

# STONY Bridges



## In this Issue

- p. 2 In Memory of Jan Siegel
- p. 20 “Stronger Minds Make for Stronger Kids” –PSTO Grant
- p. 22 Dreams Come True in Amalfi by Gail M. Murray
- p. 31 “I’ll See your Bet and Raise you \$1000!” by Merv Mascarenhas
- p. 36 Photography --- Continuing to Enrich My Life by Wendy Nurgitz



## 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 Provincial's monthly updates from June 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020

Savitri Ahuja, Sydney Baumal, Dielwen Bracken, Patricia Bremner-Ikeno, Ronald Chapman, Catherine Cunsolo, Carol Dixon, Kathleen Hawker, Patricia Lindsay, Loretta Lundy, Ronald McIntyre, Elizabeth McLaren, Margaret Mooney, Helen Quinn, Remo Ramilli, Shirley Ratcliffe, Janis Siegel, Leonard Sparks Lynne Stoyan, Ene Sutt, Craig Williamson, Carol Woo

Updated Posting  
M. Joan Hunter January 2020



## Greetings to New District 23 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 of our activities. As of September 30, 2020 RTOERO, District 23 has a total membership of 2819 members.

The following information was taken from RTOERO Provincial's monthly updates from June 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020

**June:** Aviva Brenner, Joan Chapman, Shelley Joffe, Ross MacDonald, May Nemr, Mark Silverstein, Kevin Watt

**July:** Kwan-Ying Au, Francis Coffey, Rosario Cunsolo, Sheila Harbin, Janet Jundler, Eugenia Marino, Shirley McIntyre, Leonard Nicholson, Asdghig Ramilli, Gwendolyn Rattle, Sally Ungerman, Michael Winberg

**August:** Cindy Greiver, Annie Heber, Geoffrey Ikeno, Kathleen O'Malley, Linda Ramkissoon, Agnes Schwartzberg, Bonnie Sparks, Ina Turner

**September:** Olivia Coutinho, Dr. Altaf Qadeer, Frances Wurga



## Janis Siegel 1949 - 2020

Jan was a very active member of the RTOERO District 23 executive and a President for two terms in 2010 Fall & 2016/2017. Jan also was the Project Service to Others Convener for five years supporting community activities through projects that involved members and a grant from the central office.

Jan brought her talents and skills supporting many events and activities within the District. As well Jan was involved at the provincial level as a member of the Benefits Committee that oversees our Health Plan. Jan loved a challenge and bringing people together to support good causes. Her love of travel with her husband Courtney Doldron, also an executive member and Past President, took her to many, many places bringing back great photos, new friends, and wonderful memories.

We were fortunate to have Jan's influence, enthusiasm and ideas in developing and promoting many of the things we do as a District. Jan's family was the centre of her life but her interests extended far and wide.

In her last month, Jan was honoured by the Rotary Club of Willowdale for her Leadership as she concluded her year as President of their club.

# Table of Contents

District 23



<b>In Memoriam</b> .....	<b>2</b>	<b>Champagne Breakfast</b> .....	<b>19</b>
by John Giannone, Convener		by Mildred Frank, Convener	
<b>Greetings to New District 23 Members!</b> .....	<b>2</b>	<b>Stronger Minds Make for Stronger Kids</b> .....	<b>20</b>
by John Giannone, Convener		by Maureen Capotosto, Convener & Valerie Sterling, Member	
<b>In Memory of Janis Siegel</b> .....	<b>2</b>	<b>Dreams Come True in Amalfi</b> .....	<b>22</b>
by John Giannone, Convener		by Gail M. Murray, Member	
<b>President's Message</b> .....	<b>4</b>	<b>It's Social Isolation Awareness Month</b> .....	<b>26</b>
by Gwen Scriven, President		by Sara Di Nallo, RTOERO Foundation Representative	
<b>What a Team.</b> .....	<b>5</b>	<b>RTO Scholarships</b> .....	<b>27</b>
by Maureen Caporosto, Past President		<b>Book Club.</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Political Advocacy</b> .....	<b>6</b>	by Sylvia Skippen, Convener	
by Kathy Shorney, Convener		<b>The Willow Winds</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Communications</b> .....	<b>7</b>	by Bev Gorbet, Member	
by Karen Quinn, Convener		<b>e-Devices Group</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Bridge Musings</b> .....	<b>8</b>	by Vern Paige, Convener	
by Alan Ward, Bridge Convener		<b>I'll See Your Bet and Raise You \$1000!</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Cycling .....A Growing Life Style</b> .....	<b>9</b>	by Merv Macarenhas, Editor, Webmaster and Twitter Meister	
by Eileen Kearns, Convener		<b>Andalusía - Heart of Spain</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Pole Walking</b> .....	<b>10</b>	by Gail M. Murray, Member	
by Kathy Shorney, Convener		<b>Readers Letters/Questions.</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>North York Strollers.</b> .....	<b>10</b>	<b>A Floral Refrain</b> .....	<b>35</b>
by Joanne Famiglietti, Convener		by Bruce Jacobs Davidovitch	
<b>Goodwill – Caring...Compassionate</b> .....	<b>11</b>	<b>Photography – Continuing to Enrich My Life</b> .....	<b>36</b>
by Gwen Bumbury, Convener		by Wendy Nurgitz, Member	
<b>Recruitment and You.</b> .....	<b>12</b>	<b>LIGHTFOOT by Nicholas Jennings c 2017</b> .....	<b>38</b>
by Mary Ellen Lawless, Convener		by Gail M. Murray, Member	
<b>Have-a-Java</b> .....	<b>13</b>	<b>Autumn 1987</b> .....	<b>39</b>
by Elizabeth Clarke, Convener		by Bev Gorbet, Member	
<b>Health Benefits: More Than a Report!</b> .....	<b>14</b>	<b>Waxing Nostalgic.</b> .....	<b>40</b>
by George Meek, Convener		by Mary Cairo, Archivist	
<b>Needlework and Crafts</b> .....	<b>19</b>		
by Margaret Schuman, Convener			

## Submissions

STONY Bridges RTOERO, North York, District 23 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 (for identification only) and some past and present biographical information (for publication if space permits). Articles should be from 400 to 1200 words (one half to one page) in length. Photos are also welcome (minimum 300 dpi in jpg or RAW 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. Send submissions to: Maureen Capotosto at [mpecapostosto@sympatico.ca](mailto:mpecapostosto@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 Wednesday, January 13, 2021**



# President's Message

by Gwen Scriven, President

*“Sometimes good things fall apart, so better things can fall together.” — M. Monroe*

This has been an extra ordinary year in so many ways. New hobbies and creative ways of keeping in touch with those we love have become a way of life. I hope everyone enjoyed the warm summer weather and beautiful fall colours before winter sets in. Congratulations to new retirees and welcome to new members to RTOERO District 23. You can keep informed and in touch through our newsletter STONY Bridges, monthly E-Newsletter, Facebook, website and Twitter.

There have been a few changes to the Executive this fall. In order for Districts to move forward, the RTOERO Central enacted a process to install the new Executive. The following persons were acclaimed through this process. Vernon Paige is now Treasurer, Olga Mackenzie remains as Secretary, Second Vice President is Karen Quinn, First Vice President is Mary Valtellini and myself as President. Sara Di Nallo has been appointed as our representative for The RTOERO Foundation. Maureen Capotosto will serve as Past President. All other convenors will remain in their positions until such time as there is an AGM with elections. I would like to commend the Executive on their efforts to reach out and serve our members during this difficult year and know that we will continue to be creative in finding new ways to engage you, our members.

On September 22, 2020 we had our first virtual Champagne Breakfast to welcome new members and celebrate their retirement. It was an opportunity for our convenors to let our new members know what activities are continuing on Zoom, hear about the Health Plan and MemberPerks. The Book Club, e Devices, Have-a-Java, and Needlework and Crafts groups are all meeting regularly on ZOOM. Everyone is welcome to join. You will find information in the magazine about contacting the organizers. Give one a try – they are a lot of fun!

RTOERO nationally continues in its mission to be the trusted voice for healthy, active living in the retirement journey. COVID may have changed many things this year, however, the work of the organization to advocate on behalf of seniors continues to be very active and focused on the issues. A goal of RTOERO is to broaden its membership base. One of the best ways to recruit new members is by you recommending that others join RTOERO, whether it be for the Health Plans, MemberPerks, social events or as a way of helping others. RTOERO is open to anyone who has been involved in education in any capacity, and even those currently working. Tell a friend!

I look forward to seeing many of you on Zoom or hopefully in person over the next year. If you would like to join the Executive, have a new idea for a program or have questions please feel free to contact me at [president23@districts.rtoero.org](mailto:president23@districts.rtoero.org).

Keep well, keep safe and stay strong!



# What a Team

By Maureen Capotosto, Past President

*“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.” — Phil Jackson*

What a year to be President! Everything was moving along as expected with our District until March with the worrisome news of a virus that would soon upturn our lives. In the space of 3 days we went from planning events into the Spring to cancelling everything as Prime Minister Trudeau issued his first of many announcements about the pandemic. As we dealt with the isolation and restrictions it sunk in that our executive needed to consider some different ways of doing things. Our first zoom meeting was a challenge for some to just get connected with our sound and video working. Some of us upgraded our equipment and Wi-Fi service as we realized that the internet was going to be a lifeline to the outside world.

Vern Paige led the way with the e-Device group moving into the virtual realm quite quickly. Then the Needlework group gave it a try and recognized how much the meetings were helping members to broaden their world. The Have-a-Java group gave it a try with Elizabeth Clarke and Sylvia Skippen who is new to the Convener role also brought the Book Club group together in June. Kudos to all of these pioneers! Our executive was very creative about how we could move into the new year with adaptation and ingenuity. Read about Joanne Famiglietti's offering to strollers to continue their walks if they are interested. What a wonderful team we have.

In June 2020 our Executive passed a motion to donate \$1.00 per District 23 member to Covid -19 research. A cheque for \$2815 was sent to Toronto General and Western Hospital Foundation. As well we moved forward our Goodwill donations to the food programs with TCDSB and TDSB in June

instead of waiting until later in the year. This past year we had several members propose an idea for our Service to Others Project. We decided to accept the one from Valerie Sterling as it best fit the requirements and put together an application for the Stronger Minds Make For Stronger Kids project. I am thrilled to announce that we have received a grant from RTOERO of \$4000. Read about how you can support this project by nominating a

pre-school/Kindergarten to grade 6 teacher sworking in a TCDSB or TDSB school to receive the Kids Have Stress support materials.

I will continue to support the District and the Executive as Past President and in my other roles. If you would like to learn more about working on our executive and District activities please contact me – [mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca](mailto:mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca)

## Calendar of Events

### December 2020

- 9 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 11 e-Devices Group (ZM)
- 16 Have-a-Java (ZM)

### January 2021

- 8 e-Devices (ZM)
- 13 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 20 Have-a-Java (ZM)
- 21 Needlecraft & Crafts (ZM)
- 22 e-Devices (ZM)
- 27 Book Club. (ZM)

### February 2021

- 5 e-Devices (ZM)
- 10 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 17 Have-a-Java (ZM)
- 18 Needlecraft & Crafts (ZM)
- 19 e-Devices (ZM)
- 24 Book Club (ZM)

### March 2021

- 5 e-Devices (ZM)
- 10 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 17 Have-a-Java (ZM)  
(Happy St. Patrick's)
- 18 Needlecraft & Crafts (ZM)
- 19 e-Devices (ZM)
- 31 Book Club (ZM)

### April 2021

- 14 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 16 e-Devices (ZM)
- 21 Have-a-Java (ZM)
- 22 Needlecraft & Crafts (ZM)
- 28 Book Club (ZM)
- 30 e-Devices (ZM)





## Political Advocacy

by Kathy Shorney, Convener

The RTOERO Political Advocacy Committee in support of the initiatives of RTOERO Strategic plans for 2025 continues to work towards improving the lives of our members and seniors. The Vibrant Voices Campaign has developed three areas of focus for our Advocacy Campaign:

- Physical and Mental Health for Older Adults
- Seniors Strategy
- Environmental Stewardship

As your convener, I recently participated in a Zoom conference on September 21, 2020 that shared the Vibrant Voices Strategy. The three areas of focus and action strategies were explained as we move forward to address our concerns to all levels of government and local organizations that impact the lives of seniors.

As part of the Vibrant Voices initiative, white papers that outline the issues have been published to discuss some of the challenges and questions, we as senior citizens and advocates, can ask our politicians. Over the next few STONY Bridges newsletters I will summarize these white papers and provide you with current updates on our progress and how you can become involved.



As part of the Seniors Strategy Paper, focus will be on reimagining aging and fighting ageism in our society. We are looking to help government change infrastructure to allow seniors to stay at home and age in place, improve financial security around pension plans and income guarantees, and improve healthcare. We are also supporting the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

By 2030, one in four Canadians will be senior citizens. Our health care system needs to re-think how it addresses the needs of this group. This was certainly evident in the past winter with the COVID Pandemic first wave. Identified challenges include the lack of trained geriatricians. A wide range of health care professionals including pharmacists, doctors, nurses, personal support and home care workers, physical and occupational therapists, recreational therapists and mental health/social workers need training in serving seniors. Other challenges relate to the current narrow focus on providing services and policies related to physical health. Advocating for more extensive support for long term care includes human resources, structural and funding changes to increase capacity. It should also be taken into account that most seniors want to stay in their own homes as long as possible. Health, finances, transportation, safety and other considerations impact that decision. A fourth challenge is addressing the awareness of and the prevention of elder abuse.

We are game-changing advocates who have influential relationships with the media, stakeholders and government policy makers. Our voice is clear and impactful to effect social change.

### Long-term Care Advocacy Form

The tragedy in long-term care is an issue we care deeply about. A personal email to your elected representative can be a powerful tool for change. We are working to put this issue at the top of the political agenda for government. Complete the following form to send a message today to your elected representative. We've provided a statement summarizing the issues. Feel free to add your voice and adapt this letter to your needs. Use your own words and focus on why this issue matters to you personally or to your community. You will find the form [here](#).

