



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

## *President's Message* - **Maintain Membership • Stay Connected • Embrace Technology**

The three themes have resonated with you!

When we knew that Covid-19 was here to stay for a while, one of the concerns was maintaining membership. I'm sure many members thought, "Why join this year? How is it possible to engage in our fun activities?" Well, you have not been stymied. Branches are adapting beautifully!

Branch executives have been working hard to keep up their membership as they want their branches to remain alive and vibrant. A few branches have provided stamped, self-addressed envelopes when mailing out newsletters to encourage submissions of branch fees. To make payment easier for members, many Branch Treasurers are now accepting membership dues through e-transfers. As of March 31st, 2020, there were 5,008 paid members in the Province. My hope is that we can approximate that number. RWTO/OERO is you, the members!

Branches are inherently inspired to be creative and innovative. Since Covid-19, they have been continually finding new ways to reach out, connect, and participate in activities. I am truly amazed when I hear about what branches are doing to be engaged with each other and to stay connected with members who live alone or are in retirement or special care facilities. Sharing and Caring truly remains a powerful mantra in RWTO/OERO! The theme for your Connections branch submissions is,

"Staying in Touch". I look forward to reading your stories in this issue of Connections!

One of the greatest hurdles for all of us has been learning new technology in order to continue to have meetings and to enjoy each other at fun social events. I have been told that many branches are very capable in using Zoom. One member told me that she was embracing technology; she purchased a MacBook Pro! Remember that Kathy Gallagher (rwtocyberlady@gmail.com), Provincial Website Convenor, and Mardie Panabaker (mardiepan@gmail.com), past Provincial Communications Newsletter/Website Convenor, are available during the year to assist you with technology and to have practice virtual get-togethers.

This pandemic may be infiltrating our world, but our organization of retired women teachers continues to have the resiliency to overcome obstacles, to maintain a positive attitude, to encourage each other, and to stay connected. No surprise! We are teachers and I believe these characteristics are woven into the fabric of our personalities.



*Nancy Papiez,  
Provincial President*

*Continued page 2 ►*

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## *President's Message - Maintain Membership • Stay Connected • Embrace Technology - continued*

I would like to thank the Board members who worked on the virtual AGM this year. It was quite an accomplishment that required hours of planning and dedicated work. A special thank you to Kathy Gallagher, Website Convenor, for the numerous days she laboured to prepare all of the website presentations.

I wish all of our members good health, joy and serenity as our beautiful autumn approaches!

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Papiez, Provincial President 2020-2021

## *Convention 2020*

This has been a particularly challenging article to write this year. Up to now, Convention/AGM articles have featured pictures of friends and colleagues participating in the business of RWTO/OERO and also socializing at dinners and dances. But not this year. Covid-19 has stopped the world right in its tracks and many have had to reassess their place in the world. The same has occurred within our organization.

However, there is much to celebrate, nonetheless.

#1 - Congratulations to the Branches that were planning our Convention in Kingston. Much had been prepared and the host Branches were very excited about some changes they were making. Registrations had begun and last minute details at the hotel were being completed. It was with heavy hearts that we all agreed that we would not be able to get together this June due to the concern for the health and safety of our members. Judy Drummond, Anne Graham and Martha Summers: thanks just doesn't seem to be enough for all the time and creativity that went into the planning of this event.

#2 - Congratulations to your Provincial Board of Directors. There was never any question that the regular Board meeting in May and the AGM in June would not be held in some form. We were determined to show transparency with all the business in our communications with the members. Timelines were set up to submit reports, prepare financial statements, present awards, prepare an evaluation for the delegates, and organize the election. Voting procedures were set up through the website for the Board meeting and that helped to smooth out the same procedures for the AGM. And

looking to the future, the delegates will also have the opportunity to discuss the Resolutions as they were put on hold, knowing that these issues are important to the membership.

#3 - Congratulations to everyone who participated in the voting through our website. You took the plunge and learned something new which is one of our goals in our retirement. And it also brought more awareness to our website, hoping that members utilize this important form of connecting with others. This was all facilitated by Kathy Gallagher, our volunteer Website Communications Convenor, and Justin Ewart, our professional webmaster. They worked out all the small details so that the process was easy and secure. Many thanks to you both!

#4 - Congratulations to all the award winners! Branches throughout the province deserve kudos for increasing memberships and having a positive effect in their communities. Individual members also deserve recognition for their efforts within RWTO/OERO.

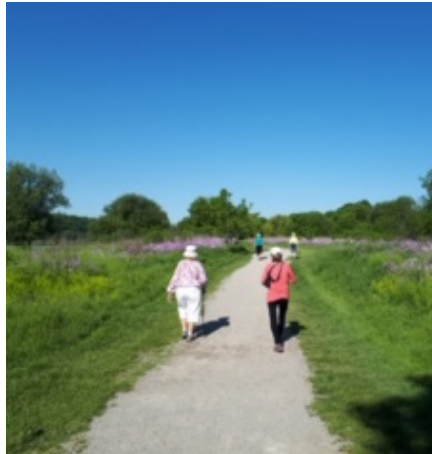
So, in the end, though our Convention/AGM took on a different format, it did achieve its goals. We are so fortunate to have such forward-thinking members who care about the membership and share their talents to ensure we all stay safe and connected.

