



**A NEWSLETTER
FROM RTOERO DISTRICT 9
HURON-PERTH**

<https://district9.rtoero.ca>

2024 Spring Edition

RTOERO District 9



1974 - 2024



**RTO
ERO**

District 9
Huron-Perth



Coming Events

For your calendar:



Spring General Meeting and Luncheon, 50th Anniversary Celebrations, Wednesday, May 8, 2024, Mitchell Golf and Country Club, in Mitchell
See form on page 7.



Leisure and Recreation Plans, 50th Anniversary Celebrations.
See details on page 11.
See forms on page 13-14.

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President's Message



It was all about political action! Oh sure, there were loose associations of retired teachers before the formation of STO (what is now RTOERO).

Fun social events, picnics, reunions. But it was *politics* that spurred the retired teachers to organize and become an official organization with a political voice and political clout.

On January 1, 1966, the Canada Pension Plan went into effect. For years teachers had contributed 6% of their wages to the Teachers Superannuation Fund, run and guaranteed by the Ontario government to give retired teachers a fair and sustainable pension. The Ontario Teachers' Federation had worked to ensure that their retired teachers were treated fairly. But, in actuality, they spent considerably more of their time on the issues of working teachers.

When the Canada Pension Plan began, Premier Robarts, whose government was already a contributor to the teachers' pension, was determined that it not be stacked on top of the Ontario pension guaranteed to teachers. So, a deal was brokered to mitigate this and still ensure an equivalent or better pension for teachers when the two were combined. Pensions also were going to be based on the best seven years of service rather than the best ten years.

But for teachers who had previously retired, this deal did not apply. In response to this concern, retired teachers, with help from the OTF, organized! And in 1968 STO – the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario, was born!

Within months their political voice had made the government listen – and teachers' minimum pensions went up from \$600 per year to \$1,400! Before the end of 1969 the power of the pension dollar was tied to inflation and the minimum pension was up to \$2,400. And that year, health services were first offered to members of STO!

This year marks the 50th anniversary of RTOERO in our District. By 1972 Huron had organized an RTO unit and in 1974, a Perth unit was formed. And though, 50 years later, we may still offer many social aspects of enjoying our retirement together, the organization of STO and now RTOERO continues to use its vibrant voice to lobby the government

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on items of importance to its members – health care, seniors' issues and the environment.

In the intervening years since STO's inception, constant work was done to improve pensions, and health programs for our retired members, and this had spillover effects into the rights of all pensioners and government retirees. In the 1990s, under the NDP Bob Rae government, the organization finally won the right to take over its own pension plan – with enormous financial success and even more secure pensions for its members.

In more recent years, RTOERO has spread its influence across the country and embraced members from the broader educational community. This year, RTOERO is putting on its first international Summit on Aging which partners with many organizations around the globe concerned with the rights of the elderly, to shine a spotlight on issues related to aging, and try and come up with solutions! On this, our 50th anniversary, we should be extremely proud of RTOERO for their efforts on the national and international stage. This conference can be attended in person at a cost of \$500 plus hotel, but is also free by Zoom to all of our members! If you know of someone who works in a field related to aging, be sure to let them know about this. Details are on the RTOERO website: agingsummit.ca.

Back in Huron-Perth District 9, we will have much to celebrate on our 50th Anniversary - and we plan to do so. On May 8, 2024 as part of our Spring General Meeting and banquet, we will feature speakers from our District's earlier days, honour some of our long-time members, view a slide show of the past 50 years, enjoy some anniversary cake and be regaled by the Irish Cowboys band for our meal. Gather your friends and be sure to come out! It's sure to be a fun time! We highlight several of our senior seniors in this newsletter on page 8, and David McClure has plans for us to celebrate our 50th at the Blyth Festival a couple of times, while they, too, commemorate their 50th anniversary. See the details on page 11. We hope to make it a year-long celebration so if you have some other great ideas, let us know.

I look forward to seeing you on May 8th! Happy Anniversary!!!!

Willi Laurie
RTOERO District 9 President

Community Grants

Each year RTOERO awards 20 Scholarships valued at \$3000 each, to post-secondary students enrolled in college or university. The 2025 applications will be available online in the Fall of 2024. There will be a reminder of this opportunity in a future Clean Slate. RTOERO members are encouraged to recommend students in their lives who meet the criteria.

The Stratford "Local Community Food Centre" is applying for the 2024 RTOERO \$4000 Community Grant. This group empowers those who have barriers to accessing and benefiting from good healthy food, by offering opportunities to cook, grow, share, and advocate for good food for everyone in the community.

The 2023 Community Grant given to the Goderich Lions Club was greatly appreciated. The funds covered medical exams, rent, school supplies, car repairs and driver exams. All newcomers who received funds were on temporary Ukrainian work visa.

Jean Weigand
Community Grants Chair





Ron Finch



So you are in your early eighties. You have been retired almost as long as you toiled in the trenches of education. Age is no excuse in defining your future. Anything is possible, even a third career. Just ask Ron Finch, with 52 fiction novels and who is writing his 53rd book.

What would I write about? With some 8 decades of living behind you, your experiences, current and historical events, along with accumulated wisdom, inevitably colour your stories.

If you were born on the wrong side of the CPR shunting yard tracks in London, Ontario, you knew poverty. You had a BB gun to shoot rats in your driveway. You did things that would be considered illegal in a more genteel neighbourhood, but were normal by the tracks. Mothers hired a grade eight student to escort kindergarten kids to school, until you learned which houses to run past, after the first week. You cultivated the right friends so that bullies knew you would stand your ground.

If you were conceived to replace a brother who died before you were born, to a deaf mother, deficient in the hug department and to a dad who discouraged reading, as just a waste of time, then you might grow up, angry. However, when you witness hungry, rail-riding hobos coming to your door for a sandwich, which was always provided, you did learn empathy.

