

CONNECTIONS

RETIRED WOMEN TEACHERS OF ONTARIO



*Jean Axcell
- President*

Where does the time go? It is difficult to imagine that by the end of this month I will have fulfilled half of my time as your Provincial President. There have been many questions to answer, many problems to solve and many e-mails, to which a response was required.

By the time you read your "Connections", I will have made twenty visits to Branches where I have been welcomed warmly, fed heartily and entertained royally. A president of any organization could not wish for anything better.

In many Branches I found three basic concerns:

1. Filling the Executive positions
2. Recruiting new members
3. Programming for an age difference of 50 to 60 years.

In all Branches I found the activities and methods which achieve the aspirations of "Caring and Sharing" to be exemplary. Congratulations Everyone!

At this time of year we become more aware of the many blessings which we enjoy, but also more aware of the hardships and sadness that the festive season brings to many in our own organization and in our communities. It is encouraging to learn that the members of RWTO willingly reach out to help those who are not so richly blessed by providing financial, concrete and emotional support in our organization and in our communities to those less fortunate.

By now, you may have discovered that I mistakenly gave credit to the winners of last year's Barbara Bain Award, for increasing their membership. Right-

President's Message

fully, they deserved my recognition for their effort in 2005-2006, but the true recognition for 2006-2007 belongs to East Parry Sound (small), Niagara Falls (medium), and Sarnia-Lambton (large) who worked exceptionally hard to increase their membership status. Congratulations for your well-earned achievement! I apologize and appreciate your understanding of my error.

Our Provincial Committees are working very hard on your behalf and several new initiatives are being undertaken this year. You can rest assured that your Provincial Executive and Board are conscientious and dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly for the betterment of RWTO.

At the end of November, Martha Abra will have completed her service to RWTO and we thank her for the tremendous contribution she has made at the Provincial Office and to the Branch Treasurers. We wish her much happiness and good health in her future endeavours.

In September, Insurance Workshops and Treasurers' Workshops were successfully held at the Holiday Inn in Peterborough. I wish to thank Carole

Kennedy and Anne Graham for their careful planning. My thanks, also goes to Terry Kennedy and Martha Abra, the facilitators who provided pertinent information to our members, and to Mike Corcoran of Marsh Canada for his presentation about the Home and Auto Insurance program.

As I continue to serve as your President, I wish all members a rewarding season filled with good food, good health, wonderful friends and family relationships, and much happiness and peace of mind.

*Yours in Caring and Sharing,
Jean Axcell*

Opportunities

- become a member of a Provincial Committee
- become an assistant to the Communications Convenor: computer literacy and experience with web pages needed
- host the 2010 Annual Convention

Tell your Area Director and/or President Jean of your interest.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Provincial President: Jean Axcell
1443 Firwood Cres., Peterborough K9K 1J2
705-740-2793 larjexl@sympatico.ca

Provincial First Vice-President: Carole Watson
9 Farley Pl., St Thomas N5R 3E6
519-631-6640 carole.watson@sympatico.ca

Insurance Convenor: Carole Kennedy
116 Creekwood Cres., Whitby L1R 2K4
905-723-6685 kennedy.c@sympatico.ca

Manulife Financial 1-800-268-3763
Broker, Terry Kennedy 1-905-339-2424
e-mail tkennedy34@cogeco.ca

Provincial Office
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer: Gloria Drake
2332 Woodburn Rd., Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0
Phone: (289) 286-0657
Fax: (905) 692-9876
Toll Free: 1-877-607-6696
E-Mail: info@rwto.org

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40739021
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
RWTO Provincial Office
2332 WOODBURN RD
BINBROOK ON L0R 1C0

Publication

This newsletter is published three times each year in September, November and March. Deadline for submissions is the second Tuesday of the previous month. Circulation is approximately 6,000 copies.