Karen Clark-Lauzon,  
Past President





## Staying Connected



## Caring & Sharing





## *Honorary Membership Award*

The Provincial Honorary Award is the highest honour that RWTO/OERO bestows. This year for the first time, the recipients received their award in a virtual Zoom presentation. For 2019-2020, we honour Karen Clark-Lauzon, Teresa Dorey and Donna Hemeon.

### *Karen Clark-Lauzon*

Karen is a valued member of the Windsor-Essex Branch. She has served with excellence on its executive for eight years. During that time, Karen co-chaired the 2016 Convention which celebrated RWTO/OERO's 60th year.



In 2017, Karen joined the Provincial Board as our Second Vice President. She served in important roles that year, first as Provincial Goodwill Convenor and secondly, as Chair of the newly formed Ad Hoc Convention Handbook Review Committee. Then, as First Vice President, Karen chaired the Constitution and Resolutions Committee. This past year, as our Provincial President, Karen has dedicated herself to learning the challenges that each Branch faces. She has offered support, inspiration and leadership both to the Branches and also to the members of the Board of Directors. Karen's leadership has come to the fore, as we faced the unprecedented challenges that Covid-19 presented to our organization.

Karen serves our organization with distinction. Congratulations, Karen!

### *Teresa Dorey*

Teresa Dorey is a self-motivated and enthusiastic leader who has served on the executive of Napanee Branch continuously since 2004. During that time, Teresa served two terms as Branch President and two as Branch Insurance Convenor. Moreover, she played key roles on the organizing and planning committees for both the 2015 and the 2020 Conventions.



In 2015, Teresa joined the Provincial Board of Directors as Area 8 Director, a position which she has held for five years. During her term on the Board, Teresa has dedicated much time to visiting her branches, to

encouraging members in their outreach programs and to offering advice and suggestions as needed. In 2016, Teresa took over the responsibility of creating articles for the Issues and Concerns section of "Connections". Her articles were interesting, informative and relevant to every retired woman. Teresa's "Storefront Workshop" at Convention 2017 showed her commitment to bringing these issues to all Convention attendees. She truly represents our motto "Caring and Sharing". Congratulations, Teresa!

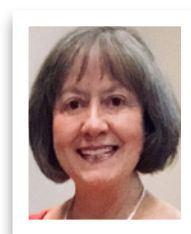
### *Donna Hemeon*

Donna Hemeon is a dedicated and well-respected member of the Beaver Valley Branch in Area 1 of RWTO/OERO. She has served on the Provincial Board for 8 years, first, as Area 1 Director, next, as Assistant Provincial Insurance Convenor and finally as Provincial Insurance Convenor. As well, Donna served on the Convention planning committees both in 2008 and 2018. She has devoted time, enthusiasm, and expertise to benefit the members of RWTO/OERO. Donna always works willingly, effectively and with a warm smile. As Provincial Insurance Convenor, Donna proved her dedication time and time again. She was quick to address issues and questions as they arose. Her exceptional knowledge of our insurance matters, together with her friendly and professional manner made each of her presentations to the Branches very effective.



Donna is a very deserving recipient of this award. Congratulations, Donna!

Submitted by Peggy Stock,  
Honorary President



## Feather in Your Hat Award

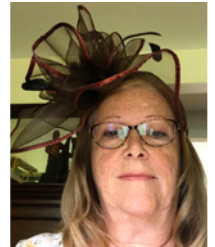
The “Feather in Your Hat” Award is given to recognize Branches for creative, innovative and successful projects that have clearly enriched the programs offered by RWTO/OERO at the Branch level. Thank you to all our Branches that made submissions this year. Our Award presentation can be enjoyed, virtually, on our website for the AGM 2020...thanks to the Covid 19 pandemic!! This year we have chosen 2 worthy recipients:

Central Algoma Teacher Support (CATS) identified a need in their rural Community for caregivers of 'Seniors with Dementia' who were experiencing “burnout”. For any support, caregivers needed to travel 40 to 80 km. to participate or to receive interactive materials or experience Day Away programmes. CATS has created 4 different Activity Kits to rotate among local Libraries and Community Centers for borrowing. They are being promoted through open houses, on Community websites and in local Community Newsletters. CATS is actively seeking financial aid for more Resource materials, Activity kits and local Programmes so that their rural population will have easier, on-going access for themselves and their



family members to engage in meaningful activities that challenge and enrich their lives.

St Catharines' Community Outreach Project, called “Shaver Totes”, repurposed 42 hand-sewn tote bags left from their Convention 2019! They chose to fill them with personal items for female patients at the local Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Foundation. The totes make excellent “assists” on wheelchairs, walkers or beds for those recovering from illness, stroke, or reduced mobility and...they can keep them! They also formed an ongoing knitting group, “We’ve Got your Back”, to make shawls and lap blankets for Branch members who can no longer attend luncheons or interest groups. A short visit is planned with the recipient when the gift is delivered! This interest group is planning to take on more projects such as hats, scarves and mittens for the homeless next year!



