



CHALK TALK

RWTO/OERO London-Middlesex Branch Newsletter

February 2018

Editor: Janice Thielenhaus

President's Message



Mark Twain once wrote, "Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see." As a tribute to Canada's 150th anniversary, our London-Middlesex Branch embraced the theme "150+ Acts of Kindness." Members volunteered in hospitals, hospices, palliative care units, long-term care facilities, and numerous community agencies benefiting children. Others supported church programs, local meal and hospitality endeavours, hosted international students, cared for elderly neighbours, and championed personal initiatives in this area. These wonderful endeavours complement the RWTO motto of "Caring and Sharing," which has become a significant legacy of who we are as a Branch and a pathway into our future.

During our "kick off" luncheon in September, we welcomed a record number of members and guests as the echo of happy voices and laughter filled RiverBend, renewing friendships and sharing summer adventures. Tara Overholt, from CTV News, delighted us with her humorous tales about the challenges and changes in the media over the years. Displays were also created to capture the vision and vitality that our Branch members exemplify.

In October, Bonnie Hinschberger, from Ellison Travel, presented interesting travel destinations and pictures which depicted her travels with the "Broad Escapes" package of tours. We could see the "wheels turning" as members contemplated different possibilities for new vacations and experiences, and potential options to travel with RWTO friends.

While enjoying the ambiance and a beautifully decorated venue, members were captivated when the RWTO Choir performed their magic at the November luncheon with their energetic and heartfelt musical selections. Thank you to Johanna Hurd for her leadership and dedication to inspire 27 talented choir members. The London-Middlesex Merrymakers shared their hilarious rendition of *If I Weren't a Teacher* with character roles performed by several of our newer members and comical characters in our midst.

A warm welcome was extended to our guests and 37 new members who have joined RWTO London-Middlesex during the "Each One, Reach One" celebrations. On average, we have welcomed 154 members and guests to each of the luncheons this Fall.

Our annual Christmas Friendship luncheon at Sunningdale in December was hosted by Sandra McKeen and Karen Tierney and a sumptuous meal was heartily devoured by 56 enthusiastic members. With Irla's gifted touch on piano, the enthusiasm of Jane and Cathy leading the carol singing, and Linda's entertaining story, the spirit of Christmas was upon us.

Congratulations to Mary Maxwell, Bernarda Norwood, Alberta O'Neil and April McCarthy-Braca who have pursued interesting and challenging projects in retirement and were nominated for the **Follow the Dream Award** at the Provincial level.

Recipients of our Outreach charities were overwhelmed by the abundance of your generosity and compassionate support for A Book for Every Child, the Women's Rural Resource Centre in Strathroy, and My Sister's Place. Following a new tradition established last year, our Branch members donated \$200 to the Salvation Army Christmas Program instead of purchasing Santa gifts. Thank you, ladies!

Nominations are open for positions on the Executive for a **1st and 2nd Vice President** and we do hope that you will consider this opportunity. You will have the support of an eager team who work well together, have fun, and enjoy the prospect of attending the Provincial convention as a Branch delegate.

We look forward to seeing you at our many activities this year. Know that your friendship and presence are important to us.

Nancy Bell

LUNCHEON DATES TO REMEMBER



Thursday, March 22, 2018
Thursday, April 26, 2018

PLEASE REMEMBER to bring Book Bags back for sales.

Thursday, May 24, 2018

SPRING BANQUET

Support for Local Charities

Caring and Sharing is the motto of the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario. Our Branch has taken this motto to heart and at each regular luncheon we support a different charity. The program sent to our members each August lists each month's recipients. All donations are entirely voluntary and much appreciated.



The charity for October has been the Women's Rural Resource Centre in Strathroy. Its mission is to use a feminist, anti-oppressive analysis to provide education, prevention and support services for women and families impacted by domestic violence in Middlesex County.

They help women and their children to be safe and make good decisions for their families - meeting women wherever they are at and walking beside them in their journey. They also support perpetrators of violence who are looking for an opportunity to change their patterns and live in peace with their family.

Jane Williams and the late Kaye Harries visited the Rural Resource Centre before making the decision for the Branch to give them support. They were warmly welcomed by the staff and were given a tour of the facility. There is a residence for families who need a safe place to live and there are brightly decorated rooms used for counselling women and children. The Centre has an outreach program which visits the high schools in Strathroy and provides counselling and courses for "at risk" teens in the community. This matches well with RWTO in our volunteer efforts and donations.

Volunteers loaded up two vans with paper goods donations. Two drivers, Lynda Faulkner and Louise Gare delivered to the Centre.



The Centre has a food bank, that offers supplies to families in need, to which we have donated in October. They have been overwhelmed by your generosity over the past three years and always send us a sincere letter of appreciation.

