



Retired Women Teachers of Ontario / Organisation des Enseignantes Retraitées de l'Ontario

## President's Report

How quickly time has passed since I became the RWTO/OERO Provincial President on June 7, 2018 at the Nottawasaga Inn Conference Centre and Resort. The 13 Area Directors and your executive met in Guelph for three days, in September, to plan and discuss the business of RWTO/OERO. I was pleased with how much was completed. The Convention 2019 Planning Committee can look forward to an updated Convention Handbook to help with the 63rd Convention 2019 which will be held in St. Catharines, hosted by the Area 13 Branches. The advertisement is in this issue. Remember to make arrangements to attend soon. The Convention promises to be lots of fun with lots of laughter while you meet new friends.

RWTO/OERO is celebrating its 63rd Anniversary of Caring and Sharing for retired women teachers, the many residents of their communities and the many organizations that benefit by our outreach programs. As I have travelled the province to visit Branches, I have seen the amazing and wonderful programs that are helping others. I have had the privilege of welcoming many new Branch members at luncheons. Some of the Branches are recognizing their "forever young" members at their fall meetings.

I appreciate the friendliness and hospitality that has been extended to me during my visits. It is an honour for me to be your Provincial President. During my visits, I have enjoyed learning about each unique RWTO/

OERO Branch and I have returned home inspired by the members that I have met and motivated to visit as many Branches as possible this year. Please contact me for an invitation to your Branch.



I have been bringing greetings from the RWTO/OERO Provincial Office to encourage the members to support their executives and to step up into leadership roles within their Branch. Many hands do make light work. My own experiences with accepting a leadership role have always been the unexpected feeling of self-satisfaction, as I have felt the adrenalin rush that encourages me to do more, to be optimistic and to motivate others to accept a leadership role.

I wish all the RWTO/OERO Branches success with their 3R's of Membership this year as each Branch spends its \$400.00 gift from the Board of Directors. I was able to observe the wonderful creative ideas that are being demonstrated to recognize, recruit and retain members. The Barbara Bain Award for Membership Recruitment has been increased at each of the three tiers. Your Branch could be a recipient of one of these awards. Think about the "Feather in Your Hat" Award this year, as it is granted for a special project for Community Outreach.

*Continued on page 3* ►

## Retired Women Teachers of Ontario Organisation des Enseignantes Retraitées de l'Ontario

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[rwtoconnections@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoconnections@gmail.com) • Website: [www.RWTO.org](http://www.RWTO.org)*



## Call for Nominations

### *Provincial Executive Officers*

Nominations for the following are to be sent to the Nominations Committee Chair before January 31, 2019.

- Provincial 2nd Vice-President
- Provincial Recording Secretary

Nominees should have experience at Provincial Board level, as well as Branch Executive level and/or other organizations, (For Job Descriptions, see RWTO/OERO Policy and Procedures Manual, Appendix C, available on our website [www.rwto.org](http://www.rwto.org) or from your Area Director) Names submitted are to be approved by the Branch Executive (a letter is required), and sent to the Area Director for confirmation before submission to the Nominations Committee Chair.

### *Appointed Convenors*

The final appointment decision will be made by the Nominations Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

- Provincial Communications Newsletter Convener
- Provincial Assistant Insurance Convener

If you have an interest in one of the available positions, please email the Nominations Committee Chair, including a brief description of relevant experience, before January 31, 2019.

### *Area Directors*

Any new Area Directors will be selected in accordance with their Area's protocol, (See Policy and Procedures Manual, Appendix A) and sent to Provincial Nominations Chair before March 31, 2019.

### *Provincial Communications Newsletter Committee and Provincial Membership Committee*

If you wish to join either of these committees, (one-year term, renewable for one more) please submit a description of relevant experience by January 31, 2019.

### *Criteria for Communications Newsletter Committee Members:*

The Communications Newsletter Committee edits *Connections* three times a year. Members do not change the style and flavour of material, but maintain consistency of language and punctuation,

### *An editor requires the following:*

1. Excellent language skills, particularly grammar and spelling. (Style sheet will be provided)
2. Previous editing experience. Please identify these activities.
3. Solid computer skills in Word, knowledge of managing photos, pdfs and attachments.
4. Ability and desire to commit to online editing early in August, November and February.

