



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

## President's Message

One of the great pleasures of being Provincial President is visiting the branches across the province. I have been to the far north and the far southern part of our beautiful province. All branches have been unique, interesting and we all have a common goal: working with women and for women. I have been inspired by the warmth and hospitality shown to me in each branch and of course the meals have been delicious. The positive interaction in each event was Caring and Sharing. The purpose of our organization is to provide fellowship, friendship, communication, and support to retired women teachers. I believe this is being done extensively.

I wish to commend our Branches for progressing, with great care, to full participation in branch activities. We still must be respectful of those who are not ready for in-person meetings. It is a changing world, and this will continue to influence our lives going forward. Memberships are continuing to come in to Provincial.

The Marketing Committee has been working hard to "heighten the public's awareness of RWTO/OERO and to generate interest for potential new members." Brand Identity will help in promoting and advertising our organization. This is the personality of RWTO/OERO, our values and this in turn

promotes a positive public view of our organization. This may include our logo, colours, motto and these can be used in our newsletters, agendas, website, at meetings and at public venues. The official name is: Retired Women Teachers of Ontario/Organisation des enseignantes retraitées de l'Ontario. Both English and French should be used whether we use the long or short version (RWTO/OERO).



Judy Drummond,  
Provincial President

**All correspondence at both Provincial and Branch levels shall have the RWTO/OERO official logo at the top of all letterhead.**

The Board of Directors are working hard on your behalf. We met in Cambridge for our board meetings in September. We continue to meet regularly by zoom to carry on meetings throughout the year. I want to thank them for their commitment and support as they represent their respective branches. I would also like to thank Linda Huffman, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, for all the work she does at

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

### Provincial President:

Judy Drummond  
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jjdrum@gmail.com

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### Insurance Convenor:

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**The Dolphin Consulting Group**  
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### Provincial Office

### Executive Secretary-Treasurer:

Linda Huffman  
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[rwtoconnections@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoconnections@gmail.com) • Website: [www.RWTO.org](http://www.RWTO.org)*





### ***President's Message – continued***

the Provincial level. As the first contact for our organization, Linda maintains a welcoming and professional manner to all.

As the Christmas season approaches, may I wish

you and your families a safe and blessed Christmas and may the spirit of the season be in your hearts.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Drummond,  
Provincial President

## ***Call for Nominations 2022-2023***

### **1. Provincial Executive Officer**

Nominations for the following elected Executive Officer position for the RWTO/OERO Provincial Board of Directors will now be accepted until January 31, 2023:

#### **• Provincial 2nd Vice-President**

Nominees should have experience at the Board level, as well as at the Branch Executive level and/or in other organizations.

The job description for this position is in the RWTO/OERO Provincial Policies and Procedures Manual, which can be found on the website at [www.rwto.org](http://www.rwto.org), under the title ABOUT, click on Governance. Please review Article VI, Duties of Executive Officers. You may also contact your Area Director or the Nominations Committee Chair for the job description.

Nominees are to submit their name by completing the Candidate's Form for RWTO/OERO Executive Position, which has been signed by your Branch President or Co-Presidents. The Candidate's Form can be found on our website at [www.rwto.org](http://www.rwto.org) under the title ABOUT, click on Governance. The form can be filled out on-line or printed and filled out. A reference letter is NOT required from the Branch.

You will also be required to submit a bio (maximum 200 words) and photo for inclusion in the March issue of Connections. Instructions for what to include in the bio are listed on the Candidate's Form.

Nominations should be emailed or mailed with a postmark by January 31, 2023 to the Provincial Nominations Committee Chair.

### **2. Appointed Convenors**

The following positions are available:

- **Assistant Provincial Insurance Convenor**
- **Provincial Communications Newsletter Convenor**
- **Provincial Website Convenor**

The final appointment decisions will be made by the Nominations Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. If you have an interest in one of the available positions, please email the Provincial Nominations Committee Chair by January 31, 2023. Please include a brief description of relevant experience.

#### **Assistant Provincial Insurance Convenor**

The main responsibilities are found in the Constitution Article VIII B 4 as noted:

- a. assist the Insurance Convenor with the annual workshops
- b. observe all aspects of the Insurance program in preparation for assuming the convenorship.

The current Insurance Convenor, Karin Mussen, and Assistant Insurance Convenor, LeAnne Taylor, can also be contacted at [kmussen.rwto@gmail.com](mailto:kmussen.rwto@gmail.com) or [rwtoinsurance@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoinsurance@gmail.com).