Submissions for Feather In Your Hat must be made to the Membership Convenor after January 1st and before March 1st. Mail a hard copy via Canada Post to:

Joyce Ratz,  
Box 487, Iron Bridge, ON P0R1H0  
ratz.dj@gmail.com

## Award Winners 2020

### Barbara Bain Membership Award

These Provincial Awards are named in honour of our long-time London-Middlesex member, Barbara Bain, who served on the Provincial Board of Directors for 11 years as an Area Director, Assistant Insurance Convenor, Insurance Convenor, 2nd and 1st Vice-President, President, Past President, and Honorary President as well as being our first Membership Convenor.

The formula for calculating this award is straightforward... how many new members join your Branch minus the number of existing members who do not renew during the April 1st to March 31st period. These calculations are done by our Provincial Secretary-Treasurer, Linda Huffman. There are usually 9 awards, 3 in each tier of small, medium and large Branches, for a total of \$3,700 (including 4 ties!).

### Tier 3, the Smaller Branches

1st place—\$400—Rendezvous, net increase 8  
2nd place—\$300—Northumberland-South Durham, net increase 7  
3rd place—\$200—East Parry Sound, net increase 6

### Tier 2, Middle-Sized Branches

1st place—\$400—Niagara Falls, net increase 13  
2nd place—\$300—Brant, net increase 7  
2nd place—\$300—Lanark, net increase 7  
2nd place—\$300—Peterborough, net increase 7  
3rd place—\$200—Cambridge, net increase 6

### Tier 1, Largest Branches

1st place—\$400—Mississauga, net increase 23  
1st place—\$400—Windsor-Essex, net increase 23  
2nd place—\$300—Burlington, net increase 12  
3rd place—\$200—Hamilton-Wentworth, net increase 11

You can watch these presentations and acceptances on our RWTO/OERO website.

- go to [rwto.org](http://rwto.org)
- click on AGM ONLINE 2020
- and choose AGM ONLINE 2020 from the dropdown menu.

\*\*\*Your Provincial Membership Committee thanks you all for the supportive, enthusiastic response to maintaining

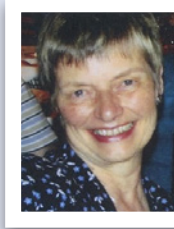
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## Award Winners 2020 - continued

and increasing our wonderful RWTO organization! Remember at this crucial time to STAY IN TOUCH with all your friends and family...and especially your RWTO friends! Please Stay Safe and Well!

“CHEERS!”  
from Joyce Ratz,  
Membership Convenor



The Cora Bailey recipients are listed on the website at [www.rwto.org/awards.asp](http://www.rwto.org/awards.asp). Please scroll to the bottom of the main page and click on “Cora Bailey Recipients 2020”

## Insurance Matters

What unusual and challenging times we find we are living in! Our “new normal” seems to be creating new opportunities to learn and to grow. I’ve learned to adapt to wearing a mask and gloves when I venture out into shops or for hair cuts. I now order my groceries online with curbside pickup. That’s always an adventure as I’m never quite sure what’s been substituted this time for the anchovy paste I keep ordering! I even gave my husband a haircut, despite having never cut hair before (and I’m pleased to say it didn’t look too bad!). I’ve also found that members are adapting to their “new normal” as well; all the while exemplifying the “caring & sharing” motto they embrace as members of RWTO/OERO. Whenever I speak with a member on the phone, whether she is calling with a query for herself or calling on behalf of another, we share tidbits and advice about how we’re adapting to the new normal. I’m heartened when I read news reports of progress on a vaccine to combat this virus which seems to be devastating to so many. It appears that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

I very much missed seeing all the familiar faces, not to mention the many hugs I receive at the Convention, as it was prudently cancelled for this year due to Covid-19. However, I thought I’d share with everyone the results of the Profit Sharing for the most recently ended Plan Year of the Hospital & Home Care Plan. The Plan continues to perform well, generating total profit to RWTO/OERO of \$58,451.46. In addition to this amount, the Administration Fee paid by Manulife to the Association generates \$23,123.27. This results in total revenues to the Association of \$81,574.73 for the year. Claims for the year were slightly greater than last year; \$166,130.87 this year. Last year, claims totalled \$154,316.72.

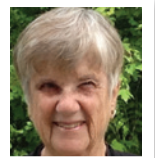
I contacted the Claims Adjudicator at Manulife to determine if we’ve had any claims resulting from

Covid-19 and I’m pleased to say that we’ve had none to this point. It seems we’re all taking the necessary precautions to avoid infection and reduce the spread. While speaking with her, Margaret asked me to remind members completing claim forms to have their family doctor complete the Attending Physician Statement that accompanies the claim form. Having a specialist complete the form is unnecessary and serves to slow down the claim process. Your family doctor will receive all reports from specialists and will be able to complete the form for you.

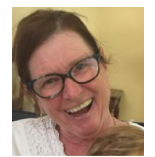
Finally, a big thank you to Anne Wilde, Provincial Insurance Convenor, and Karin Mussin, Assistant Provincial Insurance Convenor, for their hard work and dedication. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. We make a great team!

Be well, stay safe, wear a mask and wash your hands frequently!

