News At 11



Vol. 27 | Issue 2 Fall 2023

Celebrations!



Message from your New President ...



Terry Hamilton

am pleased to be your President of District 11 for the next two years. By way of introduction, prior to teaching, I was a biochemist in a tannery and at Canada Metal in Toronto. My teaching career focused on music, gym, math, and science from grades four to eight over the course of 30 years. I play piano and sing in two choirs—the Addison Women's Choir and the Rainbow Chorus of

Waterloo/Wellington. I also love sports—skiing, scuba diving, swimming, kayaking, hiking, and yoga. In my spare time, I enjoy watercolor painting. My life is full and active.

District 11 has benefited from the excellent leadership of our Past President, Wendy Brum. It will be a challenge to fill her shoes, but I will do the best I can. I am very excited to work with you over the next two years and look forward to meeting you at some of the many activities and events we have planned.

Our spring and fall luncheons are well attended and provide a great opportunity to catch up with old friends. Our monthly activities connect us with many new members from District 11.

This year, we have plans for new activities such as attending theatre events, a Rangers hockey game, day trips, workshops, such as Advanced Care planning, and making a seasonal planter. You could also try chair yoga! We are always looking for new ideas, and are considering a games afternoon in the spring. If you have ideas for events, please let us know.

The theme of this issue of the newsletter is Celebrations! Now is the time to celebrate RTOERO's advocacy on behalf of a National Seniors Strategy, Geriatric Health Care, and Environmental Stewardship. As President, I will work diligently to advance these issues, and in particular, environmental stewardship—an issue near and dear to my heart.

Stay tuned to our monthly eNews sent by email for more details on upcoming events as we celebrate being together again.

RTOERO District 11 Board

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News at 11 is seeking an editor's assistant to manage the intake of articles and reports. If you are interested in this volunteer experience, please contact:

rtodistrict11newsletter@rtoero.ca

We are seeking volunteers for our Board. If you are interested in this dynamic experience, please contact:

President11@rtoero.ca

If you have an idea for an RTOERO District 11 event, please contact:

Events_d11@districts.rtoero.ca





Join us for our ~ Annual Fall Luncheon Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023

Cost — \$30

Golf's Steakhouse

508 Lancaster St. W., Kitchener Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023

11:00 am — Meet & Greet

11:30 am — Business Meeting

12:00 pm — Lunch





Menu

- ~ Seasonal salad with squash pieces and dried cranberries ~
- (1) Chicken Supreme with mashed potatoes and roasted veggies

~ or ~

(2) Moroccan Chickpea Stew (vegetarian) with rice

~ Assorted Pies~ Tea/Coffee

To register for the luncheon, visit: district11.rtoero.ca/events

Message from the Managing Editor ...



Sylvia Ranson

elebrations are a part of our everyday lives. of birth, celebrations of life, celebrations of marriage, and celebrations of anniversaries. to name a few. Sports teams celebrate a championship, theatre productions celebrate a record-breaking run. businesses celebrate their opening—so many marvellous celebrations that bring joy!

Each year, schools all over the world celebrate student graduation. Over the course of my 40 years of teaching at community colleges here and in the Middle East, I missed only one graduation ceremony to attend a family wedding. These ceremonies always filled me with so much emotion as I watched the students I had taught walk confidently and proudly across that stage to receive their diplomas. Often these same students would tell me ahead of graduation that they really didn't think they wanted to attend, that it wasn't important to them. I would look them straight in the eye and say in no uncertain terms, "Of course you will attend—this is your day!

This is one of the very few times, and perhaps the only time, when you get to celebrate you! Other There are celebrations celebrations in life usually involve others—a marriage, the birth of a child, a team win. But this celebration is a celebration of you alone and what you have accomplished." They would usually attend after that.

> In these pages, there are many stories of celebrations—one woman's campaign to save Old Growth trees, the reuniting of a mother and her child after 33 years, a visually impaired lawn bowler who won a championship with a novice coach. With each of these stories, we see courage, determination, and persistence—all of which make the celebration that much sweeter!

Major celebrations don't come often in our lives, and when they do, they are wonderful. However, what I want to leave you with is this: take a moment to celebrate vou! Celebrate the small things that you have accomplished in life. Maybe you baked a really delicious pie, or crafted a special gift for a grandchild, or fixed that washing machine--all by yourself. Because with every one of those small accomplishments, you feel good about yourself and that's a great reason to celebrate!



Newsletter Team

Thank you **Managing Editor Sylvia Ranson** Lois Earl-Davidson **Editor Bob Frnest Fditor Theresa Martin** Editor Lil Quanz **Editor** Warren Stauch **Editor** Mary Ann Wolfe **Editor**

Our Spring theme is: Reflections



If you have a story you would like to submit, please contact Sylvia Ranson at:

rtodistrict11newsletter@gmail.com

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Wayne and Karen Buchholtz, Cindy and Bill Dubrick



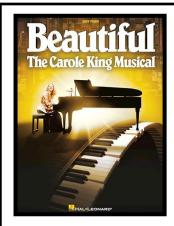
Ed and Norah Lavigne



Mark Cant and Marian Ryan



Sylvia Ranson and Terry Hamilton



ifty of our members were in attendance at the Hamilton Family Theatre in Cambridge on Tuesday, May 30, 2023 to enjoy the theatrical presentation of *Beautiful*—the life and music of the singer/songwriter, Carole King,

Carole King wrote music that has spanned the generations and it was enjoyable to see how many in the audience remembered her songs and wanted to sing along throughout the

show. It was heartwarming! District 11 has been working with the Hamilton Family Theatre administration to provide our members with a theatre experience that is close to home and exemplary in its presentations.

