



CHALK TALK - FEB. 2022

RWTO/OERO London-Middlesex Branch Newsletter

Website: rwto.org/branch/london-middlesex

Editor: Janice Thielenhaus



A Message from our Co-Presidents:

Sandy O'Brien and Vera Rowland

It has been wonderful to see each other in person, as we gathered to share some fabulous meals over the past few months. It was so good to see people once again. More and more members have ventured out each month to attend our luncheons at RiverBend.

In September, Deb Harvey shared the news about the wonderful Grand Theatre's re-entry into live performances. In October, Peter Jaffe gave a very informative presentation drawn from his wealth of experience on "How Violence Affects Children". In November, we celebrated the season with Allison O'Connor and her Dreams Come True Music Studio's performers who were excited to be able to gather together for a live performance at RiverBend. We certainly look forward to seeing those talented performers at our June Convention.

We are looking forward to learning about "Story Rugs" in March and the continuing progress at the soon to reopen Children's Museum in April.

It was lovely to have short visits with our members in their 9th decade when we dropped off little Christmas gifts. Our 8th decade members were celebrated with a draw for three gift bags. Visit our website to see updates and pictures.

A big "Thank You" to Provincial for their \$1000 grant to every Branch for the Three Rs and to our generous members who have donated over \$1000 monthly to each of our Outreach Programs. We are very appreciative of our Branch members who have renewed their membership and thank you all, for your continued support. If you know of a recently retired friend, who is interested in becoming a member, they can join us for a meal in March or April. Their first meal after signing up for a membership will be free and your name will go into a draw for a free membership for next year, 2022-23 in appreciation of your recruitment efforts.

As always, our experienced Executive has been greatly valued by your Co-Presidents, as together, we continue to navigate the ever-changing world in which we find ourselves. Thank you all!

We are thrilled to be hosting a live Convention in London June 7-9 2022 together with all of the Area 3 Branches. There are still many opportunities to participate. Just let us know!

Fingers crossed that we will meet again at our next luncheon in the Spring. In the meantime, stay safe and well.

Yours in Caring and Sharing,

Sandy O'Brien and Vera Rowland

LUNCHEON DATES TO REMEMBER

Thursday, March 24, 2022 Story Rugs

Thursday, April 28, 2022 London Children's Museum

Thursday, May 26, 2022 Spring Banquet & Annual General Meeting



2021 ZOOM MEETINGS IN REVIEW

We were fortunate to be able to stay in touch with our membership via Zoom in the first five months of 2021. Your executive met monthly via Zoom to plan the month's Membership meetings with a Speaker and a Participation Draw for a gift basket delivered safely to a winning member's door.

Mary Ellen Zabehaylo received The Valentine basket in February 2021.



In **January** '21 Mark Uhre spoke about his life as an actor in the London area theatres pre- and post shut-down.

In **February**, Lily Keighley reviewed the LPL offerings, protocols and Library activities in a slide presentation.

In **March**, Chris Allum spoke about Fraud Prevention in all its forms in the modern age.

In **April**, Amanda Conlon gave a digital tour of the new Children's Museum under construction.

In **May** we learned about the work of the *World Tailors: Courageous Women Making a Difference*. Immigrant women are being taught useful sewing skills, practicing their English and graduating to employment enabling full participation in their new life for themselves and their children in Ontario.

The new Children's Museum in the former Kellogg's factory, now redesigned, and re-purposed.



A screen shot of a few of the members participating in a Zoom meeting earlier in 2021.

LUNCHEON DECORATIONS



Irene Gauvin (pictured here) and Sue Scruton, Helen Munce, Cathy Harrison, Nancy Hickling, Marg Williamson, Gayle Murray, Joy Morrison and Roseanne Wadsworth craft the table centre-pieces for each of our luncheons.

Sometimes, the pieces are available for purchase by members after the luncheon, to off-set the cost of materials.

We are fortunate to have such creative people among our membership.

Thank you ladies!

Here is a sample of the Fall 2021 table centre-pieces.



IN MEMORIAM

It saddens us to announce that we have lost these wonderful ladies during the past year. We were privileged to have known them and extend our condolences to their families, friends and colleagues.

Joan Watt on March 15, 2021

Ruth Havers on July 11, 2021

Madeline Hardy on December 4, 2021

Rhea Stewart on December 13, 2021

Ruth Evans on December 22, 2021

Mary Maxwell

CHANGES?

