



RWTO/OERO

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



St. Catharines Branch Newsletter – October 2020

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As the seasons change, and as we continue to face changes brought on by COVID-19, I am thinking of the “good old days” that other generations faced. The recent death of our family’s 98-year-old godfather, a veteran of World War II, the recent anniversary of the horrors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and the 100th anniversary of women fighting for the right to vote, all made me realize that this is not the worst we could face. So far, my family is healthy; they still have jobs; my pension cheque arrives every month; and my grandson turned one.

I look forward to a luncheon in the new year when venues are available. I am also grateful for our generous support of others less fortunate with our donation to Community Care. Hopefully, soon a vaccine will arrive and doors and borders will open and we can reinstate our travel plans.

We celebrate our fourteen Forever Young Ladies with gifts of fall mums. We mourn the loss of Anne Marie Brady, Marilyn MacDonald, Heather Schram, and two Forever Young members, Rosemary McNamee and Anna Thwaites.

Please continue to nominate members who are ill for blankets from our knitters, or cards from our Goodwill Convenor, Alice Bradnam.

Let me thank the executive and membership who have cared and shared their time with other members. Your RWTO ST. Catharines’ executive continue to meet in reduced numbers and at a distance.

Unfortunately, the convention for June 2021 in Sault St. Marie has been cancelled. Some of our executive will attend virtually as we did in June 2020. We are hoping to extend our hat trick of three consecutive Feather in Your Hat Awards for our community involvement. Continue to care about our community, to appreciate the time we share together, and to prepare for the fun we will have in the future.



Susan Lewis,
President (modelling
our latest Feather in
Your Hat Award)



LET’S ALL DO OUR PART! LET’S ESTABLISH A CHAT-LINE!

As we enter the second wave, we need to connect with our colleagues. We are asking members to use their new directory and call the next member’s name following their own in the directory. If the next name is long distance, or you are uncomfortable making the call, please opt out. Perhaps, you could choose another name in the directory to connect with and continue the chain. The objective here is to show we care by checking in on our members by phone to ask how they are coping with COVID-19. Anyone missed we will try to reach in a later effort. Hopefully, most of us can connect with one another and share our hope that we can meet together soon.

“Music is one time when my head isn’t filled with briefs and opinions. All that is put on a shelf and I just ... enjoy!” Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Susan Lewis, Branch President

Congratulations RWTO St. Catharines!
You raised \$12,000.00 in support of our
Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold
Food Drive Fundraiser



In early September President Susan Lewis brought the need for urgent support for Community Care and their bare shelves to our attention. RWTO acted quickly, forming a committee and shortly after that received the unanimous support of the executive for the project and a branch donation of up to \$2000.00.



I am giving a shout out to the committee members who joined me in this successful initiative: Kathie Dussome (1st V.P.), Linda Gaudet (2nd V.P.), Violette Hagerty (Secretary - your flyer was awesome, and Linda Foster (Treasurer) who did double duty emailing out the flyer, collecting e-transfers, and tabulating and recording all donations for Community Care Tax receipt purposes. I would like to commend Sheila Bengier and the phone committee for reaching out with our message to those members without email and Jessica Thomson for posting the flyer on the RWTO website.

Betty Lou Souter and Maxine Hutchings, CEO's of Community Care St.

Catharines and Thorold respectively, were extremely grateful for this exceptional donation. All they could say was, "Thank you, thank you, thank you"!

RWTO St Catharines members have demonstrated the essence of RWTO's mantra of 'Caring and Sharing' by an immediate and generous response to the urgent call to action in support of this Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold Food Drive.

It has been an honour as your Past President to work with this team on your behalf and I am overwhelmed by its success.

Jan Harlos, Past President



FROM PROVINCIAL

Hello Ladies,

During our Provincial Meeting last week, I shared a short video that praises teachers done by the Schitt's Creek actors. We thought you might like to share this at one of your meetings.

Below is the link. It is on YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMyK0ANuxiU&list=PLEnbE_tGGidk49g-J9ndTYfwebNYRfJtb

Kathy Gallagher – Provincial Communications-Website

rwto cyberlady@gmail.com

CORA BAILEY AWARD

Cora Bailey from the Peterborough Branch was RWTO/OERO's first Executive Secretary-Treasurer. She held this position for eleven years until 1982 and wrote the History Book - OASWT 1956-1976. Beginning in 2003, this award was presented in her honour.



