



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

President's Message - "The Joy of Laughter"

The return of spring stirs a great sense of excitement as we shake off the heaviness of winter boots and coats and welcome bright, sunny days ahead. We look forward to the first signs that nature is awakening. With its colourful burst of flowers, buds and migrating birds returning from the south, spring begins the season of rejuvenation.

It's a time for new beginnings in our branches sharing optimism, hope and interest in upcoming activities. On the horizon, positive signs are emerging for get-togethers, new programs, and the joy of laughter in our midst.

It turns out there is some scientific veracity behind the old adage that, "laughter is the best medicine." Laughter activates the body's natural relaxation responses. A good belly laugh exercises the diaphragm, contracts the abdominals, leaving muscles more relaxed afterward.

Laughter is a powerful tool for making connections with each other. Aren't we drawn to those with a sense of humour, who take the edge off challenging circumstances and lighten the mood? One of my favourite memories was watching our friends with triplets whose tiny babies hiccupped and giggled hysterically, as their dad made silly faces and filmed their sense of joy. Perhaps your fun stems from a comical book, an invigorating walk, or enjoying a light-hearted activity with friends or family. Laughter is contagious.

This joy was evident in my branch and Zoom visits so far this year. Members shared funny anecdotes and engaged in lively chatter as they reconnected after times of isolating at home. One member joked that she needed to "social distance" from her refrigerator! Another mentioned how crazy it was that we used to eat birthday cake after someone had blown on it!



*Nancy Bell,
Provincial President*

Please consider taking on an Executive position by working in pairs. Would you be a greeter, take photos, or share one of your travel adventures or hobbies? Would you deliver outreach donations, send cards or write a branch newsletter article? Every offer is appreciated and together we enjoy the benefits. It is such a rewarding experience and brings opportunities for fun as part of a team.

I would like to thank the special women who made a huge impact on RWTO/OERO this year. Our conscientious Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Linda Huffman, and an exceptional Board of Directors dealt with unprecedented issues, extensive committee work and additional Board meetings during this global pandemic. To Terry Kennedy,

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

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President's Message – continued

our Insurance Broker, thank you for your guidance and support. For those members who held Executive positions at your local branch, connecting with our membership, engaging in appealing programs and caring for our members, you are appreciated. Our Past Provincial Presidents were there behind the scenes supporting us, too. We remember Carole Watson and Helen Mutton, two special Provincial Past Presidents, who passed away this year and whose leadership strengthened our RWTO/OERO organization.

May we all experience the theme of this year's June

Convention - "Laughter Lifts Us Up!" With caution and optimism, we're crossing our fingers for an "in person" gathering in London. Please monitor the RWTO/OERO Website for updates.

Thank you for the honour and privilege to be your Provincial President.

Your kindness, support and many new friendships will be treasured.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Bell, Provincial President, 2021-2022

Issues and Concerns

Procrastinating

Do you remember report card time when you were working? I remember it well. I would bring home from school all the essential tools needed, including student's marks and samples of their work. I also was fully aware of the date when the reports were due to the office.

So what did I do at home? I cleaned the oven, washed the windows and other unnecessary tasks to delay the job at hand. Why did I do that? I was procrastinating! I joined the 50% of adults who report that they procrastinate on a regular basis and the 20% of adults who say they are chronic procrastinators.

The causes of procrastinating are based on your mood. When you feel stressed, anxious, bored or fearful we are most likely to delay the job. Some people are constantly making decisions in their jobs and at home, so less important tasks may be put aside and stay on the "to do" list indefinitely.

Others are not good at breaking down tasks into smaller steps or they struggle to know where to begin.

Imagine what happens to relationships when one member puts aside the paying of bills and their, "I'll get to it later" never happens. Depression and anxiety play a very important role as well. It doesn't matter whether the task is simple or complex, the result raises negative emotions,

so they procrastinate.

Procrastinating, or taking time away from a project, can sometimes have positive results. Many creative people take a break during a project and may have many projects in the works at the same time.

How do we avoid procrastinating? Try breaking the project down into "chunks" as this avoids the feeling of being overwhelmed and you can find success in more manageable steps. Give yourself a reward at the completion of each step. It could be something as simple as a ten minute walk or a drink of your favourite tea out on the deck.

If you don't know where to start, talk to someone who is good at the activity. Seek their advice.

I find it helpful to schedule the time necessary to complete the task, with extra time allowed. Sometimes you just aren't feeling in the mood to clean the garage or basement, so set aside time a bit later. However, important and time-sensitive tasks cannot be shuffled aside indefinitely – don't procrastinate! Get to it.

Kathy Smith, Area 13 Director



Insurance Matters

It's amazing to realize that another year has ended and we're still mired in pandemic news. Delta, now Omicron; it makes you wonder what's next? Yet, the spirit of the members of RWTO/OERO continues to encourage and impress me. Members are reaching out to other members to ensure their connection to each other is intact. Members are encouraging others in their circle to stay safe and are seeing to the needs of each other. This truly is "Caring and Sharing"! And I'm regularly asked how I am doing and encouraged to keep well and stay safe, which is always touching.

I regularly speak with members who have been hospitalized and wonder what, of the many benefits of the Hospital and Home Care Plan, they can claim. When I enquire as to the circumstances that led to their claim, I'm mentally checking through the various benefits to make certain members include all areas they are entitled to claim.

