



**RTO  
ERO**

A better future,  
together  
Ensemble pour  
un avenir meilleur

District 23  
**North York**

# 2022 Annual Meeting

Agenda & Reports

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

*cover picture:*

*Butchart Gardens, Victoria B.C. | Merv Mascarenhas*

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# AGENDA



## **Annual Meeting Agenda**

### **RTOERO District 23, North York**

### **Wednesday, June 8, 2022, 10:00 AM**

### **Via Zoom**

Welcome, Remarks and Introduction of Executive Officers	Mary Valtellini
In Memoriam	John Giannone
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of June 9, 2021	Olga McKenzie
Treasurer's Report	Vernon Paige
Election Report and Introduction of 2022/23 Executive Members	Gwen Scriven
Incoming President's Remarks	Maureen Capotosto
Celebrate Our Members	Maureen Capotosto Mildrid Frank Karen Quinn
Questions and Answers	All
Adjournment	

Immediately following the Annual Meeting there will be an executive meeting. Everyone is invited to stay for this meeting to learn more about what is happening in District 23. Conveners of the various activities will give reports. Join us and see if you would like to become involved!

## IN MEMORIAM

by John Giannone

With great sadness, 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 Provincial's monthly membership updates from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022.



<i>A. Allen</i>	<i>Doris Gibson</i>	<i>Mary-Lou Oyler</i>
<i>Margaret Allen</i>	<i>Irene Gohm</i>	<i>M. Adele Patterson</i>
<i>Geoffrey Arnold</i>	<i>Susan Gorewich</i>	<i>Esther Plafker</i>
<i>Neil Bailey</i>	<i>Patricia Guthrie</i>	<i>Janet Plock</i>
<i>Joseph Beitchman</i>	<i>Mary Hallewick</i>	<i>Eileen Prettyman</i>
<i>Ralph Belfry</i>	<i>Ian Hamilton</i>	<i>Anahid Proudian</i>
<i>Arthur Bell</i>	<i>Andrew Hendricks</i>	<i>Gerald Racicot</i>
<i>Theodore Bellinger</i>	<i>Elinor Hepburn</i>	<i>Gordon Rae</i>
<i>Alan Beswick</i>	<i>Elizabeth Houston</i>	<i>Robert Richardson</i>
<i>Alex Biro</i>	<i>Anne Howlett</i>	<i>M. N. Rowntree</i>
<i>Helen Bondar</i>	<i>John Hunter</i>	<i>Eileen Sanderson</i>
<i>Susie Bruce</i>	<i>Lorraine Innocentin</i>	<i>Dulcie Saroea</i>
<i>Bruce Bunker</i>	<i>John Jacobi</i>	<i>Shirley Shortt</i>
<i>Hugh Butters</i>	<i>Balbir Kaur</i>	<i>Wilma Skinner</i>
<i>Jean Cameron</i>	<i>Teresa Kudirka</i>	<i>Robert Smith</i>
<i>Helen Campbell</i>	<i>Ruth Kurtz</i>	<i>Joan Stevenson</i>
<i>Robert Chiasson</i>	<i>Patricia Legge</i>	<i>Lynn Storrey</i>
<i>Claudia Colussi</i>	<i>Isabelle Leibovitch</i>	<i>George Stulac</i>
<i>Issur Cooper</i>	<i>Olive Lennox</i>	<i>Robert Takeda</i>
<i>A. Cosgrove</i>	<i>Lewis Lightstone</i>	<i>Audrey Tegler</i>
<i>Sasim Das Gupta</i>	<i>Barbara Lloyd-Tomlinson</i>	<i>Catharine Thompson</i>
<i>Hannah Donaghy</i>	<i>Gino Loconte</i>	<i>Jean Thomson</i>
<i>Kent Donaldson</i>	<i>William Malnychuk</i>	<i>Shirley Vernon</i>
<i>Jacqueline Dorland</i>	<i>Jane Markowitz</i>	<i>Margaret Vitelli</i>
<i>Barbara Duncan</i>	<i>Andrew McKeown</i>	<i>Carol Welton</i>
<i>Ivan Eryavec</i>	<i>Shirley Moore</i>	<i>Patricia Wilson</i>
<i>Vernon Farrell</i>	<i>Robert Mosey</i>	<i>Evelyn Winfield</i>
<i>Donald Felker</i>	<i>James Naumoff</i>	<i>Vivian Wylie</i>
<i>George Fligg</i>	<i>Margot Nutzenberger</i>	<i>Sonia Yaghdjian</i>
<i>Kathleen Flynn</i>	<i>Shirley O'Grady</i>	
<i>George Foord</i>	<i>Avis Oxby</i>	
<i>J. Foote</i>		

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by *Mary Valtellini*

I want to thank everyone on the executive and members of D23 for giving me the opportunity to serve our district one more time. We have such an amazing group of volunteers. As I stated in my remarks last Annual Meeting 2021, I continue to be awed by our members and executive. I stated that you are the backbone of this district! Throughout the year, you willingly and selflessly shared both your time and your talents with our members and maintained activities on Zoom. It is in lending a helping hand and showing kindness and caring that continues to make the greatest difference in the lives of our members. A wonderful example is the recognition of Maureen Capotosto in becoming this year's RTOERO recipient of the Distinguished Member Award.

2021 -2022 has been busy with countless meetings at the national, GTA, and district levels.

Zoom has allowed me to chair our monthly executive meetings and

attend all meetings from Communications to PAC, ensuring that all district goals were met, shared, communicated and supported by members. I have attended and participated in the Spring and Fall Annual Meetings and Forum. My role has been and always will be to advocate for our members.

I am also privileged to continue working with RTOERO Health Benefits Committee. They have extended my tenure for one more year with the added responsibility of Chairing the District Health Representative subcommittee for the October 2022 national meeting.

My fervent hope is to be able to begin in-person meetings with all of you in the Fall. As the Trip Convener, I will start organizing safe and exciting excursions for the upcoming year. I look forward to becoming your Past President and working and advocating for D23.



MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF  
DISTRICT 23, NORTH YORK  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021 VIA ZOOM

*by Olga McKenzie*

10.00 a.m. Meeting Convened

**Welcome, Remarks and Introduction of Executive Officers:**

G. Scriven, President

G. Scriven gave an overview of the past year and introduced the table officers.

**In Memoriam:** J. Giannone, Membership Convener

A moment was taken to remember and honour the members who passed away from May 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021. The names are listed in the AM booklet, page 4.

**Treasurer's Report** (page 8), V. Paige

- Financial Statement for the Period January 1-December 31, 2020 and Budget Overview for the Period January-December 2021
- Sound financial position
- The Executive has already approved the Financial Statement and the Budget Overview
- Call for questions – none

Motion: V. Paige and J. Famiglietti moved that the Financial Statement for the Period January 1-December 31, 2020 and Budget Overview for the Period January-December 2021 be received. Carried

**Governance Document Motion:** G. Meek

Motion

G. Meek moved "**That the District Constitution (May, 2019) be amended by rescinding it and approving in its place, the District Governance Document (June, 2021)**". Seconded by S. Di Nallo

Carried

**Election Report and Introduction of Executive Members:**

(M. Capotosto) G. Scriven



## **Executive for 2021/2022**

*Past President Gwen Scriven*

*President Mary Valtellini*

*1st Vice President Karen Quinn*

*2nd Vice President*

*Maureen Capotosto*

*Treasurer Vernon Paige*

*Associate Treasurer Kathy Shorney*

*Secretary Olga McKenzie*

*Archivist Mary Cairo*

*Book Club Sylvia Skippen*

*Bridge Alan Ward*

*Communications Karen Quinn*

*Community Service Cheryl Paige*

*Cycling Vacancy*

*e-Devices Vern Paige*

*Foundation Sara Di Nallo*

*Goodwill Gwen Bumbury*

*Governance George Meek*

*Have-A-Java Elizabeth Clarke*

*Health Services Gwen Scriven*

*Member at Large Daniele Ingster*

*Member at Large Valerie Sterling*

*Membership John Giannone*

*Needlework and Crafts*

*Margaret Schuman*

*Newsletter Associate*

*Maureen Capotosto*

*Newsletter Distributor Gerard MacNeil*

*Newsletter Editor Merv Mascarenhas*

*Photographer Vernon Paige*

*Pole Walking Kathy Shorney*

*Political Advocacy Kathy Shorney*

*Recruitment Mary Ellen Lawless*

*Social Mildred Frank*

*Strollers Joanne Famiglietti*

*Trips Mary Valtellini*

*Webmaster Merv Mascarenhas*

## **Celebrate our Members:**

K. Quinn, C. Paige

Five members have been recognized by RTOERO and Ontario Volunteer Service in February and March. They are J. Famiglietti, K. Quinn, A. Ward, G. Bumbury and M. Cairo. We are acknowledging members who have 10+ and 25+ years of service on the executive and they are: G. Bumbury, M. Valtellini, G. Meek, M. E. Lawless and M. Frank.

