

CONNECTIONS

RETIRED WOMEN TEACHERS OF ONTARIO

President's Message



*Carole Watson
President*

It is with great pride that I assume the presidency of RWTO and follow in the footsteps of the venerable women who have preceded me.

Those who know me well recognize that I am a strong supporter of women. In my dealings with RWTO, whether at a Branch or Area level, sitting on the Board of Directors, or at Convention, I am continually amazed by the talents of the women in this organization. Combine that with the empathy for women and children who are not as fortunate as we are, and the creativity that I see in every activity of which we are a part, and I realize that I am now the leader of the most dynamic women's organization in Ontario.

We have some challenges ahead of us. New retirees are younger and many still pursue careers, whether in the educational field or otherwise. All groups, whether service clubs or professional retiree groups, are facing the prospect of declining membership, as we compete with a myriad of causes to which we can dedicate our time and loyalty. We are one of these groups.

With this in mind, it is time to revisit our Goals and Objectives, and see which ones are still relevant in this first decade of the twenty-first century, and which need to take a new direction. At the October Board of Directors' meeting, we will have a professional facilitator lead us through a visioning exercise, and hope to have some new ideas for our next convention for discussion and

possible decision making. This can only be successful if you, as members, give us some insight into your thoughts concerning our future. Please share these with your area Director, with other members of the Board, and with me as I travel around the province this year. We can only move on if we move on together. And move on we must, or the future of our organization is in jeopardy.

At our Annual General Meeting, the delegates voted in a deficit budget, with the passing of a motion to increase the rebate to branches to 25% of the membership fee. This leaves your Board of Directors with a challenge to operate on limited funds. Most of our committees do their work electronically, which reduces expenses in that area. With the increase in the cost of gas, accommodation, and food, it is difficult to function within our restraints. If it weren't for our insurance rebates, we would not be able to operate as an organization. Moreover, we must remember that this insurance money is not a sure thing, and should it not be forthcoming, we would not exist.

If we are going to be a provincial organization, we do need a provincial executive, and it needs to meet. We will be looking at many ways to streamline our Board this year, and I know that when you see the Board members in your area, you will thank them for the many things that they do at their own expense, including the time that they volunteer. They are the people who keep this organization alive.

I look forward to my visit to your branch. I am always amazed at the connections that our members across the province have to St. Thomas, and am now keeping a little book of these connections.

This will be an exciting year and I am delighted to be part of it.

Warmest regards,

Carole

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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.

Convention 2008 - Mountains of Fun in Area One

It took many hands, many committee meetings, many innovative ideas, co-operation, hard work, and much travelling to meetings to host the 2008 Convention at the Blue Mountain Inn in Collingwood in June. The result was a first class convention and Area One members are to be highly commended for hosting a convention of such high calibre.



We were treated to superb meals and exceptional entertainment that exemplified the great variety of talent in the area, including Elvis, who highlighted the Tuesday program. The staff was extremely hospitable and responded graciously to our needs.

On Tuesday, Lee Beech held a workshop for new delegates, Sandra Train conducted a net working workshop on membership and programming, and Mike Malloy, representative from Dan Lawrie Insurance Company, presented information on our Liability Insurance Policy. On Wednesday afternoon, our members took part in the various trips that Area One had arranged, and then returned for a glorious banquet.

New to the Convention this year was the display of the recipients of the Cora Bailey Award sent in by the Branches and assembled creatively by Jeannine Renaud. It was amazing to read about the wonderful contributions these members have made to RWTO and to their respective communities.

At the banquet, greetings were brought from RTO and ETFO. Awards were presented to the four Honorary members, and the Barbara Bain Awards and Feather in your Hat Awards were presented to the branches. Tokens of appreciation were presented to Martha Abra, our former Executive Secretary-Treasurer, and to Carol Martin and her committee members for their work in the production of "*Chalk, Challenge and Change*".

On the Thursday morning Jeannine Renaud conducted a very moving memorial service in honour of our members who were deceased in the past year.

A highlight of the Thursday luncheon was the recognition of the Over Nineties, and the Mother-Daughter combinations



Mother-Daughter members and President Jean at Convention.

who joined us. For all occasions, the decorating committee was very creative. The hand-painted cans, later offered in a silent auction, and the arrangement of geraniums that graced the luncheon tables, created a wonderfully festive atmosphere. The lovely and varied donations from the branches for the raffle added much interest to the breakfast venue and were much appreciated by Area One in working with their finances.

Of course, the main purpose of the annual meeting was to conduct the business of RWTO and under the skilful leadership of our parliamentarian, the business went smoothly.

