

RWTO/OERO

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



St Catharines Branch Newsletter, July 2023

President's Message: Melanie Kelch, President 2023-2024



Welcome to summer 2023!

As I move into my new position as your president for the upcoming year, I want to extend my appreciation to all our Executive Members who worked so diligently over the past year to provide leadership to our membership and excellent programs for us all to enjoy! In particular, I want to thank Linda Gaudet who as President cheerfully offered her time and energy to spearhead our organization. Thanks also go to Sheila Benger, Anne Dean and Patt Chivers who are leaving our Executive. Welcome to our new V.P. Emily Lomas-Gale who stepped up to work with us and Betty Axon who will be our Honorary President. As you will read further in the newsletter, Emily has some great programs lined up for us throughout the upcoming year.

Earlier in June, the St. Catharines Branch of RWTO sent seven delegates to our annual convention held in Kingston, ON. We met with delegates from around the province for the AGM. Please read the report carefully about the results from that convention.

As I assume this role, I wanted to reflect on the Goals of RWTO/OERO and how we should be responding to these.

The Mission Statement of RWTO/OERO is as follows:

We believe that RWTO/OERO is an organization which meets the interests and needs of retired women teachers.

Our Goals are:

- To provide a strong communication network and opportunities for social interaction among retired women teachers at both the local and provincial levels.
- To provide interesting and challenging programs for intellectual stimulation, information about issues of particular interest to retired women teachers and opportunities for cultural enrichment.
- To provide support for colleagues especially in times of illness, loneliness, stress, and sorrow.
- To provide a unique form of hospital & home care insurance exclusively for members and their spouses at a reasonable cost.
- To formulate an organized plan to increase membership in RWTO/OERO.
- To ensure that RWTO/OERO is a financially well-managed organization both provincially and locally.

Our Beliefs are:

• RWTO/OERO continually works to be a fully accessible organization to meet the unique needs of retired women teachers.



- RWTO/OERO fosters and promotes interaction among retired women teachers to help members maintain and establish friendships with former colleagues.
- RWTO/OERO provides interesting, stimulating, and supportive programmes for all members.
- RWTO/OERO provides a wide range of opportunities for members to use their leadership, communication, and creative skills.
- RWTO/OERO is socially conscious and works to establish a visible, outward-looking presence among teachers in particular and the public in general to improve the lives of all women and children.

In reading our Mission Statement, Goals and Beliefs, I realize that we have huge shoes to fill and many responsibilities to assume. With the last statement in our Beliefs, there is a comment about being a socially conscious organization. We want to keep you informed about Issues and Concerns, but we are not a politically motivated organization. If you have an issue that you feel needs to be addressed, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the Executive. At every luncheon meeting, there is a bulletin board where any item can be posted for all to read.

I want to wish everyone a wonderful and safe summer and I will look forward to seeing many of you at our September Luncheon at the St. John's Activity Centre.

Vice-President's Message: Emily Lomas-Gale

RWTO/OERO Convention 2023

Our St. Catharines Branch delegates "sailed" into Kingston and got started "Rolling Down the Waters" with our fellow RWTO delegates at the nautical themed 2023 Convention June 6, 7 and



8th. Opening workshop topics included Helping our Branches Thrive, Insurance, Treasurers, Long Term Care, and a lively Zumba Gold workout. After the Tuesday workshops, we were treated to an enjoyable dinner cruise on the Island Queen.



Wednesday's Events started with the AGM. We thank Linda Foster, who anticipated that the debate on the AGM Resolutions from various branches regarding "expansion" could be potentially contentious and divisive, for requesting from the Provincial Parliamentarian, Jane Cartier, that the vote on the Resolutions be conducted by Secret Ballot. This request was approved despite some objections. More on the final results down below.



The morning session of the AGM was followed by Tours to local points of interest that included Amherst Island, The Schools Museum, and the Kingston Penitentiary.

At the Awards Banquet held Wednesday evening, the St. Catharines Branch was pleased to receive a Barbara Bain Award for building membership, which included

a grant of \$400. Our membership grew by 11 due to the balance between new vs lost members. So, our efforts to keep our membership growing have been successful. Let's continue to work at attracting new members in the year to come! The

evening concluded with some lively entertainment provided by a local group, The Reasons, who had everyone movin' and groovin', some of the more energetic delegates later than others. Enough said.