## **Incoming President's Remarks:**

M. Valtellini

Thanked everyone for vote of confidence. Looking forward to working with everyone in the year ahead.

## **Questions from the members: Conveners**

Valerie Sterling: How many equity shares do we hold? Can we withdraw District 23 funds now without penalty?

Anna Bloom: Does Gwen Bumbury need any cards?

## **Adjournment**

Immediately following the Annual Meeting there will be an executive meeting. Everyone is invited to stay for this meeting to learn more about what is happening in District 23. Conveners of the various activities will give reports. Join us and see if you would like to become involved!

# TREASURER'S REPORT

by *Vernon Paige*

Treasurer's Report - Vernon Paige



## RTOERO District 23 North York

Financial Statement for the Period January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
<b><u>Assets at January 1</u></b>		
Bank	\$ 36,480.26	\$ 12,310.49
Other Assets - GIC	11,143.80	20,060.13
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 47,624.06</b>	<b>\$ 32,370.62</b>
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>		
Grants		
Annual	\$ 44,603.51	\$ 43,973.98
Project Svc to Others	2,500.00	4,000.00
Trips	0.00	0.00
Fundraising, donations	18.00	0.00
Interest on Bank Balance and Investments	85.07	263.67
Other - income from trips, events, fundraising	1,564.20	#REF!
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 48,770.78</b>	<b>#REF!</b>
Gross Profit	\$ 48,770.78	#REF!
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>		
District Goodwill	\$ 1,586.02	\$ 2,080.47
Project - Service to Others	4,000.00	0.00
Recruitment	29.74	0.00
Meetings		161.71
Workshops		
District	0.00	426.60
National	0.00	582.28
Newsletter (printing, mailing, postage)	29,714.44	23,894.90
Website, Facebook, Email	1,136.13	71.22
Office Expenses	471.14	598.94
Retiree Receptions	0.00	0.00
Transportation	0.00	23.85
Donations	4,843.00	4,815.00
Political Advocacy	0.00	-
Other Expenses - Trips, Luncheons	739.88	3,278.21
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 42,520.35</b>	<b>\$ 35,933.18</b>
<b><u>Assets + Revenue - Expenses</u></b>	<b>\$ 53,874.49</b>	<b>#REF!</b>
<b><u>Assets at December 31</u></b>		
Bank	\$ 12,645.62	\$ 36,480.26
Other Assets - GIC	41,228.87	11,143.80
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 53,874.49</b>	<b>\$ 47,624.06</b>

Approved by District 23 Executive 2022 January 12



**RTOERO District 23 North York**  
**Budget Summary**  
 January - December 2022

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Income</b>	
400 Grant - Annual	44,984.82
480 Interest on Bank Bal & Invest's	180.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 45,164.82</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$ 45,164.82</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
<b>500 District Executive</b>	
501 Meetings - Executive	450.00
502 Meetings - Annual Mtgs/Forum	4,000.00
503 DE office expenses	750.00
504 Transportation	400.00
<b>Total 500 District Executive</b>	<b>\$ 5,600.00</b>
<b>550 Communications/Social Media</b>	
551 Newsletter	32,700.00
552 Website/Facebook/email	1,094.00
<b>Total 550 Communications/Social Media</b>	<b>\$ 33,794.00</b>
<b>600 Member Services</b>	
601 Goodwill	4,100.00
602 Member Engagement	48.00
602-1 Book Club	100.00
602-2 Have-a-Java	600.00
602-3 Needlework and Crafts	300.00
602-4 Speaker Series	2,500.00
602-5 Strollers, Pole Walking, Cycling	300.00
602-6 Mobile Devices	650.00
602-7 Bridge	250.00
<b>Total 602 Member Engagement</b>	<b>\$ 4,748.00</b>
603 Recruitment	300.00
605 Social Events	5,000.00
<b>Total 600 Member Services</b>	<b>\$ 14,148.00</b>
700 Community Grants Expense	2,500.00
<b>800 Office expenses</b>	
801 Stationery and Printing	100.00
804 Bank Fees	50.00
<b>Total 800 Office expenses</b>	<b>\$ 150.00</b>
860 Donations	5,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 61,192.00</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>-\$ 16,027.18</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-\$ 16,027.18</b>

Approved by District 23 Executive, 2022 March 9

# PROPOSED EXECUTIVE FOR 2022/2023

----- Position	Nominees -----
***Past President	Mary Valtellini
***President	Maureen Capotosto
***1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Sara Di Nallo
***2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Sylvia Skippen
Treasurer	Vernon Paige
Associate Treasurer	Kathy Shorney
Secretary	Olga McKenzie
----- Conveners	Nominees -----
***Archivist	Mary Mundle
Book Club	Sylvia Skippen
Bridge	Alan Ward
Communications	Karen Quinn
Community Service	Cheryl Paige
*** Cycling	Nadia Generoso
Foundation	Sara Di Nallo
Goodwill	Gwen Bumbury
Governance	George Meek
Have-A-Java	Elizabeth Clarke
Health Services	Gwen Scriven
***Member at Large	Mary Ellen Lawless
Member at Large	Daniele Ingster
Membership	John Giannone
Needlework and Crafts	Margaret Schuman
Newsletter Editor	Merv Mascarenhas
Newsletter Associate	Maureen Capotosto
Newsletter Associate	Valerie Sterling
Newsletter Distribution	Gerard MacNeil
Photographer	Vernon Paige
Pole Walking	Kathy Shorney
Political Advocacy	Kathy Shorney
***Recruitment	Anne Marum
Social	Mildred Frank
Strollers	Joanne Famiglietti
Technology	Vern Paige
Trips	Mary Valtellini
Webmaster	Merv Mascarenhas

\*\*\* indicates vacancy with new nominee



**Maureen Capotosto**  
**RTOERO**  
**Distinguished District Member Award Winner 2022**

RTOERO has awarded Maureen Capotosto the Distinguished District Member Award. This honour is given to those who have made significant contributions at the District level. Maureen is a most deserving winner for her tireless work with District 23 over the past sixteen years.

Maureen has a unique ability to define and fulfill a need. She is currently beginning her fourth term as President and is Associate Editor of STONY magazine. She has served as 2nd Vice President, 1st Vice President, President, and Past President three times. Maureen has been Goodwill Convenor, Editor of STONY Bridges, Service to Others Convenor, as well as chairing many committees for special events. In addition to attending many Senates centrally, she chaired the RTOERO Service to Other Committee.

Maureen's caring ways and well-developed leadership skills are what make her stand out as a leader in District 23 and beyond. She welcomes all and listens, encourages, and supports new ideas. She seeks ways to recognize the contributions of others. Maureen has introduced many new initiatives and is always willing to do the work needed to make District 23 vibrant and relevant.

Congratulations and Thank You, Maureen!



## PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*by Gwen Scriven*

How quickly the time goes by! This has been another eventful year for District 23 as remotely conducting business became the new normal. It has been a pleasure to serve as Past President with such a dedicated group of volunteers.

Communication via our STONY Bridges magazine, e-Newsletters and other social media has kept us in touch with each other. Our Goodwill team has redoubled their efforts to reach out to individual members to reduce social isolation during these difficult times.

Our special interest groups such as Have-a-Java, Book Club, e-Devices and Needlework have thrived on Zoom. Some groups, such as pole walking, have tentatively stepped back into in-person

gatherings. We are looking forward to planning in-person events for all in the coming months.

Everything that happens in District 23 results from the efforts of volunteers. Congratulations to everyone who has contributed in the past year. You are an amazing group of friends and colleagues and working alongside you has truly been a privilege.

On a final note, you can also become a volunteer with RTOERO District 23. Take up the challenge! Contact [president23@districts.rtoero.ca](mailto:president23@districts.rtoero.ca)

I hope to see everyone at in-person events this year as I continue to serve District 23 as your Benefits Convenor!

## FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*by Karen Quinn*

My first task as First Vice President was to take a more active role in the organization of the Annual Meeting last June. At that time, in our half-hour ceremony before our June Executive meeting, we acknowledged all our volunteers: we know we would not be able to provide rich and interesting activities for our members without their support and efforts. We also highlighted five special Convener volunteers for recognition who were honoured and received a

service award from RTOERO and were honoured as recipients of the Ontario Volunteer Award.

Zoom meetings and our Executive Meetings were the focus of many of my duties this year. There were meetings with table officers to discuss new initiatives, potential purchases for D23, budgetary concerns or special events for consideration. Along with my responsibilities as the Communications Convener, there were bi-monthly Zoom sessions with Sylvia Link

and her team at RTOERO Communications. They provided information and articles we were able to implement for STONY Bridges, e-Newsletters, Twitter, and Facebook. With our Communications Liaison, John Cappelletti, we met on 4 occasions throughout the year and shared concerns, successes, and information with other districts in our region of the province.

