



# RWTO/OERO Ottawa-Carleton Branch

## JANUARY NEWSLETTER

January 2022

### HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE

It's the beginning of a new year and it looks like we will be spending a lot more time at home than we had planned. Even though there is still uncertainty about the future, we hope that in the coming year you stay active and engaged, and enjoy the simple pleasures that enliven and brighten each day. In the past two years we have been learning to adapt in new ways. For many of us we have completed projects we had meant to do, or begun something new. It was wonderful to read about your **Covid Tales** last year. Let us know if you have a project or activity you would like to share. It may inspire us to try something new.



As we move through 2022, we will keep you up-to-date on what is happening in our local RWTO/OERO branch as well as provincially. As our demographic includes an aging and vulnerable population, the health and safety of our RWTO/OERO members have been paramount. We continue to follow the guidelines set out by the Ontario provincial government and our local health unit. We have found ways in which we can come together. Zoom has been a helpful tool for meeting virtually. Our branch facilitated two Zoom workshops in the fall - **Bone Health 101** and **Girls and Women in Afghanistan**. Information about these workshops is below. The **Teachers' Tea Time Book Club** has been meeting the first Monday of each month, and **Coffee and Chat** on the third Friday of each month, both via Zoom. Outdoor patio Breakfast and Conversation gatherings were very popular.

Two more Zoom activities are planned. **Armchair Travel to India** with Sharon will take place in February and a presentation about fraud prevention, called **Protect Your Money**, by the Ontario Securities Commission in March. We hope that in-person events will be possible for a visit from our provincial president, and for the annual general meeting and luncheon. Although **Convention 2022** in London is being planned as an in-person event, the final decision will be made in February. Check the list of upcoming events at the end of this newsletter for dates to mark on your calendar.

Thank you for your phone calls, cards and emails in response to the Christmas cards and hot chocolate. We would love to hear more ideas for keeping us connected. Please continue to let us know how you are doing and please let Marilyn Adair know if anyone is in need of a card.

In caring and sharing, we wish you good health and best wishes for 2022.  
Sharon Chop, President

### IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

President, Sharon Chop: [rwto.ottcar.sharon@gmail.com](mailto:rwto.ottcar.sharon@gmail.com)

Insurance Broker, Terry Kennedy: 519-583-0098 [tkennedy34@bell.net](mailto:tkennedy34@bell.net)

Manulife Financial: 1-800-268-3763

Provincial RWTO/OERO Office: 1-877-607-6696 [info@rwto.org](mailto:info@rwto.org)

## 2021 - 2022 EXECUTIVE

<b>President:</b> Sharon Chop	<b>Membership Convenor:</b> Suzanne Lanouette-Carswell
<b>Past President:</b> Kathy McLean	<b>Social Convenor:</b> <i>Vacant</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President:</b> Margaret Dempsey	<b>Goodwill Convenor:</b> Marilyn Adair
<b>Treasurer:</b> Barbara Edwards	<b>Archivist:</b> <i>Vacant</i>
<b>Secretary:</b> Patricia Taylor	<b>Communications Convenor:</b> Martha Summers
<b>Insurance Convenor:</b> Margaret Dempsey	<b>Members-at-Large:</b> Linda Willman, 2 vacancies
<b>Provincial Area Director:</b> Kathy McLean	

## UPDATES FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE

### CONTACT INFORMATION

**PLEASE NOTE:** We will no longer be publishing member phone numbers and email addresses in newsletters. Since our newsletters are posted on-line it may become a security and privacy issue. Please use your most recent directory, mailed out just before Christmas, (thanks to Suzanne Wilson-Marjerrison) to find contact information you need. Any changes in the directory information will be emailed separately.

We also encourage you that, if you have an email address, you provide it to the branch in order to receive RWTO/OERO newsletters and communications by email. This helps to reduce the cost of printing and mailing, and gets messages out in a timely manner. These communications are blind copied which means that there is no evidence that the copy was sent to another person.

President, Sharon Chop, has set up a new email address for herself to use just for her RWTO/OERO email - [rwto.ottcar.sharon@gmail.com](mailto:rwto.ottcar.sharon@gmail.com). You may contact her at this address for any questions and she will forward messages to others as needed.

### MEMBERSHIP

The Ottawa-Carleton Branch membership for this current year stands at 105 paid members. We currently have nine Life Members - Catherine Abdel-Ahad, Joyce Bradley, Isobel Bryan, Anita Dunlop, Margaret Hughes, Caroline Isaac, Marguerite Murphy, Hyacinthe Wade-Howard and Barbara Tait. 56 of our members are over 80 years of age. Of those, 24 are 90 or over as of this year, and, of course, 1 is over 100!