I will try to update you as things evolve through STONY and the e-Newsletter as your PAC convener. Further information is available on the [RTOERO website](http://rtoero.ca/giving-back/advocacy/)



## Communications

by Karen Quinn, Convener

*“You never know when a moment and a few sincere words can have an impact on a life”  
— Zig Ziglar*

As we prepare for the possible second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reminded of the dangers of social isolation among members of our population. An estimated 30% of our seniors are at risk of being socially isolated. They may have lost a spouse, family member or a close friend, suffered changes in their health or mobility, had to leave a cherished home, or are missing participation in a favourite activity. Coupled with the fact that the fall and winter bring more dangerous weather conditions, we need to reach out and assist those around us.

*“When we don't have that contact with other people, we can wind up feeling helpless and hopeless. This is really exacerbated at this time.”*

It's important, especially in these times that we make every effort possible to stay connected:

- Chat on a weekly phone call
- Arrange a shopping trip or directions for a delivery service for groceries, medical supplies
- See if there is someone to assist with clearing snow in the neighbourhood
- Arranging for a technology tool to access video calls (ZOOM, SkyCyclingpe, FaceTime, etc.)
- Drop off a little treat box (tea, cookies, flowers)
- Offer a drive to a local hair salon, doctor's office, dentist, etc.

It's amazing how a few words of kindness, a little errand or a few minutes of time can change an outlook for a whole day. If you notice someone in your neighbourhood who seems adrift or in need of help, take a few moments to reach out...you can change a life!

### E-Newsletter

#### Stay Connected with Email Updates

Each month, between September and June an E-Newsletter is sent out to all registered members highlighting the events and activities going on in North York's District 23. Over the summer months, an abbreviated version of

the monthly missive is offered during July and August. When you select North York District 23 as your home base in the RTOERO organization, your name is added to participate in our email fan-out as soon as we are forwarded your registration information. You will always be connected unless you choose to unsubscribe.

In these COVID-19 times, the E-Newsletter's role has become even more important. Regular activities such as Bridge, Pole Walking, North York Strollers and Cycling cannot be held due to social distancing protocols. Events such as Have-a-Java, Book Club, E-Devices, Needlework and Crafts have become virtual gatherings on Zoom. Our monthly E-Newsletter provides the date when registration for these activities is required and the name of your contact convener.

From time-to-time updates are mailed mid-month to inform members about important notices, or a change in status for upcoming events: new volunteer opportunities, etc. You can also register on our website: [district23.rto-ero.org](http://district23.rto-ero.org) Please scroll down on the main page and you will note the blue flashing oval: "E-Mail Update" It is important to be connected!

Our emails will arrive in your boxes from Karen Quinn --"RTO/ERODistrict23Communications". Please make sure to add that name to your accepted contact list to receive regular emails from our group.

Mail Chimp is the organization used to create our monthly E-Newsletters, and it is distributed through the Provincial RTOERO domain. Your information will remain confidential. If you have any questions or you are not receiving our communications, please email: [kquinn56@gmail.com](mailto:kquinn56@gmail.com)

### Follow us on Facebook!

LIKE our page, send us a message, take the opportunity to read professional articles about services offered and see the latest updates from RTOERO. Our E-Newsletter is published monthly on the site as well as STONY Bridges. Please FOLLOW us!

[www.facebook.com/rtoerodistrict23NorthYork](https://www.facebook.com/rtoerodistrict23NorthYork)



## Bridge Musings

by Alan Ward, Bridge Convener

*“The real test of a bridge player isn’t in keeping out of trouble, but in escaping once he’s in!”*  
— Alfred Sheinwold

It now seems unlikely that the Bridge Group will meet again in 2020 and likely that our activity will be on hold well into 2021. Some of you will continue to play through online groups and a few may be fortunate enough to have four competent players within their own households. For some of us, this a good time to revisit our libraries or go online to review our knowledge of our favourite game. Here are a few gleanings from my own reading.

The chances of a favourable division of outstanding cards is much greater when opponents hold an odd number than when they hold an even number. Suppose you hold AKxxx and are hoping to drop a missing queen or jack.

With 3 outstanding cards, a 2:1 split will occur 78% of the time

With 5 outstanding cards, a 3:2 split will occur 67% of the time

With 7 outstanding cards, a 4:3 split will occur 62% of the time

With an even number of outstanding cards, the likelihood of an even division is under 50%, except when only two cards are out, when the chance of a 1:1 split slightly exceeds a 2:0 and 0:2 split by 52% to 48%.

With 4 outstanding cards, a 2:2 split will occur only 40% of the time while 3:1 or 1:3 happens in 50% of deals.

With 6 outstanding cards, a 3:3 split will occur only 35% of the time while 4:2 or 2:4 happens in 48% of deals.

With 8 outstanding cards, a 4:4 split will occur only 32% of the time while 5:3 or 3:5 happens in 47% of deals.

If declarer has 8 trump, there will be 5 missing and the chance of a 3:2 split will be 67%. Holding 9 trump, the chance of a 2:2 division is only 40%. In this latter case, a 3:1 or 1:3 split will occur 50% of the time and a 4:0 or 0:4 split 10%.

When there are no clues offered by the bidding, it is worth considering the probabilities of different hand shapes. A void will occur in about 5% of all hands, a 6-card suit in about 16% and a 7-card suit in 3%. An 8-card suit will only happen in less than 1% of all hands dealt, so enjoy it when it comes your way! The most likely hand shapes are 4:4:3:2 (21%), 5:3:3:2 (15%), 5:4:3:1 (13%), 5:4:2:2 and 4:3:3:3 (10%). Of the remaining hands 6:3:2:2 (5.6%), 6:4:2:1 (4.7%) and 6:3:3:1 (3.45%) are the next most likely holdings.

These probabilities are significant when declarer is considering a safety play. In duplicate bridge, an over-trick can make a big difference to one’s score, but in rubber bridge the reward for an overtrick is not usually worth risking the contract. Consider the options when dummy holds AKQxx opposite xx in declarer’s hand. If the contract is in notrump and dummy has no outside entry, a 3:3 split in the suit will produce 5 tricks but will happen only 35% of the time. If declarer needs all 5 tricks, there is no option but to play for the drop. If only 4 tricks are required from this suit to make the contract and if declarer can afford to give up the lead after winning the first trick, a safety play will be a better option. Declarer leads to the AKQxx but plays low from dummy. The combined chances of a 3:3 split and a 4:2 or 2:4 split are 84%. The safety play will bring home the contract 5 times out of 6.

Sometimes a declarer gambles on underplaying an ace on the first round if a non-honour card is led in a suit where dummy holds Axx and declarer holds Qxx. Ducking the ace can be risky, particularly if the opponents have not given away any clues in the bidding. A hand with a singleton will happen in 30% of hands and on occasions an unkind opponent will lead a singleton, hoping for a ruff if partner can take the first trick. Ouch! Declarer’s partner will not be happy if a slam is defeated after the first two tricks.

To finesse or not to finesse, that is the question (apologies to Hamlet!) The recommended plays are as follows.

If opponents have two cards and you are missing the king, playing for the drop is marginally better (52%)

With 3 or 4 cards missing, finesse against a missing king but not against a missing queen.

With 5 or 6 cards missing, finesse against a queen but not against a jack.

The often-quoted adage is “8 ever, 9 never” when deciding whether to finesse for a missing queen.

The saying that one cannot teach an old dog new tricks is not true for bridge-playing seniors! Stay safe, stay well!



## Cycling .....A Growing Recreational and Transit Life Style During the Time of Covid-19

by Eileen Kearns, Convener

*“When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems worth having, just mount a bicycle and for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking.”*  
— Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of Sherlock Holmes

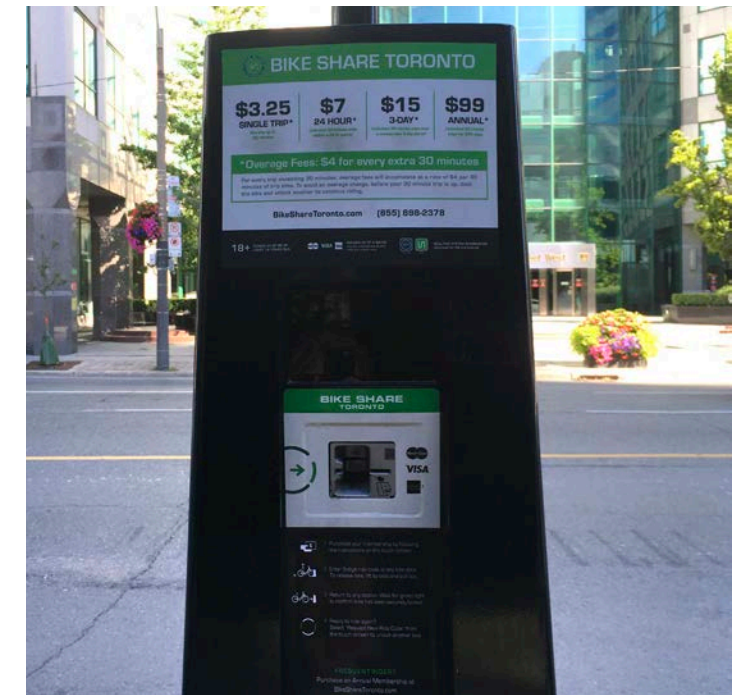
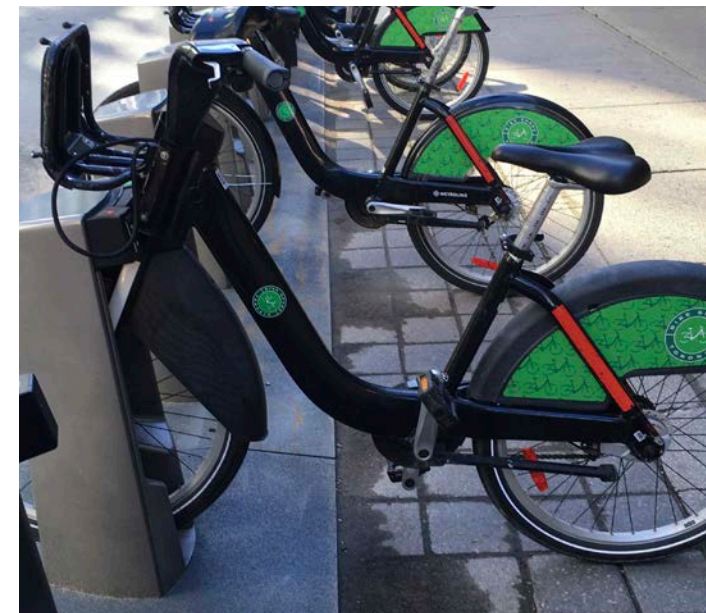
These pictures were taken on Front St. in Toronto for the purpose of demonstrating what the bike share set up is like. I also included a picture of the machines used for payment purposes.

Despite that the RTO/ERO District 23 Cycling activity is on hold until the distribution of a Covid-19 vaccine, we can certainly look at and celebrate what is happening in the cycling world around us.

It is most exciting to witness this interest and growth in cycling in our city along with everywhere else in the world!

Anyone who has been through the process of purchasing a bike for themselves or perhaps a grandchild this past Spring/Summer knows how challenging it was to actually get that purchase, given that the demand for bikes has exceeded the usual demand at this time of year.

In Toronto we have realized this cycling growth as a means of exercise and getting out and enjoying the outdoors. It is a super multi-generational activity! Additionally cycling has been an option for those who wanted to avoid public transit during a time when many people wanted an alternative option from travelling with others on shared transit.



What was most delightful to witness was the growth in locations of the Bike Share Toronto Program not only on our streets and subway locations but also at many of the park entrances/exits. This option allows cyclists to rent a bike for pleasure riding or to actually use it through a parks system/ravine for the purpose of arriving at a set destination. Whatever the intent for utilizing this bike access system it is wonderful that such an alternative is growing.

It would seem that cycling in Toronto as both a means of an increased recreational activity and as an alternate transit source will continue and hopefully grow after the post Covid-19 time frame.

So.....be ready to share your cycling adventures when the RTO/ERO District 23 Learning Spokes ride again! To register email: [Eileen\\_Kearns@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:Eileen_Kearns@edu.yorku.ca)

**Please note** there is an underscore between the first and last name in the email address.



## Pole Walking

by Kathy Shorney, Convener

*“An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day.” — Henry David Thoreau*

With the COVID virus still preventing us from holding our usual monthly Pole Walking activities, it is a good time to think about our overall fitness levels as the fall and winter comes on. Many of us have perhaps gained the “Covid 10” or with the hot summer have relaxed a little. The cooler weather is upon us now, so it is time to once again enjoy the outdoors. Pole walking requires no special equipment other than a set of poles. These poles are similar to ski poles but are adjustable in length and often with a hand grip and an interchangeable ends for smooth or icy surfaces. They are available at most sporting sections of the box stores. Cost should be no more than \$50 a pair. No special shoes are required other than your regular walking shoes. Many videos for basic information and instructions for striding can be found on YouTube.

Nordic poling started as a fitness walking activity in Finland. It offers a total body version of exercise and is perfect for older adults. The fact that you apply force to the poles during each stride causes you to use more of your total body. The benefit is an increase in heart rate and 46% increase in energy consumption. Maybe helpful to burn off those extra calories. I have noticed that more people are embracing this easy to do activity in my neighbourhood during their walks. Hopefully the image of an “old people” activity is waning.

I look forward to resuming our monthly activities exploring local parks and trails hopefully in the spring. Watch the monthly e-blasts for information. Meanwhile I hope you get some poles and enjoy a new activity in your neighbourhood.



