

STONY Bridges



RTO
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District 23
North York

Issue 134
March 2022



In this Issue

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In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of the following members of District 23. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to their families and friends.

The following information was taken from RTOERO Office's monthly updates from October 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021.

A. Allen, Neil Bailey, Joseph Beitchman, Arthur Bell, Jean Cameron, George Fligg, Kathleen Flynn, Doris Gibson, Irene Gohm, Ian Hamilton, Elinor Hepburn, Elizabeth Houston, John Hunter, Teresa Kudirka, Gino Loconte, Andrew (Hugh) McKeown, Shirley O'Grady, Esther Plafker, Anahid Proudian, Gerald Racicot, M. N. Rowntree, Shirley Shortt, Wilma Skinner, Robert Takeda, Jean Thomson, Shirley Vernon, Patricia Wilson, Evelyn Winfield



Welcome New D23 Members

by John Giannone, Convener

The Executive welcomes all the new members who have recently joined RTOERO District 23 and invite them to become active participants in all our activities. As of December 31, 2021, RTOERO District 23 has a total membership of 2776 members.

The following information was taken from RTOERO Office's monthly updates from October 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021.

October: Marie Adams, Mary Allen, Tekle Bahlibi, Ruth Herskovits, Alex Walder

November: Merle Greenspoon, Alana Hamilton, Giuseppa Loconte, Daniela Magno, Antonietta Maida, Stanley Shortt

December: Marlene Kaner, William Plafker

Cover Picture

Our charming Spring cover picture of a robin has been graciously provided to us by Ann Brokelman. Her nature blog can be found at:

www.naturephotosbyann.blogspot.com/

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Submissions

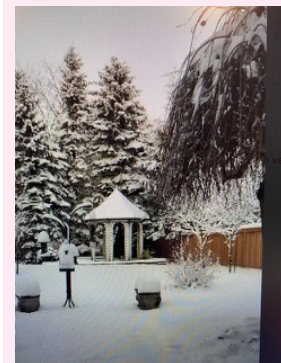
RTOERO District 23, North York welcomes submissions for STONY Bridges from members. Do you have a story to tell, an experience to share or a poem you have written? Consider submitting your work for publication. Please include name, address, and telephone number. Articles should be from 400 to 1200 words in length. Up to 10 photos are also welcome (minimum 300 dpi in jpg or png format). Please send photos as attachments and do not reduce the size. We reserve the right to edit, condense, crop, or reject letters, photos, or other submissions. See the full guidelines: <https://tinyurl.com/RTOGuidelines>. Send submissions to: Maureen Capotosto at mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca. STONY Bridges is published for its members in March, August, and November by the Retired Teachers of Ontario District 23, North York.

The due date for material for the next issue is Friday, June 15, 2022.

A Want Of Apricity

from the Latin *apricari* to bask in the sun "or how to overcome seasonal affective disorder and love winter"

my heart is subnivean in the depths of brumation



a sluggish reptilian response at low temperature

walking in hiemal slumber rising amidst hibernation

bouts of Piblokto screaming febrifacient crying

Hysteria Circle of the Arctic attacks of disturbed behaviours

awaiting the primaver-al warmth of the sun

i am a sitzmark left in the snow by a backward-fallen skier



Bruce Jacobs, Member



District 23 Needs You!

by Gwen Scriven, Past President

Consider Becoming Part of the District 23 Volunteer Team

District 23, North York, welcomes volunteers. Without our volunteers, we would be such a vibrant District that we are. I continue to be amazed by the energy, passion, and skills our volunteers bring to the Executive and the organization. We have a wonderful Executive team and invite you to become involved!

The pandemic has taught us how critical, meaningful interactions with others are to each one of us. Much positive energy is created by working together toward common goals, and while we are enriching the lives of others, our lives become richer. Volunteering is a great way to be connected and give back.

If you would like to explore how you might become involved, email Mary Valtellini, President at:

president23@districts.rtoero.ca

She will forward your contact information to the Nominating Committee Chair.

For Diana and for Ethan

*In your eyes, I see summer's last smiles
Before the strong blasts, before the cold winds of autumn...
In your eyes, I see the excited joy of the far calling trees
As their leaves gently fall away within the fast departing lights
Of a cold fall day...*

*In your eyes, I see a child's gentle dreams,
Tender lullaby in the softly descending darkness
Within the sleepy dusk hours*

*Let night's tender sphere hold you close
And all high above, the starry, starry universe:
There the soft night airs to call your name
To speak of your tender soul*

*In your eyes, the gentle soul of a dreamer,
A great and freely bestowed love
From generation to generation.*

Bev Gorbet, Member



Calendar of Events

(W) Webinar - (ZM) Zoom Sessions

March

- 4 e-Devices (ZM)
- 9 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 16 Have-a-Java (ZM)
- 17 Needleworks & Crafts (ZM)
Happy St. Patrick's Day 🍀
- 18 e-Devices (ZM)
- 30 Book Club (ZM)

April

- 1 e-Devices (ZM)
- 6 Backyard Biodiversity Workshop (ZM)
- 13 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 20 Have-a-Java (ZM)
- 21 Needleworks & Crafts (ZM)
- 27 Book Club (ZM)
- 29 e-Devices (ZM)

May

- 11 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 13 e-Devices (ZM)
- 18 Have-a-Java (ZM)
- 19 Needleworks & Crafts (ZM)
- 25 Book Club (ZM)
- 27 e-Devices (ZM)

June

- 9 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 10 e-Devices (ZM)
- 15 Have-a-Java (ZM)
- 16 Needleworks & Crafts (ZM)
- 24 e-Devices (ZM)



Shout Outs!

by Mary Valtellini, President

Happy New Year!

I hope that everyone is ready to face the year ahead. I certainly never imagined that in 2022 we would still be fighting another Covid strain - Omicron. I guess this is our new reality for now. But I fervently believe that by the time this article and STONY Bridges magazine reaches your mailboxes, the outlook will be brighter. I remain "cautiously optimistic". In the meantime, we need to build strength and resiliency to push through the frustrations we are experiencing. How do we do this safely? We need to stay connected in whatever way possible. We need to join safely in virtual or outside activities that follow all health protocols and guidelines. We need to volunteer our time by connecting with those who do not have internet capacity.

I wanted to give a 'shout out' to all our Executive who pushed through their emotions to bring joy, a smile, laughter, and a listening ear to District members. You may wonder, why mention them now? This group gives me hope! April is the month we celebrate all volunteers. What better time than to celebrate all volunteers and our Executive who give countless hours of their time to enhance the lives of others. I am forever blessed and filled with gratitude for all they do!

SHOUT OUTS to:

- **Gwen Bumbury** (Goodwill Convenor) organizing our members to call older members and listen to their stories. Read her article and see just how much this gesture is appreciated.
- **Vern Paige** (Treasurer) leading the e-Devices group and meeting virtually with members to assist them in learning new ways of communicating and using their e-devices.
- **Cheryl Paige** organizing three workshops to engage members in the Urban Wildlife Challenge as part of our D23 Community Service Project for the year.
- **Sylvia Skippen** organizing the virtual Book club and broadening our reading horizons with such an extensive genre of interesting books.
- **Elizabeth Clarke** faithfully meeting a small group of members in a virtual Have-a-Java.
- **Margaret Schuman** and the knitting group crafting beautiful items and donating them to hospitals and seniors' homes.
- **Joanne Famiglietti** creating such realistic virtual walks that make you feel physically there.



- **Karen Quinn!** What would we do without her monthly updates and reminders and her help with STONY Bridges?
- **Merv Mascarenhas and Maureen Capotosto** ensuring that STONY Bridges magazine has become one of the most informative magazines across RTOERO Districts.
- **Gerard MacNeil** ensuring that everyone receives their STONY and provides all pertinent information to the printing company.
- **Gwen Scriven** keeping us informed on all the latest developments regarding our Health Benefits.
- **Alan Ward** continuing to build on our knowledge of bridge by providing nuggets of new moves and strategies to use.
- **Sara Di Nallo** ensuring awareness of the RTOERO Foundation projects/webinars.
- **Kathy Shorney** continuing the pole walking, physically distanced, of course! As our Political Advocacy representative, I'm sure she will have information regarding our upcoming provincial election in June.
- **Mary Ellen Lawless** with her tireless enthusiasm at recruiting new members to our organization.
- **Mildred Frank** never giving up trying to find ways to keep us social.
- **Mary Cairo**, our keeper of information on the history of District 23.
- **John Giannone** for his meticulous reporting of our members, ensuring that the statistics are accurate.
- **George Meek** making sure our Policy and Governance guidelines are followed rigorously.
- **Danielle Ingster and Valerie Sterling** supporting the Executive when an extra pair of hands are needed.
- **Olga McKenzie** and her meticulous notetaking and reporting of monthly executive meetings.

Our Executive is more than what I have listed and described in this article. They do so much more to improve the lives of our members. Whenever I am asked why I am involved in our organization, the answer is simple. It is purely a selfish reason. I believe that I receive many more times over in giving to others! I believe our Executive feels the same way.

I am looking forward to 2022 and all the possibilities it may bring. I am wishing you and your loved ones much health and joy!

If you have any comments, suggestions, or feedback, please e-mail me: President23@districts.rtoero.ca

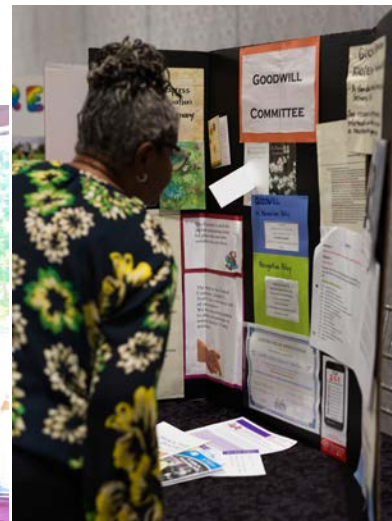


MEMORIES!

by Mildred Frank, Social Convener

Greetings from the Social Committee!

And we do have many pleasant memories of great times together...Champagne Breakfasts, Holiday Season Luncheons, the AGM Luncheons. As Covid recedes, we will move forward with plans for more memory-making experiences.



Oops! Light at the End of Tunnel Was Omicron Racing Towards Us!

by Merv Mascarenhas, Editor

“Hope springs eternal in every human breast!”

– Alexander Pope

Spring is in the Air! Let’s cast out Despair and focus on **HOPE**.

I am hoping that 2022 will be no worse than 2021, a year that exceeded my wildest dreams. We received the long-awaited COVID vaccines and the booster!

This allowed my family to enjoy the Haliburtons for a week at a lake house with family we had not seen for over a year. We could finally hug, cuddle and kiss. And enjoy the fine weather in early July. Later that month, we flew to beautiful British Columbia to visit with family. (see article in *STONY Bridges*, edition 133). We flew to Virginia, VA, a few weeks later to visit our granddaughters aged 5 and 3, who we had not seen for 18 long months. We enjoyed a heartwarming family reunion by the sea in Lewes, DE, the First Town in the First State.

Christmas was a lot better because we could get together indoors in groups of 10 (then five) compared to the previous year. And so was New Year’s Eve! HOPE is finding joy in little things, always focusing on the half-full glass—playing the hand you are dealt with and forgetting the stroke you experienced the previous year.

2022 started for me on a high note. On Christmas Eve, my uncle Willie was rushed to hospital in Faversham, Kent, with arrhythmia and was hospitalized for a week while a pace-maker was installed. He was discharged on New Year’s Eve and celebrated his 103rd birthday two weeks later at home with his wife, children, grandchildren, family and well-wishers and feted across 14 time zones through the power of Zoom. The best part is that he does not look a day over 70!

In person, RTOERO meetings will likely elude us until the Fall, but that will not get in the way of our virtual gatherings. e-Devices, Needlework and Crafts, Book Club, Have-a-Java, sessions, and our Champagne Breakfast in September. Our Community Grant Project is on a tear with three virtual presentations conducted by Toronto Wildlife – January, February and April. These sessions will be recorded and available for playback. Ten virtual sessions are also being planned for North York schools.

In addition to the rich virtual programming being provided to you through our District, RTOERO Office and our Foundation provide additional webinars to assist you and stimulate your mind. An external source that I like is OSSCO (Ontario Society of Senior Citizen Organizations) – I am currently enrolled in an 8-week general interest course that is provided FREE to Ontarians 55+. Education provided includes Computer Training.

In this new world of virtual connectedness, it is vitally important that each one of us has a peppy computer, smartphone, and broadband Internet connectivity to participate. Our e-Devices group led by Vern Paige is an excellent support group for all, irrespective of whether we are technology newbies or pros. OSSCO has similar offerings. There is



no excuse to defer that technology purchase – support is plentiful. This is especially important in the **Time of COVID** as technology brings the world to our doorstep.