President Mary Valtellini and I met with the Executive teams from Toronto, Scarborough, Etobicoke, and York for the 4 Districts meetings to discuss issues pertinent to the Greater GTA area. We also met with Claudia Mang, RTOERO Board member liaison on 4 occasions. I also had the opportunity to join the Presidents' meetings over the year. It is interesting to observe what is going on in the many districts across Canada and hear of the concerns and successes each area experiences.

The highlights of my year had to be the Forum and Senate meetings in the fall and a couple of

weeks at the Spring sessions. I was amazed by the gatherings of representatives from 50 districts across Canada, from the Maritimes through to British Columbia. Many were experienced members of their Executives who brought great passion to the sessions as they spoke not only of their districts but of the many issues that face such a large non-profit organization. We are in good hands!!

It has been a pleasure serving as your First VP this past year. I learned a great deal about how this organization works. I will continue as the Communications Convener as we move back to more active participation in activities and events. It should be an exciting year as we celebrate 50 years as District 23. Many thanks to all the conveners I have had the opportunity to work with over the past ten years and the mentorship provided, especially Mary and Maureen. They were both so encouraging and supportive.

## SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*by Maureen Capotosto*

Challenges help me learn, develop new skills, enrich my experiences, and open my world to new experiences and new people. Involvement with RTOERO District 23, North York, has been precisely that over the years since I retired.

I greatly value the friendships and opportunities to work on many different projects. Since I choose

to do this, I often really care about what we do. Karen Quinn has been such a partner as we have worked to edit the submitted materials for STONY Bridges. She shares a passion for making our magazine reflect the vibrancy of District 23. I am so pleased that Karen will continue to focus on Communications and look forward

to working with Valerie Sterling on our next edition. With so many changes forced on us with the pandemic, it has been wonderful to have so many members submitting articles, poetry, book reviews, photos, and travelogues. We welcome these and encourage others to join in.

As a volunteer with District 23, North York, I have been fortunate to work with many of our executives on specific projects. Everyone is always helpful and willing to share their knowledge and expertise to get things done and make things work. Our Executive is a wonderful group with many who continue to serve as organizers of interest groups and activities. Each year we are fortunate to have a few new people join in and get involved. New Executive members are essential for the district to maintain its vitality, bring fresh ideas and serve our members. We will miss Mary Cairo, who is passing on the Archivist role. Mary has been very active on the Executive

and with the Social Committee. She has efficiently organized and digitized our materials so that we can draw on information and photos from our past. While Mary will be busy with new pursuits, I hope we continue to see her at events in the future.

As 2nd Vice President, I have attended meetings including the Fall and Spring Forums and the Annual Meeting, worked on committees, including Governance, Social and the Community Service project and participated in many discussions with the Table Officers for planning and addressing issues.

I look forward to moving into the President role next year. Weighing the benefits and accessibility of virtual meetings with those of in-person meetings will be a challenge. If you have preferences or suggestions for new activities, please reach out to the appropriate Convener or Executive Member. Use this [form](#) from our website to contact a Convener or the President.

## ARCHIVIST REPORT

*by Mary Cairo*

The archival items include minutes of executive meetings, photographs, photo albums and copies of STONY Bridges, and reports on items about RTO/ERO members. Fact sheets and letters providing information that may apply to our members, including travel, coronavirus, and changes to our insurance coverage, have also

been stored electronically and, whenever possible, in hard copy. This year we have continued to meet on “Zoom,” allowing many of our groups to come together. Archival information can be found in the District 23 storage cupboard at Willowdale United Church.

# BENEFITS PROGRAM REPORT

by Gwen Scriven

Over 100,000 RTOERO members are covered under the Group Insurance Plans. The range of available benefits includes Hospital and Convalescent Care, Extended Health Care (includes Travel Plan), Dental, Supplemental Travel Plan, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Life Insurance (Term and Guaranteed Issue), Home and Car Insurance. The RTOERO Members Survey 2021 indicated a high satisfaction rate with all health plans. Eighty-eight percent are likely to recommend the Extended Health Care Plan, and eighty-eight percent agree there is a good balance between coverage benefits and affordability.

As Benefits Convener, I am responsible for promoting and coordinating opportunities related to health and wellness within the District. I can also liaison with an RTOERO Group Insurance participant and the plan administrator or RTOERO Staff.

Communication with our members regarding the various insurance plans is a key responsibility. Communications include reports in each STONY magazine and from time to time in the e-Newsletter. In addition to sharing important information regarding our Group Insurance Plans, these reports include articles to support members in their healthy, active retirement journey through creating and/or sharing health-related content.

To keep current, I have reviewed the resources and attended the Annual Benefits Workshop as well as other meetings organized by RTOERO.

Everyone will have received their copy of Communicate 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 Communicate are your best resources for understanding your coverage. You can find both online at [rtoero.ca/resources/insurance-plan-updates](http://rtoero.ca/resources/insurance-plan-updates).

## Updates to the plans for 2022 include:

- Modernization of the dental plan to include increased coverage for basic and preventative and new coverage for implant surgery
- Paramedical coverage now includes occupational therapists
- Rollout of the Express Scripts Canada Pharmacy Option: Offering Express Scripts Canada Pharmacy® services. Express Scripts Canada Pharmacy provides members with the option to purchase maintenance medications using an online pharmacy
- Best Doctors, now called

Teladoc, continues to offer personalized services. For information, visit [teladoc.ca/rtoero](https://teladoc.ca/rtoero)

- Changes to Travel coverages
- Eligibility changes for RTOE-RO health plans
- No increase to 2022 premiums

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

The Johnson Scholarship Program

is available to eligible students. Annually, the program makes available 50 scholarships valued at \$1000 each to Canadian students with outstanding academic achievement and community/extra-curricular involvement. Visit <https://www.johnson.ca/scholarship> for further information.

It is a pleasure to serve as your Benefits Convener. If you have questions, I can be contacted through our website or emailing [president23@districts.rtoero.ca](mailto:president23@districts.rtoero.ca).

Stay healthy, stay safe and keep smiling!

## BOOK CLUB REPORT

*by Sylvia Skippen*

This year the RTO District 23 Book Club has again been meeting via Zoom on the last Wednesday of every month since September (except for December, which we always take off).

Before the pandemic, we met at the Edithvale Community Centre. As restrictions for COVID are beginning to lift, twenty of the members responded to a survey we created. Fifteen members indicated that they wanted to return to in-person meetings. At the same time, five felt that it would be difficult for them to return to meeting in person and would like to continue meeting virtually.

Members have appreciated meeting online in the comfort of their own homes, especially in poor weather conditions. All the

members felt that a hybrid meeting would be the best option. At this time, we are exploring how that option would work.

One of the joys of our book club is having members who contribute very thoughtful ideas and comments from different perspectives. We have a committed 40 Book Club members who want to participate and be informed about the discussed books. Generally, we have about 20 participants attending each month, and everyone seems to enjoy the opportunity to express their opinions. It tends to be a lively but respectful discussion, and members have indicated that they appreciated learning from each other.

We are pleased to report we have book club members who have



offered to facilitate each of the books for our next season. In April, we compiled a list of recommended books by our existing members for our next season commencing September 2022. The book club members then voted on the choices using a ranking system. It was difficult as members offered many exciting and diverse books, but the work is done, and we now have our agreed choices for the 2022-2023 season. Members have indicated that it is vital to have a facilitator for each book as we find it enriches our understanding of the book and encourages discussion. It is not expected to be a demanding task, but the facilitator provides the author's biography, critic reviews and thought-provoking questions for discussion.

I often send out an e-mail to remind members of the meeting and the need to advise me that they want to attend. The Zoom meeting invitation is sent to all those interested in attending the book club meeting for that particular month. New members are always welcome.

Our first book in September is the *Cry of Giraffe* by Judy Oron, and

***the author has agreed to come to the meeting.***

The following are the books for next year:

- *Cry of the Giraffe* by Judy Oron  
September 28, 2022
- *The Forest of Vanishing Stars* by Kristen Harmel  
October 26, 2022
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexi  
November 30, 2022
- *The Bee Keeper of Aleppo* by Christy Lefteri  
January 25, 2023
- *Five Little Indians* by Michelle Good  
February 22, 2023
- *Bewilderment* by Richard Powers  
March 22, 2023
- *Tuscan Daughter* by Lisa Rochon  
April 26, 2023
- *The Northern Spy* by Flynn Berry  
May 31, 2023

## BRIDGE REPORT

*by Alan Ward*

When the Bridge Report for 2019-2020 was written last March, few of us could have foreseen that our activities would still be so limited by the pandemic which was just a cloud on the horizon a year ago.