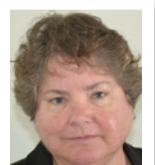
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(519) 583-0098 Fax: (519) 583-2876  
[tkennedy34@bell.net](mailto:tkennedy34@bell.net)



## Resolutions for the 2021 Annual General Meeting

Eight Board resolutions and four Branch resolutions were submitted for the 2020 AGM. Due to cancellation of this year's Convention, the resolutions are being deferred to our next Convention in 2021. New resolutions will be accepted at the appropriate time.

There has been some confusion in the past regarding whether resolutions should include only amendments to the Constitution. A review of previously submitted resolutions from 2004 revealed that earlier past practice included resolutions to amend the Constitution, Policy and also included other issues. At the 2017 Convention, the Board of Directors submitted a Resolution to limit submissions to amend only the Constitution. The Resolution was defeated. Therefore, resolutions to amend Policy, Constitution and other matters are accepted.

For the 2021 Annual General Meeting, new resolutions must be submitted to Nancy Bell by November 15, 2020.

The intent of every resolution should be clear, concise and must contain one key idea or focus. (Policy and Procedures, Article VII, Resolutions).

You will find the newest edition of our Constitution on the [www.rwto.org](http://www.rwto.org) website. When your branch is preparing to submit a resolution, questions and concerns should be directed to Nancy Bell, 1st Vice-President, and Jane Cartier, Parliamentarian, [acecartier1@gmail.com](mailto:acecartier1@gmail.com).

Looking forward to working with you, as Chair of Constitution and Resolutions, 2020-2021.

Nancy Bell, 1st Vice -President,  
(519) 452-3596  
[n3bell@rogers.com](mailto:n3bell@rogers.com)



**RWTO/OERO  
CONVENTION 2021**

***"ALGOMA ROCKS!"***

**RWTO/OERO 65th Annual Convention  
June 1,2,3 2021  
Delta Sault Ste. Marie Waterfront Hotel  
Sault Ste, Marie, ON**

**Room Bookings: 705.945.6980 tel  
705.949.6319 fax**

Hosted by our Sudbury Area 12 – Sudbury Branch  
Central Algoma Area 11 - Sault Ste Marie and Central  
Algoma Branches

*This Convention is not a "for sure"  
in these unprecedented times.*

***We plan to keep you well-informed.***

For more information, please contact:  
Convention Convenor,

Joyce Ratz 705-842-6135 [ratzdj@gmail.com](mailto:ratzdj@gmail.com)



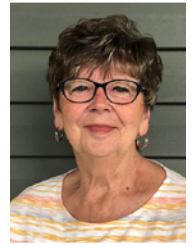


## Goodwill

It is certainly an honour to be the Goodwill Convenor for RWTO/OERO for the 2020-2021 year. I look forward to sending good wishes to 274 Retired Ladies that are 90+ years and also connecting with our Provincial Past Presidents. Cards are sent throughout the year for Birthdays, Christmas and a Spring message. We have two members celebrating their 100th Birthdays and they will be joining the other 21 members who are over 100. What a wealth of experience! Congratulations is extended to all these ladies.

Keeping our data base current is important; so keep Linda Huffman, our Executive Secretary-Treasurer informed of any changes in personal information and birthdays.

Judy Drummond,  
Goodwill Convenor  
jjdrum@explornet.com



## Issues and Concerns – *Staying Connected*

How do we stay connected with others during these times? I have thought about this topic as we have had lots of time in isolation and alone these past weeks and months.

As time has progressed, there have been many wonderful examples of individuals and groups inventing activities to stay connected. In fact, I am amazed at how quickly we have adapted to our new environment. It hasn't been easy but it clearly challenges us to keep moving ahead.

I read an article written by Jamie Friedlinier titled "9 Ways to Stay Connected during Social Distancing" and it highlights many examples of great ways that elicit positive responses.

One suggestion is to talk to one friend every day. How easy is that? A lot can be learned from a short call. Are they coping? Do they need anything? How can I help?

Facebook has been a great way to connect with others and I look forward to the daily positive posts by others. Pictures of gardens, delicious recipes, completed quilted projects, travel photos, and things that bring joy to your life.

ZOOM has become a means for meetings that can't take place otherwise but how about using it to share

a hobby with members of your group. Having a paint party virtually or learning a new skill can be an exciting activity when sharing it with others.

Families that are separated by distance have coordinated their time so they are able to share a meal together and stay connected via Facetime. Grandparents read to the grandkids and share the excitement of their stories as well.

Online classes are opportunities to learn new skills, hear motivational speakers or pursue a hobby you haven't tried. Great opportunities are within reach for all of us.

The suggestion that we need to learn to love solitude is a challenge for many of us. I have always said that I don't enjoy my own company so I keep busy and am not at home for long periods of time. If you have struggled with spending time alone take advantage of this solo time and do a puzzle, craft or take a long walk in nature. Positive rewards will occur. Stay safe and stay healthy!

