



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

President's Message

Spring is on our doorstep! After an unpredictable winter, it is energizing to experience longer days and eagerly anticipate the looming spring activities: longer walks, garden work and spring cleaning. Okay, maybe not that one so much.

During the winter months I reminisced about my Branch visits. They are definitely the highlight of the Provincial Presidency. Our Branches may be different sizes and unique in many ways, but they share the same generous hospitality. Everywhere I went I was greeted warmly and included in the friendship they shared. These luncheons often reminded me of the motto for the 2024 Virtual Convention, "Growing Forward Together".

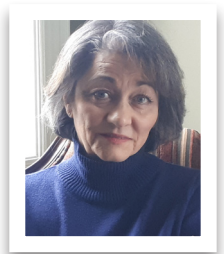
This motto could have been the motto of the autumn luncheons I attended. I was frequently given the enjoyable honour of welcoming new Branch members and handing out their membership pins. It was especially thrilling to meet the new members who were able to join our organization as a result of the membership extension. We are growing, literally!

There is another area where we as RWTO/OERO members need to grow. Many Branches, no matter

their size, share a common problem, convincing their members to share in the responsibility of running the Branch they love and enjoy. This is a team effort. When members volunteer to help it lightens the load and the task is more fun. The Ad Hoc Committee on Leadership and Organization is working hard to supply concrete activities and suggestions to ease the transition of new members to the executive committee.

I can say, from personal experience, that stepping out of your comfort zone is so worth it. I walked through that Board of Directors door knowing nothing. I was petrified! Once I crossed that threshold I realized that I was not alone. There were twenty-six women there to greet me with open arms. Everyone was kind and welcoming. I had mentors every step of the way.

It is an honour and a privilege to serve this wonderful organization and be part of the team of this amazing Board of Directors. We do grow forward together.



Sandra Salerno,
Provincial President

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

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President's Message – continued

Hurry up, spring! I am looking forward to my visits in March, April and May.

See you soon!

In Caring and Sharing,
Sandra Salerno
Provincial President 2023 - 2024

Issues and Concerns

Senior Living Options: Long-Term Care Homes 'Transforming the Culture'

I am a baby boomer. That term refers to the generation born during the population surge - the years immediately following the Great Depression and WWII, from 1946 to 1964. At that time, evidence of baby boomers moving through the decades resulted in a strain on resources such as housing, schools and healthcare. Fast forward to 2011, and the first boomers reached the age of 65, and by 2026, those boomers will be 80 years of age, an age at which activity limitations and loss of autonomy are more common. It is predicted as this generation lives longer, there will be a significant strain on health costs. As I have touched upon in previous articles, two primary sources of joy for seniors emerge from recent studies: social interactions and participating in meaningful activities. How can these goals be fulfilled in the present day long-term care model, specifically long-term care home options?

Before I present the facts and figures of long-term care in Ontario, of which residents and staff suffered greatly during Covid, I am pleased to share information about an 'emotion based model of care' being implemented in some long term care homes. An 'emotion based' approach to care creates a warm, caring environment that feels like home. Staff truly know their residents, their families, and understand their lived experiences. Schedules and routines match residents'

preferences and needs. Meaningful activities are designed to engage residents according to their abilities and what brings them joy. Relationships thrive between and amongst staff, volunteers, residents, and their families. One such model is called the 'Butterfly Approach.'

The Butterfly Approach, pioneered by Meaningful Care Matters, emphasizes the dignity of residents, as community members, their emotional health, and seeks to build a lifestyle around them which reflects their particular needs and personalities. It recognizes that the patient's emotional needs are as important as their physical needs. For those nursing homes that have adopted this approach, it could mean building daily routines around community members' needs and interests, such as eating or bathing when it suits them. It could mean engaging them in daily tasks such as cooking and laundry. It could mean creating a living environment which more strongly resembles a private dwelling by painting rooms and hallways in vibrant colours, changing the doors on rooms to look more like those of a private residence, or even bringing in their personal furniture. The result of these interventions are healthier and happier community members, lower use of supplements and certain kinds of medications, greater emotional resiliency as well as reduced

Continued ►

staff sick time, aggressive incidents, the use of calming drugs and the number of hospital visits. Team members are recruited with a strong focus on emotional intelligence and can be seen to be sharing the day like caring friends of those who live there. Team members are comfortable with ‘being with’ people rather than ‘doing for’ people. Visiting families feel part of the community of the home and enjoy spending time there. Presently in my community, a pre-existing nursing home is undergoing a transformation implementing key elements that will facilitate this person-centered model. The retro-fitted building will feature larger resident common areas and air conditioning throughout the home. The design is centered around five ‘resident home areas’, each of which creates a more intimate and familiar living space with dining and activity areas, lounges and bedrooms for up to 32 residents. Once completed, the home will also be part of a campus of care, which helps integrate the long-term care home into the broader health care system and ensures residents can conveniently connect to the care they need.