It was inspiring to be reminded how challenging Carole King's journey was from being a teenage songwriter to becoming a two-time Rock & Roll Hall of Fame honouree. Her life was aptly chronicled in this Tony® and Grammy® Award-winning jukebox musical.

Carole King wrote chart-topping hits for some of the biggest acts in music. Her personal and life-changing success came with her best-selling album, *Tapestry*, that I immediately visualize. This musical production was enjoyed by all. I know I felt like dancing in the hall on my way out of the theatre. Some classics we were entertained with were: "You've Got a Friend," "One Fine Day," "So Far Away," "Take Good Care of My Baby," "Up on the Roof," "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" and "Natural Woman."

It was inspiring to get to know the personal journey of Carole King and to revisit songs that rocked our lives and still rest in our souls.

Contributed by Marian Ryan



Have you recently changed your home address, phone number, or your email address? Please notify RTOERO via the following to ensure you receive both print copy and eNews:

RTOERO Membership Office:

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Johnson Insurance:

Phone: 1-800-361-9888 or visit: www.rtoero.ca/insurance

To submit claims, visit: rtoero.ca/insurance/claims



The GPC adult, youth, and children's choirs rehearsing with the KW Symphony in December, 2016 at The Centre in the Square

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Grand Philharmonic Choir

by Dave Arthur



t is essential that we all value and celebrate what gives us happiness, inspiration, optimism, and a sense of belonging and harmonization with others. Music does this.

One of the most accessible and personal expressions of music is singing. Music has been a lifelong passion for me. For many years, my involvement has been as a trombone and tuba player in local bands and orchestras. My wife, Barb, has been a singer in the Grand Philharmonic Choir and other groups for most of her life. I joined the choir in 1995 for their European Tour and have been a faithful member ever since.

The Grand Philharmonic Choir (GPC) is celebrating 100 years of providing an opportunity for people to join together to sing and for audiences to hear live music. A major aspect of its anniversary celebration has been participating in the creation of the exhibit, *Giving Voice: Vocal Ensembles in Waterloo Region*, at the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum. The exhibit, which is on display until January 27, 2024, is an excellent presentation of the history of the extensive choral music in our area.

The Grand Philharmonic Choir traces its roots back to the 19th century, with the German and Mennonite heritage of our area and that of other European

settlers. Singing was a integral part of local life and the sängerfest singing festival was a major attraction.

In 1922, the choir became the Kitchener-Waterloo Philharmonic Choir until 2006 when it became the Grand Philharmonic Choir. A succession of conductors led to the 38-year tenure of Howard Dyck and the continuing direction of Mark Vuorinen since 2010.

Two other major events in Waterloo Region supported by the participation of the GPC were the creation of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (KWS) in 1945 to accompany the choir, and the creation of the Centre In The Square in 1980, which, with its exceptional acoustics, is recognized as one of Canada's finest concert venues. The GPC adult choir presents a full series of four concerts, most of which were accompanied by the KWS, and the choir has performed in additional concerts as part of the KWS series, such as the annual *Yuletide Spectacular* and works like Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* at the Centre In The Square.

The GPC concerts present many of the choral masterpieces of major composers of the past including traditional works such as Mozart's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Bach's *Passions*. They also

(Continued on page 7)

perform many compositions of major 20th century composers and have commissioned new works from Canadian composers, often based on current social and environmental issues. Take This Thread, an online cooperative production with four other choirs from across Canada, responded to the pandemic. Annelies was a setting of Anne Frank's diary. Water, a joint collaboration with indigenous elders, told the story of this critical resource and a community's efforts to protect it.

The GPC organization includes the main choir, a chamber choir, a youth choir, and a children's choir. These are only a segment of a very large number of choral groups in our region including other community choirs, church choirs, and numerous choirs within the school music programs. It is estimated that almost For more information, please visit: www.grandphilchoir.com four million people in Canada participate in over 1 500 diverse organized choirs.

The many recognized benefits of choral singing include reducing stress and improving mood. facilitating brain function and memory, exercising the body including the heart and lungs, and fostering cooperation and connectedness. Singing also supports language learning and connects us across generations and cultures.

Thus, the 100th anniversary of the Grand Philharmonic Choir is a perfect opportunity to celebrate the GPC, its accomplishments and importance to the many people involved as singers, musicians, and audience. More broadly, it is a grand opportunity to celebrate the importance of and participation in choral music for all of us!





Dave Arthur taught science, physics, and environmental science at Forest Heights C.I. and Cameron Heights C.I. from 1967 to 1998. In the middle of his career, he taught music and was music head at FHCI for fifteen years. He continues to be an active musician in local groups. Dave and his wife, Barb, sing in the Grand Philharmonic Choir.

Scholarships

RTOERO members can recommend students from their family or community for a post-secondary scholarship



RTOERO believes in the power of our community to secure a better future, and we are committed to helping secure better futures for students, for each other, and for seniors in Canada. One of the ways we work towards achieving this goal is through our post-secondary scholarship program, established with reference to our strategic goal: To improve the lives of members and seniors.

This year, RTOERO is awarding 20 scholarships valued at \$3 000 each to post-secondary (college or university) students enrolled in programs that lead to careers in either seniors health and wellbeing; education; environmental stewardship; or that reflect a strong commitment to diversity, equity and/or inclusion.

RTOERO members are encouraged to recommend students in their lives, including family members, who meet the criteria. For more information, please visit www.rtoero.ca/scholarships



District 11 bids "Farewell" to the RTOERO Charity Golf Tournament after 25 years

by Warren Stauch



Joe Gatto, Dennis Koebel, Neil Koebel, Ernie Parker



Martin Schmidt, Colleen Knox, Yvonne Brady, Gary Mousseau, Jim Ironside



Margie Shouldice & Betty MacLean



Brian Hughs, Wayne Buchholtz, John Hutfluss, Brian Schmalz

n the spring of 1997, a small group of fun-loving retired teachers decided to organize a golf outing and possibly raise some money for local charities. Led by chairman, Dave Martindale, the first committee consisting of Ray Miske, Don Archer, Wayne Somerville, Jim Fox, Don Lidstone, Gary Boug, and Bucky Miller ran the tournament for twelve years.