Thursday morning, the day started off with a very moving In Memoriam service to honour those of our membership who have passed away recently. Then we rolled up our sleeves



and continued to work through the many Resolutions on the Agenda. The results of the Key Resolutions, which required 66% support, are as follows:

Branch Resolutions

RWTO/OERO "expansion" will include:

- EA'S, ECE'S, and Child and Youth Workers Passed
- Speech and Language Pathologists Failed
- Social Workers Failed
- Resolution #7 The name RWTO/OERO shall be maintained Passed

Resolution #13 – The proposed change to 2 delegates per Branch, regardless of the Branch Membership size, was sent to an Ad Hoc Committee to examine the impact on all branches and to report findings. Thanks to Linda Foster who will sit on this Ad Hoc (2 Delegates Issue) Committee.

Board Resolutions

Resolution #16 – Regarding the Addition of a Marketing Committee - **Passed**. Thanks to Fern Lackenbauer who will sit on the Marketing Committee.

All delegates worked through the process in a cooperative and respectful manner and the AGM concluded on a positive note.

Delegates then networked at the final luncheon which included a Celebration of Members over 90 and Mother/Daughter Duos, followed by the Installation of Incoming Board of Directors, remarks by Outgoing President, Judy Drummond, and the introduction of the Incoming President, Sandra Salerno, from the Haldimand Branch.

Next year's Call to Convention will be held virtually Wednesday June 5 and Thursday June 6, 2024. More planning to come.

Future General Meeting and Luncheon Plans

Hope you will be able to join us. Here are some dates to put in your calendar:

Upcoming RWTO Luncheons

Wednesday September 27, 2023

11:00 a.m., Doors open 10:30

St. John's Ukrainian Activity Centre

91 Lakeshore Road, St. Catharines

\$33.00 Payment due by Sept 20

Cheques are payable to: RWTO St. Catharines
And mailed to: Linda Foster,
14 Woodgarden Crt., St. Catharines, ON. L2M 7C9

e-transfer: rwtostcatharines@gmail.com

Menu: Perogies, Chicken, Veggies, Salad, Dessert, Beverages

Guest Speaker: Deanna White of Wellspring Niagara in Fonthill.





Upcoming RWTO Luncheons

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Club Capri, 36 Cleveland Street, Thorold, ON

11:00 a.m. Doors open at 10:30

\$33.00 Payment due by Oct 18

Cheques are payable to: RWTO St. Catharines

And mailed to: Linda Foster, 14 Woodgarden Crt., St. Catharines, ON. L2M 7C9

e-transfer: rwtostcatharines@gmail.com

Entertainment: We are in negotiations to have a local author







Wednesday December 6, 2023

Holiday Inn & Suites, 327 Ontario Street, St. Catharines, ON

11:00 a.m. Doors open at 10:30

\$40.00 Payment due by Nov 29

Cheques are payable to: RWTO St. Catharines

And mailed to: Linda Foster, 14 Woodgarden Crt., St. Catharines, ON. L2M 7C9

e-transfer: rwtostcatharines@gmail.com

Entertainment: Christmas fun activities to get everyone in the holiday spirit.





General Luncheon Information

- 1. All meetings begin at 11:00 A.M. Doors open at 10:30 unless otherwise indicated.
- 2. The name tags are on the table close to the entrance and are displayed in alphabetical order.
- 3. The cost for the luncheon will depend on what the facility is charging.
- 4. Payment for luncheons must be received by the Wednesday prior to each luncheon, whether by cheque or etransfer. If you are late in mailing your cheque, let Linda Foster know that you are planning to attend and that your cheque is in the mail.
- 5. There are no luncheon tickets. As your payment is received, your name is added to the list of attendees. You should receive a call or an email when the Treasurer has received your payment.
- 6. **Cheques** are **payable to:** <u>RWTO St. Catharines</u> and mailed to: Linda Foster, 14 Woodgarden Crt., St Catharines ON L2M 7C9. **E-transfers**, use the <u>rwtostcatharines@gmail.com</u> address.
- 7. Luncheon payments will be returned if cancelled by the Wednesday prior to the luncheon. Call 905-935-6182 (Linda) to cancel.
- 8. You will receive a phone call or email reminder several weeks prior to the luncheon.
- 9. **Escorts needed.** Sometimes our members need a ride to the luncheon. If you require a ride, or could provide assistance, please call Janis Harlos at 905-892-8203.

