



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

President's Message

For teachers, September has always been a special month. During our teaching days September has always represented new beginnings - new school year, new plans, fresh new faces.

This September is definitely a new beginning for RWTO/OERO. Our 67th Convention in Kingston set us on a new path. Just as our founding members made history in 1956, so have we made history by inviting retired Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators and Child and Youth Counsellors/Workers into the fold. Inviting the women who worked beside us in our classrooms and our schools will be an exciting new chapter in our organization. Indeed, some branches have already reported that some of these educational professionals have already joined as members. Welcome!

This year will also be interesting because there could be other changes afoot. An Ad Hoc Committee has been formed to examine the current delegate system we use for the Annual General Meetings at our conventions. This committee features representation from small, medium, and large branches across the province.

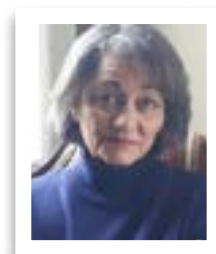
We all love to meet at our annual conventions. At the last two I could feel the excitement and happiness everyone felt to meet their friends from near and far. We all want these happy occasions to continue. But, post-pandemic, the rising costs of food and lodging make holding yearly in-person conventions not feasible from a financial viewpoint at this time.

The Board of Directors has decided to insert virtual conventions when needed to help keep us in the black going forward. We never want to see a time when in-person conventions are not possible.

It is an honour and privilege to serve you as Provincial President this year. I am eager to meet you at your branch functions this year. I hope to see you soon!

In Caring and Sharing,

Sandra Salerno
Provincial President RWTO/OERO



Sandra Salerno,
Provincial President

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

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Convention 2023 – “Cruising Down the Waters, Sailing into Kingston”

Historic Kingston saw the influx of Retired Women Teachers who arrived for the 67th Annual Convention in June. With the hard work of Areas 8 and 9, under the leadership of Anne Graham and Marg Dempsey, they kept us on track. Tuesday many participated in the workshops: Linda Huffman, with Provincial Treasurers, Linda Sargeant presented a video “Helping our Branches Thrive,” Insurance was presented by Karin Mussen and LeAnne Taylor, Long Term Care from Kingston and Zumba Gold by Trish Cammart.

The theme, Cruising Down the Waters, Sailing into Kingston became our reality when we boarded The Island Queen for our opening night. With live entertainment from Steve and Penny, commentary of the historical buildings we passed, great food and the fellowship of Retired Women Teachers, a great time was had by all. We sailed back into the harbour under a beautiful sunset.

Our very busy business meetings on Wednesday and Thursday mornings went well and we were astonished that we completed all 20 Resolutions along with our reports, financials and budget. In the absence of Terry Kennedy, Karen Mussen and LeAnne Taylor presented a cheque to our organization from Manulife.

Wednesday Tours were popular, whether you were behind bars at the penitentiary, or sitting at a desk

in a one room schoolhouse, or on a ferry travelling to Amherst Island or with Sherry Pringle, artist and author, they returned with great chatter about their adventures.

Wednesday night, the Board of Directors was piped into the ballroom for a delicious meal and many awards were presented to our ladies and branches. The evening concluded with the music from The Reasons.

Thursday morning began with the Memorial Service. As we remembered the many ladies who passed this year, their pictures were shown on the screen. Thanks to Susan Rose and Suzanne Rondeau for this presentation.

Our final luncheon with our Over 90's and Mother/Daughter duos was very special with these very important ladies in attendance. It was a touching way to conclude our Convention. The newly elected Executive and Board of Directors were installed by Nancy Papiez on behalf of Nancy Bell. The Haldimand Branch introduced our new President, Sandra Salerno. She addressed the members and adjourned the 67th Convention.

Respectively submitted,

Judy Drummond,
Past President



Convention 2023 – “Cruising Down the Waters, Sailing into Kingston” -ctd.





Honorary Membership Award Recipients for 2023



The Honorary Membership Award is the highest honour that RWTO/OERO bestows. It is given for outstanding service at the provincial level. For 2022-2023, we honour Judy Drummond.

Judy is certainly deserving of this special recognition given her exceptional contributions at the provincial level, sharing her time and skills generously.

Judy began her journey serving on the Provincial Board of Directors in 2011 as Area 9 Director for four years, supporting the branches with enthusiasm. In 2015, Judy became Recording Secretary, taking minutes that were succinct and recorded with exactness. She also collected and organized submissions for the Annual Report, which is a task that requires many diverse skills. Judy worked diligently as the Provincial Convention Convenor on the Board of Directors for the 2020 Convention that was scheduled to be in Kingston but cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic. She met this turn of events with a positive attitude, supporting her committee members and dealing with the cancellation details efficiently.

In 2020, Judy began her journey through the provincial chairs when she became Second Vice-President and was the Provincial Goodwill Convenor and Chair of the Convention Handbook Revision Standing Committee. As First Vice-President in 2021, she was Chair of the Constitution and Resolutions Standing Committee and in 2022 became Provincial President.