Archivist's Corner – Board of Directors

One of my responsibilities as an Archivist is photography. As a picture is worth a thousand words I decided I would go that route to introduce to you the members of the Board of Directors of RWTO for the year 2007-2008. Within the Board of Directors is the Provincial Executive, all the smiling faces in the first picture. When a resolution is passed, it is first presented to the Provincial Executive, then to the Board of Directors and finally to the Annual Meeting where it is either approved or rejected.

Jeannine Renaud

Provincial Executive



Except for the Honorary President everyone in the picture on the left is a member of the Provincial Executive.

Front row: Carol Martin (Honorary President); Sherri Stokes (Past President); Jean Axcell (President); Carole Watson (1st Vice-President); Mary Jane Finn (2nd Vice-President). Back row: Jeannine Renaud (Archivist); Carole Kennedy (Insurance Convenor); Anne Graham (Assistant Insurance-Convenor); Marilyn Emmett (Program Coordinator); Leslie Utley (Recording Secretary); Gloria Drake (Executive Secretary-Treasurer); Sandra Train (Membership Convenor); Lee Beech (Parliamentarian); Joyce Fee (Communications Convenor).

Area Directors



Front row: Patricia Depencier (Area 03); Jeannine Renaud (Area 10); Marilyn Emmett (Program Coordinator); Elizabeth Wells (Area 11); Suzanne Wilson-Marjerrison (Area 09). Back row: Gerri Wilson (Area 07); Mary Lanktree (Area 01); Joyce Foster (Area 12); Annette Rhodes (Area 04); Darlene Poirier (Area 06); Carolyn Shoup (Area 02); Absent: Linda Seath (Area 05); Betty James (Area 08).

Convention Co-Convenors



Ruth Kaufman and Mary Lanktree

Get To Know Your Provincial Executive

My birthday is the same date as that of the Queen Mother, the fourth of August, and my mother was born the same year, in 1900. As we all know, those coincidences did not make me a member of the nobility... but that did not stop me from embracing noble causes namely teaching and becoming a member of RWTO as soon as I retired.

When I graduated from high school I had decided that I would become a nurse. Having been accepted, I was to start in September. Something would soon change the course of my life. The trustees of the small rural school, which I attended as a child, came to my house to convince me that I should teach for one year and that if I still wanted to be a nurse I could go later. Teachers were scarce at the time. When I objected that I was not qualified, they told me that, as my mother had been a teacher, it certainly was running in my blood. So I started teaching in September 1953 in a small rural school with 27 pupils from Grade 1 to Grade 8. What a challenge! I managed to survive! Actually it proved to be a wonderful experience, so much so that I stayed for a second year. Nursing went by the wayside and I attended *l'École Normale de l'Université d'Ottawa* the following year. I ended up teaching for 35 years,

13 of which were in elementary schools and 22 in high schools. At the secondary level, I taught mostly Mathematics and was a Guidance Counselor.

I am by no means a stay-at-home person. I like to get involved and I always welcome a challenge. I really believe that in order to lead a meaningful and happy life one must, to the extent of his or her capacity, keep on learning, get involved, reach out to others, have friends and be a friend. I have yet to meet a happy person who has nothing to do.

My hobbies are golf, bridge, reading, traveling, going to concerts and the cinema, shopping, meeting people and enjoying a good meal in the company of family and friends. I believe in doing all that I can to keep healthy. For the last ten years I have participated in yoga classes, adapted for seniors, which have proven to be really beneficial.

I am so thankful to be healthy, to have a wonderful family and very special friends, to live in a beautiful country like Canada, a country that is so magnificent, so plentiful.

Oh, by the way, my mother lived to be over a hundred. I may get to receive a bouquet of flowers from RWTO. The thought is almost scary. In the meantime I live my life to the fullest.

