



THE SCRIBBLER

Sault Ste. Marie R.W.T.O. Newsletter Fall 2017 and Winter 2018

SHARING

CARING

HAVING FUN

President's January Message As teachers and adults, we often instill in young people the importance of saying "thank you". However, it is so easy to take good things for granted and forget to use the words ourselves and forget the impact that these two little words can have on our personal and collegial lives. Let's call **January 2018 Our Thank You Month**, the perfect time to make a resolution to take the time to express our gratitude. Here are a few ideas for celebrating this month:

1. Expressing gratitude is self-perpetuating. The more that we practise gratitude, the more adept we become at it, and the more we can enjoy its psychological benefits: a feeling of wellbeing and reduced depression. This is from Dr. Christian Jarrett, in the Science of Us.
2. Associate with people who are grateful for what they have and who they are. These people are energetic and have a positive, "can-do" attitude. They are open to trying new things. Our lives are enriched by these people. (From our local Zonta newsletter)
3. Appreciate the simple things in life. "Simple things relieve eyes; simple things ease mind, simple things create meditation, simple things are simply miraculous!"
by Mehmet Murat ildan

Life is never perfect, and there are always hurdles to overcome. We need to remember what we have achieved and give thanks for the blessings we have received along the way.

Thank you, each of you, for your commitment to our branch of the R.W.T.O. We have nurturing qualities such as compassion and empathy to support each other, we have opportunities to enrich each other's lives by meeting and participating in a wide variety of activities together, and we have resources to share with our fellow local and global community members.

Respectfully,

Brenda G.

In Memoriam—We regret to announce the passing of Valerie Scott.

'Remembering Valerie Scott, my friend of 50 years - submitted by Sandy Fulcher

Valerie used to say that she was a true Canadian as she was born in Rouyn, Que.; attended public school in Toronto, Ont.; attended high school in Vancouver, B.C. and graduated with a degree in 'Home Economics' from University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Man. She left the cold of Winnipeg to come to the cold of Sault Ste. Marie teaching for 30 years. Her teaching changed from Home Economics/Family Studies to Resource as the School Board eliminated the previous programs. She arrived in Sault Ste. Marie in her blue MG, which she sadly gave up for a warmer vehicle. She belonged to the 'Red Hats' and enjoyed their outings. She was a very creative person crocheting, embroidering, quilting, making dolls and painting. Pumpkin, her cat was the love of her life. Pumpkin, having diabetes, did not live to be an old cat. I'm sure that they are together now - enjoying each other's company.

New Members: Irene Gibbs and Susan Shepherd, who joined in September 2017, received their R.W.T.O. pins in November. We are excited to have them with us!

Awards: 1.) Sandy F. was awarded a Director Certificate by Past President, Bernice W., to honour her for four years of hard work as Director for the Sault and Central Algoma Branches. 2.) Bernice W. received the 2016-17 Mickey Contini Award of Merit by R.T.O. District 3 Algoma for her involvement in a wide variety of roles and commitment to the organization. We thank Sandy and Bernice for their dedicated service to our retired teachers' organizations.

Our Sesquicentennial Celebration on Sept. 27, 2017

We welcomed back seasoned members and introduced two new prospective members. Many of the ladies wore red and white to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary, and some of us dressed as teachers did in the nineteenth century. We were pleased to have Joyce Ratz, Area Director for the Sault and Central Algoma Branches, in attendance to introduce herself to us and explain her responsibilities. Joyce has been assigned to two provincial committees: The Policies and Procedures Handbook Committee and the Constitution Committee. Joyce plans to attend as many of our meetings as she can.

Members signed a form allowing for photos taken of them to be highlighted in R.W.T.O. and Algoma publications. ***Please be sure to sign a form at the next meeting that you attend if you have not yet done so.***

Brenda G. explained in detail the JOY-full sock activity for November, and a chart was passed around for members to sign up to bring various toiletries to the next meeting.

The delicious luncheon kindly provided by the executive ladies consisted of dishes representative of the provinces and territories of Canada.

After lunch, Mary Madonna, retired music consultant with the A.D.S.B., shared her musical talents on keyboard as well as her lovely voice to lead us in singing a variety of songs from across Canada and by various Canadian songwriters.

We rounded out the meeting with a short, humorous You tube video of William Shatner giving his rendition of O Canada.

The meeting provided us with lots of information, tasty food, time to socialize and the opportunity to sing and laugh together.



Back left to right: Carol Mc F., Marg C., Gerry Y.,
Mary M., Sandy F., Paula H., and Josie V.
Seated in front is Joyce MacKay.



Left to right: Rita W., Brenda O., Brenda G., Marg
W., Joyce R. and Bernice W.
Ladies in both photos dressed festively!!!



