

STONY Bridges



COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS

In this Issue

- » Ontario Volunteer Service Awards, p. 5
- » Science of Happiness, p. 21
- » Speaker Series - Deprescribing Prescriptions, p. 41



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 October 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019

Arnold Ages, Robert Bissell, Tony Conforti, Muriel Dobbie, Charles Farrauto, Anne Guy, William Hughey, Manoranjitham Kulendran, M. Rose Loughheed, Patricia McKay, Mary McNab, Patrick McSweeney, Donley Mogan, Bernardine Nelligan, George Robertson, Richard Robinson, Carmen Sergeant, Marjorie Sweet, Shogo Takeuchi, Claire Tummon, Maryalyce Vogl, Edna Wilson



Greetings to New District 23 Members

by John Giannone - Convener

The Executive welcomes all new members who have recently joined RTOERO District 23, and invite them to become active participants in all of our activities. As of December 31, 2019 RTOERO, District 23 North York has a total membership of 2806 members.

The following information was taken from RTOERO Provincial's monthly updates from October 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019

October: Joseph Crone, Geoff Grant, Vittoria Oddi, Thomas Webb

November: Mary Ann Colin, Garry Kirkpatrick, Tekle Bahlubi, Michaeline Parachuk

December: Rose Ages, Rita Mammone, Emily Markowicz

Reader's Letters/Questions

We would like to hear from you with your comments, questions and suggestions.

Email Maureen Capotosto ~ mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca and send us your thoughts.

Where can we find more information about RTOERO's mission, vision, values and strategic goals in the [strategic plan](#)?

Our Chair, Rich Prophet responded to this question in a recent letter emailed to all members. He asked members to read about the plan and the RTOERO's progress on achieving our goals in its [annual report](#). Follow this link - <https://tinyurl.com/2lcztq>

Will regular activities resume at any point this year?

RTOERO has confirmed that there will be no gatherings through to September at this point and perhaps not at any point in 2021. For updates, stay engaged with District 23 communications on Twitter, Facebook, E-Newsletters or online at the D23 website: <https://district23.rto-ero.org>.

I've noticed several pieces of writing submitted to STONY Bridges...can anyone contribute articles, poems, book reviews, travel reports to your publication?

Any member of District 23 can submit articles or photo presentations to STONY Bridges. Some members mail us multiple samples. We select articles that we hope will interest our members and provide a variety of articles within each edition. We will edit submissions and use what we can fit into the space we have. In some cases, we choose to use articles in a following edition. We will notify members if we are able to use a submission. The editor's decision is final.

Table of Contents

District 23



In Memoriam/New Members	2	Daily Distraction	22
John Giannone, Convener		Mervyn Mascarenhas, Editor	
President's Message	4	Not Quite "50 by 50"	24
Gwen Scriven, President		Steve Carey, Member	
What a Team!	5	"Sacred River": The Meaning of Water	28
Maureen Capotosto, Past President		Bev Gorbet, Member	
Tribute to George Meek	6	Goodwill – New Times—The Impact of COVID	30
Health and Benefits	6	Gwen Bumbury, Convener	
Associate Editors		Pole Walking	31
Needlework and Crafts	9	Kathy Shorney, Convener	
Joan Bourne, Member		North York Strollers – A Guided Walk	32
Political Advocacy	10	Joanne Famiglietti, Convener	
Kathy Shorney, Convener		My Passion for Speaking about Pflag*	34
What's the Buzz?	12	Marilyn Byers, Member	
Karen Quinn, Communications		Stronger Minds Make for Stronger Kids	36
What Good is the District 23 Website?	13	Maureen Capotosto, Valerie Sterling, PSTO	
Mervyn Mascarenhas, Webmaster		Grants-Giving Back to our Community	37
NOTRUMP - a Bridge term not a Political #hashtag	14	Maureen Capotosto, Convener	
Alan Ward, Convener		Coffee Time! Have-a-Java!	37
e-Devices – Everything you wanted to know...	15	Elizabeth Clarke, Convener	
Vern Paige, Convener		Tobago – A World Apart	38
The Forgotten Home Child	16	Gail M. Murray, Member	
Gail M. Murray, Member		Twilight in Barbados	39
The Cactus	17	Gail M. Murray, Member	
Bruce Jacobs Davidovitch, Member		Misplaced	39
An Anti-Authoritarian Septuagenarian	17	Gail M. Murray, Member	
Bruce Jacobs Davidovitch, Member		Recruitment and You	40
Cycling – How Time Flies	18	Mary Ellen Lawless, Convener	
Eileen Kearns, Convener		Speakers' Series: Medications as We Age	41
Tribute to Eileen Kearns	18	Mary Valtellini, 1st Vice President	
Gratitude – Social Committee	20	Book Club	42
Mildred Frank, Convener		Sylvia Skippen, Convener	
The Science of Happiness –Zoom Session		A Learned Love, A Learned Truth	43
Registration Flyer	21	Bev Gorbet, Member	
		You are the Rose	43
		Bev Gorbet, Member	
		From the Archives	44
		Mary Cairo, Archivist	

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 mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca. STONY Bridges is published for its members in March, August, and November by the Retired Teachers of Ontario District 23, North York.

The due date for material for the next issue is Wednesday, June 16 2021



President's Message

by Gwen Scriven, President

“Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering ‘it will be happier’...”

– Alfred Lord Tennyson

Welcome to 2021! We are not sorry to say goodbye to 2020. Even with its many unique challenges, there were many bright spots. We have all learned to keep in touch with friends and loved ones in new and creative ways. Zoom has become the new normal; those phone calls and emails have become doubly important. Under the guidance of Gwen Bumbury some District 23 members have reached out by phone to connect with our more senior members on several occasions to offer some conversation and cheer. This has been most rewarding for the callers as well as the persons receiving the calls. I have met some very interesting people on these calls.

A highlight of our holiday season was the presentation ‘10 Seconds to Joy’ by Laughter Coach, Dawn Thurmond. She has us laughing and catching the spirit of the season. Thank you to Mildred Frank and her team for organizing such a great event.

We at District 23 have continued to provide programs such as e-Devices, Book Club, Have a Java, and Needlework and Crafts in an online format. We have had speakers on Zoom. Those who participated have been quite enthusiastic and I encourage others to join. The information is contained in articles in this newsletter. Our communication team has kept everyone informed through e-Newletters, Stony Bridges, Facebook, Twitter and our website.

Celebrations of what District 23 accomplished in 2020 would not be complete without extending my sincere appreciation to all members of the Executive who have continued to support our members in so many ways! One of the greatest pleasures of being President is being able to work with such a great team of dedicated volunteers. Thank you everyone!

Over the past few months, there have been changes to our health benefits and travel coverages as well as premiums. The Communicue newsletter from RTOERO provided the most up to date information and changes which came into effect on January 1, 2021. The Communicue is available on the RTOERO Website. As circumstances continue to change, it is a good practice to check the website for the most current information.

This is now a time to look forward to a post COVID reality. What an exciting time this will be! Oh, the places we will go.... Whether it be out to lunch with friends, shopping, or travelling around the world we have much to be thankful for and look forward to.

If you have questions or ideas, please feel free to contact me at: president23@districts.rtoero.ca.

Calendar of Events

(ZM) Zoom Session

March 2021

- 5 E-Devices (ZM)
- 10 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 17 Have-a-Java (ZM)
Vibrant Voices Webinar p.11 (ZM)
- St. Patricks Day
- 18 Needlecraft & Crafts (ZM)
- 19 E-Devices (ZM)
- 24 Science of Happiness p.21 (ZM)
- 31 Book Club (ZM)

April 2021

- 14 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 16 E-Devices (ZM)
- 21 Have-a-Java (ZM)
Deprescribing Medicines p.41 (ZM)
- 22 Needlecraft & Crafts (ZM)
- 28 Book Club (ZM)
- 29 Our Earth, Our Responsibility: Take Action
- 30 E-Devices (ZM)

May 2021

- 12. Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 14 E-Devices (ZM)
- 19 Have-a-Java (ZM)
- 20 Needlecraft & Crafts (ZM)
- 26. Book Club (ZM)
- 28 E-Devices (ZM)

June 2021

- 9 Executive Meeting (ZM)
- 11 E-Devices (ZM)
- 24 Needlework & Crafts (ZM)
- 25 E-Devices (ZM)



What a Team!

by Maureen Capotosto, Past President

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Consider getting involved with District 23 – we have a wonderful executive member team. The pandemic has taught us all how important our friendships and family are to us. Meaningful interactions sustain us and make our lives richer. If you would like to explore how you might become involved, contact Maureen Capotosto as Chair of the Nominating Committee.

Ontario Volunteer Service Awards

This award recognizes volunteers for providing committed and dedicated service to an organization.

Adults are recognized by the length of time they’ve volunteered with one organization, ranging from five to 65 years of continuous service.

The awards are presented at ceremonies across Ontario from March to June. The recipients are given a stylized trillium service pin and a personalized certificate to acknowledge their years of service.

In early March 2021, five of our Executive members will be receiving the Ontario Volunteer Service Award

- *Gwen Bumbury, Goodwill Convener*
- *Mary Cairo, Archivist*
- *Joanne Famiglietti, North York Strollers Convener*
- *Karen Quinn, Communications Convener*
- *Alan Ward, Bridge Convener*

RTOERO District 23 congratulates these executive members and thanks them for their service to our District.



Tribute to George Meek



George Meek is retiring from the position of District 23 Convener of Benefits after 15+ years of service in the role. He will continue in this role until his replacement is appointed by the Executive. His last article can be found in the November 2020 edition of STONY Bridges.

The article that appears in this space for this edition has been prepared by our Assistant Editors. This new format allows for Communication changes at RTOERO, and a discussion of the future design of this column until a new Convener is appointed.

Many thanks to George for his valuable service to the members of North York in this role over the past several years. In 2007, George was awarded the Founding Member Award at RTOERO. George was Chair of the former Health Services and Insurance Committee (HSIC) at the Provincial level and a former President, District 23 North York.

Knowing the documents and policies well, George has been instrumental in assisting several members over the years seeking guidance.

We thank George for his hard work throughout the years. "Thank you for your dedication to the Executive and District members."

Remember: This is not goodbye! George will continue on the Executive as the Constitution/ Bylaw Convener.

George's usual advice to you:

"Please look after your health and your finances!"

"Keep your 'Insurance Plans Booklet' under your pillow."

THANK YOU, GEORGE!



Health and Benefits

by Assistant Editors

1. Health Matters

This article is produced 4 times per year by the Benefits Committee (BC) and is included as part of **Renaissance**. The latest Health Matters is found on pages [14 to 20](#) of the Winter 2021 edition. This month, we are going to present

these important changes focusing in on RTOERO health and insurance issues using the most up to date data from the website where the information is most current.

[\(RTOERO Pandemic Preparedness - https://rtoero.ca/rtoero-pandemic-preparedness/\)](https://rtoero.ca/rtoero-pandemic-preparedness/)

2. Communiqué and the Updates to 2020 Insurance Plan Booklet

Communiqué informs all members of the health plan updates. The electronic version of the [Insurance Plans Booklet](#) has been updated for 2021. Because the printed booklet is not provided annually (next printing is 2023), the current version is always available on the website. Please follow the hyperlink above or go to: <https://tinyurl.com/e7j1iygz>

If you have any questions, please direct the inquiries to insurance@rtoero.ca or [1-899-361-9888](tel:1-899-361-9888).

In mid-November, all members of the health plans received **Communiqué** by e-blast. *The newsletter* has also been mailed to all health plan members. This annual newsletter provides members with information and updates to RTOERO's health benefits and travel coverage. You can find *Communiqué* on the website. Follow the hyperlink above or go to <https://tinyurl.com/RTOCommuniqué> for the latest issue.

3. RTOERO Pandemic Preparedness

Merv Mascarenhas, our District 23 Website convener, has prepared a web page highlighting the most up to date RTOERO coverage of the COVID 19 plan at:

<https://district23.rto-ero.org/main-menu/newsletters/covid-19-updates>

This site mirrors the RTOERO site and will be updated as soon as notices are posted on the official website. Events regarding the Health Insurance and travel insurance relating to the Pandemic change frequently. The website will keep you informed. STONY Bridges was developed in January and February in preparation for a March delivery to our members—hence, it is best to seek the most current information online.

Key Topics available on website:

- Delay in claims reimbursement
- Retirement Planning Workshops are virtual
- RTOERO office closed and staff working remotely
- Members service is available by calling office at: [416-962-9463](tel:416-962-9463) or [1-800-361-9888](tel:1-800-361-9888) or by emailing: membership@rtoero.ca
- All in-person district events postponed or cancelled until further notice
- Pandemic Travel Coverage—note applicable COVID-19 coverage
- Trip cancellation or interruption

RTOERO Insurance Coverage (a focused series of

Questions & Answers). **Note: these are current as of January 2021.**

You can also contact our [Service Administrator](mailto:Service Administrator (healthbenefits@johnson.ca) (healthbenefits@johnson.ca) or call [1-877-406-9007](tel:1-877-406-9007).

Q. Why has this change been made to the travel coverage? Does this mean it's safe to travel?

A. We encourage you to follow government advisories to avoid non-essential travel, as a global travel advisory remains in effect. But we know members may have important reasons to travel, even during pandemic.

Q. Am I covered for the cost of a COVID-19 test required prior to international travel?

A: No. RTOERO's emergency medical travel insurance covers sudden and unforeseen services required while travelling. The requirement for an asymptomatic COVID-19 test prior to departure does not meet the definition of emergency services coverage.

Q. Am I covered by my travel insurance for the cost of COVID-19 testing after I return to Canada from travelling?

A. No. RTOERO's emergency medical travel insurance covers sudden and unforeseen services required while travelling. The requirement for a COVID-19 test upon returning from your travels does not meet the definition of emergency services coverage.

Q. Am I covered for the cost of COVID-19 testing?

A. No. In Canada, COVID-19 tests are covered by government health plans.

Q. Am I covered for the cost of COVID-19 vaccine while travelling internationally?

A.No.