The Cora Bailey Award is presented to a Branch member who has contributed outstanding service to her Branch. Nominations will be accepted until **November 20, 2020**. Criteria and nomination forms are available from Kathie Dussome or on our website at

<https://rwto.org/branch/st-catharines/> . Click on Membership. The form is fillable, which means after you download it, you can either type in the information and print it out or just print it out and then add the information by hand.

Members can email, mail, phone (text) or drop off nominations to:

Kathie Dussome, 1st Vice-President, 905 321-6517 or niagarasgraceland6@gmail.com

24 Meadowbrook Crescent

St. Catharines, Ontario. L2M 7H1



Our next outreach project! The Power of Used Shoes! RWTO is partnering with BioPed Foot Care to collect Gently Used Shoes, men's, women's or children's, which will be placed in a microenterprise program operated by Soles4Souls. This program creates employment for women in developing countries, empowering them to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. You can contact Linda Gaudet for pick up or more information: lgaudet7@gmail.com or 289-687-4367. Start cleaning out those closets!



Linda Gaudet, 2nd Vice-President

MEMBERSHIP

COVID-19 has hit many organizations, including ours. Unfortunately, one of our members passed away due to this terrible virus. Others decided not to renew their memberships as many of our activities were curtailed. However, we still managed to maintain a large membership of 369, including 3 new members. More than 300 of you submitted your payment before the end of August and I thank you very much.

Donna Painter, Clara Warden, Margo Smith or myself are people to contact if you are aware of a retired teacher who might be interested in joining our organization. Our best advertisement is through word of mouth and so we rely on you to help promote our organization. Hopefully we will have more to offer in the spring.

By now, you should have received your 2020-2021 Directories. Please check your information and report any changes to Linda Foster. The updates received are on a separate sheet. Please attach this to your Directory for future reference.

Linda Foster, Treasurer, Membership Convenor

GOODWILL

The St. Catharines Branch is privileged to have many
"FOREVER YOUNG" members.

We are proud to honour these women for all that they have contributed to their families, their communities and to our organization. These members, over 90 years of age, collectively represent over 1200 years of demonstrating what it means to live, to love, to learn and to leave a legacy. Many thanks to these courageous and caring women. You inspire us to carry on with confidence.

Gloria Breithaupt

Bev Davies

June Howard

Frances Lovett

Marian McKnight

Marion Mooradian

June Nordstrum

Joan Rothman

Elsie Seddon

Mary Jane Tanner

Dorothy Walker

Agnes Wieler

Geraldine Young



Alice Bradnam – Goodwill Convenor

In Memory Of



Rosemary McNamee

Anne Marie Brady

Marilyn MacDonald

Heather Schram

Anna Thwaites

**"A Life So Beautifully Lived And
A Heart So Deeply Loved"**

Agnes Wieler, herself a former Goodwill Convenor, is one of ten Forever Young ladies to receive a lovely indoor autumn mum on her welcoming backyard deck where she, her sister, Bertha and I could sit socially distant.

When circumstances beyond our control prevented a flower delivery to four of our Over 90's members, Goodwill remained connected by sending cards or making personal telephone calls.



INSURANCE

While I'm sincerely hoping you have no need for my services, I am here to assist in ANY of your Manulife Insurance needs and can be contacted at christine.graham794@gmail.com.

Since brochures are not readily available to members at our luncheons, as in the past, any member who requires an application form for the Hospital and Home Care and Personal Accidental Death and Dismemberment Plan, please contact me and I will be sure to get the required information to you. You can also check out the RWTO/OERO website at <https://rwto.org/membership/insurance-plan/>.

Given the restrictions on travel due to COVID-19, Manulife has some travel insurance information to be considered. While Manulife leads the charge with COVID-19 covered travel insurance the coverage will be maxed out at \$200,000.00, which is a very limited coverage compared to travel insurance which is generally five million. This travel insurance is under development and our membership will be informed when it is available.



Manulife's recommendation is to stay home and avoid any unnecessary travel.

Stay safe, be healthy.