Jeannine Renaud, Archivist Convenor

Branch News

Mississauga

We were honoured to have renowned Canadian author, Wayson Choy, speak at our May Luncheon. Mr. Choy has won many awards for his writing, including the **Order of Canada** in 2005. He entertained us by telling the story of his journey in becoming a writer and explained what a tremendous influence the elders in Vancouver's Chinatown had on him and his writing. He talked about the importance of stories. In his three novels, **The Jade Peony, All That Matters and Paper Shadows**, Mr. Choy draws on his own experiences of being a North American child of immigrant parents and how he was caught growing up between cultures.

Haldimand

The highlight of our Spring Luncheon was the visit from our Provincial President, Sherri Stokes, who shared some of her experiences over the past year. We enjoyed the humorous approach to her year's journey through using numerous hats that she had collected. Also noteworthy is our ongoing support, via "beautiful junk", of a local Early Childhood Centre and, via a variety of gifts, of a local Women's shelter.

Beaver Valley

One of the highlights of this past year has been the continued breakfast get togethers. It provides a relaxing time to keep in touch. We contributed to the RTO Schoolhouse Project individually and with a donation in recognition of entertainment at our Christmas dinner from the Rocklyn Academy, a private girls' school. Our March meeting was hosted by member, Ruth Norton, who was confined to her home because of health problems. Unfortunately, we lost Ruth. We were thankful that we had had the opportunity to spend quality time with her. We congratulated two of our members, Isabel Johnson and Dorothy Patterson, as they celebrated their 90th birthdays.

Dundalk-Highpoint

We are truly a "caring and sharing" group. As well as contributing generously in time and funds to Convention 2008, we take pride in supporting our local food bank, school breakfast programs, Dundalk Christmas Cheer and the Grey-Bruce Women's Crisis Centre among other charities. Each meeting our roll call is a donation to a charity. In February, we donate a warm fuzzy cover or cuddly toy to the local OPP or Crisis Centre to be used for children experiencing trauma in their lives.

Flesherton

In July we enjoyed our annual picnic with the Warton Branch at Inglis Falls. This year we invited the Dundalk-Highpoint Branch to come along. August saw us at Collingwood for lunch and then to the theatre where we enjoyed an afternoon of comedy with Dan Needles. Our September meeting was lunch at the Varney Inn followed by a speaker who, dressed as a militia man of the period, spoke about the War of 1812. In October we met at a member's home and had a local woman speak about her venture in raising alpacas.

Owen Sound

As well as contributing in time and funds to Convention

2008, we support various community charities and projects. A main focus has been the local RTO Schoolhouse Project. We are delighted that the building is being constructed and local students will have a hands-on opportunity to experience how learning happened in a one room schoolhouse. Some of the featured fund raisers of our year include a Bridge and Desert event and the selling of unique brooches. In September we toured to Orillia to view the fall colours and a matinee performance of **Stage Door Canteen**. In November we will travel to the Humming Bird Centre to enjoy the production, **A White Christmas**.

South Bruce

In September we hosted a retiree tea at "Books and Beans" in Kincardine. We find this a relaxing way to welcome new retirees to retirement. We hope this encourages these ladies to join RWTO. In October we welcomed Provincial president Jean Axcell and Area Director, Mary Lanktree to our meeting in Underwood. We were entertained by the Bell Ringers from Sauble Beach. At this meeting we distribute baskets of apples to be taken to our local schools along with information about RWTO to encourage future membership. We, too, are busy pulling together our part of Convention 2008 which includes co-ordinating the raffle and door prizes. Branches will be getting an invitation soon to contribute to the raffle.

Warton

In July we enjoyed, once again, meeting with the Flesherton Branch at Inglis Falls for our annual picnic. It was great that Dundalk-Highpoint could join us. Our September meeting was held at the Anglican Church in Tara. We are looking forward to our Christmas dinner at the Warton Propellor Club in November. On October 4, representatives of our group visited the local school and presented a book to the library in memory of member, Joyce Knowles. Our outreach projects include the local agricultural societies' fall fairs, the Women's Crisis Centre and the local foodbank. We are looking forward to preparing the "info and goodie bags" for distribution at Convention 2008.