A. Am I covered for the cost of COVID-19 vaccine in Canada?

A. No. In Canada, COVID-19 vaccination is covered by government health plans.

Q. My out-of-Canada trip started prior to Oct. 1. Does this new emergency medical travel coverage apply to me?

A. Yes. You are covered for medical emergencies incurred on or after Oct. 1.

Q. If I am out of the country and the Canadian government issues a new advisory related to COVID-19, will I be required to return home immediately?

A. No. You are able to remain in place with COVID-19 emergency medical coverage still in effect.

Q. If I book a trip and become ill with COVID-19 before departing or making additional payments, will I be cov-

ered for the cancellation?

A. No. Our travel insurance does not cover trip cancellation or interruption related to COVID-19. However, unlike other travel plans, RTOERO will continue to reimburse for cancellations and interruptions unrelated to COVID-19. Please see [page 68-73](#) of the Insurance Plans Booklet for complete details of trip cancellation and interruption coverage.

Q. If I contract COVID-19 while travelling, am I covered for indirect costs related to my illness?

A. If you are medically unfit to travel due to an emergency, your coverage is extended for up to five days following the date that you are deemed stable to return to your province by your physician or the common carrier. The coverage provides up to \$250 per day, to a maximum of \$5,000 per trip, per insured person, for the reasonable additional expenses for meals and accommodation, when a trip is extended beyond the last day of the scheduled trip due to the sickness and/or injury suffered by an insured person or travelling companion. Contact Global Excel Management using the applicable phone number on your benefits card before starting any medical treatment. For complete details of emergency medical coverage, please refer to [pages 50 to 67](#) of the Insurance Plans Booklet.

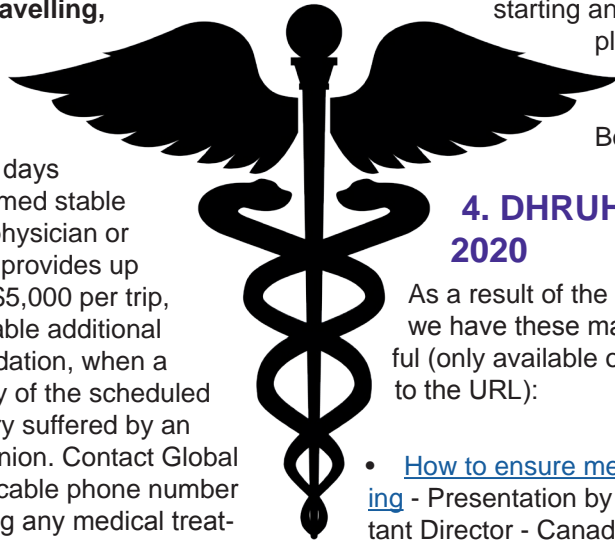
Q. I received a credit or voucher from my travel provider. Can I claim the full amount through my insurance?

A. You are not eligible to claim amounts that have been reimbursed via refund, voucher or credit. If your credit or voucher expires or a situation arises where you are unable to use it, please contact Global Excel Management at [1-877-346-1467](tel:1-877-346-1467) to review the solutions available to you.

Q. Do I have emergency medical coverage if I become ill with COVID-19 while travelling?

A. Yes. You have emergency medical coverage as long as you did not have any symptoms within 90 days prior to leav-

ing. This coverage applies even during the government's advisory to avoid travel outside of Canada due to the pandemic. Coverage includes, but is not limited to, hospital accommodation, physician charges and prescriptions. Please note that Emergency Air Transportation benefits may be available, when medically required and approved in advance. Contact Global Excel Management using the applicable phone number on your benefits card before starting any medical treatment. For complete details of emergency medical coverage, please refer to [pages 50 to 67](#) of the Insurance Plans Booklet.



4. DHRUHR Workshop October 2020

As a result of the DHRUHR Workshop in October we have these materials which you might find helpful (only available online - just click on the links or go to the URL):

- [How to ensure medications are helping, not harming](#) - Presentation by Camille Ganon, PharmD, Assistant Director - Canadian Deprescribing Network (<https://tinyurl.com/RTOGanon>)
- [Joint health: at all ages](#) – Presentation by Anya Rampersad, Certified Nutritional Practitioner - the Well Nest (<https://tinyurl.com/RTOAnya>)
- Check out the [Canadian Deprescribing Network Virtual Medication Safety Toolkit!](#) Resources are available in English and French (<https://tinyurl.com/RTODeprescribing>)
- Dr Nathan Stall's article '[How coronavirus could forever change home health care, leaving vulnerable older adults without care and overburdening caregivers](#)' (<https://tinyurl.com/RTOStall>)

5. Article(s) in 2021 Winter Matters That May Be in the Interests of Your Health

- 5 Unexpected Winter Superfoods - These gems will keep you happy all season (Winter- [pages 14 and 15](#); <https://tinyurl.com/RTOSuperfoods>)
- Sit and Get Fit - Grab a chair and try out these gentle moves (Winter- [pages 16 to 18](#) <https://tinyurl.com/RTOGetfit>)

6. Health and Wellness Online

RTOERO Foundation Webinars are a win-win-win! Watch our past webinars and subscribe to be invited to participate in future webinars.

<https://rtoero.ca/rtoero-foundation/get-involved/webinar-series/>

- Webinar [From Isolation to Inclusion](#) <https://tinyurl.com/RTOIsolation>
- Webinar: [Improving Prescription Strategies for Older Adults](#) <https://tinyurl.com/RTOPrescriptions>



Needlework and Crafts

by Joan Bourne, Member

“I find it the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keeps the darkness at bay... small acts of kindness and love.”

Gandalf, Lord of the Rings, J.R.R. Tolkien

To My Fellow Crafters

We will be following on a similar schedule of Zoom meetings this year, on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

- Thursday, March 18, 2021
- Thursday, April 15, 2021
- Thursday, May 20, 2021
- Thursday, June 17, 2021.

We will see where things go from there.

Feel free to bring whatever projects you are working on and of course, be prepared to chat. I am keeping notes of the meetings to put into our memories binder and I appreciate any pictures of your projects sent on after the meeting. This does seem to be appreciated by members who cannot be in attendance and is also a way to share patterns and ideas as to new projects.

Here then are some notes and pictures from last month's meeting...

- Joanne L. ~ informed all about the advantages to being signed in to the Toronto Knitters' Guild.
- Kathy S. ~ told us all about the Christmas Star and Maureen made us aware of the Christmas Bell.



- Kathy ~ had finished 25 preemie hats and 2 blankets for the hospital.



- Maureen ~ made a wonderful Christmas stocking.



- Elsa ~ made a scarf.

We hope you can join us!



Political Advocacy

by Kathy Shorney, Convener

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

~ Leo Buscaglia

By the time you are reading this, we will have had a long winter indoors. Hopefully, as you receive the vaccine, we will turn a corner. As members of RTOERO, we need to be vigilant in supporting the initiatives of RTOERO Political Advocacy Committee’s work towards improving the lives of seniors in Canada. District 23 has chosen to focus on the Seniors Strategy issue of the Vibrant Voices campaign. You are encouraged to go to www.vibrantvoices.ca to read the issues and strategies suggested.

Income Security

12% of senior families and 28.5% of single seniors qualify as low income. Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security program and Guaranteed Income Supplement are stepping in the right direction. Yet more needs to be done. Defined benefits pensions are proven to make retirement secure.

Universal Public Pharmacare



Vibrant Voices promotes that all seniors have access to all the prescription medications that they need. 10% of the population do not have benefits packages that provide adequate coverage for the prescriptions not covered by provincial plans. They are often without essential drugs. COVID-19 has proven that Canada needs national standards covering health care for older adults.

Social Isolation

Health is all-encompassing: mind, body and spirit. As many of us have witnessed over the past year many seniors have felt the effects of social isolation and the resulting mental health issues. As seniors, because of related ageing issues, we are especially subject to the effects. District 23 North York is looking forward to restarting many of our programs that promote social interaction. We have transferred several of our regular activities to zoom meetings, made phone calls to older members and held online special group events to promote meaningful interactions for our members.

We must encourage all levels of government to reopen programs that are essential and are designed to keep people connected. Age-friendly communities, walkable parks with benches, etc., accessible meeting places with scheduled and interactive programs and in-home personal support are needed to further avoid social isolation, loneliness and elder abuse.

Ageing at Home

Most seniors want to stay in their own homes as long as possible. Health, finances, transportation, safety and other considerations can derail that dream.

Rights for Seniors

The rights of older people are embedded yet not specific in international human rights conventions. Such conventions cover economic, social, civil, cultural and political rights. Ageism and age discrimination are real. Protecting older people’s rights will help them to lead dignified, secure lives, as equal members of society.

Recently a letter to Ontario Minister of Long-Term Care was sent on behalf of Rich Prophet (Chair) and Jim Grieve (CEO) of RTOERO. Letters have been sent to our local MPs, MPPs and Councillors to express our concerns from the District by our President. As your convener, I have also sent letters to elected officials and have placed myself on their lists to attend the virtual community meetings to monitor initiatives and to voice our needs. In the last STONY BRIDGES and e-Newsletters and with Twitter, and Facebook we have offered you links and sample communications for you to forward your concerns to government officials. I will continue to monitor current print sources and communications from the RTOERO Political Advocacy initiatives

I would like to remind you that it is important to provide your email address to RTOERO. By providing your up-to-date

email address you will be able to receive timely and important information from RTOERO and our district. To provide or update your email address, email membership@rtoero.ca or call 1-800-361-9888. Once you have provided your email address you can easily manage your preferences by clicking on the subscription preferences link included at the bottom of every RTOERO e-Newsletter.



Over the past winter, we have all been made aware of the dreadful situations regarding the care of the residents of our LTC homes and the indignities the residents have endured. Our concerns about the situation with long-term residential care must be kept in the focus of our elected officials. We are once again asking you to go to www.vibrantvoices.ca.

RTOERO will host the first *Vibrant Voices* webinar of the series on **Feb. 10**. This three-part series will focus on [our key advocacy](#) issues—geriatric health care, seniors' strategy and environmental stewardship—and will feature experts and thought leaders in the industry

Use the self-serve form to send a message to your elected officials. As the recovery efforts from COVID-19 begin, the RTOERO advocacy issues must be kept at the top of governments' agendas.

To register, click on the title of the session(s) you would like to attend and complete the registration form in the link.

RTOERO describes 5 apps to help keep you socially connected, especially during these times of physical distancing and rotating shutdowns.

[5 apps to help keep you socially connected](#)

[Rights of Older Persons: Support, Ratify, Demand Now February 10, 2021](#)

1:00 – 2:15 pm

During this session, panelists will discuss the importance of supporting the United Nations Convention of the Right of Older Persons while exploring national standards for long-term care facilities.

If you need assistance getting started, join Vern Paige's e-Devices biweekly Friday Zoom meetings. He also hosts monthly *Basics and Beyond* meetings for those struggling with smartphones and technology in general. To join the group, send Vern an email to photoguy.2019@gmail.com.

[The Aging Continuum: Secure the Support Necessary for The Journey March 17, 2021](#)

1:00 – 2:15 pm

Speakers will explore the aging continuum and the infrastructure needed to support Canadians as they age and confront health and other challenges.

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/RTOAging>

Seniors Strategy

What's the issue?
Seniors are Canada's fastest growing demographic. Care in our health care and social policies are creating barriers to seniors' independence, and to their essential roles in climate, healthy communities and economies. Tackling these issues independently won't give us the results we need. A coordinated national seniors strategy, with dedicated funding and accountable goals, will ensure we meet the working needs of seniors.

Some challenges
HEALTHY AGING: Health Canada says 75% of seniors function and 38.2% of single seniors qualify as low income. Millions in the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security program and Guaranteed Income Supplement are at risk of being lost. The most vulnerable low-income persons are those in the retirement sector.

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Canada is the only country in the world that has not passed a long-term plan. We consistently fail among the high-income countries in the world to have adequate legislation to meet these needs. Our work will be to fill these gaps.

SOCIAL ISOLATION: Through community connections and other forms of engagement to continue, identify barriers to social inclusion and physical health. To help a large older population, have support or support-based services available. According to the Government of Ontario, upwards of 50% of seniors are socially isolated.

AGING AT HOME: Most seniors want to stay in their own homes as long as possible. Homelessness, safety and other considerations are about the same.

Questions for politicians
• How can we support seniors in their homes, including safety and other considerations?
• What are you doing to support seniors in their homes?
• How can we support seniors in their homes?
• How can we support seniors in their homes?
• How can we support seniors in their homes?

Environmental Stewardship

What's the issue?
Responsible use of resources, conservation, protecting our air, land and water – representing all areas is critical for a sustainable future. Individuals, companies, industry groups and governments all have a part to play in environmental stewardship. We need to ensure the stability of our ecosystems for ourselves, our children and grandchildren.

Some challenges
BAN ON SINGLE-USE PLASTICS: The federal government will ban many single-use plastic products by 2021. Ontario is moving ahead with similar legislation. The province is also looking at other ways to reduce plastic use.

COMMON RECYCLING STANDARDS: With all the recycling efforts made by companies, there's much more to be done for recycling. Ontario requires that government-owned facilities in Canada recycle. One leader in green practices is the province of Ontario.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION: Transportation is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. We need to ensure that we have a sustainable transportation system for ourselves, our children and grandchildren.

Questions for politicians
• What do you think about the ban on single-use plastics?
• How can we support seniors in their homes?
• How can we support seniors in their homes?
• How can we support seniors in their homes?

Geriatric Health Care

What's the issue?
Canada's population is aging. By 2021, almost one in seven Canadians was a senior. Our health care system will need to be able to care for more than one in four. Our health care system will need to be able to care for more than one in four. Our health care system will need to be able to care for more than one in four.

Some challenges
GERIATRIC TRAINING: Canada has a shortage of geriatricians. Over the next few decades, the number of geriatricians will drop by 50%. The number of geriatricians will drop by 50%. The number of geriatricians will drop by 50%.

HEALTHY AGING: Healthy aging requires a focus on physical, social, mental, and health. Healthy aging requires a focus on physical, social, mental, and health. Healthy aging requires a focus on physical, social, mental, and health.

LONG-TERM CARE: The number of seniors, and longer lifespans, are creating multiple pressures on LTC. There is a huge gap between the number of personal support workers and those working in LTC. There is a huge gap between the number of personal support workers and those working in LTC.