For example, if a member has been hospitalized for a condition that subsequently required surgery and a stay in hospital, I ask how long they were hospitalized, thinking about the Convalescent Benefit. For hospital stays of more than three full days (of 24 hours each day), members can claim \$350 a month, for up to 6 months, while they are recovering at home. For stays of less than 3 days (or for outpatient surgery) members can claim \$72.50 a week for up to 4 weeks. Many members report back that this money enabled them to hire a company to shovel their driveway while they could not, or to hire a housekeeper to clean for them. At the same time, the Comfort Care benefit should also be claimed as this benefit will pay \$25 a day for each day hospitalized.

I'll ask if Home Nursing is required and direct the member to complete the Home Nursing pre-approval form or, if the need is immediate and/or urgent, to contact Manulife at 1-877-222-7340 to arrange a verbal approval. Manulife will then tell the member or insured spouse, who to contact to provide the necessary care.

I'll ask the member how they got to the hospital, thinking of the Transportation Benefit. If driven to the hospital or home after discharge, members will be reimbursed \$0.35/km. for mileage and if parking receipts are submitted for the date of admission and discharge, parking will be reimbursed as well. This benefit has an overall maximum of \$350 for that illness or injury. If taken via ambulance, there is an Ambulance Benefit that will reimburse that charge.

It is important to think as well of the various supports you may need at home following a hospitalization. Need grab bars, a bath seat or raised toilet seat? These are all covered under the Assistive Devices benefit. Has your doctor recommended

a walker, wheelchair or ergonomic walking poles? They are covered under the Mobility Assistance Benefit to a maximum of \$150. Do you need physiotherapy following your hospital confinement? The Physiotherapy Benefit will provide up to \$200 for that.

And other benefits, not necessarily requiring hospital confinement, are available to members or their insured spouses. Benefits such as the Cataract Surgery Benefit, the Fracture Benefit, Hearing Aid and Oxygen Benefit are all accessible to insured members or spouses.

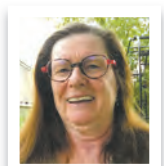
These are just a few of the many benefits available under the Hospital and Home Care Plan, and it's nice to know that if you have coverage through another plan, you can make a claim under both plans to attempt to reduce the amount that you may be out of pocket. If you need assistance when making a claim, you can contact Manulife's Customer Service department at the number provided above, or you can always contact Terry Kennedy at 519-583-0098.

Finally, a reminder that tax season is quickly approaching, and Manulife will be making tax receipts for the Hospital and Home Care Plan available to members. If you have changed your address in the past year, please ensure Manulife is informed of your new address to ensure you receive your tax receipt. If you have registered on Manulife's SecureServe site, you can download your tax receipt this year from your SecureServe account.

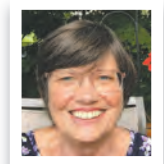
Keep well, stay safe and keep those connections going!

Broker: Terry Kennedy

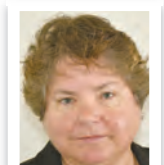
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In Memoriam

Alexander, Candy Upper Canada East	Copeland, Maxine Dundalk-Highpoint	Hunter, Fran Haldimand	Mogk, Dorothy Guelph-Wellington
Armstrong, Marilyn Mississauga	Corlett, Coralie Guelph-Wellington	Jackson, Shirley Palmerston	Moran, Mary Sarnia-Lambton
Ballard, Carolyn Durham North	de Jong, Joyce Lincoln West	Johnson, Marion Durham North	Morgan, Dorothy Niagara Falls
Bandermann, Elaine Stratford	DeRose, Marlene St Catharines	Kasha, Marion Guelph-Wellington	Morrow, Elizabeth (Betty) Sudbury
Bandy, Iris Orillia	Deszcz, Mary Ottawa-Carleton	Kemp, Jean Burlington	Moulton, Judy Kingston
Barnum, Elizabeth Trenton	Drew, Roberta Belleville	Kerr, Dorothy Hamilton-Wentworth	Mutton, Helen Sarnia-Lambton
Bauer, Joyce Oakville	Dunets, Olwen E. Rendezvous	Keyes, Geneva Kingston	O'Donnell, Diana Hamilton-Wentworth
Beckley, Jean Rendezvous	Eldridge, Bettie Hamilton-Wentworth	Lauzon, Nancy Blue Mountain	O'Neail, Mary Windsor-Essex
Beeton, Lillian Rendezvous	Evans, Ruth London-Middlesex	Lazear, Ann Ottawa-Carleton	Parish, Elsie St Thomas-Elgin
Bignell, Terry Lydia Snow North Halton	Fisher, Pamela Hamilton-Wentworth	Little, Nancy St Thomas-Elgin	Parkinson, Sue St Thomas-Elgin
Boldt, Ann Lincoln West	Fothergill, Lillian Burlington	Lobb, Laura Peterborough	Payne, Margaret East Parry Sound
Bondy, Virginia Windsor-Essex	Gaudette, Isabelle Windsor-Essex	Lozon, Lorna St Thomas-Elgin	Pearson, Beth Wiarton
Bourré, Paulette Sudbury	Gittins, Mary Guelph-Wellington	MacCharles, Peggy South Bruce	Poole, Norma St Catharines
Bradley, Diane Niagara Falls	Goller, Claudine Scarborough	MacPherson, Marie St Catharines	Pos, Mary St Catharines
Brand, Marguerita Lincoln West	Green, Sharon Scarborough	Madill, Julia Scarborough	Pritchard, Leola Palmerston
Brenton, Marion Belleville	Hannon, Elsie Dundalk-Highpoint	Maginn, June Sarnia-Lambton	Rapaich, Helen Windsor-Essex
Brodhurst, Frances Elizabeth St Catharines	Hardy, Madeline London-Middlesex	Mardon, Christine Burlington	Reier, Lynda Cambridge
Brown, Chloris Ottawa-Carleton	Havers, Ruth London-Middlesex	Maud, Lillian Brockville	Roy, Linda Sarnia-Lambton
Buchanan, Mary Northumberland South Durham	Hayes, Isabelle Guelph-Wellington	May, Phyllis Belleville	Schulz, Mary Orillia
Cann, Edna R. Ottawa-Carleton	Head, Sylvia Daisy Wilson Coldwater	McCutcheon, Beatrice Dundalk-Highpoint	Scott, Agnes Rendezvous
Carroll, Marley Mississauga	Henning, Isabel Niagara Falls	McEachern, Audrey Guelph-Wellington	Scott, Ruth Peel North
Carter, Pat Kitchener-Waterloo	Hill, Cheryl St Thomas-Elgin	McIsaac, Marion Hamilton-Wentworth	Scott, Wilma Cambridge
Chadwick, Joanne Napanee	Hintz, Norma St Catharines	McRae, Rita Lanark	Shaw, Carol Gananoque
Challice, Marilyn Peterborough	Holmes, Ida Chatham-Kent	Meeks, Bessie Kingston	Shaw, Heather Hamilton-Wentworth
Clemens, Sharon Sarnia-Lambton	Horne, Marlene Burlington	Mielko, Rose Hamilton-Wentworth	Sherk, Verlie South Bruce
Conderan, Debby Mississauga	Hoshal, Grace St Thomas-Elgin	Minniti, Louise St Catharines	Shields, Kathy Hamilton-Wentworth
Cook, Eldred Mississauga	Hunt, Virginia Sarnia-Lambton	Misner, Madeleine Brant	Shouldice, Sandra Upper Canada East