Sudbury

We were very pleased to welcome our provincial president Jean Axcell to our celebratory September meeting. Our branch was marking the 35th Anniversary of our existence and talented Jean added to our festivities by being part of the entertainment. She played the piano and sang for us as well as leading us in the hilarious song composed by Julie Andrews re: "Our Favourite Things" – you know the one – malox and nose drops, etc. During the meeting we donated \$350 to the Inner City Home, to assist with helping the less fortunate in our community. The amount, donated by our generous members, was symbolic as it indicated \$10 for every year of our existence. Four members had created a very tall "cake" out of cans symbolizing the food donations given to this cause every Christmas. A delicious real cake was enjoyed by all for dessert. We also remembered Adele Samson, Elsa Isrealson, Eve Kendel, Glorette Blais and Laurette Raymond, five members whom we lost this summer.

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Branch News...continued

Lydia Snow

Lydia Snow branch enjoyed a Costumed High Tea Party in the beautiful garden of one of the members. Using bone china cups, saucers and plates and silver tea-pots, High Tea was served to the ladies who were elegant wearing dresses, hats and gloves. Just under \$1000 dollars was spent on purchasing a library book for each of the schools in North Halton. Kay Lawson, who still attends Lydia Snow meetings, celebrated her 90th birthday.

Lanark

The Lanark Branch with 79 members meets 8 times a year. This past year two worthy members received the Cora Bailey award – Vivian Fleming, our Area Director, and Frances Maley, who kept our Branch going in 1994. These two ladies gave outstanding service to RWTO.

We began our fall with a **Rideau Canal Fall Foliage Cruise** with 55 aboard the General Brock. We left Smiths Falls and traveled through 6 different locks. Captain Andy kept us informed of the architectural heritage, birds and wildlife. We were fortunate to be celebrating the 175th anniversary of the opening of the Rideau Canal. Our Caring and Sharing continued as we traveled back to Smiths Falls in a yellow school bus.

Ottawa-Carleton

Our branch with 174 members is busy. We hold 13 events, 10 Executive meetings and members gather for tea at a restaurant the first Friday of each month. Our spring activities included a visit to the Museum of Civilization, an antique appraiser's talk, an Irish luncheon, a Rideau Carleton Raceway luncheon and the AGM. Summer saw our branch tour a B&B, have lunch and an aquafit class at a member's cottage, tour the Renoir exhibit at the National Art Gallery and welcome newly retired members at a tea. In the fall we honoured our over 80s at a tea which was co-sponsored with RTO, and lunched in Wakefield, Quebec to see the fall colours.

Listowel

Contributions were made to the local Food Bank and money was collected for children's library books. Marie Collinson and Sylvia Trudeau frequently visit Caressant Care Nursing Home for "Storytelling Time". With the donation received from Listowel Rotary Club and in partnership with Giant Tiger in Listowel, 150 backpacks with school supplies were given to elementary and secondary students. Pat Graham recounted her experiences in South Africa.

North Durham

Our members initiated a "Dare to Care" program in the schools of Brock Township. The aim is to make students aware of the needs of others in their community, how they can help and to become familiar with the community services available. The ongoing program is to be expanded with some of our members making presentations in classrooms.

Because of the popularity and interest in **Chalk, Challenge and Change** we are interviewing our members as they

become ninety and adding their teaching experiences to our existing archives.

Peterborough

In July our members and friends enjoyed Fourth Line Theatre's production, **Schoolhouse**, which was based on teaching in one room schools in 1938. Three of our members in the audience were teaching then. This tied in with our provincial **Chalk, Challenge and Change** and member, Muriel McRae's book **The Times They Have A-Change-Ed ucation**. The outdoor theatre in the middle of a farmyard provided a unique experience.



Muriel McCrae, 1932, Recess at SS #3 Marmora

Editor's Note: With apologies - Niagara Falls Branch news was incorrectly identified as Niagara South Branch in the March Newsletter.