Throughout her time on the Provincial Board of Directors, Judy has served on many other Standing Committees which included the Membership Committee, the Honorary Membership Committee, the Policies and Procedures Committee, the

Nominations Committee, and the Review Committee. As President, she was Chair of the Finance Committee's monthly meetings. Judy was also the Issues and Concerns Convenor for two years writing articles of interest for the Connections Newsletter.

Judy has served on ad hoc committees including 'Cost Savings', and 'Marketing'. She was Chair of the 'Uses and Purposes of Privacy Form vs Membership Form' and Chair of the 'Amalgamation and Names of New Branches'.

As Provincial President, Judy has given selflessly to RWTO/OERO. In addition to her committee work, she has travelled the province visiting branches to support them. She has also prepared agendas, chaired the board meetings dealing with extensive business items, and answered numerous emails and phone calls. Judy has worked with the Convention Committee Team on this year's 2023 Convention including the Island Queen Cruise for our Tuesday night dinner.

Judy has demonstrated a high level of professionalism, skill, and aplomb in every position she has undertaken on the Provincial Board of Directors. Her service in the various roles exemplifies her competent leadership. Judy embraces change with thoughtfulness. She is supportive of her colleagues on the Provincial Board and in the branches, responding to their needs in a timely fashion with grace and kindness, genuine compassion, and sensitivity.

We have certainly benefitted from Judy's dedication and all she has given.

Thank you and congratulations, Judy!

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Bell, Honorary President



Award Winners

Feather In Your Hat Award

The Feather in Your Hat Award recognizes creative, innovative, and successful activities, carried out by a branch or group of branches, that have clearly enriched the programs offered by RWTO/OERO.

Submissions for this award must be made to the Membership Convenor between January 1st and March 1st, 2024. Submissions should include area and branch names, total number of members, number of members involved in this 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 and send the submission (i.e. hard copy) by mail. The Membership Convenor will confirm its arrival by email.

2023 Feather in Your Hat Winners Listed Alphabetically

Smaller Branches

Daisy Wilson Coldwater
Kingston

Large-Sized Branches

BurlOak
Ottawa-Carleton

Medium-Sized Branches

Niagara South

Please check the Awards Page on the RWTO/OERO website for details on each project.

Barbara Bain Membership Award

The Barbara Bain Award is named in honour of our longtime, London-Middlesex member, Barbara Bain, who served on the Provincial Board of Directors for 11 years as an Area Director, Assistant Insurance Convenor, Insurance Convenor, Second and First Vice-President, President, Past President, and Honorary President, as well as being the Membership Convenor.

The formula for calculating the award is straightforward. How many members join your branch minus the number of existing members who do not renew during the April 1st to March 3rd period. These calculations are done by our Provincial Secretary-Treasurer Linda Huffman.

2022-2023 Barbara Bain Membership Winners

Smaller Branches

1st place - \$400 - South Bruce
2nd place - \$300 - Blue Mountain
2nd place - \$300 - Wiarton
3rd place - \$200 - Daisy Wilson Coldwater
3rd place - \$200 - Niagara West

Large-Sized Branches

1st place - \$400 - St. Catharines
2nd place - \$300 - Durham North
3rd place - \$200 - Haldimand
3rd place - \$200 - London-Middlesex

Medium-Sized Branches

1st place - \$400 - Sudbury
2nd place - \$300 - Belleville
2nd place - \$300 - Trenton
3rd place - \$200 - Peterborough

Respectfully submitted, Membership Committee (2022-2023)
Anne Graham (Lanark)
Joyce Ratz (Central Algoma)
Nancy Strutt (Flesherton)
Kathy McLean (Ottawa-Carleton)



Insurance Matters

I'm always pleased to report about the performance of the Hospital and Home Care Plan and Personal Accidental Death and Dismemberment Plan for the most recently ended plan year and to tell you about the Profit Sharing that was generated by the plan for the year. The plan year runs from April 1st through March 31st. The financial position of the plan during this period is evaluated by the insurer to determine the amount of profit that remains in the plan after expenses have been paid out. These expenses include claims paid and the insurer's administrative costs (such as underwriting, new policies issued and claims adjudication). When conducting its evaluation this year the insurer found that claims reflected very little change from the previous year. Overall premiums collected had declined slightly which impacts the profit. I'm pleased to share with you that the amount of the Profit Sharing cheque delivered to the Association for the plan year was \$80,685.69. When the Administrative Fee paid to the Association is added in, the total revenues to the Association from the Hospital and Home Care Plan were \$102,793.58.

We have had several questions from members about the Prior Authorization Form that Manulife now requires of plan participants in need of Home Nursing following an injury or illness. This form can be found on the RWTO/OERO website (www.rwto.org/membership/insurance) and can be downloaded for completion. If you are going into hospital and will require the assistance of a Personal Support Worker, a Registered Practical Nurse or a Registered Nurse when you are discharged, you will have to have this form completed and submitted to Manulife for their approval. You would complete the first part of the form, your family physician or nurse practitioner would complete the balance of the form. If your situation is urgent, as sometimes happens, you can obtain verbal approval from Manulife by calling 1-800-268-3763. Once you've received approval for the service, Manulife will arrange the care and will pay the service provider directly.