In Memoriam - Continued

Snider, Margaret
Central Algoma

Stevenson, Olga
Peel North

Stewart, Rhea
London-Middlesex

Stokes, Rita Aileen
Sudbury

Stubbs Densmore, Terri
Haldimand

Tanner, Mary Jane
St Catharines

Thomas, Aileen
Oakville

Thompson, Shirley
Haldimand

Till, Mary Jean
Durham North

Umbriaco, Pat
St Catharines

Unger, Marguerite
Brant

Wahamaa, Lillian
Sudbury

Wark, Jean
Wiarton

Watson, Carole
St Thomas-Elgin

Watt, Joan
London-Middlesex

Wheatley, Anne
Lanark

White, Edith
Orillia

White, Marjorie
Oakville

White, Susan
Hamilton-Wentworth

Whyte-Coussey, Ethyl
Orillia

Wills, Louise
Napanee

Goodwill

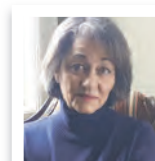
In December, it was my pleasure to send over 300 cards to our Over 90 Members and Past Provincial Presidents. This calendar year, there are 315 members in the Over 90 group. Four of these ladies will join the Centenary Club this year for a grand total of 22 senior members over the age of 100! That is amazing!

The many wonderful cards and emails that I have received are a testament to the value that our senior members attribute to this service. It is a service that we, as an organization, happily bestow. These women were once our

mentors.

I was thrilled to discover that one of my mentors will be joining this elite group. I plan to honour her birthday. I hope that you will be moved to remember an RWTO/OERO member who has made a difference in your life.

Sandra Salerno, Goodwill Convenor,
2nd Vice-President,
smsalerno@rogers.com



Membership

The Retired Women Teachers of Ontario (RWTO/OERO) operates under the umbrella of “Caring and Sharing.” That’s the rudder that steers our ship. But we also value recruitment, retention and recognition.

The Barbara Bain Award was created to honour Barbara Bain, a Past President and Membership Convenor. Branches, who achieve the largest actual increase in membership from April 1 to March 31, are eligible for cash awards.

The awards are \$200 for 3rd place, \$300 for 2nd place and \$400 for 1st place, within each tier (Provincial Policies and Procedures, May 2021)

The Feather in Your Hat Award, outlined in our December Connections Magazine, recognizes the creative, innovative and successful activities carried out by branches that have clearly enriched the programs offered by RWTO/OERO. (Provincial Policies and Procedures, May 2021)

It has been my honour to serve you on both the Honorary Membership Committee and the Membership Committee. I have been impressed by the creative and selfless acts of caring, sharing and generosity of spirit. Around each branch there is a community that is better off because of our actions; there are women’s shelters that can offer more to the people who need their help; the community food banks that are more able to assist those who are food-insecure; the Remembrance Day services with Retired Women Teachers in attendance; and quiet, nimble fingers continue to knit, crochet and sew blankets and quilts for those in need. I look forward to participating in-person again.

Evelyn Martin, Area 4 Director,
Membership Convenor





Resolutions for 2022 Annual General Meeting

Resolutions 1-4 are being submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee re Resolution #1, following the resolution from the 2021 AGM to investigate the fee rebate. The Board of Directors is supporting these resolutions. There were no resolutions submitted from the branches this year. Please read all resolutions carefully and discuss them within your branch.