In May of 2023, the Ontario Long Term Care Association commissioned Abacus Data to survey 1,000 Ontario residents aged 68 to 76 to help with planning for the future. One in ten respondents in the survey said that maintaining autonomy and control was what mattered to them most as they aged. But just one in ten (12%) have seriously thought about where they would live and what kind of care they might need. One in five seniors over the age of 80+ have complex care needs that require long-term care, i.e., needs exceed what other services in the community can provide, need help with day-to-day tasks, such as eating, bathing and dressing, need on-site monitoring for safety and well-being, are unable to return home after a stay in the hospital, need nursing care available on-site 24 hours a day. These types of multiple conditions often lead to long-term care: hypertension, dementia and Alzheimer’s,

neurological conditions, mood and psychiatric disorders, arthritis, diabetes, congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer, cardiac dysrhythmias. Today in Ontario, almost 40,000 people are waiting for long-term care. This waitlist has nearly doubled over the past ten years and it is expected to grow, adding 1,000 people per year and reaching 48,000 by 2029. The average senior will wait 149 days to access long-term care, with some waiting up to two and a half years. The first step is to get in touch with Home and Community Care Support Services (formerly LHIN) by calling 310-2222 (no area code required). A care coordinator will advise you about your options and support you as you make this important decision – which includes completing an assessment to help determine eligibility, guiding you through the application process and providing other valuable information. Unlike retirement homes, where rates will vary depending on amenities, living spaces and services, the pricing at nursing homes is consistent. Because the costs are set by the Ministry of Long-Term Care, everyone pays the same price, regardless of financial situation.

Long-term care home maximum co-payment fees (effective July 1, 2023)		
Type of accommodation	Daily rate	Monthly rate
Long-stay Basic	\$65.32	\$1,986.82
Long-stay Semi-private	\$78.75	\$2,395.32
Long-stay Private	\$93.32	\$2,838.49
Short-stay	\$42.28	N/A

What is included in the above cost? Shared dining room, TV rooms and other living areas, nursing and personal care on a 24-hour basis, access to health professionals, individual care plan (reviewed every 3 months), furnishings (e.g., bed and chair), meals (including special diets), bed linens and laundry, hygiene supplies, medical/clinical supplies (e.g., walkers and wheelchairs for occasional use), housekeeping, individualized religious and spiritual services, social and recreational programs, medical services and assistance



Issues and Concerns - continued

with activities of daily living. The long-term care home may charge extra for optional services, such as: personal hygiene products, hairdressing, cable TV, telephone, internet and transportation.

Home and Community Care Support Services has published a document titled, 'Guide to Placement in Long-Term Care Homes.' It may be found at www.healthcareathome.ca or by calling 310-2222 and requesting it. This brochure provides a step by step guide to examining the criteria to consider and advice on next steps once a decision has been made to seek

placement in a long-term care home. For those of you interested in learning more about the Butterfly Approach philosophy, please visit the Meaningful Care Matters website.

Please visit:

ontario.ca

[Long-term care in Ontario](#) for more information.

Lynn Sulman,
Issues and Concerns



Branch Presidents and Area Directors

Welcome to March and the promise of spring! It is time to review your **Timelines for Directors** and **Timelines for Presidents** that identify tasks that require your attention. Please review carefully the important information I sent out from Provincial Office with your **Membership Information** and **Delegate Form**. This document includes information to assist in choosing your delegates for our **Virtual 2024 Convention**. My **Convention Bulletin** that followed provides an excellent reference for all things convention. Included in this March issue of *Connections* are the resolutions to be discussed and voted upon at Convention. It is imperative that you, your executive and Branch members become familiar with the content of the resolutions and discuss them as a group. This will enable you to have a clear understanding of the intent and context of each, and to provide a clear direction for your delegates who will be representing your Branch at the Annual General Meeting.

And finally...

As I sat down to compose this, my final message for *Connections*, I reflected on my past six years as your Provincial Program Coordinator. It certainly had its challenges, especially with COVID right dab in the middle. But the support I received from the Area Directors, and all who were Branch Presidents during my term, was overwhelming and so supportive. You all came along as we journeyed together into the unknown world of Zoom and our first Virtual Convention that was so successful. Although a difficult time in many ways, it was really a time of personal growth for myself, our Branches and members and I thank you for your leadership as we continue to travel along this journey of learning together.

A heartfelt thank you to you **all** as I complete my term and leave the Provincial Board.

Judith Bennoch
Provincial Program Coordinator



Board Reports

Membership

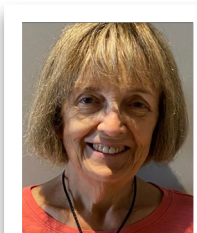
We honour Barbara Bain, a Past President and Membership Convenor, with the “Barbara Bain Award.” This award recognizes the largest increase in membership from April 1st to March 31st, as established by Linda Huffman, our Provincial Executive Secretary-Treasurer. The awards are \$200 for 3rd place, \$300 for second place, and \$400 for first place within each of the three tiers.

The “Feather in Your Hat Award” was established by the Membership Committee to recognize creative, innovative, and successful activities carried out by a Branch or group of Branches who worked cooperatively on one current or ongoing project that clearly has enriched the programs offered by RWTO/OERO. Please notify the Membership Convenor by email at rwtomembership@gmail.com and send her a hard copy by March 1st. The Membership Convenor will email a confirmation of receipt of your submissions.

A big “Thank You” to all the hard-working Branches for their “Feather in Your Hat” submissions from previous years. The Membership Committee looks forward to reading your submissions for the current year. Please check the RWTO/OERO website for the procedure and criteria required when making your “Feather in Your Hat” submissions.

