



CHALK TALK

RWTO/OERO London-Middlesex Branch Newsletter February 2017

Editor: Janice Thielenhaus

President's Message - Celebrating 60 Years



As we celebrate our Diamond Anniversary, let us honour the members who have paved a path before us. Their determination and fortitude enabled us to become a strong, vibrant organization of retired women teachers today. Our Branch proudly boasts of five local members who served as Provincial Presidents over the years.

In September, the sensational colours of fall surrounded the area with our kick-off luncheon and renewal of friendships at RiverBend. Much laughter and chatter filled the room as everyone enjoyed a "Retrospective Through the Decades" presented by our own talented performers. Special thanks to Barb, Cathy, Jane, Irene, Sandy, Helen, Linda and Kay for your delightful acting skills. Pictorial collages of our favourite memories were displayed and CTV News highlighted members and historical memorabilia from across the decades.

During October, we enjoyed the sweet and lively sounds of a Jazz Ensemble led by retired teacher-musicians, Gillian and George Laidlaw and friends. Branch Presidents from Area 3 were invited to share in the fun and they joined us in singing our anniversary song, with words adapted by Johanna and the late, Juanita.

A hearty welcome was extended to all of our guests and 28 new members who have joined our group during the "Each One, Reach One" promotion this fall. On average, we have welcomed 138 members and guests to each of the luncheons thus far.

The atmosphere was festive and jolly during our November gathering as we devoured a tasty Christmas entrée complimented by a decadent cherry dessert. Belly laughs were heard as Mary M., Sandy, Mary Jane and Cathy C. entertained us with a hilarious version of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" along with their enthusiastic backup singers. Our fabulous RWTO choir dazzled us with their upbeat and heartwarming musical selections. Thank you to our talented leaders, Irla, Jan, Johanna, and Betty M.

Our special Friendship Group luncheon at Sunningdale Golf Club in early December was organized by Sandra and Karen and enjoyed by 45 people. As a dusting of snow sprinkled outside, a scrumptious meal, funny anecdotes and carol singing warmed our spirits.

Outreach, WOW! There has been a magnanimous response to our charities this fall which included A Book for Every Child, the Women's Rural Resource Centre in Strathroy, and My Sisters' Place. In lieu of purchasing Santa gifts this year, our Branch generously donated \$200 to the Salvation Army Christmas Program. All recipients were overwhelmed by the abundance of donations and kindness of our members.

It is my privilege to be the "lead" goose in the flock, but as everyone knows, geese gain momentum and soar because of the team. My sincere appreciation to all of you.

Nancy Bell

LUNCHEON DATES TO REMEMBER

Thursday, March 23, 2017	PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING THE BOOK BAGS BACK.
Thursday, April 27, 2017	Your support in raising funds for our Branch is appreciated.
Thursday, May 25, 2017	(Spring Banquet)

Caring and Sharing

"Caring and Sharing" has been the motto and hallmark of Retired Women Teachers since the year 2000. At each luncheon many of our members are remembered for the special events in their lives such as milestone wedding anniversaries and birthdays. We also celebrate the birthdays of that month including upcoming birthdays when we don't have a luncheon; at the same time we inform members of those who are experiencing significant health events such as surgery or hospital stays. We ask members to keep these friends in mind as they go through a challenging time. This has a dual benefit in that we all learn from the experiences of these people, preparing us for our turn. For example, we have learned about the process and success of cataract surgery. Similarly, many of us have to consider declining hearing which led us to invite an audiologist (Margaret Brac) as a presenter last year...demonstrating another aspect of our organization "caring and sharing" information that supports our enjoyment of life.

If there has been a death among us or in one of our families that is also mentioned with details of "Celebration of Life" events that we can attend. In each case we contact the member and/or her family to ensure that they wish to be mentioned.

When members turn 90 and 100 we pay them a special visit with a gift. I have had the honour of recently making one of these visits. What a pleasure it was to visit with the family and celebrate a life well lived. Upon this member's passing the family contacted us to say that our visit had been a highlight of her day.

In addition to these announcements, Sharon Riley sends cards to members throughout the year remembering them during both times of joy and sorrow. It is amazing how a card in the mail can lift a member's spirits or add to their joy.

After careers that were filled with caring for children and sharing both happiness and sadness in our own families, it is wonderful to belong to an organization that cares for us and shares in our lives. It is this aspect of RWTO that drew me to join and what sets us apart from other professional groups. Caring and Sharing is not only our motto but the ideals we strive to achieve.