Jane Williams

Awards Committee

The Shining Star - Branch Award was established several years ago to recognize members for their long-term service, support of members, as well as community volunteer work. In May 2017 Marilyn Elford and Alberta O'Neil received the Shining Star Award in recognition of their service to the Branch and Community. Congratulations to both of these members.



Marilyn and Alberta heard their contributions being described before the presentation.

The Cora Bailey - Provincial Award recognizes members who have given excellent leadership and outstanding service to their local Branch. The recipient for 2017 was Mary Maxwell who has been our Treasurer for more than four years. She has been actively involved with the Membership Committee; has helped to organize a fashion show and has always been willing to assist the Branch where needed. The presentation was made in October.

Jane Williams presented the Cora Bailey Award to Mary Maxwell.



Special Pin

This year the Provincial organization, in conjunction with a member of Hamilton-Wentworth Branch designed a **special pin** in remembrance of Cora Bailey, who was the first Provincial Secretary-Treasurer, held the office for a number of years, and wrote a book about RWTO.

Since the Award first began in 2006 there have been 21 members in our Branch who have been recognized with the award. Pat Savage presented this new pin to 11 of the 21 members present at the November luncheon.

Through the leadership of these 21 members there have been a number of changes/additions in our Branch over the years such Friendship Activities, the Keeping in Touch Committee, Fundraising with the 50/25/25 Draw, Book Sales, Kiwanis Music Festival Awards, Shining Star Awards, etc. We are fortunate to have such dedicated and innovative people in our midst.

Patricia Savage

New Members in 2017

It is with great pleasure that we have welcomed the following 37 members. They are listed in the order in which they became members, reading across the columns.

Bev Sheldon	Marg Dean
Dale Box	Kathie McNamara Allard
Randi Young	Helen Ford
Cathy Wirick	Faye Willis
Carla Kuijpers	Phyllis Leighton
Susanne Quan	Kathryn Debevc
Martha Wood	Laurie McCaw
Dian Lemieux	Fern Partridge
Ruth Clifford	Diane Quartel
Connie Arn	Elfriede Munroe
Linda Freeman	Marta van der Hoff
Pat McGhee	Maureen Tipping
Debra LeGrow	Margaret Arthur
Leigh Ann Cain	Jill Barber
Elaine Bois	Mary Laird
Fatima Martins-Grabowski	Sadie Oldewening
Patricia Lynn Savage	Maria Abusow-Pas
Irene Butler	Shelley Sorgini
Debbie Howes	

Karen Tierney, Membership



New members are welcomed at the October luncheon.

Insurance

RWTO/OERO Hospital and Home Care Plan

This supplementary insurance plan is designed especially for RWTO/OERO members and their spouses so that they can have additional coverage when needed. Please note:

1. During the first year of retirement your acceptance into this plan is guaranteed. You do not need to complete the Medical Questionnaire that is part of the Application Form.
2. If you have any questions or need a claims form, contact Helen Munce or Rhonda King.
3. Our **premiums have remained the same** even though we have **three additions** to our Hospital and Home Care Plan.

These additions are:-

- ~ transportation benefit now includes cost of transportation by volunteer drivers for the Canadian Cancer Society up to \$100.
- ~ mobility assistance benefit now includes ergonomic walking poles when prescribed by a physician.
- ~ hearing aid benefit now includes coverage for charges or purchase of cochlear implants.

Please let Manulife know if you have a change of address, 1-800-268-3763, am_service@manulife.com
New enrollees with questions, call 1-866-410-0550

Insurance Co-convenors:

Helen Munce 519-473-2050

Rhonda King 519-657-7348

RWTO London-Middlesex Branch Choir

This fall's choir has 27 members including the director. There were eight rehearsals before our performance at the November 23rd luncheon. These take place every Tuesday afternoon from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at St John the Divine Roman Catholic Church, 339 Baseline Road West. This location is very close to Westminster Secondary School.

Our repertoire this fall includes 2 selections from last fall which I have borrowed from the church files. We sing basically in two parts, soprano and alto, and fortunately we have a good balance between the sections. The ladies are a very committed group and have worked very hard. We also laugh a lot!

Our choir in full swing at the November luncheon.



I have been responsible for choosing the music, playing and directing as well as opening and closing at the church. Outside of the actual rehearsal time; the selection and purchase of music and my own preparation take quite a lot of time. As soon as this season is completed, I will be looking for music to use for the spring luncheon in May and that will probably involve checking resources from different publishers. Rehearsals for that luncheon will start at the beginning of April.

It would be **extremely helpful to have someone to assist me** with music selection, directing and/or accompaniment. In fact, **this is really necessary if we are going to continue with this choir.**

I appreciate all of the ladies making an effort to come to rehearsals, sharing their time and talents. However, we would be better served with a shared directorship.

If you are able to assist, please call: 519-473-2650

Johanna Hurd, Choir Director



Johanna received our thanks after the choir had sung.

