



RWTO/OERO

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



St Catharines Branch Newsletter, July 2025

President's Message: Judith Bennoch, President 2025-2026



As I write this, we are in the middle of a heatwave that just doesn't seem to want to go away! After a cool and soggy spring, we were looking forward to summer sun....I guess it is true - be careful what you wish for!

First, I would like to thank the membership for putting your faith in me by electing me as your President for 2025-2026. I was honoured to return to the executive last year as Vice President, after a hiatus while I served as Program Coordinator on the Provincial Board. I continued to serve as Membership Chair while Area Director but needed to relinquish that role when elected to my new role. Now it was time to come back and support my local branch again.

I would also like to welcome aboard some new executive members - **Anne Marie Stockwell** is returning, joining us as **Honorary President**, **Carol Morningstar** was elected as **Secretary** and **Kathy Trussell** will be taking over as **Goodwill Convenor**. We also are excited to have **Violette Hagerty** as our newly elected **Vice President**. We thank all these members for their willingness to support our branch with their time and talents.

We also said goodbye to two members leaving the executive. Special thanks to **Janis Harlos** for her time as **Goodwill Convenor** where she created a team to support this role and incorporated new initiatives along the way. **Marilyn Emmett** is also leaving as an active member on the executive, *again sadly....* but will continue her role as Telephone lead. Marilyn has given more of her time to our branch as well as Provincial than anyone I know, providing leadership and support in so many ways...I think of her as the St.

Catharines Convention Queen! *I wonder if she will come back again....she did after a short break before....*

It was a busy spring for our branch with our April luncheon being held at a venue new to us - Club Italia in Niagara Falls. Following the informative presentation by Sarah Putman from the Alzheimer's Society of Niagara, we enjoyed a delicious Italian lunch. We also honoured our very deserving 2025 Cora Bailey recipient, Linda Gaudet. In May we held our Annual General Meeting and luncheon at Betty's in Chippawa...another first for us, and our members expressed an interest in coming back. We celebrated the lives of those who had passed this year with a lovely In Memoriam Service prepared by Sharon Martinello and delivered by President, Melanie Kelch. Linda Gaudet, Nomination Chair, conducted the election providing us with our new executive for 2025-26.

In June, our branch delegates, Melanie Kelch, Judith Bennoch, Violette Hagerty, Susan McLaughlin, Kathleen Bradley, Linda Foster and Clara Warden, attended the 69th AGM/Convention held in Brandford. The highlight for us was our branch being honoured with **The Feather in Your Hat Award**. This award is given to branches who involve many members of their branch to support their community in a unique way. Myself and Melanie Kelch, President, submitted an entry based on the development of the **Continuum of Care Tool Kit**. This

project was led by Marg Newby and the Issues and Concerns Committee, with graphic work provided by Violette Hagerty. If you recall, this Tool Kit was



presented and shared with our members at our September luncheon last year and sent out to all members who were not in attendance. As well, this project was shared with members of the Provincial Board and at a workshop later in the fall for members across the province. It clearly met the criteria of the award. Violette Hagerty and Melanie Kelch, our President, accepted the award on behalf of the committee.

The AGM at Convention dealt with a number of Resolutions which I highlighted for you at our luncheon in May. The Resolution to increase delegates to two for all branches with less than 100 members was passed. Subsequently, the majority of the rest of the Resolutions related to this decision were passed in order to have the Constitution and Policy and Procedures document reflect this decision. The only other Resolution of particular interest, suggested to open our membership to teachers who have not yet retired. A type of Social/Associate member who would attend when they could and possibly be encouraged to become full members when they retire. As there were issues with the terminology this Resolution was deferred and will likely be brought up again another year.

Finally, it was necessary for the Provincial Board to pass a deficit budget for 2025-2026. Although the reserve funds are quite healthy, they are still below the recommended levels. It was pointed out that this may mean an additional increase in membership fees in the future.