#### **Communications Newsletter Convenor**

The main responsibility is maintaining the content, currency and accuracy of the RWTO/OERO Newsletter, "Connections." The job description is in the Provincial Policies and Procedures Manual Article VII 4. Additional information can be found

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## ***Call for Nominations 2022-2023 – continued***

in the Constitution Article VII 3. Our current Newsletter Convenor, Jan Murdoch, can be contacted at [rwtoconnections@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoconnections@gmail.com), as well.

A candidate for Communications Newsletter Convenor should have the following experience and qualifications:

- i. understanding of and commitment to the vision, goals, and organization of RWTO/OERO
- ii. previous experience on the Board, on a Branch executive, or preferably on the Communications Committee
- iii. good planning and organizational skills
- iv. excellent English composition, grammar and proofreading skills
- v. previous experience with design and preparation of newsletters or other publications
- vi. final newsletter layout is done by a graphic artist

### **Communications Website Convenor**

The main responsibility is maintaining the content, currency and accuracy of the RWTO/OERO website. The job description is in the Provincial Policies and Procedures Manual Article VII 5. Further information can be found in the Constitution Article VII 3. Our current Website Convenor, Kathy Gallagher, can also be contacted at [rwto cyberlady@gmail.com](mailto:rwto cyberlady@gmail.com).

A candidate for Communications Website Convenor should have the following experience and qualifications:

- i. excellent computer skills and experience including the following:
  - word processing and graphics applications
  - using various file formats
  - file compression and transfer
  - file management
  - web page design and editing (.html files)
- ii. major changes to the website are done by the Website Consultant.

### **3. Area Directors**

Any new Area Directors will be selected or elected in accordance with their Area's protocol (see Provincial Policies and Procedures Manual, Article IV 3). Once chosen, the names should be sent to the Provincial Nominations Chair before March 31, 2023.

### **4. Provincial Communications Newsletter and Membership Committees**

These Committees are complete at this time and we thank those members who have offered their time and service for the benefit of RWTO/OERO.

For further details about any position, please contact any member of the Nominations Committee: Nancy Bell, Judy Drummond, Pat Emmerton, Area 1 Director, Emily Noble, Area 11 Director.

Nancy Bell, Past President,  
Provincial Nominations  
Committee Chair

120 Killarney Court  
London, ON N5X 2B6  
[rwtopastpres2022@gmail.com](mailto:rwtopastpres2022@gmail.com)





## ***Honorary Membership Award Nominations***

Provincial Honorary Membership in RWTO/OERO is the highest honour that can be bestowed on a member for outstanding services at the provincial level. This award is presented at the Annual General Meeting.

Services may include Provincial Offices held with distinction, committees served, extraordinary care and devotion to a task, and outstanding ideas or innovations introduced. More information is listed in the Provincial Policies and Procedures Manual under Article XII, which can be found on the RWTO/OERO Website under ABOUT, click on GOVERNANCE.

This award is dependent on nominations from the Branches and/or members-at-large. Your nomination

letter should include an outline listing the provincial committees on which the nominee has served and the noted services to RWTO/OERO at the provincial level.

All nominations must be received by the Committee Chair by January 31, 2023. Please provide full name, address, telephone number and email address of the nominee.

Please send nominations to:  
Mail: Nancy Papiez  
Honorary Membership Committee  
Chair  
10-60 Dundas St, Dundas ON  
L9H 7M6



## ***Membership Award Nominations***

All Branches should consider making a submission for the "Feather in Your Hat" Award.

The Membership Committee recognizes creative, innovative and successful activities carried out by a Branch or group of Branches who have worked together cooperatively on a project that has clearly enriched the program offered by RWTO/OERO. The "Feather in Your Hat" award is now tiered according to branch size. Three awards may be given in each category (small, medium and large).

Submissions for this award must be made to the Membership Committee between January 1 and March 1, 2023. Submissions should include area and branch name(s), total number of members, number of members involved in the project, clear

identification of the project, ongoing photos from start to finish and outcomes of the project.

In order to ensure that the submission has been received, please notify the membership convenor by email [rwtomembership@gmail.com](mailto:rwtomembership@gmail.com) and send the submission (i.e. hard copy) by mail.

The Membership Convenor will confirm its arrival by email.

Good luck everyone!

Kathy McLean, Area 9 Director,  
Membership Convenor





## Insurance Matters

Here we are; it's Christmas once again! That magical time of year that brings friends and family close to celebrate the season. We decorate our homes, bake enticing goodies, and cook up a frenzy in anticipation of numerous meals and gatherings. It's a time of memories, a time to laugh and for some, a time of sadness, as they recall those who have passed. For those who've lost a loved one, we reach out in friendship and understanding offering comfort, as best we can. For many, we're thankful we enjoy sufficiently good health to be able to remain in our own homes for as long as we can.