A relationship was developed with Conestoga Golf Club from the beginning. In the early years of the tournament, any surplus funds were donated to the WRDSB Foundation to support student needs.

When the committee was informed by Waterloo Education Foundation Inc. (WEFI) that they couldn't decide where the profits from the tournament would go, it was the end of the relationship with the tournament committee. The next year, it was decided that one of the three local hospitals (Cambridge Memorial, Grand River Hospital, and St. Mary's General) would be the recipient on a rotating basis. This tournament celebrates 25 years of operation. Over these past 25 years, close to \$250 000 has been donated.

The 104 golfers attending this year's shotgun style tournament, recognized the work of past tournament chairs, Dave Martindale, Jim Fox, Dennis Koebel, and Dale Roberts; Dale has chaired the well-organized tournament for the past few years. This year, she was assisted by Betty McLean, Wayne Buchholtz, John Hutfluss, Mike Campbell, Margie Shouldice, and Paul Rempel. Doc Schlei did a superb job as tournament MC.

Frank Haines, Bill Blake, Martha Stauch, and Ray Miske were recognized and thanked for their longtime volunteer support.

Over the years, the RTOERO Charity Golf Tournament has received tremendous support from a number of sponsors including Johnson Insurance, UPI Energy, Educators Financial Group, Remax—The Cindy Cody team, Chartwell Retirement Residences, OTIP, and RTOERO District 11. The three local hospitals have also entered foursomes each year.

It was a difficult decision for this year's committee to end the annual charity golf tournament due to a lack of volunteers to organize the event. Tournaments like this often have a life expectancy. Twenty-five years has been a great run and hundreds of golfers have had a chance to renew old acquaintances, play some golf, and share a few laughs each September when we no longer return to the classroom.

The organizing committees, past and present, extend their thanks to all who have participated and raised badly needed funds for our local hospitals. It's been a great "slice" of life!

One woman's quest to help protect Old Growth Trees in B.C. is a cause to celebrate!

by Shannon Purves-Smith

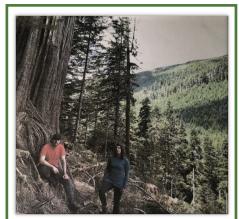
had just read a book by Peter Wohlleben, a German forester, *The Hidden Life of Trees*, which was about his research into how trees communicate and how they help each other.

Then I followed up with another book about trees by Richard Power, a New York novelist, It was a story about people who go up in those trees and stay there on a platform so loggers won't cut them down, hence killing a human being. It was a rather sad novel. After finishing it a few days later, I heard on CBC radio that 22 Indigenous people in B.C. were taken off their own land which they were trying to protect, put in iail by the RCMP, and then robbed of some land they owned. I wouldn't have believed that if I hadn't just finished reading Naomi Klein's book, The Shock Doctrine.

I saw RED! I was furious, and I wanted to do something about this perfidious event. So I called the Wilderness Committee in Ontario. They suggested that I get in touch with some of their members who were now setting up offices in B.C. in both Victoria and Vancouver. I sent them a cheque for \$1 000 and said I would like them to use it to save the trees.

The next day they called me, not knowing me at all, and said, "Shannon, did you really mean that last zero on the old growth tree cheque?" I replied loudly into the phone, "Did I MEAN that? Of course I meant it! I was born in Vancouver, raised in Burnaby, and educated at UBC. I have seen those trees for years, and I know they sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Those are MY trees!! Help them." Then





Shannon's friends beside Old Growth Trees in B.C.

the member told me that they were just setting up their organization and had no contacts in B.C. I said, "You'll find something."

Six or seven weeks passed, and I had almost forgotten about the cheque and the trees. But eventually I got a letter from the B.C. environmentalists. It said. "Shannon. we thought you went a bit too far. We didn't know anyone here, so we went out in the street, and talked about saving the Old Growth trees and about this crazy old lady in Ontario who had given a cheque for \$1 000 to do it. One man said, 'I can do that.' And then another said, 'I can do that, too.' Pretty soon 60 people had each donated \$1 000." Together with my cheque, they had collected \$61 000!

The team sent me photos of the real old growth trees and listed 66 wilderness areas which are now protected!

That is certainly something to celebrate! I wonder if those trees are thanking all the people who are keeping them alive.



Shannon Purves-Smith taught Early Music at Brock University for five years. After moving to Waterloo, she worked for 16 years at the Stratford Festival, playing clarinets, recorders, and viols. She also taught part-time at four universities. She and her husband, Michael, became avid environmentalists working with over 45 organizations that need support to promote environmental sustainability.

Continental drifting is a lifetime of journeys for this adventurous couple

by Brian Heggie

have always loved to travel. As a child growing up in Galt, my first trips were centred around Sauble Beach and Lake Huron. When I bought my first car, I drove to Huntsville and Muskoka to visit family. My first teaching job took me to Thunder Bay and Lake Superior. Ontario is huge and it took me decades to explore it.

In 1969, I made my first European trip to Britain and France where I worked for the summer. Later, while employed at Lakehead University, I travelled to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Tahiti. By 1972, I was addicted. Look out world, I'm coming!

Then I met Glenna and we moved from northern Ontario to Waterloo in 1975. As a teacher of geography, it seemed natural to travel. Teaching is enhanced by real world experience. Together, we travelled through Canada and into the USA. Throughout our working careers, we travelled domestically and internationally every year. We have many memories of those early days.