You will notice that this form indicates it is required for services other than Home Nursing. However RWTO/OERO plan participants need to use this form **ONLY** for Home Nursing. The other services should be ignored as this is a generic form applicable to all

Manulife's insurance plans. It is not required for the Hearing Aid benefit or CPAP equipment.

If you would prefer to use a Nursing Service provider other than that arranged by Manulife, you are certainly free to do so. However, prior authorization is still required, and you will have to pay for the service out of pocket before applying for reimbursement up to the plan limit (80% of the cost to a maximum of \$1,500 for any one illness or injury).

It is important to note that if you are coordinating benefits under another plan, the Prior Authorization Form is not required as the other insurer pays first before the Hospital and Home Care Plan. Manulife assumes that the other insurer (be that RTO through Johnson's, OTIP, or a spousal plan) has approved your nursing care and adjudicated your claim accordingly. You simply submit a copy of your claim summary page (which shows the amount of the claim submitted and paid by the other insurer) along with your claim to the RWTO Hospital and Home Care Plan. Manulife will pay the difference up to the maximum allowable under the Hospital and Home Care Plan.

We encourage you to visit the RWTO/OERO website and browse through the insurance page. You'll find the brochure, claim form, Prior Authorization Form and an interesting powerpoint presentation available for your interest.

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Resolutions for 2023 Annual General Meeting

Resolution # 1

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III Membership and Fees, be amended to read:

1. Regular Members
 - a. Regular Members include Retired Women Educational Professionals who have worked in schools as listed:
 - i. Retired Women Teachers
 - ii. Retired Women Educational Assistants
 - b. Retired Women Educational Professionals may become Regular Members whether or not they are receiving a job-related pension.

Motion #3

That voting for Resolutions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, and 15 be held by secret ballot.

Carried.

After a vote by secret ballot Resolution #1

Carried.

Resolution #2

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III Membership and Fees

1. Regular Members, be amended with the addition of “Retired Women Early Childhood Educators”.

Carried.

Resolution #3

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III Membership Fees,

1. Regular Members, be amended with the addition of “Retired Women Speech & Language Pathologists”. **Amended**

Motion #4

That audiologists and vision specialists be added to Resolution #3.

Carried.

Motion #4 as amended

Defeated.

Motion #7 That voting occur by show of hands and voting cards rather than a secret ballot.

Carried.

Resolution #4

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III membership and Fees, be amended with the addition of “Retired Women Child & Youth Workers/Counsellors”.

Carried.

Resolution #5

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III. Membership and Fees, 1. Regular Members, be amended with the addition of “Retired Women Social Workers”.

Defeated.

Resolution #6

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III 1. Regular Members, be replaced with “Be it resolved to extend RWTO/OERO to include Retired Women Educational Professionals as members of RWTO/OERO. Retired Women Educational Professionals shall include but not be limited to Retired Women Teachers, Retired Women Educational Assistants, Retired Early Childhood Educators, Retired Women Speech and Language Pathologists, Retired Women and Youth Workers/Counsellors and Retired Women Social Workers.

Out of Order.

Resolution # 7

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article I Name “The organization shall be called the “Retired Women Teachers of Ontario/Organisation des enseignantes retraitées de l’Ontario” be amended to read: “this organization, which as of June 2023 extended its membership to represent not only Retired Women Teachers but also other Retired Women Educational Professionals, shall maintain the name “Retired Women Teachers of Ontario/Organisation des enseignantes retraitées de l’Ontario”, hereafter referred to as RWTO/OERO. Carried

Carried.

Resolution # 8

Be it resolved that Constitution, MISSION STATEMENT, VISION STATEMENT 1, 2 and 5, and GOALS 1, “teachers” be amended to read “educational professionals”,

Unnecessary.



Resolutions for 2023 Annual General Meeting - Ctd.

Resolution # 9

Be it resolved that Constitution, GOALS 2, “retired teachers” be amended to read: “retired women educational professionals”.

Unnecessary.

Resolution #10

Be it resolved that Policies and Procedures, ARTICLE III, Membership and fees be amended to read:

1. Regular Membership to include other Retired Women Educational Professionals into our organization as follows:
 - a. To be a member of RWTO/OERO, a Retired Woman Educational Professional must pay her membership fee.
 - b. A Retired Educational Professional may join at any time during the year.
 - c. A retired Woman Educational Professional holds membership in the Branch to which she pays her Provincial Fees.
 - d. All members will have equal opportunity within the organization at Branch and Provincial levels, and/or be a delegate of the Branch.
 - e. Insurance programs will be available to all joining women members.

Withdrawn.