As a consequence of this our group has been unable to meet in person since mid-March 2020 and there appears to be no prospect of a return to our Tuesday afternoon games until 2022 at the earliest. I

continue to represent the group at the monthly Zoom meetings of the RTO District 23 Executive.

In normal times we meet once a week for a game of “social” bridge, unlike the duplicate games played by more competitive organizations. No master points, just a relaxing time with coffee and cookies to keep us energized. Any member may attend at any time, regardless of their level of experience and we welcome complete newcomers to the game, offering basic instruction upon request.

It is not necessary to come with a partner and in our style of play, we change partners every four hands. Discreet conversation is permitted, provided that its content does not violate the rules of fair play or common politeness nor its volume carry to neighbouring tables.

STONY Bridges will carry all details of the activity once it is safe for us to resume. We shall hope to continue meeting at Willowdale United Church as we have been doing for so many years.

## COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

*by Karen Quinn*

### Monthly District 23 E-Newsletters (September 2021 – May 2022)

This past year, RTOERO expanded across Canada and now has 50 districts from coast to coast. This resulted in a shift of some members to new districts as their home base moved to a new district. Our monthly E-Newsletter became a more important link with RTOERO in pandemic times.

This year our distribution list for the RTOERO District 23 North York E-Newsletter has 1725 to just over 1740 members receiving updates, monthly reminders, and important information notices. Our E-Newsletters, Facebook and Twitter pages reflect the new colours, brand, and graphics RTOERO is using nationwide as the organization is represented across the country.

STONY Bridges magazine continues to reflect all our new branding and colours.

### Database Maintenance:

The RTOERO monthly change lists continue to update our database, providing us with the contact information for each of our new members as well as providing key changes to email addresses.

Members must notify the Central RTOERO Office of all changes to their personal contact information (phone, home address, email addresses) – we cannot make these updates at our local level. This will ensure you do not miss STONY Bridges, Renaissance and other RTOERO communications. [membership@rtoero.ca](mailto:membership@rtoero.ca)

Information to register for our online communications is also available through our District 23

website: “Register for our E-News from the Button” for members who are not currently receiving the monthly E-Newsletter.

All of our members’ email addresses are kept private. When emails are sent out to the District 23 North York members, they only see their own email addresses. Only the convener has access to the complete list. Email addresses will not be shared with other members without your permission. Our domain provider is from the RTOERO Central office: rto-ero.org and our distribution list and E-Newsletter template are provided through Mail Chimp services. As we have almost 1750+ members in our database, there is no service fee to District 23.

### Distribution:

On average, members receive one or two emails monthly from District 23 via this service. The most up-to-date information was posted through our monthly E-Newsletter during pandemic times. These notifications directed our readers to the RTOERO pages on their web-

site or communication publications. When members raise questions or seek answers, they are redirected to RTOERO service members or their website for clarification.

I look forward to continuing to improve our services over the coming year.

### Facebook:

District 23 created a **Facebook** page for our members running for about four years now. This is designed to be an interactive site to encourage communication with our members. The site highlights webinars and registration for activities, E-newsletters, and RTOERO information from Central and local districts. Currently, we have over 106 Followers registered.

Please check us out at:

<https://www.facebook.com/rtoero-district23/>

We hope members choose to FOLLOW us, LIKE us and engage in dialogue with us.

## COMMUNITY GRANT PROJECT REPORT

*by Cheryl Paige*

Our community grant for 2021 to 2022 focused on fostering peaceful coexistence between people and urban wildlife. For this initiative, we were fortunate to receive a grant of \$2500 from RTOERO. With that funding, we organized information sessions for both

seniors and school-age children that built an understanding of the challenges wildlife encounter in an urban setting and educated us on humane approaches to manage and coexist with our wildlife.

We partnered with a wonderful organization, the Toronto Wildlife

Centre, the only veterinary hospital and rehabilitation facility for sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals in the GTA, for this project. In 2021 it helped over 6500 patients – a record-breaking number of admissions.

Victoria Badham, Manager of Education and Outreach of the TWC, delivered three outstanding sessions for our District 23 membership. If you love birds and want to support their existence, you will enjoy Victoria's session:

**Birds and Cities: Reducing Threats and Saving Birds' Lives.**

In this session, she talks about the top dangers facing songbirds, waterbirds, and birds of prey and 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. Her second session was also outstanding.

**Meet Your Neighbours! Common, Feared. Weird and Revered!** This session discussed typical problems urban wildlife get into and how to deal with these issues humanely. For example, how to humanely get rid of a skunk family. Who knew skunks do not like constant music.

Our last session dealt with **Backyard Diversity and How to Support Wildlife Babies.**

All these sessions were recorded and are now posted on our District 23 Wildlife webpage <https://district23.rto-ero.org/urban-wild->

[life-grant-project-2021-2022.](#)

Thanks to Bruno Pileggi, Science Coordinator for TCDSB and Mahfuza Rahman, Coordinator of Mathematics, Science/STEM, and Robotics at TDSB, we arranged for over eighteen classes in TCDSB and TDSB to learn about the challenges wildlife is encountering and what can be done to support them. Unfortunately, because of Covid, almost all the sessions were virtual but still very well received.

We sent out our evaluation form for this project in our April monthly E-newsletter. All responses were very positive. We would like to extend a special thank you to Ann Brokelman, wildlife photographer, for allowing us to use her amazing photographs for our Wildlife initiative.

“Thank you, District 23, for this especially important initiative.”

I, too, have been genuinely concerned about the decrease in the bird population, particularly evident in our city with its lack of songbirds. Therefore, it is wonderful to have presentations that address this issue. Several years ago, we discovered an injured owl high up in one of the oak trees in the primary schoolyard. With the help of TWC, we were able to see that the injured Great Horned Owl received the medical care that it needed. We are also thrilled to renew our relationship with them through this wonderful initiative: Susan Billington, TDSB principal.

# FOUNDATION REPORT

by Sara DiNallo

The RTOERO Foundation, despite COVID 19, continues to thrive and invest in research and activities to help build a better and healthier future. When we donate to the Foundation, we help improve the quality of life for seniors and continue to help build respect and self-determination for us as we age.

The Foundation advocates for a better health care system and builds social connections for older adults in Canada. This is done through grants that are divided into two components: Geriatric Care and Social Isolation

The grants are made to:

- Research to better understand and meet the complex needs of older adults
- Post-secondary training in the fields of geriatrics and gerontology
- Innovative projects that promote social engagement

A national call is put out for proposals at least once a year. These grants are awarded based on the

project's relevance to the funding criteria and the potential positive impact these projects will have on the lives of RTOERO members and other Canadians. Deciding on who the grant goes to is not taken lightly, so the applications are reviewed by a peer review committee of experts in the area of interest.

As we age, we are at greater risk for Social Isolation. EVERY YEAR, the RTOERO Foundation has designated October as Social Awareness Month to help raise funds and awareness about Social Isolation. The Foundation has webinars that we can subscribe to almost monthly that address some of the issues/barriers we may encounter as we age. It helps to take care of our well-being and human connection as we age. Let's help take care of ourselves by donating and participating in programs available for us either in person or online. Just log into the RTOERO Foundation to learn more about what we can do.



Downsview Park Seqsui Trail - Arcs 2019 by John Dickson | Merv Mascarenhas



# GOODWILL REPORT

*by Gwen Bumbury*

Over the past two years as Goodwill Convener, I have initiated and organized a telephone campaign to contact the most senior members. With the assistance of volunteer callers, we have called over 800 members who are 80 years and above. We contacted most of these members more than once during the two years.

With the ongoing challenges, uncertainty and isolation for older people, the importance of connecting with our members is even more important and necessary during the ongoing pandemic and unprecedented times.

Thank you to the volunteer callers for helping District 23 contact our senior members.

This Fall, we will still need more new volunteers to help us contact our senior members who are 80 years of age and older.

Each year, the Goodwill Committee continues to send out cards to the sick and the bereaved – families of deceased members. We also send out birthday cards to our members celebrating significant birthdays, namely: 80, 85, 90, 95 and above. In addition to the mailing of cards, District 23 makes Goodwill phone calls to shut-ins.

As Goodwill Convener, I encourage District 23 members to contact the Executive or the Goodwill Committee if they become aware

of anyone who is ill or would welcome a friendly phone call.

Traditionally, the Goodwill Committee, on behalf of District 23 extends a personal invitation to members 90 years of age and a guest to attend the yearly AGM/ Spring Luncheon. This is the third year due to the pandemic that this celebration will not be possible.

## Donations

The budgeted money in the Goodwill budget includes funds available to make donations to the charities District 23 North York supports yearly. An in-Memoriam donation of \$600.00 to the RTOERO Foundation in memory of our members who passed away. A donation of \$300.00 to each of the following:

- The Angel Foundation for Learning (TCDSB) and
- The Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TDSB)

Breakfast Programs in honour of our members who have reached a significant milestone.