I enjoy our COVID editions of *STONY Bridges* – the travelogues, poems, and human-interest stories make each one

a keeper. Being able to relive past trips through the eyes of a fellow traveller rekindles our memories and doubles the pleasure. Same for the Book Club that heightens our reading experience.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *STONY Bridges*. My thanks to Assistant Editor Maureen Capotosto, her partner in crime Karen Quinn, and Gerard MacNeil, who manages the logistics of getting printed copies promptly to your mailboxes. Please ensure that your contact information at RTOERO is always up to date – without it, you will become a castaway. To avoid this dreadful fate, all it takes is an email to membership@rtoero.ca or a phone call to 1-800-361-9888.

Lessons learned in 2021 – climate change, residential schools, Truth and Reconciliation, our frontline workers, LTCs, and caring for each other are top priorities.

We look forward to your feedback through our website’s Contact Us (<https://district23.rto-ero.org/district-contact-us>) page.

Remember: HOPE is the PASSWORD!



Benefits Report

by Gwen Scriven, Benefits Convener

Plan Updates

Everyone will have received their copy of **Communiqué RTOERO 2022** (both by mail and email) which contains the Annual Update of your Health Benefits. All changes took effect on January 1, 2022. Your Insurance Plan Booklet and the Annual Communiqué are your best resources for understanding your coverage. You can find both online at:

rtoero.ca/resources/insurance-plan-updates

There is much helpful information in the Communiqué booklet, so it is worth taking a few minutes to go through.

A summary of what is new is contained on Page 4 of the Communiqué. Here are some highlights that may be of interest:

- no premium changes for 2022.
- Occupational Therapy coverage is now included.
- several changes to the Dental Plan (see pages 4, 6 -7). Most notably, **'scaling'** has been moved to Basic and Preventative and will be covered at 85%. Since the 'scaling' no longer comes out of Minor Restorative, the full amount is still available for other work. Some additional implant preparation costs are now included as well.
- changes with regards to travel (page 8 - 9) and plan eligibility (page 4)
- **Best Doctors** is now called **Teladoc** (page 10) and provides the same services as previously.
- a new online pharmacy service called **Express Scripts Canada Pharmacy** (page 11) is being provided to our members. Express Scripts Canada Pharmacy provides our members with the ability to purchase maintenance medications using an online pharmacy. Benefits include home delivery, lower dispensing fees and, in some cases, lower-cost drugs. This service is meant to provide an option to members; you can choose to stay with your local pharmacy or switch to Express Scripts. You may receive informational emails from RTOERO regarding this service. You can also reach out to Express Scripts online or by calling [1-855 550-MEDS \(6337\)](tel:1-855-550-MEDS).

Annual D/UHR Workshop

The Annual D/UHR Workshop for District Health Reps was held on October 4, 2021. Sessions included Keynote Speaker, Dr. Greg Wells, who is a Health and Performance Expert, a Canadian Deprescribing Network presentation en-

titled *Medication, Memory and Brain Health* and a Teledoc Health presentation.

An updated District Health Rep Manual was released outlining my role and responsibilities to serve you better.

A question and answer period followed. I have included two questions of interest.

What happens to excess HEALTH premium reserves?

Reserves are maintained for the financial stability of the insurance plans due to uncertainties that could affect the plans, such as changes in provincial coverage, inflation, and pandemics. They can also be used to cover deficits, fund other reserves to the required levels, mitigate premium increases and enhance the insurance plans without a corresponding premium increase.

Will our plan cover medical cannabis?

Health Canada does not recognize medical cannabis as an approved drug with Drug Identification Number (DIN). As such, medical cannabis does not meet the definition of an eligible drug under RTOERO's Prescription Drug benefit. It is not subject to the standard prescription process under the law, and no dosing model has yet been established. RTOERO will continue to monitor the status of medical cannabis in Canada as it evolves.

Need Help Claiming your Medical Expenses?

If you require assistance registering for the My Insurance or navigating the claims portal, you can contact Johnson by email at digitalsupport@johnson.ca or by telephone at [1-833-749-1324](tel:1-833-749-1324).

Below are links to registration instructions as well as an instructional video:

English: <https://pages.johnson.ca/myinsurance>

French: <https://pages.johnson.ca/monassurance>

Once you have registered, the videos below contain instructions on how to submit your claims on the new claims' portal:

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1V4zo23ioY>
French: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCxpC6GfOHk>

Monitoring Your Medications

Are you taking too many medications? Do your medications affect your memory, increase your risk of falls, or interfere with your sleep? The Canadian Deprescribing Network is dedicated to raising awareness of medication safety, deprescribing and safer alternatives to risky medications. Its website provides resources and information:

<https://www.deprescribingnetwork.ca/>

Practicing Gratitude - Good for Your Mental Health

Being grateful is something that may sound simple and easy to do. But what is gratitude, exactly? We talk to psychologist Dr. Lynne Kostiuk from Aspirations Inc. to learn more about how to be grateful.

Dr. Kostiuk says that being grateful or thankful is more than just a thought or an idea. *"It's something that is a felt experience,"* she explains. *"It is when we are aligned with our heart and a sense of goodness."* Gratitude is the idea of feeling grateful or thankful for things or people in your life. *"There is a multitude of things that we could be giving thanks for and be grateful for every day. We can also be grateful and thankful for things we have experienced, endured and learned,"* Dr. Kostiuk says.

Gratitude is something that can be practiced — a skill that we can strengthen. Dr. Kostiuk says that there are many things that people can do to *"tune into"* a sense of gratitude. Some of her clients use a gratitude journal. In it, they write something they're grateful for in the beginning and at the end of every day. Gratitude journals are a daily reminder to be aware of things for which to be grateful. *"It can be super helpful for looking at the world through the lens of gratitude,"* Dr. Kostiuk explains.

Meditation can also be a helpful tool for learning how to be grateful. Gratitude meditations encourage us to reflect on the things that we're grateful for in our lives. Another method that Dr. Kostiuk suggests is posting photos or notes around the house of things we're grateful for. If work is stressful, you could leave notes and photos on your desk or computer backdrop.

When you're going through a rough patch, it's better to acknowledge those feelings. Moving on from them to focus

on gratitude without any exploration of your feelings could hinder your progress. Gratitude can be more difficult to access when there are multiple stressors or difficulties in your life. Instead, Dr. Kostiuk says it's better to recognize the feelings connected to those difficulties before focusing on those areas of strength to be grateful for.

Both big and small things can be a source of gratitude. One example is practicing gratitude for each morning by thinking, *"Thank you for this day that I have"*. Big, significant things can be a source of gratitude too. For example, a house or a meaningful project you've built. Or a person you've helped bring to life. Dr. Kostiuk also says that people often take nature for granted. Expressing gratitude could mean being thankful for the birds and the trees around you.



Gratitude journals and sharing feelings with others are good ways to be grateful. But you can still benefit from being grateful if you keep those feelings to yourself. *"Your gratitude is a self-experience,"* Dr. Kostiuk explains. *"Whether someone's there or not there, you can still feel that way about them. You can still create a thankfulness for them being in your life. You don't neces-*

sarily have to speak it."

Source: Lumino Health, October 2021

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOgratitude>

Small Ways to Change Your Eating Habits

Healthy eating may mean different things to different people. It may seem daunting to think about changing your eating habits from diets to detoxes. But the reality is, sometimes you don't need to make a radical lifestyle change to eat more healthily.

We talked to Natalia Bragagnolo, a Holistic Nutritionist, and the community manager at HEAL. HEAL offers 1:1 nutrition coaching and a weekly meal planning program to find a solution that fits your lifestyle.

When it comes to healthy eating, you can do many small things that will make a difference. Here are 12 tips Bragagnolo shared during our conversation:

1. **Always have healthy meals and snacks on hand** - With many people working from home these days, frequent mindless snacking has become more common. Try to have some healthy options on hand before the week begins. This way, you'll have a healthy choice to reach for the next time you crave a snack.

2. **Make more home-cooked meals** - Canada's Food Guide recommends cooking your meals more often. This way, you can precisely control what is going into your food. Don't despair if cooking isn't your thing; even just trying one or two homemade meals a week can be a great start.
3. **Fill half your plate with veggies**- Next time you're preparing a meal, visualize how it will look on the plate. It can be helpful to make sure half of that plate includes vegetables. "This will ensure you get more fibre," Bragagnolo notes. "Fiber helps balance blood sugar, which is important for reducing cravings and keeping you fuller longer. And it's a way to get more nutrients." "It's easier to healthy choices when you think 'I'm adding some delicious veggies' instead of 'I'm cutting out this and that,'" she explains.



4. **Make protein a part of all your meals** - Have a source of protein at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. "Protein is really important for balancing blood sugar and feeling satiated after a meal," she says. "It also helps curb snacking throughout the day." If you have a lot of sugar cravings, simply adding in more protein throughout the day can make a big difference.
5. **Buy less processed and packaged foods**- This means less stuff in boxes, more stuff from the produce section during your next grocery shop. "When you buy more whole foods, you'll naturally eat healthier," Bragagnolo explains.
6. **Cut back on added sugar** - Bragagnolo recommends reading food labels and choosing the unsweetened version of things. This includes items like yogurt, nut milks, and instant oatmeal packs. Purchasing the unsweetened version of things, then using your sweetener if you choose is healthier.
7. **Try healthy swaps**- Bragagnolo has a few recommended substitutes you can try to make your favourite meals and snacks a little more nutrient-dense: Try Pasta Zucchini noodles, or spaghetti squash Sandwich bread, Lettuce wraps, Rice Cauliflower mushrooms Hamburger buns, Portobello mushrooms, Milk chocolate or Dark chocolate (70% or higher). Love chocolate? There's good news. Dark chocolate is a good source of magnesium. Choose 70% or higher. If it's too bitter at first, you can start with 50%. Then work your way up. Bragagnolo says that it's also much easier to

eat the whole bar in one sitting with regular chocolate. But with dark chocolate, most of my clients find they only need a couple of squares to feel satisfied.

8. **Drink more water** - The amount of water you should consume varies from person to person. Bragagnolo recommends setting your personal goal first, such as 2 litres. Then, get a cup or water bottle that size or at least much larger than a regular cup, so you don't have to refill it as often. Make sure you drink that amount of water during the day. Staying hydrated will make a big difference in your energy and prevent you from developing a false sense of hunger.
9. **Buy what's in season** - Buying in season will help you buy things higher in nutrients and save you money. Buying produce that isn't in season means it's coming from further away. Bragagnolo explains that food travelling a long distance will lose nutrients in the process.
10. **Don't be afraid of frozen produce** - Maybe it's broccoli for a stir fry or berries to throw into a smoothie. Having frozen produce can be helpful for those days when you run out of fresh veggies at home and don't want to make a trip to the store. This may be especially useful during the winter months. Bragagnolo says that frozen produce can be just as healthy if not healthier than regular produce. "It's flash-frozen from when it's been picked fresh, so many of the nutrients are preserved," she says.
11. **Find healthy versions of your favourite comfort food** - There's nothing quite like comfort food, especially in the winter. Many of our favourite comfort foods may not be the healthiest. But Bragagnolo emphasizes that we don't have to give them up completely to eat well. Maybe instead of an entire pizza, have two slices and a salad on the side. Little things like that will change how you approach comfort food. Eventually, you won't even have to think about it.
12. **Remember that small changes still count** - Bragagnolo says you don't have to do all the above tips right away to start eating better. Start with a couple and build from there. "When change is too drastic, it's harder to stick to," she says. "Don't worry about trying to do all of the above things at once. Pick 2 or 3 things from the list that are most important to you and focus on those." Source: Lumino Health, October 2021

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOeating>

Eating Too Much Salt? Ways to Cut Back

Did you know that "salt" and "sodium" are not the same, even though they're often used interchangeably? Salt is where most of your sodium comes from. Sodium, a mineral, is one of the elements found in salt.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is working to ensure people have greater access to healthier foods and easy-to-understand nutrition information to make healthier choices. One way to do that is to make it easier for you and your family to eat less sodium.

Because about 70% of the sodium you eat comes from processed (packaged) foods and restaurant foods, the FDA works closely with the industry, asking manufacturers to gradually lower sodium across a wide range of foods. This will result in more food choices with less sodium.

You and your family can also take steps to ease into reducing the amount of salt—and therefore, sodium—you eat. The recommended limit for sodium is 2,300 milligrams per day for people 14 years and older. But people in the U.S. consume 3,400 mg per day on average!

Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, a leading cause of heart disease and stroke. Ninety percent of American adults are eating more sodium than is recommended. At the same time, more than 4 in 10 Americans have high blood pressure. Moreover, children and adolescents are also overeating sodium. Evidence shows that children who eat foods higher in sodium can carry those eating habits into adulthood.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Sodium:

1. **Try to cut back on foods high in sodium**, such as deli meat sandwiches, pizza, burritos, and tacos. Remember, it's vital to cut back both when eating at home and eating out in restaurants. If you're ordering a standard menu item at a chain restaurant, ask to see the written nutrition information and choose a lower sodium option.
2. **Compare products**. Before you buy, check the Nutrition Facts label to compare the sodium content of packaged products (there's a fair amount of variety among similar foods). For example, data collected by the FDA shows that bread can vary from 300 mg to 700 mg per 100 grams of bread.
3. **Aim to stay under the Daily Value (DV) for sodium**. The DV for sodium is the recommended daily limit—your goal is not to exceed that amount. As a general guide: 5% DV or less of sodium per serving is considered low, and 20% DV or more sodium per serving is high.
4. **Expand your spice horizons**. Try no-salt seasoning blends and herbs and spices instead of salt to add flavour to your food.

For additional information, please visit **Sodium in Your Diet | FDA**. <https://tinyurl.com/RTOsodium>

Source: Drugs.com, October 2021

Eating Too Much Salt? Ways to Cut Back...Gradually

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOsalt>



All of a Glorious Hope

High above the turbulent sea winds
The many beautiful stars flicker and glow
Down here, far below I will sing my song:
All the grace filled beauty of our world
To be followed, to be revealed...

Oh! great and majestic planet...
Oh! Wild nature glorious: the fast-flowing streams,
The cold arctic airs...
Days of radiant sunlight, days of a wild darkness...
A sacred endurance, the bittersweet advance along windswept skies
A barrier moon, high, glowing, deep skies above...

In the deep hidden outer regions will be found dying universes
will be found enduring new beginnings: new born planets and stars...
Holy universes mystery bound, and far worlds yet unknown...
A simple humanity, frail and unknowing...
Beginnings beyond reason, the long search without end...

We live in the glory, in the holy magnificence of a living planet,
All the joy, all the pain called forth in an existential being...
We live in worlds unknown
We follow in lives of haunted meaning:
Lives of a holy endurance, lives of a precious hope...
The strange voyage to carry us:

A lifetime's search beyond the darkness, the haunted darkness beyond the light...
We, will live lives of unknowing: neither knowledge of beginning, nor of end
Yet we will live lives of a most glorious hope,
The wondrous mystery to lead us to the heart's precious freedom...
The holy mystery: all and everything;
A lifetime's most sacred meaning, a life's brief, most wondrous glory...

by Bev Gorbet, Member



COVID disrupts website migration!

by Merv Mascarenhas, Webmaster

“The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men / Gang aft agley.”

– Robert Burns

Coming Soon - New Website!

Thanks to COVID-19 priorities at RTOERO Office, the much-anticipated migration from our dated DRUPAL 7 web platform to the new WordPress architecture is still a work in progress. Unlike GODOT, it will arrive!

If you wish a glimpse of our future website, please visit the District 4 Sudbury, Manitoulin website at:
<https://district4.rtoero.ca/>

What will this mean for you?

- A shiny new District website with lots of glitz, glamour and the new RTOERO branding with its bold, vibrant colours that we have become familiar with at the parent RTOERO website and publications for over a year.
- A new URL for the website, but the existing URL should automatically redirect us to the new website – the new URL will likely look like <https://district23.rtoero.ca>.
- A website that is accessible, i.e., compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

Beyond this, the promise is that the new website will give you a better user experience. We might even be able to allow you to register for in-person events and pay for them through the website without having to rummage around the house for your lost cheque book (*does anyone still use cheques?*) and a postage stamp.

Like moving into a new home, this will give us an opportunity to declutter, weed out stuff that we no longer need and experience the rebirth of our District website. Since RTOERO Office has indicated that existing content will not be automatically migrated, it will be up to us to decide what will be moved to the new website and what will be left behind.

If there is anything in particular that you wish to see on the new website, please provide us your feedback through the Contact Us (<https://district23.rto-ero.org/district-contact-us>) webpage.

Our goal for the new District website will continue to be a one-stop **GoTo** place for all information related to RTOERO District 23 North York. We will not duplicate information available on the parent RTOERO website but will make navigation a seamless experience for you.

Since Vern Paige’s e-Devices group has been so successful, we hope to post his slide decks, meeting notes, resources and video recordings on the new website so that those who miss a meeting can still access them, and those who are memory challenged like me can easily retrieve tidbits that elude us.

Toronto District webmasters are collaborating to ensure continuity across the City of Toronto. We shall keep you informed on our progress through our website, Twitter, Facebook, and e-Newsletter.

Urban Wildlife Grant Project

This exciting project is captured on a new webpage.

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOWildlife>

It contains links and details of each of the three Zoom presentations including video recordings of the two that have been completed just in case you missed them or wish to share them with family and friends. Also see “**Urban Wildlife Community Grant**” on page 20 of STONY Bridges.

After watching the presentations, I have made peace with the racoons under our deck, and the cayotes and fox roaming our streets. Remember Merv, it is we who have been encroaching on their habitat.

Carpe Diem!

P.S. If you have not done so yet, we encourage you to use the Refer a friend page (<https://tinyurl.com/RTOERO23refer>) on the RTOERO website to invite colleagues in the education sector to join RTOERO for FREE until they retire.

This is the best way to grow our membership and do your friends a favour.

Friends don’t let friends
prepare for retirement alone!



Tuscan Daughter by Lisa Rochon 2021

as reviewed by Gail M. Murray, Member

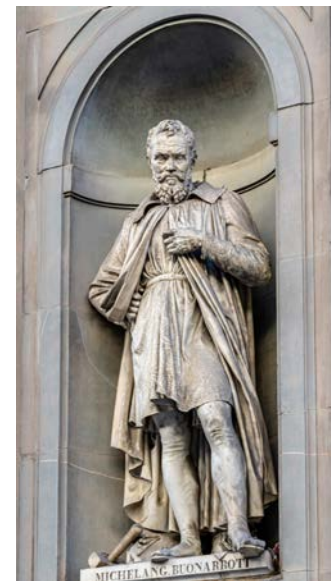
Author Lisa Rochon has set her debut novel during five epic years in Renaissance Florence (1500-1509). It opens



David - Shutterstock

with the return of two great artists and native sons: Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo di Buonarroti. Leonardo was appointed to paint *The Battle of Anghiari* and an altar piece for Santissima Annunziata. In contrast, the monied Wool Guild has commissioned twenty-seven-year-old Michelangelo to sculpt the biblical hero *David* from a massive piece of Carrara marble.

Leonardo, tall, noble, and nearing fifty with white hair and silver-white beard, is troubled by losing his youth, reputation, and status in Florence. Michelangelo is gaining a reputation because of *La Pietà* in Rome. Raphael exclaims, "*Your sculpture of the young mother holding her dead son on her knees. My God, love and forgiveness are alive in that work.*" (p124)



Michelangelo Buonarroti - Shutterstock

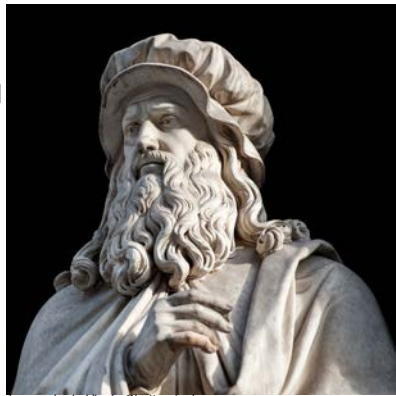
The two great artists are **connected** through the fictional protagonist, Beatrice, a thirteen-year-old peasant girl, an aspiring artist, given to charcoal drawings of birds on city buildings. A victim of the simmering feud between Florence and Pisa, abandoned by her traumatized mother after marauding Pisans' murder of her father, Beatrice makes the long journey barefoot from her hill town Settignano to sell olive oil in the dirt lanes behind the Duomo to the city's artists.

Beatrice accompanies her neighbour and healer, Agnello, to attend the ailing Lisa Gherardini del Giocondo, whose portrait her silk merchant husband has arranged for da Vinci to paint. We know this will become his most celebrated work, *Mona Lisa*.



Mona Lisa - Shutterstock

Through Beatrice, the reader is given insight into these celebrated artists, their goals, rivalry, thought processes and insecurities. I was taken with the tender rendering of scenes between da Vinci and Lisa as he strives to know this complex, gracious woman



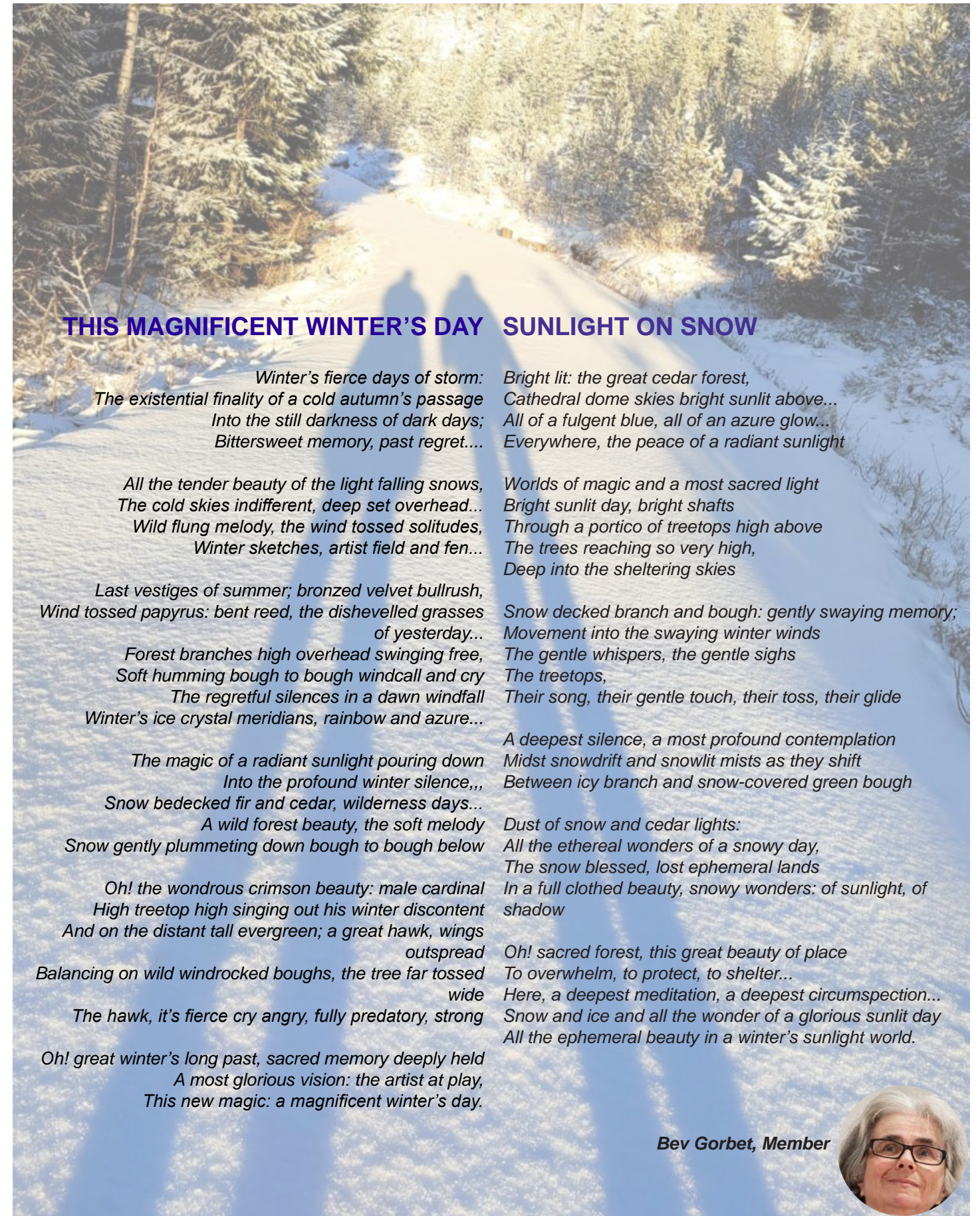
Leonardo da Vinci - Shutterstock

grieving the loss of her baby daughter, observing her layered emotions, the wild spirit lurking deep within. "She was not pretty.... still, there was something about this Lisa Gherardini. Something about the lilt in her chin, the pride in her shoulders. She personified greatness that did not end with the city but began with the earth." (p199) He hopes to create something to outlast himself, little knowing this enigmatic portrait will be his immortality.