Following is a very brief summary of the results of the resolutions:

#s 1-4 and 6 dealt with minor constitutional changes. Passed quickly.

5 added a Policy Committee to the Standing Committees. Passed quickly.

7 name of Grenville East changed to Upper Canada East passed without discussion.

8 Windsor Branch requested a 25% rebate per paid member beginning 2008-2009. Amended to allow members who pay \$15.00 to continue the \$8.00 rebate. Amended resolution passed by a small margin by a secret ballot.

9 became redundant.

10 Hamilton-Wentworth Branch requested an audio-visual presentation be prepared by the Insurance Convenors for insurance workshops. Referred to the board for further consideration.

11 from the Board requesting a French translation for our name, RWTO. Referred to the Board to check for legal implications.

On Thursday morning the Committee reports were given and passed and the budget was approved. Mississauga gave an interesting power point invitation for the 2009 Convention to be held at Stage West next June. We look forward to "Flying Free" with Mississauga. The meeting concluded with the induction of the Provincial Board for 2008 - 2009.

If you have hosted a Convention, you will have a great appreciation for the wonderful job the five small and widely geographically separated branches did in their planning and execution of the 2008 Convention. Delegates and visitors were hospitably welcomed, accommodated, fed and entertained and had "Mountains of Fun in Area One". If you did not attend, you missed an exceptionally well hosted convention.

Congratulations Area One!

You have our deepest admiration and gratitude!

Submitted by Jean Axcell, Past President

October 14 is the deadline for submissions for the November newsletter, including submissions from Regions 6, 8, 10 and 11.

Insurance Matters

So You Think You Are Well-Insured? Think Again.

Because of Canada's universal health care plan, every person living in Ontario is covered for their basic health care needs. As retired women teachers, we are usually enrolled in some kind of extended health care plans - either through local Board of Education, husband's company plan or the RTO/ERO Health Insurance Plan. All of these plans cover doctors' visits, semi-private hospital accommodation, eye glasses, some form of home care benefits and many other benefits.

Why then should we even consider enrolling in the RWTO Insurance Plan?

The answer is that there is one UNIQUE benefit feature that no other insurance plan offers. It is the CONVALESCENT benefit which is so different from other plans. It pays up to \$2100.00 after you get home from a hospital stay. To claim this benefit, a person has to have been in hospital for three or more days. This benefit pays the member \$350.00 in CASH for up to six months with NO receipts required. A second section of this benefit will pay \$72.50 per week for up to four weeks for convalescence following Outpatient Surgery or surgery requiring hospital confinement of less than 3 days! All that is needed is a completed claim form which includes an Attending Physicians' Statement submitted to Manual Financial confirming that the member has been in hospital that length of time. Think of that!

Think of having \$350.00 cash in your hands to do whatever you need to help in your recovery. You might hire a cleaning lady, someone to cut the lawn, someone to drive you to doctors' appointments, or take you to your hairdresser. You have the freedom to use the money as you see fit. No other health insurance policy gives that kind of coverage. The monthly premium of \$14.49 is minimal when you consider that there is an additional list of benefits as well. An added feature is that husbands of retired women teachers may also be enrolled in the Plan for a slightly increased fee.

This special type of health insurance was conceived by one of our members in the early years and it was designed especially and explicitly for retired WOMEN teachers. As a group, women teachers are considered to be intelligent and independent people accustomed to looking after themselves. They are

considered by the Insurance Company to be good insurance risks. In the early days there were a lot of single women teachers who may not have had close relatives to look after them if they became ill and had to be hospitalized. Nowadays, there are large numbers of widows, divorced or separated women teachers whose relatives may be living far away.

Even if you have been retired for several years and still have not enrolled, it is important for you to reconsider your decision. The Convalescent cash benefit alone is worth the price of the annual premium. You can still apply for the coverage – you will just have to complete the medical questionnaire included in the application form.

It is most important for new retirees to enrol in this unique RWTO Insurance Plan within the first year of retirement. Only then can they enrol without having to fill in a medical form. After the year is over, they will be required to reveal their medical history. Younger people have a tendency to put off thinking about their health and the need for extra insurance. Take heed! Do it now. The cost is minimal and the benefits are enormous.

Finally I want to tell of my personal experiences with the RWTO Plan. When I first enrolled I thought that it would be beneficial for my husband to have this insurance as well. When I approached him with the information, he felt that he did not need any extra health insurance because we were both well covered under his employer's plan. Thinking that he really needed this special coverage (the Convalescent benefit) I paid the annual premium for him myself. The most interesting and amusing part of this story is that he collected FIVE times and I have yet to make a claim!