## North York Strollers

by Joanne Famiglietti, Convener

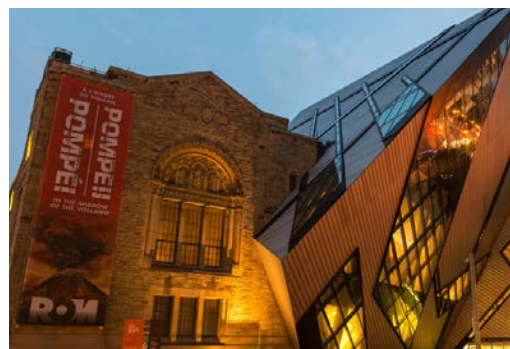
*“Some of our greatest artistic and historical treasures we put in museums, others, we take for walks.” — Roger Caras*

As Convener of the North York Strollers, I'd like to wish you good health, as we navigate these unusual times. I hope that all of you are well.

Since we are not able to conduct walks together, I am suggesting that members could follow a route that I have created in a PDF file. It is called: Virtual Walk 1 - Historical Sites in Downtown Toronto

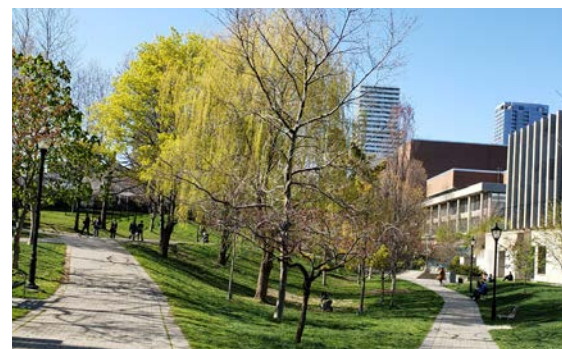
All you need to do is send me your email address, and I'll forward you this file. You can reach me at: [jcfam12@gmail.com](mailto:jcfam12@gmail.com)

I hope this will assist to keep you active, yet change your usual routine. Stay safe, stay active, and keep smiling. Hope to hear from you soon. 'Til we're able to return to our fun times together...



### Downtown Toronto Historic Sites

Bloor Street, Philosopher's Walk  
ROM, Faculties of Law and Music



## Goodwill – Caring...Compassionate

by Gwen Bumbury, Convener ~ Goodwill

*“For me, I am driven by two main philosophies: know more today about the world than I knew yesterday and lessen the suffering of others. You'd be surprised how far that gets you.”*

— Neil deGrasse Tyson

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us all to find new ways to navigate through these challenging times in our day to day lives. However, this does not mean that we are totally disconnected from family and friends. Many of us have found alternative ways to keep connected. Most of us seem to be using various forms of media to reach out and keep in touch with loved ones. Some of our members have reported that the telephone is their main source of communication. In addition to the telephone, others have participated in Zoom videos which have provided them with opportunities for social interaction and has helped overcome feelings of being alone. As well, others have joined virtual group activities online. For example, Have-A-Java, one of District 23 social events which provides an opportunity to meet and socialize, went virtual. The monthly E-Newsletter will provide information on how to join District 23 virtual group activities.

Recently, District 23 North York hosted a Virtual Champagne Breakfast celebration to welcome new members. The event was a great success. In addition to the meet and greet, the event provided an opportunity to inform and update the members with current issues, upcoming events, and activities that the organization has to offer. The Goodwill committee would like to extend a warm welcome to the new members who have joined District 23 North York, a very vibrant and active organization. Sincere thanks to the diligent members of the Goodwill Committee who have continued to send out cards to the sick, the bereaved and to those celebrating significant birthdays.

### Donations

Every year funds are available in the Goodwill Budget for in Memoriam Donations and donations for two charitable organizations. In Memoriam, a donation of \$600.00 was made to the RTOERO Foundation in honour of our members who have died during the current year. In honour of our members reaching milestone birthdays, namely: 80, 85, 90, 95, District 23 donated \$300.00 to the Toronto District School Board and \$300.00 to the Toronto Catholic District School Board's Breakfast Programs. The two school boards continue to help make a difference in the daily lives of students: providing them with nutritious meals necessary for growth and learning.

### Resources

Ontario 211 provides a range of government, community, and social services.

Call 211 should you need Information or Services including:

- Elder abuse
- Home support programs
- Long-term care homes
- Meal programs
- Senior services and homecare
- Government and social assistance
- Transportation

### Reminder

Did you move, change your phone number or email address? Update your contact information, email [membership@rtoero.ca](mailto:membership@rtoero.ca)

### Goodwill Volunteers Needed

**“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”** Mahatma Gandhi

Social Isolation is a major issue for seniors and with Covid19 the effects of social isolation have been intensified. We are reaching out to our more senior members to let them know we care and to provide an opportunity to connect with others. Would you like to be part of the group who makes these calls to brighten someone's day with a friendly chat? This is an excellent opportunity for you to become involved with District 23 RTOERO and provide service to fellow members.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Gwen Bumbury, Goodwill Convener at [ggrant98@hotmail.com](mailto:ggrant98@hotmail.com)

Gwen will give you a call to help you join this amazing team.

### Committee Members

Gwen Bumbury	416-491-1213
Xenia Cooper	905-881-5481
Maria Fernandes	416-493-7616
Kathy Shorney	416-225-1336



# Recruitment and You

by Mary Ellen Lawless, Convener

*“You are always one decision away from a totally different life.” — J. Money*

As COVID-19 continues to influence so many aspects of our lives, it is important for us to remember that keeping in contact with friends and family is essential. This is not just for our own well-being, but to support those who may be feeling cut-off from what was a comfortable retirement existence. This includes contacting colleagues from our busy days in whatever field of education we lived our younger years.

available to a member who is 50+ years of age.

However, when encouraging anyone to join RTOERO, remember to tell them about our organizational structure based on DISTRICTS. North York is DISTRICT 23 and is quite distinct from the other three Districts which constitute the City of Toronto geographically. So, be specific and invite your friends and colleagues to join DISTRICT 23, North York.

We depend on you to continue to spread the good news about our ever forward looking and thinking organization.

Did you know that RTOERO is the envy of many who aren't eligible to join our great organization? KEEP RECRUITING while you are reaching out to your friends and families as we continue to live this new reality under COVID-19.

And yes, those conversations need to include sharing the many benefits being part of RTOERO offers us. When possible, invite those who do not yet belong, to join RTOERO. Be ready to brag about all the advantages membership in RTOERO offers. Include the number of Zoom meetings organized by various conveners as a strategy for keeping in touch with friends and colleagues given the degree to which our social lives have been altered so dramatically. Just today, District 23 Book Club had a very successful Zoom meeting discussing Michelle Obama's book "Becoming".

And yes, the reality is that Recruitment to membership in RTOERO has become even more challenging during these unprecedented times!

The central office continues to offer free webinars on Retirement Planning in lieu of the previous "Retirement Planning Workshops", in both English and French, several times most weeks, well into 2021. You are encouraged to go to the RTOERO website [rtoero.ca/events](http://rtoero.ca/events) for more detailed information.

For those contemplating retirement, membership is free until you retire AND all the insurance plans are

## Top reasons to join RTOERO

RTOERO welcomes members from the broader education community - including early years professionals, teachers and those working in schools, school boards and post-secondary.

**Free**

1. Free membership until you retire
2. Free retirement planning workshops

**Member programs and services**

17. Bilingual service and francophone districts
18. Events, clubs and activities in your community hosted by your peers
19. Exclusive group and solo travel, tours and discounts
20. Friendly walk-in service at RTOERO office
21. Fast response time
22. Retirement planning resources
23. Goodwill program
24. Support for healthy, active living

**Research**

31. RTOERO Foundation funds research on healthy aging
32. Awareness campaign - social isolation

**Insurance**

3. Available to any member 50+
4. Largest non-profit health insurance in Canada for education retirees
5. Insurance plan is owned, designed and managed by members for members
6. Guaranteed acceptance within 60 days
7. Group plan = security for all members
8. No cost difference based on age
9. Comprehensive affordable coverage
10. Great coverage available across Canada
11. 93-day travel coverage included at no extra cost
12. In-depth, user-friendly insurance guide

**Political advocacy**

25. Pension support and advocacy
26. Government advocacy on key seniors' issues
27. Vibrant Voices advocacy campaign

**Publications**

33. Renaissance - award-winning quarterly magazine
34. Monthly e-newsletters
35. Tax Tips - help for members during tax season
36. Pocket Planner calendar

**Discounts and perks**

13. 3,000+ MemberPerks® discounts
14. Preferred partner discounts on products for hearing and vision care
15. Exclusive travel discounts
16. Save up to 40% on home/car insurance

**Community service/giving back**

28. Volunteer and leadership opportunities
29. \$100,000 annual community grant program
30. Scholarships for family members

**Online community**

37. Connect and engage with RTOERO and other members via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn
38. Blogs and vlogs
39. Comprehensive resources at [rtoero.ca](http://rtoero.ca)



# Have-a-Java

by Elizabeth Clarke, Convener

*“I'm definitely a people person. I love socializing and being around people and having a good conversation.” — Emily Deschanel*



Have-a -Java was a very popular social event from September 2019 until February 2020. It provided an opportunity to gather, socialize, renew or create friendships as well as meet members and convenors of the many District 23 activities.

We met at Bayview Village in the east foyer in front of the LCBO on the third Wednesday of the month between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Each member who signed in and joined the group received a \$3.00 subsidy towards coffee and a treat. Then COVID raised its viral head.

Have-a-Java went virtual in June and it was a great success. Twelve people signed up and seven people participated. Quite a change from our usual meeting place at Bayview Village, this time we had a peek into the homes of our participants, we even had a salad dressing tutorial. Another opportunity to connect and discover new connections.

We continue to meet on the third Wednesday of the month from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. though now you provide

your own coffee and treat. Updates can be found in STONY Bridges, the District 23 E-Newsletter or the **District 23 website**.

Ten participants met September 16, a combination of recently and not so recently retired members. Introductions were made and lively conversation ensued.

Here are the upcoming meeting dates

- Wednesday, December 16, 2020
- Wednesday, January 20, 2021
- Wednesday, February 17, 2021
- Wednesday, March 17, 2021 (Happy St. Patrick's Day)



# Health Benefits: More Than a Report!

by George Meek, Convener

'Health Matters' is produced 4 times per year by the Health Services Insurance Committee (HSIC) and is included as part of 'Renaissance.' It is found on pages 14 to 16 of the Fall 2020 edition. It is my intention to highlight some of the important matters found therein along with other current important information. What follows is a possible roadmap to reviewing the many health plan and related articles that are found in these editions of Renaissance. Now you can organize your reading of the articles that interest you and then check them off.

Reminder: If you read STONY Bridges 'online' and if you find a previous article in Health Matters noted here that you wish to review (again), just click on the title and it will appear. Try it!

On another important matter, if you require more information in advance of, or after contacting Johnson Inc. or Global Excel about a claim or any other Health Plans related matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 416-226-3568 or at [george.meek@sympatico.ca](mailto:george.meek@sympatico.ca).

Please 'look after your health and your finances'.



## 1. Important Message from Martha Foster, Chair, RTOERO Board of Directors:

*Dear / Bonjour*

*I am writing with important information for members with RTOERO travel insurance coverage. As you know, for now the global travel advisory from the Canadian government remains in place. That means the government is telling Canadians that public health officials do not consider international travel to be safe. RTOERO will communicate directly with all members as soon as the advisory status changes.*

*The following answers are based on the questions we are receiving.*

### Q. Am I covered for travel within Canada?

A. Travel within Canada is covered. Please follow the COVID-19 restrictions issued by the provincial and municipal public health officials for the area(s) you plan to visit.

### Q. Am I covered for trip cancellation/interruption if I'm travelling in Canada?

A. Yes. When travelling in Canada, you remain covered for trip cancellation or interruption as described in pages 72 to 76 in the RTOERO Insurance Plans Booklet.

### Q. If I become ill with COVID-19 while travelling within Canada, am I covered?

A. Yes. Emergency Medical coverage is available as long as you have not experienced any symptoms prior to leaving.

### Q. If I choose to travel outside of Canada despite the government travel advisory, am I covered for medical emergencies?

A. You are covered for medical emergencies, except for claims related to COVID-19, while the government travel advisory is in effect. This is a new enhancement to your travel coverage. You will receive additional communication regarding this change shortly.

### Q. Once the travel advisory is lifted, am I covered if I become ill with COVID-19 while travelling?

A. Yes. Emergency Medical coverage is available as long as you have not experienced any symptoms prior to leaving

### Q. Am I covered for cancellation of international trips?

A. You are not covered for trip cancellation related to COVID-19 for trips booked during the government travel advisory.

- For trips booked after the travel advisory is lifted, you will be covered.
- For complete details of trip cancellation/interruption coverage, see page 72 to 76 in the RTOERO Insurance Plans Booklet.
- If you receive a voucher instead of a refund, you can submit a claim for any unused portion if it expires.

### Q. While travelling outside Canada, if I come home early, will I be covered for trip interruption?

A. You are covered for reasons outlined on page 72 to 76 in the RTOERO Insurance Plans Booklet.

- While traveling outside Canada, you are not covered for trip interruption related to COVID-19 during the current travel advisory.
- For interruptions after the advisory is lifted, you will be covered for reasons related to COVID-19

### Q. While travelling, will I be covered if my return flight is cancelled?

A. The airline and/or travel agency normally provides a voucher or refund in this situation.

### More information

If you have other questions, please contact our Service Administrator: 1-877-406-9007 or [healthbenefits@johnson.ca](mailto:healthbenefits@johnson.ca)

### Further information:

- The Canadian Government has issued an advisory to avoid all non-essential international travel.
- If you currently have a trip planned outside of Canada and are currently traveling and are calling to open a trip cancellation, interruption or baggage claim, we invite you to contact your travel supplier to cancel your arrangements and obtain all applicable refunds and credits, and then submit your claim online at <https://claimportal.globalexcel.com/Claimant/OpenClaim.aspx?language=en>.
- Please note, you have the option to submit your claim at a later date and Global Excel will review your insurance claim as soon as they are able to do so.
- For your coverage and benefit inquiries please send your questions to [question@globalexcel.com](mailto:question@globalexcel.com).
- Please ensure to include your contact information along with your claim or policy number and they will get back to you as soon as possible.