Front left to right: Irene G., Elaine Mc F., Jenny K. and Carmen C. and back left to right: Brenda O., Marg MacK., and Marg W. Members enjoyed singing Canadian songs some of which we had taught to our students, for example, Donkey Riding, Land of the Silver Birch and I'se the B'y. Other songs we sang were adult Canadian favourites, for example, Snowbird, Four Strong Winds, and Hallelujah.

Special Activity # 1-- Visit to Meadowview Alpaca Farm and Fibre Studio on Oct. 12, 2017

Seven of us travelled to Bruce Mines on a sunny October day to enjoy a hearty lunch at Bobber's Restaurant followed by a tour of Meadowview Alpaca Farm and Fibre Studio. Our tour guide was Denise Martel who owns and operates the farm along with her husband, Robert. Both Denise and Robert are former educators in the Algoma District. Denise was the Program Curriculum Coordinator for the H.S.C.D.S.B. and later principal of Notre Dames des Ecoles. Robert was principal at both Notre Dames des Ecoles and Grands Lacs Secondary Schools. Bernice noted that Denise's experience as a leader in education and her ability to in-service others shone through beautifully in her tour guiding. Both Bernice and Carmen had time to reminisce with Denise about their years as colleagues.

First, we interacted with the gentle female alpacas in a paddock close to the barn. We learned many interesting facts about the animals and had time to pet them. The animals enjoyed having their necks rubbed.

Secondly, we visited the Shearing Shed to learn about the process of shearing alpaca wool, sorting and grading it for market.

Finally, in the fibre studio we got to see the lovely felt scarves and vests that are made on a special felt loom. The wool is dyed and formed into pretty designs on these garments.

They have a boutique on the premises from which you may purchase warm, hypoallergenic mittens, hats, socks, scarves, mats and other items. They also sell their goods at The Mill Market in Sault Ste. Marie on Wednesdays.



Bernice W., Brenda G. and Carmen C. got close to the soft, woolly alpacas.



Denise M. (far left) explained the physical features and easygoing temperament of the female alpacas to (left to right): Marg W., Carmen, C., Paula H., Carol Ch. and Carol Mc F.



Robert M. (right) showed us how easy it is to have the alpacas eating out of our hands. Carol Mc F. (left) and Brenda G. (middle).

If you ever want to give your grandchildren or great grandchildren a unique experience at the alpaca farm, call the Martels ahead of time at 705-785-3389.

REMEMBRANCE DAY WREATH On November 11, 2017, Brenda G. and Gerry Y. laid our first R.W.T.O. wreath at the Remembrance Day Service at the Essar Centre.



Brenda G. with our R. W.T.O. wreath.

JOY- full Socks Filling on November 22, 2017—

In the kitchen, Josie V. and her elves filled decorative containers with cookies baked by members to be delivered to our sisters who are home-bound.

We were appreciative of the delicious buffet that Lorraine D. and Rita W. set out for us to enjoy.

After lunch, Leslie Cassidy Amadio, founder of JOY-full Socks, gave an informative presentation on this charity which she initiated.

We then got busy filling 24 pairs of woolen socks for men and women from the two long tables full of toiletries which we had brought.

We labelled the socks Lady or Gentleman and attached a Christmas tag to each pair with a handwritten note with wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Sault Ste. Marie Branch of the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario. We left that afternoon feeling grateful knowing that we were helping adults less fortunate than ourselves.

On Dec. 17, 2017, we received the following letter from Leslie Cassidy Amadio:



My dear “JOY-Full Socks” supporters, the 2017 campaign has turned out to be another very generous year, thanks to your compassionate and kind souls. We collected a total of **2,800 pairs** of socks!!!! Yahoo!!!! The number increases yearly. My heart is filled with JOY and I thank you all very much!

This year we increased the number of charities to which we donated, from 10 locations up to 16. Each year there seems to me more in need and I am grateful that there are so many kind and generous individuals, like yourselves, who step up to help.

Thanks to your donations, we delivered more than 200 boxes and bags filled with socks, grooming products, baby products, clothing, toys, blankets and oodles and oodles of beautiful hand knit mittens, hats, blankets and socks, and so much more!

We needed a caravan of 8 vehicles to deliver all the socks! Hugs and big smiles were in abundance at each of the charities we visited. The excitement is quite visible when we arrive with “your” socks. One individual stated she “looks forward to this day every year!” One location sent a note saying she just wanted to say a big thank you to the whole Joy-Full Socks crew for all of the wonderful donations! Their clients are so amazed that people in the community care and are thinking of them and thank us for making their clients' Christmas a little brighter!

These hugs and accolades were received on your behalf. “JOY-Full Socks” would not be successful without each and every one of you. I am just the courier of your kindness. There are many “elves” in the background providing wonderful support and I thank all of you. For many, who will only receive these filled socks as a gift at Christmas, consider your generosity a blessing during the Christmas season.