Resolution #11

Be it resolved that POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, Article III, Membership AND FEES,

1. Membership be amended to read:
 - a. To be a member of RWTO/OERO a Retired Woman Educational Professional must pay her Provincial membership fee.
 - b. A retired Woman Educational Professional holds membership in the Branch to which she pays her Provincial membership fee.
 - c. A Retired Woman Educational Professional may join at any time during the year.
 - d. Each member has equal opportunity

within the organization, at Branch and Provincial levels, and may be a Convention delegate for their Branch.

- e. The insurance program will be available to any qualified member.
- f. In addition, A member may pay a local Branch fee to other Branches where she wishes to attend.
- g. RWTO/OERO will provide Branches with a free membership pin for each new member.

Carried.

Resolution #12

Be it resolved that Constitution Article III Membership and Fees, 4, Interim Member (a.), be amended to read: “An Interim Member shall be a Woman Educational Professional who is currently on Long Term disability (LTD)”.

Unnecessary.

Resolution #13

Be it resolved that Constitution Article X Annual Meeting 3. Definitions b) Eligible Delegates be replaced with: Each Branch shall be represented by two (2) delegates, one Provincial Delegate and one Branch Delegate, regardless of the paid membership numbers for each Branch.

Motion #8

That due to the proposed concept changes the RWTO/OERO Board of Directors create an Ad Hoc Committee to study the concerns and implications surrounding Resolution #13. The committee should include representation from small, medium and large Branches as well as members of the BOD. The committee will report back to the AGM in 2024.

Carried.

Resolution #14

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article X Annual Meeting 5. Voting Delegates be amended to read:

- a. Each Branch shall be entitled to two voting delegates with all reasonable expenses paid by the Provincial Office.

Motion #9

That Resolution #14 be referred to the Ad Hoc Committee established by Motion #8.

Resolutions for 2023 Annual General Meeting - Ctd.

Carried.

Resolution #15

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article X, Annual Meeting, 5. Voting Delegates be replaced with:

- a. Each Branch shall be entitled to two voting delegates with all reasonable expenses paid by the Provincial Office.
- b. Branch delegates selected to attend the Annual Meeting must be representing the Branch through which they pay their Provincial fees.

This Resolution will be addressed by the Ad Hoc Committee formed as a result of Motion #8 being carried. Because Resolutions #14 and #15 were not passed, there is no need for #15.

Resolution #16

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article VIII Duties and Structures of Provincial Committees, A. Standing Committees, be amended by the addition of: 9, Marketing Committee.

The Marketing Committee shall:

- a. Be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors;
- b. Consist of three members from the Board of Directors and invited members-at-large, the number determined by the committee.
- c. Meet to develop a marketing plan that includes analytical strategies and innovative ideas;
- d. Report the results to the Board.

Motion #10 that the vote on Resolution #16 be held.

Carried.

Resolution #16

Carried.

Resolution #17

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article VII – Duties of the other members of the Board of Directors

1. Honorary President
 - a. Install the elected officers and members of the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting be amended by the addition of “conclusion of” before “the Annual General Meeting”.

Carried.

Resolution #18

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article VII Duties of the Board of Directors

1. Honorary President. The Honorary President shall:
2. e. “Serve as a member of the Steering Committee at the AGM” be removed.

Carried.

Resolution #19

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article X – Annual Meeting

- 7a. “May speak to resolutions and motions to assist in clarifications in a discussion”, be amended by adding “unless acting as a member of the Steering Committee”.

Carried.

Resolution #20

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article IX, Branch Organization, 7: be amended to read: “Branches considering disbanding or amalgamating must inform the Provincial President in writing with a six-month notice.”

Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Salerno, Provincial President



Branch Resolutions for 2024 Annual General Meeting

Resolutions for the 2024 Annual General Meeting must be submitted to Jan Murdoch, Convenor of the Resolutions Committee, by November 15, 2023. The intent of every resolution should be clear, concise, and must contain one idea or focus. (Policy and Procedures Article VII Resolutions)

When your branch is preparing to submit a resolution, questions and concerns should be submitted to Jan Murdoch (rwtolstyp@gmail.com) or Jane Cartier at (acecartier@gmail.com).

Jan Murdoch, 1st Vice-President





Issues and Concerns

Available Support Options As We Age: The Senior Living Sector

Most of us have experienced in some way, either in seeking direct support for a loved one or in obtaining support for ourselves, the determination and advocacy required to obtain the care and services to enable continued living in the family home, or preparing for a move to a safe and secure environment that will meet the senior's needs. In last year's articles, we explored ways to ensure that accommodations to our home, attention to our lifestyle choices as well as planning for future issues related to aging, all contributed to aging in place with more control. Similarly, knowing what our options are will help us to navigate the healthcare system when our needs require more intervention.

At our recent convention in Kingston, there was a workshop entitled Long Term Care. Janice, the presenter, works as a long term care advisor, providing her clients with her knowledge and understanding of the process of accessing and acquiring the appropriate supports for her client's needs. I found her overview of the 'senior living sector' helpful. I will begin with what might be called the 'entry level' of access, contacting the Home and Community Care Support Services, previously known as the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). Home and Community Care Support Services organizations provide patient care including home care and long-term care home placement services and facilitate access to community services. HCCSS organizations are responsible for deciding who receives care, the level of care you need and for how long.