Any member who moves address or changes their email/phone number should inform Jane Williams as soon as possible. It is also helpful to the Branch if a member has a care giver or friend who acts for them in case of incapacity or death, who will contact Jane at janeandowen@sympatico.ca or phone 519-473-5160. Jane will then forward the information to the Provincial Secretary-Treasurer. **Please do not contact the provincial office directly** with these changes as they assume we have this information and do not forward it to us at the Branch.

Jane Williams

Convention 2022 June 7th - 9th
"LAUGHTER LIFTS US UP!"

This phrase has been doing double duty for our Convention team – first as our logo and second as our 'mantra'. Since the summer of 2019, plans for June 2022 have been in the works... Will we get there? Will there be a live, in-person Convention? Stay tuned! Fingers crossed! What protocols will we be living with? Thus, we have the angst and the need to keep spirits up.

It is still December 2021, as I compose this update for the Newsletter. As you read it now, winter is almost done. Unknown territory between, but I am optimistic that we are still preparing for the much anticipated RWTO/OERO get together.

The venue, Four Points Sheraton London, continues to book rooms; registration forms are ready to be posted online and in Connections; the Catering staff has our menus and instructions for set up and décor; the Bristol Ballroom awaits its decorating, entertainment and tasty, carefully prepared meals as we wait to celebrate and reunite with friends from across the province. The target Registration number is 250 + guests and other members but there may be limits re capacity in the meeting and dining rooms.

The five Branches within Area three are planning together – all taking part in some way. There are Committee Chairs and Volunteers from each Branch, all doing a stellar job preparing the many events and activities and anticipating the details that are involved. As well as Door Prizes, Tote Bags, the Silent Auction and Staycations to Tours, Entertainment, the AGM and Awards to the Over Nineties Recognition, Surprises, Hospitality, Dancing ... the list goes on!

A HUGE THANK YOU to the Committees, the Steering Committee and the Volunteers for their unfailing patience, support, hard work and research into what will make a smooth running, fun-filled Convention. This team has talent, enthusiasm and experience. Our Provincial Board Liaison Committee has offered technical help, knowledge and experience from their many past Conventions and present roles.

To our London-Middlesex Branch members – there is lots of time to volunteer and get involved. You may want to register for a day or for a meal – the Wednesday night banquet is always fun and exciting. There will be more information coming when we meet in March for the Luncheon Meeting. Even now, I am looking forward to Spring although Christmas is just around the corner! What lies ahead? Santa, I want a clear path to a June Convention!

Cathy Harrison, Convenor

Just a few members of the committee for Convention '22

Mary Jane Finn,
Pat Savage, Cathy Harrison and
Sandra McKeen



NEW MEMBERS in 2021

We were pleased to welcome these new Members in 2021

**Karen Button
Julia Ballem
Madeline Carter
Pauline Evans
Elke R. Freiter
Gail Partridge
Wendy Shannon**

Karen Tierney



New Members are welcomed.



RWTO SUPPLEMENTARY INSURANCE

If you are a Manulife SecureServe customer with the RWTO Hospital and Home Care Plan, you are required to create a Manulife ID in order to log in. If you have any problems, contact Manulife using the telephone number on the back of your insurance card. This does NOT apply to members who mail in their forms or communicate with Manulife by phone.

When a plan member has the need for nursing services at home, as a result of injury or illness, you must now send Manulife a PRIOR AUTHORIZATION FORM signed by a physician or nurse practitioner. If your need is urgent or immediate, contact the Manulife Call Centre at 1-877-222-7340 for verbal authorization.

You can find the Claim Form and Prior Authorization Form on the RWTO web-site (rwto.org/membership/insurance plans) or you can phone the Call Centre and have the form mailed to you.

If you are in your first year of retirement and wish to apply for this supplementary insurance, you do not have to complete the medical section in the application. However, this section must be completed by new Branch Members who are not in their first year of retirement and would like to apply for the Hospital and Home Care Plan. Please phone me, Helen Munce at 519-473-2050 if you have any questions. I can then send you a brochure with the application form.

REMEMBER to inform Manulife if you have a change of address.

Helen Munce

FRIENDSHIP ACTIVITIES

Breakfast dates – Shelly's Restaurant at the Lamplighter Inn on Wellington Road South, where there is a private space for our Breakfast Group.