I want to personally thank the Membership Committee for their hard work supporting these awards this year. The members are Pat Emmerton (South Bruce), Margaret Geare (Mississauga), Brenda Johnston (Lanark), Joyce Ratz (Central Algoma) and Nancy Strutt (Dundalk-Flesherton). Working with them on the Membership Committee this year has been an honour and a privilege.

Kathy McLean
Membership Convenor



Archives

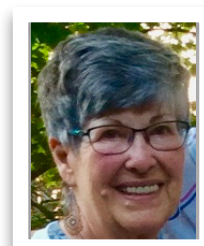
It has been a true honour for me to be the Provincial Archivist; in June my term is complete. A special privilege for me has been developing the In Memoriam service and slideshow. Although a sad time of losses, I appreciate seeing the photos and reading obituaries sent to me showing rich fulfilled lives.

Even if we don't know the members being honoured, we can appreciate their amazing life experiences. Their stories tell of teaching, raising families, volunteering, and exploring the world. They have left us their love and individual imprint. Thank you all who have sent in the information for us to share.

Special thanks to RWTO/OERO friends who have helped me accomplish my plans, through technical support, translation, creative suggestions, and encouragement.

I have been rewarded in ways I never thought possible. I am grateful to have had this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted by
Susan Rose
Archivist





Insurance Matters

How quickly time passes! It seems like yesterday we were celebrating the Christmas Season and welcoming the New Year and suddenly spring is just around the corner and the RWTO/OERO Convention is in the offing.

It's a truism that we often don't fully appreciate the importance of good health and well-being until we experience a medical issue. We take for granted the medical system we have, and the problems faced by our overburdened medical professionals. We emerged from the pandemic lock-down certainly warier, many continuing to "mask up" in crowded situations, but grateful to have made it through relatively unscathed. Some, sadly, didn't make it. We honour and remember them.

While the pandemic created a strain on our medical system, our Hospital & Home Care Plan continued to prove its worth. COVID-19 caused infected individuals to be hospitalized, often for lengthy periods of time. Then some, having "recovered" from the immediate effects of the disease, faced Long COVID and the resultant medical issues it presents. For those members who faced lengthy hospitalizations, they were able to claim several benefits under the plan. From the Convalescent Benefit that provided \$350 per month for up to six months while they were recovering to Physiotherapy benefits to assist with strengthening and mobility following that hospitalization, members appreciated the assistance the Hospital & Home Care Plan provided. Some members required greater assistance, utilizing the Home Nursing Benefit to give them the hand-up they needed at a time when they were at their weakest.

As we age in place, we increasingly come to rely upon the many benefits our supplemental plan provides. A member, with coverage through RTOERO, OTIP or a spousal plan, could claim those Home Nursing Benefits under both of her plans, thereby extending the coverage she had through the Co-ordination of Benefits feature of the plan. For example, the RTOERO Extended Health Care Plan covers 80% of the cost of Home Nursing care to a maximum of \$2,000 every two years. Our Hospital & Home Care Plan provides 80% of the remaining cost to a maximum of \$1,500 for any one injury or illness.

With agencies in Ontario charging between \$28 and \$35 per hour for the services of a Personal Support Worker and between \$55 and \$80 for a Registered Nurse, you can see how important this plan becomes in providing needed care.

When we first retire, we often don't think too far ahead about "aging in place", but studies have shown that Canadians prefer to remain in their homes as they age, rather than uprooting and moving. This desire to remain at home necessitates some planning, ensuring the supports are in place when we need them. The Hospital and Home Care Plan is just one of those supports available, and at a very affordable price. For just \$14.49 a month for a member and \$15.57 a month for a spouse, we encourage you to take a closer look at this plan and how it can be part of your retirement planning.

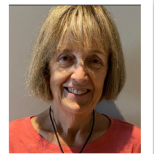
We are looking forward to our Virtual Convention this year and hope you'll tune in to our insurance presentation on Tuesday afternoon.

Terry Kennedy
Broker

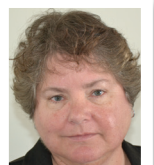
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Resolutions for 2024 Annual General Meeting

1. Submitted by Area 12 Branches (BurlOak, Lydia Snow, Mississauga, Peel North) and by Area 4 Hamilton-Wentworth Branch.

Moved by: Kathy Avey

Seconded by: Linda Sargeant

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III, Membership and Fees, 1. Regular Members; be amended with the addition of: Retired Women Educational Speech & Language Pathologists.

Rationale: · The Ad Hoc Committee Report on the Survey of Membership Extension received considerable support for Retired Women Speech & Language Pathologists.

- Expanding membership is particularly important for small and rural Branches. Provincially, membership is both declining and aging, which can be a factor in having viable Branches and filling executive roles. Membership recruitment is needed to ensure a strong organization in the future.

- Building a viable and inclusive membership would permit us to continue providing Health Care Insurance plans, combating isolation concerns for our membership, and fulfilling our goal of providing caring and sharing opportunities for women and children in our communities as well as ourselves.

- Teachers and other Educational Professionals worked as a team in the classroom and school setting with common goals for children.

- They supported students with different levels of abilities, behavioural issues, mobility and language challenges, and social/emotional struggles.

- Qualification requirements for Educational Professionals have changed greatly over the years. They have received credentials, diplomas and/or certification within their areas of expertise that have taken years of training.

