



RWTO/OERO

The Retired Women Teachers of Ontario /
Organisation des enseignantes retraitées de l'Ontario



St. Catharines Branch Newsletter – Summer 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

RWTO/OERO MOTTO: *CARING, SHARING AND HAVING FUN*

As I look back at the presidencies of 2018-2020, I realize that Patti Malkiewich's presidency was "barrels of fun" as we hosted the 2019 Convention. Janis Harlos' year was epitomized by "caring" as we took care of each other by self-isolating and sacrificing group functions to stay safe. I hope my presidency of 2020-2021 will be characterized by "sharing" as we collectively face the anxieties and challenges of this new reality with Covid19.

We share in the tension of racial unrest and separation from our families. We face the recent loss of cherished members: Victoria Brett, Marion Caplan and Clarice West-Hobbes. Please share in the care of the ill, bereaved, shut-in or elderly by providing their names for the continuing Outreach program of knitted blankets, cards from our Goodwill convenor, executive visits when they become viable, and calls from our telephone committee.

Due to the present COVID situation, THE SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER LUNCHEONS ARE CANCELLED! We do not have a crystal ball and are unsure of what the next few months will bring. As soon as it is safe to do so, your St. Catharines Branch Executive will contact you with all necessary information. Until then . . . Stay safe! Stay healthy!

Your executive continues to meet; distanced, masked but forward-looking. As a precaution, we have cancelled our September and October luncheons. As the restaurants open, we will consult with venues about future luncheons, but the new reality may be reduced numbers and increased costs for full-service menus from masked servers. Our cancelled speakers are waiting to address you again, but unfortunately large gatherings may be the last to be approved as we wait for a vaccine. Let's be welcoming to new retirees and new ideas as we navigate these uncertain times. Sage advice is to treat prejudice and privilege like Covid19:

1. Assume you have it.
2. Listen to experts about it.
3. Do not spread it.
4. Be willing to change your life to end it.

Lastly, I'm sure most of you share the pain of separation from loved ones. I miss holding my nine-month old grandson despite the distanced visits since March. Even when we think they are not looking, each of us, parent, grandparent, teacher or friend, influences the life of a child.



"When you thought I wasn't looking I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other ...

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but its all right to cry ...

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw that you care and I wanted to be everything that I could be." By Mary Rita Shilke Sill

Susan Lewis – Branch President

**St. Catharines Branch
Executive 2020-2021**

Honorary President Marilyn Emmett

Table Officers

Past President Jan Harlos
 President Susan Lewis
 1st Vice President Kathie Dussome
 2nd Vice President Linda Gaudet
 Secretary Violette Hagerty
 Treasurer Linda Foster
 Membership Linda Foster

Convenors

Archivist/Communications-Website
 Jessica Thomson
 Communications-Newsletter
 Marilyn Emmett
 Goodwill Alice Bradnam
 Insurance Chris Graham
 Interest Groups Cathy Terrio-Lakeit
 Issues & Concerns
 Program Marg Newby
 Linda Gaudet
 Kathie Dussome
 Social Lou Farquhar
 Telephone Sheila Benger

Liaisons

ETFO Donna Painter
 OECTA Clara Warden
 OSSTF Margo Smith

Provincial Board Members

Area 13 Director Kathy Smith
 Provincial Program Coordinator
 Judith Bennoch
 Provincial Communications Newsletter
 Jan Murdoch

**Physically Distancing Executive Meeting
at President Susan's.**



INSURANCE

A gentle reminder to our membership that to remain a health plan participant you must be a paid member of RWTO/OERO.

As always, I am always available to be of assistance and can be reached at christine.graham794@gmail.com



Chris Graham, Insurance Convenor

INTRODUCING OUR NEW 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT

Linda Gaudet

I am very happy to join the executive of the RWTO/OERO St. Catharines as second Vice President in 2020. I recently moved back to Niagara and rejoined the organization in 2018.

I taught high school French for 37 years before retirement and raised two beautiful boys who are now married and, this year, gracing me with two more grandchildren, doubling their number.