At kindergarten, Ron had to be taught to take a nap, then in Grade one, he could finally read the alphabet letters above the blackboard, when glasses were provided. Leaving his comfort zone to attend the academic school, Sir Adam Beck, exposed him to people who were polite and Ron learned that mathematics was his forte. After grade 13, when everyone's marks were published in the London Free Press, Ron tied with a girl from South Secondary for the highest mark in Physics. Ron's mom said, "that's nice", and his dad merely smiled, with no comment. Ron had his first experience at challenging authority when he chastised his PE teacher for making disparaging remarks about an overweight student in the class. High marks earned him a scholarship to UWO in Honours Math and Physics. In spite of an interest class in Russian language, in view of the Cold War, he was a dropout from Academia after Second Year and took a job as copyboy at the London Free Press, where he learned about the real world and met the love of his life for 60 years of marriage, in the person of Gloria, who was beautiful, smart, kind and disciplined.

After just 2 weeks at Teacher's College he was again a dropout, because he was too outspoken for that setting. London Life welcomed Ron's impressive Math skills for the Actuarial Dept but very quickly, he was sent off to IBM to be schooled as a Programmer. This was the early days of computing so most of the staff had no clue about what happened in that rarified room with the big tape drives. Payday revealed that the degree programmers were on a higher scale, even though he was the best programmer on site. Move on. Access the new Student Loan program. With wife and babes in tow, they moved in with his parents to finish his degree at UWO.

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In 1965, Ron was hired at Listowel District Secondary School to begin a rewarding career in Math and Science, teaching students from Gr 9-13 how to think. Ron's credentials were in such short supply that he was paid, a bonus of \$100 per week above the grid scale. With this encouragement Ron started a science club which highlighted UFO's and piloted leaf composting in the Town of Listowel. A few years later, he mounted a Grade 12 Space Science course and became licensed to launch rockets. Somehow, he found time to launch a career as a basketball coach for girls and boys, become Math Department Head, Althouse Associate teacher and Night School supervisor. At every step along the way Ron's motto was to simply do what was best for the students. Ron internalized and applied quality quotes in school and in writing from recognized sources such as, "Either everybody counts, or nobody counts" as penned by author Michael Connolly.



Ron's forte was always sharing, politely and freely his considered opinion on how things should be done. From an early age, Ron was taught to say nothing, if you can't say something nice. At Lorne Ave Public School in London, Ron wasn't afraid of anyone and fended off the bullies. In the school workplace, administrators looked for "team players". His polite observations in the interest of students netted him 3 promotions to Principal and 3 demotions. Ron considered these experiences as just inconveniences to be weathered, until there was again an administration opening, which required his skills. The fact that Ron enjoyed 16 happy years as an administrator in all 5 Perth County High Schools, speaks volumes. At the same time, Ron had some 38 satisfying years of community and municipal service to his credit in Listowel and North Perth.



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In preparation for retirement, Ron became a qualified Real Estate agent, with 27 years of part time status, to support their own family of five and an adopted family of four from an abused family setting. Behavioural difficulties were an understatement! The adopted kids did not understand personal property or personal space. It was the beginning of behaviour modification for Gloria and Ron. They learned a lot about police visits, probation officers, courtrooms, psych hospitals and split personalities. Abuse is an awful monster, but you never give up on kids. All are now successful adults. The daughter with the terrible temper, taught Ron to go for a walk after a bad day as a school administrator.



Not only did their family have health issues but so did Ron and Gloria. Ron has lived with Meniere's disease, inherited from his dad, while Gloria was in hospital for 3 months in 1973, saved by the Chief Surgeon at University Hospital in London. This was a learning experience for Ron. He had to figure out how to prepare supper for a family and found out the value of a stay-at-home mom. Ron learned that being a father, was a lot easier than being a mother. Always willing to help others, it was after Gloria's recovery that the adopted family came on the scene, because their need was recognized. In the meantime, Ron's sight decline ruled out night driving and thus was born the third career, to fill the void.

If you came in contact with Ron Finch, as a rogue kid, relative, friend, former teacher or colleague, then you might recognize yourself in his novels. No matter how fictional the story is, real people and your honest thoughts and convictions are embedded in the story. Local settings and historical context from the 1920s and 30s and beyond bring an air of reality to the mystery, which features some bloodshed, funerals, diseases, dementia, cute babies, abuse and even civil unrest. Writing was a secret ambition but it started out slowly in 10-minute intervals, grew to 30-minute sessions and then for several hours throughout a week. In Ron's printed pages, his ideas and beliefs come alive in 51 completed novels with heroes and heroines, sometimes released on Facebook, one chapter at a time. Self-publishing is one avenue but an agent and a wider market would be a satisfying answer to Ron's Christmas wish list.

Bruce Whitmore
Past-President of RTOERO District 9





RTOERO District 9's
Spring General Meeting & Luncheon
Wednesday, May 8, 2024
 Registration Deadline: Wednesday, April 15, 2024
Mitchell Golf & Country Club
 81 Francis Street West, Mitchell



As at previous recent SGMs, we will continue to place just six diners to each table to allow more space per person. So we will be able to accommodate a **maximum of 120** on May 8. So ... first come, first served! You will be notified if there isn't room for you.

Agenda

- 09:45 Registration and Coffee/Tea/Juice
- 10:15 District 9 Spring General Meeting
- 11:15 50th Anniversary Celebrations
Entertainment will be provided by *The Irish Cowboys*.
- 12:15 Luncheon Menu: Chicken Cordon Bleu — breaded chicken breast stuffed with ham and Swiss cheese; with garlic mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables, salad, veggie tray, coffee, tea and dessert.
(Note: a vegetarian meal can be provided if you request ahead.)

We are temporarily continuing our **2008** price for this SGM — just \$18 per person, whether member or guest!! So send your registration early!



Spring General Meeting & Luncheon, May 8, 2024
 Please complete, detach, and return with cheque payable to
 "District 9 RTOERO"
 Marty Bond, 33833 Fullerview Circle, R.R.2, Goderich, ON N7A 3X8
 by **April 15, 2024** at the latest please.