ALZHEIMER'S: Up to 10% of seniors experience some form of Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease is a major cause of disability and is a leading cause of death. Alzheimer's disease is a major cause of disability and is a leading cause of death.

Questions for politicians
• How can we support seniors in their homes?
• How can we support seniors in their homes?
• How can we support seniors in their homes?

[Our Earth, Our Responsibility: Take Action April 29, 2021](#)

1:00 – 2:15 pm

Taking care of the environment is our responsibility. Webinar panelists will illustrate how to coordinate activities, accomplish goals and take action-oriented steps to help protect the planet.

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/RTOEarth>

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Danielle Norris, manager of marketing and communications at dnorris@rtoero.ca.



“What’s the Buzz?”

by Karen Quinn, Convener

“Words and pictures can work together to communicate more powerfully than either alone.” ~William Albert Allard

In this issue of STONY, we are going to explore some of the nuances associated with the Communications available in District 23 North York.

Update your Information to Stay Connected

First and foremost, we need our members to ensure that their information is keep up-to-date. In this time of COVID, it is vitally important that you keep RTOERO always informed of changes to your contact information: mailing address, email addresses and phone numbers. These changes must come directly from the you - the member. To record changes in your membership, just contact the RTOERO Membership by emailing: membership@rtoero.ca or call 1-888-361-9888.

Please note, our district executives are NOT allowed to forward member information to another member.

Once you have provided this information, you will receive your STONY Bridges editions, your RTOERO update emails, Renaissance, Liaison and Communiqué correspondence without interruption. Your pocket calendars and important information will continue to be forwarded in a timely manner. The Central office—Membership services, will update our local district with your change of information notices, from the point of your initial registration to District 23 through any the revisions you make over the course of your time with us.

RTOERO Pandemic Preparedness

As we know, information about the COVID Pandemic changes daily, if not faster. RTOERO knows that our members have constant questions about how their health and travel insurance benefits are affected by these changing times. Merv Mascarenhas, our District 23 Website convener and STONY Editor, has linked D23 to the RTOERO Pandemic Preparedness web page highlighting the most up to date RTOERO coverage of the COVID 19 plan at:

<https://rtoero.ca/rtoero-pandemic-preparedness>

This site mirrors the RTOERO site and will be updated by the organization as soon as notices are posted on the official website. The site will keep you informed and direct you to RTOERO experts to answer your concerns. This issue of STONY Bridges was developed in January and February

in preparation for a March delivery to you, our members—hence, it is best to seek the most current information online when there are gaps between issues. Key topics and guidelines are posted in our Health and Benefits article in this issue.

District 23 Communications E-Newsletter

Karen Quinn ~ Editor

STONY Bridges is published 3x yearly, in July/August, November and March. Our District 23 E-Newsletter is published online the first week of the months between September and June and occasionally during July/August. When there is important news to share, 2 or 3 additional updates may be made.

When you register with District 23, we are notified by Membership Services and I add your name to our mailing list. Your email is not shared with other members. The monthly E-Newsletters are mailed to you in timely fashion.

If you are not currently receiving these emails, you can still register online at our D23 website:

<https://district23.rto-ero.org>

Register for our E-News from the Button



This feature is available on the main page of the website. By entering your first and last name and your email address, you will be automatically added to our mailing list. I will receive a notification. This ensures you will be kept informed on current events and new events. Register now!





What Good is the District 23 Website?

by Merv Mascarenhas, Webmaster

Have you ever had one of those moments where you need some RTOERO information but cannot for the life of you remember where you saw it or put it? Did you delete the email? Or file it in a secret place that is so secure that you cannot remember it.

This is where the website shines. It is intended to be the one-stop **GO-TO** place for information on District 23. We try to avoid duplicating information available at our parent RTOERO website but will often provide you links to relevant pages.

Quite often we need to share with you more information than can fit into a Facebook or Twitter post. **NO PROBLEM** – we just publish it on the website and provide a synopsis and URL link on Facebook and Twitter.

So! How do I find out what's new on the website? Just go to the What's New webpage under the News tab to learn about everything new since your last visit.

I have misplaced my copy of STONY Bridges and need to look up an article I liked – can the website help? Yes it can – all issues of STONY dating back to September 2003 can be viewed or downloaded from the News tab.

I want to contact one of the conveners, but her contact information is no longer listed on the website. What do I do? Just go to the *Contact Us* menu item on the *Who We Are* page and, complete the simple form and your message will wing immediately into the email box of the convener.

I have heard great things about the E-Newsletter, but do not know how to get it. Just go to the website homepage.

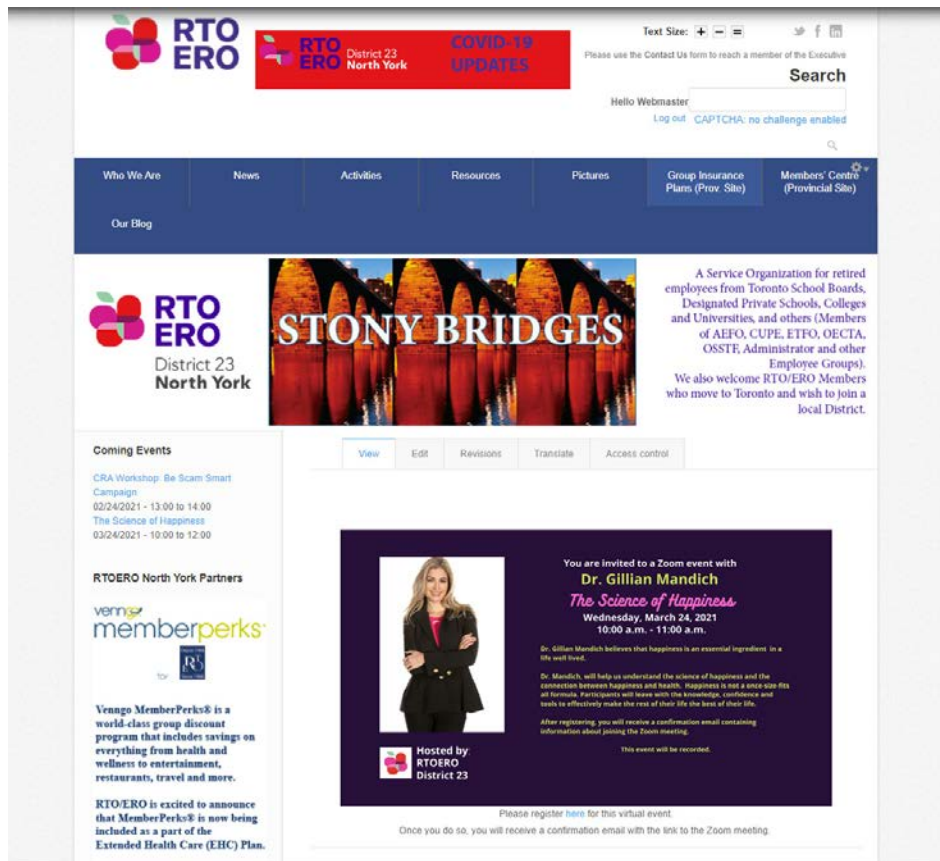
I heard that there is a video recording of Dr. Gillian Mandich's March 24 presentation on YouTube. How do I find it? Just go to the website – look under News > What's New?

I have heard great things about the e-Devices group. How do I join it? Just go to the website and look under Activities or Resources.

When all else fails, try the **SEARCH** box on the top of every page.

Meet you at the Website!

<https://district23.rto-ero.org/>





NOTRUMP – a Bridge term not a Political #hashtag

by Alan Ward, Bridge Convener

“Always look on the bright side of life!”

Monty Python, The Life of Brian

As 2020 disappears into history’s rearview mirror (whew!), we hope that Fall 2021 will see us able to renew our former activities, including Bridge. Social Bridge is unlike duplicate in many respects. We change partners after every four hands. Being recognized as a Table Champ is an incentive to sound competitive play; there is no real downside to making outrageous (but legal) bids or disastrous plays. Sometimes an outrageous bid will pay off and we are quick to forgive disastrous plays: we’ve all been there. Nonetheless, we all like to feel that our game is improving year by year and that we are adding to our arsenal of bidding conventions and crafty plays. Often the best play of the hand is not immediately apparent, which is why pausing briefly after the opening lead is a good policy. Many a contract is lost by a thoughtless play from dummy at trick one.

Contracts of 3 NOTRUMP are always interesting. Sometimes there will be 9 certain tricks after the opening lead and the only challenge will lie in manufacturing one or more overtricks. More often there will only be 7 or 8 top tricks and 1 or 2 smaller cards must be promoted into winners. Consider the hands shown below.

West opened 1 spade, North overcalled 2 hearts, East passed and South bid 2 NOTRUMP, which denied hearts but promised support in the other suits. North raised to 3 NOTRUMP.

	Spades	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs
North	92	AQJ107	A65	QJ6
South	AQ4	96	Q1092	K954

West led the 5 of spades and East played the 10, South taking the trick with the queen. What next? Declarer had 2 spade winners, 4 hearts, 1 diamond and 2 clubs but the opponents held the king of hearts, king of diamonds and the ace of clubs. West opened, so must hold at least two of these cards in addition to five spades topped by the king and jack. Declarer must knock out the king of hearts and the ace of clubs, but which should come first?

With only 15 HCP outstanding, West is almost certain to hold the ace of clubs. Declarer played a club from hand to

the queen in dummy before leading the jack back to West’s ace. At trick 4 West led a high spade, which South ducked! Another spade was led which South had to take, but the heart finesse could be taken safely by advancing the 9 of hearts from hand. If the finesse were to fail, East had no more spades and South could win any return. It was critical to knock out the club stopper before the heart suit was broached.

In actuality, West held KJ852 of spades, KJ3 of diamonds, A1072 of clubs and a singleton 3 of hearts for a total of 12 HCP. The heart singleton would have been a bonus in a spade contract, but the trump suit was shabby. The bidding by West helped NS to find the best contract and winning strategy, but few would pass such a hand.

In another 3 Notrump contract, South opened 1D with 18 HCP which North raised to 2D. South rebid 2N which North raised to 3N. The opponents passed at every opportunity, providing no clues to the distribution. West led the 6 of clubs, which suggested length in clubs and honours in that suit. The NS hands were:

	Spades	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs
North	K92	752	108654	A9
South	AJ	AK6	KQJ2	10754

If West had 5 clubs, the defenders could win 4 club tricks and 1 diamond. At trick 1, declarer played the ace of clubs and followed this by attacking the diamond suit. Whichever opponent took the diamond ace, a club would again be led. How did this help? If West had 5 clubs, East could only have 2 and one of these must be an honour. If West held KQJxx in clubs, the lead would have been the king, not the 6. If East started with Qx in clubs, the suit will be blocked. If East unblocked on the first round of clubs by dropping the queen under the ace, declarer’s 10 would become a stopper. In actuality, West held the diamond ace and KJxxx of clubs. Had declarer played low at trick 1, East’s queen would have won and a second club would have driven out the ace. Game over!



e-Devices - Everything you to wanted know, but ...

by Vern Paige ~ Convener

“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”

Socrates

In the past 14 months it became more important than ever, and at the same time more difficult, to keep active and informed and involved, to access essential services such as health care, to maintain contact with family and friends, and to remain physically and mentally healthy.

Technology, our Mobile Electronic Devices or “e-Devices”, have become increasingly important to enable us to adapt to the changes we have experienced. They are no longer just, or primarily, conveniences and entertainments, although convenience and entertainment have always also been important to healthy living.

We are increasingly dependent on technology in all aspects of life, and we are all expected to take increasingly more direct control of the technology by making more use of “e Devices” (cell-phone, tablet, computer, digital camera). Whatever your level of technical competence, our Group can help you use it to make life easier, more interesting, more fun.

We began by using video conferencing, “Zoom meetings”, as a poor but necessary substitute for getting together in person. While that is still true for some purposes, we have learned that there are also many benefits. We save travel time, expense and inconvenience. We have access to resources that were previously unavailable. We have made new friends and associates. We may have more contact with friends and family, though it lacks the warmth of sharing physical space. The very act and process of learning to use new technology are stimulating.

We hope we will soon be able to enjoy greater freedom of activity, in safety and good health, due to a combination of factors – effective vaccines, “herd immunity”, warmer weather – but it will be wise to continue to take advantage of what we have learned about some benefits of technology. We should continue and expand our exploration of social, educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities enabled and enhanced by technology.



The e Devices Group helps members take advantage of technology to seek information about any subject on the Internet, to participate in video and audio meetings, to “socialize virtually” including playing online games, to enjoy artistic and cultural performances and exhibits online, to study. Members learn and enjoy and share information about theatre, music, movies, books, online games, current affairs, medical and scientific developments, physical and mental health. We discuss various uses, in addition to “the obvious”, for cellphones, tablets, laptops, cameras.

Between meetings

- We exchange information with messages on smart-phones using WhatsApp Messenger, a free “app” on the App Store for iPhones and Google Play for Android phones.
- We encourage members to “bookmark” and refer regularly to the District 23 website at <https://district23.rto-ero.org/>
- e Devices has an information page at <https://district23.rto-ero.org/resources/e-devices> with links to more information about using Zoom and WhatsApp, and we will continue to add more.
- We recommend that you follow our Webmaster on the Twitter app or at https://twitter.com/RTO23_NorthYork
- Keep up to date with the e-Newsletters, sign up on our website at <https://district23.rto-ero.org/>.
- Check out [RTOERODistrict23NorthYork](https://www.facebook.com/RTOERODistrict23NorthYork) on Facebook

New members are always welcome.

We meet by Zoom on alternate Fridays at 10:30 am for approximately an hour, please refer to the Calendar of Events for the dates of upcoming meetings. Please email the convener with your name and email address by Wednesday before a meeting to get the Zoom link, to join our WhatsApp Group, or for other information. Also, mention any particular interest or a specific question.