Kathy Smith,  
Issues and Concerns

## Communications Website Convenor

JUST A LITTLE  
*Reminder*

To All Communications Website Convenors

Check the Communication Website Convenors Page  
<https://rwto.org/branches/communication-convenors/>  
for: What, When, and How to send information to  
rwtocyberlady@gmail.com

Kathy Gallagher,  
Communications Website Convenor





## Program

Dear Presidents and Area Directors,

September 2020 brings a new membership year for RWTO/OERO but one that is unlike any we have ever experienced. COVID-19's impact will mean a different start at the Branch level across the province – with face-to-face meetings likely being the exception. How you connect with your members will vary and require creativity – which we know former teachers have in abundance - and has already been demonstrated in your support of your membership since March.

I thank you all for your willingness to embrace technology - even though this may have been out of your comfort zone. This will likely be a key to our communication for the foreseeable future.

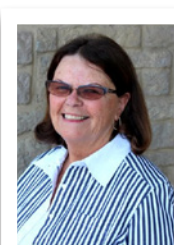
The Area Directors and I are available to provide support and guidance for whatever you may need. This includes the 5 new Area Directors that we welcome in Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8. They will work directly with you

to plan appropriate Area Presidents and Insurance meetings this fall.

As many things are unknown at this time, I have delayed sending out the President and Area Director Timelines but I will continue to share my monthly at-a-glance calendar outlining and highlighting important deadlines and dates.

Please check your email regularly as we begin this very different membership year! We are all in this together and supporting one another is key. Be well. Be safe.

Judith Bennoch,  
Provincial Program Coordinator



## Archives

I am honoured to take on the position of Provincial Archivist for 2020-21. This is my first year as caretaker for our RWTO/OERO history, and look forward to my new learning experience. I am in the process of coordinating with our previous Archivist to collect materials for safe storage. Thanks to Sandie Bender, I have well organized files and a methodical system to follow.

Because this has been an unusual year for everyone, the Cora Bailey pages which are usually transferred to York University for storage will be kept in the Cora Bailey

binders until next year. There will be six years of awards which will allow our members to view them at the 2021 Convention. Area Directors have these binders in their safe-keeping.

The In-Memoriam service is another aspect of this position, and I am receiving digital photographs any time for our 2021 tribute.

Susan Rose,  
Archivist



## Communications Newsletter Convenor

A schedule for Connections for 2020-2021 was distributed to Branch Presidents and Board members in an email. The theme for each Issue is identified in the spreadsheet. The theme is provided by the Newsletter coordinator. If you have a recommendation for a theme for future issues, please email the Newsletter Convenor. [rwtoconnections@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoconnections@gmail.com).

30 Connections emails bounced during the 2019-2020 year. Those individuals have either changed their email addresses or their service provider has changed

the security protection so that they cannot receive mass mailings. Please ensure that Linda Huffman has a current email address on file or check your Spam or Junk folder and give RWTO permission to send you information.

Jan Murdoch,  
Communications Newsletter  
Convenor





## News from the Branches – “Staying in Touch”

### Area 2

#### Cambridge

Cambridge Branch interest groups continued to meet virtually during the first few pandemic months, and now meet physically. One book club had three Zoom meetings, a new experience for most. We were happy our annual luncheon came in Stage 2, so we could meet in a member's beautiful backyard with boxed lunches. Another book club had a similar back yard picnic. Our hiking club, which had walked outdoors throughout



the Winter resumed the beginning of June, wearing masks and practicing social-distancing. July 24th was the first time we could have coffee on a patio. Our genealogy club met at the beginning of July and shared discoveries

and projects we had worked on. One member brought a beautiful family tree scrapbook she has made. We also kept in touch through emails sharing updates on the health of our president, Dianne Winkler who sadly passed away on August 7th.

Mary Jane Novak, Branch President

#### Guelph-Wellington

Upon returning home from our annual winter excursion to Mexico, it was soon evident that life would be vastly different, at least in the short term.

In March and April, we continued some book clubs via email. Also, at about the same time, some of us began gathering our vegetable seeds to prepare for indoor germination. In May, we mailed out “Thinking of You” cards to those who had surpassed 80 years of age.

By the following month we were able to enjoy “socially distanced” fireside book club meetings. Our membership committee disseminated “eblasts” in order to remind members of upcoming dues. They offered electronic transfers. Those members without access to computers and email were contacted by telephone to remind them that RWTO insurance coverage would lapse if fees went unpaid.

Joan Berry, Branch President

#### Kitchener-Waterloo

Our members have been keeping in touch several ways: through written stories, personal phone calls and drumming! We are so pleased that the eleven members in our writers' interest group continue to share their stories, poems and memoirs through email. One member is a published author who recently moved to Nova Scotia. She continues to contribute. The drumming interest group meets socially-distanced, almost outdoors, in a member's garage. Yes, they form a garage band and no neighbours have complained!

Lastly, we have kept in touch through phone calls initiated by our eight call list captains to every one of our 110 members. This turned out to be a memorable experience for both the callers and those called. We realize how important we are to each other, true friends, and how we look forward to seeing one another soon.

Prepared by Sharon Alvarez, Past President and Anne Cameron, Treasurer

#### Listowel

Hasn't 2020 been the year of opportunities to rise to the challenges! The Listowel Branch has not met together since November 2019, but we have managed to keep in touch through telephone calls, cards, and the internet. In early March, we were saddened to lose a dedicated member of our group – our Archivist. She took such care to pictorially keep track of our events. Even more importantly, she looked after the write-ups of each member's teaching experiences and stories. What invaluable records for our branch and the teaching profession in our area. Many of the schools we taught in are now closed, but the stories from them live on.