Previously a non-fiction writer of *Up North: Where Canada's Architecture Meets the Land* and a *Globe and Mail* architecture critic and columnist from 2000-2013, Rochon's leap to historical fiction is a triumph. Meticulously researched, Rochon's captivating novel is rich in detail; we sense what it is to live in 16th C Florence. We feel we know her well-developed characters. She has created a vivid portrait of time and place, revealing a human side to these master artists. This is an engaging novel for lovers of art, history, and all things Renaissance.



Author Lisa Rochon, by Gail M. Murray



THIS MAGNIFICENT WINTER'S DAY SUNLIGHT ON SNOW

*Winter's fierce days of storm:
The existential finality of a cold autumn's passage
Into the still darkness of dark days;
Bittersweet memory, past regret....*

*Bright lit: the great cedar forest,
Cathedral dome skies bright sunlit above...
All of a fulgent blue, all of an azure glow...
Everywhere, the peace of a radiant sunlight*

*All the tender beauty of the light falling snows,
The cold skies indifferent, deep set overhead...
Wild flung melody, the wind tossed solitudes,
Winter sketches, artist field and fen...*

*Worlds of magic and a most sacred light
Bright sunlit day, bright shafts
Through a portico of treetops high above
The trees reaching so very high,
Deep into the sheltering skies*

*Last vestiges of summer; bronzed velvet bullrush,
Wind tossed papyrus: bent reed, the dishevelled grasses
of yesterday...*

*Snow decked branch and bough: gently swaying memory;
Movement into the swaying winter winds
The gentle whispers, the gentle sighs
The treetops,
Their song, their gentle touch, their toss, their glide*

*Forest branches high overhead swinging free,
Soft humming bough to bough windcall and cry
The regretful silences in a dawn windfall
Winter's ice crystal meridians, rainbow and azure...*

*A deepest silence, a most profound contemplation
Midst snowdrift and snowlit mists as they shift
Between icy branch and snow-covered green bough*

*The magic of a radiant sunlight pouring down
Into the profound winter silence,,,
Snow bedecked fir and cedar, wilderness days...
A wild forest beauty, the soft melody
Snow gently plummeting down bough to bough below*

*Dust of snow and cedar lights:
All the ethereal wonders of a snowy day,
The snow blessed, lost ephemeral lands
In a full clothed beauty, snowy wonders: of sunlight, of shadow*

*Oh! the wondrous crimson beauty: male cardinal
High treetop high singing out his winter discontent
And on the distant tall evergreen; a great hawk, wings
outspread
Balancing on wild windrocked boughs, the tree far tossed
wide*

The hawk, it's fierce cry angry, fully predatory, strong

*Oh! great winter's long past, sacred memory deeply held
A most glorious vision: the artist at play,
This new magic: a magnificent winter's day.*

*Oh! sacred forest, this great beauty of place
To overwhelm, to protect, to shelter...
Here, a deepest meditation, a deepest circumsppection...
Snow and ice and all the wonder of a glorious sunlit day
All the ephemeral beauty in a winter's sunlight world.*

Bev Gorbet, Member



Telemark, Norway - Njall and Siri



Dr. Suzuki: Creating a lasting legacy through environmental stewardship

by Merv Mascarenhas, Member

“The future doesn’t exist. The only thing that exists is now and our memory of what happened in the past. But because we invented the idea of a future, we’re the only animal that realized we can affect the future by what we do today.”

– David Suzuki

RTOERO advocates on issues that affect Canadians. Environmental Stewardship promotes responsible use of resources, conservation, protecting our air, land, and water — improving in all areas is critical to a sustainable future. As part of the Vibrant Voices 2022 program, we were fortunate to have Dr. David Suzuki, an award-winning scientist, environmentalist, author, and broadcaster speak to us on January 25, 2022. In his dynamic address, he shared a compelling look at the state of the environment and offered insights to help Humanity live well while protecting our environment. A record number of 1300+ viewers from Canada, the U.S. and Europe were mesmerized – sometimes terrified, hopeful at other moments.



Dr. Suzuki began by explaining that in Japan, the word “sensei” means teacher but carries so much meaning - a sense of honour and respect for a noble profession. He was honoured to speak to RTOERO members, real sensei. The world is in dire need of education, but the right kind. As retirees, we no longer must worry about a job, promotions, or career-limiting moves – if we offend people, so be it. From his perspective if we have grandchildren, we have no choice but to stand up and tell the truth.

Dr. Suzuki’s Key Messages:

1. Our grandchildren, if born, may not be able to **VOTE** yet. We **MUST VOTE** for them and their future!
2. Climate change and greenhouse gasses are not a new fad that will go out of fashion if we wait it out. They were first discovered 200 years ago! The threat to life as we know it is growing **EXPONENTIALLY!**
3. **1960s:** Rather than come up with alternative energy sources, the fossil fuel industry led by Exxon hired P.R. experts from the tobacco industry and spent billions of dollars in a campaign of denigration of scientists and denial to keep the profits rolling in.

4. **1988:** Lucien Bouchard was appointed Environment Minister by Mulroney. When asked by Suzuki what was the most serious issue we faced, he immediately replied, **“Global Warming – it threatens the survival of our species. We have to act now.”**

5. **1988:** The Press release at the first global meeting on climate change held that year in Toronto said, **“Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to a global nuclear war.”**

It called for an immediate national and international plan to confront the threat, including a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% below 1988 levels in 15 years. Study after study showed that the targets could

be achieved, save thousands of lives, and result in net savings of tens of billions of dollars. Politics prevented us from trying.

6. **In 1990,** Suzuki started the David Suzuki Foundation to find solutions. Using the best scientific information available, it tried to identify the underlying root causes of our destructiveness to find concrete ways to change our path.
7. **2011:** Canada pulled out of Kyoto, the only nation to withdraw. Harper declared that reducing emissions was **“crazy economics,”** thereby saying the economy is more important than the atmosphere that gives us air to breathe and the weather, climate, and seasons.
8. **2015:** Canada signed the Paris Agreement to keep the temperature rising below 1.5 to 2 degrees compared to preindustrial levels by 2100. We should aim for 1.5 degrees. Science says he was right. Simple physics show us how much more carbon we can add to the atmosphere before we reach 1.5 degrees – the Carbon Budget. Trudeau then bought a pipeline saying we need to triple the output of the tar sands



to get the taxes to pay to reduce emissions. It is like saying: **“Cigarette sales are an important part of our economy. We know smoking causes cancer, so we will increase the sales of cigarettes for more tax money, not to stop people from smoking but to treat lung cancer.”**

9. **2018:** U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) declared that a temperature rise of more than 1.5 degrees this century will lead to climate chaos and must be avoided by reducing emissions by 45% by 2030 and 100% by 2050. Our Environment Minister came back from Madrid and announced, **“Canada is Committed to Net Zero by 2050.”**

Sounds great, but how many elections will there be between now and 2050? At least seven – probably more. Every new government acts as though everything the previous government did was crap, so forget about that. How many M.P.’s today will still be in power in 2050? None! Who is accountable when we won’t meet the target? No One! **“Net Zero by 2050”** is no commitment! It is only a political promise - Canada has never even tried to fulfill a single political promise to reduce emissions.

10. **2021:** U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres described the report from the IPCC as a **“CODE RED for humanity.”** Rapid action to cut greenhouse gas emissions could limit some impacts, but others are now locked in. The deadly heat waves, massive hurricanes and other weather extremes that are already happening will only become more severe.
11. **What if?** World War II: With 11 million citizens, Canada sent a million soldiers to fight the war. We

went from producing 40 airplanes a year to dozens of warplanes every week and became the 4th largest airplane manufacturer in the world. Many of the 130,000 workers in the aviation industry were women. This response is what we are capable of when faced with an emergency.

Suzuki’s Calls to Action

- We are all Animals! As animals, **clean air, clean water, food, soil,** and **sunlight** are our most fundamental needs. We must fight for them.
- Indigenous people have lived sustainably for thousands of years. We are all in the same canoe. We must learn how **our relationship with nature should guide and shape our plans.**
- We must **shut down the fossil fuel industry.**
- Imagine every child saying **“Mum, Dad and Grandparents, you’ve got to be warriors on my behalf. You’ve got to go and tell people running for office that my future is important to me and you’re going to VOTE for people who will act on that.”**
- Remember that we are the only animal that can affect the future by what we do today.**

RTOERO has made available a video recording of Dr. Suzuki’s presentation until March 25, 2022. It is protected with a password: **nature**

<https://vimeo.com/670227105>

It is well worth watching this spellbinding talk, even if you did participate in the live presentation.



Urban Wildlife Community Grant

by Cheryl Paige, Convener



This year, the focus of our District 23 Community Grant is to support urban wildlife survival by promoting understanding and education of their needs and challenges. This grant enabled us to fund **TWC (Toronto Wildlife Centre)** presentations for grades 4 to 7 students in several North York schools. It has also helped us arrange for the Toronto Wildlife Staff to present sessions for our own RTO members.

Our **first** session, **“Birds and Cities: Reducing Threats and Saving Birds Lives!”** took place on January 25, 2022. We learned about the top dangers facing songbirds, waterbirds, and birds of prey, as well as the remarkable work TWC is doing to help birds get back to the wild. We also learned the significant impact small individual actions could have on our feathered neighbours. This session was recorded and is accessible on our website:

<https://tinyurl.com/RTObirds>



Can you identify this songbird?
(Answer at the end of article)

Our **second** session, **“Meet Your Wild Neighbours! Common, Feared, Weird and Revered!”** took place on February 23, 2022, and focused on the challenges of co-existing with some of our more interesting wildlife neighbours. This session was also recorded and is accessible on our website:

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOwild>

The **third** session, **“Wild Babies! Raising Orphaned Animals at TWC & Keeping Families together in the Wild”** will deal with how we can support wildlife babies:

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

I hope you will attend this virtual session.

To **REGISTER** for it, please go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/RTObiodiversity>

Bird Watching

With Covid-19 restrictions, we can't gather; however, our feathered neighbours still do! Bird watching in your yard or from your balcony or patio is a great way to learn about the birds. There are many species commonly seen in winter. You can get to know them better by using Smartphone apps like the **Merlin Bird ID App** from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology or the **birdNET app** that identifies birds by their song.



Lorysa Cornish Purple Finch - by Ann Brokelman

Winter birds are at risk of hitting windows, being attacked by free-roaming cats, or becoming injured in other ways. Therefore, the sooner they receive medical treatment, the better their chance of recovering. If you notice a bird that appears sick or injured during your observations, try to get them contained in a cardboard box and contact TWC right away (**TWC hotline is 416 631-0662**).

Stories from Toronto Wildlife Centre

by TWC Staff



The Mute Swan

On January 12, while out walking the shoreline of Frenchman's Bay, Sara spotted an elegant mute swan with a long white neck, bright orange bill and black skin around the face. She noticed a fishing line tangled around his neck and head when she looked closer. She

called the TWC Rescue Team, who helped capture the bird. The swan was distracted in his struggle to pull the fishing line away from his neck, so the Team Leader was able to thrust a net over him swiftly.

Just a few days later, the TWC Rescue Team was called back to Frenchman's Bay, where another mute swan had injuries to his feet. Indeed, a fishhook was discovered embedded in the poor bird's right foot. There were also deep lacerations in his left foot that were likely caused by the same lure.

Every year, dozens of wild animals are admitted to TWC because of waste, especially from fishing. If you or someone you know chooses to fish, always make sure the fishing line is cut into small pieces and disposed of properly. Also, please remove any lines or hooks you see caught in bushes or on rocks, as leaving them there could be life-threatening for an animal in the future.

Year-Round Resident - American Robin

You've likely seen an American robin tugging an earthworm out of the ground during the warmer months,



This American robin suffered head and eye trauma after colliding with a glass door

but you can see these iconic spring birds during the winter too? These large songbirds are year-round

residents in Southern Ontario. However, when the temperatures drop, they spend less time on the ground, and more time in the trees, so you're less likely to see them!

On a chilly January 15, this American robin stood near a glass door, unaware of his surroundings and looking very stunned. Thankfully, he was quickly brought to TWC, where he was treated for severe head trauma and injuries to both of his eyes. After nearly two weeks of expert care, the patient was moved to the indoor aviary to allow him to strengthen his flight before returning to the wild.



The Northern Saw-whet Owl

Kate found this Northern saw-whet owl sitting on their front porch one Saturday morning. The young owl flapped his wings but could not get off the ground. Kate began to worry he had been injured after hitting a window, so she called the Wildlife Hotline (416 631-0662) and

brought him in for emergency care.

