



THE SCRIBBLER

Sault Ste. Marie RWTO/OERO Newsletter Fall & Winter 2025-2026

SHARING CARING HAVING FUN

President's Note 2026 by Patricia Lambert

TIME TO CELEBRATE!

Seventy years ago, in 1956, retired women teachers in several Southern Ontario cities became politically active because of the pathetically low pensions of women teachers who retired prior to the end of WWII. This group, the Ontario Provincial Association of Retired Women Teachers, banded together with a mission! Pensions! Pensions! Pensions! They changed their name to the Ontario Association of Superannuated Women Teachers, but they were true to their mission – adequate pensions for all women retired from teaching. However, the Provincial Government would not meet with them because they were *just* women and did not represent all teachers.

In 1968 OASWT joined with retired men teachers to form the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario. Suddenly, the Government would meet with the group.

With STO dealing with the political issue of pensions, OASWT renamed itself the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario and refocused as a social group of “caring and sharing” women supporting the social needs of women.

The Sault Ste. Marie Branch of RWTO formed in 1966 (Clara Thomas Archives, York University). As we celebrate our Branch's sixtieth anniversary, check out the history highlights of RWTO (December 25 issue of “Connections”), or read a more complete history of RWTO ([Uncommon Women](#)).

Be a part of the celebrations this year! Attend the Provincial Annual General Meeting/Convention in London June 2,3,4 /2026 (details available in the March “Connections”).

Celebrate our Branch year-end/60th Anniversary Celebration on Wednesday, June 24/2026. Attend our general membership meetings on Wednesday, February 25th/2026, and April 29/2026.

Get involved at a new level! Join the Sault Ste. Marie Branch Executive and help plan events going forward. Invite a woman retired from education to be your guest at any of our events. As we continue to be “caring and sharing”, be inviting!

Celebrate *your* RWTO!

Sept. 24th General Meeting—*Being Smart About Exercise*



VON SMART EXERCISE PROGRAM FOR SENIORS

The focus of our September meeting was to learn some exercises from Anne Callaghan, of the Victorian Order of Nurses. Well-trained and motivational, Anne is a mobility specialist, older adults training specialist, personal trainer and fitness instructor.

Anne led those of us who wanted to participate in a 30-minute class of gentle exercises which are geared to improving strength, balance and flexibility regardless of one's current physical ability. Participants had the choice of sitting or standing or both to do the exercises.



Following Anne are right to left: Bernice W., Carmen C., Brenda O., Pat P., Erminia G., Eileen F., Sharon B. Back right: Stephania H and Rita W. exercise as well. Behind Anne is Patricia L. working out.

Anne was so motivational that five of our Branch Members participate regularly in her sessions which take place Mondays and Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the lower-level Program room at the James L. McIntyre Centennial Library. Increasing our strength and balance will reduce our risk of falls, and the program is FREE! Way to go, ladies!



After Anne, various Executive Members made announcements and gave reminders to the general members in attendance.

Sandy F. gave her Treasurer Report which was accepted by members.

Brenda G., Communications Convenor, handed out a Bucket List for RWTO Sault Branch General Meetings in order to get members' input regarding ideas for activities and speakers for the remaining general meetings in November 2025, February 2026 and April 2026. She listed several ideas and provided lots of space on both sides of the page for members to add their ideas and wishes. A few new ideas were added to the list. Don't be shy; if there is something you would like to do at a meeting or a guest you would like to have come and talk or demonstrate a new skill, do not hesitate to make it known to an Executive Member. We will seriously consider all ideas put forth for feasibility this year and next year.

Susan T., Social Convenor, reminded members that a sign -up sheet is available to members to bring a sweet or savoury treat to one of the upcoming meetings if they wish. Treats are enjoyed at every meeting, and they are brought by Branch volunteers who sign up for one of the meetings.

Donations were placed in the donation jar to raise funds for The Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Fund. A total of \$130 was generously raised.

Anyone wanting to be part of the wreath- laying delegation on November 11 at the GFL Centre was invited to sign up. Brenda G. Patricia L. and Darleen Z. signed up immediately to represent our Branch.

To round out the meeting, veggies, crackers and cheese and a delicious baking assortment were available, donated by members, and the door prize of a pretty pair of place mats sewn and donated by Sandy F. was won by Mary M.

Oct. 8, 2025 Central Algoma and Sault Ste. Marie Joint Meeting

On Oct. 8, twelve intrepid Sault Branch members journeyed to Bar River to join our Central Algoma colleagues. It was a lovely warm sunny day for a drive. Easily enough, we followed Highway 17 East, turned left on Bar River Road East, drove along until we came to Lapish Road where we turned right and found the Bar River Community Hall just over a little bridge.

Upon arriving we were impressed with the renovations made to the building. The front oak door was beautiful. Inside, the oak trim around doorways and the hanging opaque white glass lights warmed up the spacious white interior.