A big thank you goes to the ladies of our phone committee, Margaret Granville, Brenda Mercier, Noreen Murphy, Beth Sharp, Jenifer Slack, Suzanne Wilson-Marjerrison, Barbara Edwards, and Linda Willman, for their tireless and invaluable help in reaching out to the membership to make sure that all are well in these stressful times, and to keep our contact information current. Through their efforts, our Goodwill Convenor, Marilyn Adair, is able to send out lovely cards to let all know that we are thinking of each other. Thank you, Marilyn. If you know of someone who is in need of a card, please let either Marilyn or Sharon know.

We are always happy to hear through your responses that our cards have brought comfort and have brightened the day for our members. Stay warm, safe and healthy until we can all meet again.

Suzanne Lanouette-Carswell, Membership Convenor



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

One of RWTO/OERO beliefs is that “RWTO/OERO is socially conscious and works to establish a visible, outward-looking presence among teachers in particular and the public in general to improve the lives of all women and children.” In the December 2021 **Connections** newsletter, Provincial President, Nancy Bell, wrote that “The exceptional relationships our branches form by supporting unique charities, encompass the true meaning of “Caring and Sharing”. Your ongoing contributions and monetary donations to nutritional programs, food banks, bed kits, literacy projects, women’s shelters, toys, socks, mittens, coats, backpacks, the arts, along with a host of other worthy charities, are life changing for those in dire circumstances. Thank you for your kindness and generosity.”

Our branch outreach in the past few years has been based on the results of a 2016 survey of members who wanted our focus to be local, support women and children and cover the whole city. We have donated to the **Youville Centre** which supports young mothers and their children while assisting them to complete high school, **Twice Upon a Time** which helps with literacy by providing free books to children aged 5-12, **Basketeers of Ottawa** which provides household items to women embarking on a new chapter in their lives and most recently the **Sharing in Student Success** which provides grade-appropriate backpacks to help students start a new school year. Following our Zoom fall presentation about the life of women and girls in Afghanistan, a donation of \$50 was made to **OCISO**, Ottawa Community Immigration Services Organization which supports families who have recently arrived in Ottawa, in appreciation.



In January 2022 we were able to donate \$300.00 to The **School Breakfast Program of the Ottawa Network for Education** on your behalf. We all know that if children are hungry, learning is a challenge. The breakfast program reports that in the 2020-21 school year 10,549 meals were served in school from kindergarten to grade 12 every day. With school closures last year and students learning on-line the School Breakfast Learn-at-home- kits were created which provided a month’s worth of shelf stable food. 15,160 kits were delivered which equaled 303,200 meals. The pandemic has seen an increased number of students who need support, and rising food prices have the organization looking for much-needed funds. For more information or to make a personal donation contact <https://onfe-rope.ca/our-work/school-breakfast-programs/>.

We look forward to our regular events where our fund raising activities will allow us to support more of those in need in our city.

## In Memoriam

We mourn the loss of our long time member, Mary Descz on November 17, 2021 at the age of 88. Mary was a dedicated elementary teacher in Ottawa for many years. She possessed a very positive outlook on life and a wonderful sense of humour with an infectious laugh! Mary was a proud Federation member and volunteered for the local Women Teachers’ Association. She will be missed by her many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A \$25.00 donation to the Ottawa Food Bank was made in Mary’s memory by the Branch, as is our branch policy.



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Since our last newsletter, a variety of activities have been enjoyed by a number of members...

### ***Women and Girls in Afghanistan***

On November 3, 2021, via Zoom, a number of RWTO/OERO members from Ottawa-Carleton participated in an informative session about the life currently of women and girls in Afghanistan. Dr. Zarlisht Amini, a doctor here in Ottawa and from Afghanistan told us about her extended family who remain in Afghanistan. Some of her aunts are teachers and are struggling to carry on without being paid and with few or no supplies for their students. The situation is dire. Even in the past, teachers were paid survival salary only. Dr Amini and her colleagues are raising money to donate to needy teachers in Afghanistan. Please contact Marg Dempsey should you wish to contact Dr Amini regarding a donation.

In addition, we learned about the *Friends of the Family* program with OCISO (Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization) from Ann Youssef, who leads this program. This program enlists the support of families in the area to meet with newly arrived immigrant families in order to assist in their cultural adjustment to a new environment. Additional information about OCISO and this program can be found at [www.ociso.org](http://www.ociso.org).



### ***Bone Health 101***

In November, a group of members joined Osteoporosis Canada volunteer, Anne Harrison, on November 8 for a very interesting presentation on what osteoporosis is, the risk factors and how one can maintain healthy bones through nutrition and exercise. It gave the participants a lot to think about. People in their 20s should be made aware of all this. The website <https://osteoporosis.ca/> is very informative. There are articles and recipes as well as a publication, ***Too Fit to Fracture: Managing Osteoporosis through Exercise.***

<https://osteoporosis.ca/wp-content/uploads/OC-Too-Fit-To-Fracture-Osteo-Exercise-Book.pdf>

### ***Coffee and Chat***



Throughout the fall, monthly Zoom gatherings of members provided the opportunity to catch up on news and enjoy visiting with friends online while they drank their morning coffee. It is expected these will carry on until we can meet in person.