I'm reminded of the reason why the Hospital & Home Care Plan came to be. In 1974 the Association, then known as OASWT, introduced this plan to help members maintain their independence and age in place for as long as possible. At that time Norma Hackett, Insurance Convenor from Windsor, explained the need for a post-hospital home care plan. She said that many retired women teachers live alone by choice, or because they outlive their husbands. She explained that retired women teachers are an independent breed and health care costs jeopardize that independence. She pointed out that next to Extended Health Care insurance under a Group Benefit plan, a post-hospital home care plan is probably the most important personal protection retired women can have, providing help when we are most vulnerable. The Hospital & Home Care Plan fills much of that need.

We're fortunate to live in a country where we have good, basic health care provided under the various Provincial Insurance plans. Yet, as good as it is, our recent experience with COVID-19 has exposed many gaps and failures within the health care system. Both the Federal and Provincial governments have known for many years of the approaching "Grey Tsunami" of baby boomers reaching retirement age and with that, the strain that would be placed upon the health care system. It is for this reason that the Ontario government began to focus on providing supports to Ontarians to recover at home. Supports provided by the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), such as Nurses for wound care and medication administration,

Personal Support Workers to assist with bathing and dressing and Physiotherapists, while we're recovering from illness or surgeries. Unfortunately, that care is limited in duration and sometimes unavailable entirely due to staffing issues or distance.

This is what makes the Hospital & Home Care Plan so important to our members. It is filling some of these gaps with benefits, such as Home Nursing and the Convalescent Benefit. It provides for aids, such as walkers, wheelchairs, ergonomic walking poles and bath seats. And it can be used to extend other coverage, such as that provided by RTO or OTIP through the Coordination of Benefits provision, so benefits can be claimed under both plans. We invite you to investigate the many benefits provided under this plan, by visiting the RWTO website at [www.rwto.org/membership/insurance-plan/](http://www.rwto.org/membership/insurance-plan/) where you can view the brochure. If you can't visit the website, please ask your branch Insurance Convenor for a brochure at your next meeting.

And, finally, just a reminder...when submitting claims under the Hospital & Home Care Plan the Authorization section must be signed. We've had a number of claims recently declined because the form was submitted unsigned by the insured person.

Your Insurance Team wishes you every joy of this magical season and a safe and happy New Year!

Insurance Convenor  
Karin Mussen  
519-272-0629  
[kmussen.rwto@gmail.com](mailto:kmussen.rwto@gmail.com)



Assistant Insurance Convenor  
LeAnne Taylor  
905-877-7030  
[haw\\_taylor@hotmail.com](mailto:haw_taylor@hotmail.com)



Manulife Financial 1-800-268-3763  
Broker: Terry Kennedy  
The Dolphin Consulting Group  
(519) 583-0098 Fax: (519) 583-2876  
[tkennedy34@bell.net](mailto:tkennedy34@bell.net)







## Issues and Concerns

### *Aging In Place : Safeguarding Our Health*

I like to think of myself as a healthy senior on the cusp of her 7th decade. I am grateful and blessed for my ability to live an active lifestyle and any aches and pains are usually temporary...until this summer. Plantar fasciitis has sidelined me from my 5K daily walks and sciatica has made extended sitting uncomfortable. In the greater scheme of things, I still have all of my original body parts (too much information I know) and have an energetic approach to my daily routines and activities. However risk factors for my age group, such as cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, heart disease, or high blood pressure may soon start to have more of an impact.

The risk of developing chronic diseases and having multiple chronic conditions increases with age. Four behavioral risk factors are tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. Other risk factors, such as age, biological sex, family history and ethnic ancestry may increase the risk of developing chronic diseases.

Certain chronic diseases are more common among women while others are more common among men. Compared to men, women were about:

- 4.2 times more likely to be living with diagnosed osteoporosis;
- 1.9 times more likely to be living with diagnosed rheumatoid arthritis;
- 1.6 times more likely to use health services for mood and anxiety disorders;
- 1.5 times more likely to be living with diagnosed dementia (including Alzheimer's disease) and asthma; and
- 1.4 times more likely to be living with diagnosed osteoarthritis.

Adapting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important to prevent and manage chronic diseases. Exercise regularly; biking, walking, swimming, or low impact aerobics. Engage in moderate intensity exercise for about 20 to 30 minutes a day to reach the recommended total. Strengthen your muscles by lifting weights or doing yoga. Having a healthy, balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean

meats while limiting your consumption of sugary and fatty foods, which can trigger inflammation in the body and lower your immune system, are important factors to sustain your healthy lifestyle.