The province is divided into geographical areas, and those areas divided into community offices. Once contact is made by either telephone or email to that office, no need for a doctor's referral, you will be introduced to a case manager or care coordinator. That person will determine if you qualify for government funded services or would put you in contact with community agencies, which may require a co payment. The case manager will arrange for a home visit and then determine the services that you need and which ones will be funded and those that will not. Regard-

less, the HCCSS will assist you in finding community services.

Here is a list of some of the in-home services available through Home and Community Care Support Services:

1. Health care professionals ie nursing care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech language therapy
2. Personal care ie washing and bathing, health care, preventative skin care, routine hand or foot care
3. Homemaking, i.e. housecleaning, doing laundry, shopping, banking.
4. End of life care at home, i.e. nursing and personal care, medical supplies, including low-cost medication for seniors through the Ontario Drug Benefit Plan, tests, hospital and sickroom equipment.

Government-funded services are delivered by health professionals and personal support workers who are under contract with your Home and Community Care Support Services organization.

This article has provided a brief summary of the information that is provided on the Ontario Ministry of Health's 'Home and Community Care' web page.

Contact your local HCCSS office by:

- Calling the provincial number 310-2222 (no area code required). This service will automatically direct your call to the nearest office from your calling location.
- Using the online map locator available on website to access your local office telephone or email address
- Email HCCSSInfo@hccontario.ca for general information

Submitted by
Lynn Sulman
Issues and Concerns Convenor



Board Reports

Provincial Program Coordinator

Presidents and Area Directors - how is it that it is already September and the beginning of our new membership year? And what a year this can be as you have the opportunity to add retired women Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators and Child and Youth Workers to your branch membership.

When planning your meetings and events for the year you may wish to keep this in mind to ensure that your content is applicable to all.

At this time, you should have received your 'Timelines for Presidents' and September 'At a Glance' calendar by now. As many of you are new this year, I encourage you all - returning and new - to print a copy of the Timelines and keep it as a handy reference throughout the year. If you have NOT received either document please drop me a quick email and I will be happy to resend.

This is also a good time to ensure that your con-

tact information is up to date with the Provincial Office at info@rwto.org to be sure you receive all communications in a timely manner.

Be sure to take the opportunity at your Annual Presidents Meetings this fall to ask any questions you may have. These meetings are designed to support you and share ideas with other branches in your area. Your meeting may also be joint with the Provincial and Branch Insurance Convenors. Your Area Director is there to assist you and is your link to the Provincial Board.

As well, I am always just an email away.

Wishing you, your branch and members a successful and enjoyable year!

Judith Bennoch
Provincial Program Coordinator



Website Convenor

New Communications Website Convenor!

Jane Macdonald
rwtowebsite@gmail.com

REMINDER

Send your Branch News and Upcoming Events using the provided form on our website rwto.org. On the Home page, choose BRANCHES and then BRANCH NEWS & EVENTS in the drop-down menu. Choose the Blue lettering that says "Click HERE to set up your post". Then fill in the blanks with your info, choose any images/files that you want to add by clicking on "Choose File" for a main image or "SELECT FILES" for extra images or files and don't forget to check off

that you're not a robot. Then click "SUBMIT POST FOR APPROVAL" These forms are sent directly to my email, and it is the easiest and fastest way to get your information posted to your Branch Webpage.

I look forward to working with all the Branch Website Convenors over the next years and if you have any questions, please email me at rwtowebsite@gmail.com and I will do my best to answer as I learn this new position.

Jane Macdonald
Website Convenor





Connections Newsletter

The Connections newsletter is RWTO/OERO's official communication to our members. It is informative and the voice of many who volunteer to serve for our organization. It takes a team to bring this communication to your attention. I would like to thank Sharon Chop (Ottawa) and Christine Roberts (South Bruce) for their editing skills and ensuring the content meets our standards. I am still in need of one or two more who have a keen eye and like to work from home or wherever they may be. There are three issues

throughout the year, so it does not take a great deal of your personal time. Please contact me directly if you are interested.

We are also very pleased to have Erica (Renaud) Miles as our Graphic Designer. Erica creates and designs the layout using her many skills. I am thankful for her guidance and patience as I navigate this new role.

Kathy Smith
Newsletter Convenor



Archivist Report

Our In Memoriam ceremony in Kingston was well-received, honouring 125 members for 2022-23. Many thanks to Kathy Gallagher for her thoughtful support; technical and personal.

Please send names of deceased members to Linda Huffman at the Provincial office and photographs to me rwtoarchivist@gmail.com as soon as possible. I will acknowledge your email; however, if you don't hear from me in a timely manner please re-send ensuring I have received it. Information can be sent by your president, goodwill/member-

ship convenor, or branch treasurer. If anyone is missed, she will be honoured the following year. January 31 is the deadline for names. March 31 is the picture deadline.