In closing, I would also like to acknowledge and thank member Patti Malkiewicz, who took on the role of Area 13 Director on the Provincial Board in May. Patti has also taken on the Sales and Materials role as well. Congratulations and again - thank you for stepping up!!

September will bring a new Membership Year - a special one - our 70th Jubilee - and we are looking at celebrating in a big way next spring!!! Stayed tuned.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and as the song goes
.... "See you in September" 🎵

Judith Bennoch, President

Past President's Report: Melanie Kelch, Past President

Caring and Sharing Award

Do you know of anyone in our branch who has gone over and above to help others, organize events or contribute to our branch in a special way? If so, you can nominate them for a Caring and Sharing Award.



Please forward nominations to Melanie Kelch at:
kelchm546@gmail.com



Calling for your Help.

Westview Centre 4 Women needs your help!

Donations will be accepted at the October luncheon of women's clothing, coats, boots, linens or sleeping bags, etc. If you needed the basics of life, what would be important to you?

For more information, contact Betty Axon, former Honorary President.

Bring your donations and they will be taken to the Westview Centre 4 Women on your behalf.

SAVE THE DATE

The FIRST class of the
ST. CATHARINES TEACHER'S COLLEGE 1965-1966
is planning a **60th YEAR REUNION** celebration on
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2025, at BROCK UNIVERSITY
(Pond Inlet Room and/or the Faculty of Education)

Let us know if you are interested in attending this
final celebration by contacting:
Joanne Atkinson (nee Bird) Or Patt Chivers (nee Swayze)

One can now register for the events by going to the
Brock University website / Homecoming 2025.

Upcoming RWTO Luncheons

Wednesday September 24, 2025

St. John's Ukrainian Activity Centre

91 Lakeshore Road, St. Catharines

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

Speaker's Topic: Home Support Services in Niagara

\$35.00 Due by Sept 17

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



A representative from the Region will introduce our members to:

"Home Support Services in Niagara"
....to keep you **SAFE** and **HAPPY** in your **HOME!**

Examples of "places that we call HOME":

Your House

Your Condo

Your Apartment

Your Accommodation

with a family member

In Assisted Living

In a Nursing Home

In a Retirement Home

In a Long-Term Care Home

Learn about "Who, What, When, and How" to access the invaluable range of HOME support services and agencies.

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

Location, To Be Announced

Speaker: Niagara Festival of the Performing Arts
by NFPA Festival Coordinator,
Lisa Cosens-Brillon
(and featuring some performers)

Westview Centre 4 Women Collection

\$\$ being negotiated Due by Oct 15



Wednesday December 3, 2025

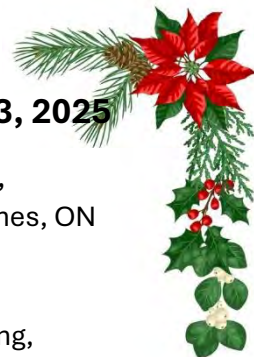
Holiday Inn & Suites,

327 Ontario Street, St. Catharines, ON

Christmas Buffet

Christmas Carol Sing-Along,

\$\$ being negotiated Payment due by Nov 26



Wednesday, April 22, 2026

70th Birthday Party

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

AGM, In Memoriam



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 e-transfer. If you are late in mailing your cheque, let Linda Foster know (905) 935-6182 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. **E-transfers, rwto@catharines@gmail.com Cheques** payable to: **RWTO St. Catharines.** Mail: Linda Foster, 14 Woodgarden Crt, St. Catharines, ON L2M 7C9.
7. Luncheon payments will be returned if cancelled by the Wednesday prior to the luncheon. Call Linda to cancel. (905) 935-6182
8. You will receive a phone call or email reminder 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 Kathy Trussell, (905) 688-2518.

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

Membership Report: Linda Foster, Clara Warden, Membership Convenors

Hello! I hope that everyone has been enjoying this hot Summer!