Jane Williams, Past President



**Fun with the
"Twelve Days of
Christmas" song,
November
Luncheon, 2016**



**The Shining Star
Awards** given in 2016
to Irla Stewart &
Marilyn McRorie

In May 2016, the membership recognized two women whose efforts have contributed to our RWTO Branch. The Shining Star Award was presented to Irla Stewart for her excellent work with our Music program and choir. In retirement Irla has built upon her teaching experience with choirs and instrumental music by giving generously of her time and expertise with our group and the community. The Award was also presented to Marilyn McRorie for her long-term involvement in our Branch, serving on a number of committees, and as Branch President, early into her retirement. Marilyn enjoys helping our members by driving and keeping in touch. She is also a volunteer in the community and currently works with the Alzheimer Society. We are fortunate to have these talented women in our Branch and pleased that they have been recognized.

Patricia Savage



Friends at a luncheon

Insurance

RWTO/OERO Hospital and Home Care Plan

This plan is designed especially for RWTO/OERO members and their spouses so that they can have additional coverage when it is needed.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. If you have any questions or need an Insurance form, contact Helen Munce or Rhonda King.
2. If you misplace your identification number or have any questions about the plan, please contact Terry Kennedy at 1-519-583-0098 or email her at tkennedy34@bell.net.
3. During your first year of retirement, your acceptance into this plan is guaranteed. You do not need to complete the Medical Questionnaire that is part of the Application Form. **Please let Manulife know if you have a change of address.** Insurance Co-convenors,
Helen Munce (519-473-2050)
Rhonda King (519-657-7348)

Positions Vacant: Can You Help?

We are currently without a First & Second Vice President and would appreciate anyone interested in knowing more about these responsibilities making enquiries of Past President, Jane Williams.

Educational Fund Report 2016

In 2011, a prime focus of Caring & Sharing was reaching out to the community. Through the efforts of Mara Hitchins, an Educational Fund was established for a new outreach project. Mara's suggestion of an educational award was approved and has been presented annually at the Kiwanis Music Festival.

Donations from our members are collected at the April Luncheon. These donations make it possible for us to donate solo trophies and monetary gifts to the winners of each division in the Speech Arts category. Our contributions in the three divisions of Junior, Intermediate and Senior are greatly appreciated.

Due to the generosity of our Branch members, we are able to disburse money, not only to the Kiwanis Music Festival, but also to other projects or organizations. Areas of interest brought forth by our members are voted upon in the Spring. In 2016 we collected \$675.00 and decided upon the Kiwanis Music Festival Speech Awards and to Autism Ontario London Chapter.

Mary Maxwell & Mara Hitchins

In Memoriam

Our Branch has lost two amazing ladies in September. We were privileged to have known them and extend our condolences to their families, friends and colleagues.

Jean Love on September 5, 2016

Juanita Johnsson on September 27, 2016

Member Recognition

In 2015, Mary Vernon was given our Shining Star Award and this year RTO/ERO District 8, presented Mary with the Award for Significant Contribution at their Annual Meeting on October 19, 2016.



Mary was cited for 20 years of outstanding service to the members of RTO/ERO and the London & Middlesex community. She has participated in the Walk for the Parkinson Society for 19 years and has raised over \$60,000 since 2003 when the Society started keeping track. For 15 years Mary has volunteered helping veterans with Alzheimer's disease and for 14 years has volunteered at Parkwood Hospital.

Janice Thielenhaus

Branch Fundraising Activities

The luncheon meetings provide an opportunity for raising funds through the sale of hand-made greeting cards, pre-read books and the 50/25/25 Draw. Many thanks go to the members who faithfully organize these activities, to Mary E. Ross who creates the cards and to those who donate prizes that make the Draw so exciting to our winning members each time. For members information, 50% of the Draw money goes to the Branch, 25% to one winner and 25% to the other winner. The money realized for the Branch through these sales helps support various activities such as sending delegates to convention, luncheon expenses, membership recruitment, etcetera.

Every purchase of tickets for the Draw, cards and books helps, so please keep on bringing your loonies and toonies to the luncheons!

Janice Thielenhaus



Pictured above are some of the new members being welcomed at the November Luncheon.

New Members in 2016

Our Branch welcomed 28 new members in 2016. They are listed in the order by which they became new members, reading across the columns.