Chris Graham, Insurance Convenor

ISSUES and CONCERNS

JUST IMAGINE

Just imagine that you are the sole care-giver of your loved one in your home. Your loved one dies. The Coroner arrives. The Coroner's report to the police reveals that your loved one was found to be dehydrated, malnourished, hygienically-neglected and medicine deprived. You would be charged with ELDER ABUSE! You have in effect murdered your loved one.

In court, your defense will likely be mental illness and YOU may be placed in a Long-Term Care Facility. You could be facing similar conditions to the ones you provided for your loved one. Otherwise, you are deemed mentally sound and will be going to jail or facing another judicial sentence.



It is sad that it took COVID-19 and the military to highlight the deplorable living and working conditions in some Long-Term Care Facilities. In my opinion, what it is even more appalling is that our politicians have been informed through numerous reports that huge profits can be made from abusing vulnerable, powerless seniors.

Please encourage your local politicians to take immediate action to change the *living, working and dying conditions* in Long-Term Care Facilities.

In the mean time, stay informed.

Marg Newby, Issues and Concerns Convenor

FEELING OUT OF THE LOOP?

Check out our website page at <https://rwto.org/branch/st-catharines>



You'll find several tabs which will lead you to pictures, dates, interest group information, the latest newsletter as well as previous years. Take some time and explore what your RWTO branch has been up to.

Please look at the Membership tab as that's where you'll find the Nomination form for the Cora Bailey Award. Please feel free to nominate a deserving member!

Jessica Thomson, Archivist/Communications-Website Convenor

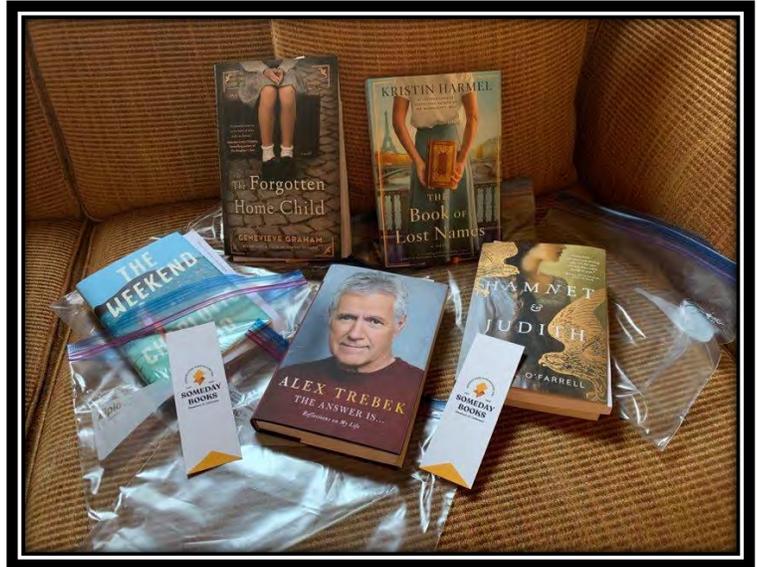
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic many personal and community events have had to be cancelled. Despite this, some of our Interest Groups have been able to have a safe September start-up. Thanks to all of the Interest Group leaders who gave a lot of thought and consideration as to whether it was possible for their groups to gather safely following proper COVID-19 protocols.

The Port Dalhousie walking group has continued to get together throughout the summer and presently meet on Monday and Thursday mornings at Rennie Park. Members bring their own chairs and refreshments, and after their walk enjoy each other's company while social distancing. If you are interested in joining, contact **Susan Burnison**, Morning Walkers Coordinator, at susanburnison@gmail.com or 905 935-1568.

This year's **Revolving Book Club** looked to a local business, **Someday Books**, at 21 King Street in downtown St. Catharines to purchase the books. The owners, Graham and Elysia, were very accommodating and helpful to Pat Wilcox and myself as we chose your books for the upcoming year. Supporting them in the future would be an excellent idea!

On another note, the distribution of the books inside their sealed zip lock bags happened because of several RWTO members who offered to drive around our area and give them to you personally. A big thank you goes out to Pat Wilcox, Wendy Waind, Verna Leger, Lynda Gibson, Jan Harte, and Elaine Reimer!



I hope everyone finds a book or two that will tickle their fancy this year!
Patt Chivers, Revolving Book Club Coordinator, at pchivers@cogeco.ca or 905 934-6636.