2. Submitted by Area 12 Branches (BurlOak, Lydia Snow, Mississauga, Peel North) and by Area 4 Hamilton-Wentworth Branch.

Moved by: Claudia Stewart

Seconded by: Linda Sargeant

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III, Membership and Fees, 1. Regular Members; be amended with the addition of: Retired Women

Educational Audiologists

Rationale: · Expanding membership is particularly important for small and rural Branches. Provincially, membership is both declining and aging, which can be a factor in having viable Branches and filling executive roles. Membership recruitment is needed to ensure a strong organization in the future.

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- Qualification requirements for Educational Professionals have changed greatly over the years. They have received credentials, diplomas and/or certification within their areas of expertise that have taken years of training.

3. Submitted by Area 12 Branches (BurlOak, Lydia Snow, Mississauga, Peel North) and by Area 4 Hamilton-Wentworth Branch.

Moved by: Margaret Beaudette

Seconded by: Linda Sargeant

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

Rationale: · The Ad Hoc Committee Report on the Survey of Membership Extension received considerable support for Retired Women Speech & Language Pathologists.

- Expanding membership is particularly important for small and rural Branches. Provincially, membership is both declining and aging, which can be a factor in having viable Branches and filling executive roles. Membership recruitment is needed to ensure a strong organization in the future.

Continued ►



Resolutions - continued

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- Teachers and other Educational Professionals worked as a team in the classroom and school setting with common goals for children.
- They supported students with different levels of abilities, behavioural issues, mobility and language challenges, and social/emotional struggles.
- Qualification requirements for Educational Professionals have changed greatly over the years. They have received credentials, diplomas and/or certification within their areas of expertise that have taken years of training.

4. Submitted by Area 12 Branches (BurlOak, Lydia Snow, Mississauga, Peel North) and by Area 4 Hamilton-Wentworth Branch.

Moved by: Marie Solvarski
Seconded by: Linda Sargeant

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III, Membership and Fees, 1. Regular Members; be amended with the addition of: Retired Women Educational Psychologists.

Rationale: · Expanding membership is particularly important for small and rural Branches. Provincially, membership is both declining and aging, which can be a factor in having viable Branches and filling executive roles. Membership recruitment is needed to ensure a strong organization in the future.

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5. Submitted by Area 12 Branches (BurlOak, Lydia Snow, Mississauga, Peel North) and by Area 4 Hamilton-Wentworth Branch.

Moved by: Linda Sargeant
Seconded by: Claudia Stewart

Be it resolved that Constitution, Article III, Membership and Fees, 1. Regular Members; be amended with the addition of: Retired Women Educational Office Support Staff.

Rationale: · Expanding membership is particularly important for small and rural Branches. Provincially, membership is both declining and aging, which can be a factor in having viable Branches and filling executive roles. Membership recruitment is needed to ensure a strong organization in the future.

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6. Submitted by Area 11 Sault Ste Marie Branch

Moved by: Patricia Lambert

Seconded by: Barbara Perry

Be it resolved that the organization currently known as Retired Women Teachers of Ontario/Organisation des enseignantes retraitées de l'Ontario change its name to Retired Women Educators of Ontario/Organisation des enseignantes retraitées de l'Ontario

Rationale: This name better reflects who we are, not who we were. The former name suggests that some members are more valued than others; all should feel equally invited. This name allows for the addition of other retired women educator groups without further need of a name change.

Historically, we have gone through a number of name changes. Our RWTO/OERO roots date back to the Rendezvous Club started in 1937. Between 1944 and 1956 a small group of Rendezvous Club members was in the forefront of the fight to resolve women's pension issues.

On April 3rd, 1956 this organization (RWTO/OERO) formed as a separate entity, the Ontario Provincial Association of Retired Women Teachers (OPARWT).

Shortly thereafter, it became known as the Ontario Association of Superannuated Women Teachers (OASWT).

In 1968, after a vote held by ALL the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (with the help of the Ontario

Teachers' Federation), all retired teachers banded together into one group, the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario, which gave it the power to negotiate with the Provincial Government regarding pensions.

OASWT also continued as a separate entity to provide for social opportunities for its members. The name was changed to the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario, which avoided confusion with the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario.

Now it is time to move forward with a new name, the Retired Women Educators of Ontario/Organisation des enseignantes retraitées de l'Ontario which demonstrates who we are!

We should celebrate our past and embrace our future!

7. Submitted by Area 11 Sault Ste Marie Branch

Moved by: Patricia Lambert

Seconded by: Barbara Perry

Be it resolved that all RWTO/OERO branded materials continue to be used until the current supply is depleted and then be replaced with RWEO/OERO branded materials.

Rationale: It would be wasteful and costly to simply discard current materials. It will take time to produce a new LOGO, printed materials, pins, etc.



Candidates for RWTO/OERO Provincial Board

Margaret Geare

RWTO/OERO Mississauga Branch

Nominated for

**RWTO/OERO Executive Position of
Program Coordinator**



It is with pride and humility that I accept my Mississauga Branch nomination for Provincial Program Coordinator.

Branch

From 2014 to now, I have held numerous positions: President, First & Second VP, Past President, Nominating, Communications (Website), Program Convenor, and Standing Delegate. In addition, I have been a convenor for interest groups for Book Club, Lunch Group, Trips and Tours, and Art Gallery Tours.

In 2021, I was awarded the Cora Bailey Award.