We are a **Fragrance-Free Environment**.

Past President's Message: Linda Gaudet

It has been a whirlwind romance with RWTO for the last three years. I have enjoyed myself immensely, at the Executive Meetings and at the Luncheons. It has been my great pleasure to work with some incredible women - talented, hard-working, and sympathetic women who give their time and attention to the women who make up the St. Catharines Branch.



I will continue to serve you faithfully, as Past President, as Chair of the Branch Handbook Committee and as a member of the We Care Committee. I look forward to being a mentor to Melanie Kelch, the incoming President and Emily Lomas-Gale, the newest member of the Executive as Vice-President.

My greatest pride has been my humble efforts with **Soles4Souls**, collecting gently used shoes for women and children in need in Guatemala. This year, as well as two years ago, during the pandemic, we collected over 800 pairs of shoes. Well done ladies! If you haven't already cleaned out your closet, think ahead to the next shoe drive!

Respectfully submitted by Linda Gaudet, Past President









RWTO/OERO Spring Convention St. Catharines Branch Team Theme: Rolling Down the Waters





Group Tour to the Kingston Penitentiary

Melanie Kelch, Kathleen Bradley, and Linda Gaudet got put behind bars. The offenses were not disclosed, but they must have been serious.

Also, a picture of the inside of The Kingston Pen.





Awards Banquet where the St.
Catharines Branch was awarded the Barbara Bain Award for its increase in membership.
Congratulations St.
Catharines!



RWTO/OERO CORA BAILEY AWARD, 2022 – 2023

St. Catharines Branch, Area 13

Jessica Thomson

This thoughtful and creative Jessica Thomson volunteered in 2016 to serve on the Executive as the Branch Archivist. She developed an impressive digital Photobook to annually document Branch activities. She volunteered as the Communications: Website Convenor, to update the website with current activities and documents. Jessica conducted touching "In Memoriam" services, hosted "ZOOM" meetings, and supplied YouTube Karaoke songs for "Singing for Fun". She participated as a Convention delegate twice and assisted with the Niagara Convention. She participates with the Friday PM Hiking Group, Bowling, Euchre, Bridge, cohosts Singing for Fun and initiated a "Chat About It, Chapter 2" Book Club.



During the isolation of Covid-distancing, Jessica inspired and designed our Branch "Warm Wishes" card to connect with our members. To lift the spirits of teachers struggling with Online Education, she posted a supportive poem. Her involvement with Cancer Fundraisers escalated following the loss of her sister, who passed away in her forties from Breast Cancer. Jessica organized her school's Terry Fox Runs and, in retirement, serves as the RWTO/OERO Rankin Cancer Run Team Organizer for our participants and donors. RWTO/OERO has kept Jessica busy!

Jessica graduated with a Psychology degree from Brock University and an M.Ed. from University of Toronto. Her teaching career began in 1980 and she retired in 2014. She taught students in Welland with Developmental Delays and later, the "little ones" in Gr. 1 in Thorold. Primarily a Special Education and a Learning Resource Teacher, she worked with elementary aged students with Learning Disabilities, ESL, Communications Disorders and Mental Health challenges. During her maternity leaves, she worked as a Psychometrist with her mother who was a Psychologist. Gaining experience with assessment tools helped Jessica serve as a DSBN Assessor in a pilot project. In retirement, she has worked with students from China on their language skills.

Jessica's hobbies include skiing, sailing, hiking, cycling, gardening, and travelling. Now that her husband has retired, they plan to travel more in their future. Greece is next on their list. She shared wonderful memories of her family over the years. Her growing family is a big part of her retirement as the Thomson's welcomed a son-in-law and a new grandson this year.

For her dedication to "Caring and Sharing" to the St. Catharines Branch of RWTO/OERO, we are pleased to honour Jessica Thomson with the Cora Bailey Award.