The Registered Veterinary Technician noticed the patient's right-wing drooped lower than his left, and he could not fully extend it. X-rays were taken and revealed a fracture in his right shoulder. The patient was given medicine to ease his pain, and his wing was expertly wrapped to stabilize the injury. After a month of treatment and plenty of time to



strengthen his flight muscles, the recovered owl was ready to return home.

Wildlife photographer Ann Brokelman watched as the patient took off and perched on a nearby tree branch on a peaceful afternoon. The tiny owl looked back with his bright yellow eyes, ready to return to his life in the wild.

Toronto Wildlife Centre Information

Toronto Wildlife Centre is the only veterinary hospital and rehabilitation facility for sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals in the GTA. TWC is entirely funded by donations and receives no government funding. It is located at a temporary site at unit 4 – 60 Carl Hall Rd. Toronto

In 2021 it helped over 6500 patients. patients – a record-breaking number of admissions

Over 320 wonderful volunteers support it.

Toronto Wildlife Centre is the busiest wildlife centre in Canada and a leader in wildlife rehabilitation.

If you wish to donate items, please check out their list: <https://www.torontowildlifecentre.com/donate/wish-list/>.

Sorry, they do not offer pick-up services.

TWC hotline is [416 631-0662](tel:4166310662)

A special Thank You to Ann Brokelman for allowing us to use her amazing photographs for our Wildlife initiative.

Answer: Can you identify this songbird? a Pine Grosbeak Female

Better than a Session

Desolation

I knock at your door.

You make two cups of tea.

Friendship personified.

Easy quiet as we sip our tea.

Comfort in the company.

I talk.

You talk.

Sharing our hearts.

I cry.

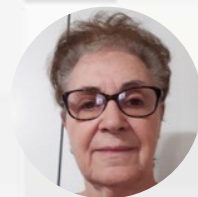
You cry.

Synergy...

It's not healed, but better.

Catharsis.

Sheila Winnick, Member



Bridge Report

by Alan Ward, Convener

“The play’s the thing ...” William Shakespeare’s Hamlet has lessons for bridge players. Too often, we concentrate on learning complex bidding systems to help us reach optimal contracts but fall down on the plays necessary to fulfil them. *“Alas, poor Yorick!”*

Try solving these hands before reading the accompanying description. In each case, South is a declarer in a 4S contract. East-West passed in the first two hands, and in Hand 3, West opened with a 3C bid, North and East passed before South again declared in 4S. The opening leads from West on the three hands are Queen of diamonds, King of clubs and Queen of clubs respectively.

First, South opens 1S, West passes, and North leaps to 4S. With 10 total trump, ten tricks are likely to come in. South can see 4 potential losers, one diamond and three hearts. A diamond loser is unavoidable, so the King of hearts must be protected by getting West off the lead. South covers with the diamond King, and East takes the trick with the Ace. East cannot profitably lead a heart. If East leads a club, South dare not finesse but must play the Ace to keep West off the lead. If East leads a diamond or a spade, South wins, and after drawing trump must, at first sight, choose between a finesse in hearts or clubs, either of which guarantees immediate defeat if it fails. A ruffing finesse offers more possibilities. After drawing trump and cashing the club Ace, a club honour is led through West. If West has the King and ducks the lead, a heart can be discarded from dummy. Should West cover, dummy will ruff the King of clubs, establishing two club tricks providing two hearts discards. If East has the King of clubs, a heart lead will concede a trick to dummy’s King, making the contract. East has the Ace of hearts supported by the ten in the full diagram, while West has the missing King of clubs. West had QJx in hearts and QJTxx in diamonds. Leading the heart Queen would have defeated the contract immediately. With no guidance from the bidding, which Queen would you have led?

In the second hand, South opens a preemptive 2S. When West passes, North leaps to 4S. Declarer can count four potential losers, three in diamonds and one in clubs. West leads the club King and declarer must take the first club trick to preserve a low club for a later throw-in. The declarer will make a diamond trick if the diamond King and Ace are in the same opponent’s hand. Had West led a diamond, the contract would have been cold. As it is, South must force one opponent to lead a diamond by drawing trump, cashing AK of hearts and ruffing dummy’s last heart before leading the losing club. Whichever opponent wins this trick must lead a diamond; leading a club would provide a club ruff and a diamond discard.

West’s 3C bid implies a seven-card suit. The opening lead of the club Queen fells East’s singleton King. South wins the first trick with the Ace. If South immediately draws trump, the South hand will have three club losers and a heart loser. Given West’s club length, East may have Jxxx of trump. South must use both of dummy’s trump to ruff losing clubs before drawing the opponents’ trump. Hence South leads a low club at trick two and ruffs with the King of trump, knowing that East is likely to hold the Jack, in which case dummy’s 9 would be over-ruffed. An alert East would lead back a trump immediately if possible, leaving South with two more club losers and a heart loser. South returns to hand with the diamond Ace and leads a third club, ruffing with the 9 of spades. If East can over-ruff, South now has only two more losers, a heart and a club. If West has the missing Jack of trumps, the declarer will probably make an overtrick since West is unlikely to have three trump. Timing is everything in this hand.

At the time of writing this article, it has been 22 months since our friendly RTO Bridge group met. Believe me when I say that you are all very much missed! If we are permitted to resume our meetings in September 2022, we hope to welcome our former members and new RTO members who have retired in the past two years. There are no sharks in the water!

North	North	North
S KQ765	S AJ972	S K9
H K94	H AK4	H QT98
D K932	D J83	D QJ7532
C 7	C A6	C 7
South	South	South
S AJT98	S KQT863	S AQT876
H 863	H 75	H A2
D 7	D Q94	D A
C AQJT	C 83	C A852



Hey Let's Go Travelling

by Gail M. Murray, Member

Virtual tours take viewers around the world without leaving home.

As a travel writer and intrepid traveller, I'm compelled to share my latest discovery—**Heygo**—an interactive virtual platform where people can access tours in real-time with experienced international tour guides at www.Heygo.com. Travel the world from the comfort of your home. All you need is a computer, tablet or cell phone and Wi-Fi. Best of all—it's **FREE!**

John and Liam, two brilliant young gentlemen who met at college in Cambridge, studying law and computer engineering respectively, co-founded Heygo at the start of the pandemic to keep exploring new places and stay connected. As they were interviewed by their followers in a park in London, England, their idealism shone through. Guides, unemployed worldwide due to lockdowns, signed on to share places they knew best from their personal and professional perspective. They continue today even as international travel gradually resumes.

How did I find this?

The invitation appeared in my inbox. As a volunteer tour guide at Toronto Botanical Garden, I'd received the regular e-newsletter announcing a virtual tour the week the site was promoting gardens. Fellow Tour Guide Abdullah Hamidi, Master Gardener and orchid grower, gave a wonderful Heygo Tour called **Ornamental Grasses Inspired by Piet Oudolf's New Wave Planting**, focusing on the graceful flowing ornamental grasses in our gardens.



Stephan van der Meer and Anne Frank Statue

I was curious, I checked out the Heygo site, and Amsterdam guide Stephan van der Meer's tour jumped out at me—**Keukenhof!** Tourists flood the famous gardens in the Netherlands in April to take in the reams of Tulips. Stephan's brilliant tour covered a section of the gardens dedicated to a fall standout—Dahlias. **Keukenhof Castle – Dance among the Dahlias** not only taught me about the colourful blooms, statues, and buildings, but I could capture these gorgeous flowers using the postcard feature. As they are in real-time, even when the guides repeat the tour, they are never the same twice, and we gardeners know gardens are in a constant state of change.

When sweet Lee from Amsterdam took us to the Poezenboot, a shelter for cats on a houseboat in the canal, she donated all her tips. Many of the over 100 animal lovers tipped gener-

ously, and the shelter got 207 euros that day which I think was exceptional. You can select the amount or type in your choice with the minimum being \$2.00, about the price of a cup of coffee - a bargain. I do admit I am addicted. In a month, I've spent \$60.00. It can add up but **oh so worth it!**

Using the chat feature, you can engage with the guide, comment, and ask questions. You feel part of it when they call you by name and answer your question. It's not ZOOMING, no one can see you, and so you can wear your PJs. I've messaged back and forth with some of the guides. You can join **Heygo Voyagers Facebook** page and post comments and postcard photos. You can also leave a review at the close of the tour. How can you access these amazing tours? Go to the Heygo site, www.Heygo.com and sign up for your free account. On the home page, click Explore and search under: Calendar, Categories, Location. Click on Categories to select by topic, e.g., Art and Architecture, Shopping and Markets, Museums and Exhibitions. Under Calendar, tours are listed in a line by date, time, title, name of the guide, for example, Friday 22 Oct/11 AM/Venice—Grand Canal from a Vaporetto/Andrea. Just click to book, and you get a notification in your inbox. You can also **'follow'** your favourite guides and visit their page (e.g. www.Heygo.com/florent) to learn more about their background and upcoming tours. If you try the tour for ten minutes and you're yawning, click 'leave.' Usually, tours run 45 minutes to an hour. If you're entranced, **be kind and leave a tip.**



Dahlia Days at Keukenhof

Tours are free but tip-supported, which is greatly appreciated by the guides who've designed the tours, checked out locations so they run to time, travelled by car or train/transit to reach the location, sometimes paid an entry fee (to see the sunset from the Eiffel Tower it was 17 euros to ride up in the elevator), battled the elements like light rain and night chill to give you a unique experience. The guide receives 60 percent and the administration 40 percent. Otherwise, the guide is not compensated by the company. You can tip in the currency of your country, and it's converted to the currency of the guide's country. Genius. Anywhere from 25 to 150 people join these tours. It's so easy using your credit card or PayPal.

When sweet Lee from Amsterdam took us to the Poezenboot, a shelter for cats on a houseboat in the canal, she donated all her tips. Many of the over 100 animal lovers tipped gener-



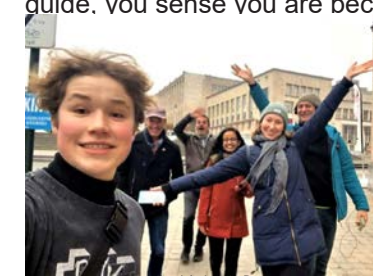
Cat Boat House and Tall Homes

ously, and the shelter got 207 euros that day which I think was exceptional. You can select the amount or type in your choice with the minimum being \$2.00, about the price of a cup of coffee - a bargain. I do admit I am addicted. In a month, I've spent \$60.00. It can add up but **oh so worth it!**

There is an endless variety from walking the cobblestone streets of **Montmartre** with Florent, to wandering ancient buildings and aqueducts of **Segovia** with Jose Ruiz, cruising down canals of Amsterdam by night while listening to **Starry Starry Night** with Lee and Mark, to **cooking ricotta and spinach pie** with Sara Verde, to seeing the tea rooms of **Harrowgate** with John Wright of Yorkshire, to climbing the trails of **Banff** with our own Patrick Twomey. After several tours with a guide, you sense you are becoming acquainted. I'm rather fond of charming Florent, who lived in Montmartre as a student and has mentioned his wife Dora and baby Gabriel, in addition to giving us lots of accurate historical information.



Charming Florent



Finn, Patrick, Lee in Brussels

I enjoy seeing what state the world is in—masks or no masks; quiet or busy and hearing the guides speak English with various accents adding flavour.



Bellagio, Italy

I like visiting places I've travelled to reminisce and revel in the beauty. **Bellagio, Italy** is a case in point. I'd stayed a week in this delightful town on Lake Como in May of 2015,

so I was thrilled to join Patrizia riding the ferry across the cerulean lake, misty mountains in the distance. In Bellagio, as we wandered narrow lanes, **I felt at home.** Italy is like that for me. Later in Milan, I marvelled at the **Gothic Duomo** and elegant Galleria, so it was great fun to revisit the standouts with Patrizia. When Florent took us to **Giverny** in the fall to Monet's Garden, I marvelled at the quiet and lack of tourist hordes on the Japanese bridge and his bright blue kitchen so welcoming. I'd been there on a busy July day!



Spires of Duomo, Milan

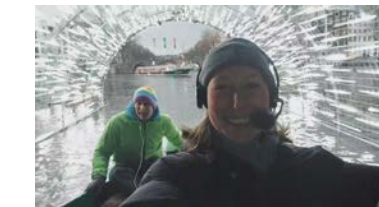


Patrizia from Milan

I'd always dreamed of seeing **Iguazu Falls** tumbling over the border between Brazil and Argentina. We rode the glass elevator down to the base of the falls with Lillian Slerich as she warned we might lose the signal, so stay tuned. That can happen. Usually, they have five bars but drop to three bars, and the screen can freeze. Don't panic. Refresh or leave and come back. We could hear the thundering water take in the view from the bridge along the bottom as Lillian pointed out plants and butterflies while informing us of the mythology and geography of this splendid natural wonder.