Honorary Membership

Each year, RWTO considers nominations for this award which our organization offers to members who have made an outstanding contribution at the provincial level of RWTO. Nominations may be from Branch Executives or from members-at-large.

The criteria for nominating members are explained on page 25 of the Policy and Procedures Handbook (June 2007).

Please submit two typed copies of nominations no later than January 31, 2008. Accompanying your nomination should be an outline of the reasons for the nomination, the service of the member to RWTO, offices held, and outstanding achievements. Please provide full name, address, phone and email contact of the nominee.

Send nominations to Convenor of Honorary Membership Committee:

Patricia Depencier
12946 Longwoods Rd., R.R.6 Thamesville, ON N0P 2K0
email: pjdepencier@sympatico • Fax: 519-692-5563

Committee Members:

Betty James, Joyce Foster, Suzanne Wilson-Marjerrison

Goodwill News

Happy and sad tidings...

It has been my pleasure to send 100th birthday greetings and one dozen roses on your behalf to the following members: Mary Moles (Blue Mountain Branch), Grace Morton (Trenton Branch), Grace Climenhage (Niagara South Branch), Elizabeth McIntosh (Niagara South Branch), and Dora Tansley (Pay Direct). Thank you to the Branch members who helped to arrange for the delivery of roses to these special members as they celebrated this milestone in their lives.

It was when I called to arrange delivery of roses to Ruby Holley of the London-Middlesex Branch to mark her 100th birthday on August 16th, that I was informed of her death on July 28.

Provincial was also saddened to learn of the death of Past Provincial President, Margaret Fallona, on July 11 at the age of 101. Margaret was Provincial President during the 1981-1982 term when the name of the organization was still the Ontario Association of Superannuated Women Teachers (OASWT).

Both Ruby and Margaret were members of the London-Middlesex Branch. Our condolences to their families and to that Branch at the loss of these long-time members.

News also reached us of the death of Eve Kendel, Provincial President during the 1998-1999 term, on August 17. Eve served RWTO in many capacities, most recently as official photographer at our Annual Meeting in June 2006 when we celebrated our 50th anniversary. Our sympathy is extended to her family as well as to the Sudbury Branch, where she will be sorely missed.

As a reminder, it is extremely important that your Branch continue to forward information about changes in address, as well as obituaries, to the Provincial Office so that our motto of "Sharing and Caring" can continue to be extended to our "Over 90" members. Thank you for your help.

Wishing you all much happiness for Christmas and the coming year...

*Mary Jane Finn
Goodwill Convenor*

Know Your Provincial Executive

Marilyn Emmett,
Provincial Program Coordinator

Born and raised in South Porcupine, a small mining town in northern Ontario, Marilyn attended North Bay Teacher's College and began teaching in St. Catharines in 1966. She taught all grades JK through grade 8 at several schools in the St. Catharines area, retiring in the year 2000. Marilyn immediately joined the St. Catharines branch of RWTO, becoming Social Convenor in 2001 and then Second Vice President in 2002. As she moved through the chairs, Marilyn also became the branch Communications Convenor and continued with that position until June 2007. The St. Catharines Branch had a great time hosting the 2002 Convention. Marilyn was Secretary-Treasurer for that Convention and was responsible for most of the computer generated items.

Marilyn's first experience with the Provincial Executive was as Recording Secretary in 2004-2005. For the next 2 years she was the Director of Area 4. Marilyn is now the Provincial Program Coordinator. The Provincial Program Coordinator's responsibilities include:

- a. coordinating the activities of the Area Directors
- b. acting as a liaison between the Provincial executive and the Area Directors
- c. organizing the details of the official count of the voting delegates at the Annual Meeting
- d. selecting the Returning Officer, the timer, the Steering Committee and the Scrutineers for the Annual meeting in consultation with the host Branch
- e. managing and promoting sales of RWTO publications and supplies at the Annual Meeting

When Marilyn is not busy with RWTO activities, and numerous other volunteer commitments, she enjoys reading, spending time with friends, scrapbooking, card-making and digital photography. She treasures those special times she spends

with her daughter Debbie, who now lives in Burlington, and her mom who is still a very active lady at 85. The best times are spent with her husband Rick, who is also retired, enjoying the many seasons at their home in Port Dalhousie and traveling whenever they want a change of scenery.

