



RWTO/OERO Ottawa-Carleton Branch SUMMER NEWSLETTER June 2023



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to summer! It has been a very encouraging year. Our members took pleasure in being able to attend in-person events. In April, a number of members enjoyed a Greek lunch at the Kallisto restaurant. We heard a very moving talk from Barbara Carroll, Executive Director of the Debra Dynes Family House.

Forty-two members registered for our AGM and Lunch at Falcon Ridge Golf Club. The lunch was delicious and the conversation lively. Marilyn Adair presented a meaningful *In Memoriam* for those members who died in the last year. A new Isabel Fawthrop Award was presented to Marilyn Adair and Suzanne Wilson-Marjerrison. This award is given in memory of Isabel Fawthrop "to an RWTO/OERO Ottawa-Carleton branch member who, over time, has demonstrated commitment, extraordinary dedication and service to our membership." Both of the recipients more than meet the criteria for this award. Congratulations to them both. If anyone is interested in receiving a copy of the 2022-2023 Annual Report, please contact one of the Executive. Falcon Ridge Golf Club has been booked for Wednesday, May 15, 2024. Mark your calendar.

The 2023 Provincial Convention in Kingston was a huge success. Thank you, Marg Dempsey, who was co-convenor with Anne Graham from Lanark. We also thank those on our executive who had planning roles and the volunteers from our branch who helped out with various tasks in Kingston along with the other branches of Eastern Ontario. Please read the report later in this newsletter. A video entitled



Helping Ottawa-Carleton Thrive 2022-2023 was made for this Convention. The YouTube link is <https://youtu.be/dprE5ewDPCc>. Copy and paste the link into your web browser. This video shows our branch's Ukrainian project for which we were honoured to receive a ***Feather-in-Your-Hat Award*** at the convention. This award is presented by the Provincial Board of Directors to recognize creative, innovative and successful activities carried out by branches who work on projects to enrich the programs offered by RWTO/OERO.

Our website is being continually updated by Marg Dempsey who is learning new skills. Our events will be posted. Please check it out at <https://rwto.org/>. Go to Branches and click on Ottawa-Carleton. We looking forward to an interesting and fun filled year of "caring and sharing".

Sharon Chop rwto.ottcar.sharon@gmail.com

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

President, Sharon Chop: rwto.ottcar.sharon@gmail.com

Insurance Broker, Terry Kennedy: 519-583-0098 tkennedy34@bell.net

Manulife Financial: 1-800-268-3763

Provincial RWTO/OERO Office: 1-877-607-6696 info@rwto.org



2023 - 2024 EXECUTIVE

President: Sharon Chop

Past President: Kathy McLean

1st Vice-President: Margaret Dempsey

2nd Vice-President: Irene Cameron

Treasurer: Barbara Edwards

Secretary: Patricia Taylor

Membership Convenor: Sue Lanouette-Carswell

Insurance Convenor: Margaret Dempsey

Goodwill Convenor: Linda Willman

Archivist: Barb Edwards (Acting)

Communications Convenors:

Newsletter: Louise Pivato

Website: Marg Dempsey

Members-at-Large: Marilyn Adair, 2 vacancies

Area Director: Brenda Johnston, Lanark Branch

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PROVINCIAL AREA 9 DIRECTOR

Hello to all Ottawa-Carleton RWTO/OERO members. My name is Brenda Johnston and I am the new Area 9 Director for Lanark/Ottawa-Carleton. I am a member of the Lanark Branch and live in Perth. I'd like to thank Kathy McLean for her excellent work in this position over the last few years. I am looking forward to meeting the members in your branch and working with your executive in Caring and Sharing for us all. Have a GREAT summer and see you in September. To the right is a photo of Brenda (centre) at the Convention with Lanark members Jane Graham and Mary Dexter-Kayser.



MEMBERSHIP

It's time to renew your membership for 2023-2024 if you have not already done so. The fee is \$50.00 for the coming year. Members who renew by September 1 are eligible for an *Early Bird Draw* for reimbursement of the yearly fee, the draw to be made at the Welcome Lunch on September 7.