A reminder that Membership Renewals and dues of \$55.00 are to be submitted to Linda Foster, Treasurer, by August 30, 2025. **E-transfers**, rwto2catharines@gmail.com
Cheques payable to: **RWTO St. Catharines**. Mail: Linda Foster, 14 Woodgarden Crt, St. Catharines, ON L2M 7C9.

This year again, we are pleased to announce that we will be awarding **three free memberships** to members who have sent in their renewals and dues by August 30th. The draws will be made at our September luncheon from the renewals received. Winners will then be contacted.

Our **Membership Directory** will be printed early in September. **To have your name included, your membership needs to be renewed by August 30th**. If your information in the Directory needs to be changed, please let Linda Foster or Clara Warden know as soon as possible.

This year, we will not be distributing **Membership cards**. These are the cards that were wallet sized. If you feel that you would still like one, please let Clara know.

We are always looking for new members, so please "talk up" our Branch group with any retired women educators that you may know. Membership information is available on our website, <https://rwto.org>, or you may contact Linda Foster or Clara Warden, if you are aware of anyone who may be interested. We need your help in recruiting newly retired women educational professionals, as well as those who have been enjoying retirement for a while.

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

Goodwill Report: Kathy Trussell, Goodwill Convenor

Hello all. My name is Kathy Trussell, and I am the new Convenor of the Goodwill Committee. During my teaching career I taught early primary (K-1) mostly at William Hamilton Merritt School (formerly Sheridan Park). I started teaching at the age of 43, after staying at home with my four children and then working in Early Childhood settings, as I also have my ECE diploma. I am a very proud Nana to 7 wonderful grandkids aged 6 to 10 and love spending as much time as possible with them. Whenever we can, my husband Bob and I love to travel.... in the summer all over Canada in our travel trailer and other times of the year we try to squeeze in at least one cruise. I also love to read, play golf and swim.

The Goodwill Committee is a small but very dedicated group who spread love to our members on your behalf, whenever there is a need. We love to reach out to the "Forever Young" members, (those over 90), with little treats, cards and phone calls throughout the year. We will be honouring them again, at our September Luncheon. So, over 90 members, watch for your invitation in the mail at the beginning of September,

If you know of someone who needs a sympathy, get well, or even a 'thinking of you' card, please contact me through email at bob54kat57@gmail.com or phone at 905-933-1912. If caring for others is one of your strengths... we would love you to join our group!

Insurance Report: Susan McLaughlin, Insurance Convenor

The Manulife Hospital and Home Care Plan is an affordable extra insurance plan that gives peace of mind during a convalescence from a hospital stay. It costs \$14.95 a month for a member and \$15.57 for a partner. You can enroll in the plan

**MEMBERSHIP
RENEWALS are due.**

\$55.00

**Submit to
Linda Foster,
Treasurer, by
August 30, 2025**



Newest Member:
Darla MacLean, with Clara
Warden and Melanie Kelch



in the first year after you retire without a medical questionnaire to be filled in by your doctor. After your first year of retirement, you are required to send in a medical questionnaire to obtain approval to join. All the information on what the plan covers can be found on the RWTO website, <https://rwto.org> or you can ask Susan McLaughlin for a brochure.

For those of you who already have the plan, remember that you have a year to submit your claim. If you stop your membership with RWTO, your plan will become invalid, and it is up to you to call and cancel it. The same applies if you move into a home that gives you medical assistance. If you have questions give me a call.

Susan McLaughlin, Insurance Convenor (905) 935-9966.