Sign up for this special RWTO Insurance today

Submitted by

Juanita Rathbun, Past Provincial President

For an application and brochure, contact your branch insurance convenor or call our insurance broker, Terry Kennedy, at 905-339-2424. She will be pleased to assist you.

News From Goodwill

It is my pleasure to be your Goodwill Convenor this year. Three of our members have turned 100 years old this summer. Congratulations to Jean Phillips of the Niagara South Branch, Catherine Jolley from Beaver Valley Branch and Marjorie Hutchings of Gananoque Branch for reaching this very significant milestone. Thanks to the executives of those branches for arranging to have roses and cards pre-

sented from your RWTO. This is a rewarding task and it is only with the help of all members that we can keep tabs on our Over Ninety members. As you can well imagine, information in this department is in constant transition. Please continue to let Gloria Drake or me know of changes. We do want to stay in touch with all of them.

Carol Bell, Goodwill Convenor

Archivist's Corner – Jeannine Renaud

Convention 2008 At Blue Mountain Conference Centre A Great Occasion To Recognize Our Wonderful Members

Honorary Membership Awards

Four members received the Honorary Membership Award: Jean Axcell, Judith Hood, Linda Seath and Vivian Fleming.



Above are Judith Hood with Evelyn Dargavel and Linda Seath with Carol Nelson.

Barbara Bain Membership Awards



The recipients of the Barbara Bain Membership Award were Trenton, Owen Sound and Lincoln West. Above from left to right are Norma Broadbear, Diane Workman, Barbara Bain and Laurena Brower.

Cora Bailey Awards



Over 80 members received the Cora Bailey Award during 2007-2008 for their outstanding service to their Branch. A display of their photos and a summary of their accomplishments expressed our gratitude. Above are Connie Cole, Linda Luscombe and Marilyn Hodge.

Feather In Your Hat Awards



The recipients of the Feather In Your Hat Award were Kingston, Napanee and Sarnia-Lambton. This award recognizes creative, innovative and successful activities carried out by the Branch.

Issues And Concerns

Are you aware that:

Some grandmothers are raising their fetal alcohol syndrome grandchildren without any financial help. They are being forced to live in near poverty, whereas, if these children were turned over to Social Services, the caregiver would receive \$1600 a month. As well, there are very few support groups for these grandmothers.

Some women are forced to legally separate or divorce their husbands in order to get their spouses into nursing homes without having to mortgage their homes and as a result live in poverty themselves.

Many women are worried about their long term care as some nursing homes are failing many of the governmental stan-

dards. These ladies have no family nearby to advocate for them and keep a close eye on their care. There is a national website to see how any nursing home rates. (www.nursinghomeratings.ca)

There is a blood test for ovarian cancer much the same as for prostate cancer. It is not covered by OHIP and very few doctors prescribe it during a lady's annual physical.

As a group, RWTO should become more vocal in advocating these concerns.

If there are other issues and concerns of our members, please let me know as awareness can only help others.

Patricia Depencier,
Issues and Concerns Convenor

Branch News

Scarborough

Each month we had a celebration, another busy year for the branch. This was the first time the Cora Bailey award was presented. Connie Cole, Marilyn Hodge and Linda Luscombe were the recipients. The 80 and 90 year old ladies were acknowledged with flowers as a thank you for their support and contributions. Spring was celebrated with a fashion show in March and then a plant sale in May. The members overwhelmingly supported the toy drive in November and each month contributed to the two women's shelters that the branch supports. Despite lower numbers at the monthly luncheons the enthusiasm never lessens for the many projects that the Branch undertakes. As the new executive begins its duties, Scarborough looks forward to another exciting year.

Hamilton-Wentworth

Our monthly e-mail newsletter has become an important communication tool in our organization. Liz Verrall, who was in charge of membership, began this monthly newsletter in February 2004. It keeps our members, especially our shut-ins, informed about our activities, accomplishments and any upcoming community events. The newsletter is now available in text only or a longer format with colourful clip-art. Fewer telephone calls are needed and we now have an executive member who is solely responsible for the publication to ensure that it is always current and informative. Our venture into the technical age has been rewarding and successful.

Niagara Falls

Provincial Insurance Convenor, Carolle Kennedy, presented a comprehensive overview of insurance available to the members. Betty Lou Manker shared the topic *Angels About Us*, illustrating the historical and modern connections of the world's three main religions via angels. The First Baptist Chimers, including some of RWTO members, brought a special musical celebration. Four of our members received Cora Bailey Awards. Donations were given to Eventide Home, Project Share, Boys' and Girls' Club Building Campaign, Hospice Niagara, McMaster Medical Centre, and the Toys and Mittens Campaign.