I can retrieve a photo from an online announcement if you send me the link or location. We make every effort to find and include as many pictures as possible.

Respectfully Submitted by
Susan Rose



News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

Cambridge

Our branch draws its members from Cambridge and surrounding towns in southwestern Ontario. In the last 25 years our city has become ethnically diverse as many families have moved from Toronto; however, our membership remains predominantly white and Christian. We hope there may be more diversity within the other educational groups which we can now welcome as members. We meet in a church which has been an affirming congregation for over 20 years. This venue promotes diversity and includes at-risk members from a community addiction recovery program as kitchen and wait staff. Our meetings always include an Indigenous land acknowledgement. The venue is fully accessible so that members with mobility issues can attend. Members are encouraged to car pool and rides are offered. Our two book clubs and genealogy club meet online during the winter. We support a variety of charities, including a local homeless shelter and women's crisis shelter.

Submitted by
Mary Jane Novak, Branch President

Guelph-Wellington

Guelph-Wellington Retired Teachers ask everyone to welcome new members to our fall opening meeting and each luncheon after that. All retired teachers are also invited to join our group on rwto.org. New members receive gifts and a membership pin at the time they join and



a welcome note from the president. We also now begin each of our luncheon meetings by recognizing our relationship with native people in

our area. This includes identifying that we are gathering near the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral) people. We offer our respect to the seven tribes in our area as we seek to strengthen our relationship with them. We recognize that members come from many walks of life and that we desire to take down walls that divide us. At our March meeting a member spoke about her work with native students in the North upon her retirement. A new executive committee has been formed to find more ways to interact with our community.

Submitted by
Marion Kelly, Branch member

Kitchener-Waterloo

Diversity and Inclusion in our RWTO/OERO

Membership:

D: Different

I: Included

V: Various gifts

E: Enrich us.

R: Real acceptance is

S: Shown to all,

I: Inspiring us with

T: Truth, trust, and tenacity.

Y: Yes, we are embracing.

Quote: "Inclusion works to the advantage of everyone. We all have things to learn and we all have something to teach." - Helen Henderson (1946-2015)

Submitted by the executive members of the Kitchener-Waterloo Branch of RWTO/OERO

Palmerston and District

Recently, in a worship service, the song "Draw the Circle Wide" was sung. As I sang the words "let our hearts touch far horizons, so encompass great and small; let our loving know no borders",



News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

I was reminded of ways my friends and I have been involved in helping newly landed immigrants, as well as society's less fortunate individuals, and marginalized strangers. Serving as contact person for a Laotian family, ESL classes within our schools/communities, one-on-one conversations within a group setting, engaging individuals in community activities, and sharing meals are but a few ways to draw the circle wider. Caring and sharing together we learn from each other as we showcase the talents and contributions of each individual. Seemingly little pebbles create big ripples.

Your journey is not the same as mine, and my journey is not yours, but if you meet me on the path, may we encourage each other. – Unknown

Submitted by
Kathy Watt, Branch President

Stratford

Our branch is a good mix of retired teachers who have "come from away" as well as from the local school board. We also have both elementary and secondary levels and are now thrilled to have our first Educational Assistant become a member.

To add to our diversity, several members work with immigrants who have been sponsored by the churches. We also have ladies who teach Indigenous groups in their "free" time; as well as two members who have written a book and workshop that works with Indigenous tales.

Our membership consists of women from a wide age range– from 55 to over 100! The historical accounts of these women's memories are amazing.. The membership consists of women who have a range in identity (straight and LGBTQ2S+); as well as marital status. These life experiences have

been diverse and supportive for our community.

We are very proud of our membership.

Submitted by
Linda O'Connor, Branch President

Chatham-Kent

To promote diversity within our branch, we will need to keep that in mind for our yearly planning. We want to welcome retired female educational professionals of all ages, abilities, educational levels, ethnicities, races, and backgrounds. It is important to educate and concern ourselves with activities and programs of interest so that our varied members feel included and supported. That will begin with accessible venues for any membership gatherings and hopefully menus with options. We need to hear the stories and learn of the experiences and talents of diverse groups in our own community. We hope to involve more members during our meetings through personal contact invitations and requests for assistance with necessary tasks. Practicing our sharing and caring and helping our members feel important and valued is what we want and need for the success of our branch.

Submitted by
Lynn Russell, Branch President

London-Middlesex

London-Middlesex members and executives come from varying teaching backgrounds such as private, public, separate, elementary and secondary. As we implement our Each one, Reach one program this fall, we strive to welcome all new retired members with our lunch meetings and our friendship activities. We provide a variety

News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

of social opportunities for all and opportunities to participate in many different charitable outreach projects. Our lunch meetings are held in an accessible venue enabling a variety of people with differing abilities to attend. We also offer rides to those who need help to attend. We endeavour to include various speakers and topics on a diverse range of topics. In September, our guest speaker is the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Donna Kotsopoulos speaking on the topic of Education Beyond 2050. Our members continue to be interested and concerned about their previous profession.