A PowerPoint Presentation will be available to branches, delegates and interested members titled, “Understanding Provincial Finances”, prior to the Convention. This will be found on the website at rwto.org (Convention - AGM Minutes & Resolutions)

Resolution #1

Be it resolved that Policies and Procedures Manual Article XIV, Financial, 4a: “The annual Branch rebate per paid Provincial member shall be twenty-five (25%) of the membership fee, commencing with the 2008-2009 membership year. The rebate on the fifteen dollars (\$15.00) membership fee shall remain at eight dollars (\$8.00).” be amended to read:

“The annual Branch rebate per paid Provincial member shall be thirty percent (30%) of the membership fee, commencing with the 2023-2024 membership year. The rebate on the fifteen dollars (\$15.00) membership fee shall remain at eight dollars (\$8.00).”

Rationale:

- Local Branches are facing the challenges of rising costs and operating expenses.
- The existing 25% rebate per member was implemented in 2008-2009 as a return in assisting with actual costs per member.
- A minimal number of members/delegates are subsidized to attend Convention.
- Promoting “Caring and Sharing” in our communities is a local branch priority demanding time, talent and treasure. A great deal of the work of RWTO/OERO occurs within the local branch.
- Rebates are guaranteed, based on membership, to provide monies for local expenses wherever needed.
- Fundraising, to increase membership for the purpose of generating revenue at the local level, is increasingly demanding of time and energy. The reality is that we have an aging membership.
- Based on the financial status of the organization, grants may or may not be forthcoming, as approved by the Board of Directors.

Resolution # 2

Be it resolved that the amount of funds held in reserves at the end of the fiscal year will be a minimum of two (2) times the anticipated expenses for the following year.

Rationale:

- Generally, business practice is that reserves should be 1½ to 2 times the anticipated expenses of the following year. This provides a concrete directive for the organization.
- It is the duty of the Board of Directors to maintain the financial health of our organization.
- Although the fiscal year ends March 31, expenses continue to be incurred prior to the receipt of membership fees.

Resolution # 3

Be it resolved that when the amount of funds held in reserves exceeds the two (2) times anticipated expenses for the following year, the Board of Directors will examine the feasibility of remitting special grants to the branches.

Rationale:

- Generally, business practice is that reserves should be 1½ to 2 times the anticipated expenses of the following year. This provides a concrete directive for the Board of Directors.
- It is the duty of the Board of Directors to maintain the financial health of our organization and honour fiscal transparency.
- Membership dues are the only guaranteed source of revenue for the provincial organization. If membership numbers decline unexpectedly, we need to be financially prepared.
- Costs vary based on the type of convention, live or virtual. Live conventions incur expenses, at a considerable time prior to the actual event. Immediately following a live convention, there are expenses that need to be paid (e.g. delegate support for travel, meals, accommodation, etc.). This all needs to be paid before new membership fees are received.

Resolution # 4

Be it resolved that when the Board of Directors is distributing special grants to the Branches, these special grants will be paid out equally to each Branch.

Rationale:

- Unity and fairness are fundamental to our motto of

Continued ►

Resolutions for 2022 Annual General Meeting – Continued

“Caring and Sharing”.

- All branches are important in their contribution to maintain and increase membership.
- All branches are important in their continued support of valued outreach projects.
- All branches are important in their support of the overall goals of RWTO/OERO.
- All branches have costs.

Resolution #5

Be it resolved that Constitution Article V Duties of the Board of Directors, 2 Board of Directors, be amended by the addition of f, “Wherever possible, ensure that RWTO/OERO Provincial meetings and events take place in a venue or facility that is accessible to all.”

Rationale:

- We are an organization who cares about the well-being and needs of our members.
- We seek to retain our members as they age and their health, comfort and safety needs may require careful consideration when planning our events and activities.
- We strive to be inclusive and responsive to our members' special needs, so we may all benefit from each other's participation in our organization.

This resolution is a repeat of Resolution #3 from the 2021 AGM. The wording of Resolution #2 which was carried, has been used in this resolution.

Resolution #6

That an Ad Hoc Committee be formed to develop viable strategies to have events virtually available at the Annual Convention.

Rationale:

- This resolution came about as the result of Motion #10 at the 2021 Annual General Meeting that Resolution #3 be referred to the Board of Directors for further study and that the Board of Directors report back with suggested wording at the AGM 2022.
- During the 2021 Annual Virtual Convention, members, who were non-delegates, participated virtually in many events, such as entertainment, workshops, tours, the Awards Ceremony, and Installation of the new Board of Directors.

Resolution # 7

Be it resolved that Constitution Article VII, Section 3, the second a, “manage the Website by communicating all

changes to the Webmaster” be amended to read:

“manage the Website by communicating all changes to the Website Consultant”

Rationale:

The job title Website Consultant is defined as follows: “develop websites and applications for a client who is employed by a web designer firm or who works as a private consultant” is more applicable to RWTO/OERO's situation.

Resolution # 8

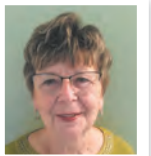
Be it resolved that Constitution Article VIII, B, Section 5 c. “liaise with the Webmaster and Communications Newsletter Convenor” be amended to read:

“liaise with the Website Consultant and Communications Newsletter Convenor.”

Rationale:

The job title Website Consultant is defined as follows: “develop websites and applications for a client who is employed by a web designer firm or who works as a private consultant” is more applicable to RWTO/OERO's situation.

Respectfully submitted by
Judy Drummond, 1st Vice-President,
Chair, Constitution and Resolutions Committee



Assistance Required

We are trying to locate a copy of the book "Chalk, Challenge and Change". If someone has an extra copy please contact rwtoconnections@gmail.com



CANDIDATES FOR RWTO/OERO PROVINCIAL BOARD

CANDIDATE:
JUDITH BENNOCH
RWTO/OERO PROVINCIAL
BOARD POSITION -
PROGRAM COORDINATOR



To the Members of RWTO/OERO,

It has been my pleasure to serve on the Provincial Board of Directors since June of 2015.