Editor's Note: Due to the number of items for the September newsletter this article was held over. My apologies to President Jean who had mentioned it in her message.

Margaret Fallona
Past Provincial President
1981 – 1982

Eve Kendel
Past Provincial President
1998-1999

Remember her with a smile today,
She was not one for tears.
Reflect instead on memories
Of all the happy years.
Recall to mind the way she spoke,
And all the things she said.
Her strength, her stance, her willing hand,
Remember this instead.
As we loved you, so we miss you.
In our memory you are near.

In loving remembrance of Margaret and Eve.

Insurance Matters

On September 20th the Branch Insurance Convenors of RWTO attended a seminar in Peterborough, Ontario, on the various insurance products offered through the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario. The seminar was very well attended, with 47 Branch Convenors, as well as many Board members in attendance. Mike Corcoran of Marsh Canada made a presentation about the Home and Auto Insurance program. There have been some recent improvements to the Home and Auto Insurance package and we encourage all members to phone Marsh Canada at 1-899-265-2196 to ask for a quotation before your next renewal date. You may find that the improvements offered result in savings for your insurance costs.

Terry Kennedy made a presentation on the Hospital and Home Care Plan and its Profit Sharing Arrangement, the Personal Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance Plan and the Travel Insurance program. A question was asked about dental surgery and eligibility for benefits under the Hospital & Home Care Plan. Terry investigated with Manulife Financial, the insurance company that underwrites the plan, and their response is "The Hospital & Home Care Policy contains an exclusion for dental treatments and therefore no benefits would be payable under the policy." While dental treatments are not covered under the plan, there are many other benefits of which our members can take advantage. For example, one of the most frequently claimed benefits is the Convalescent Care benefit, which provides insured members with a benefit of \$350 a month for up to six months while they are recover-

ing at home after being hospitalized for 3 or more days. And a reminder to the members who have not yet taken advantage of this valuable plan; you can still apply for coverage after your first year of retirement. Call Manulife Financial at 1-866-410-0550, Terry Kennedy at 905-339-2424, or one of your Provincial Insurance Convenors to obtain a brochure and application form today!

If you're planning a vacation this winter, don't forget to travel 'protected' with the RWTO Travel Insurance Plan. Call CanAm Insurance at 1-888-326-3535 to obtain quotes for Out of Canada Emergency Hospital Medical Insurance, Trip Cancellation & Trip Interruption coverage, or even for coverage for visitors to Canada, all tailored to your specific needs and budget. If you already have coverage through another program, you can even extend the number of days you are covered through that program by "topping up" your existing coverage. And, because you are a member of the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario, your spouse, your children (whether they live with you or not) and your grandchildren can take advantage of the competitive rates offered under this plan.

If you have insurance questions, or wish either of us to make a presentation at an up-coming Branch meeting, please contact us:

Carolle Kennedy - Provincial Insurance Convenor.
905-723-6685 kennedy.c@sympatico.ca

Anne Graham - Assistant Insurance Convenor
613-829-4679 grahamanne@rogers.com

Important Information About RWTO's Liability Insurance

Some Branches have been asked to provide proof of Liability Insurance to the facilities where they are holding their meetings. Since this is a somewhat new request this article is intended to clarify how and why this information is needed and how it can be obtained.