*“Although the prevalence of most chronic diseases and conditions increases with age, many can be prevented, delayed or mitigated through the development of age-friendly, safe and socially supportive environments, reducing health inequities faced by vulnerable seniors, supporting healthy behaviours and choices and focusing on effective health promotion and disease prevention activities.”*

*Aging and chronic diseases: A profile of Canadian seniors*

Think about your state of health as it is now. What can you do now to help ensure a healthy future? Here is a checklist to help you tweak any areas that need more focus:

My health:

- I am physically active and do a variety of physical activities that I enjoy.
- I eat seven or more servings of fruit and vegetables in a day.
- I have a healthy body weight that has remained the same for the past six months.
- I schedule regular appointments for physical, vision, dental and hearing check-ups.
- I know what screening tests are recommended for my age and discuss these with my doctor.
- I do not smoke or I have a plan to quit in the future.
- If I drink alcohol, I stay below the limits suggested for adults my age.
- I avoid alcohol when taking medication, or check with a doctor or pharmacist first.
- I generally experience good mental health. I am aware of the signs and symptoms of depression/anxiety and if they continue, I will take steps to address them.
- I keep my mind active through a variety of interests and hobbies, such as reading.

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## Issues and Concerns - Continued

I know how to keep my bones healthy and strong, and have discussed this with my doctor or other health care professional.

I have talked with my doctor about my pre-existing medical condition and what services and supports I may need as I age.

I am aware of my family's medical history and have talked with my doctor about what I can do now to maintain my health and how my health care needs may change as I age.

I am aware of electronic tools, such as medication

reminders and health management systems that will allow me to remain healthy.

I have written down my wishes for care in the event I become incapable of giving my consent.

Thinking about your future? Plan now to Age in Place – A checklist  
[Canada.ca/Seniors](https://Canada.ca/Seniors)

Lynn Sulman, Area 3 Director



## Program

Presidents and Area Directors,

Where has the fall gone! It is already December, with everyone busy with seasonal preparations, projects and celebrations. It is clear reading notes from your Annual Area President's meetings that supporting your communities, particularly at this time of year, is a priority and counted on by many organizations. Kudos to all for your ongoing Community Outreach.

In mid-January, I will be sending out to each President your branch Membership Information, compiled by our Provincial Secretary-Treasurer. This form identifies your complete membership numbers which determine your number of delegates for Convention 2023. Please

be sure to check these lists carefully and report any discrepancies to Linda Huffman, as soon as possible.

Later in January you will receive my Annual Convention Bulletin which will provide all the details you need to prepare for Convention 2023.

Please save and/or print this document for future reference and regularly check your email as well as [rwto.org](https://rwto.org) for updated important information.

Have a happy holiday season!

Judith Bennoch, Provincial Program Coordinator



## Archives

All Materials are ready for storage at York University. We will continue to file hard copies of all important Board reports. I keep digital back ups also.

The "In Memoriam" tribute for the Convention in Kingston has been planned.

I will use the official list sent to me by Linda Huffman Jan. 31, 2023.

Please be sure your submission is in by that deadline. Also, please send photographs or a link to the obituary to me by March 1.

We would like to have as many photos in our slideshow as possible. Note my new email: [rwtoarchivist@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoarchivist@gmail.com)

The theme this year is "Something Beautiful Remains", focussing on the legacy left by our members who have passed. The display will include the Memorial Tree again as the feedback was favourable.

Susan Rose, Area 6 Director and Provincial Archivist





## Goodwill

Usually, my Mondays are spent sending birthday greetings, on behalf of RWTO/OERO to our 280 ladies who have reached the wonderful age of 90 or more. We had 4 ladies turn the glorious age of 100 this year, Rea-belle Christiani a member of Scarborough Branch, Dorothy Lawrence a member of Sudbury Branch, Joyce Charlton a member of the Chatham-Kent Branch and Rita Purcell a member of the Lanark Branch. I am sure these ladies have

wonderful stories to share about their years teaching, similar to the stories located in "Chalk, Challenge and Change". Warm Christmas greetings will be soon coming to our elder members and our Past-Presidents on behalf of our organization, in "Caring and Sharing".

Jan Murdoch, Provincial Goodwill Convenor



## Communications

### Website Convenor

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

Kathy Gallagher, Communications Website Convenor



### Newsletter Convenor

If you are not receiving Connections online in PDF format, it may be because the security on your server is preventing it from arriving, it may be going to SPAM or JUNK. Internet service providers do not like mass mailings as they are often associated with unwanted advertising. Please ensure that Linda Huffman has your updated email address if you change internet service providers.

If you have been unsubscribed accidentally or by

your service provider only YOU can resubscribe to Connections. You need to visit the Newsletter page on the Provincial website. The four pieces of information that are important are the email address, your First and Last Name and your Branch.