The past 4 years I have served in the position of Provincial Program Coordinator, which I have enjoyed immensely. The past two years have been particularly challenging for our branches and our Provincial Board highlighting the need for frequent and meaningful communication and support for everyone. Since joining the Provincial Board, I have been a member of many Standing and important Ad Hoc Committees, putting to test my organizational and

leadership skills in supporting the work of the board. Most recently, I was part of the Voting Procedures Handbook Committee and Virtual Convention Committee and presently sit on the Convention Handbook Revision committee.

Previous to this role, I served for 3 years as Area Director for Area 4/Area 13 supporting all branches through the amalgamation. At the same time, I was Membership Chair of my local branch, St. Catharines, which I held for many years and supported other branch work.

The role of Program Coordinator requires an exemplary communicator with strong organizational and interpersonal skills, which I feel I have demonstrated during my tenure.

I would welcome the opportunity to continue this role for the next two - year term.

Sincerely, Judith Bennoch

CANDIDATE:
JAN MURDOCH
RWTO/OERO PROVINCIAL
BOARD POSITION -
2ND VICE-PRESIDENT



To the Members of RWTO/OERO,

After completing 31 years teaching in Ontario, I semi-retired and accepted a contract as a Vice-Principal in Shenzhen, China. The experience helped conclude a stimulating career in education.

I was fortunate to join the RWTO/OERO, St Catharines Branch where I met and worked with interesting, knowledgeable, and supportive women. They offered a plethora of activities to keep me busy and helped me learn about my new community. When my branch nominated me for the position of Provincial Newsletter Convenor,

I accepted with enthusiasm. Monitoring the publication of "Connections" enables me to demonstrate my technical and organizational skills while engaging cooperatively with many Branch Presidents and Communication Coordinators. The talents within our organization amaze me as I read the issues I assemble.

As a member of the Board, I have participated in interesting Ad Hoc Committees. The Virtual Convention Committee in particular provided me an opportunity to demonstrate my problem-solving abilities in a collaborative setting, and as chair of the Common Initiative Committee, I have demonstrated my leadership, organizational and creative skills.

I would be honoured to continue my commitment to RWTO/OERO serving as 2nd Vice-President. I truly believe in the importance of our organization and its motto "Caring and Sharing".

Sincerely, Jan Murdoch

News from the Branches – "The Joy of Laughter"

Area 2 Cambridge

Chatting for the first time in almost two years, at our November luncheon and silent auction, brought joy to so many of us. Our SIGs have met in-person and on Zoom when necessary, throughout the pandemic. Feeding the birds on some of our hiking club walks brings joy on these cold winter mornings. Hearing humorous stories of our ancestors in our hybrid Genealogy Club meetings brings many laughs: I discovered I have a 2nd GtGt Grandfather who was likely a bigamist; DNA has revealed some humorous surprises for some of our members, such as distant ancestors with unknown illegitimate children. Our book club read "The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" by Alexander McCall Smith, part of a "feel-good" series set in Botswana. "The more people are around you, the more you want to laugh", let's keep this in mind as we look forward to a more "normal" year.

Mary Jane Novak, Branch President



Kitchener-Waterloo

A Lady, a Lady Giraffe and RWTO/OERO - not a "stretch" of a story at all!

Anne Innis Dagg was our first presenter for 2021-22, which is also our 60th anniversary year as a branch. Anne is a world-renowned giraffe research scientist. She spoke of her work and the documentary made of her life.

Prior to our presentation, Anne looked at the RWTO/OERO website and was intrigued by the reason for our founding in 1956 - women teachers having lower pensions than their male colleagues. She linked this to her struggles as a woman in a male-dominated profession. This led to a thoughtful and anecdote-filled discussion of our professional lives over the past 60 years. Anne's son Ian built a backyard sculpture, Gayle the Giraffe, as a fundraiser in his Waterloo backyard. She invited anyone interested in donating to the Anne Innis Dagg



Foundation to have their name proudly added to a patch on the giraffe. Anne was the perfect start to our diamond jubilee - an unplanned discovery of an important connection as working women. True serendipity.

Anne Cameron, Branch Treasurer

Guelph-Wellington

When I retired 10 years ago, I was looking for something to do that would be fun and give back to the community. I was a bit of a ham, so I decided to don a clown costume and see what would happen. My brother taught me how to make balloon animals. It has been a wonderful journey to hear the laughter and see the joy on people's faces while performing in parades, at birthday parties, fall fairs and school barbecues. COVID has put a cramp in my style, so in the spring I am going to do a self-distancing thing called "Sidewalk Sandy". I will sing happy birthday with my ukulele, make balloon animals and do a little drumming. I hope to do this for donations to the local food bank. I retired to a life of constant laughter and it has been a real joy.



Sandra O'Connor
Making Guelph-Wellington Laugh!,
Branch Insurance Convenor

Listowel

Laughter – such an important part of our lives during this pandemic. Some days are challenging to find humour, but we must look all around us. It is often in the simple things that we find it. For example, I continue to find puffs of hair in the strangest places, three weeks after sending my sister's dog home. Time for another good laugh as I pick up the fluff ball.