A pleasant old-fashioned picnic completed the year. It was held in the garden of member Helen Macdonald, under the shade of the maple tree, planted by Helen herself. Since eight people at our picnic, including former Provincial President, Sherri Stokes and Margaret Jackson, Branch Delegate, had attended the 52nd Annual Convention at Blue Mountain, members received lots of information about the convention.

Lincoln West

Our group enjoyed a variety of entertainment: local authors Dorothy Turcotte, Lois Marlatt and Margaret Pettit, health care specialists, music and craft presentations. Partnering with West Lincoln Community Care, *Books in a Bag* is ongoing. We tried something different with a visit to the cosmetic and beauty section of Shoppers' Drug Mart. Information on skin care, especially in the summer sun, was informative. Two ladies had a facial while others tried samples and went home

with a sample bag. We could purchase at a 20% discount and a basket of cosmetics was put together as a draw prize and was won by Lois Taylor.

Haldimand

May 5th, 2008 saw our RWTO members in Fisherville, enjoying a tasty luncheon of roast beef with all the trimmings. Through a slide show presentation, Miggs Wynne Morris talked about what she had learned about the unique nature of the peoples she lived with during her stay in the far north. Her passion came through as she shared her involvement with the native peoples. Those present left with plenty of food for thought.

Niagara South

Our members truly embodied our motto of 'Caring, Sharing and Having Fun' by participating in a creative activity presented by Pauline Bain of Stamplicity, in Port Colborne during one of the luncheon meetings. Retired teachers learned how to make beautiful cards and were introduced to the newest trend in scrap booking techniques available in other workshops. The members showed their caring by sharing the cards with Canadian Forces members serving overseas. Our troops appreciate receiving correspondence from individuals and groups. Contact your local MP for information about how to send mail to the many different locations around the world where our troops are stationed.

Brant

Our latest event was a trip to our South Coast on a misty day in June. Our first stop when we arrived in Port Dover was a tour of the Museum. An amazing collection of Port Dover and Lake Erie history is well displayed. Dover has many good places to eat and we decided to try Fisherman's Catch. It was a great choice and we enjoyed a long lunch with a nautical atmosphere. After lunch we took a short drive to the cottage of one of our members and enjoyed lots of laughs and conversation that was topped off with afternoon tea! We had a wonderful day of caring, sharing and having FUN!

St Catharines

We culminated our fundraising efforts for the year by holding a game and dessert afternoon. The funds raised were presented to our Women's shelter, Gillian's Place for a total of \$3460 during the year. Other funds were presented to the hospital building fund, Community Care and the United Way. Our branch was well represented at the convention in Collingwood. We so enjoyed the conference - the entertainment, the efficient business meeting and the ambience. We relived some of the "having fun" by attending a fundraiser in St. Catharines at which Peter Irwin 'Elvis' was the main attraction. We are planning another exciting year for our members including wellness seminars and are hosting a Morning Recess Coffee Break for prospective members. Two members were presented with Cora Bailey Awards for their outstanding contribution: Marilyn Emmett and Carol Pushie with our gratitude and congratulations.

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Ottawa-Carleton

In June members of our Branch met for lunch, then toured the nearby Rideau River historic farm home of retired teacher, Choral Lindsay, to see her collections of dolls, books, glassware, antiques and artifacts from the 1800's. Choral was responsible for writing part of the application to seek UNESCO, World Heritage Site status for our Rideau Canal. In July members met for afternoon tea and listened to a period-piece play on the porch of Ottawa's Laurier House, home of Prime Ministers Laurier and King. Later as we toured the house, original furniture and artifacts collected by both owners were fascinating to see and to hear about from our excellent guide. In August members enjoyed a pot luck luncheon and swam at the cottage of member, Eleanor Lillico, always a favourite summer outing in the Gatineau Hills, north of Ottawa.

Lanark

Lanark Branch of RWTO travelled by motor coach to Upper Canada Playhouse in Morrisburg, Ontario, on the picturesque St. Lawrence River. Following a delicious buffet lunch at the MacIntosh Country Inn, we were ably entertained by the talented cast of the hilarious comedy of Wally's Café, as we reminisced with some of the 40's and 50's lifestyle and music. The historical murals at the Village Plaza and Upper Canada Playhouse depicted some of the previous stores and events of the area. What an enjoyable day!