Name: _____

Guest: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Number of lunches: _____ @ \$18 each = \$ _____

The link to use your credit card is <https://www.rto-ero.org/payment-d9>
 This link is also found on the left bottom of District 9's web page, just above the copyright information as "**Pay online for District 9 event or activity**".



By attending this event, you consent to having your image included in our newsletters, website and social media channels. Please inform our photographers if you do not wish to be photographed.



Celebrating our Most Senior Members

This is a year to celebrate so we would be amiss if we did not give a nod to the most senior members among our ranks. The following 72 members are all 90 or over sometime during this, our 50th anniversary! That means they were in their forties, and still teaching when STO was first formed all those years ago! Among these astute members President Willi can note her former Guide Leader, her former Geography, Latin and Phys Ed teachers, a former schoolmate's mom, a number of past executive members of RTO, and many colleagues, mentors and friends. Such longevity is an inspiration to us all!

Happy 50th anniversary!

Flora Hesk	Earl Clark	Doreen Clark	Dorothy Frank	Donald Morton	Argelyne Strote
John Semple	Sally Kooy	Clayton Murray	Harold Fullerton	Heinz Hoernig	Anne Eekhoff
Lois Ottewell	Tim Willis	John Dickinson	Nancy Elmslie	Don Keillor	Cameron Frazer
June Westman	Joseph Wooden	Adam Stecher	Dorothy Frank	Gavin Cloutton	Ronald Fischer
Kenneth Wood	Grace Uloth			Bill Van Weiren	Rosaire Roy
Phyllis McPhail	Catherine Durley			James Chapman	Carol Simons
Dorothy Leitch	Carl Zvonkin			Dora Cathers	Vera Kemp
Marion Triebner	Doris Dodd			Gwen Caesar	Janeen Clynick
Dorothy Hart	Ross Errington			Audrey Haberer	Everett Muir
Sheila Reaburn	Marjory Kilgour			Mary Jacobe	Patricia Stringer
Mary Tufts	Jean Hodgert			Gretchen McKerlie	Dorothy Elliott
Doris Stewart	Ramona Jamieson			Jean Moorehead	Maureen Carroll
Colin Colquhoun	Dorothy Dilworth	Shirley Paul	Hazel Marie Huras	Mildred Bernasconi	Ruth Cox
Jane McArthur	Donna McDonald	Charles Ryde	Eleanor Mansfield	Katherine Nesbitt	Norman Kehl
George Wicke	Marion Thompson	Joan Martin	Rose Marie Carpenter		



Cathy Hugill and Willi Laurie



Vibrant Voices Webinars

Vibrant Voices is the name RTOERO gives to its Political Advocacy campaign speaking out for Seniors, Health Care and the Environment. One of its roles is to educate our members on various issues related to these three advocacy pillars. Thousands of members listen into the webinars given by top experts in their field. On February 29th Colin Milner, presented the webinar entitled "Aging - The Great Disrupter." His highly entertaining presentation talked about the five things you can do to live better longer and extend your able years while reducing your time in poorer health. As more people age healthily in place, our society has been disrupted and changed forever. And new language, infrastructure, ways of monitoring health and caregiving will need to be embraced. Autonomous living all starts with self-care and personalizing how best to meet your lifestyle goals. Though it is intended for RTOERO members only, I would highly recommend watching this webinar with your partner so you can come up with a game plan you both can work with. Check out the notes from the webinar and the video of the webinar on the Vibrant Voices website.

The next Vibrant Voices webinar is coming up at 1 pm via Zoom on June 28th and is entitled, "7 Pillars for Living Your Best Retirement."

Willi Laurie
President of RTOERO District 9



5 + 2: A Simple Equation for Protecting Yourself from Scams

None of us are immune to falling victim to scams. Being aware of the risk of being scammed is essential, but still, we may be drawn in by a too-good-to-be-true type offer that seems perfectly matched to our wants and needs.

Detective Constable John Armit from the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) was interviewed by the CBC this year and offered a simple equation to protect yourself. He says, "Take five and tell two".

If you receive a pitch – by email, text, phone or any other source, take five minutes to think about it. Don't respond right away. And talk to at least two other people about it before doing anything.

Source: [cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/fraud-scams-tips-avoid-ontario-1.6764432](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/fraud-scams-tips-avoid-ontario-1.6764432)

From the RTOERO Toronto Office



The Role of Dental Care in Overall Health

Our oral health both impacts and is impacted by overall health. Good oral hygiene is an essential part of maintaining your wellness. Regular dental checkups can help ensure any issues are caught or treated early.



Ways oral health interacts with overall health:

- Evidence has connected mouth bacteria to endocarditis, pneumonia, cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's.
- Gum disease, a common condition, can become periodontitis if left untreated.
- Medications can impact saliva flow. Saliva is important for oral health. It helps neutralize acid, support digestion and prevent tooth decay and gum disease.
- Oral health issues can impact mental health and quality of life. Evidence shows that people with periodontal disease may avoid social contact. You may not be able to enjoy food in the same way. Bad breath or missing teeth can cause feelings of embarrassment or shame.

If you're not a Dental Plan member, you can add the coverage with guaranteed acceptance.

- The spouse or dependent of an RTOERO member with extended health insurance can join the dental plan, even if the primary member doesn't.
- New dental applicants must stay in the plan for at least 24 months.

Details about RTOERO's dental plan are available at rtoero.ca/insurance/dental-plan/ or contact the RTOERO benefits team to discuss your needs: 1-800-361-9888.

From The RTOERO Toronto Office





Leisure and Recreation Plans

Below is a list of events, plays and activities planned for this summer:

Wednesday, May 29, 2024:

10:30 a.m. Tour Suntastic Greenhouses at 40534 Thames Road East, Exeter.

12 noon Lunch in downtown Exeter.

1:30 p.m. Walking tour of downtown Exeter with Joanne Bowen.