Monday, March 14, 9:30 am at Shelly's

Tuesday, April 12, 9:30 am at Shelly's

Wednesday, May 11, 9:30 am at Shelly's

Monday, June 13, 9:30 am at Shelly's

Tuesday, July 12, 9:30 am at Shelly's

Wednesday, August 10, 9:30 am at Shelly's

Adventures of the Hiking/Walking Club



The Hiking and Walking club has continued to find new trails in the Fall of '21 and has now reached over 30 members. Anyone who likes to walk in parks or hike on trails in and around London is

welcome to join for fun, laughter and companionship – set your own pace and come out when you can!

The frequency and number of walks decreased with wet weather and Covid cautions of course, but a few new locations were enjoyed by those able to attend. In the west end of the city we went to Kains Woods and in the east end we explored the Jane Bigelow Trail (named for our first female Mayor who championed parks, trails and recreation) and Meadowlily Woods along the Thames River where the autumn colours were admired one perfect day for walking.

Has someone left a big CD leaning against a tree – or is it a huge spider's web???

Photos from Lynda Faulkner

Cathy H. grandmac@hotmail.ca

Maureen G. moe.graham@hotmail.com



Outreach to our Community in 2021-22

Cash donations have been preferred during Covid restrictions in order to limit personal contact.

September 2021 The Women's Rural Resource Centre, Strathroy and Area

October 2021 ANOVA – supporting victims of violence at the London Women's Shelter

November 2021 My Sisters' Place

March 2022 The London Food Bank

April 2022 The Children's Museum & Kiwanis Music Festival Awards

Best Reads from our Executive Members

Cathy – Isabelle Allende, *Daughter of Fortune*, a biographical saga of a young orphaned girl who manages to see the World.

Sandra – Hilary Clinton & Louise Penny, *A State of Terror*, a fiction that kept this reader on the edge of her seat; an utterly compelling thriller!

Mary – Rhys Bowen, *The Royal Spyness* a humorous mystery and historical fiction series. The latest book is *God Rest Ye Royal Gentlemen* released in 2021.

Debby – Kate Quinn, *The Huntress* is an historical fiction masterpiece that will keep you spellbound and is quite true to the actual known history of the period.

Sharon – Kate Quinn, *The Rose Code* (624 pages in paperback). A WWII story of three young women who are code-breakers working in the top secret Bletchley Park. There is a spy they must root out after the war is over – based on factual data.

Dianne – Suleika Jaoud, who battled leukemia as a very young adult writes a memoir, *Between Two Kingdoms*, a journey as inspiring as it is amusing.

A second memoir - Alex Trebek, *And the answer is ... Reflections of my life*. This is a series of vignettes which give fascinating glimpses into his life and philosophy as well as a behind the scenes' view of the making of Jeopardy.

Jane – Val McDermid, *The Vanishing Point* – a crime thriller begins in Chicago's O'Hara airport where a young child is kidnapped. This gripping plot is filled with breathtaking twists and turns as Stephanie looks for Jimmy. The surprise ending is worth the journey! McDermid has written many novels set in the U.K.

Janice – Beverley McLaughlin, *Truth Be Told* an autobiography from her life as a child and along her journey to becoming the first female Chief Justice on the Supreme Court of Canada. She explains how many of the ground-breaking legal decisions came into being. A compelling read.

Vera – Beverley McLaughlin, in her retirement writes fiction, *Full Disclosure* has a female lawyer leading the way through a courtroom drama packed with plot twists.

Sandy – Karin Slaughter, *False Witness* tells the hard-hitting, fast-paced tale of a flawed heroine who works hard to save her sister, her daughter and her marriage from a pathological murderer set upon revenge. She is a master of the genre.

Fredrik Backman, *A Man Called Ove*, is a poignant story of an irascible curmudgeon. A good read!

Janice – Richard Wagamese, *Medicine Walk*, is a heart-rending story of an indigenous young boy surviving by his wits and knowledge of the woods, fish and animals as he takes his alcoholic father on his final journey. This indigenous author has written many excellent books. *Starlight* has the same central character and was published posthumously.

Another indigenous author, Katherena Vermette, *The Break*, is not an easy read but very true to the life of many indigenous women – there is a "trigger" warning at the beginning of the book.