Trenton

Besides our monthly gatherings, Trenton members have enthusiastically supported a variety of outings. Our Trips Committee organized a Fall Colours excursion to Lang Pioneer Village, lunch at the Viamede Resort, and a boat trip on Stoney Lake. The May trip to see My Fair Lady in Toronto, included lunch at Moxie's and prompted requests for more theatre. This July we bought a block of seats to Love Songs of

Lerner and Loewe at Westben in Campbellford. In October we will tour Prince Edward County for craft demonstrations, wine, cider and cheese tastings, visits to historical sites and a market garden, and lunch. Next spring a trip to StageWest to see Married Alive is planned.

Peterborough

Congratulations to Sharon Maskell, our worthy recipient of the Cora Bailey Award for 2008. We have bridge, golf, and Let's Do Lunch interest groups. We welcome Jean Axcell back to our branch executive. After our outdoor theatre outings to see Schoolhouse and The Last Green Hill, our members encourage visitors to the Kawarthas to attend and enjoy the theatrical productions at 4th Line Theatre. Our first gathering will be a Yahoo Muffin Party to welcome new retirees. We are looking forward to a great year with some changes to the format of our general meetings – coffee at 10:30, business, then lunch followed by entertainment.

Northumberland

Every woman loves a birthday - everyone else's! Keeping this in mind, our Northumberland Branch, had a birthday party for its members who met at a local dining facility and celebrated. In June, enjoying cake, fruit and a beverage our members caught up with each other's lives as we welcomed several new prospective members. A good time was enjoyed with lots of fun and a sing along led by our past president, Jean Axcell.



We are planning to visit Ocala Winery in Port Perry in late October for some wine tasting and dinner.

Membership News

I am sure that you would agree with me that we had Mountains of Fun in Area One at this year's convention. Thank you to all the members from Beaver Valley, Flesherton, Dundalk-High Point, Owen Sound, South Bruce and Wiarton for their excellent work in planning the 52nd Annual Convention. I spoke with several first time attendees and they enjoyed the experience. Please encourage new members to attend the 2009 convention in Mississauga.

A sincere thanks to Sandra Train, Carol Martin, Darlene Poirier and Donna Parkhill for all the work they did on the Membership Committee last year. I am looking forward to working with the Membership Committee for 2008-2009. If you have any membership concerns please contact Ruth Ferguson, Gerri Wilson, Betty James or myself.

One of our tasks this year is to add pictures to the RWTO website. Please send hard copy pictures of any fun activity that you do in your Branch that you feel would be of interest to others. Many branches have interest groups that are very involved

and we would like to show what you do. Many branches do amazing charity work and that also would be of interest to all members throughout the province. Please include the names of the people in the picture and also their permission for the picture to be used. One permission form can include all names. Thanks to Lincoln West and Lydia Snow for already sending pictures. Please send pictures as soon as possible to get them on the website before December.

There has been a slight drop in our membership this past year so I would encourage all of you to invite new retirees and encourage others to return to become members of RWTO. It is one of the few unique women's organizations in the province, and it is important that we all care and share with our retired teachers.

The very best to all of you as our 2008-2009 year begins.

Carolyn Shoup, Membership Convenor
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Receive Your Newsletter by E-Mail

Those wishing to help the environment and RWTO costs may receive their newsletter on-line.
Send your name, address and e-mail address to Joyce Fee, Communications Coordinator at jfee@accel.net

RWTO Calendar 2008-2009

September 16-17, 2008	Provincial Executive Meeting
October 14, 2008	Submissions for November Newsletter
October 15, 2008	Membership fees should be submitted
October 21-22, 2008	Provincial Board of Directors Meeting
November 15, 2008	Submission of Resolutions for 2008 Convention
November 30, 2008	Determine Branch numbers for Convention delegates
January 31, 2009	Nominations for Board for 2009-2010
	Nominations for Honorary Membership Awards for 2009 Convention
February 9, 2009	Submissions for March Newsletter
April 1, 2009	Submission of invitation to host Annual Convention in 2011
April 15, 2009	Submissions of Delegate Forms for Annual Meeting
April 7-8, 2009	Provincial Executive Meeting
June 1, 2, 4 2009	Provincial Board Meeting
June 2, 3, 4 2009	53rd Annual Convention at Mississauga, Stage West
September 1, 2009	Provincial Fees for 2009-2010 now due

Resolutions

All resolutions to be brought to the 2009 Annual Meeting must be submitted to Mary Jane Finn, convener of the Resolutions Committee, by November 15, 2008. Each resolution must contain only one key issue. The intent of the resolution should be clear and concise. Questions or concerns should be directed to Mary Jane Finn or to Lee Beech, Parliamentarian, who are available to help with the language and structure.

Send to m.finn@sympatico.ca or 1766 Eastgate Estates, Windsor ON N8T 2T2.
Mary Jane Finn, First Vice-President



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