RWTO/OERO St. Catharines Branch Slate of Officers 2025-2026



Table Officers

Past President

Melanie Kelch

President

Judith Bennoch

Vice President

Violette Hagerty

Treasurer

Linda Foster

Secretary

Carol Morningstar

Honorary President

Honorary President 2025-2026

Anne Marie Stockwell

Convenors

Social

Louise Farquhar

Communications: Archivist/Website

Sharon Martinello

Communications: Newsletter

Fern Lackenbauer

Goodwill

Kathy Trussell

Membership

Linda Foster, Clara Warden

Insurance

Susan McLaughlin

Interest Groups and Out 'n About

Kathleen Bradley

Issues & Concerns

Marg Newby

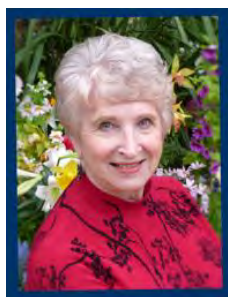
Telephone

Marilyn Emmett

Area 13 Director

Patti Malkiewich

Welcome New Executive Members:



Anne Marie Stockwell, Honorary President. Anne Marie is a well-known member of our Branch. She has served as Past President, President, Vice President, is a Cora Bailey Recipient and now Honorary President. In her professional years, Anne Marie dedicated 35 years to teaching, including internationally (China) and is an ESL specialist. Anne Marie enjoys reading and crafting, such as card making, crocheting, sewing and cake decorating. Anne Marie also spent 20 years providing tax preparation services to low-income families. This clearly displays a caring heart, wisdom and creativity. We are happy to have you as our Honorary President.

Carol Morningstar, Secretary. I have been an active member of RWTO/OERO ever since I first retired in 2017. I love the friendships I have formed, the fun groups, delicious luncheons and companionships. Being Area Director for two years gave me insight as to how the provincial RWTO/OERO helps the branches and stays updated on new and exciting areas to improve the lives of seniors. Our branch is a great example of this.

Filling Violette's shoes as Secretary will never happen, so instead I will try to do my best in attempting the basic commitments of the role. Violette has been an amazing secretary for over 13 years. I only took on this role knowing she will still be on the executive and will help with the "extras". Thanks Friend!



I taught mostly elementary music for my career and loved seeing a different side of students when they enjoyed singing, playing boom-whackers, tone chimes or recorders. Sometimes those who struggled in other subjects would be the shining stars in music class. What a joy to see.

My hobbies are spending family time at the cottage with my husband, Dave, our two wonderful children, Derek and Andrea, their spouses, Shaun and Vicky, and two now amazing adult grandchildren, Owen and Mya. I also ride my electric bike whenever possible and Dave and I continue to travel, which we will do until either we run out or the money runs out! Photo albums of our trips are also a passion. Retired life is wonderful!!

Thanks for allowing me to serve you as your new Secretary. I hope I do it justice.

Kathy Trussell, Goodwill Convenor. See Goodwill Report (above) where Kathy introduces herself and shares her heart for others. Welcome aboard!



RWTO Rankin Run

A group of wonderful ladies participated in the Rankin Cancer Run on May 24. The weather was cool but we persevered and walked 5 km. Some of us walked at Brock University with thousands of others and some RWTO ladies walked in Port Dalhousie or next to the canal. Our RWTO ladies raised thousands of dollars by asking their neighbours, friends and the ladies of RWTO-St. Catharines to donate to this worthy cause. This money is used to support the services in local hospitals and treatment centres in the Niagara region. We raised \$6,500 which I think is fantastic!! We are a generous group of people! Thank you!!



Please consider donating next year or walking with us. Sincerely, Jessica Thomson



April Luncheon 50/50 Winner: Margaret Pulford with 50/50 Draw Sales, Sheila Bengert
Door Prizes: Clara Warden, Membership Convenor, and Melanie Kelch
Door Prize Recipient: Margot Smith with Clara Warden
Door Prize Recipient: Joanne Hall.

RWTO/OERO CORA BAILEY AWARD, 2024 - 2025

St. Catharines Branch, Area 13



Linda Gaudet

Linda Gaudet joined RWTO/OERO in the 2019-20 membership year. Her career in education spanned 37 years as an inspiring secondary school French teacher. She concluded her career at Lakeport and Governor Simcoe S.S.