Wednesday, June 12, 2024:

10:30 a.m. Tour Tiny Footprint Homes at 43 First Avenue, Vanastara.

12 noon Lunch at Kate's Station.

1:30 p.m. Tour the CNR School on Wheels on Victoria Terrace in Clinton. A small fee is charged.

Tuesday, June 25, 2024:

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Visit the Trick Farm and Water Powered Mill at 37733 Bayfield Road, Clinton. This farm is a nice reflection of early Ontario agricultural and industrial activity.



Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 8:00 p.m. at Blyth Festival Outdoor Theatre.

We have front row group tickets for THE FARM SHOW: THEN & NOW.

This is the 50th anniversary celebration of the play that inspired the founding of the Festival in 1972. We have front row seats priced at \$44.00 each. Sign up at our May 8 meeting or call me.

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Wednesday, July 17, 2024:

10:30 a.m. Visit Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame at 386 Church Street South, St Marys. Seniors' fee is \$9.00

12 Noon Lunch in downtown followed by a downtown walking tour and a visit to Stonetown Bowling Lanes at 21 Church Street, St Marys. A small fee is charged for the walking tour.



Wednesday, July 24, 2024:

10:30 a.m. until noon. Tour of Bayfield Lavender Farm at 77881 Porters Hill Road. The owner, Jemma, will give us a tour and you may visit the shop after for purchases.

2:00 p.m. A walking tour of The Square and West Street in Goderich. Conducted by David Yates. Meet at Huron County Museum. Dave's phone 226-963-1167.

Thursday, September 5, 2024:

2:00 p.m. at the Blyth Memorial Hall in Blyth.

We have a group of second row tickets for ONION SKINS AND PEACH FUZZ.



This play is a nostalgic story of the FARMERETTES, who were summer workers during WORLD WAR 2 who helped plant and harvest crops during times of worker shortage. The play was inspired by the book written by Bonnie Sitter and Shirleyan English. Tickets at \$44.00 are available at our spring meeting or earlier by calling, emailing, or writing to me. Also, a list of forms for these activities are available on the next page.

David McClure, 9923 Pinery Lane, Grand Bend, N0M 1T0
519-238-8449 or canadave@hay.net

At our Spring Meeting on May 8 in Mitchell you may purchase a \$44.00 theatre group ticket for Blyth Theatre either for the FARM SHOW on 25 June, 2024 or ONION SKINS AND PEACH FUZZ - the Farmerette Story on 5 September, 2024.

Our district is served well with summer theatres and museums and all of them deserve our support. You may want to complete your day at one of our "LOCAL SOCIALS" by attending plays at Petrolia, Grand Bend, Drayton, Stratford and Blyth or visiting 3 of Ontario's very best museums namely Huron County Museum in Goderich, Stratford Perth Museum west of Stratford and Lambton County Museum just south of Grand Bend. May you enjoy the activities planned for your 2024 summer.

We hope you have a summer with nice weather and enjoy some of our "local socials", a name coined by Clare French a few years ago.

Dave McClure
Leisure and Recreation Chair

Forms for Theatre



I plan to attend THE FARM SHOW at BLYTH OUTDOOR THEATRE on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 8.00 p.m.

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

NO. of tickets _____ @ \$44.00 = _____ Our seats are ROW 1 Seats # 10 to 19

Make cheque payable to RTOERO District 9 and labelled Theatre tickets on memo line.

Pay at spring meeting or mail to David McClure

9923 Pinery Lane, Grand Bend. NOM 1T0 519-238-8449



I plan to attend ONION SKINS AND PEACH FUZZ - THE ONTARIO FARMERETTES

at BLYTH MEMORIAL HALL on Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

EMAIL _____

NO. of tickets _____ @ \$44.00 = _____ Our seats are in ROW C Seats # 10 to 19

Make cheque payable to RTOERO District 9 and labelled Theatre tickets on memo line.

Pay at spring meeting or mail to David McClure

9923 Pinery Lane, Grand Bend. NOM 1T0 519-238-8449



A List of Forms for Summer "Local Socials"

Please complete registration at our spring meeting or mail, email, or phone me.



Tour SUNTASTIC GREENHOUSES and Walking Tour of Exeter with Joanne Bowen

Meet at 40534 THAMES ROAD EAST, @ 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 29, 2024

Name: _____ Phone # _____



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Visit TINY FOOTPRINT HOMES and CNR SCHOOL ON WHEELS.

On Wednesday, June 12, 2024. Meet at 43 First avenue, Vanastra for home tour at 10:30 a.m.

Lunch time at Kates Station and visit railway school car on Victoria Terrace, Clinton at 1:30 p.m.

Name: _____ Phone # _____



TRICK FARM TOUR on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Visit Thomas Trick Farm and Water Powered Mill at 37733 Bayfield Road, Clinton.

You may want to enjoy Blyth outdoor Theatre FARM SHOW at 8:00 p.m.

Name: _____ Phone # _____



ST. MARYS : Tour Baseball hall of fame and Walking Tour on Wednesday, July 17, 2024.

Meet at Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame at 10:30 a.m. followed by lunch

and a downtown walking tour with museum staff and visit Stonetown Bowling Alleys at 1:30 p.m.

Name: _____ Phone # _____



BAYFIELD LAVENDER FARM and Walking Tour of the Square in Goderich on Wednesday, July 24, 2024.

Meet at 77881 PORTERS HILL ROAD for a tour of the farm at 10:30 a.m.

1:30 p.m. Meet at the Huron County Museum for tour conducted by Dave Yates.

Name: _____ Phone # _____





Celebrating RTOERO Milestones

68 members of RTOERO District 9 are celebrating milestone memberships this year! RTOERO has sent us certificates for 25 years, 30 years, 35 years, 40 years and yes, even 45 years for each one of these milestone members. These will be presented to milestone members in attendance at our Spring General Meeting and 50th Anniversary Banquet. After all, it is a celebration and we should celebrate their long-term commitment. I was excited to see not only former colleagues and mentors, but also executive members past and present, and even my former Phys Ed and Geography teachers in the list!!!!