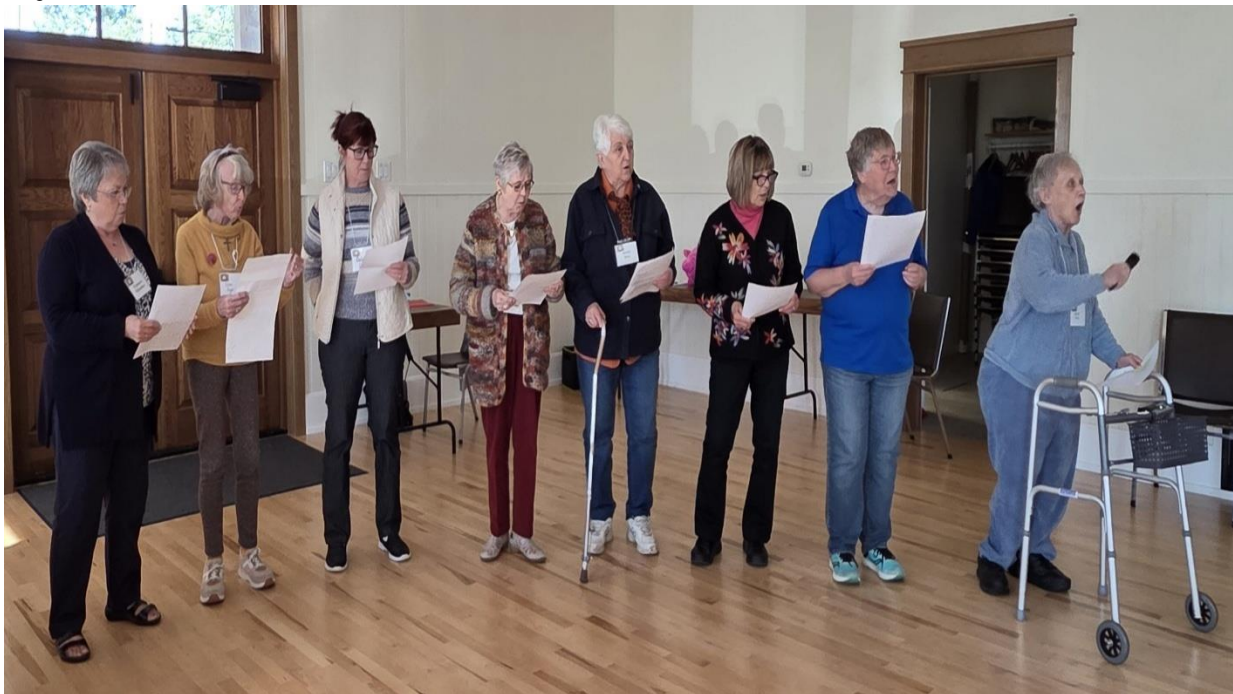
At the head table were left to right: Maureen G., Central Algoma Recording Secretary, Carol N. Area 11 Director, Marilyn S. Central Algoma Branch President, Patricia E. Sault Branch President, and our guest of honour Linda Sargeant, Provincial RWTO President.

We began with an icebreaker “Find Someone Who”. We sought out ladies, asked them questions on the sheet trying to find someone who could answer in the affirmative to each question once only and then shared the names and responses. It was a fun way for us to get to know each other a little.

Each Branch President gave an update on her Branch’s special activities. Central Algoma then held the business part of their meeting with reports by each Executive Member and Convenor of interest groups.

Kelly C., Central Algoma’s 1st Vice President, read “The “History of Bar River” by community member, Verna Lapish.

It was then our Branch’s turn to introduce Linda Sargeant with our “News Flash” rap written by our very dramatic Bernice W! Each line revealed a fact about Linda’s interesting life and illustrious career in education.



Performing the “News Flash” Rap are left to right: Carmen C., Eileen F., Darleen L., Sandy F., Gerry Y., Brenda G., Patricia L. and Bernice W.



Provincial President for 2025-26, Linda Sargeant, proudly wearing her many RWTO pins, told us that our introduction of her was the best she has ever experienced.

What a pleasant, down- to -earth, energetic lady!

We revealed that Linda was the oldest of five children raised in Hamilton and Stoney Creek, that she earned her degrees in History, Geography and Education all from Brock University. She did volunteer work in Barbados after graduation and it was there that she met her future husband with whom she later had one son.

Linda enjoyed a 37-year career in Hamilton-Wentworth teaching grades one to eight, and worked one year as Principal.

In 2002, Linda describes herself “greeting endometrial cancer and ovarian cancer”. She survived due to having the first scheduled surgery for endometrial cancer and new chemotherapy medications for ovarian cancer.

When she retired in 2011, Linda joined RWTO Branch Executive. She moved through various chair positions and spent five years as Branch President.

She received a Cora Bailey pin which she wears with pride not only for earning it but also for designing it and sharing it with the province.

In 2022, Linda was named Area Director and took on the role of 2nd Vice President of Provincial Executive in 2023.