## 2. Responding to Questions About Possible Discount in 2020 Health Plan Premiums

We know the pandemic temporarily impacted members' ability to use some of your benefits, including paramedical services and dental treatments. Other eligible items, such as prescription medicines and aids/appliances – have continued to be used at normal rates. As well, we are proud that our travel insurance has supported a record number of members who have cancelled future trips or whose trip was interrupted by the pandemic and needed help returning to Canada.

RTOERO members direct our health plans on a voluntary basis – overseen by the Benefits Committee and governed by our Board of Directors. Premiums are collected monthly, and the plans undergo a reconciliation process at year-end, where the claims paid are compared to the premiums collected for the year. If the plans see a surplus, these funds are fully reinvested back into the plan – offsetting future costs and deficits from years with higher claiming.

During these uncertain times, we have yet to see how the rest of 2020 will unfold. We see increasing signs of recovery, along with practitioners reopening their doors and a renewed interest in people looking to travel beyond within Canada.

## 3. Highlights of Benefits Committee Meeting August 25, 2020

- The Chair of the Board updated the committee on responses received from various provincial governments regarding RTOERO's concern about long term care.
- DHR/UHR Workshop Update: Because of the ongoing concerns about COVID-19, it was decided to proceed with a virtual workshop on Monday, October 5, 2020 from 1:00 to 3:30pm.
- Travel Update and Communications: In order to better inform our members a **COVID19 landing page** on the RTOERO website was created to publish key content to our membership; it is updated frequently with new information. A memo on travel was sent to members via e-blast on August 13, 2020 followed by a robocall to members without an email on file. The most important piece indicated an enhancement in coverage as outlined in the Q&A (see below):

### Q. If I choose to travel outside of Canada despite the government travel advisory, am I covered for medical emergencies?

A. You are covered for medical emergencies, except for claims related to COVID-19, while the government travel advisory is in effect. This is a new enhancement to your travel coverage. You will receive additional communication regarding this change shortly.



#### 4.DHR/UHR Workshop Update:

Because of the ongoing concerns about COVID-19, it was decided to proceed with a virtual workshop on Monday, October 5, 2020 from 1:00 to 3:30pm. Your District Health Representative (DHR), George Meek, and Past President Maureen Capotosto, attended virtually. Board Chair, Martha Foster took the lead introducing (virtually) the Board (which includes our Dave Kendall) and involved Staff. Benefits Committee Chair Gayle Manley introduced her Committee and laid out the purpose of the webinar. Dr. Nathan Stall (Sinai Health System, and the University Network Health Network {UHN}) was the keynote speaker and spoke at some length about the situation and changes in our Long-Term Care Homes which is still a challenge as we approach 'the second wave'. There was a Benefits Committee Update followed by a good and extensive Q & A period moderated by our Director of Benefits, Stephen Wong. Questions were submitted in advance or on the 'chat function'. Another highlight was the issuance of a 'District /Unit Health Representatives Insurance Plans Manual' which should be a current resource as we deal with member questions and issues. I thought it would be useful to print the following Q & A.

#### Q: What are Government of Canada Travel Advice and Advisories?

A. Travel Advice and Advisories provide Canadians with official information and advice from the Government of Canada on situations that may affect their safety and well-being abroad. They may include an advisory for a country or region where conditions put Canadians at increased risk. Travel Advice and Advisories help Canadians make their own informed decisions in order to minimize risk while travelling abroad. All Canadians who consider travelling outside Canada, including tourists, business travellers, students and those living overseas should read Travel Advice and Advisories . The Global Affairs Canada Travel Information Program team collects continuous reports on safety and security abroad from a variety of sources and monitors world events. The team also analyzes trends and incidents affecting international travellers. Travel Advice and Advisories are updated promptly to inform Canadians of situations that may affect their safety, health and security while abroad.

In Canada, there are 4 levels of Travel Advisories. Level 3 (avoid non-essential travel) and level 4 (avoid all travel) are considered formal notices and will impact the coverage offered under the travel insurance coverage. Medical emergencies in countries or area(s) under a Travel Advisory are not covered by the RTOERO Travel Plans, if the medical emergency results from the situation that has prompted by the travel advisory.

If you book a trip to a particular area after a travel advisory has been issued, the cost to cancel your trip is not covered

under the RTOERO Travel Plans. If a travel advisory is issued after you book your trip, the cancellation of your trip is covered, subject to a maximum of \$6,000 per insured person. If a travel advisory is issued while you are away, you have coverage for the trip interruption, subject to policy exclusions and limitations found on pages 77-79 of the Insurance Plans Booklet up to a maximum benefit of \$6,000 per insured person.



Before you book your trip, and travel, you can obtain information on travel advice and advisories from the government's website at [travel.gc.ca](http://travel.gc.ca) or by calling toll-free at 1-800-267-6788. You can also contact Global Excel Management for additional pre-trip assistance.

#### Article(s) in 2020 Fall Health Matters That May Be in the Interests of Your Health

*Vaccines Aren't Just for Kids- Older adults also need protection against infectious disease- the flu and (hopefully soon) for COVID-19:*  
(Fall-pages 14 and 15)

*Are You Getting Enough Protein? A healthy diet includes enough protein to live well:*  
(Fall-pages 16 and 17)


*Taking Care of Business- Powers of Attorney safeguard your financial affairs when you can't:*  
(Fall-pages 40 and 41)

# What you need to know about deprescribing



## Are older Canadians taking too many meds?

  
2 out of 3 Canadians age 65 and over take at least 5 prescription medications.

  
1 out of 4 Canadians age 65 and over takes at least 10 prescription medications.  
(CIHI, 2018)

## What is deprescribing?

When too many medications are taken, deprescribing is a solution. Deprescribing means reducing or stopping medications that may not be beneficial or may be causing harm.

The goal of deprescribing is to maintain or improve quality of life.

## Why deprescribe?

Taking medications may be necessary for health, improving symptoms or prolonging life. However:



### Things change

As we age, medications affect us differently. Medications that were good then, may not be the best choice now.



### Medication may cause harm

The risk of harmful effects and hospitalizations increases when taking multiple medications.



### Seniors are more at risk

They are hospitalized five times more often than people under age 65 because of harmful medication effects.  
(CIHI, 2013)

## Risky meds are good candidates for deprescribing



Medications are considered risky when the harms outweigh the benefits, and safer drug or non-drug therapy can be used to treat the same condition.



Older women are typically more susceptible to harmful effects of medications and more likely to be prescribed risky meds.



Always check with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before changing or stopping any of your medications.

# Ask about deprescribing: make sure your medication really is helping you



## What can you do?



**Start a conversation** with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. Here are some questions you can ask about your medications:

1. Why am I taking this medication?
2. What are the potential benefits and harms of this medication?
3. Can it affect my memory or cause me to fall?
4. Can I stop or reduce the dose of this medication (i.e. deprescribing)?
5. Who do I follow-up with and when?



**Inform yourself** about your medications and why you are taking them.



**Keep a list:** ask your pharmacist for a list of all your medications. Keep an updated medication list on you and on your fridge.



**Spread the word** about deprescribing to friends and family, advocacy groups and government representatives.



**Download information** on deprescribing: [deprescribingnetwork.ca/useful-resources](https://deprescribingnetwork.ca/useful-resources)

## What is the Canadian Deprescribing Network (CaDeN)?

**CaDeN** is a group of health care leaders, academic researchers and patient advocates working together to promote safe medication use across Canada.

**CaDeN's goals are to:**

- **Reduce harm** by raising awareness and decreasing the use of risky prescriptions among seniors.
- **Promote health** by ensuring access to safer drug and non-drug therapies.



**Learn more about deprescribing and medication safety on CaDeN's website:** [deprescribingnetwork.ca](https://deprescribingnetwork.ca)



## Needlework and Crafts

by Margaret Schuman, Convener

*"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have." — Maya Angelou*

The Needlework and Craft Group continue to create many unique items. Due to the times, we will continue to have ZOOM meetings. We enjoy sharing ideas and creations that have been created by members. We also share ideas for future projects and suggestions for items that might be presented by and welcomed by local organizations.

One member has suggested that she has enough appropriate fabric to make facemasks for children to donate to the schools. She has a pattern and they are easy to find on the internet. If you are interested in this project let us know and we will connect you with her.

New members are always welcome to join our group.

We will continue to hold Zoom Meetings for the immediate future.

Thursday November 19, 2020  
Thursday January 21, 2021  
Thursday February 18, 2021  
Thursday March 18, 2021  
Thursday April 22, 2021  
Thursday May 20, 2021

You are most welcome to join future Zoom meetings. Send your name and emails address to either Joan or Margaret listed above. If you require more information contact Joan Bourne - [jbourne@sympatico.ca](mailto:jbourne@sympatico.ca) or Margaret Schuman - [schumanmp@gmail.com](mailto:schumanmp@gmail.com)

But, we really look forward to having "real meetings" again.



## Champagne Breakfast

By Mildred Frank, Social Convener

Over the years. The Champagne Breakfast has become a popular event in District 23. We have really enjoyed meeting new retirees and inviting them to join us...a toast to their new experience, a great way to begin.

So, on September 24, we gathered on Zoom - we being the newly retired persons, the Executive for District 23 as well as some of our regular members.



Mildred Frank, our Social Convener, welcomed all, Gerard MacNeil, Newsletter Distributor proposed the toast and then Maureen Capotosto, our outgoing President introduced the Executive. Several spoke about the programs they organize—Elizabeth Clarke about Have-a-Java, Sylvia Skippen about the Book Club, Vernon Paige about the e-Devices group, George Meek about Health Benefits, Maureen Capotosto and Valerie Sterling (member) about our Service to Others Project, and Karen Quinn about Communications. Time for questions was then made available.

Martha Foster, representing the Board, joined us, bringing greetings from the Provincial Board of Directors and speaking about the advocacy that RTOERO is doing on behalf of members and seniors. We were very pleased about that.

With that, Mildred Frank thanked everyone for coming, wished all a good year and closed the meeting.



# Stronger Minds Make for Stronger Kids

by Maureen Capotosto, Convener ~ Project Service to Others & Valerie Sterling, Member

Our Service to Others Project for 2020 – 2021 is *Stronger Minds Make for Stronger Kids*. We officially learned that the RTOERO Board accepted our recommendation for this project. Carol Carkner, Chair wrote “The Committee Project Service to Others commends you for your worthwhile project and recommended that it be fully funded for the proposed amount of \$4,000.” What great news!

Note: The Canadian Psychology Association has officially changed its name to Strong Minds Strong Kids, Psychology Canada.

As a member of their Board of Trustees, Valerie Sterling is aware of the crucial work of The Psychology Foundation of Canada (PFC) and in particular how their *Kids Have Stress Too!* and Stress Lessons programs have been beneficial to students and teachers across Canada. Valerie is acutely aware of the effects this pandemic is having on children’s mental health and of the need for programs such as these. Valerie reached out to PFC’s Executive Director to determine opportunities to support the organization’s mission of nurturing resilience in children and youth. As the goal of PFC is to offer their psychology and evidence-based programs at minimal to no cost to communities, Valerie, a RTOERO District 23 member, felt this was a perfect opportunity to encourage a partnership on a project to demonstrate RTOERO’s understanding and continued commitment to students beyond retirement.

The funds from the grant will allow 115 schools/teachers of pre-school/kindergarten to Grade 6 students to have a document that will help them to deliver simple lessons – targeted activities in health promotion. They will be able to assist students to become resilient, cope with adversity and change and, have meaningful and inclusive participation in their social environments. The participants will also gain increased knowledge of mental health.



The funding of this Project will also bring awareness to the RTOERO membership of their District’s support to provide resources which strengthen health and wellness promotion in communities and continued engagement with schools.

The PFC can demonstrate the support of RTOERO as follows (if COVID restrictions are not lifted, the presentation below will be done virtually with the guides being shipped to the schools):

District 23 members (if possible) will present the program guides to school administrators/teachers. At the time of presentation, they will ensure that the school/teacher is informed that these guides are courtesy of RTOERO through the Project Service to Others. In addition, each guide will include a sticker “courtesy of RTOERO...” with respective contact information.

Since 2000 PFC has been training educators with their *Kids Have Stress Too!* (KHST!) and Stress Lessons (SL) programs. Descriptions of these programs are provided in the accompanying article

These programs are designed for teachers to help their students identify and manage stress. This project will provide 115 elementary educators in North York schools with one of the *Kids Have Stress Too!* And Stress Lessons program guides.

As this Project is about delivering psychology and evidence-based programs guides to teachers in the classroom, it shows how RTOERO members recognize the need to support prevention and early intervention strategies in support of children’s mental health and giving educators the tools to support their students. This project demonstrates to the schools and the general public that RTOERO retired



members have an understanding of the importance and focus of health promotion. We support building stronger partnerships between sectors to support children and creating healthy communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic is posing both a physical and emotional threat to our children. While the physical virus may impact children the least, the mental health repercussions likely impact our children the most. Canada is in the midst of a mental health crisis with anxiety on the rise with children and youth. \$50 billion a year is being spent on treating mental health problems and illnesses. We can’t wait until our kids suffer from a mental illness. Prevention is the intervention needed.

The goal of the *Kids Have Stress Too!* and Stress Lessons programs is to help children and youth in the pre-school/kindergarten to Grade 6 range manage adversity giving them a solid foundation of mental health before problems or issues may begin. There are a number of benefits to this partnership project because:

- **from an educational perspective**, students become more engaged in the classroom when their stress is managed. Educators, also, learn from the program, benefitting from the strategies and tactics to manage their own stress.
- **from a community perspective**, students share their knowledge of stress and stress management strategies with their family and friends giving a greater reach and the benefits of community wide mental health promotion.
- **socially**, as we promote mental health and the building blocks to a stronger foundation of mental health with our children, our society will benefit in the long term mitigating the need for treatment for mental health issues.