Rankin Run Participants

RWTO St. Catharines did it again! The Rankin Run was a success! These ladies (and a few others) walked 5 km to support the Cancer programs in St Catharines. We raised approximately \$4,500.00!

I'm very grateful for everyone's generosity! Rankin Run is one of our big fund raisers of the year and although the weather didn't cooperate, we had a great walk and feel like we demonstrated our caring and sharing philosophy!

Thank you everyone for your support and participation! Jessica Thomson, Team Leader

RWTO/OERO CORA BAILEY AWARD, 2022 – 2023

St. Catharines Branch, Area 13

Christine Graham

Christine's gentle and humble manner made her an invaluable member of the Executive in a role that required trust, respect, and privacy. She easily established a rapport with our members who needed Insurance support often during very trying times. The ability to comfort is important and takes genuine care and commitment of time. Chris served on the Executive from 2015 to 2022, first as the OECTA Liaison and later, as the Branch Insurance Convenor. As OECTA rep, she experienced challenges in accessing recently retired women teachers. As Branch Insurance Convenor, the position became much more demanding due to the increasing needs of our members and the isolation of the Covid years. Occasionally, she



arranged for other Executives to assist. In conjunction with the Provincial Convenor, she hosted an Insurance Open Window Workshop. Insurance convening has no clock. Chris participated in the Friday PM Hiking Group, Euchre, the Book Club, the Arthritis Christmas Gift Wrapping and the annual Rankin Cancer Run.

The completion of Christine's Undergraduate degree and her Master of Education thesis at Brock University contributed to her career in education that spanned "more years than she cares to admit". Her Elementary teaching included Junior Kindergarten through Grade 8 and Special Education. In 2002, as Principal, Chris played a key role in implementing The Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) at Mary Ward Catholic Elementary School. This new program ensured that all young families from the community were welcomed and was the first in the province to be implemented in a school setting. Her support of the program soon made this OEYC an exemplary site for politicians, policymakers, and other providers to visit and see the program firsthand. Her work with the Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) continued as she became Program Officer of Curriculum -Early years through Grade 12. She was also the lead for the School Effectiveness Framework for the NCDSB, often giving workshops regionally and at the Ministry level. Chris believes in intentionally empowering others through respect, compassion and kindness and has been an integral part in many teachers' career development. As busy as she was, there was always time for community involvement which included the Star of the Sea Pastoral Council and serving on the Board of Directors for the Partner Assault Response Program.

Recognizing that time with her family is finite, fleeting and so very precious, you can often find her in Connecticut or Bayfield these days. Her email signature illustrates Chris's life philosophy. "And what is as important as knowledge?" asked the mind. "Seeing and caring with the heart." answered the soul.

For the many ways that Christine has demonstrated her commitment to and endless caring for this Branch, we offer our thanks and are pleased to honour Christine with the Cora Bailey Award.

Provincial Website www.rwto.org

St. Catharines Branch news!

https://rwto.org/branch-new/st-catharines/

Here you will find:

Membership News,
a Photo Gallery,
recent and archived Newsletters,
In Memoriam information and more.





RWTO/OERO St. Catharines Branch Slate of Officers 2023-2024



Table Officers

Convenors

Past President
President
1st Vice President
Treasurer & Membership

Secretary

Honorary President Branch Honorary President 2023-2024

Social

Communications: Archivist/Website

Communications: Newsletter

Goodwill Membership

RWTO/OERO Manulife Insurance Plan

Interest Groups and Out 'n About

Issues & Concerns

Telephone ETFO OECTA

OSSTF

Provincial Program Convenor

Affiliate/Liaison Representatives

Area 13 Director

Linda Gaudet
Melanie Kelch
Emily Lomas-Gale
Linda Foster
Violette Hagerty
Betty Axon
Louise Farquhar
Sharon Martinello
Fern Lackenbauer
Janis Harlos

Linda Foster, Clara Warden

Susan McLaughlin Kathleen Bradley Marg Newby Marilyn Emmett Marilyn Emmett Clara Warden Margo Smith Judith Bennoch Carol Morningstar



Executive members who are stepping down.

Thank you for your many years of dedicated service to our branch!