Submitted by
Mary Maxwell and Linda Freeman, Co-Presidents

Sarnia-Lambton

Diversion and inclusion have been a priority for RWTO/OERO for many years. The fellowship of women from varying backgrounds has always enhanced our gatherings. When lives are enriched by the perspectives offered by a variety of cultures and lifestyles, enjoyed over a meal, we can gain insight into the lives of others and develop new appreciation for their many challenges. This promotes a culture in which all feel equally listened to and involved. As former educators, we know learning never stops and being open to opinions is a way to grow. Inviting representatives and awareness of local initiatives is a way to expand understanding of issues faced by minority groups. Diversity and inclusion are issues which will only become more relevant. Our expanding global lives create a coexistence of different nationalities, religions and ethnicities, as well as gender and sexual orientation. Our organization gives us an opportunity to learn from each other.

Submitted by Johnna Johansen and Eveline George,
Co-Presidents

St. Thomas-Elgin

Our Branch met six times with interesting guest speakers and supporting a variety of Elgin charities. In September, the branch raised \$1100 towards our annual backpack project for Violence Against Women. In October, we invited Janet Francis who is originally from Trinidad to be our guest speaker. Janet has been concerned about the lack of diversity in children's books. So, she wrote her book "Lucky's Hidden Talent". Her book features children from various ethnic groups discovering their hidden talents. In April, Christine Burke, a line dancing instructor, invited us to join her on the dance floor where she taught us a few easy line dances. At our May meeting, members were invited to donate fabric and sign up for our Elgin Hospice Cuddle Quilt project. Our Branch continues to reach out to our members via newsletters, emails and phone calls ensuring that all members are kept informed of the branch's activities.

Submitted by
Rita Demcheson, Branch President



Windsor-Essex

Currently our branch reads a Land Acknowledgement before any branch activity to focus our attention on the contributions of First Nations peoples. We took part in the Moose Hide Campaign by wearing a small piece of moose hide in solidarity with Indigenous and non-indigenous



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men and boys against violence toward women and children. Pieces of moose hide were provided to our members along with an explanatory card.

When planning activities, we focus on the access needs of members with mobility issues. We see branch members working collaboratively and assisting each other with food and supplies at events. In addition to in-person gatherings, we hosted Zoom Book Chats and a session recently with travel agents so that members unable to join in-person or associ-

ate members living outside our area can participate alongside branch members. These are some of the ways we support diversity and inclusion.

Submitted by
Patricia Wales,
Branch President



Lanark

Our branch has 62 members and 8 life-time members. We are looking forward to opening our membership to other women from the educational community.

Our Social committee arranges for luncheons and activities in different locations in the county and in September we will be in Rideau Ferry overlooking the beautiful Rideau. In October, we look forward to a visit from Sandra Salerno, our Provincial President, in Perth. In November we will be in Carleton Place and in December, we return to Smiths Falls for our traditional turkey dinner.

We are very proud of our members Judy Drummond, the Provincial Past President and Brenda

Johnston, Area 9, Director.

We donate to food banks and local charities and are proud of the involvement of our members in the community.

It is wonderful to meet together again and to experience our motto "Caring and Sharing and Having Fun".

Anne Graham
President

Ottawa-Carleton

Ottawa-Carleton will host our September Welcome Lunch and Quarter Frenzy, our December Christmas Lunch and Silent Auction and our AGM in May. In addition, we are Dining Around the World. We enjoyed a Tex/Mex midwinter break and a book sale, a Greek lunch with a speaker, Italian food overlooking the Rideau Canal and afternoon tea on the lawn. We will host Sandra Salerno in the fall.

Our branch was honored to receive a Feather in Your Hat award for our Ukrainian project for which we raised funds for mental health.

In "Caring and Sharing" we keep in touch with members with our phone tree and send birthday cards to every member.

Our outreach continues to support the School Breakfast Program of the Ottawa Network for Education.

We are looking forward to a new year of "Diversity and Inclusion" as we welcome our first educational assistant as a new member.

Submitted by,
Sharon Chop, Branch President

News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

BurlOak

Both Oakville and Burlington are increasingly more diverse with many cultures, nationalities, and people of various identities, visible in our community. We do have members from diverse backgrounds and welcome everyone into our branch. The amalgamation process has highlighted the need to understand and communicate our differences in experience and routines.

We listen to our membership and realize that our way of doing things is not the only way, but rather we try to incorporate all ideas to ensure a feeling of inclusion and equality. Our new name "BurlOak" being a perfect example of equity, equality and inclusion.

We continue to seek speakers who will enlighten us, in an effort to be inclusive and mindful of all people.

Many members are concerned about climate and pollution which has led to interest in Indigenous teachings. Our charitable projects and donations are centered on helping women and children who need support.

Submitted by,
Claudia Stewart, Branch President

Lydia Snow North Halton

Lydia Snow North Halton Branch strives to always rent fully accessible venues. We hold our meetings and events in a variety of locations to reduce travel for our members. We do offer rides to members who don't drive.