As the convener, it is my responsibility to promote and provide the resources and services available to those members seeking assistance or information in areas such as community services and social services. I will continue to bring awareness of the available resources through STONY Bridges magazine.

Every month I use the Provincial Membership Change Lists to update District 23 Membership list. I attend monthly Executive meetings and report on the activities and concerns of Goodwill.

I want to thank the members of the Committee who are very committed to the task. Committee members are Xenia Cooper, Maria Fernandes, Kathy Shorney.

## GOVERNANCE REPORT

*by George Meek*

The role of the Convener (who works with a committee from time to time) is set out as follows:

- i. Make recommendations to the Executive for changes in the District Governance Document
- ii. Be responsible for monitoring the currency of the District Governance document, Policy and District Job Descriptions and bring recommendations to the Executive for change and addition.

RTOERO adopted a new “Governance document” in 2018, and from that, a new “RTOERO District Governance Model” was developed. The RTOERO Governance Committee has requested us to review our current Constitution (new name- District 23, North York Governance Document) and bring it into line with the new ‘District Governance Model’ for submission to our Executive for approval.

This process has been done under the guidance of the Constitution Committee. {Article 3.01 (b)} composed of Gwen Scriven, Maureen Capotosto, Sara DiNallo & me. The Executive approved this new Governance Document (14.04.21) and it was presented to the 2021 AM and approved.

This year, our work included a review of our Policy and the Work Group (Olga McKenzie, Gwen Scriven, Maureen Capotosto & me) presented substantive revisions to the Executive, which have been approved.

The work Group has now begun the review of the ‘Job Descriptions’ This review will continue into next year.

I would like to thank the many Executive members who have assisted me in our substantial work over this past year.



Butchart Gardens, Victoria BC | Merv Mascarenhas

## HAVE-A-JAVA REPORT

*by Elizabeth Clarke*

For the past two years, Have-a-Java has gone virtual.

We continue to meet on the third Wednesday of the month from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. - though now you must provide your own coffee and treat.

You can find updates in STONY Bridges, the District 23 E-Newsletters, or the District website.

Thanks also to fellow executive members who assist in supporting this activity

## MEMBER-AT-LARGE REPORT

*by Danielle Ingster*

I have shared all the good news from RTOERO to teachers thinking about retirement this year and shortly. I have left magazines and other publications in their hands (staff rooms were often not ac-

cessible). I also suggested that it is advisable to attend more than one information session available online from RTO.

I am looking forward to our next in-person meeting, hopefully soon.

## MEMBER-AT-LARGE REPORT

*by Valerie Sterling*

It was my pleasure this year to join the Executive Committee. At the meetings, I observed all the work, time, skill, and energy that each member contributes to District 23 – a fantastic group of volunteers planning and implementing activities, advocating, and representing our voices at RTOERO.

My contribution was to attend meetings and assist with editing

the Community Grant materials and the Spring edition of Stony Bridges. In addition, last Fall, I especially enjoyed reaching out to our new members to welcome them to District 23 and invite them to attend our virtual Champagne Breakfast. The new members were delighted to receive a phone call and suggested that they would enjoy speakers at our annual breakfasts/events.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*by John Giannone*

As Membership Convener and as a member of the RTO/ERO District

23 Executive, one of my main responsibilities is to keep the Dis-

trict's Membership List as current as possible. Once I receive new information from the RTOERO Provincial Office, I forward the reports to other members of the Executive, allowing them to update their files, as required, for their Convener activities. I also prepare a summarized update—which is shared with the Executive at our monthly meetings. The updated information lists the changes in membership over the last month (new members, members who have moved to/from another District, members who

have cancelled their membership or who have, unfortunately, passed away). This report also notifies the District of any changes in the current membership information.

Every effort is made to welcome our new members, either by phone or email, to provide them with information about our District.

As of March 31, 2022, our current membership is 2,752 Retired Members and 52 Actively Employed Members.

## NEEDLEWORK AND CRAFT REPORT

*by Margaret Schuman*

*(report prepared by Olga McKenzie)*

The Needlework Group continues to meet, via Zoom, on the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 10:00 a.m. We enjoy getting together and sharing our various projects and ideas. Members continue to broaden their skills using YouTube.

We are always open to assisting various groups however we can. Premie hats and blankets continue to be created for Humber River Hospital, and we have also been contributing to other deserving requests. Some members have found yarn stashes and other items in drawers and cupboards, and some exciting and very creative projects have been produced. New patterns, colours, and new techniques have been explored and shared at our Zoom meetings. Members have made many unique

creations, and we look forward to making draw items for our luncheons, the proceeds of which will go to the RTOERO Foundation and the Community Service Project we support.

The great news is that we are now planning for face-to-face meetings to resume in September at Edithvale Community Centre. We will continue to meet on the third Thursday of the month in the Fall. We are beginning to plan for our raffles at our Champagne Breakfast.

We look forward to seeing old and new friends. New members are always welcome. Come along and give us the benefit of your interests!

# NEWSLETTER & DISTRIBUTION REPORT

by Merv Mascarenhas, Maureen Capotosto, Gerard MacNeil

STONY Bridges, a high-quality colour newsletter/magazine, was published by RTOERO District 23, North York, three times this past year: August 2021, November 2021, and March 2022.

COVID-19 transformed STONY from a newsletter into a glossy magazine. Creative poets quickly filled the void created by the lack of in-person meetings, travel authors and human-interest stories.

STONY Bridges has grown from a staid 32 pages to a 40-page blockbuster, with the March 2021 issue setting a record of 44 pages. An electronic version is emailed to all retired and actively employed members via the RTOERO e-blast service. Retired members who elect to receive a printed copy are sent a copy two weeks later after being printed and mailed.

Our Summer 2021 STONY cover image of a Great Blue Heron watching over his newly hatched chicks is truly captivating. We are indebted to *Ann Brokelman* for using this masterpiece and other amazing nature pictures for our covers this year. Ann says, *"I love watching nature, especially behaviour - the interaction between adults and babies, the way the colours and feathers look, how an animal preens, how the porcupine walks, how the paws on a fisher look vs the pine martin. My hobby makes me enjoy every day, from a caterpillar to a bear or moose."*

Ann's work has blended in well with Cheryl Paige's Urban Wildlife Grant Project in conjunction with the Toronto Wildlife Centre (TWC). In addition to fascinating presentations to North York schools, members were able to participate in a three-part virtual series presented by Victoria Badham, Education and Outreach Manager at TWC. Video recordings of these presentations are available on the District 23 website. They appeal to all generations, especially grandchildren.

During the time of COVID, our travel writers Gail M. Murray and Steve Carey have allowed us to journey with them to the French Renaissance, Barcelona, South Africa, and Robben Island, where political activist and lawyer Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 of the 27 years of his imprisonment before the fall of apartheid. Yours truly joined the fray with a travelogue into the wonders of Beautiful British Columbia - beautiful wines and sights juxtaposed with devastating forest fires. Closer to home, Joanne Famiglietti led us on a backyard tour, looking at Midtown Toronto's Hidden Sculptures. Gail's article on Heygo was the perfect antidote for those suffering from travel withdrawal – for the optional cost of a latte, we can participate in a live guided tour of any exotic part of the world from the comfort of our lounge chair. As Steve Carey loves to remind us, *"The world is a book and those who do not travel read*

*only a page (St. Augustine).”*

STONY was also graced by our prolific poets Bev Gorbet, Bruce Jacobs Davidovitch, Carole A. Martyn, Joyce Arnsby, and Sheila Winnick. Gail also contributed several book reviews to complement the sterling work of our Book Club.

In her Happy Retirement picture story, Marcellina Lobalsamo reminded us that the uncomplicated things in our daily lives satisfy us. Friends and family are pictured experiencing simple activities that bring calm. In another article, Mary Mundle described the joys of reaching out to fellow members.

**Dr. Suzuki: Creating a legacy through environmental stewardship** - In a mesmerizing RTOERO presentation on January 25, 2022, David Suzuki swung us from terrifying images of our wanton destruction of planet Earth to offering us a glimmer of hope if we act quickly. On our website at <https://district23.rto-ero.org/dr-suzuki-creating-a-lasting-legacy-through-environmental-stewardship>, I offer a distillation of his Call to Action and a transcript of his presentation and the Q & A.

RTOERO hosted three town hall meetings with representatives of the major political parties in the June 2, 2022, Provincial Elections. One of the parties, unfortunately, declined the invitation. Video recordings of these excellent meetings are available at:

- [Seniors strategy](#)
- [Geriatric health care](#)

- [Environmental Stewardship](#)

Responsible use of resources, conservation, protecting our air, land, and water — improving in all areas is critical to a sustainable future. Still, some powerful people and industry leaders dismiss and confound the situation in the face of irrefutable evidence. On June 2, 2022, we hope you voted for MPPs and a political party that will implement a non-partisan solution to the greatest challenge of our lifetime? **We can ill afford to kick the can down the road for 4 More Years!**

We are sorry to bid farewell to Mary Cairo, an Archivist who has dedicated many years to assisting members and making District 23 a leader at RTOERO. We thank her for organizing, digitizing, and making our archives accessible to share with our district members. We wish Mary well in her future endeavours.