The certificates not presented at the banquet will be mailed out after May 8. So here they are:



45 Years

Brent Turnbull

40 years

Mary Tufts	Colin Colquhoun	Dorothy Hart	H. Ross Errington
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35 Years

Gwen Caesar	Earl Clark	Doreen Clark	Bernice Dekker	John Dickinson	Ronald Fisher
Harold Fullerton	Flora Hesk	Frances Hodgert	Gerald Ingram	Norman Kehl	Dorothy Leitch
Jane McArthur	Edna Rehkopf	Argelyn Strote	Kenneth Wood	Carl Zvonkin	

30 Years

Samuel Alberico	Roslyn Campbell	Sally Campeau	Mildred Cowdrey	Jo-Anne Eckert	James Gladding
Lillian Logtenberg	Rhea Jones	Shirley Kaufman	Arnold Mathers	Ila Mathers	Mary Moffatt
Clayton Murray	Ronald Patterson	Elizabeth Paulen	James Ready	Joseph Wooden	Inge Wraith
Al Taylor					

25 Years (Quarter Century Club)

Richard Ament	Linda Ankenman	Robert Babcock	Douglas Barnett	Viola Boersen	Terrence Boyce
Rita Core	Douglas Currie	Diana Delbridge	Arthur Duboyce	Ronald Finch	David Gilroy
Barbara Golding	Carol Hoelscher	Catherine Hugill	Audrey McKague	Rudolf Michaeli	Doug Neil
John Patterson	Christine Poelstra	Douglas Procter	Gloria Reibling	James Simpson	Mary Sproule
Douglas Sproule	Bruce Whitmore	Brian Wretham			

Cathy Hugill and Willi Laurie



Thinking Environment

Sustainable Downsizing

We just moved to a downsize house this November, and, while thinking we were doing a pretty good job all along of donating excess items, it was surprising to us just how many nooks and crannies were filled with items we could no longer use. Though we had to go the inevitable bin route, there were also so many items we felt environmentally, we needed to dispose of in a more sustainable way. With so many of our members in the same boat, and the Environment being a special interest of District 9, I thought I would share some things we discovered along the way – and sometimes, too late!



Yarns, craft items, wallpaper

Schools and summer camps are always making use of craft items in their arts programs and welcome these donations. Give them a call first before you drop off.

Batteries

Do you have old batteries you'd like to get rid of? You can recycle them at **Best Buy** stores or in designated boxes at **Giant Tiger. Home Hardware** in Goderich will also accept old batteries for recycling.

Tip - While collecting your batteries, bundle them with rubber bands so the ends all face the same way. Random batteries stored in a plastic bag or tub may still have enough charge in them to start a fire. Securing them with rubber bands keeps the poles apart and helps prevent that fire risk.

Best Buy stores will also take electronics, as will your local **ReStore**.

The ReStore – What a treasure place this can be! Excess furniture, books, building and household supplies and good used appliances can all go here! These stores take so many items that others may find useful, and translate them into fundraisers to build homes for needy families. And while there, be sure to browse for some little treasure you might like to take home. We replaced all the pigtales in the basement of our new home with ReStore industrial styled lighting – many of these were still new in the package! Our ReStore even takes videotapes of favourite movies due to the cottage culture of the area.

Thrift Stores and Consignment Stores – These mostly take clothing, footwear and accessories but every thrift store has its own character and line of goods.

Royal Doulton and Fancy Dishes – We went down to one set of dishes that wash well in the dishwasher and donated the rest. But many people have cupboards full of fancy stuff they want a better price for. Look for a dealer to appraise and buy it, or put it up on a local buy and sell page. Someone out there will want it. We were also able to download a lot of excess furniture pieces on the buy and sell Facebook pages which saved us a few trailer loads to the ReStore!

Textile Recycling

What a godsend this was! **Goodwill** collects, sorts, recycles, repurposes, and shreds used textiles so they can be used as rags, stuffing for products and automobiles, and by-product used by the agricultural industry. Each year over 100 billion garments are sent to landfills around the world. By recycling textiles and giving them a new life, Goodwill is building a fully circular economy.

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H and M — Stores also do Textile Recycling. There is one in the Masonville Mall in London. Take any unwanted clothes or textiles, by any brand and in any condition, to an H and M store. Hand in your bag of old clothes at the cash register and receive a thank-you voucher to use toward your next purchase. Please note that undergarments **CANNOT** be donated for recycling.

What to do with gently used bras?

La Vie en Rose has a used bra collection initiative called The Roses of Hope Foundation. Its mission is to financially support organizations that are committed to the well-being of the community and the protection of the environment.

Keep the gently used bras you don't wear anymore. Drop off the bras at **La Vie en Rose** (Stratford Mall) near you. They recycle all bras collected; they are given to an organization that repurposes them.

Contact your local shelters to see if bra donations would help. Many women's and homeless shelters seek gently used bras and other clothing items. Keep your eyes open for any other local donation drives.

Blankets and Old Towels

Your local vet may be interested in your old towels and blankets – ones that may be past their prime. Or donate them to a textile recycling company.

Project Hope London deals with homeless populations and provides them with necessities like socks, gloves, mitts, and blankets, tents, hygiene products, etc. You can drop these items off there. Find them on Facebook.

Recycle Your Old Socks

Time to clean up your sock drawer! Only 12% of clothing materials end up getting recycled. The Smartwool Second Cut project collects socks and contributes to the circular economy. From now until May 2, drop off unwanted socks at your local Mountain Equipment Company store; look for the Smartwool Second Cut Project bins. All socks are welcome, as long as they're clean: all brands, all colours, all materials, all conditions (single socks are good too). To date, the Second Cut Project has kept 12,000 lb. of material out of landfills. In London, you can drop off at the **Mountain Equipment Company**, 1051 Wellington Rd., N6E 1W4. Phone: 519-668-6657.

Now, what to do with old recorded videotapes and black plastic items?????