Jan Murdoch, Communications Newsletter Convenor  
[rwtoconnections@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoconnections@gmail.com)



## Members to Members

Our congratulations to Judith Bennoch, a talented actress, who was the recipient of the Outstanding Lead Actress Award 2021-2022.





## Sales and Materials

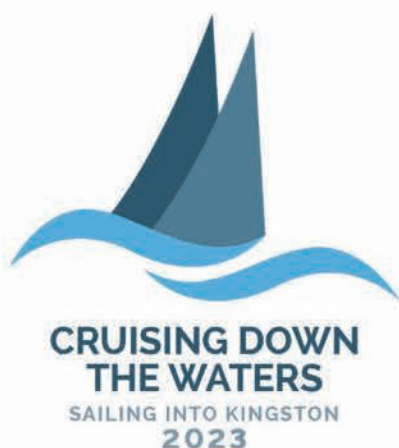
As Sales and Materials Convenor, I ensure there is sufficient RWTO/OERO inventory on hand to meet your needs and make recommendations about items we carry.

Each spring, Area Directors survey Branch Presidents to determine their needs for pins and materials. Please note that there is a limit of 3 Cora Bailey pins per Branch each year. Membership pins are provided free for new members and are based on your best estimate for the following year. All replacement pins are available for \$5 each. Your orders may be picked up at the Kingston Convention. There will also

be a Sales Booth where members may browse and purchase materials. Branch Presidents and Board members can place an order directly through me.

Visit the RWTO/OERO website at [rwto.org](http://rwto.org) to see the full list of items available and their prices. Purchase items such as our new Sticky Note Pads or RWTO/OERO Pens - at \$1.25 each, great value for useful items.

Judy Anderson,  
Sales and Materials Convenor,  
[rwtoalesandmaterials@gmail.com](mailto:rwtoalesandmaterials@gmail.com)



### RWTO/OERO 67<sup>th</sup> CONVENTION

June 6 -8, 2023

Four Points by Sheraton  
Kingston ON



Room Bookings: 1-613-544-4434 (Front Desk)

Branches 8 & 9 look forward to welcoming you to Eastern Ontario.  
Come and enjoy the hospitality and sites of Kingston and area.

*For more information, contact Convention Convenors:*

Anne Graham 613-259-2207 [annegraham2207@gmail.com](mailto:annegraham2207@gmail.com)

Marg Dempsey 613-820-7864 [medempsey2020@bell.net](mailto:medempsey2020@bell.net)

<https://rwto.org/convention/rwto-oero-67th-convention-2023/>



## News from the Branches – *Best Experiences*

### Cambridge

Cambridge Branch has had a Genealogy Club since 2019. We met in members' homes until COVID, then switched to Zoom, and eventually to hybrid meetings. Navigating Zoom was initially challenging; however, we eventually mastered it. Weather and mobility issues make in-person meetings challenging for some, so Zoom taught us another way to support those folks and invite their attendance. We also have a Facebook page where we can connect and support each other. In March several members made short PowerPoint presentations on an ancestor who had served in WWI. We next looked at the experience of our ancestors as they entered Ontario/Upper Canada, Canada West/Quebec. We accessed a wide range of on-line genealogical sources for our research. Our technical skills developed as we produced webinars. Recently we experienced the joy of connecting in-person and discerning how to use those times together for helping each other further our research.

Mary Jane Novak, Branch President



### Guelph-Wellington

We must admit that moving to Zoom during the pandemic was a challenge - finding someone able to host the meetings, getting everyone into the meetings, eliminating background noises, and other little hiccups. Once mastered, Zoom has become an invaluable asset. We look forward to continuing to host Executive Meetings online – cutting out travel time, avoiding inclement weather and including members who are out of town.

We held our first in-person meeting since the pandemic on September 14, 2022 at Victoria Park

East Golf Club in Guelph. It was fantastic to have ninety members register for this Fall Luncheon! There was opportunity for much visiting and catching up, for signing up for any of fifteen Interest Groups, to cover Business Items face-to-face, to enjoy an excellent meal and to groove to the sounds of the 50's and 60's with "Two of a Kind". With such a great response to our first in-person meeting and growing membership, we look forward to our Christmas Luncheon!

Judy Steer and Marion Kelly, Branch Co-Presidents

### Kitchener-Waterloo

Our branch has been busy during 2022. We were able to hold in-person luncheons in March, May, and September, and we will have our Christmas-themed Luncheon on November 24th. We have welcomed several new or returning members and made some changes to our Executive Team.

At our September Luncheon, we thoroughly enjoyed a presentation by Heather Browning highlighting the life and writing of Beatrix Potter. Our Knitting Club and Memoir Writing Group are flourishing.