Honorary President, Patt Chivers

Past President, Kathleen Dussome

Telephone Convenor, Sheila Benger

Communications: Archivist/Website Convenor, Anne Dean



Membership Report – Linda Foster, Clara Warden, Membership Convenors

Hello! I hope that everyone is enjoying this lovely Summer!

Just a few reminders: Membership Renewals and dues of \$45.00 are to be submitted by August 31, 2023.

If you change your email address, phone number or mailing address, PLEASE let me or Linda Foster know so the membership records remain current, and you don't miss receiving important information.

NOTE: You must be a paid-up member of RWTO/OERO to take part in Interest Groups or to be enrolled in the RWTO/OERO Hospital and Home Care Plan.

New members are important for our group. Membership information is available on the website, **rwto.org**, and from myself, Clara Warden (OECTA Affiliate), Margo Smith (OSSTF Affiliate), Marilyn Emmett (ETFO Affiliate) or Linda Foster. We need your help to recruit newly retired teachers as well as those who have been enjoying retirement for a year or two or more.

Have a safe, healthy, and happy Summer! See you in the Fall! Clara Warden, Membership Convenor

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

\$45.00 Due by August 31,2023

e-transfer to

rwtostcatharines@gmail.com

Cheque payable to RWTO St Catharines

Mail to Linda Foster 14 Woodgarden Crt St Catharines, L2M 7C9

Cash payments are welcome as well.

Associate members pay \$15.00.

Insurance Report -- Susan McLaughlin, Insurance Convenor



The RWTO/OERO insurance plan is a great supplement to your primary insurance. It covers some of the extras that are not included in your primary plan. If you apply within one year of retirement, enrollment is guaranteed, and you do not need to complete a medical questionnaire. If you apply later, you will be required to complete a medical questionnaire and your application will be subject to approval by Manulife.

If you are interested in the plan, you can read about the coverage on-line and download the application forms. Go to the RWTO/OERO website. I will have brochures with application forms out at our luncheons in the fall. Give me a call if you need more information.

Susan McLaughlin 905 935 9966

Goodwill Report -- Janis Harlos, Goodwill Convenor

2022/2023 was a busy year for Goodwill. The Forever Young contingent filled a table at the September Luncheon, enjoying Father Anton's perogies and chatting up their peeps. They also received a Sunflower arrangement in honour of our Ukrainian friends. Autumn mums were distributed to those unable to attend. Forever Young members should be on the lookout for their September Luncheon invitations in mid-August.

We introduced Holiday treat baskets for the Forever Young. Accolades received suggest that they were a great success. We will continue this initiative. RWTO members have already signed up to bake for Christmas 2023. Thank goodness we have so many talented bakers.



As Goodwill Convenor, I have continued to send out Christmas, Birthday, Thinking of You and Condolence Cards. I have also called several members who are experiencing difficult situations and a card just won't do. I wish I could personally reach all of you. Thanks to those of you who have kept me in the know.

If you know of someone who could use a little pick me up, "We've Got Your Back" still has a few blankets to share. Thanks go out to the knitters who gave time and resources to make this possible.

I have asked for volunteers to help with the expanding responsibilities of the Goodwill Convenor. I would like to plan a meeting in mid-August to discuss ideas. Please contact me if you think you could help or for any other Goodwill concern at jharlos6@gmail.com or 905 892 8203.

Yours in Caring and Sharing, Janis Harlos, Goodwill Convenor

Out 'n About JOIN US! MEET A NEW FRIEND!

Possible Bus Tour to New York City

The Out 'n About Group and Travelogue Group are investigating a possible 3- or 4-night, bus tour to NYC in the spring of 2024.

There will be an information meeting on Monday September 11, 2023, at 1:30 PM. This is our regular Travelogue meeting which is held in the Fellowship Room at Trillium United Church, 415 Linwell Road, St. Catharines. A travel agent, Aga Tempelaars-Goik,



will be making a presentation on New York City and providing details of the trip and itinerary.

If you would like to attend, please contact Marilyn Weber (Travelogue Chair) marilynw167@gmail.com or 905 934 3858 since space is limited.