The one project in which we are participating this summer is helping to fill backpacks for students in need heading back to school in the Fall (hopefully!) The year of Covid-19 has added many more children to the list needing school supplies and we are pleased to partner with our local Salvation Army on this venture. Hopefully there will be a way to physically visit with each other in the coming months and continue to support the youth in our community.

Sue Knowlton, Branch President

Continued ►

### **Palmerston**

#### **(BYOBL) Bring Your Own Bagged Lunch**

Our callers have been working above and beyond, during this time of social distancing, calling our members monthly for a phone visit. Our Zoom Executive meeting was hosted by Janice Benson and our social distancing meeting was held at Anne Darroch's home.

One of our favourite socials is the 'Ring The Bell' brunch, which is held on the first day of school every year. Since there is not a venue that can accommodate us safely, we are adapting. Instead of brunch, we are having a 'bring your own bagged lunch' event at Anne Darroch's property, south of Mount Forest. There is a large, spring fed pond that we can relax around, if weather permits. Otherwise, the new driveshed will be used. We are looking forward to seeing one another face to face, on the first day of school.

Debra Kalb, Branch President

### **Stratford-Perth**

On St. Patrick's Day, we held our last official face-to-face event. Then our world changed and we quickly learned how to "Share and Care" during a worldwide pandemic. We went to Zoom and learned how to creatively share during several different types of digital events.

One of our Book Clubs began having Zoom meetings with book chats and guest speakers. They invited the author of Light

Keeper's Daughter, Jean E. Pendoziwol, to a Zoom meeting. She was just delightful in sharing stories about northern Lake Superior, the setting for the story.

Another group who meets regularly at a local restaurant for a beverage and wings met digitally. Weekly, members sat in front of their computer with a beverage and an appetizer to tell stories. Now that things are opening up, this group is moving forward with some small group face-to-face visits.

As an executive, we called all the members to check in and see how they were. We wanted to say "Hi" and make sure everyone had someone who was helping them with shopping, etc. It was great to hear that so many of our



members were doing well. The fall will be interesting as we will be moving forward to see how to slowly and responsibly begin to go back to our "normal" activities.

Cheryl Strickland, Branch President

### **Area 3**

#### **Chatham-Kent**

By staying in touch we celebrate the connections that link us together. In Simon and Garfunkel's song, "Bridge over Troubled Water", we are reminded that we are not alone; we have friends in RWTO Chatham-Kent. "I'm on your side...when times get rough". One member sends cards of sympathy and goodwill to stay in touch with members who have health issues, celebrate birthdays, are bereaved or achieve personal accomplishments. Frequent phone calls and emails encourage social conversation and planning for future meetings, guest speakers and community needs. "If you need a friend, I'm sailing right behind."

Janet Grainger, Branch President

#### **London-Middlesex**

This past spring, we have had three monthly meetings that were cancelled due to Covid-19 and provincial stay at home orders. We have used our phone and email chains to keep in touch with members on more than one occasion. We have sent out reminders for renewal of memberships so members will continue to be in good standing. As our new executive was to be installed in May, we have moved ahead with new executive members which will hopefully be installed in the future. Executive meetings have been held monthly on Zoom to plan for now and the future. We are looking forward to again having the opportunity to have conversation with each other in person.

Submitted by: Mary Maxwell (on behalf of Sandy O'Brien and Vera Rowland, our new co-presidents)

#### **Sarnia-Lambton**

On the surface, activities this summer mirror what happens every year. Forward progress beyond the summer is questionable at best, but we remain cautiously optimistic that we will eventually return to what we have known. Our convenors have touched base with our planned venues. Timelines are projected to be the new year at the earliest.

Our new card convenor is keeping in touch for birthdays, get well and sympathy. One member will

*Continued* ►





## *News from the Branches - "Staying in Touch" - continued*

celebrate her 100th birthday in August. Sadly, we recently lost our most senior member in her 102nd year. Membership renewals are arriving, about 147 so far, 100 more to go. Only 5 are not renewing. Right now, we are like ducks swimming in circles, not in a row as the expression goes, but we are waiting for the time we can leave the puddle and move forward once again.

Mary Anne Barstead, Branch President

### *St Thomas-Elgin*

We have all experienced how difficult it may be to stay in touch with friends and family during this pandemic period of time. Needless to say, trying to communicate with over one hundred branch members presents a unique challenge. We are fortunate to have in place email addresses and phone numbers which may be accessed quite easily through our team of callers. Also, the branch website is updated regularly by our communication convenor. To date we have used these systems to relay information pertinent to our members.

This approach to stay in touch does not compare with our past experience of chatting with friends while sharing a lovely lunch. Sadly, we have not met since our November 2019 meeting, and have no real indication of when we might visit with our branch members. Our executive hopes to plan creative ways to connect with each other on a more personal level. Hopefully, some aspects of this goal will be achieved. Best wishes to all members sharing in this experience!