Devil's Throat - Iguazu Falls on the Bridges



Lee & Mark in Festival of Lights

Perhaps it's time to leave my comfort zone during the winter and venture to Rio de Janeiro or Buenos Aires as South America is experiencing summer. I could tip my toes in the sand of

Australia's beaches or watch a sunset over Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

I can't wait for spring in Europe. Stefan plans a return to Keukenhof for blossoms and spring bulbs – yes those dazzling TULIPS! If Bloemencorso Bollenstreek - the flower parade of fragrant floats – is back in 2022, you can count on Stephan to highlight it.



Mooloolaba Beach on Sunshine Coast with Alex 2022



Gail and Lee Duval - Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto

On Amsterdam guide Lee Duval's recent February visit to family in Toronto, she invited Voyagers to meet up at Roy Thomson Hall. What great fun to meet this dynamic lady, comment and participate on camera as she streamed live to 159 viewers world wide.

These talented professional guides have enhanced my world, made history and geography come alive, enriched my awareness of cultures and values, and given me more than grand views. They have provided valuable insight allowed me to dream of places too costly or far away to visit while encouraging me to plan for future travel, and I am grateful. Travel guru Rick Steves is fond of saying, **"Keep on Travellin."**



A Self-guided Tour of the Etobicoke Mural Project

by Joanne Famiglietti, Strollers Convener

“One step at a time is good walking.”

– Chinese Proverb

In the early 2000's the Business Association in Etobicoke decided to use some tax money to start the Mural Project, to beautify the area and bring people to explore Etobicoke and frequent the businesses nearby.

These interesting murals are huge, painted on the entire side of each building chosen. They tell the story of Etobicoke's past. A description of each mural gives important information to explain the scene.

The walk begins on Dundas St. W. at Islington Ave.

Here are some examples:



Welcome over the bridge



Enjoying golf near the Mimico Creek



After Hurricane Hazel



Apple Orchard of prominent Appleby family



Portrait of a local businessman



Gordon's Dairy (owned by a local family)



Pub with no beer



Overview of murals in Michael Power Park



Book Club

by Sylvia Skippen, Convener

“That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you’re not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.”

– F. Scott Fitzgerald

This year during COVID-19, the District 23 Book Club members have been meeting online in the comfort and safety of our own homes. We meet by Zoom on the last Wednesday of the month at 2:00 p.m., and these meetings are approximately one and a half to two hours long. We have enjoyed getting together with other avid readers, and many of us have appreciated not having to travel. In the past, we met in person at the Edithvale Community Centre. We will continue meeting via Zoom in response to the rapidly spreading and highly transmissible Omicron variant.

In reflecting on our booklist for this season, we have chosen books that deal with the impact and intrigue of World War II. The focus was on the era of World War II or shortly after. However, the emphasis of these authors was giving voice to often-overlooked female historical figures. These women are strong, independent, and courageous characters. Many of these women had difficulty following the traditional roles they felt obligated to take. These authors were able to bring alive the lead characters vividly and in a way that made the reader care about them.

In September, we were fortunate to have Nina Pollack facilitate the book *The Huntress*. It was a fascinating historical novel about an English journalist and a Russian female bomber pilot who joined forces to track the huntress, a Nazi war criminal. Nina provided an extensive author’s biography, critic reviews and thought-provoking questions for discussion.

In October, we discussed *The Barbizon Hotel: The Hotel That Set Women Free* by Paulina Bren. Shirley Wlodarczyk thoroughly researched the book, facilitated the meeting, and provided additional research of her own, which prompted insightful discussion. The Barbizon Hotel provided women with a room of their own and a chance to find themselves without family obligations and expectations.

Winter in Madrid by C.J. Sansom, another historical fiction novel, was set when the Spanish Civil War was over, and Madrid was in ruins. Many of us were unaware of war-time Spain or this author. This author was one of Lillian Cappella’s favourites, but the library only had minimal books. Fortunately, members could share the books or different websites to obtain them. We appreciate Lillian introducing us to this book, and the author and her discussion highlighted the time and impact of impossible choices.

In January, Marilyn Fletcher provided a fascinating discussion of the book *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* by Patty Callaghan. Although C.S. Lewis was well known as the beloved author of *Narnia*, Joy Davidman’s passion and intellect were a match for him.

In March, Richard Wlodarczyk led a spirited discussion of the book *The Splendid and the Vile: a saga of Churchill, Family and Defiance During the Blitz*. This is a thorough investigation of Winston Churchill’s first year of leadership in 1940. Churchill led England through France’s surrender, the miraculous rescue at Dunkirk, and the Nazi’s bombing blitz of the UK, which killed over 44,000 Britons. While Larson focuses heavily on Churchill and his family, he also provides an impressive account of the Blitz. Larson explores the reactions to the bombings from the Prime Minister, the royal family, and ordinary Britons. While Churchill is the main character, Larson’s profiles of his aides and colleagues add valuable context to the prime minister’s role in the war. The book reads like a novel where the reader keeps turning the pages with his gripping prose. Our discussion moved into the effects of war on families, current events in Ukraine and our delight at learning more about Churchill’s humorous and controversial personality.

We always welcome new members, and you are not obliged to attend every meeting. The Zoom meeting invitation is sent to all those who have indicated an interest in attending the book club meeting for that particular month. If you wish to participate in the book club, please email me a few days before the meeting date to ensure you are included in the Zoom invitation. I often send out an email to remind members of the meeting and advise me if they want to attend. Also, we publish information in the monthly e-Newsletter sent at the beginning of the month.

Contact: Sylvia at sylvia.skippen@hotmail.com

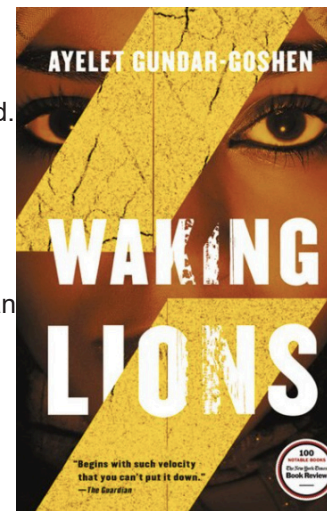
The following are books for future discussion:

Waking Lions

by Ayelet Gunder-Goshen, Mar 30, 2022

“Waking Lions” is a suspenseful and morally devastating drama of guilt, survival, shame, and desire. One night, neurosurgeon Dr. Eitan Green is driving home from his long

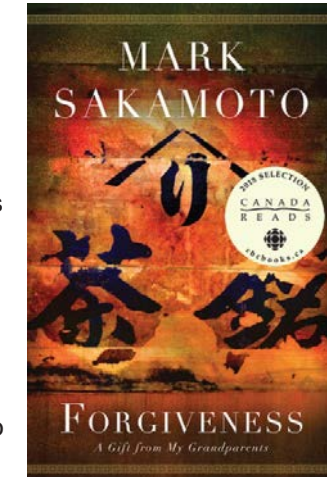
hospital shift near the Israeli city of Omer. His SUV hits a man who appears out of nowhere on a moonlit desert road. The man looks to be African, a migrant. He is still breathing, but the driver cannot save the African man’s life with his skull split open. After a few minutes of tortured soul searching, Eitan decides to leave the accident scene, hoping that his life, the one he has built with his wife and two young sons, can be saved. He gets into his SUV and drives home. When the victim’s widow knocks at Eitan’s door the next day, holding his wallet and claiming that she knows what happened, Eitan learns that her price for silence is not money but his expertise. It is something that will shatter Eitan’s safe life and take him into a world of secrets and lies he could never have imagined. Eitan comes to realize that in trying to avoid disaster, he has instead stepped into deeper ruin.



Forgiveness

by Mark Sakamoto, Apr 27, 2022

Read a heart-rending true story of two families on either side of the Second World War and a moving tribute to the nature of forgiveness. When the Second World War broke out, Ralph MacLean traded his quiet yet troubled life on the Magdalen Islands in eastern Canada for the ravages of war overseas. On the other side of the country, Mitsue Sakamoto and her family felt their pleasant life in Vancouver starting to disappear after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. One would live out the war in a prison camp, and the other would find herself and her family packed off to a working farm in rural Alberta. Forgiveness intertwines the compelling stories of Ralph MacLean and the Sakamotos as the war rips their lives and their humanity out of their grasp.

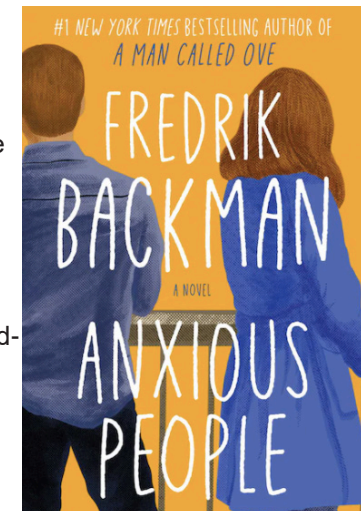


Anxious People

by Fredrick Bachman, May 25, 2022

#1 New York Times best-selling author of *A Man Called Ove* wrote this book. It is about a bank robbery that went wrong and eight extremely anxious strangers who find they

have more in common than they ever imagined. Viewing an apartment usually does not turn into a life-or-death situation, but this open house becomes just that when a failed bank robber bursts in and takes everyone in the apartment hostage. As the police surround the premises and television channels broadcast the hostage situation live, the robber must decide which terrifying prospect to take: going out to face the police or staying in the apartment with this challenging group. As the pressure mounts, the eight strangers begin slowly to disclose personal information to one another and reveal long-hidden truths, grievances, hurts, secrets, and passions.



Divorce Train

*The phone rang today
Another marriage gone astray.
It’s better for her, said he.
“She’ll get it all the kids,
The cat, the cash. Free at last.”*

*A memory, forgotten by the male,
Rose silently to amend the tale.
A scant year ago
When there was cash
All was buried in his stash.*

*The bones of a child’s confidence
Are bleached and laid as track.
With lies for ties,
And wails for rails,
The divorce train carries freight.*



by Joyce Arnsby née Farrow, Member



e-Devices Group

by Vernon Paige, Convener

The e-Devices Group meets every 2 weeks (still virtually by Zoom). Most of us seniors reached 2022 with limited knowledge and understanding of **“technology”**. Personal technology or **“e-Devices”** (personal computers, cellphones, tablets) may seem unnecessarily complicated, difficult to use, and of no practical value to us as individuals. However, some of us (and most younger people) now have different perceptions.

The world’s response to the ongoing pandemic has accelerated technological evolution. As technology evolves, it becomes **“smarter”**, more capable, easier to use. More people become familiar with devices and find more uses for them, which spurs further development. As devices become more **“capable”**, more of us find uses for them and become more reliant on them, and so it continues.

As technology evolves, it is easy to **“fall behind”** and be slow to adapt to new methods. In contrast, by avoiding or postponing the challenges of new things, we may be missing out on many benefits. We may also be uninformed or misinformed about defending against attendant risks.

In the e-Devices Group, we share information and experience about the Internet and personal technology. We try to help **“catch up”** technology laggards and take more and better advantage of the capabilities of our devices.

A few discussion topics

- Easily give your precise location to first responders in an emergency (or to friends and family meeting at a cottage or park) with a free smartphone app, <https://What3Words.com>.
- Toronto Public Library (TPL) has a wide range of free **“online”** services available, too many to list in detail here, but you can find them with an Internet search (Google or Bing, for example). Search for **“TPL Hoopla”** or **“TPL Kanopy”** for movies, **“TPL Medici”** for concerts and opera, **“TPL Pressreader”** for newspapers and magazines from 100 countries in 60 languages, eBooks and audiobooks with the free **Libby** app, and many more, all without having to go to the library.
- Get maximum benefit from the Calendar app on your devices.
- Keep copies of essential documents and information always available with you on your phone and tablet

SENIORS' GUIDE TO STAYING CYBER SAFE DURING COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadians are spending more time online than ever before. That's why it's never been more important to stay cyber secure.

Instances of cyber criminals masquerading as healthcare organizations or Government of Canada representatives have been increasing – and in many cases, they're targeting seniors.

COVID-19 has showed us how quickly the world can change, but the need to stay cyber safe hasn't. If you know how to spot a scam and keep your account secure, you can prepare yourself for what's out there.

PROTECT YOURSELF WITH SIMPLE STEPS

PRACTICE SAFE PASSWORDS

Use a **passphrase**, a series of at least four words and 15 characters in length.