Note: To keep your RWTO/OERO insurance plan valid, you must be a member in good standing. If you know of any newly retired teachers or previously retired teachers who may be interested in being members of our organization, please invite them to join us at one of our events. Personal contact is known to be the most successful recruitment tool.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

One of the RWTO/OERO core beliefs is “to improve the lives of all women and children”. Helping our neighbours in Ottawa is more important than ever. Being able to meet in person allowed us to raise funds through various activities: the Quarter Frenzy, the Christmas Silent Auction, Priscilla Pig and directed fundraising. These funds were used in several ways:

Debra Dynes Family House: Barbara Carroll, the Executive Director of Debra Dynes Family House, spoke eloquently to members at the Kallisto Greek luncheon in April about the impact our Christmas collection of hygiene products has made for the many children and youth, families and seniors on fixed incomes who come to the Debra Dynes Family House. We were also able to make an additional \$48.00 donation collected by Priscilla Pig at the luncheon.



Breakfast Program of the Ottawa Network for Education We received a thank you note for our continuing support of this program. The letter states: *“The program serves over 2.7 million nutritious, free meals each year to children and youth across the city of Ottawa in 198 schools – that’s 2/3 of all schools (elementary and secondary) in the City of Ottawa and the need is growing. We are incredibly grateful for your support. Thanks to caring organizations like yours, we support student well-being, remove barriers to learning, and boost student success. Together, we will fuel kids and ignite learning.”*



Mental health for Ukrainian refugees in Ottawa: Not only was \$1,040.00 raised for mental health for Ukrainian refugees in Ottawa at our November lunch, but an additional \$200.00 was donated from the Easter Egg (Pysanky) making workshops in the spring.



Common Initiative: One of the goals set by the province this past year was to enhance the RWTO/OERO presence in our school communities while creating relationships amongst our school-aged and older citizens. We were asked to connect with a school or schools and request that students create friendship cards to be given to a Long-Term Facility or Seniors Home. This activity complements the Ontario Grades 1-8, Language curriculum and demonstrates “Caring and Sharing”. Our Branch Ambassador for this project, Linda Willman, reached out to a teacher whose students created Valentine’s Day cards that were given to the Redwoods for distribution among its residents. The photos of the residents showed happy recipients. We hope to expand this project next year. If you know a teacher who may be interested in participating in this project, please contact Linda Willman.



We thank you all for your continued support of our Community Outreach activities. It really makes a difference in peoples’ lives.

RWTO/OERO CONVENTION 2023

MY FIRST RWTO/OERO CONFERENCE, JUNE 2023 by Irene Cameron

This year I was honoured to be selected as the Branch Delegate to the RWTO/OERO Annual Convention held in Kingston. As Ottawa-Carleton was one of the hosting branches, I was able to see first hand all of the planning and preparation that went into the organization of such an event. Needless to say it was a monumental task.



On arriving at the hotel on Monday, our group immediately set up the registration desk for the 224 delegates that were set to arrive the following day. On Tuesday, we began to welcome our members from all over Ontario. One could feel the buzz and excitement as friends greeted each other with happiness and hugs. Tuesday afternoon I attended a workshop entitled 'Helping Our Branches Thrive'. Our branch submitted a video for this workshop. This workshop was of particular interest for me as I was able to learn how branches across the province welcomed new members and increased their membership. The day ended with a cruise on the 'Island Queen' where the delegates enjoyed dinner and entertainment. Wednesday proved to be a very busy day. In the morning the AGM began and in the afternoon several tours were offered of which the trip to the Kingston Penitentiary proved to be the most popular. The evening Awards Banquet, at which Sharon accepted a *Feather in Your Hat Award* for our Ukrainian Project, and other branches received other awards, ended with lively musical entertainment by **The Reasons** (accompanied by lively dancing by a large number of our members!!) At Thursday morning's In Memoriam Service, five of our members were remembered as we recognized those who have gone before us.



For me, the two highlights were the workings of the AGM and the final luncheon to which members from across the province who were over ninety years of age were invited as special guests. We passed several motions. One motion now enables RWTO/OERO to welcome Educational Assistants and Early Childhood Educators to become members of our organization. The other motion that absolutely astonished me was that we passed an increase of \$10.00 to the organization membership fees beginning in 2024. We have not had an increase in eighteen years! At the Closing Luncheon on Thursday, we honoured 19 of our members who are in their nineties, six of whom are in our Ottawa-Carleton Branch. There was a standing ovation as these women were led into the room by Kingston's award winning Town Crier. This was such an emotional event as we paid tribute to the women who paved the way for us.



During the days of the convention I witnessed women reconnecting with longtime friends, forming new friendships, sharing information and learning new skills. All were grateful to belong to such a supportive organization. Now I truly understand our motto 'Caring and Sharing'.