I've thoroughly enjoyed membership in the RWTO euchre group, the travelogue group and singing for fun. It's time for me to put something back into such a caring and sharing organization and to foster old and new friendships.



My goals in accepting this position are to encourage women in their retirement pursuits, to help our aging retirees and to promote the RWTO/OERO with the next generation.

Linda Gaudet – 2nd Vice-President

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HONORARY PRESIDENT

I am privileged to be your Honorary President for the upcoming year. This is normally a time when we look back at all the wonderful activities of the past year and look ahead with enthusiasm and renewed energy as we begin setting new goals and planning for the future events within our Branch.

This year, however, we all must adjust to a new normal. Many of us have been socially isolated since mid-March. For some, it has been an extremely lonely and difficult time.

As the Province starts to “open-up” and we take calculated steps forward following federal, provincial and local guidelines, we find ourselves repeating words and phrases that are new to our vocabulary like: flatten the curve, social isolation, physical distancing and personal bubbles. We greet each day as a new challenge and give thanks for our family and friends, as we don our masks and carry on.

COVID will certainly be adding its challenges for the St. Catharines' Branch Executive. As Honorary President, I hope my RWTO/OERO experience will enable me to support this group of conscientious, hard-working women during these uncertain times.



Marilyn Emmett – Honorary President

In Memory of



Victoria Brett

Marion Caplan

Clarice West-Hobbs

**“A Life So Beautifully Lived And
A Heart So Deeply Loved”**

MEMBERSHIP

It is time to renew your membership for the year 2020-2021.

- Our dues are still **\$45.00** and are to be renewed by **August 31, 2020**.
- **Please be on time** with your payment.
- You can send a cheque, make an e-transfer (rwtostcatharines) or drop cash in my mailbox.
- There is not a form to complete this year. Your membership card will be sent with your directory in the fall.
- If you change your email address, phone number or mailing address please let me know so the membership records remain current and you don't miss receiving important information.

*Remember, you must be a paid-up member of RWTO/OERO to take part in our interest groups or to be enrolled in the RWTO/OERO Hospital and Home Care Insurance Plan.

New members are important for our group. Membership information is available on the website, rwto.org and also from Clara Warden, Margo Smith, Donna Painter or myself. We need your help to recruit newly retired teachers as well as those who have been enjoying retirement for a year or two or more.

Cheques payable to RWTO St Catharines

e-transfer: rwtostcatharines –password emailed to me separately

Address: Linda Foster
14 Woodgarden Crt.
St Catharines, ON L2M 7C9

Linda Foster, Membership Convenor



GOODWILL

On April 6th, Queen Elizabeth addressed the British Commonwealth with these words of wisdom from years of experience. "We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return. We will see our friends again. We will see our families again. We will meet again."

Although these times are exceptional, they are not unprecedented. Did you know that two of our members lived through the devastating Spanish flu over one hundred years ago?

Since social distancing has been advised, and out of an abundance of caution, personal visits with our "Over 90" ladies were replaced with telephone visitations this spring. Many thanks to our "Forever Young" members for sharing such interesting and inspiring stories.

Let us encourage each other to "stay calm and carry on" as we continue to remain connected via email, snail mail or friendly telephone calls.

Take care and stay well until we meet again.

Alice Bradnam, Goodwill Convenor



CORA BAILEY AWARDS

I have the pleasure of revealing our Cora Bailey recipients after withholding their names for our presentations at April or May luncheons 2020, that as a result of COVID - 19 were cancelled. They will receive our praise and applause at the next viable luncheon. The Cora Bailey Award is the most prestigious award we can bestow on members who have shown outstanding leadership and dedication to the Branch in a variety of interest groups, activities or Executive positions. Both Patricia Malkiewich and Nadine Martin deserve our recognition as they leave the Executive but continue to contribute to the interest groups and activities of St. Catharines RWTO.