Provincial

In 2021, I was nominated for Area 12 Director. In the past three years, I have served on the following Provincial Committees: Membership, Constitution and Resolutions, Leadership and Structural Organization, Marketing, and Social Justice Committee Chair.

Community

I have held leadership positions with FWTAO and ETFO teachers' unions locally and provincially, clubs, and non-profit organizations.

In 2018, as Zonta International, Area 2 Vice-Director, I chaired the election process at their bi-annual District Conference and AGM.

In 1980 to 1984, I ran my own second-hand children's clothing business.

As the Program Coordinator, I would be committed to using my strong skills of interpersonal communication and organization to build a team within our "caring and sharing" organization.

Nominations Report

As of January 31st, we have not had any candidates come forth for 2nd Vice-President for our RWTO/OERO organization. Any delegate may make a motion at the Annual General Meeting for this position when the elections are being conducted.

If more than one candidate is nominated for any of the executive positions, then a secret ballot shall be held. Election of these candidates shall be by majority vote of the delegates present at the Annual General Meeting. Constitution, page 10, Elections #4b.

Nominations Committee:

Judy Drummond, Chair

Joan Gamble Area 8

Lynda Sommer Area 7

News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

Rendezvous

We are a small Branch of 50 plus six Life Members, enjoying our monthly newsletter, chat over coffee and lunch while working on milk bag mats, our charitable project. Over-90's are celebrated at a luncheon each spring.

We taught in the Greater Toronto Area, some living nearby, others moving away to smaller communities, but returning to connect with former colleagues. At luncheons women speak to their friends in their childhood languages. We worked in schools in the most diverse city in the world. My 'Welcome to ESL' sign was a poster-sized list of over 30 languages. Many of us began our education in other countries or in small communities with amazing differences and similarities. Some began in one room schoolhouses in the segregated USA or Australia, others in three storey buildings in Ontario cities. Some of us began school with no English and some continue to speak their first language.

Submitted by Judy Anderson,
Branch President



Scarborough

Scarborough has continued to be a busy Branch. Programmes that include an opportunity to share crafts and day trips have started again. Chair Yoga was a fun activity at one luncheon. The an-

nual toy drive was held in conjunction with the local police. Of course, we continued to support the local shelter with monetary gifts, toiletries and magazines. We have continued to have luncheons in local venues which provide a wide variety of menus.

We are celebrating our 54th year as a Branch—35 presidents and 49 Cora Bailey recipients. We celebrated two 100th year birthdays but sadly one of the members has passed away.

Scarborough continues to be a vibrant Branch and the members continue to support the programmes which are planned for them.

Submitted by Carol Nelson
Branch President

Blue Mountain

The year 2023 has seen Blue Mountain members, including some over 90 ladies, caring for themselves and others, by sharing in fun and fellowship at our informal luncheon meetings and in other ways.

We reached out to our local Red Cross representative who shared information about valuable resources such as transportation, meals and other supports all available to our members, if and when needed.

Another occasion found us in conversation with a local author/playwright and winner of the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour. Needless to say laughter was on the menu that time. Countless vignettes and distributing then autographing his latest book all became part of our meeting.

Our Branch has also made supportive donations to our local hospice, our local hospital and our area food banks.

Our Book Club continues to cause lively discus-

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News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

sions.

Submitted by Lois Plowright
Co President

Daisy Wilson Coldwater

RWTO/OERO encourages the participation of all our members in each of our meetings, in a welcoming and inclusive environment. We start each meeting acknowledging that we are on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe. Our regular meeting place is barrier-free, so that all our members are able to attend. We encourage car-pooling. We support our local food banks and other charities that support vulnerable individuals in our communities. We support immigrant families seeking peace in our area. We have a wide range of ages and abilities in our Branch and we encourage each one to participate in meetings to the best of their ability. We welcome and appreciate all!

Submitted by Helen Carstairs
Communications Representative

East Parry Sound

East Parry Sound values the importance of being an inclusive Branch. We aim for activities that provide social interaction among our five-generational membership. Our meeting format is friendly and casual, our venues all accessible, and our luncheons strive to accommodate dietary needs. We want our members to feel a true sense of belonging, to look forward to our get-togethers, and to remember the fun and the laughter after they've left. The value that each member brings to the Branch and to the whole East Parry Sound area is important to us. We celebrate and honour

members' talents and skills, consequently, our own members often serve as our speakers. Regularly, one member's story is shared with the group in a feature called 'Who We Are'. We support an "Invite a Friend" policy, car pooling and "Tea and Treats" wherein a small group visits individual members. Friendship draws us in and keeps us together.

Submitted by Peggy Stock & Eleanor Atkinson
Co-Past Presidents



Orillia Branch

Orillia's primary focus this fall has again been to enable those in Long-Term Care to be connected to elementary students through our program Caring Cards. Our Communications Convenor has worked to develop a good rapport with schools and nursing homes in our community. The program has become so successful that teachers are contacting our Convenor asking to be part of the project. This year she had the assistance of a very new member to our Branch.

The quality of the cards being prepared by the students is improving each year.

The project was covered by our local news outlet in December and the residents reported how much the cards mean to them.

One lady said that she saves them all and takes them out to look at when she feels sad.

News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

To thank the participating schools, a suitable book for each school's library, inscribing the book from our RWTO/OERO Orillia Branch, is given.