A number of couples we met through teaching introduced us to the cruise experience and once again we were hooked. At that time, anywhere in the Caribbean was our favourite destination. Later, we went farther afield, to Scandinavia, the Mediterranean, and Britain.



Glenna and Brian Heggie on a camel walk along Playa Bianca east of Tangier, Morocco.



By the time we retired, we had met many friends and colleagues who shared our passion for travel. Many are RTOERO members. Learning from the experience of others has greatly influenced where and when we travel and which companies we travel with. Social media also influences our decisions—Facebook and YouTube are very important resources. Facebook friends like Donna Robinson, set fantastic examples for us. We live vicariously though their photos and experiences. Their help in getting to less familiar places has been invaluable.

You can check out YouTube for any destination on earth and you will get so much information you almost drown. China, Hong Kong, and Columbia were among the destinations we visited as a result of these hot tips.

On our "continental count clock," we had drifted through North America, South America, Europe, Australia, and had Asia checked off by 2000. In early 2000, we returned to South America and cruised to Antarctica via Argentina. That was a fantastic trip, made possible by climate change as cruise lines gained more access to Antarctica. That trip left Africa as the missing piece of our continental cruising goal.

Two events combined to threaten the completion of our quest. The first was a car accident that left me

(Continued on page 11)

with permanent mobility issues and the second was the pandemic which stopped us in our tracks for a few years. Just when we thought our goal to reach the seventh continent was over, advice from a Facebook friend led us to a possibility. A former teaching colleague had worked in Morocco and told us about an easy access ferry that travelled from Spain to Morocco. We could do this!

While on vacation in Portugal with family, we drove to Gibraltar and then caught the ferry to Tangier, Morocco. It was an amazing, but short visit. Such a beautiful city, contrasting old and new with panoramic views of both the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

Knowing we have travelled to all seven continents has made the world shrink. These experiences have provided us with a better understanding of other cultures previously under appreciated by us.

There are several ways to measure your experience as a world traveller. One is the Travelers Century Club (travelerscenturyclub.org), an international nonprofit social organization founded in 1954 for travellers who have visited one hundred or more of the world's countries and territories.

A second is <u>3Pulse.com</u>, a site where countries and cities are combined and mapped so you can see your travels plotted. Both of these serve to motivate and inspire.

We're not sure what's next for us in travel experiences. Right now, whether to choose a new destination or revisit a favourite place is a real dilemma. However, we aren't finished travelling yet. There's still more world out there to explore and celebrate!

Brian Heggie retired in 2001. His last assignment was as Principal of Glenview Park Secondary School in Cambridge.

Conversation partners needed for English teachers and students in El Salvador

by Betty Ann Colquhoun

Do you enjoy talking to new people? Do you have an hour a week to spare? Do you like learning about new cultures?

CanTeach Connections (<u>www.canteachconnections.org</u>) needs patient, caring volunteers as conversation partners to connect virtually and speak English on a weekly basis with a Salvadoran teacher or student of English. No lesson planning or marking required—just a desire to make a difference and chat with a new friend in another country. For more information, please contact Betty Ann Colquhoun at: bettyann.canada@gmail.com.



Milestone Membership breakfast held for members who celebrated their 25th year with RTO

















A good time was had by all at the District 11 Spring 2023 Luncheon





























Wendy Brum and Carol Kroetsch listening carefully to the presenter's information

Holly Burrell, Laura
Dicknoether, Wanda
Dicknoether happy to get
their hands dirty

District 11 members enjoy creating their own planters for their homes!

n May, District 11 members gathered at Sheridan Nurseries to make their own planters to beautify their homes. Not only did they get to share conversation with old and new friends, they learned a lot about putting flowers in planters and in the garden.

Ensuring you water your planter often, give the soil adequate nutrients, and provide adequate drainage will keep a planter healthy. Although a perennial was added to the planter, members were advised by the knowledgeable staff that it should not stay in the planter outside over the winter. A perennial's roots will not survive the cold in a planter, only in the ground.

Five Takeaways!

- ⇒ You need to water a planter more often than your garden because the planter dries out more quickly.
- ⇒ Make sure you have adequate drainage.
- ⇒ Do not leave perennials outside in a planter over the winter—the roots cannot survive.
- ⇒ Nutrient-rich soil is important in a planter.
- ⇒ Wendy Brum makes a good planter.

Contributed by Laura Dicknoether





District 11 Members showing off their planters



RTOERO District 11 Award of Distinction ~ Wayne Buchholtz ~



edicated, reliable, service-oriented, and friendly are just a few words to describe Wayne Buchholtz, the 2023 Award of Distinction recipient for District 11.

Each year, we honour a District 11 member who participates actively in organizations where helping others is the key focus. The recipient is someone who demonstrates an outstanding commitment to volunteer service and freely gives his/her time and talents while also encouraging and mentoring other people.

Wayne was honoured at the spring luncheon for his many years of volunteer work in the community. He worked for the WCDSB for 33 years as a teacher, vice principal, and principal and still found time to be a regular volunteer for his church and for sports organizations as both an umpire and a referee.

During his 27 years as a principal, Wayne also served on a variety of different boards. After retirement in 2003, Wayne was elected as a WCDSB school board trustee and served in this position for 11 years, acting as both

Vice-Chair and Chair for the Board of Trustees.

Wayne is described as someone with an unfailing commitment to "hang in there" when things get difficult. In particular, he showed this commitment to serve during the pandemic by volunteering at a COVID-19 vaccination centre for a year. Wayne is someone willing to take on additional volunteer shifts and train new volunteers in order to provide stability to these organizations.