Interest Groups

The St. Catharines Branch of RWTO/OERO is fortunate to have a variety of stimulating groups to which members in good standing (those who have paid their RWTO/OERO Membership) may join. If you are interested in joining one of these groups, please contact the group leader or sign up at the September meeting.

If you have a special interest or talent and would be interested in starting a new group, we welcome your ideas. Please contact Interest Group Convenor: Kathleen Bradley, (905) 246-2924 kath49bradley@gmail.com

Should an Interest Group be at capacity, please leave your name with Kathleen. We are always willing to start new groups if we can find a leader.

BEADING: Members meet on days and times decided by the group. Contact:

Genevieve 905 682-6125 gen3habib@gmail.com

BOWLING: Members meet every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. for 5-pin bowling at Pla-Mor Lanes, Port Dalhousie. Contact:

Bonnie 905 563-4287 bonnie13@hotmail.ca Barb 905 935-5339 cats@vaxxine.com

BREAKFAST BUNCH: Enjoy your morning with the Breakfast Bunch. Share a meal with friends new and old within the Niagara Region. Contact:

Kathie 905 321-6517 niagarasgraceland6@gmail.com

BRIDGE: Members play 16 hands of Bridge six times a year, with an end of season lunch in June. Contact:

 Sharon
 905 934-6396
 sthorne45@cogoeco.ca

 Helen
 905 641-1376
 hself@cogeco.ca

 Alvine
 905 704-9079
 alviner@vaxxine.com

DINING DIVAS: Members meet one evening a month to experience the local food scene. Contact:

Kathleen 905 246-2924 kath49bradley@gmail.com

EUCHRE GROUPS: Members meet in groups of four or eight at members' homes one afternoon per month. Group #1

Elaine 289 434-5550 rereimer2e@gmail.com Group #2

Susan 289 213-7933 hollandhillbillies@hotmail.com

OUT 'N ABOUT: Share your idea for a one time only event, outing or experience. We'll plan it together. Kathleen 905 246-2924 kath49bradley@gmail.com

GOLF: Members play nine holes weekly from May to November. All abilities participate and play for fun. Diane 289 362-0424 jhockeyd@icloud.com

"LET'S CHAT ABOUT IT" BOOK CLUB:

Members meet once a month from September to June to discuss a common book. Contact:

Group #1

Marg 905 688-1797 margpulford@gmail.com

Group #2 - Chapter Two

Jessica 905 687-7510 thomsonjess@hotmail.com

LUNCH BUNCH: Members dine in some local restaurants a few times during the winter months.

Peggy 905 934-8204 peggy,j.allen2@gmail.com

REVOLVING BOOK CLUB: Members read a different book every month and keep the last one for their own libraries. Contact:

Patt 905 934-6636 pchivers@cogeco.ca

NOTICE: All books will be ready for distribution at the September Luncheon being held at St. John's Ukrainian Hall on Wednesday, September 28th. Plan to pick up your book on the 28th either personally or via a friend. Enjoy your year reading!

SINGING FOR FUN: Members meet once a month for a sing-a-long of "oldies" and popular tunes. Contact:

Laurie 905 227-0469 jetty_22@hotmail.com

TRAVELOGUE GROUP: Members meet the second Monday of the month, sharing travel videos, photos, and experiences. Contact:

Marilyn 905 934-3858 marilynw167@gmail.com

WALKERS 1 – MORNING GROUP:

Members meet Mondays and Thursdays, 8:30-9:30 a.m. in Port Dalhousie for various walks in the Port community. Contact

Susan 905 935-1568 susanburnison@gmail.com

WALKERS 2 – AFTERNOON GROUP:

Members meet Fridays at 1:30 p.m., at a different trail each week, for a one-hour walk. Contact:



Chris 905 646-1828 christine@honsinger.com

Join a group!

Make new friends!

Share your knowledge and skills!

Have fun!

Let's Chat About It, Chapter Two

Yes, we read and talk about books while we enjoy treats.





New MembersReceiving a rose at the April 2023 luncheon



Friday Walkers It's a lovely day for a walk!

"The Chris' Friday Flock"



Friday Walk and Lunch at the Upper Deck, May 2023



Dining Divas July Outing



Picture from the May Luncheon