Willi Laurie
RTOERO District 9 President





Welcome to the Change Her World Community Library, Chilumba, Malawi!



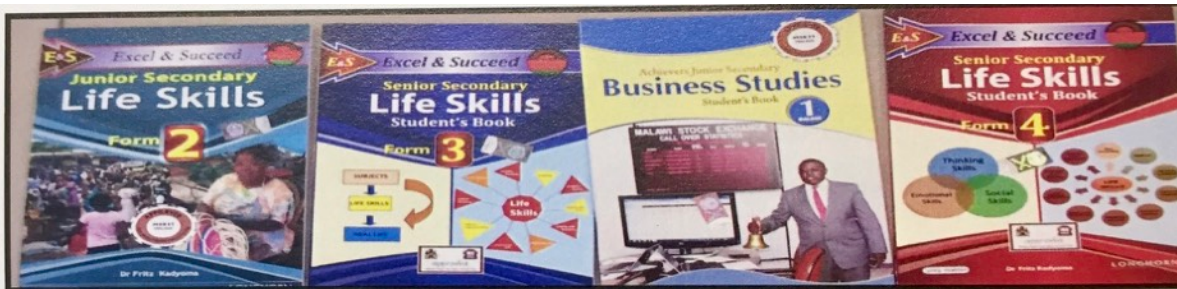
The official opening of the new library took place last August during Linda and Carol's visit to Malawi. A recent CHW beneficiary, Gift Mwafulirwa, who holds a Diploma in Community Development, has been engaged as Office Administrator. She receives an honorarium, has been provided with a bicycle for travel and has begun her 3-month trial period. In addition to office duties, she will ensure regular hours and oversee activities in the library.

The children's section is currently open 3 mornings a week. Young readers are visiting and attendance is growing. On Saturdays many secondary students have been visiting to study for upcoming examinations. On those days Ellen and Rozaline, two board members will assume library duties, supported by Themba, our technical whiz, so that the computers can be used and monitored.



Our original plan was to organize, fully stock and establish use of the children's section as the first step. However, all good plans are flexible and allow adaptation to meet needs, and that has been the case in this instance. Reports of as many as 30 to 40 secondary students coming on Saturdays to read, study, and use the computers for exam preparation has led to rethinking that original plan. It became obvious that the one copy of each of the texts these students use was not sufficient. So, the Board here in Canada made the decision to order additional texts, as well as the shelving to hold approximately 300 books. Numerous bins of books for the children's section had been shipped to Malawi in the past and were waiting to be put out for use, so that portion of the library will not be lacking in literacy materials for the time being.

Continuation from page 18



Only children and students are permitted to use the library presently, with strict hand washing enforced. A log book of visitors is maintained. Books are not allowed to leave the facility. A night watchman is engaged to ensure security at the site.

Financial support from The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada has allowed the implementation of a second pig project for the women. Training was offered early this year and the pigs were with their new owners mid-February. The first project was a great success, enabling the women to earn income for their families and establish independence while developing a sense of community with other project members. The CHW boards, both in Canada and in Malawi, have high hopes for this second venture. Many thanks to WICC.



The veterinarian outlined all manner of care for the piglets.



Then Wezzie, Change Her World co-ordinator, explained the organization's requirements for participants.



Maize distribution



Continuation from page 19

November through March is termed the "Hunger Season" in this part of the world. Stores of maize are usually depleted and the torrential downpours (every afternoon) in 30-degree temperatures wash away plantings and turn dirt roads into impossible quagmires. Change Her World facilitates distribution of maize to vulnerable women and supported students as needed. The first of March this year brought reports of devastating floods in areas adjacent to Lake Malawi. We are awaiting news from Chilumba that everyone is safe and damage is minimal.

The Change Her World annual dinner and fundraiser is April 13 in Stratford. More information is included on the poster on page 21. Clicking on the poster will bring you to the Change Her World website: changeherworld.ca. Then, if you want to proceed, click on the ATTEND button. The last date to purchase tickets is April 10th."

Please remember our Books 2 Books fundraiser. Tidy up your book shelves, purge as you downsize, or just make room for more wonderful reading. All fiction, non-fiction, adult, juvenile, and children's gently used books are appreciated. We cannot accept textbooks, encyclopedias, magazines, or damaged books. Your donations may be brought to me at the Spring General Meeting (May 8th). Drop off can be arranged in Wingham or in Stratford and pick-up at your location is also possible. The monies raised from your books are sent to purchase books to fill the shelves in Malawi. We work with a used book seller and also hold used book sales during the summer and fall. For more information talk to me at the Spring Meeting or contact me by phone, text or email.



Thanks for my bag of maize!



Thanks for the training and our piglets!

"Thank you" in Malawi always comes with dancing and singing!

Many thanks for the support that comes to Change Her World from our District 9 group and from individual members. Happy Spring!

Pat Evers
Change Her World Director and RTOERO District 9 Liaison
(519) 450-8479
pevers7@gmail.com





14th Annual Fundraising Dinner

April 13, 2024
Best Western Arden Park
552 Ontario St. Stratford
Social Hour ~ 5:30
Dinner ~ 6:30 (Roast Beef)
*(For special meal requirements,
contact the hotel at 519-275-2936)*

Tickets - \$65.00
- at Blowes, Stratford
or www.changeherworld.ca
*(Just click on the ATTEND
button for instructions)*



**Come to hear Carol
and Linda share their
trip to Malawi.**

2024 Collection Campaign
Just 1,099 more pairs of cotton
underwear needed to reach 20,000!
Please bring sizes 2 to Ladies S
to the dinner.
~ Thanks

Questions and Answers about Travel Insurance

You may have heard that RTOERO has a new member benefit: Trip interruption and cancellation insurance for members who aren't yet part of the RTOERO Entente Group Insurance Plan.

Here are some key questions and answers RTOERO receives about travel insurance. See more on the blog here: rtoero.ca/travel-insurance-for-canadians-questions-and-answers/

Do I need travel insurance?