Submitted by Kay-Anne Broger
Branch President

Brockville

Our Brockville Branch has had an enjoyable start-up with 43 renewing members, six Life members and one new member. The Membership, Treasury, and Goodwill officers have been busy connecting with our affiliates and making necessary updates.

In September, we enjoyed a delicious catered luncheon with lively accordion entertainment provided by Iryna, a former resident of the Ukraine, who has worked in the education field as well.

In December, we met for our seasonal, catered gathering where we also sang along while Betty shared her amazing talents on the keyboard. We enjoyed visiting with our guests from Lanark and Gananoque as well as our local attendees.

The Spirit of Giving is alive and well as we generously donated gift cards to the local Interval House to support women and children during the holiday season. A donation was also made to Quilts of Valour which will see a local veteran receive a quilt.

Submitted by Karen Kerr-Kennedy,
Branch President



Gananoque

Diversity means different things to different people. Our community is an ever-changing feast of colour for the eye, the mind, and the soul. Gananoque is a Branch with members from three cities, seven towns or villages and everywhere in between.

We dine along the St Lawrence River, on the Rideau Lakes, and near the mountains of Westport. When considering our venue, we look for safe entrances and walkways which are accessible to all. We are mindful of special diets when checking out our menu options. Our members enjoy the fellowship of friends and a chance to sit and talk to one another. The smiles, the laughter and chatter are shared when they are together.

Our shut-in members receive cards for special occasions as well as our newsletter.

Caring and Sharing is a way of life for our membership. It is evident with every smile, car ride, helping hand and hug.

Submitted by Joan Gamble
Branch President



Upper Canada East

The Upper Canada East Branch is nestled in the unceded Ashinabe Algonquin lands from the Quebec border to Brockville.

We meet four times a year. Each meeting is held in a different location within our geographical Branch area. It is important to us that we meet

Continued ►

News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

in facilities that are easily accessible to all. Thus ensuring inclusivity to all of our members.

As the scope of RWTO/OERO membership widens, we encourage all newly retired women working in the education field in our area to visit our Branch and consider membership.

Our Branch, being located in a more rural setting, is not as culturally diverse as those in more urban areas.

Our fundraising activities support local food banks, women's shelters, school bursaries and community events aiding women and children.

As we continue to support our communities, we hope to reach as many social, economic and cultural groups as possible.

Beacon Bags is a charity that assists young women who are rescued from human trafficking.

Submitted by
Diana McKendry
Communications Convenor



Kingston

Winter greetings from Kingston Branch. We have been fairly quiet during the fall with only one luncheon get together at our favourite restaurant. We were happy to welcome our Director, Joan Gamble, and past Director Theresa Dorey. Sadly, I just learned that one of our recipients of the Over 90 award at Convention, Ethel Kane, has just died. We will really miss her faithful attendance at all our functions. Our condolences to her family. When you read this, spring should be well on its

way, chasing away all the terrible illnesses that our members are suffering. Blessings to all from Kingston Branch.

Submitted by Betty Jeanne Kippen
Branch President

Napanee

Napanee Branch is a small Branch of 30 members. We enjoy getting together and socializing with each other at our breakfasts and lunches. At these times we also provide support as needed. We have two general meetings besides these more informal get togethers. Napanee Branch also has a phone system with which the members can keep in touch with each other. Unfortunately, we have had to discontinue our Tales and Tunes for Tots as we no longer have a delivery system for our bags. We are hoping to connect with Hospice Lennox and Addington to continue our caring and sharing with them. We continue to support the Morningstar Mission and the Salvation Army as they work to help those in need. We also continue to support the Greater Napanee Area Arts Association as they continue to promote the arts in the Napanee area.

Submitted by Beryl Jacka,
Branch President

Sudbury

Similarity bias, one of the numerous types of implicit biases, plays off the fact that individuals tend to be more comfortable with people who are more like themselves. "Rewiring" our brains to minimize biases is essential to be cognizant of how our thoughts, attitudes, and judgements affect our interactions. Building a "culture add" rather than a "culture fit" is essential.

News from the Branches – "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"

The "Women of Worth" segment at our luncheons has two members share their passions or experiences. Presenting issues of concern to women and seniors are springboards to share different views. Having members represent our organization at the Sudbury Women's Center Gala for the International Women's Day allows interaction and networking with women from various walks of life.

Inclusion becomes a daily choice where each heart is a shelter for another.

Submitted by Suzanne Rondeau
Branch President

Central Algoma

September was my first meeting as Branch President at the Sylvan Valley Hall. We had some new members join us and we heard about the report of the Provincial Convention in Kingston. There were sign up sheets for our five interest groups that meet monthly. In October we had our joint meeting with the Sault Ste. Marie Branch. The luncheon was held in Bruce Mines. Sandra Salerno, our Provincial President, addressed the entire group and we enjoyed the fall colors all around us. In December we held our Christmas luncheon at the Zion United Church in Thessalon. We had a special speaker, Shannon Maki, who is the coordinator for the Vulnerable Person's Registry in the Algoma district. During the meal we ran a silent auction and after the meal we had a rousing Christmas sing along. At each meeting we were encouraged by the new members who have joined RWTO/OERO.