Or use **complex passwords** with:

- At least 12 characters
- Upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols
- No personal information

USE A DIFFERENT PASSWORD FOR EVERY ACCOUNT

NEVER, EVER SHARE YOUR PASSWORDS WITH ANYONE

Some different types of authentication factors include:

- Proof of **who you are**, like fingerprint scanners or facial recognition
- Proof of **what you know**, like a security question or password
- Proof of **what you own**, like an app or text notification on your phone

DON'T TAKE THE BAIT

Phishing scams are messages or phone calls made to look and sound like they're from people or companies you're familiar with. In some cases, a cybercriminal may already know something about you to make the message or phone call sound

Senior's Guide to Staying Cyber Safe - <https://tinyurl.com/RT0cyber>

- Health Card, driver's licence, passport, vaccination record, calendar, insurance policies.
- Use your phone as a magnifying glass, mirror, flashlight.
- The free **Lens** app on your phone can lead you to information about an item you see in a store: similar and competing products, prices at other stores, reviews. The same app can translate signs and documents in a foreign language or identify birds, insects, and plants.
- The digital, online world has its share of **“bad actors”** annoying us with spam and trying to scam and defraud us. So did – and still does - the **“pre-digital”** world. The crooks learn new tricks quickly. We talk about how to be safe, confident, and efficient online. **Seniors' guide to staying cyber safe during COVID-19** is a good place to start for simple tips on how to protect yourself from cyber threats - <https://tinyurl.com/RT0cyber>.
- Is everyone a **“photographer”** now? Digital photography has many advantages over film. With film, we took 24 pictures at a time and waited days or weeks to see them and decide which few to print and file in an album at home. Now we can take 100 in a few minutes, see them immediately, and carry hundreds with us on the phone. How can we take better pictures? We don't need a camera; we can use our phone, right? Maybe, but why do some of us still use a camera? How should we organize, store, protect and display our photos?

The New Normal

We are all weary and frustrated by limitations and restrictions placed on our activities by Public Health authorities to control an ongoing pandemic. Most of us also are or should be concerned about falling ill from the virus or spreading it to family and friends. Much of the rapid recent technology evolution has been driven by efforts to fight the pandemic and safely navigate through and ameliorate the restrictions.

Online shopping and banking can be safe and efficient. Virtual meetings like our bi-weekly e-Devices Group are less **“fun”** than in-person events. Still, in many ways they are better – we don't have to rent and organize space for each meeting, we don't have to travel and park, we don't have to contend with unpleasant weather, some can participate who couldn't or wouldn't in-person because

of distance or health. This is also true for family and friends. We don't touch and hug much, but we actually **“see”** family and friends more often. Grandchildren I saw occasionally, I can now read bedtime stories several times weekly. Family and friends, we occasionally saw we now play games online weekly (*euchre, bridge, codenames, chess*).

We found many excellent sources of excellent (excellent 2 times, yes, that's intentional) culture, entertainment, recreation, information, and education. Some we may have previously been aware of but dismissed because of distance, time, or cost, now they are accessible online at our convenience at lesser cost or free. Others we learned about from information shared online, and many more were new.

The COVID virus is awful; the pandemic is awful. Personal technology can help us cope.

Popular Movies

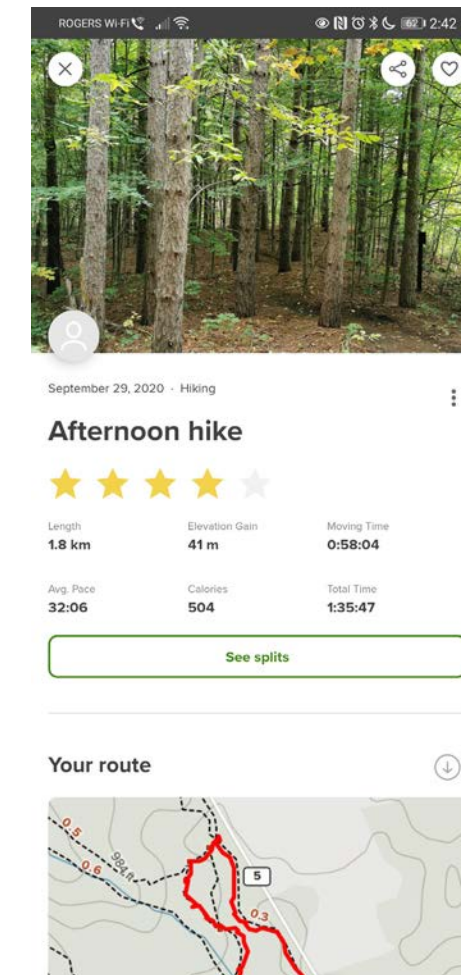
- Movie Dave
- Movie Conspiracy Theory
- Movie Murder by Numbers
- Movie Trigger Point
- Movie Bombshell
- Movie The Humans

Popular Television

- Television Masterpiece: Wolf Hall
- Television Vera - Season 7
- Television Manhunt - Season 1
- Television Inspector Winter - Season 1
- Television Murder In... - Season 1
- Television Keeping Faith - Season 3

Popular Music

The e-Devices Group can help all of us use technology to better effect.





Political Advocacy

by Kathy Shorney, Political Advocacy Convener

Once again, elections are on the horizon -- this time at the Provincial level. It is time to make our needs and concerns as seniors known to all parties' candidates.

The Provincial government is responsible for our health - both mental and physical, housing, transportation, and access to services. We, as seniors, are the fastest-growing demographic. Our votes and voices will have power.

By 2030, 1 in 4 Canadians will be Seniors. This statistic further emphasizes the need for urgent changes in Long Term Care and services to allow ageing in place.

Another critical issue that has become more evident since Covid is the significant switch to digital access to many government services. Many seniors do not have the skills or access to online services such as health card renewal, booking vaccines, transportation services such as Wheel Trans.

I have been in contact with our Provincial PAC team and our GTA group to discuss this concern. Also, related to the Covid years, is the further backlog of cancelled or delayed access to health care for treatments and surgeries that

affect our quality of life.

It is essential that the candidates for a seat in the Provincial Parliament hear our concerns. We can do this by voting, asking questions of the candidates, and belonging to advocacy groups such as RTOERO. It has joined with other non-partisan groups with advocacy policies such as ACER CART to increase our voice.

How can you support RTOERO and its advocacy focus?

However you interact with candidates is worthwhile:

- Attending an all-candidates meeting, zoom event or at your front door;
- Writing letters/emails;
- Asking questions about candidate's policies, both personal and party.

Once again, issues related to the ageing population are outlined in **Vibrant Voices**, RTOERO position papers.

Copies of the position papers are available online at:

Seniors Strategy (<https://tinyurl.com/RTO-Seniors Strategy>)

Geriatric Health Care (<https://tinyurl.com/RTO-GHC>)

Environmental Stewardship (<https://tinyurl.com/RTO-ENV>)

In addition to providing updated election information, as your Convener, I will continue to voice our concerns at meetings. I will make you aware of changes that benefit our quality of life.

Please watch the e-blasts for updated information about informational webinars sponsored by **Vibrant Voices** as they are announced. I have attended many and found the time well spent.



The Last Garden in England - Julia Kelly

as reviewed by Gail M. Murray, Member

With meticulous period detail, international best-selling author, Julia Kelly, transports the reader, immersing them in three different time periods. The fictional garden she creates at Highbury House is central to the plot and theme – a garden like a person is never static, requiring nourishment to change and grow.

After moving to London and visiting historic Hidcote Manor, Kelly was inspired to set her novel in Warwickshire near Stratford. She paints an engrossing portrait of her fictional garden, filling it with luscious garden rooms like Hidcote as garden designer Venetia's vision evolves.

In 1907, Venetia Smith was hired by the wealthy Melcourts to design a grand garden. Although ahead of her time, she is privy to 19th-century propriety, so if exposed, her secret and passionate love affair with Helen Melcourt's botanist brother Matthew Goddard could not only ruin her reputation but her livelihood.

In 1944, the British government requisitioned Highbury House as a convalescent hospital. Later, local farmers and 'land girls' arrive to plough up the huge lawns for crops. Much conflict is at play between the imperious mistress of the manor, Diana Symonds, Cynthia, her controlling sister-in-law and cook, Stella Adderton. At times, lines between the classes blur when Diana aids Stella and befriends land girl Beth (both beneath her class). This section has a sweet romance between land girl Beth, who loves to sketch the gardens and the dashing Captain Hastings.

Diana is the most compelling of the heroines. Though proud, she is gentle with children, her son Robin and Stella's orphaned nephew Bobby. She is most associated with the winter garden, her retreat, whose respite turns to tragedy. The winter garden motif runs throughout the novel. Perhaps it is symbolic of a man (woman) at rest with a promise to bloom.

Presently, a cell phone toting Emma Lovell, owner of Turning Back Thyme, is hired by Sydney, Diana's great-granddaughter, to restore the neglected gardens to their former glory. Through her digging, we finally become aware of the women's connections.

At first, I found it confusing, keeping so many characters straight. In the 19th century portion, many are called Miss or Mr., and their given names, e.g. Mrs. Symonds is introduced formally and later referred to as Diana; the cook is Miss Adderton to her employer and Stella to her new friend Beth.

The novel's strength lies in the individual stories, which could be separate novels. In the last few chapters, we piece together the clues, and the connection between these women becomes apparent. I almost wanted to read all the chapters on Diana first and then go back and read all the sections on Beth etc. On second reading, the novel is more fluid and relatable, and you can see how Kelly is planting the seeds to solve the mystery of this rich and satisfying read.



When Matthew teaches Venetia to cross a rose, Kelly depicts creating a new variety – the rose to become Celeste's rose – as poetic and erotic. They are soulmates. Matthew, a botanist, and a sensitive soul, who has been wondering about her garden rooms, expands on her choices:

Each room represents the life of a woman. The tea garden is where polite company comes to meet, all with the purpose of marrying a girl off. The lover's garden speaks for itself and the bridal garden and the children's garden. I would guess the lavender walk represents femininity... the statue garden. Aphrodite, Athena, Hera, depictions of the female form. (No one had ever noticed before, yet this man saw right to the heart of it.) The one thing I don't understand is how the water and winter garden fit, he said. (p149)

Gardeners and garden aficionados will love the garden descriptions sprinkled throughout the narrative. I leave with you the prologue, Venetia's poetic, and poignant farewell to her creation:

"Stark and beautiful, with its clusters of silver birches broken by dogwood, blood-red stems violent against mournful grasses bending in the wind. Pure white hellebores – the Christmas rose, dot the border. In a month, the first green-heads of snowdrops will burst forth through the snow in elegant white blooms before purple crocus, and yellow stamen follows. She will not see these heralds of spring."



New Learning

by Olga McKenzie for Margaret Schuman, Convener, Needleworks & Crafts

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.”

— Henry Ford

We are in 2022 and still restricted to Zoom meetings instead of face-to-face meetings. Although we are desperate to meet in person, Zoom has been an excellent second option. Several needlecraft members continue to meet via Zoom, and during this time, we share lots of projects and ideas. Everyone continues to knit, crochet, and sew for donations, for friends and family.

Some members have challenged themselves to learn new skills using YouTube. Some members make good use of the podcasts, which are informative and entertaining. They then generously share the new skill with the rest of the group. The gift of time helps us to concentrate on new ideas and skills.

Many members also use the gift of time to repurpose old projects and reuse donated yarns, etc.

Sometimes we travel around the world without leaving our homes, looking at the crafts of other countries.

Elsa has been busy learning Tunisian crocheting, a cross between crocheting and knitting. She enjoys learning this new type of crocheting and has been using YouTube to learn this skill. We look forward to seeing her finished scarf. She promises to send a photo.

Joanne showed us her yarn swift and ball winder. It was quite fascinating watching it going round and round, and when finished, a great ball of wool was ready to use. Joanne also learned a new skill, Portuguese knitting, an easier way of using two colours. Joanne has joined The Toronto Knitters Guild, which meets monthly and always has a guest speaker. Her first meeting was very worthwhile, and she enjoyed the guest speaker very much. Once you



become a member, discounts are available for other things.

These are just two examples of what our members are up to. It's inspiring to see the efforts of others.

And of course, time is spent socializing – discussing various topics, sharing information, and exchanging tips. We also welcome new members.



Nordic Pole Walking

by Kathy Shorney, Convener

“A well-developed sense of humor is the pole that adds balance to your steps as you walk the tightrope of life.”

— William Arthur Ward

By now, winter is on the run, and we will welcome spring and the rebirth of nature. I hope you have managed to enjoy walking in your neighbourhood or possibly in some of the city's parks and trails over the extended lockdown.



We are now ready to resume our walking/poling group on the third Tuesday of the month. We are a small group who enjoy the company of others while we use our Nordic poles or walk.

Our group meets at 10:00 am in a local park and spends about 90 minutes enjoying each other's company. Trails are paved, and we try for mainly level land. Since we go at our own pace, all fitness levels are welcome. Parking is free, and I try to have washrooms nearby.