Linda was elected RWTO Provincial President for 2025-2026.

Linda has been involved in many diverse volunteer positions for many years while teaching and working for RWTO.

Linda has made and continues to be a very busy lady who works tirelessly to make a difference.

Linda urged us to speak up for anything we want improved with regard to RWTO. "Speak up!"

Marilyn S. presented Linda with a donation in her name to the Trefry Memorial Centre on St. Joseph Island. This service supports older adults to remain in their homes as long as possible.



A delicious lunch was served consisting of chili, harvest salad, chips, cheese, sour cream, corn muffins and pumpkin squares.



Left to right: Gerry Y., Brenda G. and Carmen C. posed on the front steps of the hall which were decorated for autumn.

A great time was had by all.
Left to right:
Darleen L., Eileen F.,
Kelly C., Gerry Y.,
Marilyn S. & Patricia L.



Left to right: Kaija B., Susan T. and mom, Marg T., Mary M., Carmen C., Sandy F. and Brenda G. Missing are Sherrill D. and Bernice W. who had just left for home.



November 26, 2025 **Christmas Card Writing**

There were announcements made at the beginning of the meeting.

The Provincial Grant to Branches for our RWTO/OERO 70th Anniversary was increased from \$100 to \$200.

Members are encouraged to receive their copies of Connections online. All new members will be sent their copies via the internet.

Branch President, Patricia L. took the initiative to visit all three local teachers' federation offices and left ten envelopes of information regarding RWTO which could be given to women retiring from the schools. More envelopes are available upon request.

Patricia L. also sent cards to fifty-three Algoma School staffs for Teacher Appreciation Day Oct. 8th. Great way to show our support, Patricia!

Envelopes containing pens, book marks, membership cards and receipts have been delivered by our Branch Executive to members who had not received theirs. Thank you to those Executive Members who drove around town making deliveries. It was very kind of you!

To increase awareness and support to members when information about a member or a family member is identified, it is important to let Patricia L. know if she has permission to share with all our members. Also, be sure to inform Rita W., Goodwill Convenor.

Sandy F., in her Membership report, conveyed that we had sixty-two paid members as of Oct. 31, 2025.

Three delegates have expressed their interest in attending the 2026 RWTO/OERO Convention. The final decision regarding who will be going will be announced in March 2026.



It was great to see Marg W. (left) and Sue N.(right) join us again.

We love your "Dashing through the Snow" sweater, Sue!



Busy ladies writing Christmas cards! Left side front to back: Judy P. and her sister, Alison. Right side front to back Sharon B., and Geri P.



Having great fun wearing Christmas colours of red and green and writing cards is Mary Anne P.

Members in attendance that day wrote a grand total of 523 Christmas cards which were distributed after the meeting to residents in three homes: Extendicare Van Daele, F.J. Davey Home and The Ontario Finnish Rest Home. We hope that all the residents who receive our cards will enjoy them.

In the donation jar, we collected \$110 for Christmas Cheer!

The door prizes of two boxes of chocolates donated by Susan T. were gladly received by two happy members.

All in all, it was a productive joyous day for all of us!



Investigating Seniors' Care in Algoma by Carol Neave, Area 11 Director

Central Algoma RWTO has an Investigators' Committee which consists of ten Central Algoma members and one Sault Ste. Marie member, Barb P.

The Investigators took a year doing preliminary work such as learning the differences between Independent Living, At Home Care with Assistance, Retirement Homes, Retirement Home Care with Assistance, Assisted Living, and Long -Term Care. We divided all the retirement places into these categories between Sault Ste. Marie and Blind River.

Then we prepared sixty questions that we hoped the tour guides would answer for us, so we could form our individual opinions of what each place could offer us. We did this should we decide in the future that our next step in the journey of life should be to access care of some kind.

We have completed our visits except to one place which seems to be resistant to our visit or our questions. However, we will continue to pursue a visit there.

A compilation of our personal opinions and rated findings is now in the process of being organized. There will be a copy for the Central Algoma Branch plus a folder of specific resources and copies too for the Sault branch. We will be sharing our findings and making the binders available [May 27](#), first for Central Algoma, and when invited to do so, anytime after that to the Sault Ste. Marie Branch.



RWTO Book Club 2 by Susan T.

In 2025, our members continued to meet each month by the fireplace at North Branch Library. We use the library's "Book in a Bag" programme and are reading mostly fiction. Our selections ranged from 19th century China, the Holocaust, Montreal, Stockholm and Antarctica. Our favourite read was "The Little Old Lady Who Broke All the Rules" by Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg.

We also went out for lunch in January (North 82) and August (The Mill Patio - wonderful [sun](#)!). We listen and laugh. It's okay to not like the book. New members are always welcome! Look for information on when and what in the monthly calendar.



HAPPY 2026 READING!

Newsletter by Brenda Gallander

Photos by Brenda G. and Gerry Y.