I, too, am humbled by your generosity and kindness. It is a gift to me to experience the goodness in each and every one of you. Merry Christmas everyone and may God continue to bless you, each and every day.

With love and a grateful heart,

Leslie

Hopefully, many of you saw the coloured photo of Sheila Mount filling one of the woolen stockings in The Sault Star, November 23, 2017.



L to R: Brenda G. presented Susan S. and Irene G. with membership pins.



Leslie Cassidy- Amadio talked about JOY-full socks.



Carmen C. boxed our 24 pairs of socks filled with toiletries.



Rita W. read The Legend of the Christmas Stocking to members. Left to right at this table were Irene G., Sheila M., Jenny K., Carmen C. and Susan S.



Left to right: Brenda O., Lorraine D. and Rita W. displayed boxes of homemade cookies donated by members for our home-bound sisters

THREE INSURANCE REMINDERS by Bev. B.

- 1.) Please be aware that RWTO insurance is *supplemental*. You should have a primary health care policy such as the ones offered by R.T.O., O.T.I.P, or a spousal plan.
- 2.) You are wise to keep ALL receipts pertaining to any medical expense. It's easier to collect receipts at the time of service than try to get them reproduced if you discover after the fact that a particular expense is covered by the plan.
- 3.) The RWTO website has a wealth of information about the insurance plans. To access it, simply go to rwto.org and, when the homepage opens, click on "Membership" then open "Insurance Plans". A full explanation of the plans offered by RWTO is easily found there as well as contact information for Terry Kennedy, the insurance broker and both the provincial RWTO convenor and the assistant convenor. If you scroll to the bottom of the page, there is a section titled, "Frequently Asked Questions" which contains many detailed scenarios.

RWTO 2018 Convention Reminder

Members who are interested in attending the convention on June 5-7, 2018, are asked to make their interest known to Brenda G. or Sherrill D. The convention will be held at the beautiful Nottawasaga Inn Resort in Alliston. We have two rooms booked, and some members from the Central Algoma Branch will be going as well. The convention is always lots of fun, and is a good way to get to know fellow branch members better and to maybe even make new teacher friends. You do not need to be a voting delegate to come. Watch for details about the convention in the March 2018 issue of the [Connections](#) newsletter.

TEACHER BIOGRAPHIES Joyce R., our Director, encourages each member to write her biography for our Branch records. Joyce has offered to share her written biography, so we can use it as an example.

We will talk more about the biographies at the February general meeting. Perhaps you will start your biography by making a plan including your inspiration to become a teacher, your educational background, your teaching positions, a special experience during your teaching years and a description of how you keep busy as a retired teacher.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT by Brenda G.

The committee consisting of Carol Mc F., Jenny K., Brenda G., Paula H. and Sherrill D. has been meeting since October to plan how to recruit new and lapsed members, to retain members and to have our members recognized in the community for what we do.

We are in a difficult position currently in that most young retirees are choosing to only join R.T.O. if they join a retired teachers' organization at all because they are accustomed to organizations with both male and female members such as E.T.F.O., O.E.C.T.A. and O.S.S.T.F. Also, there is a trend in society in general away from sororities, churches and service clubs.

For our branch of R.W.T.O. to continue beyond 2018-19, we need members to step in and volunteer to take a turn at V.P. and President. Several branch presidents have been "recycled" over the years twice and thrice; now we need different members to give leadership a try.

When you take a little risk to assume a leadership role, do not fear; it is not an overwhelming position and you are never alone. Past presidents are eager to mentor you and are just an email or phone call away. The ladies on the board are very supportive and offer positive feedback.

When you step in to lead, you will enrich yourself with this experience. You will also be contributing to your sisters' enrichment and helping to keep our branch alive and active.

Other Reminders:

- 1.) The Breakfast Club meets every second Friday of the month at 9:00 a.m. at Gino's Restaurant, 1076 Great Northern Road. Please join us for breakfast or coffee and conversation.
- 2.) The Scrabble Club meets every second Friday at 1:00 p.m. at Collegiate Heights. If you wish to join us, please call Brenda G. at 705-949-9145 or email her at gallanb@shaw.ca.
- 3.) The Book club meets the third Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. We have a list of books selected for Jan. to June. We take turns hosting the meeting at our homes by providing thought provoking questions and refreshments. Call Brenda G. or email her if you wish to join us.
- 4.) Our next general meeting is Wednesday, February 28, 2018.

Be Thankful

"Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire,

If you did, what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something

For it gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult times.

During those times you grow.

Be thankful for your limitations

Because they give you opportunities for improvement.

Be thankful for each new challenge

Because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes

They will teach you valuable lessons.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary

Because it means you've made a difference.

It is easy to be thankful for the good things.

A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are

also thankful for the setbacks.

GRATITUDE can turn a negative into a positive.

Find a way to be thankful for your troubles

and they can become your blessings."

~ Author Unknown