Submitted by Mary-Jane Thompson
Branch President

Sault Ste Marie

Our Sault Ste Marie Branch continues to strongly promote the themes of inclusion and diversity, proudly keeping both central to planning. During the current year, our Sault Branch has continued to offer well-attended bimonthly general fellowship gatherings as well as a diverse array of monthly events for those members who would like to gather more often. As these opportunities are always developed around the voiced interests of all members, new and engaging activities regularly result. To ensure inclusion of members, accessibility is always of key importance and is carefully reviewed on several fronts when a Branch event is planned. Transportation is provided for members who express need. Members are welcomed to regularly invite guests to Branch functions. Branch communication is via mode best suited to the member. Finally, the allowance for more diversity in our general membership has allowed for the welcoming of new members that have quickly become an important part of our Branch family.

Submitted by Barb Perry
Branch President



In Memoriam

<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Branch</i>
Abdel-Ahad, Catherine	Gloucester	Ottawa-Carleton
Anderson, Joanne	Harrow	Windsor-Essex
Barnes, Geraldine	Mississauga	Lydia Snow North Halton
Barnes, Ila	Etobicoke	Mississauga
Beckman, Barbara	Cambridge	Cambridge
Bickerton, Catherine	Lasalle	Windsor-Essex
Bilton, Mary Lou	Florence	Sarnia-Lambton
Bois, Gabrielle	Windsor	Windsor-Essex
Bradley, Emma (Lou)	Guelph	Lydia Snow North Halton
Break-Jarvis, Anne	Guelph	Guelph-Wellington
Brooks, H Barbara	Madoc	Belleville
Brunton, Bernice	Cambridge	Cambridge
Chapman, Maxine	Belleville	Belleville
Cherrington, Gail	Oakville	BurlOak
Clark, Ann	Vineland	St. Catharines
Clark, Helen	Peterborough	Peterborough
Colley, Marie	Brampton	Peel North
Cruikshank, Marie	Collingwood	Blue Mountain
Cudmore, Irene	London	London-Middlesex
Cuthbertson, Cathy	Oakville	BurlOak
Davidson, Evelyn	Norwood	Peterborough
Denyes, Hilda	Thomasburg	Belleville
Di Domenico, Irene	Windsor	Windsor-Essex
Donnelly, Teresa	Gananoque	Gananoque
Dusten, Jean	Blenheim	Chatham-Kent
Elliott, C. Maxine	Mississauga	Mississauga
Engel, Gerry	Kitchener	Kitchener-Waterloo
Evans, Janet	Barrie	Orillia
Farrell, Sylvia	Beaverton	Durham North
Finch, Bernice	Embro	London-Middlesex
Fitzner, Daryll	Burlington	BurlOak
Fleming, Vivian	Carleton Place	Lanark
Francis, Alice	Grand Bend	Sarnia-Lambton
Fry, Lisa	Powassan	East Parry Sound
Good, Patricia	Stratford	Stratford
Gordon, Carol	Guelph	Guelph-Wellington
Graham, Elizabeth	Owen Sound	Owen Sound
Greavett, Bonny	Kingston	Kingston
Haines, Maureen	Niagara on the Lake	St. Catharines
Halvorson, Margaret	Scarborough	Scarborough
Hannon, Delores	Markdale	Dundalk-Flesherton and District
Heidt, Mildred	Dutton	St. Thomas-Elgin
Hellebrandt, Susan	Waterloo	Kitchener-Waterloo
Hillier, Sheila	Belleville	Belleville

In Memoriam

<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Branch</i>
Hunter, Deborah	Kitchener	Cambridge
Hunter, Faye	Orillia	Orillia
Johnston, Barbara	Mississauga	Mississauga
Jones, Muriel	Athens	Brockville
Joyce, Louise	Mississauga	Mississauga
Kajiura, Sylvia	Hamilton	Hamilton-Wentworth
Kells, Noreen	Brigden	Sarnia-Lambton
Kopp, Shirley	Kitchener	Kitchener-Waterloo
Kozar, Mildred	Fonthill	Haldimand
Laidlaw, Patricia	Quebec	London-Middlesex
Lambert, Donna	Hilton Beach	Central Algoma
Lang, Angela	London	London-Middlesex
Large, Jacqueline	Caledonia	Haldimand
Laushway, Alice	Prescott	Upper Canada East
Lefebvre, Laurie	Chatham	Chatham-Kent
Lord, Shirley	Chatham	Peterborough
Lumsden, Diane	Hamilton	Hamilton-Wentworth
MacDonald, Shirley	Belleville	Scarborough
MacKay, Margaret	Thessalon	Central Algoma
Maher, Jane	Richmond Hill	Rendezvous
Martin, Dawn	London	London-Middlesex
Massey, Martha	North York	Scarborough
Mavin, Barbara	Cambridge	Cambridge
McBeth, Carol	Arthur	Peel North
McIndoo, Merna	Orillia	Daisy Wilson Coldwater
McManus, Patricia	Essex	Windsor-Essex
Michelin, Marilyn	St. Catharines	St. Catharines
Minto, Sharron	Windsor	Windsor-Essex
Mitton, Marjorie	Chatham	Chatham-Kent
Monteith, Janice	Brantford	Brant
Montpetit, Violet	Utterson	East Parry Sound
Mooradian, Marion	St. Catharines	St. Catharines
Mullin, Betty	Stratford	Stratford
Munson, Jean	Niagara Falls	St. Catharines
Murphy, Marguerite	Kanata	Ottawa-Carleton
Nelder, Lois	Sault Ste. Marie	Sault Ste. Marie
Nightingale, Muriel	Burlington	BurlOak
O'Grady, Doreen	Listowel	Palmerston and District
Oldenburg, Kay	Sudbury	Sudbury
Orchard, Marion	Dutton	St. Thomas-Elgin
O'Shea, Patricia	Penetanguishene	Daisy Wilson Coldwater
O'Sullivan, Louise	Deseronto	Belleville
Page, Frances	Orillia	Orillia
Pallister, Helen	Shelburne	Dundalk-Flesherton and District
Park, Patricia	Sudbury	Sudbury
Paterson, Phyllis	Waterloo	Kitchener-Waterloo