These guides are excellent and will be easy to promote given the current issues.

We will be relying on members who are newly retired and/or are still working as occasional teachers/secretaries/etc. for the bulk of the referrals to distribute the materials as they are the ones who will most likely know teachers still employed. It will be a good project to attract future members

and get our new members involved and understanding our commitment to community organizations and the well-being of children. We will also seek referrals from the currently employed but not yet retired members in our District to connect them to the activities and work we do as a District. If you would like to recommend a pre-school/kindergarten to grade 6 teacher to receive one of these packages, Please send an email with the teachers’ name, school, grade and email address to Maureen Capotosto – [mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca](mailto:mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca)

Your recommendations and support will make this Project very successful.

## About our 2020 PSTO recipient

The Psychology Foundation of Canada (PFC), a registered charity, has been offering primary prevention programs for 45+ years. It has a history of developing and delivering psychology and evidence-based programs and resources that nurture resilience in children and youth, giving them a solid foundation of mental health.

“Canada is experiencing a mental health crisis, with anxiety on the rise with youth and \$50 billion a year spent on treating mental illnesses,” says Valerie Sterling, RTOERO member and a PFC trustee. “Prevention is the intervention we need, and that’s why I believe in the work PFC is doing.”

With the help of educators, psychologists and stress experts from across Canada, PFC designed the *Kids Have Stress Too!*® and Stress Lessons programs to help the caring adults in children’s lives promote resiliency, buffer stress and build positive coping skills. PFC has created versions of the programs based on children’s developmental stages – early years, primary, junior, middle school and secondary school

Learn more at [strongmindsstrongkids.org](http://strongmindsstrongkids.org).



# Dreams Come True in Amalfi

by Gail M. Murray, Member

A radiant Diane Lane portraying American author, Frances Mayes, bursts upon the tiny wrought iron balcony to greet the sunrise. Pastel pink and yellow cubist houses climb the mountainside. The deep blue Mediterranean crashes ashore below. She is in magical Positano, a tiny fishing village resort in the geographical centre of Italy's spectacular Amalfi Coast. She is living my dream!

I had watched the film, *Under the Tuscan Sun*. one dreary November afternoon. A mere six months later I am realizing my own dream. My balcony opens onto a private terrace garden complete with a *vista sul mare*. The majolica dome of the cathedral of St. Maria Assunta dominates the watercolour houses. At night the town takes on a mystical quality with the glittering lights from the homes suspended over a purple velvet sea. John Steinbeck put Positano on the map in May 1953 with his article for Harper's Bazaar.

After a week of immersion in Florentine galleries, I am treating myself to Italy's natural wonders. The train from Florence to Naples proves a relaxing transition from the rolling hills, forest green cypress and golden hued stone villas of Tuscany to farm fields, blood red poppies and finally the blue of the sea. Trains are easy on the soul. I have pre-arranged to be met at the station by limo. Suddenly a handsome young man in a black, slim fitting suit approaches me directly

"I sorry *signorina*. I late. Traffic," he says. With his movie star looks, I might be in an early Al Pacino movie. Many explore Amalfi's *costiera divina* from the seat of a SITA bus. The limo ride is good value, considering the expense of car rental and parking garages. A car can be an albatross in some regions of Italy. Many hill towns and coastal villages are 'pedestrianized'. Cars must be left on the outskirts along narrow roads or at expensive parking lots.

I snuggle in to the comfortable grey leather seats as my enthusiastic driver, Alessandro, becomes instant tour guide pointing out landmarks.



"Sorrento...Mount Vesuvius...Pompeii," he says.

Lively Neapolitan mandolin music pours from his CD heightening the excitement. We are on the legendary Amalfi Drive – a rugged cliffside highway of hairpin turns – skirting the sea from Sorrento to Salerno. As we glide along this 'Blue Ribbon' with five hundred-foot drops, the sapphire sea sparkles and tiny white villages peak out at us behind the limestone mountains. I understand what breath-taking means.

Positano is built on a steep incline. Alessandro stops the car and motions to me as the luggage is unloaded and whisked away.

"You follow him *signorina*, he take care of you," he says smiling warmly.

There is barely a moment to tip Alessandro. The porter manoeuvring a contraption much like a tall riding lawnmower, is speeding ahead down steep narrow streets called *scalinatella*, actually flights of steps. By chasing my luggage, I arrive at my hotel the Buca di Bacco. The concierge reminds me of a mature Rossano Brazzi. Throughout the trip I have been aware of the warmth, charm and politeness of Italian men. It seems I have been 'raised' on American movies set in Italy.

The hotel is one of elegant simplicity. All the rooms face the sea. There are long narrow shutters then glass doors that are door and window in one. Deep blue and gold curtains flutter in the breeze from ornate wrought iron rods. The

bathroom is white marble. Taste and charm spill into the terrace *ristorante* and inviting bar with soft lighting and turquoise brocade couches. The bar is off the outdoor terrace and a sumptuous buffet breakfast is served in both venues. There are fresh flowers everywhere.

My hotel is on the beach at Positano, so I start the climb up the narrow streets shaded in vines and bougainvillea. Everything is lemons! Elaborate lemon-scented candles, lemon soaps and shower gels, lemons painted and fired on ceramic fruit bowls, decadent lemon cream filled sponge cake and of course *limoncello*, a sweet lemon liqueur, offered liberally to tourists. *Limoncello* is quite potent and combined with steep, narrow cobblestone streets can almost disable the unaccustomed. I like it best chilled over ice to dilute the alcohol content. I learn to say 'no grazie' to shopkeepers' generous offers.

As I pass art shops and women's clothing shops, I get the impulse to follow in the footsteps of Steinbeck and check out the Hotel Sirenuse. When Steinbeck stayed there in the fifties, Hotel Sirenuse was owned by Marquis Paolo Sersale, mayor of Positano and an Italian nobleman. The American writer described it as "an old family house converted into a first-class hotel, spotless and cool, with grape arbours over its outside dining rooms. Every room has its little balcony and looks over the blue sea to the islands of the sirens from which those ladies sang so sweetly."<sup>1</sup>

The hotel continues to be first class. As I wander from patio to patio the views become more spectacular. I continue walking towards the upper town. When it starts to rain, I pop into a charming bookstore called *La Libreria*. I can't believe my find – a copy of Steinbeck's original Harper's article produced as a slim paperback with watercolour illus-

trations. After purchasing my treasure, I ask her, "How far am I from Hotel San Pietro?"

"About twenty minutes' walk. It's on the outskirts of town. Just keep following the road," she replies.

A visit to this hotel is high on my list of sights, so I'm excited to be so close. I'd overheard Hotel San Pietro is like an eagle's eyrie set high on a cliff. It is about two kilometres from the centre of town. What I've really come here for is a close up look at the blue and yellow majolica tile on the terrace benches. The intricate scenes are Renaissance inspired scenes of Roman horses and chariots. Art is everywhere in Italy. It is something I become accustomed to and miss when I return home.

The fragrant tropical gardens of the terrace are even beautiful in the faded grey light. I'm a little damp and windswept. The drizzle turns to downpour. I take refuge in a corner of the ristorante, along with sculptures of marble goddesses, gilt antiques and fresh bowls of roses on linen tablecloths. The alcove is really an atrium with floor to ceiling windows fronting the terrace. I sink into cushioned white wicker armchairs as fuchsia bougainvillea climbs the wall and ceiling. The sea is completely grey now, waves splashing high against the cliffs.

When the waiter arrives with cappuccino on a silver tray, I pull out my credit card and treat myself. At five euros I'm paying for real estate. The moment is worth it. I settle in contentedly sipping my cappuccino, brandishing my prize – the thin volume of Steinbeck.

The next few days Apollo brings sun and I sail to Capri. The famous Blue Grotto is closed due to high waves but the





tasted paradise, now death where is thy sting?" I wonder where it is from, Shakespeare perhaps or Milton. It captures the romance and peace of Ravello.

Later I wander Villa Rufulo's exquisite gardens. Villa Rufulo, built in the thirteenth century as a residence for the wealthy Rufulo family, is a big attraction. Its gardens inspired Wagner's opera Parsifal and concerts continue to be held there. Its tall rectangular tower, Torre Maggiore, forms a focal point at the entrance to the main square of the little town. Before entering the gardens, I walk through the Moorish architecture of the cloister as classical music plays from well camouflaged speakers. The coolness and green of the shade gardens and the water feature add to the sense of calm. From the belvedere, I enjoy the colourful planting patterns below and the roses cascading ancient stone walls. Most magnificent is the view of the umbrella pine framed by the sea and the ancient Church of S.S. Annunziata. It is on all the postcards and book covers. A little step has been thoughtfully placed so that amateur photographers may capture this great shot. The Chinese art of feng shui has not escaped the designers of these gardens. I am taken with the artistry.



I would not have felt comfortable wandering around Rome or even Florence on my own but, Ravello is so small I can't get lost and there are no cars or hordes of vespas to dodge. In the short time I have been here, I can already sense the friendliness of the people.

Everyone speaks to me with a *'buon giorno'* or with a nod or a smile as I walk the quiet streets taking in gardens, ceramic shops and endless vistas. Maria tells me "children are left unattended in the main square to trade cards, ride their bicycles, and chase the pigeons. Everyone knows everyone else and they watch out for each other."

A sweet little toddler runs up to me and I bend down, then she smiles and touches my nose.

"*Bellissima bambina,*" I manage and the mother smiles.

Cat aficionados soon become aware of the ever-present resident cats of Ravello. I had read somewhere that Ravello has more cats than cars. With pedestrianized streets it is safe for them to roam. I feel safe too. As I walk down Via S. Chiara I pass my favourite house. At first, I had noticed its white stucco and red tile roof and beautiful tropical garden then I saw him – a little orange kitten practising gymnastics. Today the mother cat is sunning herself on the terra cotta patio tiles as her orange, black and calico kittens play. The village flows in rhythm to the ever-present church bells. I love Florence and its art treasures but Ravello – the town is the masterpiece.

While eating *gelato* and admiring elegant dinnerware, vases and fruit bowls in the exclusive ceramic shops, I find little ceramic tiles entitled *'Attenti ai Gatti'*. Wandering the lane-ways I've seen similar tiles beside the doorways some warning *'cave canem'* (beware the dog). I ask Francesco, the owner, to explain what it means.

"*Attenti ai gatti* means beware the cat. They are so cute you want to take them with you. You start with one and..." he says smiling and this from a strapping six-foot-tall Italian male. The cats reflect the people friendly, at ease.

"Tame or feral cats, they all seem well fed," I remark.

"Have you been up to the Palumbo Hotel on Via S. Giovanni?" he asks, "they're known locally for their bevy of cats."

"That's beside the Palazzo Sasso. They had several white kittens and tourists were stopping to photograph them," I reply. Francesco winks.

I am starting to notice the cats of Ravello. They are refined and serene like the town. I even pen a poem about them.

One morning I hike from Ravello down to the little seaside town of Atrani on a path used by locals. So, this is how the people get around on well-worn dirt pathways and huge stone steps much like the stone paths to Machu Picchu on the Inca Trail. They are a hardy lot. I pass gardens and lemon groves. Some have trained the lemon trees to climb across wooden vines. The town square in Atrani has a fountain and acres of laundry hanging from pink and white stucco buildings. It is ripe with fresh tomatoes, basil and Italian hospitality. Even though it is May, people are sunning on the beach. I tip my toes into the chill Mediterranean. I take the bus back to Ravello a bargain at one euro.

I am looking forward to Villa Cimbrone so have saved it for last. As I stroll the narrow four-foot wide laneway-street en route to the famous villa gardens, white roses cascade over the medieval stone walls. Suddenly a train of donkeys clip by forcing me to take cover in a nearby doorway to avoid

collision. The little animals have square metal 'saddlebags' on either side filled with bags of cement. The villa is under renovation. I enter the Moorish courtyard and walk the long pathway under the hanging gardens of mauve wisteria, past the replica of Donatello's David to the Doric temple of Ceres. The Renaissance lives in this majestic Italian garden.

I have seen photos in glossy coffee table books of the Terrace of Infinity but nothing prepares me for the actual experience. It is like my first connection with the Botticelli's. I gaze at the Roman marble busts on their belvedere above the sea commanding a panoramic view that spills into sky and sea and goes beyond.

When I think of Ravello what is it that so enchants me? Is it the panoramic vistas of striking pines, silver mountains and lapis lazuli sea melting into sky? Is it the breath-taking villa gardens and the Terrace of Infinity? Is it the sense of freedom? Strangely what touches my heart most is my parting visit to my 'patio cats'.

The marmalade mother sits in the sun lovingly nursing and grooming her kittens as the church bells chime. I hear George Bernard Shaw's Saint Joan, "my blessed, blessed church bells carried on the wind."<sup>3</sup> Had they been people these cats would have been a Botticelli painting.

Each town on the Amalfi Coast has a unique character. Perhaps one day I shall return, perhaps part of me has never left. As Steinbeck wrote of Positano, I reflect on my experiences on the Amalfi Coast, its people, its beauty and the strong emotions I felt there.

"*Amalfi* (italics mine) bites deep. It is a dream place that isn't quite real when you are there and becomes beckoningly real after you have gone."<sup>4</sup>

Footnotes:

1. Steinbeck, John. Positano. in Harper's Bazaar c1953.
2. *ibid.*
3. Shaw, George Bernard. Saint Joan. Essex, England: Lonmans c1991.
4. Steinbeck, John. Positano. in Harper's Bazaar c1953.