The Travelogue Group successfully met on September 14th at Charles Daley Park. The 12 people present were able to form a large social-distancing circle and engaged in personal conversations on the topic at hand. The next meeting is planned for October. **Marilyn Weber**, Travelogue Club Coordinator, marilynw167@gmail.com or 905 934-3858.

The Singing for Fun Group met virtually in the spring. They will try for another Zoom sing-a-long soon. **Laurie Benson**, Singing for Fun Coordinator, jetty_22@cogeco.ca or 905 227-0469

The Bowling Group have kept in touch with Pla-Mor Lanes, who are diligently implementing safety measures. Depending on numbers allowed inside, the Bowling group may begin their league in January.

Some members are enjoying playing **Bridge** and **Euchre** on-line. Groups have not been getting together.

Obviously, given the constraints presented by COVID 19, the food, Bridge, Euchre, Singing and Jewellery groups have not been meeting. Hopefully conditions will improve soon and these groups will resume when it is safe to do so. Thanks everyone for your continued patience during these difficult times.

Cathy Terrio-Lakeit, Special Interest Groups Convenor

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (Continued)

The weather was on **The Golf Group's** side this season with lots of sunshine and some very warm days. Those conditions allowed our 13 signed-up ladies to have 14 weeks of golf. We had great cooperation from the Garden City Golf Course (aka "The Dump") with our 3 scheduled tee times each Tuesday, wearing our masks as we entered the clubhouse to pay and use the washrooms. Once the group of 3 or 4 ladies teed off, we were able to take off our masks and distance ourselves easily. It's a relaxed type of golf as we play 9 holes where keeping score isn't a prerequisite unless you wish to keep track of your personal best. The ladies enjoyed two extra planned outings, each on a Thursday with a day at Legends, the Chippawa Course in Niagara and another at Riverview Golf Course in Fenwick. After we all finished our 9 holes, we each took our own lunch and lawn chair and enjoyed some social distancing time together, either sitting under a shade tree at Legends or beside the lake in Vineland. Comments from the group have been that being able to be outside in the fresh air each Tuesday was something many of the ladies looked forward to all season. For some they have told me



it added so much to their summer and they so looked forward to their golf day as it allowed a connection to a wonderful friendly group of ladies.

Linda Holmes, Golf Group Leader, lholmes7@cogeco.ca or 905 562-4234



Friday Walking Group – A beautiful day at Short Hills Provincial Park. One of our Friday walking locations.



AT – A – GLANCE (Violette Hagerty, Secretary)

<h2 style="color: blue;">AT – A - GLANCE</h2> <p style="color: red;">How the RWTO-OERO St. Catharines Branch responded to the CoVid-19 Crisis in 2020 (for our Members and the Community)</p>		
 <p>Goodwill & Forever Young Connected with cards, calls, and flowers to our members and to our Forever Young members while visits were prohibited.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Communications</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Members were linked through Newsletters, the Branch Website, Branch Email and Phone messages</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">“Caring Connections Chat-line”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Starting a “social check-in” Outreach using our Directories to telephone members and connect, chat and chase away the “CoVid Blues.”</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
 <p>Thanksgiving Fundraiser \$10,000 generously donated by our Members supporting the Food Drive of Community Care of St. Catharines/Thorold.</p>	 <p>RWTO-OERO Donation \$2,000 For Food Drive: of Community Care (St. Catharines Thorold).</p>	 <p>“We’ve Got Your Back” Continuing to knit and stock shawl & lap blankets for members, as needed.</p>
 <p>Interest Groups: Connected members with some activities: Revolving Book Club; a zoom Singalong and sharing online music/ theatre websites; socially distanced Friday trail walks and other AM walks; outdoor Travelogue; outdoor Euchre. Not quite time for “Dining” or “Eating, Drinking and Being Merry”</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Future Outreach Projects</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our VP’s are proposing and planning future Outreach projects to serve the local and world communities. “Soles4Souls”.</p>	
<p>General Luncheons <i>The day will come!</i></p> <p>While we await the “green light” to meet and to “break bread together” once again, let us give thanks for our health and our safety and continue to support our local and worldwide communities as they manage these challenging times.</p>		