Please note that RTOERO e-Blasts are only sent to members who have a valid email address in the RTOERO database. If you are unsure of your communication settings, the bottom of all emails from RTOERO contains a link to your Marketing or Subscription Preferences. Please ensure that the District Newsletter checkboxes correctly reflect them. When the new Member Portal is launched by RTOERO later this year, you will be able to update your information through the portal.

While STONY Bridges includes the most current information near the time of publication, changes



may be inflight. Check the monthly E-Newsletter, websites, Twitter, and Facebook for important updates.

We are grateful to those who elect to dispense with the printed versions of STONY Bridges and Renaissance. This gesture is environmentally friendly and saves us printing and shipping costs. You can make this election through our online website form (<https://district23.rto-ero.org/opt-in-for-online-newsletters>) or the RTOERO Preferences link at the bottom of all RTOERO communications. Full disclosure: I opt to receive printed copies of STONY Bridges and Renaissance!

We are grateful to all table officers and conveners who provide programs for their common interest groups. Despite the cancellation of in-person meetings, many groups have thrived in the World of Zoom. Participation in the Book Club and e-Devices has grown in the virtual world because it is more convenient than fighting traffic and the elements to get to Edithvale. These virtual meetings also allow members in far-off places to join in and share in our camaraderie. And they reduce our carbon footprint. I suspect that hybrid meetings will become the new normal even after COVID fades into distant memories.

We encourage you to become one of our contributors by submitting poems, pictures, and stories – page 3 of STONY indicates the submission deadline for the follow-

ing issue.

**Maureen Capotosto, our Associate Editor**, receives all submissions and works with **Karen Quinn, Associate Editor**, and a team of volunteers to proofread and edit articles and other content for STONY Bridges. Conveners and table officers of District 23 also generate content for our newsletters as we continue to offer and share programs and activities of interest to members.

**Merv Mascarenhas, Newsletter Editor**, designs and lays out the newsletter from these edited submissions. A two-column layout improves the readability of STONY, especially on smartphones – in recent STONY Bridges, we have experimented with three column pages too. To avoid participants having to cut up their precious copies of STONY to complete and mail in activity registration forms, fillable registration forms for each activity are published on the website. These forms can be filled online, printed, and mailed with cheques to the respective conveners whenever in-person meetings resume.

**Gerard MacNeil, Newsletter Distribution Convener**, works with our printer and distribution service to ensure that members wishing paper copies of the newsletter receive them promptly at the correct address. Actively employed members receive the online version instead. He also provides copies of the Spring edition to school staff in about 250 public/Catholic and private schools in the former City of

North York. The remaining copies are used for member recruitment

purposes and public relations at District 23 events.



## NORTH YORK STROLLERS REPORT

*by Joanne Famiglietti*

This year the NY Strollers have experienced yet another challenging time. We usually meet on the first Thursday of most months at 10 a.m., but we could not connect in person due to the Pandemic. Virtual Walks were self-guided, and published in STONY Bridges.

These included:

- **Virtual Walk 2**  
Chorley Park to Brickworks  
(Path from Chorley Park)
- **Virtual Walk 3**  
Sculpture Garden (Davisville  
Dr. /Yonge ST. to Mt. Pleasant Ave.)

- **Virtual Walk 4**

Etobicoke Tour of Mural Project. (Dundas St. W at Islington Ave.)

We hope you had the opportunity to enjoy yourself on these walks. Hopefully we will be able to meet sometime soon and experience these and other walks together.

Till we're able to connect in person, stay fit, stay safe and stay healthy.



Etobicoke Mural Project - Woman Golfing | Joanne Famiglietti

## POLE WALKING REPORT

*by Kathy Shorney*

As the Convener, I continue to plan and organize our monthly walks on the third Tuesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. The group's purpose is to provide an outdoor fitness opportunity, either with Nordic poles or without, where we explore the local parks and trails in the central North York area.

Because we have had a long period of social isolation recently, this group provides a safe outdoor social activity. I chose locations for their safety of walking trails, free parking, and availability of wash-rooms when possible.

Nordic poles are inexpensive fitness equipment that offers stability

when walking and provide a gentle complete body and low-stress fitness opportunity. Our group has a steady attendance of about 8 members, and we constantly encourage others to join and bring a friend. It doesn't matter your fitness level as we usually join a friend and go at our own pace.

We meet from September to December and restart in March until June. At the June event, we usually celebrate with refreshments. I will continue to communicate the locations of this group activity in STONY Bridges and through our e-Newsletter. We are always ready to welcome new members.

## POLITICAL ADVOCACY REPORT

*by Kathy Shorney*

As your Political Advocacy Convener, it is my responsibility to keep updated with the policies and concerns of RTOERO related to government policies that affect our daily lives as we age.

Over the past year, I have sent information in our e-Newsletter and forwarded information regarding the Vibrant Voices White Papers, which are the basis of RTOERO's advocacy campaign. The three main components of the RTOERO advocacy are Environmental Stewardship, Geriatric Health-care and Seniors Strategy. I have attended several regional meetings

over zoom at which we share our District's activities and ideas to promote healthy aging policies.

I expressed concerns about the significant switch to digital access to many government services at a recent meeting. Many seniors do not have these skills or access to online resources such as health card renewal, booking vaccines, and transportation services such as Wheel-Trans. In addition, I attended and encouraged our members to participate in the virtual town hall meetings held in April focused on the 4 main political parties' policies related to our key

advocacy issues.

In the past year, our District chose Seniors Strategy as a focus of our activities. In addition, as part of our Community Service Grant, we partnered with the Toronto Wildlife Centre. This partnership supported the white paper related to Environmental Stewardship. The District on your half has sent letters to the Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments expressing our concerns. Now that the Provincial election has been completed, I will contact the North York ridings'

elected representatives to express further our advocacy issues related to our members.

As the Fall Municipal election approaches, I will monitor the candidate policies related to affordable housing and access to city services. I will keep our members aware of current issues and concerns at regional meetings. I will make you aware of changes that benefit our quality of life through our e-Newsletter and STONY Bridges.

## PHOTOGRAPHY REPORT

*by Vern Paige*

In an abundance of caution, the District 23 Photographer continues to wear an N95 mask, maintain social distancing, and avoid spending unnecessary time indoors where there may be unavoidable proximity to others whose "COVID status" is unknown. This does not prevent me from carrying out my responsibilities.

The Pole Walkers Group activity in March was an excellent exercise for me and my camera and the walkers. Now that warmer weather is here and public health COVID

restrictions are relaxed, we will see more RTOERO activities and I will make available my services.

I remind you that my appointment should not discourage you from using your camera. I also intend to use my camera for non-RTOERO purposes. Questions and discussions about photography are also appropriate in the Technology/e-Devices Group meetings.

You may email the District Photographer at [PhotoGuy.2019@gmail.com](mailto:PhotoGuy.2019@gmail.com).



# RECRUITMENT REPORT

by Mary Ellen Lawless

**RECRUITMENT MATTERS!** More than ever.

What a great gift membership in RTOERO is to anyone involved in any aspect of education! As we enter the third year of Covid restrictions which have impacted every aspect of every person's life and activities, it has been particularly difficult for RTOERO to reach out to potential members.

Thus, more than ever, we need to have each person reading this annual summary commit to checking with colleagues and friends who may be eligible and to determine whether they are taking advantage of all the outstanding supports and initiatives being provided for us by RTOERO. And, if someone is not a member, go to "Refer a Friend" available from RTOERO's website at [rtoero.ca/free-membership](https://rtoero.ca/free-membership) and invite colleagues to join RTOERO for FREE until retiring.

The excellent Membership booklet [ESPRIT](#) is also available from RTOERO or your District 23 Recruitment Convener. It is very easy reading and provides a virtual roadmap of the steps one should follow, beginning about fifteen years before one's anticipated date for retiring, and listing each essential step to one's life as a retiree from education.

The Retirement Planning Workshops continue to be presented virtually on a weekly schedule in

English and French by staff from the RTOERO office. These workshops are also FREE. However, the absence of personal contacts local members of RTOERO were able to make with colleagues at these workshops have made recruitment even more challenging.

There are fifteen possible categories of membership and over thirty benefits listed in *Esprit*, including:

- discounts from 3,000+ Venn-go affiliates;
- excellent plans for health, auto, home insurance;
- travel discounts;
- the online community available through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube;
- a wealth of information around tax planning, health and wellness, available scholarships for family members; and
- opportunities to support research on aging and volunteering.