Laughing makes us feel good. It demonstrates a connection to something. As the pandemic begins to run its course, and we start thinking about being present with others, not just on Zoom or FaceBook, it is important to continue to find joy in the small moments. So read that book and laugh out loud, watch that movie and giggle, sing along at the top of your voice, and dance with a smile on your face! We deserve joy!

Sue Knowlton, Branch Co-President

Continued ►



News from the Branches – "The Joy of Laughter"

Palmerston

Joy Remembered

In the last few weeks of my sister's life, I visited her at the Royal Victoria Hospital. She hated being there, so I packed her favourites: fresh blueberries, whipped cream, fluffy scones, yogurt, raspberries, and a huge container of watermelon chunks.

When I arrived, I brewed Earl Grey and Patricia invited me to share high tea while sitting in the window seat of her room. I spooned out blueberries and whipped cream onto a warm scone, as a nurse entered to check Patricia's I.V. We smiled our blueberry smiles and kept dining.

It seemed that every time I served a different refreshment, the nurse would arrive to see us perched in the window seat scarfing down yet another treat.

We began to giggle and couldn't stop for the sheer joy of being together sharing our inside joke, that no matter what the crisis, laughter mixed with high tea was the best medicine.

Debra Kalb, Branch President

Stratford

Stratford Branch experienced the joy of laughter at our fall face-to-face gatherings. In September, we met outside of Gallery Stratford on a warm sunny day for a "Tea Party". Using our grants from Provincial we were able to provide yummy, boxed lunches. New potential members and current members were excited to see each other and connect with old and new friends.

In November, we held our Christmas meeting where the branch enjoyed an excellent turkey dinner. Our hybrid meeting included the executive putting on a presentation on sharing and caring. The meeting ended with a spoken word presentation by internationally recognized actor and author Marion Adler. Marion brought us lots of laughs. Members who came in by Zoom could order a turkey dinner. Executive members "porch-dropped" these meals for their enjoyment. Covid does not stop us in Stratford from having fun and laughter.

Cheryl Strickland, Branch President

Area 3

Chatham-Kent

Getting Outside our Comfort Zone has certainly been inevitable, during the COVID-19 pandemic that we have all been facing! Area 8 has been trying to stay connected with our growing membership by participating in physically-distanced activities such as kayaking and hiking local trails, an outdoor executive meeting in the summer, zoom meetings, phone calls, emails, and good old pen and paper correspondence. We are excited to welcome four new members this year and sad to see the recent passing of two of our active members.

Our Goodwill Ambassador, Laura, has continued to send birthday cards and gifts to recognize special birthdays, other milestones, and "thinking of you" cards when warranted. At Christmas, cards and artistic bookmarks were mailed to each of our 60 members and we are planning an Easter surprise as well! Our callers phoned to welcome new members and welcome back previous members.

Our Newsletter Coordinator, Lynda, sent out a very informative newsletter in the fall and another will be sent during the spring months.

Our Treasurer, Helen, has been doing a great job of keeping our finances in order.

So, despite the circumstances we are trying to stay connected in new ways, but we certainly look forward to meeting in person again when it is safe to do so.

Karen Kerr-Kennedy, Branch President

London-Middlesex

Since September, hearing the conversations and giggles as people gathered once more, in person at our luncheons, gave meaning to the joy of laughter. Our numbers grew each month as everyone was eager to socialize.

Looking back over our time of isolation, it was uplifting to have monthly zoom meetings, January to May, with interesting speakers and positive topics. Our members also brought smiles to our Outreach Program recipients with their very generous donations. Our Walking and Book Clubs and Breakfast group enjoyed many chuckles when they gathered.

Continued ►

News from the Branches – "The Joy of Laughter"

Grins of appreciation were evident when we delivered our Christmas gift bags to our Over 90s and draw prizes to the winners in their eighties. Every member received a Christmas card with our heartfelt wishes.

A sense of humour has been very important as branches of Area 3 work together to prepare for our Convention in London 2022. We hope "Laughter Will Lift You Up" in person. See you there!

Sandy O'Brien, Vera Rowland. Branch Co-Presidents

Sarnia-Lambton

I expect most are familiar with the acronym LOL. However, for too long now, in my opinion, LOL has also meant "Lack of Laughter". Due to isolation and caution near others, we may hear conversations and there might be smiles behind those masks. But only the good effects of a laugh can lead to the ultimate level – JOY. Whether it's a giggle, a chuckle, a chortle or a guffaw, it can initiate the progression from a smile, to a grin, to a chuckle and then joy bursts from your soul. Laughter is viewed by many experts as nature's best medicine. Anytime you can is the right time to laugh, even when alone. Dr. Seuss reminds us, "from there to here, from here to there, funny things are everywhere." Let loose a smile and watch it grow. It will inspire you and all around you.

Mary Anne Barstead, Branch President

St Thomas-Elgin

As our St. Thomas-Elgin Branch executive planned this year, we kept 3 things in mind. This included, to focus on fun, being ready to pivot easily between in-person and ZOOM meetings and to continue our charitable work. We will continue our hybrid approach of e-news and in-person meetings when possible. In October, 60 members enjoyed a Coffee Meeting and a speaker who took us on a travel presentation of the Canadian Mountaineer Train Adventure. Celebrations included honoring past leadership, as well as presenting 30 filled backpacks to our Women's Shelter. In November, 80 members met to enjoy an early Christmas Dinner, some trivia and lots of prizes. We were happy to donate toys and books and \$1500 to Christmas Care. We hope to meet again monthly from March until June. We will collect donations for other local food banks. Our members continue to share generously!