If your group is hosting a function at a facility that requires proof of liability insurance i.e.- a Certificate of Insurance, this can be obtained through the RWTO Secretary-Treasurer. When you contact her, preferably by email, (info@rwto.org) she will need the following information:

1. Branch name.
2. Name and address of facility church/hall/etc. where the meeting/luncheon etc. is to be held. If a Branch holds all of their meetings and/or events at the same place, only one Certificate will be needed.
3. Name of contact person.
4. Phone and fax number (if available) of contact person.
5. Date(s) the Insurance is needed.

The Secretary-Treasurer will then send a Certificate of Insurance to the facility.

Certificates will be issued annually, as needed. The expiry date for any certificate requested in the next several months will be June 15, 2008.

N.B.** As a requirement of RWTO's Insurance, if a Branch is planning a bus tour, murder mystery dinner,

golf tournament etc., as a requirement of RWTO's Insurance, you must obtain a Certificate of Insurance from the bus company, etc., and forward it to the Provincial Office before proceeding with the event. This is to ensure that the bus company etc. has their own coverage in the event a member is injured during the bus tour, etc. This is a new procedure, but must be followed.

Our policy is set up to cover the types of events listed in our Annual report. If the event is a new type, not of the usual Branch activity, the Secretary-Treasurer should be contacted so that the Insurance company can be notified.

Branches must obtain Certificates of Insurance from special venues e.g. halls /wineries/restaurants which are different than their usual meeting places. Any sanctioned RWTO Event – golf tournament, fashion show etc. or bus trips to the Convention or bus tours at the Convention should all be checked for their liability insurance and the Certificate forwarded to the Secretary-Treasurer.

In this day of litigation it is becoming more and more important that organizations such as RWTO protect themselves from a devastating lawsuit. It's comforting to know ... "You're Covered!"...if you've made your call and followed the steps to make sure your event is under the Insurance Umbrella!

Membership News

Quilting is one of my favourite pastimes. I am a definite fabric-a-holic and have a very sizable 'stash' to prove it. I love the beautiful colours and designs and get great pleasure in seeing the many pieces come together to form a finished project.

I liken RWTO branches to quilting. We take many women of different sizes, shapes and colours and join them together to form a unit – a Branch. The various individual women add their strengths and personalities to make a pleasing whole. As an avid quilter knows, one has to keep adding new fabrics to the 'stash' all the time. So, too, do we need to keep adding new membership to maintain our organization.

At a recent Membership Committee meeting the importance was stressed of good inter-branch communications. Area branches, especially neighbouring ones, should keep each other informed of upcoming events of interest. Consider joint ventures to share costs or workload or visits to each others' meetings. The whole branch doesn't necessarily have to participate; it could just be interest groups, executive or whatever. Maybe something worked really well in your branch so share that idea with others.

Consider having a Membership Minute at your meetings. You could do a brief biography of one of your members including her involvement with RWTO. Keep things light-hearted! You could send around a sheet of paper with a member's name at the top and have everyone write a positive comment about that person. Share the comments during your Membership Minute. Be creative with your own ideas.

I would like to share a few ideas generated from the Annual Membership workshops on how to retain members, including newly recruited retirees. Make people feel welcome. Assign an executive or long standing member to look after each new person. Have your Membership Convenor or executive member phone after a meeting to encourage newcomers to come back to the next event. Use hand written notes or invitations to make communications especially personal. Improve the type of entertainment offered – motivational speakers, challenging programmes, upbeat themes. Hold a hobby show to demonstrate members' interests. Hands on programmes are successful. Hold an auction where each member has to bring something hand-created.

Kingston Branch Bags Plus Anniversary 1997-2007

It is with great pleasure that Kingston Branch is honoured in this issue with a **Feather in the Hat** for their long term commitment to a project close to their hearts.

This year is the 10th anniversary of **Bags Plus**, the caring and sharing project of the Kingston Branch of Retired Women Teachers of Ontario.