### *Criteria for Membership Committee Members:*

Membership Committee Members will be expected to have an interest in, and willingness to:

1. Support existing Branches, and assist with needs, if requested to do so by the Convener.
2. Generate ideas for maintaining existing membership and suggest creative ways of encouraging newly retired teachers to join RWTO/OERO.
3. Help to identify areas of the province, not currently served by RWTO/OERO, where our organization might be of interest and, if required, assist in forming new branches.
4. Offer workshops or presentations, if requested to do so, by the Membership Convener.
5. Commit to responding to any online discussions promptly and thoughtfully.

**For further information** about any position, please contact any of the Nominations Committee: Lois Lockhart, Committee Chair; Sandie Bender, Kathy Smith, Sharron Colter.

Applications should be submitted by January 31, 2019, to the Nominations Committee Chair.

Lois Lockhart  
Nomination Committee Chair  
7653 South Chippawa Rd,  
Wellandport, ON. L0R2J0  
[lois\\_lockhart@hotmail.com](mailto:lois_lockhart@hotmail.com)



## Nominations for Honorary Membership Award

Provincial Honorary Membership in RWTO/OERO is the highest honour that can be bestowed on a member for outstanding services at the provincial level. This award is presented at the Annual General Meeting. The criteria for this award are listed in Article XIII in our Policy and Procedures Handbook which can be found on the RWTO/OERO website.

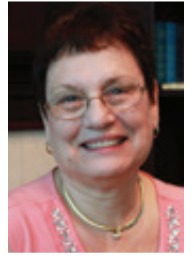
This provincial award is dependent on nominations from the branches and/or members at large. Your nomination letter should include an outline listing the provincial committees on which the nominee has served and the noted service to RWTO/OERO at the

provincial level. All nominations must be received by the Committee Chair by January 31, 2019. Please provide full name, address, telephone number and email address of the nominee.

Please send nominations to:

Dianne Rice  
Honorary Membership  
Committee Chair

9908 Eric Street  
Thedford, ON. N0M 2N0  
[drice5671@gmail.com](mailto:drice5671@gmail.com)



### *President's Report - continued*

By the time you receive this issue of *Connections* you will be preparing for the festive season with special family celebrations for Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and other family traditions. At this time of year, I wish everyone a happy, healthy and hearty family

celebration. Be peaceful and remember to be "a gift with a lift" to make someone's day awesome.

Sharron Colter  
RWTO/OERO Provincial President

## RWTO/OERO 63rd CONVENTION

**June 4 - 6, 2019**

**Presented by: The Area 13 Branches  
Lincoln West, Niagara Falls  
Niagara South, St. Catharines**



**Holiday Inn and Suites  
St. Catharines, ON**

**<http://rwto.org/convention/convention-2019/>**

**Contact: Marilyn Emmett (Convenor)**

**[marilyn.emmett5@gmail.com](mailto:marilyn.emmett5@gmail.com)**

**905 646 5543**



## Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of “Building Connections”



When I saw the theme “Building Connections” for the December issue of our provincial newsletter, my thoughts went back more than fifteen years to 2003-4, the year I was Provincial Recording Secretary. That was when the Board of Directors literally started “Building *Connections*”, our great provincial newsletter. The September 2018 issue marked its fifteenth anniversary!

The Executive Secretary-Treasurer at the time, Johanna Vanderpool, had been sending out information to members and putting it on the website, but came to the October Board meeting to say that it was too much for

her to do with all the rest of her work. My brain kicked in, my hand went up, and out came “Why don’t we create a position on the Board to handle this job?” Discussion led to the decision to do just that, and the position of Communications Convenor was established to publish a regular newsletter and keep the web site up-to-date. The job description was developed with appropriate motions for the next AGM. Then suddenly, a phone call came... “Martha, you remember that idea you had to create the job of Communications Convenor? Well, wouldn’t you like to do that job?” The rest is history!

It was interesting to take on the job of “Building *Connections*”. Decisions had to be made about what to include, how it would be put together, and then, how it would be printed and distributed (back then it was all print). Fortunately, Johanna was able to pass along the name of Sandy Mulveney, a graphics designer in Cobourg, to do the layout work for us, and the distribution would be through the Provincial Office. A committee was established to help with the first edition, and board members were to provide most of the content. My job was mostly to put it all together in a specific order and fill in what was needed. It then went to Sandy to manipulate and “make it look good”. It’s a good thing we had e-mail to handle all of this, since Board members were scattered across the province, and I was splitting my time between Northern Ontario and South Texas!