CLOSING LUNCHEON with MEMBERS OVER 90 by Marg Dempsey, Convention Co-Convenor

One of the features of the Convention's Closing Luncheon on Thursday was the celebration of members who are over 90 years of age. Nineteen of twenty-one members from across the province who had accepted this invitation, were able to attend. Regrettably two members were not well enough to make the trip. The Ottawa-Carleton Branch was delighted to have the following members attend, as guests: Vicky Ash, Helen Brown, Meryl Forrest, Helen Macdonald, Frances Murphy Pike, and Pat Swerdfeger.



The theme of the slide show of their photos during the luncheon was ***“Forever Young, Members Over 90”***. On display throughout the Convention were foam boards showing each member's photo and bio. These were given to the women in remembrance of this luncheon.

RWTO/OERO is founded on the work and commitment of members such as these women who have paved the way for us. Now it is our turn to do the same for the next generation of members.

IN MEMORIAM



We mourn the passing of our member, Catherine Abdel Ahad, on April 16, 2023. Catherine dedicated 30 years of her life teaching second language French at Ottawa Board of Education elementary schools. Her passion for excellence in language and her commitment to her students left a lasting impact. Today, because of her work, thousands of Canadians can speak French. In later years “Ketty” attended many of our events, accompanied by her son, Gabriel. A donation has been made in her memory.

TEACHERS' TEA TIME BOOK CLUB 2023-2024

Covid and the close of the restaurant we had been using for many years has left the book club looking for a new place to meet. We are presently meeting at 11:30 on Mondays at Cora's Restaurant on Richmond Road. The following books have been chosen for the upcoming year. Contact Joy Phillips-Johansen to let her know you would like to join the group.

September 12	The Weight of Ink by Rachel Kadish
October 2	A Spanish Sunrise by Boo Walker
November 6	Looking for Jane by Heather Marshall
December 4	No meeting - This is the Christmas Luncheon date.
January 8	Denial by Beverly MacLaughlin (Former Chief Justice)
February 5	Atlas: The Story of Pa Salt by Lucinda Riley and Harry Whittaker
March 4	The Underling by Ian McKercher
April 1	Still Life by Sarah Winman
May 6	People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks
June 3	I Could Have Been by Helen Gallagher

UPCOMING EVENTS



The following events are in the calendar for the upcoming year. Please remember to wear your RWTO/OERO pins and bring your Rewards Card. You may win a prize.

SUMMER OF 2023: Summer events were advertised at the AGM and had many members sign up. There may be a few spaces available. Register soon!



Wednesday, July 26 at 1130 a.m. - Welcome to Summer

Lunch at the Canal Ritz, 375 Queen Elizabeth Driveway

If you signed up in May, please confirm your attendance with Erin Linnen at erin.linnen18@gmail.com or 613 224-3761. To register, contact her a.s.a.p.

Thursday, August 17 - Tea on the Lawn at 12:30p.m.

2100 Caboot Street, Billings Estate

Enjoy 3-tier service, finger sandwiches, scones with butter and jam, desserts.

This is a very popular outing. For those who registered at the AGM, please confirm your attendance by sending, to Kathy McLean, by July 21 your cheque for \$25.00 (made out to RWTO/OERO) at 2303 Badger Crescent. Ottawa ON K2C 1H9. This covers the cost of the tea service as well as the tax and tip. This will allow others to attend if those who signed up previously will not be attending.



OTHER DATES THROUGH THE YEAR: More details will be sent out as they become available.



Thursday, September 7 - Welcome Back Lunch with Quarter Frenzy fundraiser

Lone Star Texas Grill, 780 Baseline Road

Contact Marg Dempsey to reserve a spot.

Wednesday, October 18 Lunch with Provincial President, Sandra Salerno

Algonquin International Restaurant

More information will follow.



Monday, December 6 - Christmas Luncheon and Silent Auction

Centurion Conference and Event Center

More information will follow.

Wednesday, May 15, 2024 – Spring Lunch and AGM,

Falcon Ridge Golf Club



Thank you to the executive members whose continued hard work throughout the year makes events possible. Please let any of us know if you have any new ideas to assist us to plan events and activities. If you could organize a lunch or activity, address and mail cards, plan a speaker, run a workshop or other activity, or assist in any way, your help would be greatly appreciated.

We are grateful to live on the traditional unceded, unsundered territory of the Anishinabe Omàmiwini/Algonquin Nation whose presence on this land goes back thousands of years.