### ***Breakfast and Conversation***

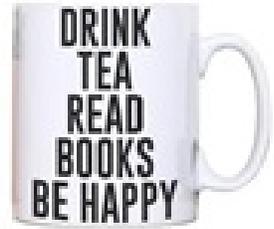
A group of members met for breakfast several times on the outdoor patio at Chances 'R Restaurant in the fall. Good food, good friends, and good conversation made for quite enjoyable gatherings, until Mother Nature stepped in with winter. As the COVID protocols change, and things improve, it is hoped to resume this activity.



## TEACHERS' TEA TIME BOOK CLUB

The Teachers' Tea Time Book Club has been "zooming" along all fall and now into 2022. A dozen loyal, enthusiastic members meet on the first Monday of each month at 1 pm.

This fall we read *The Missing Sister* by Lucinda Reilly, *New Girl In Little Cove* by Demhnair Monaghan, and *Call Me Indian* by Fred Saskamoose. In December we had a Christmas party (on Zoom, of course). Each member showed us a couple of Christmas decorations which were meaningful to her and explained why. We heard of some lovely memories as we viewed the articles. Then we had some entertaining stories of failed Christmas dinners or other disasters on the day. We finished off with a game of trivia, and everyone agreed that it was a fun way to start the Christmas season.



Now we are in 2022. In January we discussed the book "*Where the Crawdads Sing*" which proved to be excellent. One member commented that it was the best book she had read recently.

Our monthly book club meetings will continue online for the near future via Zoom. The titles to be discussed for 2021-2022 are as follows:

February 7 - *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray

March 7 - *The Book of Lost Friends* by Lisa Wingate

April 4 - *Lady in Waiting* by Anne Tennant

May 2 - *The Last Garden in England* by Julia Kelly

June 6 - *The Rose Code* by Kate Quinn

There you have it. If you think you might like to join our book club, please contact Joy Phillips-Johansen.

### ✓ MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

**UPCOMING ZOOM PRESENTATIONS** and gatherings through the winter and spring...

**Contact Sharon Chop at [rwto.ottcar.sharon@gmail.com](mailto:rwto.ottcar.sharon@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom link.**

**COFFEE AND CHAT** - February 18 and March 18.

Bring your morning coffee and visit with other members via Zoom on the third Friday of the month at 10:00 a.m.

**INCREDIBLE INDIA, PART 1** - February 16 at 1:00 p.m.

Visit India, via Zoom, while sitting in your armchair as Sharon Chop recounts the smells, colours, tastes, sounds and wonderful sights of India.



**PROTECT YOUR MONEY** - March 22 at 1:00 p.m.



A presentation about fraud by the Ontario Securities Commission to help you stay safe. It will include common scams, warning signs and what to do if you suspect fraud, questions to ask your financial representative, money tips and available resources. The presentation is approx. 45 minutes plus time for Q&As at the end.

## TENTATIVE IN-PERSON EVENTS FOR LATER IN THE SPRING...

### VISIT FROM PROVINCIAL PRESIDENT, Nancy Bell - April 20

This will, hopefully, be our regular luncheon to welcome our president, and include some fun activities. The venue and confirmation will be sent to you when they are available.



### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON - May 17

Plans for this, including the date, are dependent on availability of the venue, and of course, Public Health guidelines. Confirmation will be sent when available.

## IN THE MEANTIME... A FEW WINTER WELLNESS TIPS

Something about the first true snow storm really marks the transition into the new year. There are still months of short, dark days ahead and it can be tempting to climb under the covers and hibernate until spring. But...

- Brighten someone's day - phone a friend, perhaps one you have not spoken to for a while
- Schedule afternoon tea or morning coffee with a friend on Zoom
- Read a book or watch a movie and discuss it with a friend
- Play a card game on-line with friends
- Exercise your mind with puzzles, crosswords, brain teasers, word searches
- Start or complete a project
- Look through your photographs
- Join an on-line exercise program (chair exercises on *You Tube* for example) or go for a walk
- Make an old or new recipe, perhaps use a recipe from "*Stirring up Memories*"!
- Take advantage of the many on-line talks or presentations available - one such presentation is an 8-session program on things we should think about as we get older in order to make decisions. Visit [www.coaottawa.ca/smartaging](http://www.coaottawa.ca/smartaging)

## DID YOU KNOW?...

Did you know that January 24 marked the fourth *International Day of Education*? The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed January 24 in celebration of the role of education for peace and development.

"Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth and adults behind." Today, 258 million children and youth still do not attend school; 617 million children and adolescents cannot read and do basic math; less than 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary school and some four million children and youth refugees are out of school. Their right to education is being violated and it is unacceptable."

For more information contact <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/educationday>