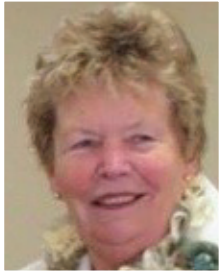
After three years, I was ready to pass the job on, and I am pleased to see how *Connections* has grown and evolved under subsequent Communications Convenors. One really great thing I learned when I agreed to serve on the current editorial committee a couple of years ago, with Cathie MacGillivray is that Sandy Mulveney is still doing the design and layout. The more things change, the more they stay the same. She has been the constant as convenors, board executive, and executive secretary-treasurers have changed over the years. We have “Built *Connections*”, a newsletter of which we can be truly proud.

Martha Summers



Sandy Mulveney, of Hello Design Studio, has been an integral part of the building of the *Connections* Newsletter. Originally living in Cobourg, she now lives and works in Deep Brook, Nova Scotia, helping us put together a polished newsletter for our members across the province. Sandy has been working with each of our Communication Convenors since 2001.

## Connections Newsletter Convenors



Martha Summers



Joyce Fee



Bev Pickard



Mardie Panabaker



Cathie MacGillivray

## Communications Newsletter

Your branch stories are inspiring to read with all the amazing ways you support each other and reach out to your community. Thank you for sharing your stories with all of us. A special thanks to our editors, Martha Summers, Gayle Manley and Linda Huizenga, for all the work they do in preparing the newsletter for you. Just a reminder of the importance of keeping your information up to date, especially your email address. *Connections* newsletter will not reach you if we have an old address. To update, please contact Gloria at: [info@rwto.org](mailto:info@rwto.org) or phone (1-877) 607-6696.

We are also looking for a member, with average computer skills, to put together the *Connections* Newsletter for 2019-2020. Could this be you? Please feel free to e-mail me for more information or with any questions you may have. This is a great opportunity!

Cathie MacGillivray  
Communications  
Newsletter Convenor  
[rwtoconnections@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoconnections@gmail.com)



## Communications Website



Kathy Gallagher  
Communications Website  
Convenor  
[rwto cyberlady@gmail.com](mailto:rwto cyberlady@gmail.com)



## Provincial Newsletter CONNECTIONS

Why not receive your Provincial Newsletter, *Connections*, via e-mail instead of mail! The cost of mailing newsletters continues to rise, each year. Emailing newsletters to members is free! To receive your newsletter by email, please email Gloria at [info@rwto.org](mailto:info@rwto.org) or phone Gloria at (1-877) 607-6696.





## Issues and Concerns - SAD: Are You at Risk?



The winter months have arrived and along with taking precautions for risks such as falls and the flu, we should also be aware of and take steps to avoid the effects cold dreary weather can have on our health. Most of us are familiar with the “winter blues”, the low

mood that cold weather and shorter days can bestow on us. When low mood leads to the point of depression and lasts throughout the season it is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Research shows that women are four times more likely to develop SAD than men and it is more common in those who live far north or south of the equator. Some symptoms of SAD include – fatigue, pervasive sad mood, loss of interest, sleep difficulties, craving starches and sweets, weight gain, feelings of hopelessness and despair and thoughts of suicide. If these symptoms are severe and occur every winter, you may have SAD. If you think you may have SAD consult a physician or psychologist to find the best treatment for you. ***\*Important\* Do not keep suicidal thoughts to yourself! Help is available for you, whether through a friend, the Emergency Room, a therapist or member of the clergy. Find someone you trust and let them know how bad things are. This can be your first step on the road to healing.***

In less severe cases there are steps you can take to ward off the winter blues and all of us would benefit from most of them.

### *Feeling blue, try these:*

**Stay Active:** Exercise by walking at least 30 minutes a day five times a week. Do this outside if possible. Fresh air and sunshine are two of nature’s greatest healers. Open blinds and curtains to let in natural light. Sit near windows when reading or resting.

**Stay Social:** Going out with friends or family can lower stress levels. Get involved in activities such as volunteering, classes or community events. For those who are house bound, keep in touch with family and friends by telephone, on-line calls with Skype, Facetime, e-mail or write a letter.

**Eat Well:** Eating well ensures that you get the nutrients your body needs to stay healthy. You may crave starches but add lots of leafy greens, fruits and colourful vegetables to your menu to get the vitamins and minerals you need. Add a vitamin D supplement. As well as helping the body absorb calcium, Vitamin D helps muscles, nerves and the immune system work appropriately. Our bodies do not produce enough vitamin D as we age and the lack of sun in winter compounds this problem. Health Canada recommends that we take a daily 400 IU supplement of vitamin D after age 50.