Many thanks to our member, Anne Lowe, who guided us through most of the pandemic by organizing Zoom meetings. We are hoping to continue now with in-person Luncheon meetings if COVID does not interfere with this plan.

Thank you to all our enthusiastic members who have shown unwavering support. We are working toward the goal of an increased membership in 2023.

Karen Todd-Bustamante, Executive Team



### Palmerston and District

A very popular In-person Experience for our group was when guest prize winning, cake decorator

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## News from the Branches – Best Experiences

Hannah visited our organization. After demonstrating several techniques and styles, each member was given her own cupcake to creatively decorate.

From seasonal flowers to graham-teddies-on-beach-blankets-under-cocktail-umbrellas to colourful candies, the works of art were eye appealing and tummy tempting! The best part was taking the artistic creation home to enjoy with a cuppa tea.

In viewing pictures of the experience, it was interesting to see that some people decorated their cupcakes in colours matching the outfit worn that day. Very amusing...and tasty, too.

Our Zoom meetings were well attended and proved beneficial in choosing our Charity for the year during the time of COVID. We had two groups vying for the title, and each group made a presentation to our Executive via Zoom. Zoom also made it possible for our Book Club to continue with our discussions.

Kathy Watt, Branch President



### Stratford

We are very fortunate in our Stratford branch to have a trained IT person. Our past president is a technical wizard! We are so grateful for her ability to "host" multiple Zooms for most of our meetings and interest groups. She was able to "walk us through" how to connect to Zoom and troubleshoot any problems. We think she has hosted over 100+ Zoom meetings (and still counting)!

The best continued use of Zoom has been for all our executive meetings over the COVID shut down. It has

been a great help during the winter months as nobody was out driving.

We did our best to try to have Zoom general meetings. Our interest groups were able to be continued: Cinema Cinners were able to have Zoom talks about the Netflix movie they watched; two book clubs carried on their monthly book discussions; the walking group were able to meet online to talk together (they had to walk on their own); the "Hub" Club also had weekly chats and toasted each other online. Even our Knookers chatted while knitting and crocheting during Zooming.

Zooming continues to be an option this year, especially with winter approaching along with another round of COVID and Flu season. It has been a wonderful way to stay connected to each other. Sharing and Caring while Zooming was a major mental health saviour for all of us!

Linda O'Connor, Branch President

### Chatham-Kent

Yes! We successfully held Zoom board meetings in March, April 2021 and even a general meeting, with a small attendance, in May 2021. Internet connections are an ongoing problem for some, especially in rural areas. Travel time was saved by using Zoom to meet with our June Convention planning committee.

We expressed our 'Caring and Sharing' ways with personal phone calls, emails and Christmas and Valentine cards, which were greatly appreciated!

In September 2021 our first in-person gathering was a 'Meet and Greet' coffee time. We planned to concentrate on renewing acquaintances, camaraderie, and limiting business. Through November 2021, with guest, Nancy Bell, Provincial President, April and June 2021, our attendance was smaller but our ladies certainly enjoyed the time of socializing and a delicious meal.

As we begin our 2022-2023 year, we are returning to our 4 regular meetings, hoping more ladies feel comfortable in attending.

Lynn Russell, Branch President



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## ***News from the Branches – Best Experiences***

### **London-Middlesex**

While members did learn and participate in zoom meetings during fall and spring of 2020-2021, we eagerly and carefully returned to in person lunch meetings for fall 2021 and spring 2022. Our new executive began this term 2022-2023 with lunch meetings hosting about 100 participants. We began September with the Thames Valley School Board Chairperson, Lori-Ann Pizzolato speaking to us about local education interests and how schools are still responding to the effects of COVID. Still keeping it local, in October, we hosted Trish Wiggell, the owner of Bijou Boutique, who presented a fashion show of Fall Fashions designed by Canadian designers and modelled by some of our own members. In November, we are looking forward to the Christmas holidays with the Christmas Merry Makers, a local London group entertaining us with a song.

Mary Maxwell, Branch Co-President and Linda Freeman, Branch Co-President



### **Sarnia-Lambton**

Sarnia-Lambton is happy to announce the launch of our 2022-2023 year, looking forward to a series of five luncheons. Our theme for the year is "Retirement: Hours to Enjoy". Our meeting in September is especially busy as we pull together all the efforts of committees who have been working throughout the summer.

Our first event was the presentation of three 'Caring and Sharing' donations. They followed the theme for September, which was "Enjoy Learning about Support Programs for Youth". Recipients were selected by suggestions from members attending our April and May meetings. The first presentation went to "Gallery in the Grove: Art in the Classroom", which hosts activities with local artists. Next was a donation to the VON, designating the "VON Children's Respite Program". The third presentation went to "Access

Open Minds", focusing on Mental Health.