Sue Bandeen, President

Windsor-Essex

A slight smile, a good chuckle, a belly laugh all help to relieve stress and provide a more positive attitude, especially during difficult times. Meeting and talking with members has provided me with many a healthy endorphin release. Our December 1st, Christmas luncheon was held in person, with a good attendance of 74 members, at the Ciociaro Club. Giggles and chuckles and laughter abounded. Our entertainment included Chris Pilsworth, a comedic magician and loads of special draws and prizes for our attending members and our 80+ members. Windsor-Essex Branch continues to send cards, to telephone members, and to email messages including a joke or two and some cute "hmmmmmm" thoughts. We have included riddles in our newsletters with a prize for the first solver and we include pictures to stir memories, often providing a smile or two. Looking down memory lane often leads to laughter, and laughter shared brings the most joy!

Linda White, Branch President

Area 9

Lanark

Here, in Lanark Branch, we have been delighted this fall to meet in person several times, with our ladies. We had an outside picnic in the park, a luncheon in a restaurant twice and finally a catered Christmas dinner in a rented space. It has been so encouraging to see each other, talk together, share stories and ideas and discuss future plans. We invited members from several nearby branches to our Christmas event, it's always great to hear what's happening around us. We are continuing to support our local food banks.

With the arrival now of the Omicron virus, we will be going back to executive meetings and meetings with members through Zoom again. With many shutdowns and restrictions back in place, as well as winter snow and ice, it is so important for all of us to keep in contact with each other. We can look forward to spring, which will allow us to be outside more and hopefully help with virus control.

Jane Graham, Branch President

Continued ►



News from the Branches – "The Joy of Laughter"

Ottawa-Carleton

There is nothing more contagious than laughter. Babies laugh before they can speak. This delicious and enchanting sound is a powerful source of human communication and connection. It is the connections we make with others that really matter. Although it has been more difficult in the last two years to get together, there are still ways to enjoy simple pleasures and share the joy of laughter. The music of laughter at a picnic in the park, over breakfast on a patio, during Zoom coffee and chats or tea and book discussions, participating in on-line trivia, travelling by armchair, sharing a Christmas hot chocolate,



smiling at butterfly decals on windows, celebrating a milestone birthday or a phoning a fellow member to connects and welcomes members. We will continue to seek opportunities for laughing together for our well-being, as our 2022 outreach supports the well-being of children through the School Breakfast Program of the Ottawa Network for Education.

Sharon Chop, Branch President

Area 12

Burlington

By the Numbers

In these unsettled times of on again/off again opportunities to get together, how are we doing?

55 ladies came to our Christmas luncheon. They and others donated **62** pairs of socks, **114** pairs of mitts and gloves, **88** hats, **19** hat-and-mitt sets and **5** fleece scarves.

7 Advent gift bags were delivered to our Over 90's.

31 purses full of personal care products were donated to a local Purse Project.

250 pounds of food were donated to the food bank.

101 Get Well, sympathy, "thinking of you" cards have been sent by our Goodwill chair.

246 hand-made Valentine and Christmas cards were sent



by our clever card makers.

46 ladies have participated in Afternoon Tea in a Box, since September.

18 members are participating in our two book clubs.

I would say that mostly, we're doing fine thanks to "Sharing and Caring" and Having Fun.

Mary McCully, Branch President

Lydia Snow North Halton

After our social events switched to Zoom, our former President set up a committee to brainstorm ways to keep in touch with our membership. Different ideas are put into action at each meeting. Some committee members looked after presenting a Chit Chat topic in our monthly newsletter, where members were encouraged to send a response. These were compiled, emailed or sent as a hard copy to everyone in our branch. A favourite was reading about our funniest moments in teaching. There were many stories to make us laugh out loud! Volunteers from the Staying in Touch Committee also made phone calls, mailed cards and sent e-cards. For the last two Christmases, committee members have donned their elf hats and made visits to ladies, delivering plants, poinsettias, fancy cookies or chocolates. We share the joy of laughter while "Zooming" but also value the connection with members who are unable to join us online.



Debbie Rauch, Branch President

Mississauga

"I Love to Laugh".

Laughter makes me feel good. It releases endorphins, fills my lungs with air, gives me optimism and hope, relaxes my whole body and lifts my spirit. The best laughter is that which is shared with friends and loved ones. That might not be so easy these Covid days. We have to look for the moments. So, read a funny book, watch a funny movie or sitcom, have a friend send you jokes or comics, watch a comic on YouTube, or get together with a fun friend on Zoom or FaceTime or even on the phone. Laughter is good for you.

When I think of laughter, I am

Continued ▶

News from the Branches – "The Joy of Laughter"

reminded of a scene in the movie Mary Poppins. In the scene, Mary and her friends are laughing so hard that it not only lifts their spirits, but lifts the tea table right up to the ceiling.

I leave you with the joyful lyrics to their song:

"I love to laugh, Loud and long and clear. I love to laugh, So everybody can hear.	The more I laugh, The more I'm filled with glee. And the more the glee, The more I'm a merrier me."
---	--

Marie Solarski, President, Mississauga Branch

Oakville "The Joy of Laughter"

During these challenging times, the best medicine is laughter. Laughter promotes an overall sense of well-being, adds joy and zest to life, and it's contagious.