**Turn up the music:** Research shows that listening to upbeat music improves mood in both the short and long term. Watch some comedies on TV: Laughter is one of the best ways to lift one’s mood.

Teresa Dorey  
Issues and Concerns  
[ted.area8@gmail.com](mailto:ted.area8@gmail.com)





## Insurance Matters

I love the theme of our *Connections* Newsletter this month! Building Connections. But how, I thought, do the RWTO/OERO Insurance plans build connections? Suddenly, a television commercial that ran in the 1970's and 80's popped into my head and I thought...yes! That's how our insurance plan builds connections!

Let me remind you of the commercial. For those of us of a certain age, it will be very familiar! It was an advertising campaign for Faberge Organics shampoo featuring a lovely young woman washing her hair and commenting how if she tells two friends, then they'll tell two friends, and so on, and so on... That's exactly what happens with the RWTO/OERO Hospital & Home Care and Personal Accidental Death and Dismemberment Plan. When I ask members how they heard about our insurance plan, most will tell me that they heard about it from a friend or another member! Many will share their experience with the insurance plan and encourage others to enrol. In fact, our insurance plan is the reason some members join this association.

The plan isn't limited to new members or those who have newly retired. An advantage to newly retired members, in their first year of retirement, is that they can enrol in the plan and their acceptance is guaranteed. They don't need to complete the medical questionnaire and there is no need for a medical examination. For those members who have been retired for more than a year, they too can enrol in the plan. The only difference is that these members will have to complete the medical questionnaire included in the enrolment form. There is no medical examination required for these members either...just the medical questionnaire. When your enrolment form is received at Manulife, it is reviewed by a Medical Underwriter who determines your eligibility based upon your Medical Questionnaire. If for some reason your application is declined, and your health later improves, you can reapply.

Many members think that the Hospital & Home Care Plan terminates at a specific age. There is no termination age or age restriction for the Hospital & Home Care Plan. The only requirements for continued eligibility in the plan are that you are a member in good standing, you must be insured under a provincial health plan and you must be living independently.



When a member moves into a long-term care facility that provides nursing services as part of the residence fee, that member becomes ineligible for the plan.

The Personal Accidental Death & Dismemberment Plan is the only plan that does have age restrictions. Under this plan, the benefit amount reduces by 1/2 at age 70, and again by half at age 80. At age 85 the coverage terminates completely.

So, please continue to spread the word about our wonderful insurance plans and build those connections. If you tell two friends, then they'll tell two friends, and so on and so on...

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas Season and all the best in the coming new year!

### Insurance Convenor:

Donna Hemeon

519-538-3707

[donna.hemeon@gmail.com](mailto:donna.hemeon@gmail.com)



### Assistant Insurance Convenor

Anne Wilde

905-774-8330

[wildeanne@rogers.com](mailto:wildeanne@rogers.com)



**Manulife Financial** 1-800-268-3763  
Broker: Terry Kennedy

**The Dolphin Consulting Group**  
(519) 583-0098 Fax: (519) 583-2876  
[tkennedy34@bell.net](mailto:tkennedy34@bell.net)





## Program

### *Greetings Area Directors and Branch Presidents!*

The fall is a time for renewal and new beginnings for RWTO/OERO Branches. Everyone is busy putting plans and projects for the 2018-2019 membership year in motion. All Area Meetings have now taken place. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading the minutes I have received and learning about the diverse programs, projects and events that are taking place in your Branches across the province.

This October I began sending out reminders in the form of a monthly calendar using an 'At A Glance', format for upcoming deadlines and important dates. I

hope you have found this a useful tool which is meant to supplement the Timelines for Presidents.

As the Area Directors schedule and make their visits to your Branch, please remember that they are there to support and assist you in any way they can. I am also available to the Area Directors and Branch Presidents anytime, should you require further assistance.

Judith Bennoch  
Program Coordinator  
[rwtoprogramcoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoprogramcoordinator@gmail.com)



## Goodwill



Since July 1, one hundred and ten birthday cards were mailed to members who are Over 90 on behalf of RWTO/OERO. Of those members, fourteen members were celebrating 100 years or older. The eldest,

Mildred Wideman from Scarborough, turned 107 on August 17th! Beautiful bouquets of flowers were delivered to Joyce McMullen (Durham North), Verna Tivy (Scarborough - pictured here) and Bessie Meeks (Kingston) to celebrate turning 100 years old and to

Merle Charton (Rendezvous) who turned 101. Thank you to the branch members who delivered the flowers on behalf of RWTO/OERO and helped to make the day special for each of these ladies.