You can email Vernon at PhotoGuy.2019@gmail.com or Vernon.Paige@gmail.com



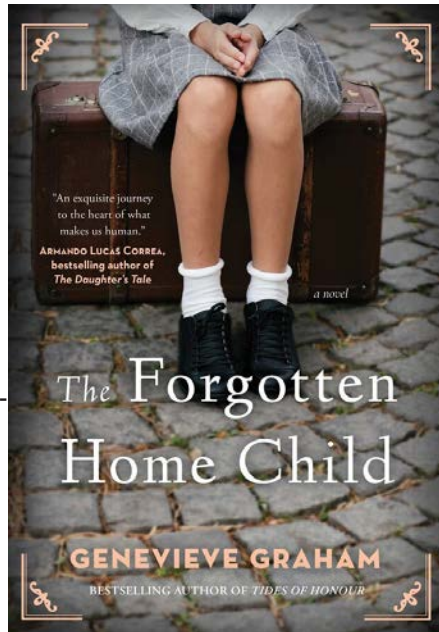
The Forgotten Home Child

by Genevieve Graham ©2020 as reviewed by Gail M. Murray, Member

Bestselling Canadian author Genevieve Graham has written a taut, engrossing novel exposing a dark part of Canadian history and the lives of British Home Children. One in ten Canadians is descended from a Home Child. She brings their plight to light through involving us in the lives of her three main characters based on her tireless research.

Drawing on a dark, little known chapter in Canadian history, Genevieve Graham paints a searing portrait of childhood shattered by isolation, injustice and brutality.

Through meticulous research, Graham uncovers alarming facts shining a light on the lives of British Home Children – over 120,000 destitute children between the ages of three and eighteen taken from Britain’s streets and orphanages from the years 1869 to 1948 and brought to Canada to toil as indentured servants, mostly as farm laborers and domestics. This child migration scheme was thought to provide a better life but there was little to no monitoring or checking up on the children.



The Forgotten Home Child, Gail M. Murray

Winnie runs away from an abusive step-father. Living on the streets of London she’s taken in by Mary and her older brother Jack where she learns to beg for and steal food. Captured by the police, the girls fair better in Dr. Barnardo’s Barkingside Girls’ Village, a local home for orphans and forgotten children. Here they have warm beds, regular meals, are taught to read, sew, cook and clean. Their bond goes beyond friendship to one of family. The theme of home and family is a recurring one in the novel.

Separated from her brother Jack for several years, they are re-united on the Liverpool dock being shipped out to Halifax. Once in Canada they are separated again - the girls sent by train to Peterborough and the boys to London to work on remote farms. It is the

Depression and these children offer cheap labour at \$3.00 for an application fee. Winnie, a city girl learns to milk cows and plant crops while barely surviving on scraps and sleeping in a shed with the sheep. “She realized the bleakest thing about her life was the loneliness.” (p. 96)

Only Winnie’s resilience keeps her story from becoming too distressing. Eventually allowed to attend school in the winter, she reconnects with her friend Charlotte who ignores Winnie until meeting secretly after school; such is the stigma and shame of being a Home Child.

About seventy-five per cent of Home Children suffered neglect (malnourished, froze to death) and abuse (whipping). Jack’s harrowing life reflects the horrible beatings some of the boys endured. Charlotte represents the lucky ones who were actually adopted into loving homes. These are not mere statistics but flesh and blood people Graham has created that gain our support and sympathy.

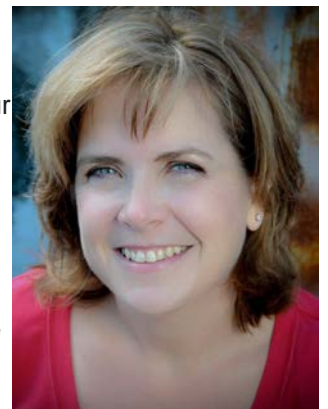
Despite the inhumane treatment, Jack and brothers Edward and Cecil enlist in World War II. Jack and Winnie, now a nurse, reunite as she tends him in hospital. The novel takes on a different tone at this point, yet their early years



Home Child Stamp, Gail M. Murray

“Everything you read about in *The Forgotten Home Child* happened to the actual Home Children.....a large percentage of the girls like Mary suffered sexual abuse and rape. Many boys were beaten to death, like Quinn and others committed suicide.....froze to death.....full of pitchfork holes.” (p346, 347)

Readers will instantly become engrossed in the lives of her main characters: tiny, brave Winnie, gentle Mary and rebellious Jack (a natural leader and protector). Fifteen-year-old



Author Genevieve Graham

continue to haunt them. "Life was hard and he'd become just as hard in order to survive it.....he reached for the possibility of happiness." (p. 253, 254)

Despite finding love, Jack can't escape his past. He is bitter, filled with anger and inferiority despite his success as a mechanic. The most common feeling mentioned among Home Children is bitterness.

Graham has achieved her purpose bringing public awareness to this shameful part of our history. Graham thanks Lori in her acknowledgements and Lori Oschefski, founder of British Home Children Advocacy and Research Association writes:

"The Forgotten Home Child is a poignant, edgy and skillfully written portrayal of a Home Child's experience that typified so many. The absence of any sugar coating makes this story come to life and brings a level of reality that is often lacking – an emotional journey well worth reading."

The Cactus

*Saguaro
It rolls off the tongue
Mighty sentinel of the
Tohono O'odham Nation
Succulent reservoir of the
Gila River watershed*

*Sonoran native
Your archetypes have withstood
The invasive and the invader
Surviving seasons that know
Only drought*



*Across the ero-
sive millennia*

*By dawn hooded
orioles sip cactus
flower nectar
Like Franciscan
friars drinking
benediction wine
By dusk long-*

*nosed bats, no fear of impalement
Draw nectar amidst spines and spikes*

*Shallow roots make you vulnerable to
theft
The laws of Arizona protect you
Yet, thoughtless hunters vandalize
you
As target practice
Wandering arid arroyos
Under a treacherous noon-day sun*

Bruce Jacobs Davidovitch



An Anti-Authoritarian Septuagenarian

*Septua septuary
To be septuagenary
ut LXX
Poised at the solar apex
Fearing a cosmic reflex*

*Hepti septi as prefix
Tujuh puluh in Malay
All the fundamental hooplah
Soixante-dix in Quebecois
A prisoner of natural law*

*Year-sharing with Cher and Dolly P.
Sylvester S. and Wonder, Stevie
Spiritual order in theology
Introspection in numerology
Waxing and waning physiology*

*Pfizer must be kept at -70 C
Preferring 70 F lazing by the sea
Not ready to heed the call of the
clarion
Still feeling mobilized, a contrarian
barbarian
Steadfastly, an anti-authoritarian
septuagenarian*

Bruce Jacobs Davidovitch





Cycling.....How Time Flies When You Are Riding A Bike!

by Eileen Kearns, Convener

Eileen began in 2013 as a Member-at-Large with RTOERO District 23. Eileen enthusiastically broached the idea of a cycling activity. It was so well received that it became a regular spring, summer and fall event. Eileen welcomed other Districts' members to join in and now there are at least one or two other cycling groups. Eileen even organized a skating event for us. Eileen carefully considered safety issues, worked with Parks and Recreation and planned interesting routes. We are most grateful for Eileen's contribution.

Thank You, Eileen!

Despite being 7 and ½ years later, I remember as though it was yesterday, how cycling came to be with the RTO/ERO District 23.

At a social event during the fall after my retirement, a few of us were discussing what we had done the previous summer. It was at this gathering I mentioned that I had been cycling. A light went on and the discussion ensued that it would be a new and most active endeavor for the District to initiate.

It was during the following winter at an Executive Meeting when I came ready to discuss/present the idea. Helmet in hand, bell, cycling gloves, water bottle, a bike pump and a Toronto ravine map with paths highlighted on it were just a few of the props that I brought to this meeting.

Nothing like a few props to set the mood! 😊😊

Yes, you are right in noting these cycling props were sans a bike.....it was the middle of the winter after all! 😊😊

At this meeting it was decided to reconvene as a smaller committee to organize the last details.

This committee met in the then District 23 President's kitchen.....of course, as it is universally understood as the most typical place to solve worldly issues etc. or in this case finalize the cycling details.

This small committee discussed the release/waiver form honed to the specifics of cycling that each participating cyclist would sign.

The following September 26, 2013 was our inaugural ride!

As they say, 'the rest was history'. We moved from cycling 2x a month to more frequent cycling trips and then even extended the season weather permitting, from the summer months to include the spring and fall. In the spirit of being a group of active life-long learners we named the group, The Learning Spokes!



Eileen Kearns

Eventually I extended an invitation to both the Scarborough and Toronto Districts allowing them to also register for our rides.

Over the years the articles in Stony Bridges have recounted some of our explorations and antics and suffice it to say it has been quite a ride!

It is therefore with a heavy heart that I am passing the wheels and bell 😊 to someone younger and definitely with younger joints. I look forward to hearing from any

interested party that would like to take on this endeavor and of course I will assist the person with this transition.

I too hope to join in some of the rides. Happy Trails!

Eileen.Kearns@edu.yorku.ca





Gratitude

by Mildred Frank, Social Convener

“Gratitude is a powerful catalyst for happiness. It’s the spark that lights a fire of joy in your soul.”

Amy Collette

Whenever we gather, there is a tireless team of volunteers who spend time working out the details, the menus, the speakers, the games and the celebrations. This year, they organized the Virtual Champagne Breakfast and the “Ten Minutes to Joy” with Dawn Thurmond, just before the holiday season. The Social Committee has also coordinated our next Virtual Event: Dr. Gillian Mandich: The Science of Happiness on March 24, 2021.

We are very grateful to Cheryl Paige for introducing us to Dr. Gillian Mandich. Committee members include: Mary Cairo, Gwen Scriven, Cheryl Paige, Mary Valtellini, Maureen Capotosto, Karen Quinn, George Meek, Sara DiNallo, Merv Mascarenhas and Mildred Frank.

Thank you all!



The Holiday Season Event 2020 – 10 Seconds to Joy

by Mildred Frank, Social Convener

“What a JOY this morning was and what an excellent idea for us to have someone with such a powerful and useful message to help us through these dark times.”

This is the opening statement of a Thank You message sent from a member who attended “Ten Seconds To Joy” on December 15 this past year. Our Holiday Season Luncheon - a traditional event of many years - had to be cancelled so the members of the Social Committee decided to offer a treat of another kind.

And so, we invited Dawn Thurmond from San Antonio, Texas, to brighten our holiday season—and brighten it she did. Dawn is known as a professional Laughter Coach. She presented a workshop that began with some information on problems created by stress and anxiety. Her

suggestions for dealing with such realities were very timely. And then the fun---she led us through a variety of exercises that proved to lift our spirits through laughing from nervous-



ness to a genuine feeling of ease. Facial contortions and weird sounds can do amazing things. As one participant wrote, “Her content and exercises are very helpful. I am remembering to wear a smile, which will be contagious and the forced laughter already is feeling real and being contagious.” Another said, “My grandchildren are coming and I will teach them and do the exercises with them.”

We missed our traditional luncheon, of course, but came away from ‘Ten Seconds to Joy’ with a lighter spirit, and strategies for enjoying the season---and life generally.

You are invited to a Zoom event with

Dr. Gillian Mandich

The Science of Happiness

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Hosted by:
RTOERO
District 23



Dr. Gillian Mandich believes that happiness is an essential ingredient in a life well lived.

Dr. Mandich, will help us understand the science of happiness and the connection between happiness and health. Happiness is not a once-size-fits all formula. Participants will leave with the knowledge, confidence and tools to effectively make the rest of their life the best of their life.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Zoom meeting.

This session will be recorded.

“There is no secret to happiness but there is a science to it.”

Dr. Gillian Mandich

You are invited to a Zoom session with Dr. Gillian Mandich. She states that research shows regardless of genetics, age, gender and life circumstances, it is possible to intentionally increase happiness. Join us to learn how to increase your happiness and health!

To register for this event, please go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOMandich>

See you on March 24!



Daily Distraction (Because it's still a great country)

by Merv Mascarenhas, Editor, Webmaster and Twitter



Daily Distraction - Jan 6, 2021 - Ken Lima-Coelho



The Heebie-jeebies - Ken Lima-Coelho

My young friend, Ken Lima-Coelho, has kept us entertained and challenged during the past many months of physical distancing through his *Daily Distraction* on Facebook.

Ken is the VP, Marketing and Communications at YMCA Calgary and a card-carrying member of *The Heebie-jeebies*, a Canadian comic acapella quartet formed in 1993 ostensibly to "meet girls".

As a newly minted 17-year-old, I left my family in Uganda to seek my fortunes and a university degree at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. I grew a beard because I had such a baby face compared to my other freshmen who were a couple of years older, smoked and looked so attractive (referring to my women classmates here).

A few months later and it was Christmas when all dorms close for two weeks. Flying back home 10,000 miles was not an option. Fortunately, the Schmidts came to my rescue. They invited me to spend Christmas with them – all six of them! Christmas morning saw an early 6:00 a.m. start – Santa had emptied his entire bag of goodies that night at Shoreham Drive. We woke to a Christmas tree surrounded by a mountain of gifts. I was overwhelmed by the number that had my name on them. The kids, aged 2-11, were awestruck by this brown-faced, gangly stranger who had crashed at their house and pretended to not know how to do dishes. They were thrilled that they could run circles around him at Monopoly, Crazy Eights, Cheat and Old Maid, not to mention tobogganing and sledding.

"Merv might be in university, so how come he cannot ride a bike?" they mused. The following spring, they made it their

mission to teach me how to ride. I can still picture these ankle-biters holding on to the bike and screaming instructions at me on what not to do. Thanks to their exhortations, I finally got the hang of it. So why did I not know how to ride? -- the day before my eighth birthday when I was to receive a sparkling new bike that I had browbeaten my parents into buying me, my godmother, Cruella de Vil (aka as my school principal), stormed into our house. She raked my parents over the coals for daring to ever consider giving me a bike. Did they want their first-born son killed? Did they not know how dangerous the roads were? That was the end of that dream until ten years later.

That first Christmas led to 50 years and counting of a close and binding friendship between the Schmidt and Mascarenhas families. If seven was not enough, MaryAnne was born the following year. Because I went on about how sacraments were such large celebrations back home, they threw a huge party at the church hall inviting all their extended family and friends to celebrate MaryAnne's christening. A year later my brother Ivan joined me at university and became a fifth Schmidt son.