Susan Lewis, Branch President

PATTI MALKIEWICH, Past President, 2018-2019, entertained us at luncheons with skits, costumes and the teapot musical of “The Teabags”. She co-ordinated over 100 volunteers for the 2019 convention and created a “barrel costume” and an “Over-The-Falls” Photo Booth which added to the “barrel of fun”. She received a “Feather in Your Hat” award in 2018 for the membership’s collection of bras to “Free the Girls”, supporting markets by enterprising women freed from sex slavery. All this was done tirelessly, as well as serving as Interest Group Convenor, joining the Hiking Group, Dining Divas, and the Rotating Book Club, and caring for others through the Rankin Run, the Arthritis Gift Wrap, and Habitat for Humanity-Women Build. Her role model as a “Plusperfect” Past President, is one to emulate.



NADINE MARTIN quickly found a well-suited role on the Executive as one of two Goodwill Co-Convenors. When this position ended, she continued to support the Branch as Interest Group Convenor. As well as nurturing friendships attending the Dining Divas, the Lunch Bunch, the Revolving Book Club, and Singing for Fun, she created and led a new interest group, “Eat, Drink and Be Merry” to accommodate more new members. Beyond RWTO/OERO, she volunteers within the Thorold Community with the Savory Samples Program and the breakfast and worship lunches at St. George’s Church and St. John’s Anglican Church. If you don’t see her at an RWTO luncheon or interest group, she is probably hitting the road with her cousin while living up to her objective of “going somewhere new every year”.



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A SIGN OF THE TIMES! – Can you recognize these members 😊?



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

THANK YOU BRANCH LEADERS!

Because of you, the Branch Interest Group connection remains.

The RWTO/OERO - St. Catharines Branch Leaders have shown insight and initiative in dealing with the COVID restrictions that prevented direct contact and distanced group members.

Several groups have been in contact by phone, email and video.

We are proud of your efforts!

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- All group leaders are willing to continue serving in their role for the upcoming year.
- Linda Holmes (Golf Group) will continue this year but seeks a replacement thereafter.
- Each Interest Group will have a different start-up time.
- More Special Interest Group information is available on the website, **RWTO/OERO.org**.

Cathy Terrio-Lakeit asked this question: **“How can the Interest Groups proceed safely while adhering to the COVID regulations?”**

1. REVOLVING BOOK CLUB

- Organized a team of women to deliver the first book, in September, to start the new season.
- Patt Chivers has maintained contact with her members via email.

2. TRAVELOGUE

- Meetings will be compliant with provincial and local COVID regulations.
- Marilyn Weber must confirm the use of First Grantham United Church.
- If COVID regulations allow, groups of 20-25 members could safely meet.
- Attendees will wear masks.
- The previous routine of serving refreshments may have to change or be eliminated.

3. WALKING GROUPS

- **Port Dalhousie Walkers:** (Susan Burnison) We walk on Monday and Thursday mornings from 8:30-9:30, meeting at Lakeside Park. We walk in groups of two and practise social distancing. It is a personal thing if you want to wear a mask. After the walk, those who wish get a coffee/tea at Homestead and we sit at the concert steps and social distance while socializing. If Rennie Park is empty, we sit there as long as we can social distance. Some of us carry a lawn chair in our car in case we need it.
- **Friday afternoon Walkers:** (Christine Honsinger) We meet at 1:30 on Friday afternoons at “The Spit” (George Nicholson Trail) in Port Weller.

4. GOLF

- Golf poses low risks if safety measures are followed.
- Linda Holmes is awaiting word of the opening of The Garden City Golf Course.

5. SINGING FOR FUN

- Laurie Benson and Jessica Thomson are trying novel ways to connect and participate with members with YouTube, Online Tunes, Musical Videos and Zoom Sing-a-Longs.

6. REMAINING GROUPS are “On Hold” until such times as COVID restrictions are changed and it is safe to resume.

- Bowling
- **Card Games:** Bridge, Euchre
- **Food Groups:** Creative Cooks, Dining Divas, Eat Drink and Be Merry, The Lunch Bunch
- Let’s Talk About It Book Club



Cathy Terrio-Lakeit
Interest Group Convenor