# It's Social Isolation Awareness Month

by Sara Di Nallo ~ RTOERO Foundation Representative



Hi Everyone,  
I am the new Foundation Representative for District 23. I will be reporting to you about the latest Foundation news. I would like to welcome all our new retired members to our District.

The RTOERO Foundation works together with other agencies and our members to enhance the quality of life for older adults. The Foundation funds efforts that benefit Canada's seniors. By giving to the foundation we help foster better health care and social connection for seniors in Canada which in turn helps enhance the quality of life for them.

October is "Social Isolation Awareness Month". Social Isolation is one of the country's biggest health risks especially to Seniors. The campaign runs through the whole month of October, to build awareness of social isolation. This year due to the pandemic 1 in 5 older adults are affected. Members could join the Social Isolation Campaign in October. Every Tuesday in October a new challenge is given by email. The challenges are designed to support older adults who feel isolated to feel included and supported.

The fundraising goal this year for the Foundation is \$100,000 to support research, awareness, and community projects to help socially isolated older adults. You can also donate directly to the campaign. Let us help the move from isolation to inclusion become a reality.

Stay safe and healthy everyone!



## RTOERO response to Ontario poverty reduction consultation

### RTOERO responds to Ontario poverty reduction strategy consultation

As the Ontario government updates its poverty reduction strategy, RTOERO urges the government to consider how its policies and programs will improve the quality of life for seniors. Province identifies as being at heightened risk of poverty, along with Indigenous people, single mothers, people with disabilities, recent immigrants, and racialized communities.

Each of the seven issues we outline relates directly to one or more of the Government of Ontario's key engagement areas around poverty reduction:

- Encourage job creation and connect people to employment
- Provide people with the right supports and services
- Lower the cost of living and make life more affordable

#### 1. Age-friendly communities

An age-friendly community optimizes opportunities for health, participation and security. Such communities reduce the pressure on health care and the demand for spaces in long-term care facilities, and add to social well-being and

vibrancy. Some studies show that age-friendly communities, with their positive features, can also modify the effects of poverty. Link to poverty reduction goals

- Provide people with the right supports and services

#### 2. Pharmacare

Pharmacare can help to reduce the burden of drug costs, and decrease the disparity between rich and poor. A universal, public, comprehensive, accessible and portable national pharmacare program would cut costs and lead to a healthier population – both of which give people more economic means.

Link to poverty reduction goals

- Lower the cost of living and make life more affordable

#### 3. Retirement income security

Defined benefits pensions are proven to make retirement secure, and enable Canadians to continue to contribute meaningfully to our economies and communities. Ontarians deserve a secure retirement, with a guaranteed and sufficient source of income so that they do not fall below the poverty line. That will ensure that older Ontarians can afford to enjoy a healthy, active and dignified retirement.

Link to poverty reduction goals

- Lower the cost of living and make life more affordable

#### 4. National seniors strategy

Seniors are the fastest growing demographic in Ontario. Ontarians are living longer, and our health care system is not keeping up with shifting demographics. A coordinated seniors strategy will support governments in optimizing health, financial security and social inclusion, so all Canadians can age with dignity.

Link to poverty reduction goals

- Provide people with the right supports and services
- Lower the cost of living and make life more affordable

#### 5. Geriatric health care

Over the next two decades, the numbers of Canadians aged 65-plus will double. Those 85 and over will quadruple. We face a shortage of geriatric professionals, roles that will be in high demand. Older Ontarians constitute about 16% of our population, but account for nearly half of our health and social care systems costs. Having personnel with the knowledge needed to care for older Ontarians is essential.

Link to poverty reduction goals

- Encourage job creation and connect people to employment
- Provide people with the right supports and services

#### 6. Elder abuse prevention

Poverty Reduction Goals:

- Encourage job creation and connect people to employment
- Provide people with the right supports and services
- Lower the cost of living and make life more affordable



## RTO Scholarships

Each year RTOERO awards up to 20 scholarships, valued at \$3000, to post-secondary (college or university) students enrolled in programs that lead to careers which could benefit RTOERO members and seniors in Canada.

RTOERO members are encouraged to recommend students in their lives, including family members, who meet the criteria.

Over the past 20 years, we've awarded 374 scholarships totalling \$429,000.

### Eligibility

The applicant must be directly entering or already studying in a college or university program that leads to a career which could benefit RTOERO members and seniors in Canada.

- This includes fields such as: Health sciences; medicine; nursing; personal care; geriatric health care; research into healthy active living for seniors; architects and designers of age-friendly spaces.
- The applicant must be recommended by an RTOERO member.
- Successful applicants may be awarded the RTOERO scholarship only once.
- RTOERO members are not themselves eligible to be awarded the scholarship.
- In addition to the completed application, the applicant must provide proof of enrolment.
- Please see application instructions (blue link) below for more details on the selection criteria.

### How to apply

Please read thoroughly the following **Application Instructions** before completing your application. There are several changes to the criteria from previous years.

**Applications are due by January 29, 2021.**

For more information contact [scholarship@rtoero.ca](mailto:scholarship@rtoero.ca).



# Book Club

by Sylvia Skippen, Convener

**“Reading is the key that opens doors to many good things in life. Reading shaped my dreams, and more reading helped me make my dreams come true.”**

— Ruth Bader Ginsburg, January 12, 2019

Our District 23 Book Club meets on the last Wednesday of the month using Zoom. It continues to be a learning experience using Zoom, but members are acquiring new technical skills and hopefully feeling connected to fellow reading companions. We always welcome new members and have seen increased interest in this group as COVID-19 is making other activities such as theatre and socializing more challenging. We invite you to take the opportunity to attend the book club without having to travel or deal with weather conditions. You can enjoy getting together with other keen readers in the comfort of your own home. We are grateful that we can continue to learn from each other. One of the greatest abilities is resilience and I believe RTO is developing creative ways to adapt to the new normal.

This past term, we were able to have very lively discussions about our book choices and members always provide thoughtful and interesting interpretations. I find it very helpful to listen to members’ reactions to the books chosen and find it makes the book more interesting and meaningful. We are very fortunate this year to have members of the book club volunteer to facilitate the meetings. The facilitators have done an excellent job providing background information on the authors, critic reviews, and providing thought provoking questions for discussion.

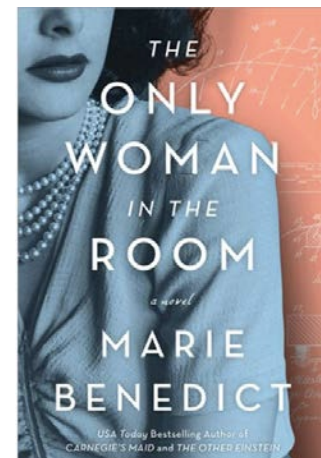
If you wish to participate in the book club, please send me an email a few days prior to the meeting date to ensure you are included in the Zoom invitation. The Zoom meeting invitation is sent to all those who have indicated interest in attending the book club meeting, nearer to the time we will meet. Also, information will be published in the monthly E-Newsletter sent at the beginning of the month. Contact Sylvia at: [sylvia.skippen@hotmail.com](mailto:sylvia.skippen@hotmail.com)



## “All We Leave Behind” by Carol Off January 27, 2021

Carol Off is one of Canada’s most respected journalists, and a co-host of CBC Radio One’s show: *As It Happens*. In an interview for a CBC documentary in Afghanistan, Off interviewed Asad Aryubwal. In the interview, he revealed the

responsibility of mass murders committed by the warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum. Following that interview, Aryubwal and his families’ lives changed forever. As Carol Off said “What is good for the reporters’ career is not necessarily so for the individual providing the information”. In *All We Leave Behind*, Off writes about the harrowing and desperate account of one family’s story, the attempt to escape Afghan warlords, oppression under the Taliban, and the persecutions of refugee life. Off begins to tell their story and travails until she becomes caught up in the lives of the family. This is her story.



## “The Only Woman in the Room” by Marie Benedict February 24, 2021

“*The Only Woman in the Room*” is a New York Times and USA Today bestseller. A graduate of Boston University Law School, Heather Terrell worked for two major law firms while pursuing on the side, a career who gained positive reviews as a writer of historical fiction. As her writing career achieved success, she assumed a pseudonym as Marie Benedict. Her first major writings include: *Carnegie’s Maid*, *The Other Einstein*, and this novel, where she explores the life of Hedy Lamarr, Hollywood star and “the only woman in the room”. Set in the shadow of the Third Reich, Lamarr, equipped with a brilliant and scientific mind, set out to aid her new country to fight the Nazis if she could get key people to listen to her. A powerful novel, that mirrors the stars ‘real life’ story.

“Every day most of the people in the world stare at an invention that she had a hand in, and that’s the cellphone,” Benedict says. “Once I knew that, I knew absolutely that I had to tell her particular story.”



## The Library Book by Susan Orlean March 31, 2021

Bestselling author Susan Orlean writes a compelling and mesmerizing story about the fire in the Los Angeles Public Library on the morning of April 29, 1986. Patrons and library staff who had been evacuated from the building later realize this was not the usual fire alarm. The fire was disastrous: it reached 2000 degrees and burned for more than seven hours. Four hundred thousand books were destroyed and seven hundred thousand more were damaged by the fire. Although there was an investigation, more than thirty years later, the mystery remains: Did someone purposefully set fire to the library—and if so, who? Susan Orlean weaves her lifelong love of reading into an investigation of the fire and tells the broader story of libraries and librarians in a way that has never been done before. She uses her insight and talent for deep research to tell how these beloved institutions provide much more than just books and why they remain an important part of the heart, soul and mind of country.



## The Island of Sea Woman by Lisa See April 28, 2021

Mi-ja and Young-sook, two girls living on the Korean island of Jeju, are best friends that come from very different backgrounds. When they are old enough, they begin working in the sea with their village’s all-female diving collective, led by Young-sook’s mother. The *Island of Sea Women* is an epoch set over many decades, beginning during a period of Japanese colonialism in the 1930s and 1940s, followed by World War II, the Korean War and its aftermath, through the era of cell phones and wet suits for the women divers. Little do the two friends know that after surviving hundreds of dives and developing the closest of bonds, forces outside their control will push.



## The Alice Network by Kate Quinn May 26, 2021

Kate Quinn is a bestselling author of historical fiction. In this Historical novel of two women—a female spy recruited to the real-life Alice Network in France during World War 1 and an unconventional American socialite searching for her cousin in 1947. They are brought together in a mesmerizing story of courage and redemption.

“This fast-paced story offers courageous heroines, villains you love to hate, and dramatic life-or-death stakes. A compelling blend of historical fiction, mystery, and women’s fiction, Quinn’s complex story and engaging characters have something to offer just about everyone.”

— Library Journal (starred review)

### THE WILLOW WINDS

*Willow winds from the west  
Sing the song the wind sings best  
Nor ever let the commons rest,  
Thy holy peace filled song....*

*Willow winds and peace filled joy,  
Carry the whirlwinds across the sky  
Carry all the beauty each holy day  
All, a vast glory lit majesty*

*Willow winds, the call and cry  
All the joy, world and sigh,  
Gentle whispers, sacred memory  
All love’s beauty, the peace the majesty...*

Bev Gorbet





## e-Devices Group

by Vern Paige, Convener ~ e-Devices

**“Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious.”**

— Stephen Hawking



Our Group is about using technology (cellphone, tablet, computer, digital camera) to make our lives easier, more interesting, to “stay connected” and generally cope with the pandemic. We share information about using Zoom and other “apps”, online activities (entertainment, cultural, educational, social), online information about aging and health. We help each other with technology issues and have a little fun.

COVID made our e-Devices much more important, made us much more aware of their utility and value, as we used them to help each other find toilet paper, cleaning supplies, the best times and places to shop. Until it was warm enough and safe enough for outdoor activities, we learned to meet online with friends and family for celebrations, and we renewed interest “virtually” in some old favourite activities like euchre and bridge.

We also became aware of vast resources and opportunities available online – arts, entertainment, culture, crafts, education.

With warmer weather and some relaxing of restrictions we shared information about the most interesting and the safest outdoor activities. In the enjoyment of very pleasant summer weather many of us may have forgotten how much our e-Devices contributed to getting us that far. Now that colder weather has returned, so has realization of how much we depend on this technology.

This is a difficult time for everyone, but not equally difficult for everyone. Not as difficult for most of us as for many others.

We must not forget that we are among the 1% or 2% of the world’s population with access to the e-Device technology that we mostly take for granted. We should take it almost as a duty to take advantage of this privilege. Not to feel guilty about it, but to appreciate and not waste our opportunity. You may know something worth sharing with others through our e-Devices Group, you may need something that others can help with. Or just join us for conversation.

We must be realistic, but we can and should still be optimistic.

New members always welcome. We meet by Zoom alternate Fridays at 10:30 a.m. for approximately an hour, please see below for the dates of upcoming meetings. Please email the convener by Wednesday before a meeting, providing your name and email address, for the Zoom link or for other information.

- Friday, November 27, 2021
- Friday, December 11, 2020
- Friday, January 8, 2021
- Friday, January 22, 2021
- Friday, February 5, 2021
- Friday, February 19, 2021
- Friday, March 5, 2021
- Friday, March 19, 2021
- Friday, April 16, 2021
- Friday, April 30, 2021
- Friday, May 14, 2021
- Friday, May 28, 2021
- Friday, June 11, 2021
- Friday, June 25, 2021

**PhotoGuy.2019@gmail.com**  
or **Vernon.Paige@gmail.com**



## I’ll See Your Bet and Raise You \$1000!

by Merv Mascarenhas, Editor, Webmaster, and Twitter Meister

If you are down about the weather, COVID or wearing masks, I’ll see your bet and raise you \$1000.

While not sporting a six-pack, I have been reasonably healthy, play a round of golf each Monday, walk for 1-2 hrs most days and was last in a hospital forty years ago with a torn ACL.