Lynn Christie, Branch President

### *Windsor-Essex*

Re-organizing, re-assessing, rearranging was the reality in April, making sure my mind, body and spirit were healthy. Family took precedence.

May began Mission Connecting – checking in with all of our branch members. Phone calls began to our 80+ members and some of the most priceless and delightful conversations ensued. Our ladies eagerly shared their thoughts and



feelings, remaining grateful for their blessings. I wanted to be sure that everyone had someone – family, friends, neighbours to connect with. Our RWTO sisters were upbeat and busy and so very inspiring – our sisterhood was well and thriving.

June days were devoted to the AGM and local RWTO business – revising our Branch Guidelines, designing a Branch Brochure, and recruiting new retirees.

July was allocated to making a second round of calls and producing a Summer Newsletter. The Barbara Bain award monies were used to include a stamped-addressed return envelope for membership renewals.

August will bring new challenges - we are ready, willing and able to face a new tomorrow staying in touch.

Linda White, Branch President

### *Area 9*

#### *Lanark*

Staying connected has become an issue that has affected us all during this time of the Pandemic.

Members of my own family live on the West Coast, so we have always connected through Facetime, you can see and speak with your loved ones, the next best thing to being there!

Our church has set up a phone partner network for us to check in on each other on a regular basis. Email is also a great way to contact others in your social circle. Send an ecard with a wide variety of messages, try it with your friends and family members. Join Zoom meetings, on Zoom you can reach out to many people at once, see and speak with them. People have used Zoom technology for business, home, school, and church to have virtual games, lunches, parties, or any fun you can imagine!

Now is the time to brush up on technology. We have entered an era of connecting to each other that will only grow stronger in the future.

Jane Graham, Branch President



*Continued* ►

### Ottawa-Carlton

As we adapt to living with COVID-19, we are all missing regular activities and close contact with family and friends. Friendship and support are the touchstone of our organization. In caring and sharing, we have used our phone tree to stay in touch with our members, share a laugh and see if we can help. Our Goodwill convenor has sent cards to our over 80s. Updates and newsletters keep members informed and cheered with personal anecdotes. A couple of our members who remembered the Blitz commented, that at least then, they were able to be together. Our executive stays connected by phone and distance visiting and our book club members have been sharing titles others might enjoy. It is also important to stay in touch with the needs of the community around us. Our donation for backpacks for students of families in need will be especially appreciated this September. We are looking forward to brighter days and opportunities to get together.

Sharon Chop, Branch President

### Area 12

#### Burlington

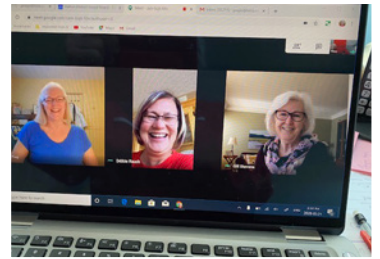
At the beginning of the shutdown, our branch sent out cards to all members living in long-term care or retirement homes, those living alone without family close by and those without a computer. Just a little card saying HELLO, your friends at RW are thinking of you and wishing you well. As well, we have been sending out monthly e-letters with anecdotes, cartoons, messages from members and updates crucial to our membership. We also have sent individual emails to keep in contact with each member, even those who do not attend events. Lastly, we have started phoning members to check in and to keep in touch. Some interest groups have been having Zoom meetings. When this is done, we will have developed new friendships, renewed some old ones and look forward to saying Hello, face-to-face again.

Bonnie Folkard, Branch President

#### Lydia Snow North Halton

Monthly email news updates keep us in touch with our activities and members. Our telephone committee calls on those who do not receive emails; our Care and Share coordinator keeps in touch for birthdays, illness and other events. Through a series of emails and phone calls we arranged a 90th birthday celebration

walk/drive-by. To keep our Branch activities moving, our executive has met using Google Docs and Google Meet, as well as using many emails. More recently, an appropriately distanced outdoor



porch executive meeting occurred. For upcoming member meetings in the Fall, we hope to use venues which would have enough space to allow us to keep our distance. While it is a challenge to include every member, we may turn to a trial of an electronic meeting.

Our monthly change collection has allowed us to purchase 11 bed kits through Sleeping Children Around the World. We are fortunate in this time of change to stay in touch in so many ways.

Linda Frey, Branch President

### Mississauga

One of the best things about belonging to RWTO/OERO is the opportunity to make new friends. Several years ago I joined an Interest Group to learn how to play bridge. A group of women, all strangers to one another, came together every two weeks to learn the basics of the game. At the end of the year of lessons, we decided to keep in touch, to play together and to learn from one another. Over the years our bridge skills have developed, but more importantly so have our friendships.

Then along came 2020 and the Coronavirus. At first we just cancelled our biweekly bridge game thinking that it would soon be over, but we quickly realized that we needed to be in touch. So now we meet every week on a Zoom call just to see one another's smiling faces. We laugh at our Covid hairstyles. We share our news and our opinions on the current situation. We support one another as one of our members battles against cancer and another, along with her husband, suffered from the Coronavirus and won that fight. We rejoice together the happy times like the impending birth of a grandchild.

Through RWTO/OERO, we have become important to one another and keeping in touch is important to each of us.