RTOERO now has District organizations across Canada, making it possible for those retiring from any field of education to continue to be involved and provided with current information on every aspect of education.

The award-winning magazine [Renaissance](#) is published four times a year and sent to all mem-

bers of RTOERO. It is a wealth of current information on every aspect of living well in retirement.

In addition, District 23 publishes an equally informative magazine [STONY Bridges](#), in August, November, and March, with outstanding articles, poetry, reviews of recent best-selling books, and summaries of the many activities offered locally.

And ...

If you are reading this, you are invited to help your District 23 reach out to potential members and share the good news of the plethora of benefits available to them and their families through membership in RTOERO District 23, North York.

You must include your request to join District 23 when you complete your application form for membership. Please keep recruiting, especially for District 23.

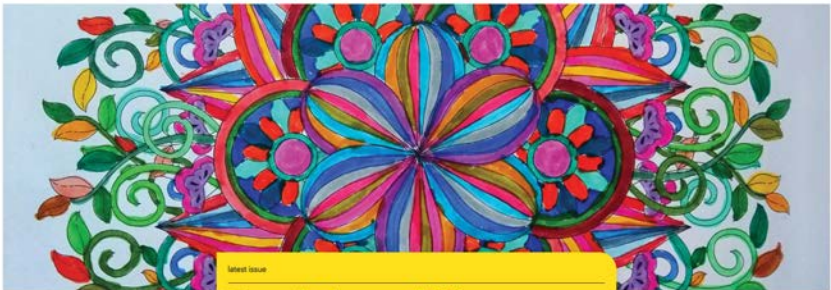


renaissance

RTOERO Magazine



features advocacy food foundation living well life travel





## SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

by Mildred Frank

Our practice over the years has been a pleasant one - providing opportunities for members to get together to share a meal, have good conversations with friends, and hear the latest news about our organization. Covid, as you know, interfered with that.

However, we did go forward with one event that is always very popular — a Champagne Breakfast to welcome new members. Virtual it was, but we did welcome 20 new members and enjoyed the compa-

ny of regulars. During the program, we introduced the executive members and shared with the new people the various activities we make available. After the regular program, we had time to share, if we so desired, news of the day. - whatever.

We look forward to further opportunities to be together for fine meals and delightful entertainment.

## TECHNOLOGY/E-DEVICES REPORT

by Vernon Paige

The United Nations considers Internet access a basic right. Not as important as food, clean water, and shelter, but still... The Canadian federal government and the City of Toronto are more specific: high-speed Internet access must be made available to all citizens at a reasonable cost.

Many educators, theorists, and others consider digital literacy – competence with Internet technology – to be as important now as basic reading. It took several thousand years, until about 200 years ago, for most of human society to learn to read. Now a technology that didn't exist 50 years ago may be almost as important. Almost. (You must first be able to read.)

In urban society it's not enough just to have Internet access. To participate fully it's increasingly necessary to achieve a higher level of digital competency, which increasingly means being able to use a smartphone for more than just phone calls.

It is surprising that these devices have become so useful and so important in such a short time – 14 years! It is not surprising that many of us need some help to begin using them. RTOERO District 23 e-Devices Group began meeting 3 years ago as a way for us to help each other learn about personal electronic technology – smartphones and tablets and computers and the Internet. Since then, the pandemic dramatically advanced

the technology, and its importance to the point of being virtually (ha! ha!) a necessity.

Some things we have shared and helped each other with:

- being in touch with family and friends when we can't be with them in person.
- buying goods and services safely and efficiently when it isn't safe or convenient to do it in person.
- giving precise directions to meet family, friends, or emergency responders in an unfamiliar location or somewhere (such as a park or parking lot) without a convenient street address.
- accessing the Internet's infinite information, education, and how-to resources.
- using opportunities online that are not possible in person because of time, distance, cost, or other factors – educational, cultural, entertainment.
- recognizing it is not just a pandemic-necessary poor substitute for meeting in person, but an efficient cost-effective alternative that enables more frequent gatherings.

- buying your first device, upgrading, or learning to use what you have.
- enhancing your non-technology activities – improving your golf or chess or bridge, new recipes, honing your skills in photography and other arts, sharing your walking, or cycling routes or garden visits, identifying wildlife and plants.
- online shopping and banking. Yes, there are risks, but with basic knowledge and simple precautions it is safe, convenient, and efficient.

When the pandemic forced a pause in our in-person meetings it was logical that this Group, probably more than any other, should begin meeting virtually, online using Zoom online conference software and our e-devices.

Some of our first online meetings were focused simply on learning how to do it, and we are still very interested in helping “newcomers”.

We now meet online alternate Fridays at 10:30 am for approximately an hour. To join the Group or request more information please send email to Vernon Paige at [PhotoGuy.2019@gmail.com](mailto:PhotoGuy.2019@gmail.com).



Sundial, Butchart Gardens, Victoria BC | Merv Mascarenhas

# TRIPS REPORT

by Mary Valtellini

Sadly, another year has come and gone with no official trips planned!!

We continued to live vicariously through the virtual and, in some cases, actual travel experiences by some of our more adventurous friends.

I will begin to book events to Shaw, Stratford and Mirvish for 2022

– 2023. We will follow all Health and Covid protocols and RTOE-RO recommendations to ensure everyone's safety. I hope you plan to join your fellow district members and me!!

## TWITTER REPORT: @RTO23\_NORTH YORK

by Merv Mascarenhas

Elon Musk's bid to buy Twitter for \$44b and take it private has shaken the Twitterverse. His promise to promote more free speech on the platform is disconcerting. Unfettered misinformation and disinformation on social media are known problems. Twitter's top lawyer Vijaya Gadde is in the spotlight after Elon Musk criticized her in scathing tweets. She has been responsible for reigning in Twitter accounts that spread lies and hate.

Musk has a track record for erratic behaviour and exercising extremely poor judgment on Twitter posts. He has frequently spoken out in favour of the Canadian trucker protests against Covid-19 mandates. In January, he posted a photo of the long line of trucks and tweeted: "Canadian truckers rule."

In another post, he said: "If the Canadian government is suppressing peaceful protests, that's where

fascism lies." The Auschwitz-Birkenau museum has criticized Musk for comparing the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, to Adolf Hitler. He tweeted a meme that showed a photo of Hitler with the words "Stop comparing me to Justin Trudeau" above the image and "I had a budget" below. The post responded to reports that Canadian authorities had ordered banks to block cryptocurrency donations to anti-vaccine protesters.

Musk has also run afoul of the SEC - in a settlement that included a \$20m fine, he agreed to have his tweets vetted by Tesla lawyers if they could affect its stock price.

Pending the havoc Musk can wreak on this valuable social media platform, Twitter has been an effective medium for District 23 communications. It provides members with a curated feed of articles by RTOERO on seniors issues, the

environment, healthcare and education. We have 107 followers and follow 212, including many thought leaders.

All members are encouraged to follow District 23's Twitter account - [@RTO23\\_NorthYork](https://twitter.com/RTO23_NorthYork), launched on December 13, 2018. We urge you to **Like** our tweets and **Retweet** them.

If you are not on Twitter, do sign up for it. You can choose initially to be a *lurker*, i.e., a user of an internet message board or chat room who does not participate. Twitter is FREE and can be accessed from your smartphone, tablet, PC or Mac.

Our Twitter account keeps you informed by:

- Tweeting Breaking News and the latest content on our website

- Retweeting curated news related to seniors' matters, education and health issues from around the world
- Providing notifications about Events, News, Articles, STONY Bridges, and E-Newsletter.
- Attracting, informing, and engaging members
- In short, improving communications with our members.

Just do it!

Tweet, Tweet!



## WEBSITE ([DISTRICT23.RTO-ERO.ORG](https://www.district23.rto-ero.org))

by Merv Mascarenhas

We strive to make our website the go-to place for information on all things RTOERO District 23, North York, by publishing:

- A **What's New?** webpage that lists all new content in chronological sequence.
- Articles on all major District 23 events, including photographs.
- An online form allows you to switch from paper to eco-friendly electronic versions of STONY Bridges and

Renaissance.

- An online Contact Us form that lets you communicate with any Convener or Executive Member – please use it to contact any member of the Executive or provide us feedback on the website, social media, events, etc.
- FLICKR photo albums of District events (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/rto23/>) - these albums are surfaced in activity reports and under the

Pictures tab.

- Resources such as the District 23 Governance Document (previously known as Constitution).
- Our most recent Tweet at the bottom of our homepage - <https://district23.rto-ero.org/>
- If you are on Twitter, please follow [@RTO23\\_NorthYork](https://twitter.com/RTO23_NorthYork); else, get yourself a Twitter account to allow you to do so.

e.g., Cheryl Paige's Urban Wildlife Grant Project 2021-2022. This three-part series presented by Toronto Wildlife Centre's Victoria Badham, Education and Outreach Manager, is outstanding and well worth watching

- **Twitter Content:** The size restriction of Twitter messages is overcome by linking Twitter content back to detailed pages on the website. The same is done for Facebook posts.