Other important volunteer positions that Wayne has been involved in include running a homework club for

elementary students for six years, fundraising for the food bank, and serving as a board member of the Kitchener Public Library. He has been a Reading Buddy at the KPL for 16 years, working with a student once a week during the school year. Wayne has been very involved in RTOERO District 11 for most of his retirement years as a Director, President, and chairperson of numerous committees.

Wayne also spent eight years coaching a world-class blind lawn bowler. He showed his true commitment to

helping others by accompanying Norm to tournaments around the world.

Wayne states that he enjoyed volunteering at his church, the library, and Grand River Hospital the most. He worked in three positions at Grand River Hospital including helping patients and their families find important resources at the Patient and Family Resource Centre in the Grand River Cancer Centre. He started working in patient registration once volunteers were welcomed back to GRH and continues to work in that position each week.

At the present time, Wayne also serves on the GRH volunteer Board, works as a Reading Buddy and is a member of the RTOERO District 11 Board.



Past President, Wendy Brum, with Wayne Buchholtz

Wayne is dedicated to his family and loves to spend time with his three sons and six grandchildren. Wayne and his wife, Karen, love to watch their grandchildren participate in various sports events.

As Wendy Brum, Past President of District 11, stated in her introduction of Wayne at the luncheon: "Wayne is someone who helps to raise others up. He recognizes the skills and talents of others and makes you believe in yourself as much as he believes in you. He is statesman who provides guidance, encouragement, and compassion, as well as knowledge and experience to all we do in District 11."

Congratulations, Wayne Buchholtz

~ A worthy recipient of the Award of Distinction for 2023 ~

District 11 Upcoming Events & Monthly Activities

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date/Time	Event
Sunday, November 5—2:00 pm	Evita—Hamilton Family Theatre
Monday, November 13—2:00 pm	Chair Yoga with Mary Zadel (by Zoom)
Thursday, November 16—11:00 am	Fall Luncheon—District 11
Thursday, November 23—11:00 am	Making a Christmas Urn—Sheridan Nurseries
Sunday, January 14—2:00 pm	Kitchener Rangers Hockey game
Wednesday, January 24—1:00 pm	Advance Care Planning with Patti Haskell (by Zoom)

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

Day/Time Each Month	Activity
Third Monday—2:00 pm	Stitching with Friends —meet by Zoom to work on and share handiwork projects such as needlepoint, knitting, cross-stitch
Second Tuesday—9:30 am	Coffee and Conversation—meet at a different independent café in the Region for coffee and conversation
Third Thursday—10:00 am	Book Club —meet by Zoom or in person to discuss a wide selection of books [Note: Mon. Nov. 27—1:30 pm with author]
Third Friday—10:30 am	Fresh Air Fridays—explore different trails or parks throughout the Region

To register for any of these events, please visit: <u>district11.rtoero.ca/events</u>
Watch for details in your District 11 eNews in your email account

RTOERO District 11

New Members

October 1, 2022—September 30, 2023

Jane Barratt Kathleen Berwick Glenn Booker **Richard Booth Barbara Bout** Albert Buckingham Kerry Casey **Cheryl Clark** Susan Cressman Lauren Crosby **Charles Davidson** William Fallows Khalid Faroog John Forman Paul Fracas George Freeman Robin Frizzell

Jo Gallaway

Pamela Garbutt

Norman Giesbrecht

Patrick George

Shonna Giles Catherine Gillin Rita Givlin Margaret Graham **Deborah Guenther Ruth Anne Hamel** Mike Harrington William Hewitt **Ruth Hibbard** Wendy Higgins **Gary Hoad** Margaret Ingoldsby Joan Ireland Donalda Jamieson E. Anne Kelly Lois Kinney Ronald J Koebel **Louise Kruithof**

Thelma Ross-Sarovan Gerry Schulze Larry Shantz **Betty Yvonne Siegfried** Diana Smith Kathy Smith Rick Swanson Deana Sweeney Alma Watts **Beth Wolf** Della Lataille-Herdsman Lori Woodlev John Lee Jenyi Wu Linda Lingard Suzanne Zeller

Jeanne McConnell

Gillian McKenzie

Bonnie Murdoch

Frank Mensink

Donald Oberle Teresa Pickett

Shelly Porteous

John Ricketts

*Ed. Note: Names in list are as accurate and inclusive as possible given publishing timelines and information provided



Peter Rasberry led the April hike



Fresh Air Friday Hikers at Huron Natural area April, 2023

Fall 2023

The game of bridge offers riveting contracts and robust contacts

by Jim Fox

ife certainly has its twists and turns. At times, circumstances create unexpected opportunities that can last a lifetime. My formative years were spent in a very modest home in east London, Ontario where I could look out our kitchen window at the farm fields across the road. It was a 30-minute walk to the closest bus stop to access the Saturday movie matinee in London's downtown.

When I was ten, my grandmother, who had health issues, moved in with my family which created an unexpected opportunity for me. My dad and mother both enjoyed the game of bridge and with my grandmother now living in our home, a fourth player was needed. I became that fourth. To increase my math skills, Dad had taught me to play cribbage at age five. He was just as patient teaching me some of the basic conventions of bridge so I could play with them.

My grandmother passed away when I was thirteen and after her

passing, I did not play bridge consistently until my post-secondary years at the University of Guelph. Too much of my time was spent in the coffee shop in the basement of the Massey Hall Library playing for bus money. Unfortunately, I walked home on a frequent basis.

It was after my retirement in 1999 that new opportunities to play bridge more frequently presented themselves. In addition to one-four table outings in homes or rented facilities, I learned about the Grand River Bridge Club (GRBC) on Gage Street in Kitchener and was invited to join. As the club's popularity grew, more space was needed and the club

moved to its present location at 2481 Kingsway Drive, Kitchener.