Gloria Drake does a wonderful job of keeping the lists of Over 90s members up to date. Please remember to inform Gloria of any changes of address to ensure all Over 90 members receive greeting cards. Next will be Christmas Greetings to 248 Over 9's!

Nancy Papiez,  
Goodwill Convenor  
[npapiez@cogeco.ca](mailto:npapiez@cogeco.ca)



## Archives

Preserving history is the visual and tangible conservation of cultural identity. The RWTO/OERO archives tell the organization's story and provide a living record of years past. It is my honour to take on the role of Provincial Archivist. I have begun to collect and record archival materials resulting from Convention 2018. At the September 2018 Board of Directors meeting, the lists of Cora Bailey recipients for 2013-2014 were collected and will be stored for transfer to York University, where the RWTO/OERO records are held. Thank you to the Area Directors for assembling the materials from their Branches.

One of the moving highlights of the annual Convention

is the In Memoriam Service during which members of RWTO/OERO who have passed during the year are honoured and remembered. As your Provincial Archivist, I am responsible for organizing this tribute. If you have any suggestions for readings or music, please send them to me.

I look forward to a year of learning and discovery.

Sandie Bender  
Archivist  
[sbender1@cogeco.ca](mailto:sbender1@cogeco.ca)





# *Celebrating our Branches – “Building Connections”*

## *Area 5*

### *Scarborough*



Scarborough Branch continues to build and maintain connections with local community groups that support women and children. Each month our members donate useful

daily products for the women and children at a local shelter, as well as much needed sports equipment in the spring. Each September, backpacks, full of school supplies, are provided for the kids currently living in the shelter. At our November luncheon, our members come loaded with toys and gift cards for the families and kids in need within the Scarborough community. Our local Police Division distributes all these gifts at their annual Christmas Party. We also have a connection with the “Breakfast for Kids Program”, in Scarborough, and donate each year. Some of our members volunteer to help at the local Autism branch Christmas Party. This provides great satisfaction for the kids and members. These connections, in our community, help women and children have happier lives throughout the year.

### *Rendezvous*



This year, members of Rendezvous Branch in Toronto focused on ladies who were unable to attend meetings, events or luncheons. Four of us made a road trip to Niagara Falls where Adelle, age 90, set out a delicious coffee break and joined

us for lunch in town. Some of us visited a member age 101, whom none of us knew, in the dementia unit of a local retirement home. We saw that she was well cared for by the staff. Reaching out to the families of our members connects us with them through stories from their teaching careers and adventures. Some of our elderly members do not want our attention. Some pass away before we are able to visit. It is often a challenge to locate a member, get permission to visit from her family, have them inform the care facility and finally make the connection. It is worth the effort.

### *York North*

York North is very proud of our charity fund raising efforts that enable us to build connections with the community and among our members. We are small and dwindling rapidly but those who remain work very hard. We began our first drive at our fall luncheon last October with our bottle raffle. Members donated maple syrup, cooking oil, salad dressing, jam, bath products, etc. and then bought raffle tickets for the bottles they wanted to win. Our efforts will continue at our December luncheon when we will raffle off twelve festive baskets filled with preserves, cakes, other edible treats and many handy purse and household items that our members donate. At each of our four luncheons we also have an “Everything for a Dollar” table where new or slightly used books, puzzles, jewellery and a myriad of small items are sold. Members also contribute generously to our Loonie/Toonie dishes that are placed at each luncheon table. The money collected is used to support four food banks, two in York Region and two in North York.



## *Area 6*

### *Blue Mountain*

Blue Mountain Branch is a small group, but we have fun. At our April meeting we had a great time learning about Belly Dancing with Anne Cameron and then we tried doing it with lots of laughter! One of our members, Joy Burkholder, attended the Special Recognition Luncheon at the RWTO/OERO Convention in June. She looks too young to be there!



In September we learned about a local group that supplies scholarships and bursaries to local students by matching deserving students with donors on an individual basis. The members continue to support our Books for Babies project and the parents of newborns at the Collingwood and Marine Hospital seem to really appreciate the books and reading information they receive. The walking group and book club continue to meet and enjoy their time together.