Ensuring you're adequately covered can provide peace of mind to help you enjoy your trip and reduce stress if the unexpected happens. While not required by Canadian law, travel insurance is essential to protecting you, your family and your finances.

Should I have insurance for a day trip across the border?

Yes, if crossing the border for a shopping day or other activity, it's important to make sure you have medical coverage.

Why might I purchase multi-trip coverage vs. single trip coverage?

If you're taking multiple trips in a year, then it's worth looking at multi-trip coverage. Remember that travel is more than major vacations – it can include weekend getaways or even cross-border shopping trips. Purchasing single-trip coverage may not be as cost-effective, and it also requires your time and attention each time you need to do it.

Is credit card travel insurance good enough?

Many credit cards include both medical and trip cancellation and interruption insurance, provided the trip was booked using the credit card. This type of insurance may be sufficient for you but don't assume it is. Always be sure to check the details – for example, there may be a maximum length of trip, or you may not be covered over a certain age. Read the limitations and exclusions carefully. You may also want to top up coverage if the coverage amounts are not enough for your needs.

To learn more about RTOERO's trip cancellation and interruption travel insurance, visit: <https://rtoero.ca/insurance/trip-cancellation-interruption/>

If you know someone working in education who likes to travel, tell them about this benefit – it's one more reason to get their membership now.

From the RTOERO Toronto Office



Surviving Spouse Benefits: RTOERO Will Be There

There are few life situations as challenging as the death of a spouse or, for dependent children, the death of their parents/caregivers. Be assured that RTOERO will be there. If the primary member of the RTOERO Entente Group Insurance Plan dies, surviving spouses or dependent(s) can become members and enjoy the same benefits.

What to expect:

- Johnson Insurance needs to receive the death certificate. The spouse doesn't need to call or email themselves—a call or email can come from a friend, family member, district goodwill coordinator or funeral home. Johnson can be reached at 416-920-7248 or 1-877-406-9007, or by email at healthbenefits@johnson.ca.
- Johnson Insurance sends the surviving spouse or dependent a continuation of benefits form and postage-paid envelope. The form needs to be completed and sent back.
- The surviving spouse or dependent will then become an RTOERO member if they aren't already. They will be enrolled in the Entente benefits.
- All historical file notes and claims history will transfer to the surviving spouse's record. They'll receive a new benefits package, card, and a welcome package from RTOERO.

From the RTOERO Toronto Office



Avoiding AI-Powered Scams

New generative artificial intelligence (AI) can imitate anyone's voice or appearance and is now widely available to the public. Scammers are using the technology to fool people.

How AI-powered voice scams work:

- You may receive a phone call that sounds like it's from someone you know asking for help, but it's artificial intelligence imitating their voice.

What to do:

- Ask a question only that person will know.
- Consider preparing in advance – some families have chosen a special word or phrase to confirm their identity.

AI can also be used to create videos that look like anyone and have their voice. Sadly, we can't trust our eyes and ears anymore! Always be alert if you receive a call, text or email that is rushing you into taking action or asking you to share information.

For more, visit getsmarteraboutmoney.ca/learning-path/types-of-fraud/ai-voice-cloning-scams

From the RTOERO Toronto Office



Some Great Memories

I first heard of the formation of our organization back in 1974 because on the previous June 1973 two of my teaching colleagues at South Huron High School, namely Laretta Siegner and Victor Dinnin, had retired and later joined our new retired teachers' organization. The name chosen for our organization was The Superannuated Teachers of Ontario and was abbreviated as STO. Our district had 2 units called Huron & Perth. Each unit organized social occasions and dinners and trips but the big event of the year was the district annual meeting and dinner held for many years, close to Thanksgiving time, at the Seaforth Arena and Community Centre. That meeting was a grand social occasion with a speaker, entertainment and best of all a sumptuous meal.

Our district was fortunate that several of our members were avid travelers and great organizers of local trips and ones more distant. Notable was the work performed by Jim Chapman and Clare French and several others organizing local trips as well as ones in our province and Eastern Canada and several American states. Clare organized all those great "Local Socials" and notably the bus trip to distant Branson, Missouri for all their musical entertainment. And we appreciated that Doug Bundy organized several enjoyable theatre trips to our summer theatres in Grand Bend and Blyth.

I was very happy that I was able to conduct 2 trips to eastern Canada namely a VIA RAIL trip in 2003 to the Gaspé Peninsula where we hired a bus to visit the famed Percé Rock and Forillon National Park. And in 2004 we travelled by air to St. John's where we hired Doug Banks as our Viking Trails bus driver who took us on a marvelous 11-day trip across the province from East to West including Heart's Content, Bonavista, Twillingate and "all around the circle" (as the folk song goes).

I am enclosing some photographs of those trips. You will recognize several of the participants. Some are still 'hale and hardy' and some have passed away.



Our group in Newfoundland in 2004.



Joan and David McClure in the Newfoundland trip in 2004.

Continuation from page 24



Jim Chapman in the Forillon Store in the Gaspé trip by train in the Forillon National Park in 2003.



Our group at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, in 2004.

Over the last 50 years we have enjoyed many social occasions and camaraderie in our District 9 RTOERO. We have all enjoyed being a part of RTOERO and our wish is that the next 50 years will be equally enjoyable for its members. Long live RTOERO in HURON AND PERTH counties.

Dave McClure
Leisure and Recreation Chair



Get Social with the RTOERO Foundation

Did you know the RTOERO Foundation has a Facebook page and X account?

The foundation posts information, news and resources that highlight seniors' issues with a special focus on geriatrics research and social connection, as well as providing updates on the work of the foundation, including the latest news on its granting program. The foundation's social media accounts are open to all, so feel free to share the links below with family and friends.