Planning for our November Christmas Bazaar filled the rest of our time.

Mary Ann Barstead, Branch President

### **St Thomas-Elgin**

During the summer of 2021, our executive under the energetic leadership of President Sue Banderen decided it was time to bid farewell to the COVID Blues. We planned six in person meetings and decided that all should emphasize joy, fun and laughter. What perfect antidotes for the seemingly endless COVID hiatus!



While all of these meetings were nothing short of wonderful, three of them, in my view, were exceptional: the Christmas meeting in November, the In Memoriam meeting in May and the Fashion Show meeting with Nancy Bell as our guest speaker in June.

Lastly, I would like to thank our membership for donating so generously to the various charities that our branch supports. At our May meeting, our members donated \$1400 to the Hospice of Elgin plus a generous \$1100 to the Backpack Project, a charity established by our branch twenty years ago to help women and children in crisis.

Catherine Gardiner, Branch President

### **Windsor-Essex**

From fascinators to cowboy hats, our 80+ year old Branch members arrived in style to our celebratory June Tea where they were photographed, played games and enjoyed socializing. Volunteer Members assisted with rides to a local retirement community where celebrants and volunteers alike were tested upon entry. A pianist played in the background with speeches kept to a minimum as our special women enjoyed engaging with each other after a two-year hiatus. The treats rolled out with sandwiches, baked goods and tea served by our dedicated Member volunteers. The theme of Birds, Butterflies and

*Continued* ►



## News from the Branches – Best Experiences

Rainbows delighted these honoured guests who were sent home with goodies to enjoy. All left with warm memories of our connection and sisterhood as we recognized their wisdom and contributions.

Patricia Wales, Branch President



### Lanark

Our Branch has used Zoom over the past 2 years for Executive Meetings and to keep in touch with members. We have also been kept informed about Insurance through Zoom meetings and presentations by the Provincial Insurance Convenor or her assistant. The PowerPoint presentations with accompanying comments were very useful for us at the branch level.

We have now held several in person luncheons beginning with a wonderful Christmas 2021 gathering to which we invited members from local branches as well. We continued throughout the Spring with in person luncheons, a Guide dog presentation, which Nancy Bell was able to attend, and our AGM.

This fall we have planned more in person events and are very pleased to see people enjoying chatting and catching up with each other. A highlight this fall for me was presenting branch member Rita Purcell, who was celebrating her 100th birthday, with a bouquet of flowers and a note of donation to our local hospital in her name.



It is with high hopes that we have turned the corner on COVID and can continue enjoying each other's company at gatherings this year.

Jane Graham, Branch President

### Ottawa-Carleton

Our branch continues to "care and share" through our phone committee, newsletters and seasonal cards. Zoom was a learning experience for many and has become a useful tool for meetings and clubs. Zoom presentations were also a virtual success. Members learned about osteoarthritis, fraud, the plight of Afghan women and girls and took an armchair trip to India. Zoom will continue into the future, especially

on snowy winter days.

In-person activities were well-received when they began this spring. We were delighted with the regular attendance of members who are over 90 at our "Breakfast and Conversation" mornings. A special luncheon in support of Ukrainian refugees with a talk from a refugee about her personal experience of the Ukrainian-Russian War, was well-attended. Participants enjoyed a delicious Ukrainian meal. This event was also an opportunity to invite potential new members.

More "Caring and Sharing" and having fun is on the way in 2023!

Sharon Chop, Branch President and Martha Summers, Branch Communications



### BurlOak

The most exciting meeting this year was the very first gathering of the new BurlOak branch, the amalgamation of Burlington and Oakville branches. Our September meeting is always one we look forward to - friends we haven't seen since the last meeting, their latest news, and checking to see who and where are the new members. This year our group has a new name, new faces and a new start. It was wonderful to have 83 people at the luncheon – the room hasn't been that full in ages. The food was fabulous as usual, and the speaker Jenn J. Danna was amazing. She knows so much about so many things it



Continued ►



## *News from the Branches – Best Experiences*

was hard to decide what to ask her to speak about. An even bigger smile comes knowing she's "one of our own" in a way – daughter of a former member, Edie Danna. All in all, a fabulous start.

Mary McCully, Branch President

### **Lydia Snow North Halton**

In April, we held a hybrid Annual General Meeting. With assistance from staff at our venue and our planning committee, we livestreamed our meeting and had members attend in person. This allowed members to choose their level of comfort, as COVID was still a concern. Additionally, we have several members who no longer live nearby (British Columbia, for example), so they were able to join us.