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## *Celebrating our Branches – “Building Connections” continued*

### *Daisy Wilson Coldwater*



We are a small but growing branch. To build connections and friendships, members arrive at 11:00 a.m. to share and visit. The laughter and enthusiasm during this time is contagious. Teams of three organize the food, set up and framework for each meeting. A new member is invited to join each team. The ideas and creativity of each team are amazing. We raise funds at Christmas for needy children or women. In 2017 we chose Sleeping Children Around the World and learned about their wonderful work. Together we celebrated the Wedding with a Royal Luncheon complete with fascinators. Some meetings we eat out, for others we might bring our own sandwich. In September we join Orillia Branch to meet our new president. Members volunteer for many charitable organizations and we support their fundraising events. We look forward to future opportunities to care, share, laugh and celebrate together.

### *East Parry Sound*



This summer, East Parry Sound Branch, together with Orillia and Muskoka branches, enjoyed building connections within Area 6. Peggy Stock, (East Parry Sound), Elaine Heron, (Muskoka) and Kaye-

Anne Broger (Orillia), arranged a luncheon and a day outing in Bracebridge. The warm, sunny August day was perfect for lunch on the patio at The Inn at the Falls. Altogether, 31 members from our branches enjoyed a wonderful social time, getting acquainted, sharing stories, laughs and experiences. Kaye-Anne's carefully prepared “Getting to Know You” activity was

an excellent mixer which allowed us to discover many interests and talents among members. These provided good points of conversation, too. A friendship gift of honey was given to each of us by the Muskoka Branch. After lunch, groups formed to explore the main street stores and the camaraderie continued. All agreed that this adventure was a great success which deserves to be repeated.

### *Orillia*

Orillia has seven meetings a year with a membership of 59. This is an increase in membership this year with the addition of members from the Muskoka area. We are very pleased to welcome them to our



Branch. We also made connections with Parry Sound this summer. In August members from Orillia, Muskoka and Parry Sound met in Bracebridge for a wonderful patio lunch at “The Inn at the Falls”. We had a chance to get to know everyone and visit. It was a fabulous day and the weather was beautiful. This year we have many exciting events planned. These events include a Pot Luck Luncheon with Coldwater (Daisy Wilson) Branch, speakers to inform us about the planned local Hospice Centre to be built and a fashion show presented by Northern Reflections. We also have catered dinners to celebrate Christmas and our last meeting in June. This year we are donating money to the local Youth Centre and the Food Bank.

### *Area 8*

#### *Brockville*

Building connections in the Brockville Branch has always been our key focus. Connecting with each other as we go from teacher to retired teacher to teacher in a retirement home to one in a full care facility is a very important aspect of our group's foundation. This is why we still continue to exist. We also continue to connect



*Continued* ►

## *Celebrating our Branches – “Building Connections” continued*

with our local community by meeting in various places of worship. Thus, we are supporting their women's groups. We have great food and great conversations in a relaxing atmosphere. A win, win!! Our charitable work continues to focus on children's literacy through our work with Fun with Books. This association will soon cease to exist after twenty - five years in our community. No volunteers could be found to play the key roles. With the demise of teaching “The Arts” in our schools we are now supporting a local initiative to provide these experiences outside of school hours. Our meetings have used this connection to provide entertainment for those in attendance. Our September meeting connected with a former teacher, Dizzy Lizzy, who told stories of classroom exploits of the earlier years. Lots of memories and lots of laughter were enjoyed by all. Building connections continues to be what we do.

### *Gananoque*

The word, “connections”, implies a relationship.



Building connections is important for strengthening a group. Because Gananoque Branch spans a wide area, our members lack opportunities to develop new social friendships within the group. To overcome this need, at each meeting we include a short fun activity requiring members to meet another member and engage in a directed topic of conversation. This activity has been well received and has led to the learning of shared interests and experiences, as well as the putting of names and faces together. Such connections would not happen spontaneously. To maintain the feeling of inclusion, when members are absent or shut-in, they are sent a card, signed by all of us. We receive notes and messages of appreciation which show us the importance of such a gesture, the assurance of connection. When members become friends, we become more aware of needs and can provide mutual support. Connections and relationships are important to the continuation of our membership. “Caring and Sharing” becomes more than just a motto; it becomes a way of life.

### *Upper Canada East*

“NAS”, “If you have Nothing, Anything is Something.” This organization was started by a group of Florida Snowbirds, who found in their hearts, a project assisting children from ages five months to eight years of age. Any area in the world, dealing with a crisis situation, such as a hurricane, a tornado or flooding, where all is lost, is in crisis. The sewing of crisis gowns

began. When a child has nothing, a new tunic means a great deal. The Upper Canada East Branch adopted this project and put together kits including

instructions and enough material and ribbon to make three gowns. Interested members chose a kit and took it home to sew. We are now in the process of assembling more kits to be given out at the November meeting. Something so simple can mean everything to a little child. So began the Crisis Gown initiative; spreading our caring and love with those in true need.