Marie Solarski, Branch President

Continued ►



## News from the Branches - "Staying in Touch" - continued

### Oakville

Touch is one of the "six" senses and staying in touch with our members involves them all.

Birthday cards; emails of birthday wishes, special occasions, and uplifting videos and cartoons; participation in the Teddy Bear Hunt; G.A.R.D.E.N. Club Journaling and sharing of flower/ vegetable garden photos; personal experience poems; newsletters, e-letters, and phoning members involve sight and sound. Flowers to those turning 90 evoke smell. Members making personal masks and mask mates for healthcare workers involve touch.

The "sixth sense" is feeling: the caring, giving, and friendship which the branch does for its members and for its charities (S.J.A. Therapy Dog Program, Robbie's Rainbow, Shifra House, Halton Women's Place).

Our newly created Social Distance Club, running weekly, involves all these senses: backyard physical distancing visits, conversation, treats, drinks, and fellowship.



Our staying in touch epitomizes our motto of caring, sharing, and having fun, in spite of the new realities of Covid-19.

Leslie Watkins, Membership Chair

### Peel North

To say the least, beginning my term as president of Peel North in the midst of COVID-19 has been filled with uncertainty, unusual, unsettling, interesting, and challenging times. Staying in touch has been a group effort. Brenda Bissell, our Communication Convenor, has sent out an email message of introduction from me to our members as well as 'Looking Back' compiled by our talented archivist, Janice Awde. These pictures chronicle our club's activities from 2010 to 2019. Ruth Taylor, our Goodwill Convenor has sent cards and greetings to our members who have been ill, shut in or are without internet. A newsletter highlighting COVID stories, experiences and photos contributed by our members is planned for August. Our executive had a Zoom Meeting in June with another planned for August to discuss next steps. Members, who have become friends through RWTO have enjoyed responsible and socially distant coffee mornings. We are staying in touch the COVID way.

Pearl Cook, Branch President

## The Bottom Line

- Staying at home is one vital method to combating the spread of COVID-19. Both the pandemic and strategies used to control it can affect people's overall health and wellbeing.
- Keeping active with generally safe exercises like Pilates and yoga, which can be done at home through digital aids like DVDs, online classes and videos, and mobile apps, can help.
- Pilates may yield positive benefits for walking speed, muscle strength, the ability to accomplish daily living activities, mood, balance, flexibility, and quality of life in older adults.
- Yoga can improve health-related quality of life and

mental wellbeing in older adults who practice it versus those who don't.

- If you're new to the world of Pilates or Yoga, think about connecting with a physiotherapist or registered kinesiologist to discuss whether these exercises are right for you, and if there are any considerations you should make note of when trying them. Be aware that it may take time to hear back from health care providers in light of COVID-19.

McMaster Optimal Aging Portal  
Read More Copy and Paste

<https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/blog/detail/blog/2020/04/08/looking-for-exercises-to-do-at-home-pilates-and-yoga-can-help-you-keep-physically-and-mentally-fit>

### Wanted - Editors - We need help with Connections.

- Criteria:**
- 2 weeks availability Aug, Nov and Feb
  - Keen eye for correct punctuation, grammar and spelling
  - Keen eye for page layout
  - Internet access
  - Location, anywhere



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# RWTO/OERO Calendar 2020-2021

September 1, 2020	Annual Provincial Membership Fees due – to be sent to Provincial Office by October 15th. Fees for new members must be forwarded to the Provincial Office when received.
September 14 – 17, 2020	Provincial Executive and Board Meetings
October 15, 2020	Membership fees due September 1st for 2020-2021 and should be forwarded to the Provincial Office by October 15th and must be received on or before November 30th
October 31, 2020	Submissions due for December Newsletter – Areas 1,4,7,13
November 15, 2020	Resolutions due for 2021 Convention in Sault Ste. Marie to 1st Vice-President
November 15, 2020	Resignation of any Directors to Provincial President
November 30, 2020	Calculation of branch numbers for 2021 AGM delegates based on official membership count as received and recorded in the Provincial Office
January 5 - 10, 2021	Annual Report and Branch Membership Forms sent to branches
January 15, 2021	Submission of each new Area Director's name to Provincial President
January 31, 2021	Nominations for 2021-2022 Board to the Provincial Past President
January 31, 2021	Membership + Communications Committee applications to the Provincial Past President
January 31, 2021	Nominations for Honorary Membership Award at AGM
January 31, 2021	Submissions due for March Newsletter - Areas 5,6,8,10,11
March 15, 2021	Branch Annual Reports due to Directors
March 31, 2021	Director Reports due to Program Coordinator
March 31, 2021	Unpaid members are taken off membership list. Insurance may be in jeopardy.
March 31, 2021	Financial Year End
April 15, 2021	All delegate names are to be in to Executive Secretary-Treasurer
April 15, 2021	Registration due for Convention 2021 in Sault Ste Marie
April 30, 2021	Branch Financial Reports due to Executive Secretary-Treasurer
May 11–13, 2021	Provincial Executive and Board Meetings
May 15, 2021	Branch Executive names for 2020-2021 due to Executive Secretary-Treasurer
June, 2021	Convention 2021 and AGM



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