The topics of our meetings are varied, in order to appeal to as many members as possible. For example, visiting a local sheep farm and reducing plastics.

All of our events involving food include gluten free and vegetarian options.

To keep in touch, we use Jackie Lawson e-cards for special events, birthdays and celebrations.

For our outreach, we send funds annually to different community organizations. For example, Community Living, Food4Kids, Adult Learning, and Big Brothers, Big Sisters. We also collect and donate personal products to the Women's Shelter. Lydia Snow members give very generously to our communities.

Respectfully submitted by
Margaret Beaudette, Branch President

Mississauga Branch

At our most recent RWTO/OERO AGM and Conference we voted on a number of Resolutions to expand inclusivity in our organization. This was the first step in the right direction. Including all women who have worked in the field of education will only strengthen and help to revive RWTO. Congratulations to the delegates who chose to make this move.

Encouraging diversity is the next step and perhaps a more difficult goal to achieve. In businesses and in our school systems, diversity is attained by recognizing the value of every employee, by drawing from a larger pool of talent when considering promotions to leadership positions and by ensuring that the employees, or in our case, the membership, reflects the community.

By making sure we are welcoming to all, by celebrating events and special days in many cultures, and by treating everyone as an equal we can achieve our goal.

Submitted by
Marie Solarski, Branch President



News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion" - Ctd.

Peel North

Moving towards greater diversity and inclusion within a group creates an opportunity for an untapped candidate pool to share new perspectives and ideas for innovation. Changing the RWTO/OERO constitution in June 2023 to extend eligibility for membership to teaching assistants, child and youth workers and early childhood educators is a big step towards strengthening the group. Our challenge now is to recruit these new candidates and to make them feel that their participation and contributions are valued in all

aspects of RWTO/OERO. We need to reach out to our former education partners and encourage them and their retired colleagues to come and explore our local branches. The members of Peel North look forward to welcoming new members and including them in our quest for a diverse, strong and vibrant group of caring and supportive women.

Submitted by,
Kathy Avey, Branch President

Coming Soon ...
**to a computer,
tablet, or
smartphone
near you!**

Virtual Convention 2024
**Tuesday June 4th &
Wednesday June 5th!**

The graphic features a colorful geometric background. On the left is an illustration of a desk with a laptop, a satellite dish, and a window. On the right is a logo with the text 'Growing Forward Together' and '2024' surrounded by stylized human figures. The main text is in large, bold, yellow and blue fonts.

Hosted by your Provincial Board of Directors

RWTO/OERO Board of Directors 2023-2024

Past President	Judy	Drummond	613-275-1354	jjdrum@xplornet.com
President	Sandra	Salerno	905-765-0201	smsalerno@rogers.com
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Director - Area 11	Jean Emily	Noble	705-253-6106	jenoble@shaw.ca
Director - Area 12	Margaret	Geare	416-988-2810	margaret.mgeare.geare@gmail.com
Director - Area 13	Carol	Morningstar	905-357-3796	rwtoarea13director@gmail.com

RWTO/OERO Calendar 2023-2024

Sept. 1, 2023	Annual Provincial Membership Fees due - to be sent to the Provincial Office by Oct. 15th. Fees for new members must be forwarded to the Provincial Office when received.
Sept. 12, 2023	Executive Meeting.
Sept. 14, 2023	Area Directors Meeting.
Sept. 12-14, 2023	All Board Meeting.
Oct. 31, 2023	Submissions due for December Newsletter Areas: 1, 4, 7, 13
Nov. 15, 2023	Resolutions due for 2024 Annual General Meeting. Submit to Jan Murdoch Resignation of any Directors to Provincial President.
Nov. 30, 2023	Calculations of branch numbers for 2023 AGM delegates based on official membership count as received and recorded in the Provincial Office
Dec. 15, 2023	Board of Directors Zoom Meeting.
Jan. 5-10, 2024	Annual Report and Branch Membership Forms sent to branches.
Jan. 15, 2024	Submission of each new Area Director's name to the Provincial President.
Jan. 31, 2024	Nominations for 2024-2025 Board to the Provincial Past President. Membership and Communications Committee applications to the Provincial Past President. Nominations for Honorary Membership Award presented at 2024 AGM. Submissions for March Newsletter Areas: 5, 6, 8, 10, 11
Mar. 1, 2024	Submissions for Feather-in-Your-Hat-Award
Mar. 15, 2024	Branch Annual Reports due to Directors.
Mar. 31, 2024	Director reports due to the Program Coordinator. Unpaid members are taken off the list. Insurance may be in jeopardy. Financial Year End.
Apr. 15, 2024	All delegates names are to be in to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer. All registrations are due for Convention 2024.
Apr. 30, 2024	Branch Financial Reports are due to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer.
May 7-9, 2024	Virtual Provincial Executive and Board Meeting
May 15, 2024	Branch Executive names for 2023-2024 due to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer.
June 4-5, 2024	Virtual Convention 2024 and AGM.



RWTO/OERO

RWTO/OERO Provincial Office
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PM Agreement
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