

A Longstanding Tradition of Women Supporting Women

A place to gather. An opportunity to make friends. A support network.

These are just three of the offerings the PEGG Women's Club of Calgary provides for its members—and has done so since its inception 76 years ago.

Started by what club member Susan Shrive calls “pioneers of their time,” the club connected wives of professional engineers and geoscientists with each other. Many members were young, new immigrants to Canada with small children, and had left their family and friends in their homeland. They connected over shared circumstances, and the club often provided babysitting during activities.

Shrive exudes, “Many travelled the world with their husbands. They are fiercely independent, strong women with spunk. I look at these now 90-year-olds and think they're so inspirational. When I hear stories about these people landing in Canada from far-flung places with one suitcase each and nowhere to go—wow! What a life they've led. They were so brave.”

A New Era of Women in STEM

Though the club started out for wives, it has since evolved, Shrive explains. Now, it's a special place where women support women in engineering and geoscience. Few women worked in those fields when the club began—although the group does include a 96-year-old member who studied science at Cambridge in the 1940s, prior to emigrating to Canada. Now, younger members are a mix of female engineers and geoscientists, wives, and partners. The club currently has 150 members, and any woman who is eligible to join APEGA—or who is affiliated with someone who is—is welcome.

Club members are eager to carry on their long-held tradition of support by attracting younger members. “It's a bonus to the club to be multi-generational, because we all have something to learn from one another,” explains Shrive. The club's oldest member is turning 100 in 2021, clocking 71 years of active membership.

An Avenue for Friendship and New Opportunities

Interest groups meet each week, including a walking group, an investment club, and a book club, and there are regular outings and annual events. Members attend the Lunchbox Theatre, check out philharmonic performances, do archery, play bocce, and visit places like the Glenbow Museum.

There's a Welcome Back party after summer, a new members evening, an annual general meeting, and Shrive's favourite event—a Christmas party complete with a dinner and dance. The group also holds an annual fashion show, invites speakers to give talks, and is looking to begin a pub trivia night to cater to younger members.

The club also gifts a [\\$2,000 bursary annually to a second- or third-year engineering or geoscience student at the University of Calgary.](#)

The most important things the club does, imparts Shrive, is provide an avenue for friendship and introduce members to new opportunities. Even COVID-19 hasn't stopped this steadfast group.

Now one year into the pandemic, the club's walking group still pounds the pavement—following all government restrictions—and members still read along with the book club. Zoom has come in handy, enabling the investment group to talk money and the annual fashion show to go on. "It's been so important during COVID-19 that we are sending newsletters out, and members are calling other members to make sure they're doing ok—that's the sort of group it is," professes Shrive.

She also highlights everyone—including up-and-coming engineers and geoscientists—could use some extra support this year. She encourages them to join the PEGG Women's Club of Calgary.

It has done support in spades, since 1944.

Visit the [PEGG Women's Club website](#) to join or for more information.