Associated with the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), the GRBC now offers a weekly schedule of duplicate bridge games and teaching labs, both onsite and online. Online games were a necessity during COVID-19 and still remain popular. The club presently has a membership of over 200 people, including

members from many RTOERO affiliates. It offers a clean, friendly environment for those wishing to learn to play bridge or for those honing their skills to the highest levels. We often hear comments such as, "Why would I want to learn bridge?" or, "Isn't it hard to learn?" or, "I haven't played in decades" and/or, "I don't have a partner."

I learned to play bridge socially with my parents and grandmother and that is still my focus today. I have met new friends and enjoyed the social interactions the game provides. At this stage in my life, I do not have to worry about playing for bus money.



Grand River Bridge Club players

For more information, check out the GRBC website at www.grandriverbridgeclub.com or call 519-893-4595.



Dave Quarrie and retired speech therapist, Sue Lawton, hosting a workshop on bridge

Jim Fox was a Business Studies teacher, Department Head and Resource Staff member for 31 years with the WRDSB. In addition to playing bridge, Jim pretends to be an athlete on the golf course and at old-timer hockey games, but is pretty darn good with a fishing rod in his hand.

ntract Bridge Leag

Uncovering the veil of secrecy led to reuniting a mother with the child she placed for adoption in 1968

by Sylvia Ranson

or over 30 years, not a day had gone by that my sister didn't wonder what happened to the child she put up for adoption in Sarnia, Ontario, in 1968. Those were the days before the birth control pill was widely used. Those were the days when women who had 'out of wedlock' pregnancies were stigmatized, shamed, and were seen as 'loose' women, too irresponsible to parent.

"Historical data from Statistics Canada show nearly **600 000** (post-war) babies were born to unmarried women and were recorded as "illegitimate births" from 1945 to 1971. Of these, over **350 000** Canadian

women were persuaded, coerced or forced into surrendering their babies to "traditional" couples wanting to expand their families and were told they would never see their baby again." (Art Eggleton, Chantal Petitclerc, *Policy Options*, Aug. 2018).

My sister was one of these women.

A teenage woman getting pregnant out of wedlock and keeping the baby was almost unheard of in 1968. Our father had died a few years earlier, leaving my mother to attend to the needs of seven children. We simply did not have the means, financially or physically, to care for this child. The

stigma was great in our hometown and consequently, my sister moved out of town during her pregnancy.

When my sister entered the hospital to give birth, nurses would not attend to her until my mother spoke up. After the baby boy was born, my sister was not allowed to see him and was told she had ten days to make up her mind whether to keep him or not. The baby was kept in a bassinet in the basement of the hospital and when I visited her, we sneaked down the back stairs so I could see him. I can still see that sweet, wee baby with a beaded blue bracelet on his tiny wrist that read, *Ranson*, lying in that crib at the far end of the room. We were not allowed to hold him.

Under pressure, my sister reluctantly agreed to give up her baby for adoption. A few months later, she moved to Florida to begin a new life. Over the ensuing years, she tried in vain to find her son. She put ads in

the hometown newspaper when he turned 18. She visited the local Children's Aid Society to inquire, hoping to gain further information that would help her find him. At that time, adoption records were sealed so they could not comply.

One morning in 1996, I was listening to CBC radio and heard about a grass-roots online organization that assisted individuals looking for one party of the triad in an adoption (birth mother, birth father, or child). I asked my sister, who was about to turn 50 and living in Florida, if she had ever considered searching for her son she put up for adoption. She replied that she

had considered doing that every day from the day she had left the hospital without her baby in 1968.

Thus began our search. As I was more computer literate, we decided I would conduct the search. At the time of the baby's adoption, my sister was provided with non-identifying information about the adoptive parents—he was adopted by a couple who farmed a 50-acre soybean farm in south-western Ontario; his mother was a lab technician. On the adoption website, I posted that I was searching for my birth nephew and provided the non-identifying information. Others did the same. At the time I was searching

in 1996, there were over 25 000 people registered from south-western Ontario!



Mother and son reunited

For mothers, the unrelenting memory of giving up her child without true consent and not knowing what happened to the child, was paralyzing at times. For adoptees, what the rest of us take for granted about ourselves—the right to possess our original birth certificate, our medical history, and our genealogy—were the motivating factors behind their search. Many have unanswered questions about their origins, circumstances of their birth, and the reasons which led their biological family to make the decision to place them into adoption.

Over a period of four years, I conducted the search, posting my information, following up on postings from

(Continued on page 21)

A visually impaired lawn bowler becomes the Canadian National Blind Lawn Bowling champion with the help of his novice coach

by Wayne Buchholtz

uring my lifetime, I have volunteered, coached which meant that the bowl was and officiated many sports. When my old friend, Norm Green, called and asked me to coach him in lawn bowling, I responded yes, immediately, although I knew nothing about lawn bowling—especially for someone who was visually impaired.

Norm had an industrial accident in the mid 1990's resulting in the total loss of vision in his left eye and less than 5% vision in his right eye. Norm had always been athletic, so he decided to continue with sports within his limitations. He took up bowling, curling, lawn

bowling, and golf—all sports offered for the visually impaired community. When his lawn bowling coach passed away, he asked me to coach him.

Knowing nothing about lawn bowling, I began learning about the game, both for the sighted and the visually impaired. Lawn bowling is a game similar to curling, but played on grass with weighted bowls which cause them to

bend when thrown similar to a curling stone. Unlike curling, the central target called a jack is rolled and thus the length of the target can vary from 90 to 125 feet. Like curling, the purpose of the end is to get as many bowls closer to the jack than your opponent.

With the visually impaired, the object of the game is the same, but the players need the support of a coach as they cannot see the jack at the other end of the green. A coach who can guide them when they throw the bowls.