So why this sudden bravado! In mid-August I came down with severe stomach cramps. Despite COVID, I went to Emergency at NYGH to be checked out. The verdict was pancreatitis – you really don’t need a gall bladder, Merv! A day later I was let out, a few ounces lighter. A week later I was readmitted due to a persistent low-grade fever and diarrhea. More tests followed with the prognosis good. I was well enough to drive the moving van to get our youngest moved back home after she spent 4 years living downtown. Mind you, I did defer the heavy lifting to her friends. The next day I was enjoying a beautiful day on the deck catching up on the warm rays and my favourite villain. At lunchtime, I went into the kitchen and prepared a delicious sandwich.

And then froze in suspended animation! Thankfully, Margaret instantly recognized the telltale signs of a stroke and had the paramedics at our doorstep in minutes. They confirmed her verdict, stabilized my condition, and whisked me downtown to Toronto Western Hospital where its Emergency department was prepped for my arrival. A few hours later I was speaking coherently in ICU. Four days later I was transferred to Toronto Rehab Institute, where I spent the next six weeks being cared for by the most caring medical staff and therapists.

The major challenge that first popped up was that I had always managed our household finances. The plan had always been that I would show Margaret the ropes, but the day never came until ... Since I have over a hundred passwords to track, I had a cheat sheet that had clues to my passwords. It worked well for me, until I could no longer decipher the clues. A lot of our personal finances were in spreadsheets – Excel was never something that caught Margaret’s fancy. So here I am attempting to teach Margaret Excel, while finding myself dyslexic! Margaret was very patient, knew when to call a timeout, and let me have all the time I needed to handover the keys to the kingdom.

Lessons Learned:

1. Make sure that your spouse is as familiar with your finances as you are - or your child, accountant, or trusted friend.
2. Make sure that all your online resources and social media accounts are documented. You don’t want to lose the thousands of pictures that you have archived in iCloud, Google Photos, OneDrive or elsewhere.
3. Make sure that your computers are backed up in the cloud (I use iDrive) so that you can recover your valuable data if your computer/tablet/smartphone is stolen, or house goes up in flames or you are pickpocketed like I was in Paris last year.
4. We had updated our wills and powers of attorney last year, giving us one less thing to worry about.
5. Re-examine your priorities - My rehab stay gave me an opportunity to ponder over what’s really important in life. Health, family and friends quickly bubbled to the surface. The outpouring of love from them, many of whom we had not regularly stayed in touch with, was simply overwhelming.
6. Finally, be glad that we are Canadian! Eight weeks of world-class healthcare in hospitals and rehab with not a penny to pay from our pockets! Shout out to RTOERO Supplemental Healthcare Insurance.

A lasting image from rehab is me crossing University Avenue with a walker to the central boulevard and taking several golf swings with Lou, my PT, gripping my shirt to prevent me from keeling over. I progressed well enough to dump the walker for a cane. We regularly scouted the neighbourhood for new parkettes to dig divots, before settling on a building with a beautiful courtyard replete with gardens and a lush lawn. By then I was taking full on shots at the glass façade, albeit with a whiffle ball. It was realistic enough for the building security guard to charge out of the building to stop us. Lou somehow calmed him down, and he let us continue playing until Lou tired of playing fetch!

If this version of STONY Bridges looks new and improved, it is because Maureen enlisted Sylvia Link’s (RTOERO Director, Marketing & Communications) aid who provided a professional graphic designer to bail me out. While I am still not out of the woods, I am able to take care of the website and Twitter, as we patiently wait for Godot and the Promised Land of a new WordPress platform.

Stay Well! Be Safe!





# Andalusía – Heart of Spain

by Gail M. Murray, Member

Andalusia comprises the southern region of Spain. Last September, I sojourned to her three most spectacular cities: Granada, Cordoba and Seville.

Granada, nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, was the last outpost of Islamic rule. The Moors ruled the Iberian Peninsula for 800 years until the Reconquista, spear headed by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. Granada occupies a large valley and two hills – the Alhambra and the Albayzin.

The luxurious 5 star Alhambra Palace Hotel c.1910, was our home for the next three nights, and was is akin to living in a stunning art gallery. My room decorated in cream and terra cotta had green shutters and casement windows I open to let in a cool breeze. Black and white Moorish tiles delight in my huge bathroom where a tiny window, instead of a ceiling fan, prevents shower steam. The caring and professional staff gives this exquisite hotel a family feel. Later Lyn and I enjoy a late meal on the panoramic terrace – a great introduction to this city.

The sumptuous breakfast buffet spans the length of the peach dining room. Café con leche, freshly squeezed orange juice from sweet Seville oranges, mild yogurt with fruit puree, omelette, salmon, ham iberico, cheeses and dried fruits and individual green salads are on offer.

On our first full day before the tour begins, Lyn and I ride Bus 32 as it loops through the city, disembarking at Mirador San Nicolas or the Saint Nicholas viewpoint for a great view of the Alhambra Fortress amid gypsy rhythms. Next a leisurely walk through the narrow laneways of the old quarter with fragrant jasmine and bougainvillea cascading the white walls, blue pot scapes, bistros with blue glazed ceramic tiles, reminiscent of Portuguese azulejos and teterias (Moorish tea rooms with cushions and ornate interiors) and a taste of honey almond gelato.

Next day we awaken early as darkness morphs into golden hues. It's chilly, only 55F. "We're in the mountains" says Robert, our guide, stylish in his navy wool jacket and wool scarf. We walk up hill anticipating the great Alhambra Palace and enter through the Justice Gate for our 9 AM time slot. When we emerge three hours later; it's 75F and hordes descend.

The Alhambra, named for its crimson color, is the most

outstanding example of medieval architecture dating to the Moorish occupation. Robert navigates this huge complex as we listen on whisper headsets gazing in awe. The Palacios Nazaries has 14th C carved timber ceilings, stucco stalactites, Moorish arches, filigree windows and bright ceramic tiles in geometric designs in blue (heaven), green (oasis), gold (wealth) and red (blood). No human or animal motifs are allowed. "Only god is victorious" is inscribed on the wall 9000 times.

Robert, born in Malaga with a Spanish father and English mother, speaks perfect English. He is the most impressive, articulate and informative of all our many guides. The Courtyard of the Lions which represent royalty, strength and power, is a focal point in the sultan's private dwellings. Twelve marble lions. According to Islamic tradition, the walled garden is an image of paradise or heaven in the Qur'an. Serene patios and reflecting pools inspire solace.

There is lots of climbing up hill through fragrant gardens of pomegranate trees and velvet roses to the exquisite Generalife (summer palace retreat) with its myrtle hedges and quiet pools for contemplation. After a magical morning, I relax on the terrace of our hotel.

Driving into sunrise we pass groves of silvery olive trees. Cordoba province is known for olives, sunflowers, wheat, asparagus, artichokes and ham Iberico made from black footed pigs.

Joachim our lively, informative, humorous guide winds us through narrow 'kissing streets' of the old quarter of Cordoba famous for courtyards where individual blue pots of geraniums climb white washed walls.

We arrive at the Alcazar (Citadel) of Christian Monarchs – a Roman Catholic fortress built near the great Mosque. Here we wander stately gardens where Queen Isabel enjoyed reading amid fountains, roses and neatly trimmed boxwood hedges.

Next we discover the most famous landmark in Cordoba – the Mesquita/Cathedral. Mesquita is Arabic for mosque. The concept of a mosque originated when the prophet Mohammed and his followers met for Friday prayers at his open courtyard protected from the hot sun by date palms. The forest of columns, the most striking feature of this sacred place, remind Arab worshippers of their home. The ancient architect superimposed two tiers of arches (resembling Roman aqueducts) to create light and space. The immense Mezquita makes me feel small and reverent.

The Roman Catholic church in Gothic and Baroque styles built in the centre of the mosque after the Reconquista, is ornate with enormous black mahogany choir stalls and distracting adornments. For three centuries the Great Mosque of Cordoba held a place of importance for the Islamic Community. It is from Al-Andalus that Spain's southern region takes its name Andalusia. As the tour comes to a close Joachim's passionate plea – all three religious groups lived together in peace and tolerance – something today's world could learn – echoes in my consciousness.

We 'lunch' at Taberna #10. We've come to realize lunch or la comida in Southern Spain is a three course meal. Our group fills the tiny upstairs room. Blue glasses sparkle. Menu: chilled octopus ceviche with mango & avocado, almond raisin soup (fresh tomatoes in olive oil for me), lemon cream (cf. lemon meringue and very sweet) complimented by white wine.

The afternoon is spent at Palacio de los Viana. Our garden tour is rich in history and culture as the garden is an essential element of palaces and stately patrician homes. Viana Palace was home to many noble families between the 15th and 20th centuries and remains a residence with patio gardens open to the public – each unique. Some stand out plants include: scented jasmine, pink oleander, bougainvillea, blue plumbago, and fruit trees (pomegranate, sweet and bitter orange trees). Bitter orange trees provide shade in street scapes whereas the juice from sweet oranges, awaken us each day.



En route to Seville an unexpected hidden gems awaits. At the town of Palma de Rio, we discover the 18th C Baroque church – Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion with its glorious tile work of the Virgin, and the Palacio de Portocarrero. Portocarrero Palace with its botanical and citrus gardens surrounded by ancient walls forms a unique monument, combining 12th C Moorish architecture with a 16th C Renaissance palace.

In 2008 director, Ridley Scott, filmed Kingdom of Heaven here. At the end of our tour, we're treated to a brief documentary showing scenes shot on location. Orlando Bloom plays the illegitimate son of a Templar knight played by Liam Neeson. Orlando's simple blacksmith grows in stature and heroism by the film's conclusion. I remember the movie. By the turquoise pool, where Bloom shot a bathing scene, we sip mint tea from silver and blue Arabian glasses. This delicious tea is a blend of mint, lemon and thyme from the palace gardens. Our novice guide encourages us to sample kumquats directly from the tree. Jack, the Jack Russell, mix is a big hit.

Our bus climbs to Parador de Carmona, a 14th C Arab fortress and later temporary residence of Catholic Monarchs during the siege of Granada. I relish my café con leche by the Mudejar fountain in the peaceful courtyard. Our afternoon visit is to bougainvillea covered Palacio de las Duenas named after 13th C convent Santa Maria de las Duenas formerly located next door. The lavish home has a country house ambience. Of all the Duchess of Alba's properties, it was her favourite and opened in 2016 after her passing. Though now a museum with stunning Mudejar patios (seven of them!) posters from Feria or Holy Week, her flamenco dress and taxidermy heads of bulls saved from the ring; it is a touchstone of Spanish culture. Intensely person in aspect, we see photographs of the duchess with family and friends including a young Jacqueline Kennedy.

In the 19th C the property briefly became a guesthouse, administered by Antonia Machado Alvarez, father of the celebrated Spanish poet Antonia Machado who was born at las Duenas in 1875. There is a plaque in the Courtyard of



the Lemons with lines familiar to every Sevillano:

*My childhood memories are of a patio in Seville  
And a bright orchard where a lemon tree ripens.*

Stunning Seville (population 2 million) seduces as the cultural heart of Andalusia. As our bus manoeuvres the city streets, I'm impressed with the absence of high rise, instead - five story buildings with wooden, glass enclosed and ornate wrought iron balconies in infinite variety. Hotel Becquer named for the celebrated romantic poet whose statue decorates Maria Luisa Parque, has a charming breakfast room, a machine to make freshly squeezed orange juice and great location blocks from the old town.

Maria Luisa Park, which I yearn to see from a horse drawn carriage, supplies a welcome greenspace acting as lungs for this thriving city. It reminds me of Central Park in New York. The area is designed in Moorish paradisaical style with ponds, fountains, lush plantings, Mediterranean pines, stylized flower beds and hidden vine covered bowers. Not only is the park a botanical garden but home to doves, ducks swans and parakeets. The statue of poet Becquer and the octagonal fountains of lions and comical frogs spouting water provide interest and entertainment.

The immense Plaza de Espana, built for the 1929 Spanish American Exhibition, is a brilliant landmark in the North West area of Maria Luisa Park. It took twelve years to build. Venetian foot bridges with bright blue azulejo tiled handrails cross canals and colorful balustrades depict a historical scene from each province. I take a moment to snap a photo of the brilliant tile art.



A high point of our trip is a flamenco performance at Casa de Flamenco. Performers – a singer, guitarist and dancers - are seasoned intense and passionate. Fiery and striking, Macarena age twenty seven with dark intense eyes and perfect posture executes her turns, shawl flourishes and turns to perfection as she flirts with her young male partner. This club is in the courtyard of a 15th C patrician home now part of a boutique hotel. Dance is a way of life here with many talented Sevillanos making a living as professional dancers.



I'd like four days here to breathe in the ambience, meander unique shops in the old quarter, learn more of this art form in the Museo del Baile Flamenco with its paintings, photos and flamenco costumes. I'd love to see the Basilca Macarena and their Virgin of Hope float paraded during Holy Week, and take in artisan shops in the Triana District famed for ceramic tile. But at least I am here now and we are walking back to our hotel through Santa Cruz which expresses the essence of this city. Bar décor includes mounted bull heads and ham hock on the hoof. I get a taste of Santa Cruz with its ancient cathedral and labyrinth of narrow streets coming alive at twilight as families congregate for the paseo, children laugh and run about the plaza with soccer balls and young people meet for a drink. This is iconic Spain.

I took this trip, Spectacular Gardens and Gaudi, with master gardener Donna Dawson at [www.gardeningtours.com](http://www.gardeningtours.com) and if all goes well with our world she is repeating it in Sept. 2021.



### A Floral Refrain

Give me some flowers while I'm living  
Let florets bud while I'm alive  
I'd like some flowers while I'm living  
Perched south-west facing, watch them thrive

Don't wait to place 'em on my coffin  
They'll only wilt and disappear  
Turn brown and desiccate to rotten  
Shedding their sentient veneer

I'm quite particular to poppies  
And hydrangea when they're in bloom  
The pepp'ry smell of white gardenias  
Will elevate those bouts of gloom

When I lay prostrate with my prostate  
Or confined to hospital's bed  
Immobilized due to limb fracture  
Consider homemade gingerbread?

