

Lega Femminile (Ladies Auxiliary)

In 1966, a small group of both single and married women began discussing ideas about forming the Lega Femminile (Ladies Auxiliary) of the Famèe Furlane. Years earlier, in 1958, the men of Friulano origin had already founded the Famèe Furlane of Vancouver which was only made up of male members. Virginia Cividin, as its founder, accepted the responsibility of attending the men's Board of Director's meeting on March 3, 1966 to ask for their approval. As a gesture of goodwill to the newly founded group, the Board of Directors offered the Ladies Auxiliary the use of the Famèe Furlane logo and stationary. Of course, the initial purpose for the formation of the Ladies Auxiliary was to provide a manner by which the women of Friulan origin and descent could meet in order to exchange ideas and make new friends.

The earliest meetings of the Ladies Auxiliary were held in the home of Maria Benvenuti. Dolores Carino was appointed as an interim representative of their group until official elections of the Board of Directors could be held. The first President elect was Leonilla Tesan, who served on the Board of Directors for several years. After that, other President elects included: Virginia Cividin, Luisa Carino, Esterida Colussi, Agnese Mussio, Evelina Gubiani, Alice Ros and Corinna Marzin.

During the past forty-two years, the Ladies Auxiliary focused their efforts in three areas: the enjoyment of friendships with other women, helping the Famèe Furlane and donating time and money towards charitable causes. Whenever possible, the Ladies Auxiliary got together socially; for instance, at the beginning of each year, the ladies usually gathered to have a dinner together. During Mardi Gras, sweet delicacies such as 'crostoli' and 'frittole' were prepared and served at our meetings. Of course, the more courageous of ladies dressed in costumes! In the past, yearly tours were also organized for our members to visit various parts of British Columbia and Washington State. Two of our most memorable trips were to Leavenworth, Washington, and the sights on Vancouver Island. The Ladies Auxiliary also helped the Famèe Furlane with social events, banquets and picnics and took great pride in cooking for these special occasions. In doing so, these women also prided themselves in helping to further develop their children's knowledge and awareness of the language and culture of Friuli. For many years, the Ladies Auxiliary hosted and assisted the Red Cross Blood Donor Clinic, at the Italian Cultural Centre. During our annual banquets, all the proceeds from our raffles were donated to the Variety Club Telethon where our contributions helped to purchase one Sunshine Coach. The name of the Famèe Furlane of Vancouver is proudly displayed on the door of Sunshine Coach #472. Yearly donations have also been presented to the B.C. Children's Hospital. In 1996, the Ladies Auxiliary proudly received a Certificate of Recognition from Anna Terrana, M.P., House of Commons, for 30 years of dedication towards community work.

Each year, the Ladies Auxiliary hosts their Anniversary Banquet. The most memorable of these were the banquets which celebrated our 20th, 25th, 30th and 40th Anniversaries.

The first Festa dell'Immigrante was organized by the Lega Femminile in 1991. Of the attendees at the Banquet, both the first, as well as the most recent to arrive in Canada, were honoured. Their photograph was taken and placed in the L'Eco D'Italia. This

Banquet, was dedicated to the immigrants who helped to successfully build and give Canada its visage.

The Ladies Auxiliary continues to be a vital part of the Famèe Furlane of Vancouver. It continues to work hard towards sustaining both the language and the culture of Friuli today and for generations to come.