Our guests were Sue and Dave Williams, who presented "An Adventure on the High Seas & the Journey Within." They recounted their journey on a sailboat from Hamilton, Ontario to Portugal. It was fascinating to hear about their adventure, but I, like many I think, was glad to only sail virtually. There were several immense challenges they overcame on this journey. Happily, Sue and Dave returned safely to Canada and kept us enthralled with the recounting of their tale. We were also able to purchase Sue's book about their journey, entitled "Ready to Come About". Our members who joined us online were also able to ask questions of Sue and Dave, as well as purchase Sue's book online. It was definitely an interesting and successful AGM.

Margaret Beaudette, Branch President

### **Mississauga**

Here at the Mississauga Branch we have tried to keep our membership engaged and interested throughout the restrictions of the pandemic. With over 300 members, it is not easy to please everyone. But we have found one Zoom presenter who was able to keep quite a few entertained.

Lianne Harris mixes a little theatre with an amazing amount of research to create her historical presentations. She has a dizzying array of topics to choose, and the costume and PowerPoint presentation to highlight each topic. Our members

enjoyed several Zoom presentations from Lianne and we look forward to having her present in person.

Now that we have started meeting in person, we held a luncheon in September. There we were entertained by the Georgetown Transfer.

This group of three women (and one man for accompaniment) sang songs made popular by the Andrews Sisters. With excellent voices, beautiful harmony, and fun showmanship, they had us happily singing along.

Mary Solarski, Branch President



### **Peel North**

Zoom was quite liberating for our group. Our experience brings to mind aspects of the poem 'High Flight' by John Magee. We were able to slip the bounds of time, location and weather to dance the internet on our laughing silver wings. We zoomed northward to the Arctic on a motorcycle, viewed fashion through the ages, were amazed by a magician and viewed Christmas traditions through time. Meetings ended with Break Out rooms to maintain social connections. We continue to have executive meetings on-line, play cards and discuss birds and books without leaving the safety and comfort of our homes.

Members are slowly gathering the confidence to attend, in-person meetings followed by lunch at local restaurants. We hover on the brink of chasing and shouting the wind along and flinging our craft through rootless halls of air.

Kathy Avey, Branch President



# ***RWTO/OERO History***

## **Facts From “Uncommon Women” by Lenora M Beech**

The first Newsletter in 1957 was a one-page letter from the President, mailed to all members. In 1968 the Newsletter expanded to two pages and in 1972 the Executive decided to send it out by mail 4 times a year September, November, March, and May. In 1984 Dorothy Montgomery had the Newsletter printed externally and hired a crew to sort and bundle it before mailing. The total costs in 1985-1986 was \$4135.00 for printing and \$3,172.50 for postage.

In 2004 the Executive Secretary-Treasurer's duties were revised, and the Newsletter responsibility was assigned to the Communication Convenor who also took on the responsibility of the website.

The Newsletter varied in size between 8 and 12 pages depending on the content 'Connections', the RWTO/OERO newsletter is now produced 3 times a year September, December, and March. Back issues can be read on the RWTO/OERO website.

- In 1991 the Voting Card was introduced at the AGM.
- In 1993 additional voting delegates were introduced on a sliding scale. For each additional 50 members in a branch, an additional Delegate could attend the AGM at the delegates expense.
- In 1999 the Organization changed its name to RWTO/OERO from OASWT.
- In 2001 876 new members joined the organization.

## **From “Chalk, Challenge and Change” 2006, a RWTO/OERO 50th Anniversary Project**

“My first job interview in 1937 was rather unusual. A friend of mine, who was a French high school teacher, had a car...a rare thing back then. She lent me her car to go to Dundalk to get a job. The local farmers who were on the board made the decisions and the person who interviewed was working in the field, so I had to get out and go over into the field and have the interview there. He hired me on the spot.”

Jean (Bundell) Hunt, St Catharines

“At age 26, I recall awaiting my job interview while sitting on a sack of flour in the general store in a rural community. It was 1933.”

Mary (Taylor) Holmes, Orangeville

“I had to go to London Normal School for teachers training. At the time, the government paid for it. They even paid for the taxis to take us to our practice teaching in the country schools. There were about six or seven professors and about ninety-six students. We were the first class that needed five years of high school to enroll. The only tuition cost was fifty dollars for the textbooks.” Katherine (Griffiths) Dwyer, Windsor “Back then, one of the “joys” of teaching was the fact that a lot of teachers, especially those in rural schools had to board in someone's house. I boarded in both Kleinburg and Toronto. Neither experience brings back fond memories.” Eileen (Potter) Hill, North York

As we approach our Platinum Anniversary, should we be looking at a similar project????





*May you delight in the music  
and laughter at Christmas*



**RWTO/OERO**

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