### Important Changes:

- **E-Devices subweb:** Vern Paige will resume publishing notes, slide decks, videos, and other resources for his biweekly meetings in this subweb under the Resources tab once migration to the new web platform is complete. It helps new group members catch up on topics that they missed and come up to speed quickly.
- **Newsletters:** Karen Quinn's E-Newsletters are now published under the Activities tab on the website. Electronic versions of current and past editions of the STONY Bridges magazine are available on the website under the News tab.
- **Videos:** Edited video recordings of some presentations are published in a District 23 North York YouTube Channel and surfaced on corresponding pages on the website,

**New Website:** Migration to the new website may be in progress by the 2022 Annual Meeting. Navigating it promises to be a more engaging and user-friendly experience. A parallel initiative will see the introduction of e-commerce, which will allow us to register for events from a barstool in our (Wo) Man Cave with no need for a printer, envelope, and postage stamp. We would appreciate your feedback on how our new website can better serve your needs and be easier to navigate – send us your suggestions through our [Contact Us](#) form.

We have been informed that existing content on our website will not be migrated to the new one. A challenge for us will be culling old content and moving current and archival content manually to the new website.

**What's New Page:** This page lists all new posts on the website to provide you with a quick snapshot

of new items.

**Search:** Try this powerful functionality to find information on the website.

**Contact Information:** Due to privacy concerns, we have removed contact information for Executive members from the website and new editions of STONY Bridges and the e-newsletter. To reach a Convener or table officer, please go to the Contact Us page and complete the form to send an email message to the person you wish to reach. You will be contacted by the appropriate person promptly.

**Activity Registration Forms:** To avoid participants having to cut up STONY to submit registration forms for District activities, we publish fillable activity registration forms for each activity on the website. This allows you to fill out

forms online, print the completed forms and mail them with cheques to the responsible Convener. Since we have had no in-person meetings this past year, this facility will resume when we resume meeting in person.

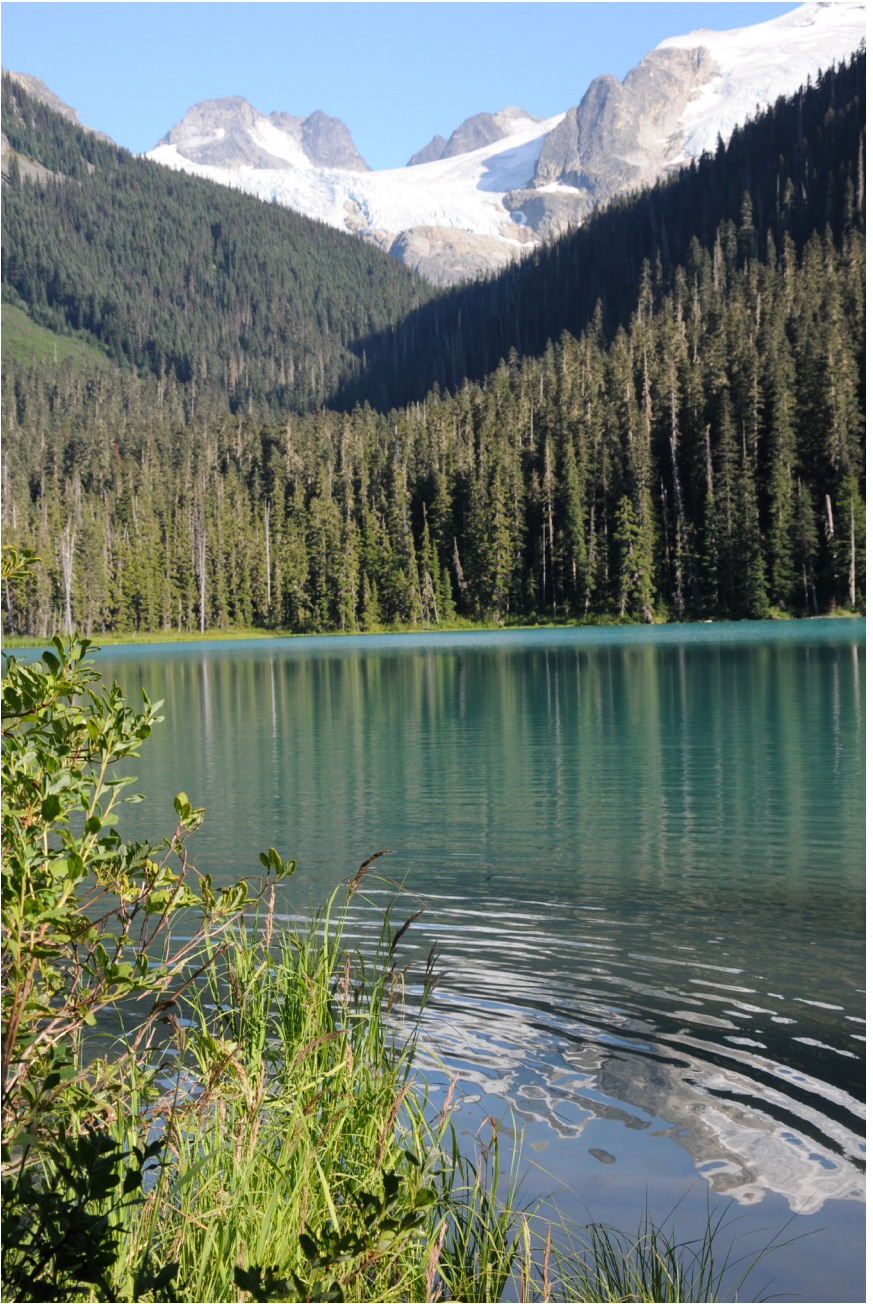
### Breaking News!

As part of its celebration of National Volunteer Week, RTOERO launched on April 28, 2022, an exciting new service for district executives – a new RTOERO Learning portal, a one-stop destination for virtual learning related to one's district executive role – and more! It will be an excellent resource for new and existing district executive members. This functionality will be extended to all RTOERO members in 2022.



Sculpture, Mission Hill Family Estate - Okanagan | Merv Mascarenhas





Lower Joffre Lake, British Columbia | Merv Mascarenhas

## FOUNDING MEMBERS OF RTOERO DISTRICT 23, NORTH YORK

Bruce Dawson\*  
Joan Featherstone\*  
Viva Heaton\*

Helen Lang\*  
Dick Webster\*  
Dorothy Young\*

## PRESIDENTS OF RTOERO DISTRICT 23, NORTH YORK

1973 - 1974	Bruce Dawson*	1998 - 1999	George Meek
1974 - 1975	Dr. John McIntosh*	1999 - 2000	Marion Taylor
1975 - 1976	Gertrude Paterson*	2000 - 2001	Rob Fraser
1976 - 1977	Dr. David Tough*	2001 - 2002	Beverley Wood*
1977 - 1978	George Hosie*	2002 - 2003	Andrée Nottage
1978 - 1979	Fraser Bradshaw*	2003 - 2004	David Fleming
1979 - 1980	Margaret Bates*	2004 - 2005	Frank Saliani
1980 - 1981	Eileen Carter*	2005 - 2006	Helen Wiber
1981 - 1982	Ruth Bick*	2006 - 2007	Mary Ellen Lawless
1982 - 1983	Ken McKee*	2007 - 2008	Margaret Schuman
1983 - 1984	Jack Foote*	2008 - 2009	Michael Sheffe
1984 - 1985	Ruth Robson*	2009 - 2010	Luci Soncin
1985 - 1986	John Allen*	2010 - 2011	Jan Siegel* / Luci Soncin
1986 - 1987	Joe Bilson*	2011 - 2012	Maureen Capotosto
1987 - 1988	Elaine Wyles	2012 - 2013	Mary Valtellini
1988 - 1989	Mary Scanlon*	2013 - 2014	Margaret Lato
1989 - 1990	Don Hazell*	2014 - 2015	Courtney Doldron
1990 - 1991	Geoff Arnold*	2015 - 2016	Maureen Capotosto
1991 - 1992	John Wilson	2016 - 2017	Jan Siegel*
1992 - 1993	Aileen Thomas	2017 - 2018	Marisa Agostini
1993 - 1994	Betty Nagle*	2018 - 2019	Sara Di Nallo
1994 - 1995	Gord Claus	2019 - 2020	Maureen Capotosto
1995 - 1996	Mildred Frank	2020 - 2021	Gwen Scriven
1996 - 1997	Claire Piché	2021 - 2022	Mary Valtellini
1997 - 1998	Nancy Walsh*		

\* deceased



Greenhouse, The Burchart Gardens, Victoria, BC | Merv Mascarenhas

designed by  
mascarenhas & associates