Fast forward several years and a few degrees, I felt compelled to return to Uganda to reunite with the other half of my family after being away for six years.



BMW 2002

It was a glorious summer. I picked up a brand-new duty-free BMW 2002 in London. Together with Ivan and Larry Johnson, a university friend who came along for the ride, we did a 5000 km circle tour of Europe before shipping the car and flying home. We had the time of our lives in Uganda - visiting game parks, night clubs and partying until we dropped.

Much too soon, Ivan and Larry with Ron, my youngest brother in tow, returned to Kalamazoo. My BMW arrived safe and sound and I landed a job – I had to decide between a teaching position at Makerere University and an IT job at the Treasury. I chose the latter. Life was nirvana, but warning drums were beginning to sound. A few months later, President Idi Amin came back after visiting Gaddafi in Libya. To avenge Golda Meir's refusal to up his allowance, all Israelis were given three days to get out of Uganda. My Israeli boss, who was vacationing in Mombasa and could not return, warned me that Indians would be next.

He proved to be right – Idi Amin had a dream on August 4, 1972, in which he claimed Allah told him to expel all

Ugandans of Indian origin, giving us a scant ninety days to uproot our lives and flee the country. Once we got over the disbelief of being booted out of our birthplace, my first impulse was to return to the U.S., the country I had left behind barely a year earlier. The Schmidts moved mountains to get me back – they even got me a job offer from Upjohn*, the large Kalamazoo based pharmaceutical where I had interned during my post-graduate work.

While the U.S. Embassy was dawdling, Canada moved in with a large contingent of immigration officials. Within two months, the team screened, selected, and transported over 6,000 refugees to Canada. To cover our bets, my sister and I applied for entry into Canada too. Two weeks later our applications were approved. Relieved, I went back to the U.S. Embassy to plead for my U.S. visa. Upon hearing that I was accepted into Canada, the U.S. official urged me to flee from Uganda on the next plane and promised to transfer my files to the U.S. Embassy in Toronto.

My sister and I decided that I would go first and sponsor my parents and siblings while she stayed behind to wind up our home and come to Canada with the rest of the family. Parting with my orange BMW was heartbreaking.

It was Day 63 of 90 when I flew to Montreal. We were given a hot meal, and provided warm coats, hats, gloves and boots to equip us for the Canadian winter. The next day I was on my way to Toronto, right dab in the middle of Thanksgiving weekend; a lonely place to be when you do not know a soul in town.

On Tuesday, I made my way to Canada Immigration and sponsored my parents and two younger sisters - they arrived in Toronto three weeks later, just before the November 2nd deadline.

Back to week one in Toronto – with time on my hands, I decided to jump on a bus and visit my brothers and the Schmidts in Kalamazoo. At the border crossing in Detroit, a friendly Immigration officer drew out my story. Still feeling American and having crossed the border many times, I naively obliged. Yes – I had only just arrived in Canada. No – I didn't have a job. Yes – I had applied for immigration to the U.S. Yes – I did have a job offer from Upjohn. The Verdict: ***“You will only be let into the U.S. if you post a bail bond of USD\$25,000!”***

Shell shocked, I took a shuttle back to Windsor. I was practically penniless having been allowed by Idi Amin to take only USD\$100 of my money out of Uganda as his generous resettlement allowance. I called the Schmidts collect to inform them that I would not be joining them for supper.

Shocked, they told me to check into a motel in Windsor and wait for them.

Bright and early the next morning, after driving 225 km, they showed up smiling and waving a \$25,000 cheque to my wide-eyed surprise. After a celebratory brunch, we approached the border again. The officials were surprised! After conferring, a new verdict came down. ***“Bond or no bond, you will not be allowed across the U.S. border!”***

The Schmidts were apoplectic and embarrassed to be American. They fed me again while apologizing profusely before putting me on the next bus back to Toronto.



1981: The Schmidts with Baby Justine - Merv Mascarenhas

I soon realized that Toronto was a better place for my parents than Kalamazoo, which had no public transportation. The then world-class transit system in Toronto would allow them to travel independently, plus they would have many of their own friends to socialize with – many refugees from Uganda settled in the GTA. And in case you are wondering Ugandan refugees have been one of the most successful and enterprising groups of immigrants to both England and Canada. I abandoned my visa application to the U.S. and have never looked back.

Over the years we have kept in close touch with the Schmidt family, visiting back and forth and celebrating christenings, First Holy Communions, weddings, and funerals together.

My American mother, Evelyn Schmidt, passed away in February 2020 at age 88. Thankfully, it was just before COVID shut us down. We were able to bid her a fond farewell and see her buried next to her husband, Dick.

It was only then that I realized the magnitude of their kindness 48 years earlier. They had driven 500 km back and forth that day to bail me out. \$25,000 would have been equivalent to USD\$156,000 in today's dollars, a lot more than their house was worth back then. They had five young kids to feed and put through school. The bail bond must have set them back a pretty penny, and they would have had to put their house up as collateral!

And yet ...

**An interesting footnote is that Upjohn was bought up by Pfizer in 2003, and is now the main North American distribution hub for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.*



Not quite “50 by 50”

by Steve Carey, Member

“The world is a book, and those who don’t travel read only one page.”

St. Augustine

We are living in very different times right now! COVID-19 has cancelled travel plans for people all around the world. However, the opportunity to spend all of this time at home has provided an occasion to reflect upon memories of past travel and where one would like to travel to in the future.

International air travel was not something that we did growing up in my family. Times were different then. My parents did not travel to Europe until after they retired, I went for the first time when I was in my early 20s, my son went for the first time when he was not even two. While in university, I had the opportunity to travel to Tanzania for three months to work on a water project. Our flight path included changing planes/refuelling stops in Amsterdam, Vienna, Cairo and Mt



Water Project in Tanzania - Steve Carey

Kilimanjaro before landing in Dar es Salaam. Nowadays, only one stop is required to change planes in Europe.

Before starting my

teaching career, I spent a summer, or two, backpacking around Europe and a Reading Week in the Bahamas! In my early years of teaching, I managed to get to Israel and Rome on an extended March Break trip and return to Europe for a summer.

When my wife and I got married in August of 1984 – we planned a very different type of honeymoon - we flew around the world in 30 days as we both had to be back in our classrooms by the Tuesday after Labour Day. Our itinerary included stops in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Delhi and Rome. We had about five days in each city and took in the highlights, experienced the food and culture. It was amazing! We were left with lots of memories of a whirlwind trip and a desire to experience the world even further!

As a couple, we travelled to Ireland with my parents to meet my wife’s extended family and my father’s ancestral homeland. There were trips by car across Canada and the USA during the summer after our Graduate School

Summer Courses were finished. We had the opportunity to take small groups of high school students to Tanzania for a month to work on the same water project that I had worked on while in university. It was such an experience to be able to return to a remote part of Tanzania to witness how people’s lives had changed 25 years later and provide students with a different way to view the world.



Water Project in Tanzania - Steve Carey

The question remained – how many countries had I (we) visited? We were both 48 when I heard that radio interview and thought that there was no way that we could reach that goal in about two years. After taking some time to complete the calculations, I determined that we had each been to around 26 different countries in total. My wife and I had been to most of the same countries although we each had some unique destinations. It was next to impossible to reach 50 countries before we were 50, but we needed some sort of goal of countries to visit by a certain age. Our

mantra became “60 by 60.” Visit 60 countries/territories before we turned 60. We desperately needed some strategies to help us reach this goal.

Importance of putting aside money and time to travel

As teachers, we applied and were approved for self-funded leaves (4 over 5). However, we had a mortgage at the time and after much reflection, we had to decline the offers from our boards. We could afford to maintain the mortgage but then we would have no money to travel. Instead, we vowed that we would make the most of our summer holidays. We made efforts to pay down our mortgage – but we also wanted to live as well.

One summer we visited parts of Europe that we had never been to – Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. Most of our travel between places was by train. We took a day trip to Theresienstadt - a Holocaust “camp-ghetto”, soaking up some sunshine at an amazing spa in Opatija on the Adriatic, criss-crossed the Danube seeing Buda and Pest and rode in a small yellow wooden subway car on Continental Europe’s first underground railroad, walked through the quaint Historic Centre of Bratislava and savoured Kremšnita (Traditional Bled Cream Cake) on the shores of Lake Bled.



Great Wall of China - Steve Carey

As our 25th wedding anniversary approached, I wondered how we could match a month-long round the world honeymoon? Well, with a two-month Round-the-World Silver Anniversary trip! This time we travelled to **Hawaii**, Tokyo, **Beijing**, Hong Kong, **Singapore**, (we were supposed to go to Bali – but that’s another story) **Seoul**, **Istanbul**, Rome and Amsterdam/Belgium. We returned to some places that we had visited 25 years prior but added some new places as well. We had the opportunity to have a sombre visit to Pearl Harbour, ride a Bullet Train to Mt Fuji, experience Beijing a year after the Olympics, walk along the Great Wall of China in a spot that not many tourists go to, meet up with

a former student in Seoul, spend a day with a former colleague in Hong Kong gaining some insights as a local and take a boat trip on the Bosphorus River – Asia on one side, Europe on the other.

Another summer we experienced the Baltics, not on a cruise ship but by air. Starting in Copenhagen, we cycled around the flat city to see the Little Mermaid and Nyhavn Canal, Noma and Christiania before taking in the sights of Tivoli Gardens. Next, we flew to Tromso, north of the Arctic Circle in Norway and experienced 24 hours of sunlight before taking in the sights of Oslo. Stockholm was our next destination where a friend had recommended taking a day trip by boat to the Stockholm Archipelago where wealthy locals have IKEA-like cottages and boats. It was just like visiting Muskoka 30 years ago. While visiting Helsinki we had the obligatory Finnish Sauna experience and visited the Flagship Marimekko store. To avoid the process of applying for a Russian visa, we took an overnight ferry boat for a two-night stay in St Petersburg where we marvelled at the priceless artwork in the Hermitage Museum. From Helsinki, we also made a day trip to the historic walled city centre of Tallin, Estonia.



Hermitage, St. Petersburg - Steve Carey

to exotic parts of the world, I completed my training and became a TICO certified travel agent, TravelOnly with Steve Carey. I use as my email signature a quote from St Augustine. “*The world is a book, and those who don’t travel read only one page.*”

With retirement we could now travel at any time during the year – not only during the expensive peak travel periods. Our first retirement trip was an extended two-month vacation to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. We ex-

In 2013 retirement was in the cards for my wife and me. While at the YMCA one day, I remember overhearing two gentlemen talking about retirement. They said that it was important to **retire to** something, **not from** something. With my love of travel

perienced iconic Australia – the Sydney Opera House, Bondi Beach, Sydney Bridge, Blue Mountains, Port Douglas, snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef, Uluru and the Red Centre, Barossa Valley Vineyards, Adelaide, Kangaroo Island, Great Ocean Road, Twelve Apostles and Melbourne. Our timing was such that we were able to end our visit to Australia by attending the Crown Oaks Horse Race – part of the Melbourne Cup at Flemington Racecourse. We spent just over two weeks in New Zealand – visiting both the North and South Islands. Christchurch, Mount Cook, Queenstown, Doubtful Sound, (an absolute must) Wellington, Napier, Hawke’s Bay Vineyards, Rotorua and Auckland. On our return flight across the Pacific, we spent a glorious week snorkelling on Savusavu, one of the outer islands of Fiji.



Sydney - Steve Carey

I now specialize in leading small group exotic travel experiences. These have included **Incredible India** – Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Udaipur, Pushkar (and the world’s largest camel auction) ending up on the Ganges in Varanasi.

Mystical Myanmar – a river cruise on the Irrawaddy River. **Sensational Southeast Asia** – Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. **Splendours of Southern Africa** - Johannesburg, (Soweto, Apartheid Museum, Liliesleaf Farm) Karongwe

Game Reserve, Cape Town (Table Mountain, Robbin Island, Cape Point) Stellenbosch Vineyards, Chobe National Park in Botswana and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

Wonders of Peru - Lima, Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu and Puerto Maldonado in the Peruvian Amazon. For the last two years, I have taken groups of travellers to **Kenya and Tanzania** to get off the beaten track and witness the work of local communities before experiencing the abundant wildlife on a safari.



Morning Monks - Luangprabang



Hanoi tailors - Steve Carey



Vespa Food Tour - Steve Carey

To keep costs down, try to stay with friends/family and use their place as a base for other trips

We have been able to do this here in Canada as well as internationally. While staying with relatives in Vancouver – we have



Soweto - Steve Carey



Taj Mahal - Steve Carey

taken separate trips by car to The Sunshine Coast, The Okanagan Valley, Northern California, Oregon, Washington State and an Alaskan cruise. While staying with friends in Leuven, Belgium we have explored parts of France (Vimy Ridge), Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Staying with relatives in Ireland enabled us to visit Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England.

Look for discounted prices on different itineraries and routings

One March Break we found a special on airfare to Santiago, Chile which for an additional \$100 you could fly on to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Having explored with my students the social injustices of the overthrowing of the elected government of Salvador Allende by the US-backed Augusto Pinochet it was so powerful to walk through the grounds of La Moneda -presidential palace. We drove to the Vina del Mar and Valparaiso on the coast via some vineyards. While in Buenos Aires we visited Eva Peron’s grave in Recoleta Cemetery, walked through the Plaza de Mayo and witnessed the small group of mothers who were still protesting their missing children), Casa Rosada (Evita’s balcony) and the neighbouring Metropolitan Catholic Cathedral (home church of Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio - now Pope Francis)

We took a unique opportunity to sail on a highly discounted 30-day cruise from Cape Town, South Africa to London, England at the time when people wanted to avoid travel to West Africa due to an Ebola outbreak. The cruise stopped in Namibia, Angola (first Princess cruise ship to ever visit Luanda) Sao Tome and Principe (just north of the Equator) Cape Verde and then sailed north to Tenerife, Madeira, Casablanca in Morocco, Ceuta (Spanish Morocco – a part of Europe on the African continent) then to Malaga, Lisbon, Rouen and finally Dover. What a once in a life-time experience at a super discounted fare!

We were shocked to meet people who had already been on board that ship for 100+ days. For some retired people, living on a cruise ship can be cheaper and more desirable than staying in a Retirement Residence!