The joy of laughter can be found everywhere in our branch. Our Social Distancing Club met in parks to chat and chuckle, play games, picnic, participate in carol-singing, Bocce Ball and trail-walking. Zoom meetings included chair yoga, fitness class, Christmas sing-along,



sharing of Easter celebrations, creative drinkware, easy recipes, Creative Questions to Tickle the Mind, and conversational party games. Some members enjoyed their first restaurant lunch, while others volunteered at Food4Kids. Members participated in acrostic Resolutions, Spring into Haikus, Getting to Know You Cinquains, Members' Pets, My Favourite Things, You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby, What Have You Been Doing During the Pandemic, and Blast From the Past teaching photos.

All these activities brought us pleasure, happiness, amusement, and merriment which are the definitions of the joy of laughter!

Leslie Watkins (Historian/Archivist, Membership) and Sharon Jenkins (Communications)

Peel North



Laughter is Truly the Best Medicine

Program

Dear Presidents and Area Directors,

It is March - and that means that we will soon lose an hour of sleep, just as we are ramping up to a busy spring!

Please review your Timelines for Presidents document as March is a busy time for Presidents. There are due dates for a number of items, including the end of your fiscal year.

In late January, you received your Convention Delegate Form and Membership List and my Convention Bulletin that is full of important information. If you have not

done so, I would suggest that you print the Bulletin as a handy reference, along with the list of Resolutions included in this Newsletter. A review and discussion of the Resolutions, with your branch delegates and executive, is strongly suggested.

I am looking forward, hopefully, to meeting many of you in person in London this June!

Judith Bennoch,
Provincial Program Coordinator
rwtprogramcoordinator@gmail.com





Workshops

Insurance



Learn about the many features of the RWTO/OERO Hospital & Home Care Plan and how they can benefit you." We will review each benefit of the Plan and how it can be used to supplement and complement other coverage a member may have.

Treasurer

New Treasurer? Need a refresher? Please join Linda Huffman for a tutorial on how to Excel with your remittances and learn a few tips and tricks with the program.

Marketing Strategies

Social media is a useful marketing tool to engage our target audience. Learn how to:

- Be "media savvy" in promoting the RWTO/OERO brand.
- Identify and expand your target audience.
- Create interesting and captivating posts.
- Track your performance and adjust your strategy accordingly.

Helping Our Branches Thrive!

Learn about great ideas Branches across the Province have developed for their members and communities - active, fun, for outreach and personal growth...projects that are working well. Share ideas together and connect with Branch members province-wide.

Staycations

Drum Circle Facilitation: with Anne Lowe

This is a fun drum and percussion jam session requiring no previous experience. Participants play what they feel rather than following a complex set of rules. Join us in our Drum Circle.
"Discover your musical bent!"

A Leisurely Afternoon In The Pool

Cool off while you float, swim or flex your muscles in the pool.

Ageless Grace-Timeless Fitness for your Body and Brain with Amy Ross

Nourish your body-brain connection seated in a comfortable chair, listening to familiar music. The moves are simple, safe and fun. Help improve your overall health and well-being!

Tours

Village of Port Stanley

Included in this tour is a delicious lunch at the Masonic Centre south of St. Thomas. Afterwards visit the lovely shops and boutiques in the quaint, but trendy village of Port Stanley, Elgin County's Lake Erie gem.

Port Stanley Festival Theatre

Enjoy a delicious lunch at the Masonic Centre followed by a performance of the Crooner Show at the PSFT. This high-energy 90 minute show celebrates the songs made famous by the great crooners of the 50's, 60's and beyond. The venue is wheelchair accessible.

An Afternoon Exploring London!

Explore the old and the new – Parks, the Thames, the Forks, Covent Garden Market-Your 'cool' coach will loop through the city, stopping for lunch downtown at a patio/Bistro. Finish at Banting House Museum (story of insulin).

Dear Members,

It's that time of year again – signs of Spring coming with Connections in our post or e-mail and information about the Annual Convention – our 66th this June! We hope that these two pages promoting that event really do "Lift Your Spirits!" like a bouquet of balloons! Our Area 3 Convention Team is optimistic that Convention 2022 will be 'live' this year. The actual Registration Form will be sent out in early March on the Provincial Website and/or by e-mail. A request can be made to your Branch President for help if you have any difficulties. Best Wishes from the Area 3 Convention 2022 Team. We continue to plan for fun, surprises, celebration and a happy reunion!

Cathy Harrison, Convenor

Entertainment



Tuesday Evening

Laughter in the Works! Ready to chuckle? Our members will entertain you ... stay tuned ...

Wednesday Evening

The Incontinentals are a 4-piece vocal/instrumental group specializing in the classic rock and roll hits of the 50's and 60's. Join us for a fun evening of danceable music with outstanding vocals and harmonies.

SEE YOU JUNE 7TH 2022 IN LONDON ON





RWTO/OERO Convention 2022 June 7- 9

Four Points Sheraton Center
1150 Wellington Road South
London, ON N6E 1M3
CALL 519-681-0600

When you call, please reference RWTO June 2022 group rate.

For More Information Contact:
Cathy Harrison 519-319-3407
grandmac@hotmail.ca

WHAT'S NEW?



- * Online Registration
- * Etransfer for payments
- * Live-Streamed Workshops, Staycations & Entertainment

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All venues, tours and activities will follow the mandated health protocols of the Provincial and local Health Units (MLHU & Southwestern Health Unit) at the time of Convention 2022.



Workshops

Tuesday



Entertainment

Tuesday
and
Wednesday



Tours Staycations

Wednesday



Awards & Recognition

Wednesday
and
Thursday



AGM

Wednesday
and
Thursday



www.rwto.org



RWTO/OERO

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