You can easily connect with the Foundation on either platform by clicking on the links below. For a little more instruction, please follow these steps.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FoundationRTOERO/>

1. In the search bar (top left corner) type RTO Foundation
2. On our page, find and click the "Follow" button
3. Congratulations! You are now following the RTOERO Foundation on Facebook

X: https://twitter.com/RTO_Foundation

1. In the search bar (top right corner) type @RTO_Foundation
2. On our page, find and click the "Follow" button
3. You are now following the RTOERO Foundation on X...congratulations!

For additional information about the foundation's social media accounts, please contact Deanna Byrtus, Manager of Donor Relations, at dbyrтус@rtoero.ca.

From the RTOERO Toronto Office



Ads Section

Calling all volunteers!

Blyth Festival is looking for volunteers to help with ushering this summer and retired teachers are some of its best volunteers. Also, you get a chance to take in a play for free! Give them a call if you can usher anything from a couple of nights to the whole summer.

Here's the link:

[Volunteer and help the Blyth Festival this season](#)



blythfestival.com

Toll-Free: 1-877-TO-BLYTH (1-877-862-5984) Local: 519-523-9300

Retired Teachers' Breakfast

Last Friday of Every Month - Kate's Station, Vanastra, 8:30 am. New members always welcome.

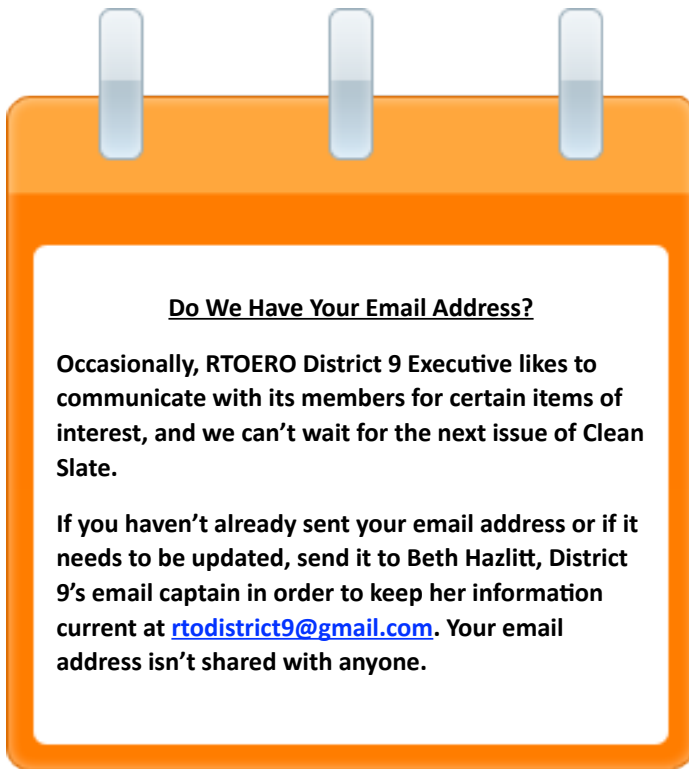
If you have similar events taking place informally in your area and want others to know about them, please let us know for the next issue of the Clean Slate. Or email wlaurie@tcc.on.ca and we can put it on Facebook for you.

INVITATION

Calling all former and present teachers of F. E. Madill Secondary School and Wingham District High School to join us at the school on Saturday, June 29, 2024 from 1 - 4 p.m. for the HIGH SCHOOL Reunion in conjunction with the Homecoming weekend celebrating Wingham's 145th Anniversary.

Please come to renew friendships with your teaching colleagues and visit with your former students.

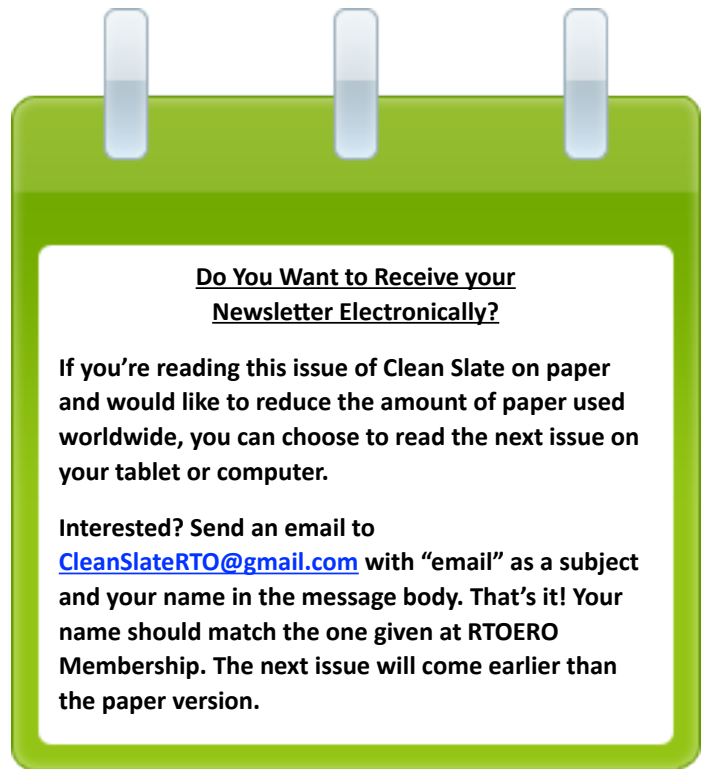
Hosted by Wingham Area Historical Society.



Do We Have Your Email Address?

Occasionally, RTOERO District 9 Executive likes to communicate with its members for certain items of interest, and we can't wait for the next issue of Clean Slate.

If you haven't already sent your email address or if it needs to be updated, send it to Beth Hazlitt, District 9's email captain in order to keep her information current at rtodistrict9@gmail.com. Your email address isn't shared with anyone.



Do You Want to Receive your Newsletter Electronically?

If you're reading this issue of Clean Slate on paper and would like to reduce the amount of paper used worldwide, you can choose to read the next issue on your tablet or computer.

Interested? Send an email to CleanSlateRTO@gmail.com with "email" as a subject and your name in the message body. That's it! Your name should match the one given at RTOERO Membership. The next issue will come earlier than the paper version.

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