Seek opportunities to combine neighbouring countries on the same journey



Cape town - Sailing - Steve Carey

When we were in Zimbabwe at Victoria Falls – we walked across the Zambesi River on the Victoria Falls Bridge and entered Livingstone, Zambia. We were invited to

use the opportunity to bungee jump from the bridge, but we declined with thanks! After the Southern African small group trip, we flew to Reunion and Mauritius for some snorkelling in the Indian Ocean.

When in Buenos Aires we took a boat trip across the Rio de la Plata to spend a day in Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay. On our Honeymoon in Hong Kong, we took a day trip to visit Macau and China. Visiting Berlin in the early 1980s I went through Checkpoint Charlie and visited East Berlin. East Germanv. One summer when visiting Sicily, we flew to Malta for four days to experience the magic that that Mediterranean island has to offer.



Zimbabwe and Zambia - Steve Carey

After a small group trip on the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar, we travelled to Kuala Lumpur and

Langkawi in Malaysia (we were supposed to go to Bali, but erupting volcanoes prevented us.) Visiting Southeast Asia with a small group enabled us to add a visit to Brunei and the Philippines afterwards on our own.

Once the small group trip to Peru was over, my wife and I flew to Iguazu Falls in Brazil and then onward to take in some of the sights of Rio. The small group trip to India provided us with an opportunity to spend some time afterwards in Sri Lanka and Bali (we finally made it- it was well worth the wait!)

Before our last trip to Kenya/Tanzania in 2019, we took some time to go gorilla trekking in the Impenetrable Forest in Bwindi, Uganda. We walked for about 45 minutes before seeing, up close and personal, a dozen or so of the remaining 1000 Mountain Gorillas in the world. An absolute travel highlight! A visit to Newfoundland gave us a chance

to spend four days in Europe, with a 45-minute flight to the French Territory of St Pierre and Miquelon.

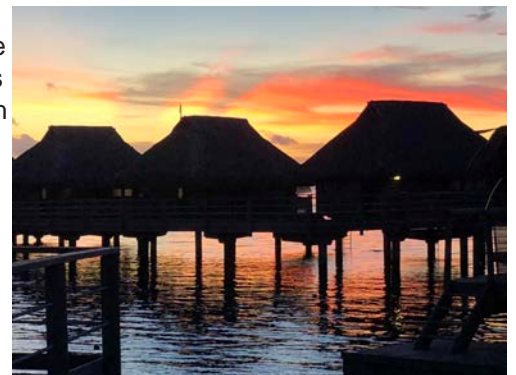
By the time we celebrated our 60th birthdays' in 2017, we had long surpassed our goal of visiting 60 countries/territories. Last year we were only able to add Tahiti to our list of countries/territories visited and we had to cut short that trip in mid-March due to COVID. We were to travel onward from Tahiti to Japan and meet up with a small group to experience the Cherry Blossoms of Iconic Japan. Looking forward to that experience in March of 2022.



Gorillas in Uganda - Steve Carey

To date, we have visited 95 countries/territories. We didn't make "50 by 50", we surpassed "60 by 60" and are well on our way to "100 by 100". The pandemic may have curtailed our travel plans for now, but we hope our future includes travel to the Camino de Santiago, Ecuador and the Galapagos, Egypt/Israel/Jordan, Ghana, Iceland, Japan, Kenya /Tanzania, Morocco, Southern Africa and Western Australia.

Hopefully, the time at home due to COVID-19 has provided you with an opportunity to reflect on your travel journey to date. Where have you travelled to? What sorts of travel experiences have you had?



Tahiti - Steve Carey

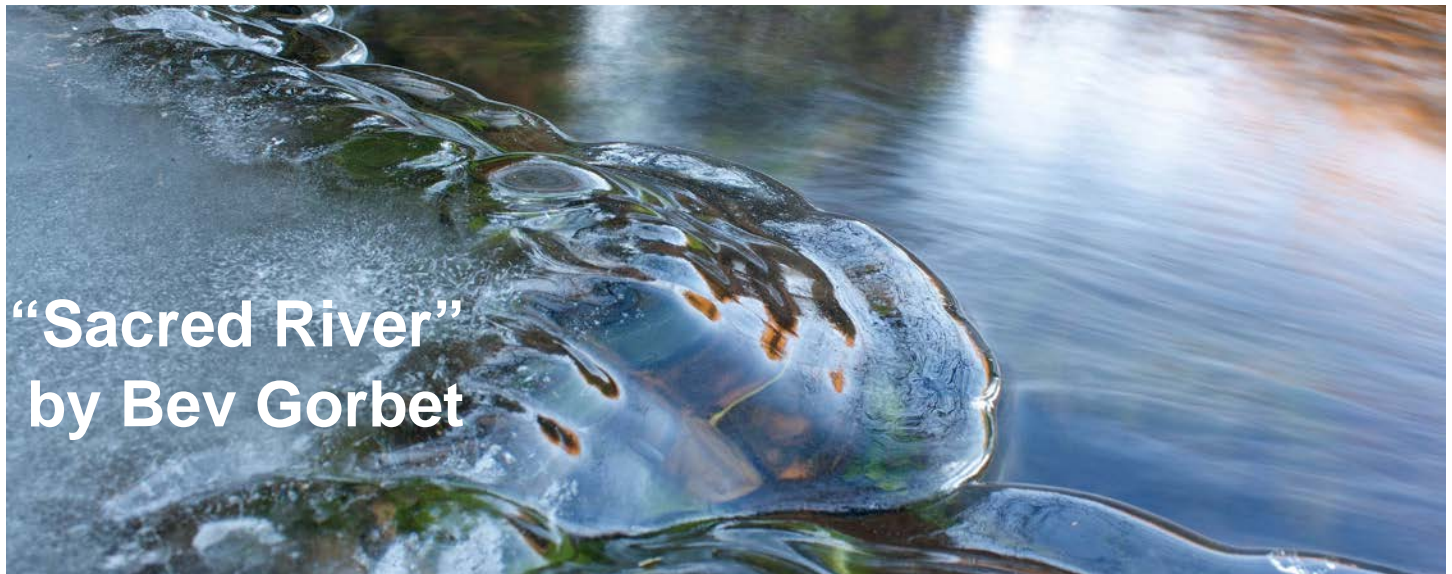
How many countries have you been to? Where do you want to travel to next? Do you have certain places/events that you wish to experience? Crossing the Equator or the International Date Line? Dipping your toes in the Arctic Ocean? Experiencing the Aurora Borealis in Iceland or the wildlife of an African Safari?

St. Augustine might ask: "How many pages have you read in the Book of the World?"



“Sacred River”: The Meaning of Water

by Bev Gorbet, Member



“Sacred River”
by Bev Gorbet



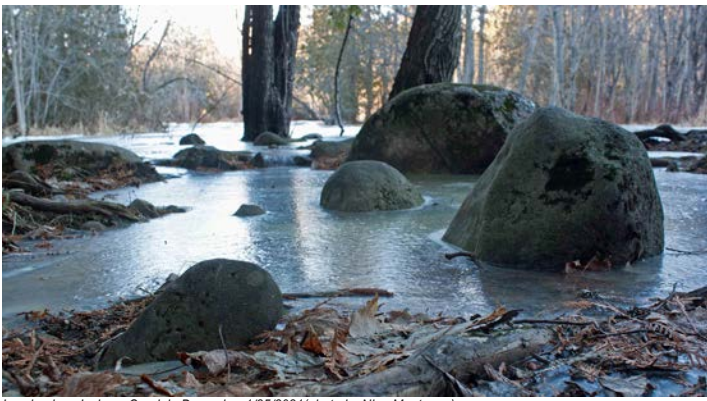
Ice platforms and ice-covered twigs overlook flowing Jackson Creek, ON 1/25/2021
(photo by Nina Munteanu)



Ice platforms and ice-covered twigs overlook flowing Jackson C Jackson Creek flows like liquid sunshine around terraced ice islands during early morning 1/25/2021 (photo by Nina Munteanu)

Like the purest of sounds,
Like the rhapsodic tinkling, windblown days,
Of glass windchime and bell,
The call, the pure rhythm, the lyrical song
River of crystal waters pouring down under ice

Holy nature’s melody, all the grace,
The sacred beauty of the wild outdoors...
The magical distortions of light under ice,
Luminescence and glow, bright sunlight
On a cold winter’s day...



Ice shoal on Jackson Creek in December 1/25/2021(photo by Nina Munteanu)

The lightening glitter in moving prisms of light...
Majesty, deep within water and ice,
Carousels of prismatic light moving elegantly
Across the stony river bed below...
And above, a magnificent solemnity:
Backlit snow drift, detritus of crystal flake:
Azure and lavender lights



Jackson Creek and surrounding forest after first major snowfall 1/25/2021(photo by Nina Munteanu)

And icy patches, snowdrift on treetop
and cold bough,
Gently melting drops, rainbow lights
Softly falling down to touch a lyric memory:
The pure song, windchime echo and dream,
Sacred memory: sacred river, deepest reflection...

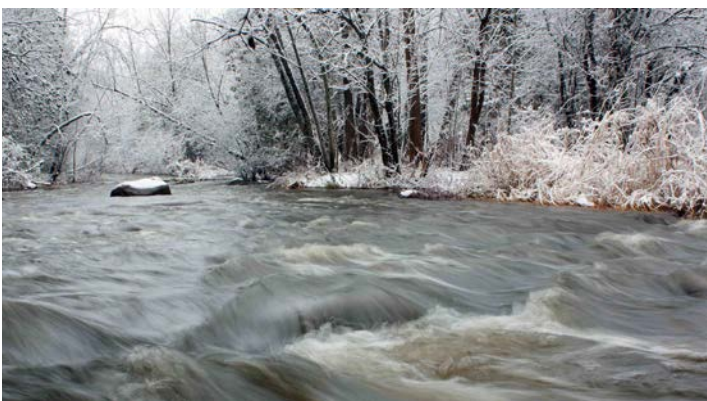


Ice shelves form in quiet bay of Jackson Creek, ON 1/25/2021(photo by Nina Munteanu)

Everywhere a reverential light reflected upwards
To catch the delighted eye...
Radiant reflections of warmth and comfort:
The sound of the dancing winds high above,



Ice "clouds" in Jackson Creek "froth"1/25/2021(photo by Nina Munteanu)



Jackson Creek and surrounding forest after first major snowfall 1/25/2021(photo by Nina Munteanu)



Nina Munteanu is a Canadian ecologist / limnologist and novelist. She is co-editor of *Europa SF* and currently teaches writing courses at George Brown College and the University of Toronto. Visit <http://www.ninamunteanu.ca> for the latest on her books.

Permission to use poem and photos was granted by Nina Munteanu and Bev Gorbet



Goodwill – New Times – The Impact of COVID-19

by Gwen Bumbury, Convener

“Show charity and goodwill to others and it will return to enhance your own life in many wonderful ways.”

Bryan Adams

Since the beginning of COVID-19, our lives changed dramatically in 2020, the year of the pandemic. Our normal way of life has been disrupted and compromised with ongoing changes and challenges. Many navigate through these challenges with fear and uncertainty, at the same time, striving to adapt to the new reality.

The virus has changed every facet of our lives, restrictions on visits from and to family members, social gatherings ceased, physical activities limited or no longer possible. The new reality to experience some form of social interaction has been virtual celebrations or activities on Zoom. The pandemic has caused unprecedented changes and anxiety. It has also forced us to stay home on the recommendations of the public health officials.

It appears the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects will be with us for some time to come.

With that in mind, early in April 2020, RTOERO District 23 began an initiative that involved a group of committed volunteers contacting all members who are 80 years of age and above. Some older members living alone might already be socially isolated, experiencing suffering through isolation, loneliness, and death of loved ones. We can help older adults reduce those feelings of social isolation. We are making every possible effort to connect with our more senior members. We are calling to let them know that the organization is thinking about them. Most importantly, it presents opportunities to have friendly conversations. These opportunities also engage members in dialogue to inform us how they are coping and how COVID-19 has impacted their day-to-day life.

Some members shared how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their everyday life during these uncertain times.

- Interacted with family virtually
- Increased feelings of isolation

- Concerned about their physical health
- Played a variety of games – cards and other puzzles
- Missed visits from family members, children, and grandchildren
- Listened to audiobooks, reading more than usual
- Aware of Zoom and thankful for the technologies that permitted them to stay connected
- Check-ins – daily, weekly from family members and friends
- Expressed boredom while being confined to home
- Listened to music reported by fewer members.



Volunteer callers also reported that the senior members were appreciative and thankful that District 23 reached out to them. Some said that they have been trying to do the best they could under the circumstances. With some members who lived alone, the volunteer callers felt that the telephone call was necessary. Another group of members projected a sense of relief and happiness to hear a human voice.

Volunteers also mentioned that the conversations were pleasant with some senior members who had a great sense of humour and shared a joke or two.

With the assistance of volunteer callers, District 23 contacted almost 500 senior members.

In the future, District 23 will continue the attempt to contact all members 80 years of age and over. It is very encouraging to have a group of dedicated volunteers to help in this very needed endeavour.

We thank you.

In addition to telephone calls, District 23, Goodwill Committee continues to send birthday cards to our members 80, 85, 90, 95 years of age and older. This year we have mailed out over 250 birthday cards. Families of deceased members receive bereavement cards.

Reminder!

Please do not hesitate to call an Executive member or a Goodwill Committee member if you are aware of a member who is ill, hospitalized or would welcome a phone call.

Did you move?

Please remember to inform RTOERO Membership Department at membership@rto-ero.org or call [416-962-9463](tel:416-962-9463) to update your address – this would avoid mail returned.

Committee Members

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



Pole Walking

by Kathy Shorney, Convener

“There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.”

Sir Ranulph Fiennes

By the time you are reading this, Spring is on the way. It has been a long winter and most of us have been inside. Although the City has been progressive in plowing, maintaining many extra park trails and providing more wash-rooms to encourage opportunities for being outside safely, many of us have become homebodies.