In Memoriam

Our Branch has lost five long-time members this past year. We were privileged to have known them and extend our condolences to their families, friends and colleagues.

Clara Tupper on March 26, 2017

Eleanor Greeniaus on April 22, 2017

Marg Virtue on July 6, 2017

Doris Robotham on November 25, 2017

Dorothy Harrison on December 29, 2017

Friendship Activities for 2018

Everyone is welcome! Join us in the fun!

Feb. 12	Breakfast at Shelley's (Lamplighter)
Feb. 28	10:00 Mini Golf ; Lunch 11:30 - Mandarin North
Mar. 6	Breakfast at Shelley's
Mar. 9	Take A Break Travel - Canada Blooms/Home Show
Apr. 11	Breakfast at Shelley's
Apr. 17	Take A Break - Ripley's Aquarium/Eaton Centre
May 7	Breakfast - The Village Pantry-Lambeth
May 16	Car Rally / Lunch
June 12	Breakfast - The Village Pantry-Lambeth
June 21	Picnic - Peace Garden
July 11	Breakfast - The Village Pantry
July 19	Huron Country Playhouse - Canada 151
Aug. 13	Breakfast - Four Seasons - Fanshawe Park Rd.

Please watch for further details through the Friendship email/phone contacts. *Nancy Bell*

A Member's Recognition

At the RTO District 8 Annual Meeting in October 2017, **Doreen Knight** was recognized for her Significant Contribution to District 8 for over 25 years of organizing the RTO Bridge Club, setting and closing up the room at their church, preparing the refreshments and being the contact people for new players to join. Doreen and her husband Wally were a great team.



On behalf of District 8, Lorna Wilson gave Wally posthumous recognition at his Celebration of Life in November.

Doreen is also a keen member of RWTO and one of our former Past Presidents of London-Middlesex. We offer condolences to Doreen and her family on Wally's passing.

Christmas Fun in November

At our Christmas Special Lunch on November 23rd after the Choir had sung, the London-Middlesex Merrymakers took centre stage. They performed a delightful rendition of, ***If I Weren't a Teacher*** - suggesting many alternative occupations, with appropriate dress and mannerisms.

I think we were all glad we did in fact choose the teaching profession even if, in our moments of frustration, we occasionally wished we hadn't! *Janice Thielenhaus*



The Thursday Book Club

The "First Thursday of the Month" book club has been meeting and enjoying our Book Talks for almost seven years - well over eighty-four books have been discussed! We want to say "Thanks" and express our appreciation for the London Public Library System and its helpful staff for the wealth of Book Bags we have shared since 2011.

A quick survey of our group has resulted in these two suggestions for London-Middlesex Branch readers. (Isn't that all of us?)

1). Get to know Canadian authors! There are new generations of authors on the book shelves with stories that resonate from skillful, creative writers who know how to use language, structure and plot. A few that we recommend are Lori Larsens, Louise Penny, Joseph Boyden, Sean Michaels and Ann-Marie MacDonald. It's a good idea to check the weekly Arts section in the paper or Google for book reviews.

2). A favourite book read earlier this year and one we highly recommend is ***Major Pettigrew's Last Stand*** by British author Helen Simonson. A decorated military man steeped in traditional English values, kind and intelligent, comes face to face with the 21st century. His family, community, pursuits and culture have changed direction and he is isolated, confused and dizzy from the effects. His soul feels humankind is losing sight of its humanity. After a chance encounter with his local newsagent, a relationship blossoms and his journey toward enlightenment begins. The story is told with humour, compassion and a deft touch of irony; the major heads into a covert world of apathy, bias and prejudice to shake up a culture and find love again. It is a fast-paced, satisfying read. *Cathy Harrison*

The Wednesday Book Club

Our group would like to recommend the following two books that related to us. Naomi Klein's non-fiction book, ***This Changes Everything***, consisted of radical fast-paced solutions to our present day climate change crisis. The author's well researched views called for immediate drastic solutions for the economic, political, scientific, social and ethical issues that are impeding the existence of our planet! The author's hard-lined position invoked a meaningful discussion. Although all of us agree that there is a crisis, we feel that a less radical approach would be better. Read the book and share your thoughtful opinions about the future for our generations to come.

Corduroy Mansions, by A.M. Smith, is a fictional story that's filled with amusing, likeable, eccentric characters. The author himself looks like his characters - British, eccentric and humorous! The book has no plot per se, but is filled with engaging stories and individuals that weave into each other's lives. Our discussion of the book was enjoyable and offered us many opportunities to go off-topic - a tradition that we follow strictly. Our group, Jane Williams, Mary Maxwell, Jackie Kinder, Angela Lang, Barb Cole, June Levy and myself **would welcome new members.** *Debby Albin.*

Final Note

Many thanks to Bernarda Norwood and Cathy Harrison for their photographs in this edition and to Elizabeth Van Dongen for being a proof-reader. *Janice Thielenhaus, Editor*