In 1997, Alice McIlroy had an idea for creating book bags to be distributed to children. Under the capable leadership of Judy Moulton, the first Bags Plus co-ordinator, these book bags have now become bags full of personal care items, hats, mitts, scarves, socks, mugs and teabags, books and magazines, toys, art materials, writing materials, school supplies, baby supplies, jewellery, etc., all ages, gender, and seasonally appropriate, which are donated to agencies who then do the distribution.

As well as the cloth bags, and to assist with changing needs, they donate boxes of items such as afghans, bus tickets, and coffee and doughnut gift certificates to agencies that distribute to clients. In the past year, they have sent 6 large "treat" boxes to Canadian troops in Afghanistan. They have also donated to help with crisis situations in their community.

The original bags were mainly for women and children in crisis, but now they have added packages for youth, men, mothers and babies or preschoolers and for families and seniors.

They pack three times a year – for Christmas and winter, for spring and summer, and for back-to-school. All this could not happen without the wonderful work by the dedicated volunteers who sew bags, knit, sew and crochet items, shop for bargains from yard sales, dollar stores and store sales, donate items and collect donated items from friends. In the past, they have also saved and collected A&P cash register tapes to earn money back from the company for this project. Scholastic Books and Quality Home Products have been faithful donors.

The local District 20 RTO branch has generously supported them through their Service to Others Project. The RWTO branch and RTO branch members give added support at their lunches. Under the leadership of Dorothy Pearson and Bonny Greavett, the current co-convenors of the project, the Branch looks forward to continuing their caring and sharing in the Kingston community and the surrounding area.

Best wishes to you all for a healthy and active winter. I look forward to sharing with you in the spring.

*Yours in caring and sharing
Sandra Train, Chair of Membership*

Executive Position

Nominations for the position of Provincial 2nd Vice-President are now being accepted.

Nominees should have experience at the Board level as well as at the Executive level in an RWTO Branch and/or other organizations. The job description is printed in the RWTO Policy Manual, and is available from your Area Director or members of the Nominations Committee. Names submitted are to be approved by the Branch Executive making the nomination and then sent to the Area Director for confirmation.

Nominations should be mailed or emailed to:

Nominations Committee Chair, Sherri Stokes
21-5150 Dorchester Rd, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 7H2
sherstokes@sympatico.ca

postmarked no later than January 31, 2008

Areas 5, 10 and 12 will be selecting new Directors in accordance with the protocol established within each area and outlined in the RWTO Policy Manual.

For more information don't hesitate to contact Sherri Stokes, Committee Chair, or committee members Carolyn Shoup, Marilyn Emmett or Gerri Wilson.

Mountains of Fun in Area One!

RWTO 52nd Annual Convention
June 3, 4 & 5, 2008 at Blue Mountain Resort
Nestled between the shores of Georgian Bay and the majestic Blue Mountains

Blue Mountain Resorts Ltd R R # 3 Collingwood, Ontario L9Y 3Z2
 Phone 705-445-0231 • Toll Free 877-445-0231 • www.bluemountain.ca

Convention Co-Convenors: Mary Lanktree: 519-922-2931 mlanktree@bmts.com • Ruth Kaufman: 519-375-6910
 Registrar: Linda Murray: 519-538-1445 linmur@bmts.com

Accommodation Information: Reservation Number 31H2J5 RWTO
 Per night: Standard room \$122.84
 Condo Suites: Two bedroom \$244.22 / Three bedroom \$321.91

Resort Policy: A 50% deposit will be requested upon registration



30 Village Shops & Restaurants • Indoor and Outdoor Pools/Hot Tubs • Hiking, Mountain Biking and Golf
 Panoramic Gondola Rides • Private Beach

Submissions for March Newsletter are due January 31, 2008

Please submit by e-mail to jfee@accel.net or Joyce Fee, 1524 Westbrook Drive, Peterborough, ON K9J 6R4



RWTO Provincial Office
 2332 WOODBURN RD
 BINBROOK ON L0R 1C0

PM Agreement
 40739021