It is time to embrace Spring and get outside and enjoy the parks and trails again. While Nordic pole walking offers a very positive fitness opportunity with both upper and lower body exercise, regular walking is also beneficial. As we age, regular exercise is important to keep our joints moving. Perhaps you can download a pedometer on your cell phone or use one you already have to keep track of your steps.

Nordic Walking Poles are available at most big box stores which sell sporting equipment. They should cost in the range of \$50 and are fully adjustable for height of the user.

There are many videos that offer instruction for correct height and walking instructions, suggesting how to use the poles correctly to receive maximum fitness opportunities. If you have older poles that do not lock when adjusted, a video about repair is also on YouTube. I have certainly noticed over the past few weeks an increase in the number of pole walkers in my

neighbourhood.

Our city has many paved trails with minimal hills. I suggest you monitor the Parks and Recreation website as they may be offering the walking fitness activities in local parks as they did in the fall session. I am looking forward to running our usual monthly walking group hopefully by fall.



Check our monthly E-Newsletter to see if I am able to begin earlier than September. We usually meet in local parks on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Our group is a small, but social group who enjoys walking/poling at our own rate for about an hour.



North York Strollers – A Guided Walk

by Joanne Famiglietti, Convener

“I love walking because it clears your mind, enriches the soul, takes away stress and opens up your eyes to a whole new world.”

Claudette Dudley

Chorley Park Path to Brick Works

Begin your walk at 245 Douglas Dr., Toronto. Stroll along the path on your route to the Brickworks. Maps are along the route to guide you. The pictures are what you might see. Enjoy!



Chorley Park: A Brief History

A chateau-like mansion for the Lieutenant Governor (1923-1938) was situated on this site. In 1940, it was transformed into a military hospital until the RCMP used the mansion for administrative staff in 1955.

Later, U of T acquired the property for refugee students.

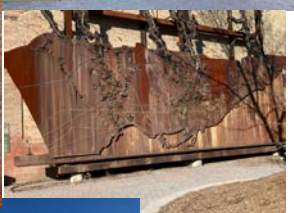
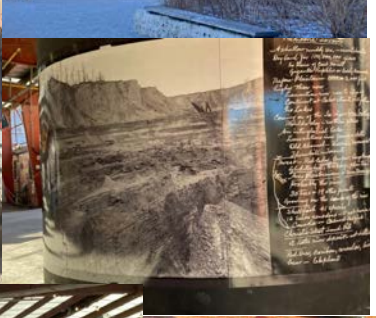
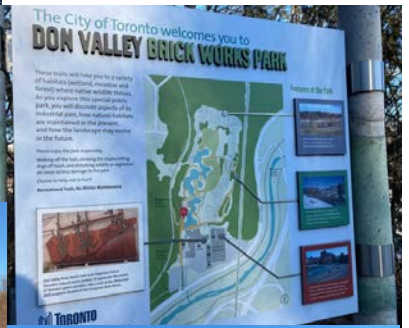
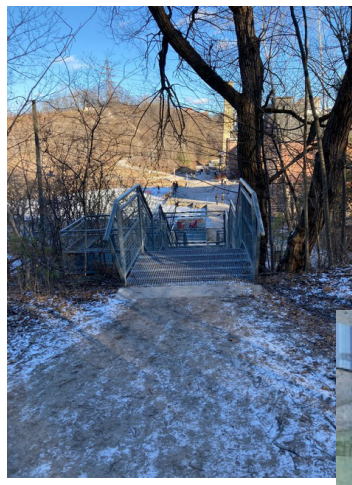
Because of the high cost of maintaining the deteriorating mansion, it was demolished in 1960, and today it's the site of a beautiful park with a trail to the Brick Works.

Here one is able to connect to many trails of varying distances.

CAUTION:

This walk is to be taken only under good conditions. During winter months, snow and ice make for slippery conditions.







My Passion for Speaking about Pflag*

by Marilyn Byers, Member

Twenty-five years ago, I was taking a course and wanted to make a difference in our community.

I had been involved in making a difference for seniors and for people with disabilities.

I said to my son, "Kevin, what should I do?"

His reply: "Why don't you do something for Pflag?"

"Pflag?? What's that??"

Well not long after that I put all my energies into finding out about Pflag. At the time, I was living in York Region. Soon, I teamed up with Tom and Barbara Beattie, and the St Mathews United Church to start a Pflag group in York Region.

I spent my days speaking wherever I could get invited, as well as speaking in the high schools. I had called the York Region Statistics Head Office to find out what the population count was. When I was asked why I needed this information, I said I wanted to find out how many people were gay in York Region.

"Oh, there are none up here. They are all in Toronto!!!"

Of course, this was not the answer.

I spent most of my time public speaking and came to the conclusion that people needed Education. Parents were having difficulty understanding what had happened with their child. Some said, "Get out." Sons and daughters were terrified about speaking on the subject.



Son Kevin, Marilyn & Winston (Kevin's partner of 24 years)

In 2012, I retired. However, I still spoke when invited, and brought all my resources. Below is the amazing speech my son gave at my retirement celebration held at St Mathews United Church in Richmond Hill on Tuesday, November 27th, 2012

Marilyn comments that when she saw the cover of the RTOERO Magazine, Renaissance - Winter 2020,

"I had to take a second look. I couldn't believe it..."Modern Family" which included a gay male couple who looked like they just got married.

AT LAST, we are treating everyone with respect and equality!! I was thrilled. My son has had a partner for 24 years. We just had Christmas Turkey dinner with his mother at my place (pre COVID-19). I then read more of a follow up inside with more photos and two women that I believe may be partners. I also saw the wonderful long Rainbow Banner!

WOW!! CONGRATULATIONS to RENAISSANCE !

I believe that those who do not accept gay people would accept if they understood what it meant to be gay. Being gay is not a sin, Bashing is!

SOMEONE you Know and LOVE is gay! I would be happy to help people understand. I was able to get 2 grants and we had billboard signs.... That's another story!!

Pflag* Canada is a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their LGBTQ2S children.

*Parents, Friends & Family of Lesbians and Gays

On My Mother's Retirement by Kevin Willcock November 27, 2012

Mom, I hope my words this evening convey the love and appreciation that I have for all that you are and all that you have done.

Almost 20 years ago we had a conversation that started with me saying something like.

“Well by now I guess you know I’m gay...”

Those few words started a journey. It is a journey of love, joy, disappointment, organization, persistence, and passion.

A year or two later you had to do a project for your course at Landmark Education. You were pretty resistant and were not sure what the project should be.

“What about Pflag” I said.

“Pflag, what is that?” You asked. Well, the rest is history.

Your passion has touched the lives of thousands. Probably saved some of those lives. You have forged alliances, won hearts, worked tirelessly, pissed a few people off (sorry Mayor Cousins), and made the world a better place.

There have been the awards...

- Spirit of Community Award - 2001- Municipality of York Region
- Community Service Award - 2001 - Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto
- 5 Year Ontario Volunteer Award

- 2001- Province of Ontario

- Certificate of Appreciation - 2002 - York Region Health Services
- Certificate of Appreciation - 2003 - Ontario Provincial Police College
- Outstanding Achievement Award - 2004 - Voluntarism in Ontario from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

But that’s not what it’s about. It’s about bringing people together. It’s about telling a distraught parent that their son or daughter will be fine. Maybe not fine in exactly the way they expected, but fine none the less.

Earlier I mentioned the importance of forging alliances. You forged an alliance with Barbara and Tom Beaty that stood the test of time. That is an alliance I’m forever grateful for. Your skills complemented each other and you found a way to work together for over a decade. You may not have always seen eye to eye, but you worked it out because your mutual passion was bigger than all else.

Several years ago, Rev. Brent Hawkes said to me “thanks for coming out to your Mom.” I looked at him rather quizzically and before I had a chance to say anything he added “cuz you unleashed Marilyn on the homophobes”

The Pflag Mom From the Urban Dictionary:

An over-enthusiastic proud mother of a gay person. The Pflag Mom manifests herself in many borderline-embarrassing ways, from buying her child exclusively gay themed books and movies on birthdays, to writing

letters to the editor and attending marches on behalf of her son or daughter who happens to be gay and of whom she is so proud.

The Pflag Mom is known to pop up in the least expected places... CBC radio, pride day hugging booth, huge billboards, TV debates, national newspapers, and of course... brunch on Church Street.

The gay children of the Pflag Mom realize that she means well, and understand that being subjected to family dinner discussions about ‘gaydar’ while other guests shift uncomfortably in their seats are eminently preferable to being the child of homophobes.

The Pflag Canada is a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their LGBTQ2S children. Mom has more gay friends than her child, and certainly attends more gay fundraisers, speaking events, parties, and such events than her child.

The Pflag Mom’s car is always in need of repair—carrying hundreds of kilos of brochures and books takes its toll you know.

*“You should see all the cheesy rainbow magnets my mother put on her car. I mean it’s sweet, but, Gee, she’s just *such* a Pflag Mom.”*





Stronger Minds Make for Stronger Kids

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

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.”

Helen Keller

At the Board meeting of Strong Minds Strong Kids Psychology Canada Board of Trustees on the 28th of January 2021, Maureen Capotosto presented a cheque from RTOERO District 23 for \$4000 towards the purchase of the Kids Have Stress Too and Stress Lessons Programs.

The funds from the grant allow 160 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. Teachers 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 COVID-19 pandemic is posing both a physical and emotional threat to our children. Canada is in the midst of a mental health crisis, with anxiety rising among children and youth. We can't wait until our kids suffer from a mental illness. Prevention is the intervention needed.

Kids Have Stress Too! and **Stress Lessons** programs are designed 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 several 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 rely on members, newly retired and/or 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.

We have opted to purchase electronic versions of the documents to overcome any difficulties with providing these materials directly to teachers. For this reason, our money will stretch further, purchasing an increased number of resources. Thank you to those who have submitted the names of teachers to receive this resource. Think about any teachers you know – these teaching your grandchildren, teachers you worked with before retirement or ones you have kept in touch with since retirement. Please submit their name and email to Maureen Capotosto – mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca We will distribute materials as we receive names.





Grants – Giving back to our Communities

by Maureen Capotosto, Convener

“No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another.”

Author Unknown

Community Grants are designed to encourage all RTOERO Districts to support and partner with local organizations to promote projects that will help our organization to meet our strategic goals of improving the lives of members and seniors; being the trusted voice for the broader education communities; and broadening our membership base. Since the inception of this grant 21 years ago, we've donated \$1.85 million for 523 projects.

We are seeking suggestions for community projects. We have successfully been involved in numerous Service to Others Projects over the past years. RTOERO has revised the grant program for this year. We are looking for suggestions from our members regarding suitable organizations for these projects. You can review the criteria and other information on the RTOERO website - <https://rtoero.ca/giving-back/grants/>.

This year RTOERO Districts are eligible to receive grants of up to \$2,500 for community projects that advance these strategic goals. Districts interested will serve as the project sponsor and will submit the application for a Community Grant in partnership with a community organization.

Please submit your suggestions to Maureen Capotosto by April 1, 2021:

mpcapotosto@sympatico.ca



“Coffee Time! Have-a-Java”

by Elizabeth Clarke, Convener

“The smell of fresh-made coffee is one of the world’s greatest inventions.”

Hugh Jackman

Virtual Have-a-Java continues to be well received.

There are about twenty names notified for the monthly get together on the **third Wednesday of the month at 9:30 a.m.** and eight to ten people join our Zoom call.

Everyone is welcome to join us for a chat with some colleagues. For now, you need to prepare your beverage and snack.

Come and share what you are doing to cope and hear what’s on the minds of others. Maybe you have a good joke to tell us or can inform us about how you are.

Email Elizabeth Clarke at clarkemeneguzzi@gmail.com if you would like to join in.

Once the vaccine becomes available it will be great to meet again in person.





Tobago - A World Apart

by Gail M. Murray, Member

Tiny, tropical Tobago offers unspoiled beaches, colourful West Indian villages and a world of natural wonders from coral gardens rich in marine life, to the oldest protected rainforest in the western world.

Birders flock in droves. The harried soon relax under sprawling coconut palms.

Tobago, located in the Caribbean Sea at the end of the Lesser Antilles and 43km northeast of Venezuela, is a world apart. Tobago retains the best of the 'old Caribbean' - small intimate hotels, friendly service and secluded beaches. Don't look for five-star complexes and non-stop action.

Leave the world behind and do some "chillin" in scenic surroundings. Exotic birds, lively bands, and bucolic beaches – that's my Tobago.

Though small in area, the mountainous backbone and winding rutted roads make hiring a taxi or guide a good option. Guiding here is a prestigious profession. Guides pass extensive training to receive certification. Many top guides are naturalists with websites such as: David Rooks, Peter Cox and Simon Mc Letchie. You can design and book a private tour as I did.

The surf soothes me to sleep and I awaken to birdsong. A pair of mocking birds and a chorus of bright yellow banana quits are singing in the sea grape trees overlooking my patio at Blue Waters Inn, Bateaux Bay, Speyside.

Simon McLetchie greets me warmly with a firm handshake and an air-conditioned car. Simon has a relaxed manner, great knowledge of the island's

history and nature preserves, is well schooled in birding and is happy to stop to shoot photos.

Tobago has a mountainous center. Two main roads skirt the Atlantic and Pacific coasts with a series of spectacular bays at shoreline. As we wind upward climbing green forested hills, each hair-pin turn reveals breathtaking panoramic views of sapphire coves.



At Bloody Bay, Simon details the history of the slave revolt. Bougainvillea cascades over pink, yellow and turquoise wooden homes built on columns, shutters open to sea breezes at Parlatuvier Bay. This fishing village has an extensive wooden pier and colourful boats bobbing in the waves. Seine fishing is the main industry here.

I stroll the beach sinking into sand the consistency of brown sugar. The frothy surf reminds me of cappuccino as it tickles my legs. This circular cove is surrounded by emerald green rainforest whose slopes contain palms, mahogany, teak and immortal trees whose brilliant orange blossoms reach skyward. The beach is almost deserted. Six year old Reynard is making a 'sand angel' waving his arms and legs to form the wings, the way North American children create snow angels. He giggles as I photograph him.

I sense the peaceful, unhurried life here and begin to flow with it. Simon

finds me wandering the beach. "Lunch is ready", he says.