Grant me some flowers while I'm living  
And while you're at it, chocolate too  
I'd like some flowers while I'm living  
One day I'll do the same for you

BJD

(Bruce Jacobs Davidovitch)



## Reader's Letters/Questions

We would like to hear from you with your comments, questions and suggestions. Email Maureen Capotosto at [mpcapostosto@sympatico.ca](mailto:mpcapostosto@sympatico.ca) and send us your thoughts.

**“I did not receive the Summer issue of STONY Bridges. What should I do? Who should I contact?”**

Email Gerard MacNeil ~ [g.macneil@bell.net](mailto:g.macneil@bell.net)  
State whether you receive your copy of STONY Bridges digitally or via Canada Post. If you receive the electronic version, state your name and provide your email address. If you have your copy delivered to your home, please send Gerard your home address. Arrangements will be made to get a copy to you.

**“How do we contact you in the time of COVID?”**

During this time, we encourage members not already receiving our monthly E-Newsletters to register for our online communications to keep as up to date as possible. You find the information through our District 23 website: [district23.rto-ero.org](http://district23.rto-ero.org). Look for the banner: “Register for our E-News from the Button” for new members not currently receiving the monthly E-Newsletter. Potential new readers can also contact Karen Quinn ~ [kquinn56@gmail.com](mailto:kquinn56@gmail.com)

**“How Do We Contact Individual Executive Members?”**

Due to privacy concerns, we have removed most contact information from STONY Bridges and website. Use the Contact Us form on the District 23 website: [district23.rto-ero.org](http://district23.rto-ero.org) to contact members of the Executive.



# Photography – Continuing to Enrich My Life

by Wendy Nurgitz

I have always envied people who can travel for weeks, all over the world, taking only a carry-on bag. That's not me!

By the time I stow my camera and all its various accessories in the carry-on, there couldn't possibly be room for clothes and other necessities. Sure, Rick Steves does it but he is an experienced traveller who probably has a photographer accompanying him, never mind a digital single lens reflex camera (DSLR), chargers, lenses, filters and possibly tripods!

Yes, I know there are people who take all their photos using their phones or iPads. I'm not one of those folks who stands with arms extended forward, squinting at a screen, trying to focus on a scene that I want to record visually. When I introduce myself to the tour group, I usually tell them I will be the one with a camera planted in front of her face.

I've had cameras all my life. Nothing fancy. In fact, the first camera I recall owning was a cardboard box camera - probably the Kodak Brownie - that recorded eight images on a roll of black and white film. If I still owned all the economy model cameras I had during my youth, I could stock a camera museum that no one would want to visit.

In Morocco, on my first trip using a digital camera I felt as if someone had liberated me to take as many photos as I wanted. No more budgeting film as the trip went along. No more saving up to have the film developed once I returned home. Now I could take as many photos as I wanted and I could pick and choose what I felt worthwhile printing. I could crop and edit photos. I could take pictures of signs so I would know what and where the pictures I had taken were all about.

Being a teacher, it's not surprising that I believe in life-long learning. As the daughter of a mother who drew, painted and sculpted, I took workshops and other courses to develop my craft. This involves personal risk because it means accepting criticism (and hopefully suggestions for improvement). An unexpected bonus is that photography is not only a hobby but it is also a reason to be out and physically active as well as socially active. This past May, I was standing at G Ross Lord Park, taking photos of the mating toads and suddenly I found myself involved in a "mask to

mask" conversation with others violating the toads' privacy. In the pre-COVID times, I used to edit my trip photos to a manageable number for viewing and then share with friends over coffee or at photography club meetings. Today, the LIFE Institute photography club is meeting – via Zoom – and our gathering will be my big social event for the day, if not for the week!



Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland

My favourite book during COVID is the one I compiled when I realized that I wouldn't be travelling for at least 18 months or even several years. The intent of the book is to serve as a reminder of past travel experiences and as a showcase for some of my favourite photos. While COVID was forcing a digital life upon us, I wanted a real book that I can hold in my hands, turn its pages to trigger memories and longings for the life that has changed so drastically. Keeping me productively occupied for weeks, the project required reviewing decades' worth of photographs and revisiting travels, gatherings with family and friends and other social events that are not possible at this time. [I have photos of people hugging!] I learned how to use the BookWright app affiliated with Blurb photo books which I count as healthy mental stimulation. I was so thrilled with the test product that I tweaked it and republished it in hard cover!

I am truly grateful to my family who nurtured my passion for photography especially my mother who taught me about composition, my father who lent me his Konica for a trip to Israel and many years later, bought me my first DSLR, and all the rest who set the example and were constantly clicking away.



Storks in Portugal



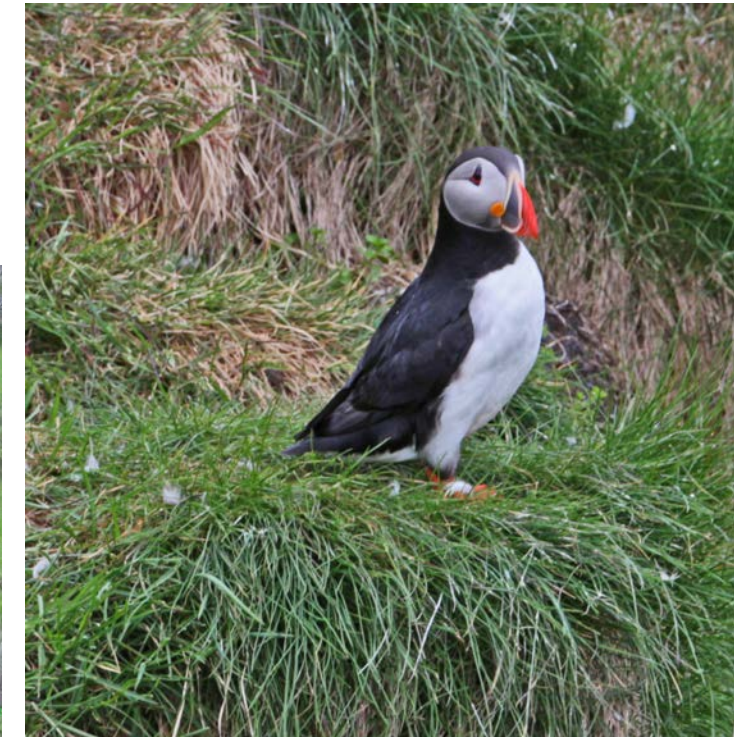
Morocco



One World Trade Center, NY



Mama grizzly and twin cubs in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

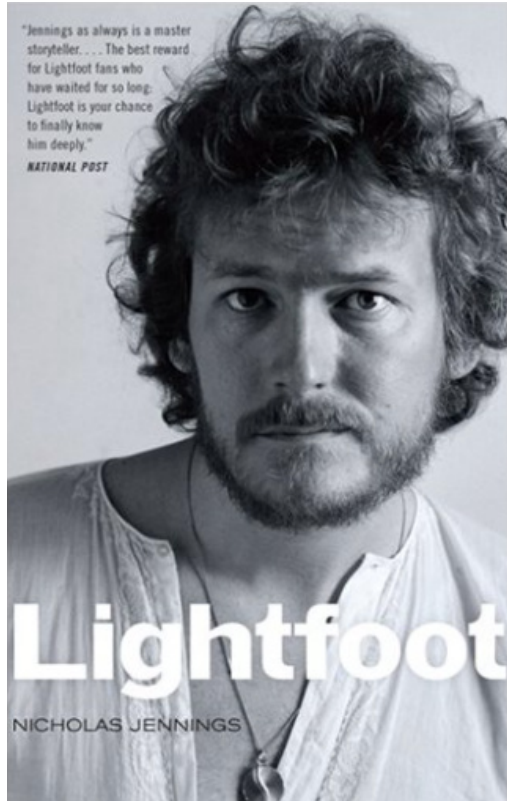


Icelandic Puffin



# LIGHTFOOT by Nicholas Jennings c 2017

Book Review by Gail M. Murray



the world.

Chapter one, called By Lake Couchiching, deals with his early life, love of nature, singing in the church choir and later barbershop in High School. Serious about a musical career, he attended The Westlake College of Modern Music in Hollywood learning music notation, sight reading, composition and arranging. He and pal Terry Whelan headed to Toronto singing mostly folk ballads. When Gord met Ian & Sylvia (Tyson) at the Riverboat in Yorkville, they were impressed with his song writing and introduced him to their manager, Grossman, who booked him into New York clubs and folk festivals launching his career. Ian & Sylvia have a hit with his song Early Morning Rain.

His debut album is superbly crafted with quality, depth and range. His baritone voice, mellow sound and poetic lyrics stand out. His ballads were often inspired by real events, the Canadian landscape and the dynamic between men and women.

“Lightfoot’s songs always took listeners on a journey, drawing them in to stories rich in emotion.....meticulously crafted, the songs were instantly accessible.” (p5) He was influenced by Bob Dylan whom he admired. They shared the common language of music and often jammed together at his Rosedale home when Dylan was in concert in Toronto.

With Canada’s Centennial he was commissioned by CBC producer Bob Jarvis to write a song to capture the grandeur of Canada. He gave Gord the book by William Van Horne, architect of the first transcontinental railroad. Three days later after much focus, coffee and whisky, he emerged with the iconic Canadian Railroad Trilogy which he debuted at Massey Hall. Lightfoot’s appearances there became a yearly ritual. Pierre Berton, author of The Last Spike praised him saying “You did more good with your damn song than I did with my entire book on the same subject.” (p74)

Gord gives Jennings background to many of his songs. Bittergreen (1968) was written for his first wife Brita about whom he could romanticize, his muse, in spite of booze and women on the road. Drinking helped him socialize and it settled his nerves before a concert. It also took its toll on his body and his relationships.

“If You Could Read My Mind (1970) bares his soul in a bittersweet poetic way capturing the breakdown of a

relationship ( his marriage breakdown with Brita) showing his vulnerability and guilt with lines like “heroes often fail” and “chains upon my feet”. His songs frequently deal with wanderlust, ‘movin’ on.’

“Canoeing demanded organization and orderliness, two things Lightfoot excelled at. And with his disciplined approach to work, he thrived on the challenges of wilderness trips.” (p 176) It helped clear his mind and body after being on the concert circuit. Some songs that echo his experiences: Whispers of the North (opens and closes with a plaintive loon call), Christian Island, Knotty Pine, A Winter’s Night. He was also an avid sailor.

Lightfoot is a quintessential Canadian. In 1988, who better to open the Olympic Games at Calgary than Gord Lightfoot and Ian Tyson singing Lightfoot’s Alberta Bound and Tyson’s Four Strong Winds? Lightfoot also worked with David Suzuki on environmental activism.

Women loved Lightfoot. There were three marriages: (Brita Olaisson /Elizabeth Moon /Kim Hasse) which produced Fred, Ingrid, Miles and Meredith and three cohabitations (Cathy Smith /Cathy Coonley /Joanne Magee) which produced Eric and Galen. Gordon is proud of his six children.

In 1981, at the age of 44, he finally quit drinking. He has emphysema and must take oxygen during intermissions while performing. He is happily married to his third wife and takes her touring with him. He’s grateful for the success and life he has lived creating music. This also comes across in the 2019 documentary If You Could Read My Mind where this author (Jennings) is interviewed along with friends – Murray McLauchlan, Ronnie Hawkins, Ian Tyson, The Good Brothers and more. This masterful artist and storyteller we claim as our own.

Just a few on my favorites:

- 1965 For Lovin’ Me
- 1966 Early Moring Rain
- 1967 Go Go Round/Song for a Winter’s Night/Canadian Railroad Trilogy
- 1968 Black Day in July (Detroit Race Riots)/Bittergreen/Pussywillows, Cattails
- 1970 If You Could Read My Mind/
- 1971 Cotton Jenny
- 1972 Christian Island,/Don Quixote/Alberta Bound/Beautiful
- 1974 Carefree Highway
- 1975 Rainy Day People/Gord’s Gold Album
- 1976 Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald
- 1983 Knotty Pine/Whispers of the North

## AUTUMN 1987

Out of darkest longing  
I have come to know what silence is:  
The songs of silence to become the world  
illuminated...

Listen to the wild, calling winds  
In all the open spaces...  
Listen to your heart, to your soul...

Out of darkest longing  
The rose enclosed in her many enfolding  
petals  
Slowly opens to reveal the universe  
And deepest solitude sings within me...

The heart has her many secrets: hidden  
passageways...  
Countries where no stranger may journey:  
A world of dreams, world of echoes, a world of  
mystery  
All the joy, the unfettered soul...

I will live free of all things:  
Storm child of the night, the wind and the rain  
I will dream of what is not,  
I will sing my lone song  
And set free, will wander where a cold  
darkness  
can never find me...

I am alone in the world,  
I will live free spirit unchained  
A deepest solitude will forever sing deep  
within...  
My heart untethered, full of joy, a most glorious  
wonder

Bev Gorbet





# Waxing Nostalgic

by Mary Cairo, Archivist

*“Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race.”*  
~ H. G. Wells

Cycling Events with the Learning Spokes’ riders from the summer of 2019



### Change Of Postal/ Email Address or Other Information

Please send changes to: RTOERO, 18 Spadina Road, Suite 300, Toronto, ON, M2R2S7 or to [membership@rto-ero.org](mailto:membership@rto-ero.org); or call the RTOERO Membership Section at **416-962-9463** or **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](mailto:Gerard MacNeil) at **416-481-7411** or email him at: [g.macneil@bell.net](mailto:g.macneil@bell.net).

CANADA		POSTES
POST		CANADA
Postage paid		Port payé
Publications Mail		Poste-publications
40042060		

**STONY BRIDGES**  
c/o Gerard MacNeil  
1407-88 Erskine Ave.  
Toronto Ontario  
M4P 1Y3