### *Kingston*

Our Kingston Branch has had a very interesting year. We were delighted to host our Provincial President, Lois Lockhart, as well as our Area 8 director, Teresa Dorey, at our spring luncheon. Napanee and Gananoque Branch members attended as well. Two of our long-time members turned 100 years



young this year. They were presented with bouquets and gifts when we visited them. The recipients, Bessie Meeks, (pictured here), and Miriam Mitchell, enjoy good health and were thrilled to be remembered. Kingston Branch's Caring and Sharing project, Treats for Troops, is capably organized by our archivist, Bev Ritchie, who uses the funds collected by the sale of gently used articles at our luncheons, to buy and pack treat items into boxes. These are delivered to CFB Trenton for delivery wherever our troops are stationed. The boxes are well received, and the recipients are enthusiastic about receiving a little piece of home.

### *Napanee*

The Napanee Branch of RWTO/OERO joined other organizations, citizens and businesses in Greater Napanee to sponsor a pallet in the “Pallet- Able Art” project. Barb Marlin, one of our members painted “Life's Journey of Education”. It was exciting to see

*Continued* ►



## *Celebrating our Branches – “Building Connections” continued*



it erected at the Napanee Library. Members had the opportunity to celebrate Barb's work at a thank you party at the Library and to meet Napanee staff. It was also wonderful to have one of the Pallets chosen to be written up in the "Grapevine", a magazine serving a large area of Eastern Ontario. We

are thrilled to share our "Tales and Tunes for Tots" that has reached over a thousand babies in our County providing parents with early literacy kits. A highlight of our fall meeting was a visit to the restored Royal Chapel of the Mohawks on the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. One of our members, Gayle Clement, was able to add interesting facts to the tour. We were pleased to contribute to help preserve this beautiful building. Napanee RWTO/OERO will continue to make more community connections.

### *Area 10*

#### *Sudbury*



Sudbury Branch celebrated the first day of school by going out for lunch. 31 members attended this, building connections within our branch. It was

most successful! A new member also attended. Our aim, as always, is to attract new members in every way we can. Our Christmas Luncheon will feature excellent musicians playing the piano, cello and violin, playing songs appropriate for the season. We always have a monetary collection for the Inner-City Food Bank and our members have been most generous, building and maintaining connections to a most deserving charity.

### *Area 11*

#### *Central Algoma*

Our Central Algoma Branch is always looking forward to a new school year without actually returning to school! Together we learn a great deal through sharing



community members' expertise and we care for others in our communities by donating to scholarships and local food banks. This September we will be "all abuzz"

learning about bee apiaries. Later in the year, it's "In the Cards" that we will participate in card making and will "nurture nature" as we learn about the Kensington Conservancy in our area. Of course, we always look forward to our joint meeting with the Sault Ste. Marie Branch when we get to meet our Provincial President. We also anticipate reading many great books in our Book Club and enjoying exploratory walks with our Hiking Club. The Games Club always enjoys their fun and the Craft Group are very social as they engage in many different creative works such as needlepoint, knitting and jewellery making. The icing on the cake is that our spouses or friends appreciate the wonderful food in our quarterly Theme Dinner group. Perhaps most importantly, we like and trust each other enough that we can be silly together with lots of laughter.

#### *Sault Ste Marie*

At the moment we are getting our first snow fall-hopefully it will disappear. The Sault Ste. Marie Branch consists of 60 members who come together on a regular basis to have fun, care and share. This year we have planned five general meetings and two special ones for our members. Our first special meeting was a combined meeting hosted by the Central Algoma Branch at the lovely light house in Bruce Mines. Fun was had by all. We were very pleased to have our Provincial President, Sharron Colter and our Area Director Joyce Ratz, join us. The programs for the rest of our meetings will be planned by our members at large. We can hardly wait to see what they have in store for us. One will certainly involve discussion about which charity we will support this year. To find out more about Branch, visit our RWTO/OERO web site.



## Membership

The theme for this issue is “Building Connections” and I am reminded of a very old TV commercial for FTD Florists that said, “Reach out and touch someone today”. In those days we built connections with those around us by picking up our telephone and having a real conversation. Perhaps we might have sent out a card or have written a letter. There was always the possibility of walking or driving over to someone’s home and visiting face to face. These things still work remarkably well with our senior members and I believe that most branches are doing this. I am also sure that we all look for the “lost faces” or shy individuals at our events, go over, sit and talk with them and invite them to join our table

But, in today’s world, our younger retirees or soon to become retired teachers, do not use their iPhones to talk. They text, tweet, twitter and Facebook (which a great many of us are not comfortable in doing).