As a coach, I stand about ten feet in front of Norm, which allows him to see the contrast between my white shoes and the green grass. We then decide where he would throw the bowl—outside, inside or right at my feet. That would give us the line we wanted so the bowl would bend to the jack, with the weight he needed to throw the first bowl based on the distance to the jack which I would tell him. When the bowl came to rest, we would use a clock image to let Norm know where the bowl ended up. With the jack as the middle, I would tell him 3 o'clock two feet,

level with the jack two feet from the jack, or 6 o'clock, 10 inches which meant that the shot was 10 inches short of the target.

Norm and I worked together for about eight years and as I developed a knowledge of the game and Norm began to trust me, we became a very good team. Norm became a world class player, going to the worlds without me (I was still working) and twice finishing second. I was able to go to a variety of Canadian championships over the years, but the

> highlight for me was a fourcountry tournament, held in Glasgow, Scotland with Canada, Scotland, England and Israel represented.

We arrived in Glasgow in July and it was immediately apparent how the Scots loved lawn bowling and Canadians! Everywhere we went they were so happy to see us and bent over backwards to make us feel comfortable and welcomed.



Norm Green getting ready to throw a bowl 2013

The first Saturday, I was sitting in the hotel lobby reading when a piper dressed in the full Scottish regalia was waiting there ready to pipe a newly wed couple into the hall and we started to talk. Of course, with my Canadian accent he wanted to know where I was from. When I replied, Kitchener, he was very excited because his sister lived in Cambridge. Within two minutes, he introduced me to the bride and groom and suddenly. I was invited to the wedding, dressed as I was, in my shorts and all! It was an unbelievable night and I was able to taste a variety of Scotches thanks to the piper and wedding party.

The Scots take lawn bowling seriously and we played a series of exhibition matches in small towns all over Scotland. Every town greeted us warmly with spectators watching every match we played. Following the matches, we were treated to a fine meal, although no matter where we ate, boiled potatoes were served with every meal—including a salad plate meal.

(Continued on page 21)

On our day off, we took the train from Glasgow to St. Andrews and had an opportunity to walk the Old Course. What an experience, as the Old Course is a public park with people walking around it and across it to get to the beach. After a memorable day, we returned to Glasgow and ate at a restaurant in a building built in 1760 that was originally a bank. They know how to respect their heritage.

Near the end of the trip, we participated in the fourcountry competition in Glasgow which was impressive from the opening ceremonies to the medal presentation.

During one game, there were sighted people bowling away from the tournament who came over, asking why we were in shorts and not long white pants, as was the tradition. Following the game, we went to the bar where we met them again. They were sweating like crazy in their long pants, while Norm and I were very comfortable. They never said another word.

One of the highlights of the tournament was when Norm played the reigning world champion in a singles match with about 200 spectators watching and applauding every shot. The game ended in a tie after an incredible triple takeout. The roar was fantastic, leaving us with goosebumps. At the end of the tournament, Norm was awarded a silver metal. The best part was when a sighted bowler said that he could never beat such great competitors. What a celebration we had!

In 2012, Norm Green became the Canadian National Blind Lawn Bowling champion after he won gold in the B-2 men's category—a victory he claimed for three years in a row.

My experiences with Norm taught me that given the opportunity, people can work through the worst challenges in their lives, and still achieve their dreams.

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Adoption Story (Continued from page 19)

adoptees who were born around the same time and lived in the area, hoping upon hope to find my birth nephew and sister's son. At the same time, I contacted a child-finders organization in our hometown that was doing similar work. The extent of the relentless efforts of people who volunteered their time to help others in their search truly amazed me.

In October of 2000, a woman at the child-finders organization contacted me to share this news: "We think we have found your birth nephew." You cannot image how my heart felt at that moment. A fellow who had contacted me about a month prior had offered to conduct some research on my behalf. He attended a reunion for lab technicians and by discreetly asking questions, he discovered a couple who farmed a soybean farm and who had adopted two children, the boy being the same age as my nephew. He contacted the child-finders organization and they were able to confirm the identity of this boy. He was indeed my birth nephew! It turned out he was living and working on the family farm just outside our hometown of Sarnia. He had been so close by all those years!

The process after that was very emotional. After an agonizing month, my sister finally heard from her son,

Mark, who delighted her with stories about everything that he had accomplished thus far in life. He was 32 at the time, had graduated from university, became a teacher, then decided he would return to the family farm to help his aging father. He had so many stories to tell about the sports teams he joined growing up, the many musical instruments he played, but most importantly, that my sister was a grandmother to two beautiful grandchildren.

In January 2001, I flew to Fort Lauderdale, Florida where my sister was living. My nephew and his five-year old daughter flew together from Sarnia and we all met in the Fort Lauderdale airport at the same time. What a remarkable reunion. What a moment to celebrate!

Five years later, my sister moved back to Sarnia, where she sees Mark and his family regularly. She has watched her now three grandchildren grow to be adults, and recently attended the weddings of her grandson and the granddaughter she met 22 years ago at the airport. That granddaughter has followed in the footsteps of her father and grandfather and is now co-farming the family farm with her father. Another wonderful milestone to celebrate!

Editor's Note: Adoption records opened for adoptees and natural parents in Ontario on June 1, 2009. Free access is given to an adopted person who is at least 18 years old, or birth parents, if the adopted person is at least 19 years old and the birth was registered in Ontario. If an adopted adult or a birth parent of an adopted child does not wish to connect, they can protect their privacy by registering a disclosure veto or a "no contact" notice.