Parlatuvier's Riverside Restaurant, really a covered balcony on the roof of a clapboard house is surrounded by lush tropical plants. Our cook and hostess live below. Our home cooked meal of authentic West Indian cuisine is served up in large bowls as if we were part of the family. What a meal – barbecued chicken, kingfish freshly caught and served in succulent spicy sauce, curried rice, garden vegetables. When I order ginger ale, our hostess brings me a shandy (Carib Ginger Beer). I like its tart crisp flavour. For dessert it is homemade ice cream. Just pick a

flavour – coconut, nutmeg, mango, passion fruit or chocolate. I'm going island. I'm living 'the sweet life' just like the local birds that are addicted to sugar.

At sprawling Englishman's Bay, palms and rainforest meet the sand. Surf crashes against jagged black rocks. A rainbow of batik sarongs flutters in the breeze as sun worshippers recline under tall coconut palms. Taxis will drop you for a beach day (agree on a price and pay them when they return to pick you up). Even though it has a small restaurant, Englishman's Bay is considered a 'secluded' beach lying somewhat off the beaten track down a long dirt road.

On my private tour, we alternate between gorgeous Caribbean beaches and picturesque fishing villages and close with a trek to Argyle Waterfalls. As we ascend, climbing black rocks alongside the Argyle River, we pass huge stands of bamboo. Simon points out a Blue Crowned Mot Mot. What a prize with his bright turquoise head and tail feathers, brilliant orange breast and florescent green body. Soon I understand why Simon has changed into rubber boots. He's in the riverbed gently guiding my steps as I cross from rock to rock. Luckily this is the dry season. As I hear the rushing water my heart starts to race. The destination is worth the journey. Argyle Waterfalls is the highest and most accessible of

Tobago's rainforest waterfalls. Its three tiers surge into round pools. The daring can climb the stone steps carved out of the rock to the very top pool. Simon points out, "it's not recommended. It's at your own risk. My insurance won't cover you."

I plunge into the largest pool and find its coolness refreshing. I love the challenge of swimming up to the rushing torrent in water eighteen feet deep. No lifeguards. Simon is watching over me and my valuables. The pool has high rocky moss-covered walls on three sides so there is nothing to grab onto. You need to be a strong swimmer. It's a feeling of oneness with nature. I've experienced it before in ancient rainforests. The outside world is miles away. Here, at the North end of Tobago, emphasis is on nature, hiking, fishing, birding, charming small hotels and great local restaurants such as Jemma's Tree house Restaurant which has become an institution.

From a small clapboard building, creative Jemma expanded up and out into a huge two hundred year old almond tree. This open, airy restaurant on various levels has cedar floors and flavourful seafood specialties such as mahi mahi, creole shrimp and buttery lobster. Jemma's signature dish, "breadfruit pie" stirs the senses and keeps the customers coming back. The main ingredients include breadfruit, potatoes, eggs, milk and cheese cooked in individual casseroles. This delicious treat tastes a bit like scalloped potatoes au gratin. I think of Captain Blye on his

mission in the South Seas, bringing breadfruit plants back to England when the famous mutiny occurred.

The majority of tourists frequent Crown Point, Tobago's southern more built-up area with postcard perfect, Pigeon Point. Photographs of tall coconut palms, spreading dramatically across a strand of azure sea and white coral sand beach, have lured me to Tobago but the secluded northern Caribbean beaches have won over this nature girl. That said, Pigeon Point is a destination beach. A long, central wooden pier stretches out from the entrance. From a distance the pier, palms and palapa huts conjure up visions of Tahiti. Pigeon Point is three beaches in one. Turn right of the entrance to find ample shade under palms, open air wooden shelters or yellow beach umbrellas. There are picnic tables, lounge chairs, fresh water showers, flush toilets, a full-service bar and a West Indian buffet. Keep walking past the bar until the blast of wind hits you. Rent a windsurfer, or kite sail. It's your adventure.

Listen to Robert Frost and 'take the road less travelled' by walking left at the entrance about ten minutes. You can become one with the palms and warm, shallow water. This quiet section of the beach is almost deserted. Who needs civilization when paradise is on offer? Tobago is an idyllic place of intrinsic beauty – a land of birds, beaches, bright wooden homes, sea breezes, breadfruit pie, steel pan bands and beckoning adventure.



Misplaced

*I must have been born with a tropical soul
geographically misplaced at birth
I tremble as dark clouds
announce approaching winter
wince at bare leafless trees
withdraw from bleak grey November
this cold, chill, colourless landscape
saddens*

*I dream of turquoise seas
longing swells, yearning to escape
to fuchsia bougainvillea and scarlet
hibiscus
birdsong and rushing waves
ice clinking in frosted glasses*

*Sun glorious sun
warm and soften my winter dry skin
energize my summer deprived body
I'm wearing SPF 30
Come, caress me.*

by Gail M. Murray

Twilight in Barbados

*On my balcony
sipping coffee
twilight descends
soft rose and azure hues
shadow palms, black against the horizon
murmuring doves, twittering Bajan sparrows
ebb and flow of the ocean
waves crash
guests in their rooms
shower away salt and suntan lotion
I sit at peace
as the resort comes to life again.*

Gail M. Murray



Recruitment and You

by Mary Ellen Lawless, Convener

“Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life”

Mark Twain

Many of you reading this issue of STONY Bridges will know of friends and family members who will be choosing to retire, given the challenges COVID-19 has thrown at us this past year.

is on the application form. Members of RTOERO District 23, North York receive Stony Bridges.

There is free membership until retirement and free retirement planning sessions.

Friends - share the good news with your colleagues planning retirement or those already retired but not yet members. They will thank you for it for years to come.

<https://tinyurl.com/RTOMembership>

Do these colleagues and friends a huge favour and share with them today the many advantages membership in RTOERO offers potential members at every age and stage of life. When people are making major life-changing decisions, often when tired and under stress, what to do in the future can be a major concern. This outline should help people to realize that membership in RTOERO offers

- the range of activities
- the opportunity for savings with the insurance plans
- the discounts through Venngo
- the many publications pertinent to one's age and interests.

By definition, membership in RTOERO is open to anyone who has worked in any field of education with

- in public and Catholic school boards
- private schools
- First Nation schools
- as education assistants
- in student transportation
- post-secondary faculty and staff
- with ministries of education

RTOERO is organized by DISTRICTS, with a total of 62 covering all provinces of Canada with 2 French-language Districts and 1 for Quebec. Selecting a District to join



PLEASE POST OR GIVE TO POTENTIAL RETIREE

view the full schedule online

Class is in session!

Retirement Planning Webinar

FREE workshop for anyone working in education

Post-secondary, administrative staff, support staff, early years educators, maintenance and contract staff.

Whether you are retiring this year or within the next 5-15 years, join RTOERO to cruise through retirement worry-free! From insurance plans to discounts, we've got everything you need to retire happy and make your awesome years healthy and fun.

SELECT YOUR BEST OPTION: ASSORTED DATES & TIMES | ENGLISH or FRENCH

March 4, 2021 - Thursday, 5:30 PM	May 4, 2021 - Tuesday, 5:00 PM
March 10, 2021 - Wednesday 5:30 PM	May 8, 2021 - Saturday, 10:00 AM
March 16, 2021 - Tuesday, 2:30 PM	May 12, 2021 - Wednesday, 5:30 PM
March 20, 2021 - Saturday, 10:30 AM	May 15, 2021 - Saturday, 9:30 AM
March 24, 2021 - Wednesday, 5:00 PM	May 20, 2021 - Thursday, 5:00 PM
March 30, 2021 - Tuesday, 4:30 PM	May 29, 2021 - Saturday, 10:30 AM
April 7, 2021 - Wednesday, 5:00 PM	June 1, 2021 - Tuesday, 5:30 PM
April 10, 2021 - Saturday, 2:30 PM	June 3, 2021 - Thursday, 4:30 PM
April 14, 2021 - Wednesday 5:30 PM	June 8, 2021 - Tuesday, 5:00 PM
April 20, 2021 - Tuesday 4:30 PM	June 12, 2021 - Saturday, 10:30 AM
April 24, 2021 - Saturday, 9:30 AM	June 16, 2021 - Wednesday, 4:30 PM
April 29, 2021 - Thursday, 4:30 PM	June 22, 2021 - Tuesday, 4:30 PM
	June 26, 2021 - Saturday, 9:30 AM
	June 29, 2021 - Tuesday, 5:30 PM
	June 30, 2021 - Wednesday, 4:30 PM

NOT QUITE READY? More Webinars TBA

Évènements et ateliers
 Trouvez un atelier ou organisez votre propre atelier et réservez-nous pour venir faire une présentation.
<https://rtoero.ca/fr/evènements-et-ateliers/>

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Speaker Series

Mary Valtellini ~ 1st Vice President



Medications as We Age:

How to Make the Most of Them and Prevent Harmful Effects

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 @ 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
ZOOM session in conjunction with Have-a-Java

(further information will be provided in your March/April E-Newsletters)

Presenter:

Camille Gagnon, PharmD



Camille Gagnon is the Assistant Director of the Canadian Deprescribing Network.

She is a Clinical Pharmacist and has experience in primary care, program management, community pharmacy and teaching to pharmacy students and technicians.

She is a passionate medication safety advocate and cherishes every opportunity to share her knowledge and passion with others.

Description

Medications can help us in many different ways. However, our bodies become more sensitive to medication effects as we age. Some medications may even carry more risk than benefit, causing falls, memory problems, or hospitalizations. The more medications we take, the greater the risk. This is of particular concern as 1 in 4 Canadians over age 65 who live in the community take at least 10 medications.

Are all of your medications still helping you? When was the last time you sat down with your health provider to review your medications? On April 21st, join us to learn about risky medications and ways to help you prevent medication harms. This will help you ensure the medications you are taking are still right for you.





Book Club

by Sylvia Skippen, Convener

“I have read like a man on fire my whole life because the genius of English teachers touched me with the dazzling beauty of language.”

Pat Conroy, A Lowcountry Heart: Reflections on a Writing Life

This year the District 23 Book Club has been meeting by Zoom on the last Wednesday of the month. Our get-togethers begin at 2:00 p.m. We have attracted 42 members who are enjoying getting together with other keen readers in the comfort of their own home. We always welcome new members and you are not obliged to attend every meeting. Meeting online has allowed us to meet safely during COVID-19 and many have indicated that they appreciate not having to travel.

Although we didn't meet in December, we started the new year discussing “All We Leave Behind” and “The Only Woman in the Room” in January and February respectively. The facilitators provided author's biography, critic reviews and thought-provoking questions for discussion. Members contributed with very thoughtful and interesting perspectives. We are fortunate to have enthusiastic members who volunteer to facilitate the meetings.

In April and May, we will be making plans for next year's book selection. Last year we compiled a list of interesting books with some description and had members vote on the selection. We then chose eight books from this list according to members' preferential vote. Hopefully, this year we will have another interesting list and members volunteering to lead the discussions.

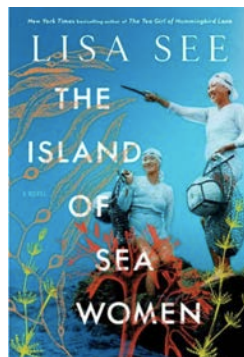
If you wish to participate in the book club, please send me an e-mail a few days prior to the meeting date to ensure you are included in the Zoom invitation. I often send out an e-mail to remind members of the meeting and the need to advise me that they want to attend. The Zoom meeting invitation is sent to all those who have indicated interest in attending the book club meeting for that particular month. Also, information will be published in the monthly E-Newsletter sent at the beginning of the month. Contact: Sylvia at sylvia.skippen@hotmail.com



The Library Book by Susan Orlean March 31, 2021

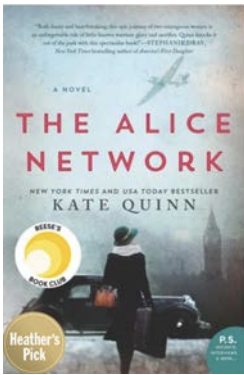
Award winning New Yorker reporter and New York Times bestselling author Susan Orlean writes a compelling and mesmerizing story about the fire in the Los Angeles Public Library on the morning of April 29th, 1986. The patrons and staff who had been evacuated from the building later realize this was not the usual fire alarm. The fire was disastrous: it reached 2000 degrees and burned for more than seven hours. Four hundred thousand books were lost 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 books and 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 Kata Quinn

May 26, 2021

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).

A Learned Love, A Learned Truth

A learned love, a learned truth: the path
To humankind’s essential freedom...
Each generation needs to learn the great lessons:
Must learn that love leads to mercy, to compassion,
That great symphony, the magnificent song
Of a gentle heart...

Oh! that humankind could follow
Love’s great lesson each generation:
The urgent kindness of a loving heart,
An openness to the world:
The holy gift of caring, of kindness:
The courage to be, the patience to be...

Each generation needs lessons
In the truths of our existence:
This, a gift so very strong and fierce,
So existentially beautiful
Each generation must relearn love’s great hope,
Loves message of a holy redemption

We live in a world of sadness,
In a world of despair, a vital honesty subject to
convenience,
Too often we receive lessons in hatred, lessons in
cruelty.
We owe it to each generation to teach the necessary
truths:
A learned love, a learned truth: the path
To humankind’s essential freedom



GORBET January 2021



YOU ARE THE ROSE

*You are the rose
In the heart of spring...
You are the flame
At the center of a caring eternity...
You are the song of the skylark
As she traverses the bright blue sky high above*

*You are beauty,
All the wonder in a summer’s day,
All the joy in the far distant fall breezes... You are
the passionate melody
At the center...*

*You are joy, you are sadness
You encompass all the compassionate meridians,
Of a sentient humanity...
All the latitudes of wonder, of truth,
Of a joyous solitude
All the sacred majesty of a world full aflame...*

*You live the holy kindness of a mother’s love,
All the joy in a newborn’s laughter
You are living a life of sincerity, of
a caring kindness You are living
all the magnificent beauty
In a life well lived.*

Bev Gorbet



Anticipating Future Smiles

by Mary Cairo, Archivist

“Smile to the future and it will smile back to you.”

Yoko Ono



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; 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 at **416-481-7411** or email him at: g.macneil@bell.net.

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