Canada Post can testify to the fact that nobody writes letters or sends cards any more. So, how do we build connections in a world where “Privacy Laws” are making it increasingly impossible to obtain information on our about to be retiring colleagues? How do you build a connection if you aren’t able to make a connection? This is something that each branch needs to be working on and to be sharing with each other through their Area Directors and which can then be passed on to the membership at large. Perhaps together we can all come up with some strategies for solving the problem.

Suzanne Lanouette-Carswell  
Membership Chair  
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For many older adults, their home literally contains a lifetime's worth of memories. And by that, I mean lots and lots of STUFF! Photos, children's artwork and out-of-style clothes in the attic; holiday decorations, knickknacks and dusty toys in the basement; furniture and spider web-covered bikes in the garage. And that isn't even mentioning the closets, drawers and under the beds!

There are several good reasons seniors should consider decluttering now and cleaning out their homes.

Anyone who has had to clean out a loved one's home following an unexpected illness or death knows what a difficult task it is, emotionally and physically. Of course, during this process the adult children or other family member often will find a few cherished

family keepsakes. But wouldn't it be better to share that special moment with them now?

Whether you decide to retire to a smaller home, a retirement community- such as an active adult community or continuing care retirement community or hope to live out your days in your current abode, the reality is that eventually, your house will likely need to be sold. And houses that are clean and tidy are exponentially easier to sell.

While no one would suggest you ditch priceless mementos or family heirlooms, most people find that after they do “the clean-out,” they never even miss the things they got rid of. Plus, the huge sense of accomplishment can make a major decluttering project feel even more satisfying.

Edited from Brad Breeding| August 28th, 2015

## The Importance of Sisterhood



I snuggled into bed feeling happy, fulfilled and inspired. There's a kind of restorative magic that unfolds in our hearts and mind after an evening out with our girlfriends. They are not just our chosen family but also a necessity for our soul.... something like 'an apple a day' kind of recommendation. Girlfriend get-togethers is the 'balm' we women need to get through the various phases in our life.

### *Why are girlfriends so vital for a woman's wellbeing?*

- They tell us the truth ...just enough to get us thinking.
- There aren't any taboo topics while talking to them. We can talk just about anything—if things are good, they are excited for us; if not they encourage and support us in whatever we are going through.
- Even if we don't say anything, they can read our mind, and never fail to show us compassion.
- They walk with us through everything—death, divorce, illness; Being each other's cheer leader, offering a helping hand and reminding us of the 'glass half full'.
- They infuse in us—energy and optimism
- They give us courage and confidence when the going gets rough and many a time are the catalyst for bringing about a change in our lives.

- They understand when we need to vent or talk of our fluctuating hormones. In my friend's eyes I am always capable of achieving my dreams—A perspective that is not just inspiring but also infectious.
- They seem to have an answer for all our confusions, whatever they may be—the right outfit for the party or where to get the best airfare deals or the best kind of investment options. Even if they didn't know the answers they'd figure out someone who does and direct us to them, but no issue that any one of us have will go unattended.
- They are caring and step in to offer a helping hand during troubled times.

No doubt, during certain phases in our lives, when we are desperately trying to balance the demands placed on our time, spending time with our friends takes a back seat. In the swirling confusion of activities, we neglect them, but soon learn that it is in this circle of girlfriends—women who are woven together into a fabric that encompasses acceptance and affection, that we find our real selves. As we spend hours sipping coffee and laughing spiritedly there is warmth, encouragement, empathy, intimacy and humor at the table. Each one of us is a gift to the other and collectively we are more than the sum of our parts. Having friends is a lot about being a good friend; Making that choice to invest our time, energy, attention or love in our friends instantaneously makes us feel brighter and bouncier.

Through the years my girlfriends have been my secret keepers, collaborators, the ones who have lovingly nudged me to make incremental changes in my life.

While I've waded through the amazing as well as the trying experiences of life, it is this sisterhood that reinforces what the Head of Psychiatry at the Stanford University said -

*One of the best things a man could do for his health is to be married to a woman, whereas for a woman, one of the best things she could do for her health is to nurture her relationship with her girlfriends.*

Anu Rajgarhia (Counselling Psychologist)



# RWTO/OERO



## Sisterhood





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