Pamela Power	Patricia Laidlaw
Vera Rowland	Mary Jane Finn
Mary McNabb-Lutz	Donna Newcombe
Sandra Pincombe	Grace Laursen
Joan Brania	Sheila Morgan
Hazel MacLeod	Lynda Faulkner
Susan Lowry	Patricia McCarthy
Helen Starling	Maureen Bradley
Loretta Phillips	Kathie McCarthy
Marilyn Loosemore	Pat Taylor
Susan Isaacs	Sharon Lunau
Jan Telfer	Edith Van Keulen
Kathy Newnes	Hilda Smeltzer
Sandy Wagter	Leslie Graham

Karen Tierney, Membership

First Thursday Book Club

Our members (of Book Club One) have been reading and discussing books together for six years. The following are three selections from the past year that we have chosen as "good reads". *Alice I Have Been* by Melanie Benjamin is a well researched and insightful fictional biography of Alice Liddell, the muse of Lewis Carroll and the inspiration behind *Alice in Wonderland/Through the Looking Glass*. The descriptions of Victorian life and the author's sensitive portrayal of this young girl's development are excellent. Melanie Gideon wrote *Wife 22*, an absorbing first novel written from a unique perspective that explores relationships in the age of social media. The author writes with humour and compassion. Her style is quirky but compelling.

The Underground Girls of Kabul: In search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan is a non-fiction book by Jenny Nordberg, award winning journalist, who researched and interviewed a group of women over time and in depth. She uncovered a hidden but surprisingly common custom called "bache posh", which translates as "dressed as a boy". In a culture that highly favours boys over girls, families of daughters create a boy by disguising one of their girls. It is a fascinating account of the unwritten rules they followed and the long-term effects on their emotional and social development.

Cathy Harrison

If you are interested in joining a third Book Club, contact President, Nancy Bell.

The Cora Bailey Award - 2016

This is a Provincial Award to recognise Leadership and outstanding Service. This year the Cora Bailey Award was presented to our **Past President, Jane Williams** at the October Luncheon Meeting. Jane has been very involved in all aspects of our Branch workings and even co-chaired a Fashion Show! She has proven to be an excellent leader with a positive personality which has helped continue our successful growth. Thank you for your efforts, Jane.

Patricia Savage

From left to right: Mary Maxwell, Nancy Bell, Jane Williams and Patricia Savage



Second Wednesday Book Club

We would like to recommend two books that we read from the "Book in a Bag" library program. The first is the *Late Nights on Air* by the Canadian author, Elizabeth Hay. The setting is a Yellowknife quaint radio station, the characters are eccentric and humorous. The prose flowed with dark humour. It was a light and easily digested read.

At the other extreme, *A Walk Across the Sun*, dealt with a sensitively timely topic - the human trafficking of young girls who are forced into a life of prostitution and the attempts made to rescue them. The author, Corban Addison, is an attorney who supports human rights causes. His personal experience and passion for the rights of others combine to create a well-written story with the back and forth flow of characters, places and continents. Although the topic was difficult for all of us to read, the author's mastery of the subject encouraged us to continue. The ending was more hopeful and fairy tale-like than we could initially imagine. We truly honour all of the multi-faceted professional rescuers who pursue this emotionally draining high-risk career in reality.

Debby Albin

Friendship Activities

Everyone is welcome! Join in the fun and meet new friends!

- Feb.13, Breakfast at Shelley's 9:30 a.m.
(Lampighter Inn on Wellington Rd S.)
- Feb. 22, Lunch at the Enat Ethiopian Restaurant,
(379 Horton St. East)
- Mar. 2, London Museum Tour and lunch in the River Room
- Mar.14, Breakfast at Shelley's 9:30 a.m.
- Mar. 30, Car pooling from Argyle Mall, viewing of swans in Aylmer - lunch at The Green Frog
- Apr. 11, Carpool again to Butterfly Gardens in Cambridge, Lunch at the Chrysalis Cafe
- Apr.12, Breakfast at Shelley's at 9:30 a.m.
- May, June and July Breakfasts T.B.A. later
- May 16, Shear Elegance Spa, lunch at Palasad North or The Waltzing Weasel on Adelaide St. N.
- Jun. 4, Geranium Heritage House Tour
- Jul 20, "Million Dollar Quartet" production at Huron Country Playhouse matinee performance

Please watch for further details through the Friendship email/phone contacts or ask to be on the reminder list. If you have an idea for an event, we'd love to hear from you.

Deb Kaiser and Nancy Bell

Final Note

Many thanks to our photographers for their submissions; Bernarda Norwood, Patricia Savage and Owen Williams. Thanks also to Nancy Bell for her help with this newsletter and proofreading skills.

Janice Thielenhaus, Editor