Linda quickly became an active and supportive member of St. Catharines branch, volunteering to take on the responsibility of 2nd Vice President in 2020-2021. This was a challenging time for our branch with COVID, making keeping in touch with our members so vital while slowly working back to meeting in person.

She helped welcome us back to in-person activities as 1st Vice President in 2021-2022 and continued her strong leadership taking on the role of President in 2022-2023.

As Past President in 2023-25 she was able to continue to share her acquired knowledge and skills.

During Linda's time on our branch executive, she served on various committees including providing secretarial skills for the Issues and Concerns Continuum of Care Start Up Tool Kit project and chaired the Branch Manual Committee for 2 years. She also initiated and coordinated the 'Soles4Souls' project, collecting shoes from members from 2020-2023. Linda was also instrumental in organizing the 'Clarice West-Hobbs Memorial Garden Fund' in 2023.

But it is not all work and no play for Linda - as a member she participates in the Book Club, Euchre, Travelogue and Singing for Fun Interest Groups. *In her own words....I am such a ham, I love getting laughs at luncheons. One of the best luncheons was just this year when we listened and sang along to songs from our more youthful days. It was uplifting and it was great to hear that it is good for our health!*

In 2024 she volunteered to take on the role of Area 13 Director, representing the St. Catharines Branch. This demonstrated her willingness to extend her support of RWTO/OERO by contributing to the organization at the Provincial level. She also serves on the Provincial Social Justice Committee.

Since joining RWTO/OERO Linda has enjoyed reconnecting with many Lakeport colleagues. She has joined Violette Hagerty's Mirvish theatre group and volunteers at the Community Care Food Bank. She enjoys power walks along the Welland Canal and the Canada Games track.

Linda raised two intelligent, kind and funny boys - Andrew a Family Doctor, and Alex who followed in her footsteps, as a teacher - French and Music. She is proud of their successes, their partners and her five wonderful grandchildren.

For her generous service, the St. Catharines Branch is honoured to grant Linda Gaudet, this well-deserving recipient, the Cora Bailey Award for 2024-2025.

Interest Groups and Out 'n About



Revolving Book Club. Books for the upcoming year will be available at the September luncheon. If you cannot attend, please have a friend pick it up for you.

NOTE: One more reader is needed for this group. Contact Patt Chivers if you are interested.

"Art in the Afternoon" NEW Interest Group. Offered by Heather Armstrong, former Art Teacher

Come out for an afternoon of creativity in Port Colborne. Explore a range of drawing & painting techniques. The main focus is to have fun! Even if you have never drawn or painted before it is never too late to learn. A number of afternoons will be offered for you to choose from. Sign up at the September luncheon.



A sign-up sheet will be offered at the September and October luncheons to ascertain those interested in a Shaw outing in 2026. Decisions as to the play, the date and the time will be relayed once the new Shaw program is published.



An Afternoon Tea will be offered, probably in October. Watch for this in the October newsletter.

The Christmas Urn Workshop at the Watering Can will be offered in November.



Christmas Card Making Afternoons will be offered in late October, early November.

As always, Kathleen Bradley, Interest Group Coordinator, is always looking for other opportunities, outings and experiences to offer our membership. Kathleen is open to all suggestions and leaders.

May 16th Fri PM Walkers at the Queenston Floral Clock



Euchre Lunch, June 2025



June Cardmaking: 10 ladies made greeting card at Fern Lackenbauer's home over multiple days. Many "Thinking of You", some Sympathy and Birthday.

<https://rwto.org> Learn more about RWTO/OERO on the Provincial website.

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

View the St. Catharines Branch activities, including contact information, upcoming events, Branch newsletters, Interest Groups, Resources, Awards and more.

Newsletter assembled and published by RWTO Communications:

Newsletter Convenor, Fern Lackenbauer.

Thanks to UPS Printing, Ridley Square, Evgenii Boukalov