I will attend the site meeting point rain or shine—no need to register ahead. You can reach me at:

k_shorney@yahoo.com.

I hope you can join our group. Bring a friend.

The spring schedule is:

SPECIAL DATE Tuesday, March 22, 10:00 a.m. York Cemetery western entrance off Senlac. Park near the gates to the left.

Tuesday, April 19, 10:00 a.m. Earl Bales Park Upper Level - enter off Bathurst and park in the lot near the Community Centre.

Tuesday, May 17 10:00 a.m. G. Ross Lord Park enter off Dufferin north of Finch opposite Supertest Rd .and park in the large lot past the Service Centre near the sports fields.

Tuesday, June 21, 10:00 a.m. East Don Parklands - **NOTE THIS LOCATION MAY CHANGE** (don't hesitate to get in touch with me before coming and watch for the eblast. *When travelling eastbound* on Sheppard, turn right on Old Leslie Street just before the lights at Leslie and turn right at the top of the hill. *When travelling westbound*, turn right on the first road west of Leslie, turn right into parking. Cross the bridge, turn right, and enter parking at the end of the road.

Light refreshments will be served to celebrate the summer solstice.



Nominate a Community Grant Project

by Cheryl Paige, Convener

Each year RTOERO invites submissions from each district for a Community Grant program. For example, from 2021 to 2022, District 23 supported the Toronto Wildlife Centre.

We welcome your suggestions for a community grant program for 2022 to 2023. The project must help RTOERO meet our strategic goals (*to improve the lives of members and seniors, to be the trusted voice for the broader education communities and to broaden our membership base*).

The grant must address some aspect of RTO values (*diversity, equity and inclusion, community connection, commitment to healthy active living, environmental sustainability, service, well-being, and accountability*).

If you have an idea or suggestion, please forward it to:

cheryl.m.paige@gmail.com.



Reaching Out

by Mary Mundle, Member

“You matter. That smile you shared could be the sun on someone’s darkest day.”

— Amy Leigh Mercree

Oh, to be retired now that Covid’s here! Teachers thrive on listening to others, talking, and writing for students, parents, and other teachers – all vital components of teaching. Retired teachers may have removed the cloak(room) of schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, schoolyards, staff rooms and other elements that comprise learning institutes. Our desire to communicate, educate, and show goodwill to others has not changed.

No longer do we have students, school team members, including custodians (for me, **those** were essential gems of the world of school) and other support staff with whom to exchange ideas and gain knowledge and on occasion achieve a drop of empathy. On occasion, we even conversed with those in the upper echelons of education, the principals, vice principals, superintendents (formerly titled inspectors), consultants, psychologists, and public health nurses (yes, I recall those days when we had professional health care workers with whom to consult). Those on the current education front line might find fiduciary support if nurses were on site!



In retirement, what do we do with all this freedom away from the ructions of education? The confines of our beloved Covid 19 to 22 and beyond constrict my volunteer time. I peruse the RTOERO emails, and when I focused on Gwen Bumbury’s offer of phoning RTOERO members, I directed an email her way. I took up the challenge and now have the privilege of phone visits with a dozen or so RTOERO members. How salubrious to be welcomed into their residences - condo, house, or long-term home.

I met and had the chance to exchange background experiences with those on my list. To protect the identities of these retirees, I slightly altered some of what I write about them. One learned educator only casually mentioned in the last sentence of our visit that he is blind and has finished with the recorded titles sent from the public library. He expressed uncertainty that Toronto Public Library branches might not be serving books just now. When I inquired

whether the CNIB had been in touch, the only comment and not a complaint was that his CNIB registration might have run out! Locked out of a world of listening to readings, he was still a positive force in a residence that was Covid locked down. Perhaps, I thought, a CNIB contact would offer a better “**vision**” for this vibrant gentleman.

On to my next listed port of call. I joined a mutual admiration society. I discovered that this teacher, who climbed close to the glass ceiling in education, attended the same Toronto elementary school I had when I lived here in childhood. She, fortunately, graduated from that institute. My family moved out of the province, so I ended my excellent educational beginning in Ontario.

Few of these passionate, loquacious persons even took a second to define their living quarters before dashing into a classroom for discussion! Fascination ensued as I listened to these worthy citizens who offer entrance into their lives past and present. It’s very humbling. Some are “alternately abled” or whatever is in vogue as the term just now for those who manage in complex physical and

mental circumstances.

I begin my foray as an RTOERO caller by giving my name and saying that I am a retired teacher phoning to say hello. That seems to soften the blow. Although seeing an unknown phone number on call display, I am ready for people to hang up. No one has hung up yet nor queried if I were a telemarketer! I think I’ll stick with being one of Gwen’s callers and not attempt the latter!

If you are next on one of Gwen’s lists, it’s just another RTOERO member calling and glad to be part of your world, if only for a few minutes. Your life matters; everyone’s life does.

“I must learn to be content with being happier than I deserve.” - Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*



The Night Portrait by Laura Morelli

as reviewed by Gail M. Murray, Member

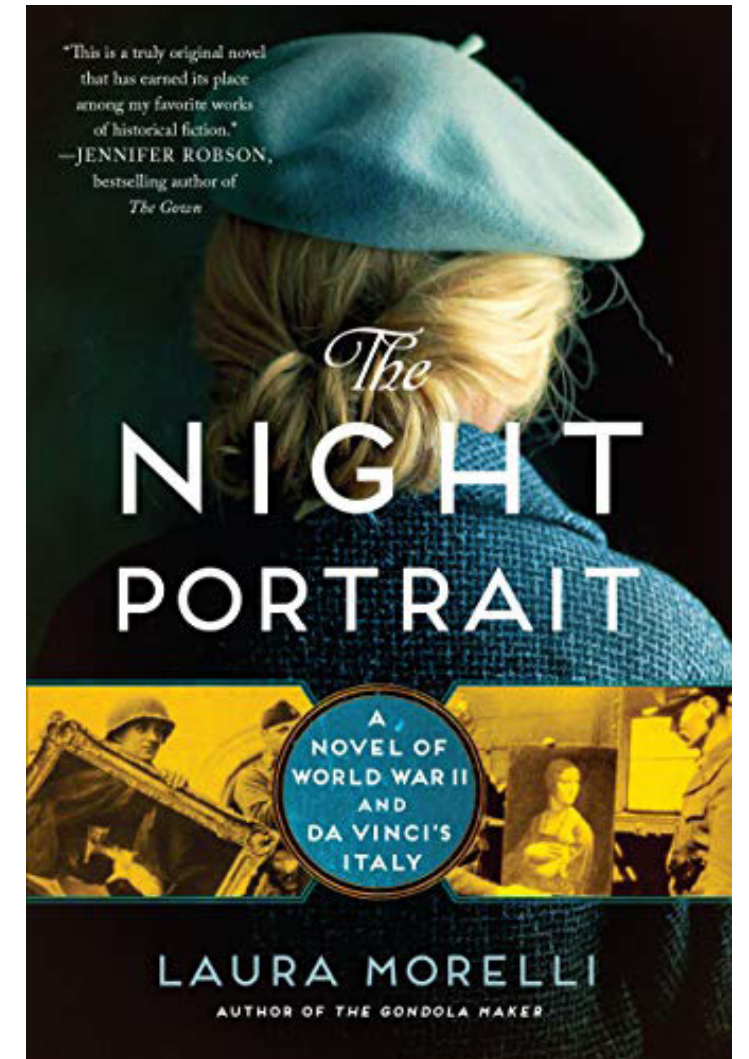
More enigmatic than Mona Lisa, this masterpiece, Lady with an Ermine, the first modern portrait, shows the mind and personality of its subject. Art historian Morelli, immerses us in 15th Century Renaissance Italy and the mind of young Leonardo da Vinci as he paints Cecilia Gallerani, sixteen-year-old mistress to Ludovico, Duke of Milan. The portrait’s creation and preservation become the story’s focal point, connecting two women’s destinies 500 years apart and a symbol of hope.

This novel stands out as a departure from the many WWII books about concentration camps and Nazi Occupation. Hitler is amassing art for his high command and grand museum at Linz. Edith Becker, a Munich Museum conservator, is assigned to assess and document valuables looted by the Nazis under Hans Frank, The Butcher of Poland. Though disgusted, she keeps her head low vowing to save this portrait.

Despite dual timelines and four points of view, the story unfolds flawlessly. Richly detailed and well crafted, the chapters are short and tight. So fluid is the writing; we are caught up unawares. Morelli employs a unique device I call “echoing” – she ends one chapter with the start of another: “Yes, Cecilia thought. It is time for me to leave this house. And this man (Ludovico il Moro). ...It is time for me to leave this house, and most of all, this man (Hans Frank) Edith thought.” (p371, 372)

American G.I. Dominic Bonelli is appointed to assist The Monuments Men, curators, art historians, architects recovering art and artifacts plundered by the Nazis. Morelli foreshadows Edith and Dominic’s meeting. As the Allies enter Munich to cheering crowds, Dominic notices an older man clutching a stuffed toy dog (Edith’s father). Art is the high point of civilization; war is the lowest. The end is poignant and uplifting.

Morelli’s writing and art background so entrance me; she has taught art history at universities in Italy and the USA, that I’ve purchased *The Giant: A Novel of Michelangelo’s David*.





Age in place: Make your home and routines safe for healthy aging

by RTOERO Communications

This article is shared with you, courtesy of the Marketing and Communication Committee, in part to introduce this excellent article to you in STONY Bridges and connect you to the link to follow up on the remainder of the article on the RTOERO website. Full Kudos to Sylvia Link and her committee for offering these informative articles and links to our members.

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOage-in-place>

According to a **2021 national survey** (<https://tinyurl.com/RTOageinplace>) conducted by March of Dimes Canada, 78 per cent of us want to stay in our homes, but the majority of us don't think we will be able to. The good news is there are things you can do to plan for and support your independence and working with an occupational therapist can be a great step.

Here's what we've covered in this post:

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOage-in-place>

- **What is aging in place?**
- **How ageism impacts healthy aging?**
- **How to assess your home and activities for healthy aging?**
- **What does an occupational therapist do?**
- **When to consider an in-home assessment from an occupational therapist?**
- **Common aging in place concerns and what to do about them**
- **How to find an occupational therapist**
- **How much does occupational therapy cost?**
- **Advocating for age-friendly communities that support aging in place**



Have-a-Java

by Elizabeth Clarke, Convener

“Coffee with a friend is like capturing happiness in a cup.”

– Anonymous



Have -a - Java continues to meet on the third Wednesday of each month from September to June from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. We will continue with our Zoom sessions under the guidelines of Toronto Public Health, RTOERO and the Health Ministry. Until further notice you will have to provide your own coffee and treat. Updates can be found in STONY Bridges, the monthly E-Newsletter or the District 23 website: <https://district23.rto-ero.org>

Here are the remaining dates.

- Wednesday March 16, 2022
- Wednesday, April 20, 2022
- Wednesday, May 18, 2022
- Wednesday, June 15, 2022.



New RTOERO Webinar Recordings

by RTOERO Communications and Marketing Group

New RTOERO webinar recordings are now available

Missed some of RTOERO's live webinars in 2021? Don't worry! The recordings are now available on the website.

Recent additions include:

The Women's Age Lab and gendered ageism with a focus on older women, presented by the RTOERO Foundation

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOgendered-agism>

How to create a giving strategy that works for today and the future:

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOgiving>

RTOERO at its website rtoero.ca/resources/videos includes several webinars for your viewing. A few of the more popular selections are highlighted below.

Our Earth, Our Responsibility

<https://rtoero.ca/webinar-our-earth-our-responsibility/>

Paths to wellness for older persons: body, mind, spirit

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOwellness>

Saving the forest...Saving us

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOforest>

Ageing in Isolation: what do we know or where do we go from here?

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOaging-isolation>



The Good Old Days!

by Mary Cairo, Archivist

Remember a time when we did meet each other in person and had fun times eating, drinking and socializing face to face?



Change Of Postal/ Email Address or Other Information

Please send changes to: RTOERO, 18 Spadina Road, Suite 300, Toronto, ON, M2R 2S7
or to membership@rtoero.ca; or call the RTOERO Membership Section at [416-962-9463](tel:416-962-9463) or [1-800-361-9888](tel:1-800-361-9888)
or fax: 416-962-1061.

This will ensure your continued receipt of STONY Bridges, Renaissance, your RTOERO annual diary and other RTOERO mailings. If you did not receive your copy of STONY Bridges, contact Gerard MacNeil at [416-481-7411](tel:416-481-7411) or email him at: g.macneil@bell.net.

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