Basic Income Waterloo Region group seeks to end poverty and homelessness



by Carol Stalker

n 2015, I retired from my position as Professor in the Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work at Laurier University. My retirement plan was to travel with my husband as much as possible; however, I also wanted to do some kind of volunteer work. I happened to attend a conference at Women's College Hospital in Toronto where I heard about the Ontario Basic Income Pilot Project that was soon to be implemented by the Ontario government. I discovered there was a Basic Income advocacy group in Waterloo. So, after attending a meeting, I joined Basic Income Waterloo Region (BIWR) – a group of community members who are passionate about

improving Canada's social safety net, eliminating poverty, and responding to the rise of automation in the workforce.

I was immediately drawn to this group because of my experience working in mental health and child welfare in London, Ontario in the '70s and '80s. In my role as a direct service social worker in child welfare, I witnessed the many ways in which inadequate income led to stressed and overwhelmed parents, the consequent neglect of children, and the effects on the mental health of these children.

When I worked in an adult out-patient psychiatric clinic, I saw the long-term negative effects on mental and physical health of adult individuals who had grown up in families living with poverty. I wanted to contribute to improving the future for children and families who continue to suffer from inadequate income—a problem that appears to be getting worse. Additionally, I was very aware that our current social assistance rates are far below the poverty line, the system is punitive and burdensome, and actually serves as a disincentive to finding work for many.

BIWR meets monthly and we make presentations to university classes, churches, and other organizations. BIWR also advocates with politicians at the municipal, provincial, and federal level, maintains a website, and posts on Facebook and Twitter.

We recently spoke to the Waterloo Regional Council in support of a motion put forward by Councillor Pam Wolf asking the Council to write to the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario "to work collaboratively towards implementing a National Guaranteed Livable Basic Income (GLBI) to eradicate poverty and homelessness, and through their representatives ensure everyone in Canada has sufficient income to meet their basic needs." We were pleased to see that the motion passed unanimously.

> a regular basis to ensure all Canadians can meet their basic needs, participate in work status. The group advocates for a program whereby the funds would be administered by the Canada Revenue Agency: Canadians whose income falls below the agreed upon threshold (based would receive, on a monthly basis, the

BIWR advocates for a social policy that sees funds provided by the government on society, and live with dignity regardless of on the official poverty line for each region) amount needed to reach the threshold.

BIWR also shares information about how a GLBI is affordable—how it could be paid for, and how it would save spending in health, mental health, and criminal justice while improving local economies and supporting more cohesive communities, not to mention reducing homelessness. Another strong argument for GLBI is the need to deal with the consequences of automation and the growing number of precarious jobs.

My volunteer experience with BIWR has been the purpose and reward I was seeking in my retirement.

For more information, please visit:

Locally: https://basicincomewr.ca

Nationally: https://basicincomecoalition.ca/en/



Carol Stalker is Professor Emeritus in the Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work at Laurier University. Her research included studies of the effectiveness of single-session therapy in walk-in counselling clinics, improving the effectiveness of mental health counselling and interprofessional practice in primary health care, and promoting sensitive practice by health professionals when they work with survivors of child abuse.

"I wanted to contribute to

improving the future for

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to be getting worse."

Be safe! Walk this way with your furry, four-legged friend

by Theresa Martin

og ownership offers emotional and physical benefits, but going on a neighbourhood dog walk can suddenly result in injuries. After hearing about the serious injuries that an RTOERO member suffered this year, I did some research about how seniors can walk their dogs more safely.

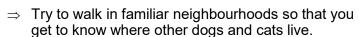
Health Canada recommends that adults should participate in 150 minutes of exercise each week and daily walks are a wonderful way to achieve that goal. Dog owners like me can easily accomplish this goal while also enjoying a walk with our furry companions.

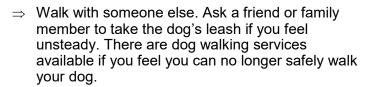
Unfortunately, fracture injuries to seniors while on dog walks have been on the rise. Fractures usually occur in wrists, arms, fingers, and hips and are more common in senior women who generally have a lower bone density.

Jay Patel, physiotherapist from Eramosa Physiotherapy Associates in Cambridge, stresses the importance of having good control of your dog in order to walk safely. Jay offered the following tips:

- ⇒ Invest time in dog training so that your dog walks well on a leash. Practise using basic commands, such as "stay" and "sit" while on walks.
- ⇒ Use a six-foot leash to give you more control than a retractable leash. Hold the leash in your dominant hand and use the other hand for extra support. Keep your dog close to you as you walk.
- ⇒ Be alert. Squirrels, birds, rabbits, cats, and other dogs can easily distract your dog. Look forward rather than down as you walk, so you can better anticipate a potential problem. Be prepared to cross the street or change directions if your dog is unpredictable around other dogs.
- ⇒ Work on your balance through regular exercises, as our balance tends to weaken as we get older.
- ⇒ Be aware of the weather conditions and always wear proper footwear. Laced shoes and boots with good treads are the best way to keep your balance, especially when walking on uneven or slippery pavement. In the winter, be extra cautious

on your walks when the sidewalks are icy, or postpone if you can.





Our seven-year-old dog, Aria, weighs only 14 pounds, but I know she could pull me off balance if I am not paying close attention. Aria wears a body harness instead of a collar, which is safer for her, and it is easier to control her movements.

Other safety tips I follow include carrying a cell phone and having an identification card that lists medical conditions and emergency contact phone numbers. If necessary, bring medication that you need with you.

On hot days, I bring a water bottle so Aria and I can stay hydrated. I keep a few dog treats in my waist pouch to use as needed. At night, I walk with a family member in well-lit areas. Wearing bright clothing, bringing a flashlight, or using a leash with reflective

tape are great ways to stay visible at night.

Getting out for daily walks alone or with a friend is good for our physical and mental health.

Following these tips will help dog owners to enjoy many safe walks with their beloved four-legged friends.





Theresa walking her dog, Aria

Fall 2023



District 11 **Waterloo**



Sandhill Cranes



Photo by Peter Rasberry

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