In Memoriam

<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Branch</i>
Patterson, Eilene	Mount Brydges	Sarnia-Lambton
Patti-Buntain, Gail	Hamilton	Hamilton-Wentworth
Polgar, Mary	Brantford	Brant
Potton, E M Mae	Guelph	Guelph-Wellington
Price, Dr. Maxine	Essex	Windsor-Essex
Rathbun, Jane	Trenton	Trenton
Ridley, Jane	Oakville	Mississauga
Robert , Anne	Val Caron	Sudbury
Robitaille, Rachel	Sault Ste. Marie	Sault Ste.Marie
Rutledge, Cynthia	St. Thomas	St. Thomas-Elgin
Rynn, Alice	St Catharines	Niagara West
Schaub, Joyce	Milverton	Stratford
Sheffield, Ruth	Brantford	Brant
Smith, Laura	Townsend	Haldimand
Spencer, Irene	Brampton	Peel North
Staples, Sharon	Newcastle	Northumberland South Durham
Stepp, Claire	Windsor	Windsor-Essex
Stuart, Mary	Parkhill	Chatham-Kent
Sutcliffe, Louise	Sudbury	Sudbury
Thomas, June	Niagara Falls	Niagara Falls
Tinney, Fern	Warkworth	BurlOak
Tisdale, Joyce	Town of Plympton Wyoming	Sarnia-Lambton
Tobias, Lois	Port Colborne	Niagara South
Trowbridge, Frances	Georgetown	Lydia Snow North Halton
Van Vierzen, Johanna	Gananoque	Gananoque
Vargo, Eleanor	Sarnia	Sarnia-Lambton
Wagner, Diane	Georgetown	Lydia Snow North Halton
Wakabayashi, Doris	Burlington	Hamilton-Wentworth
Walker, Mae	Owen Sound	Owen Sound
Wallace, Marion	Belmont	St. Thomas-Elgin
Warner, Audrey	Wiarton	Wiarton
White, Eleanor	London	London-Middlesex
Wing, Roma	Brockville	Gananoque
Woods, Helen	Stratford	Stratford
Yaromich, Judy	Grimsby	Niagara West
Young, Geraldine	Niagara Falls	St. Catharines

RWTO/OERO 68TH Convention/AGM 2024 Program

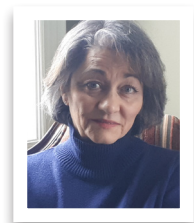
EVENTS FOR DELEGATES (blue)

OPEN EVENTS (red)

Tuesday, June 4

Morning

RWTO/OERO Virtual Song/Keynote Address – Sandra Salerno
Annual General Meeting (AGM)



Afternoon

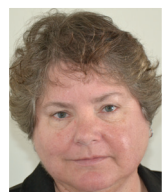
Workshops

(Workshops will be available to all members on the Website after the convention)



Treasurer's Workshop – Linda Huffman

The Treasurer's Workshop will be covering topics such as: Banking (e-transfers) including a video, setting up an Excel spreadsheet, and handling expense vouchers.



Hospital and Home Care Insurance – Terry Kennedy

'Understanding and Promoting the Hospital and Home Care Plan.'
A PowerPoint Presentation outlining the key benefits of our Manulife Hospital and Home Care Plan. A key part of the presentation will focus on ideas to encourage members to subscribe, and potential RWTO/OERO members to join.

Evening

Entertainment

EVERYONE can look forward to enjoying some uplifting entertainment. Further information will be provided when the final details have been worked out!

Wednesday, June 6

Morning

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

1:00 PM

In Memoriam

Over 90s Recognition

Awards Ceremony – Barbara Bain/Feather In Your Hat/Honorary Membership

Closing Ceremonies

**REGISTRATIONS WILL BE SHARED BY EMAIL
AND ON THE RWTO.ORG WEBSITE ONCE AVAILABLE**

Communications Newsletter

Connections is a major source of communication to all members of RWTO/OERO. It takes many hands to put an issue together and I would like to thank those members of the RWTO/OERO Board, local Branches and Linda Huffman (Executive Secretary-Treasurer) for their wonderful contributions. In addition, there is a team of editors who carefully read the submissions with a keen eye for any errors. Thanks to Christine Roberts (South Bruce), Sharon Chop (Ottawa-Carleton), Margaret Dempsey (Ottawa-Carleton) and Pat Emmerton (Area 1 Director) for their tireless help. Wishing everyone an early spring (Lol) and “see” you at the Virtual Convention in June.

Submitted by Kathy Smith,
Newsletter Convenor



RWTO/OERO

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Tecumseh, N8N 0H9

**PM Agreement
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