



# 34th STORY

District 34 - York Region

Vol. 33 No. 1 - January 2021



*Remembering Fall*  
*Cover by Chris Prefontaine*

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2020- 2021**

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*Jose Fernandes, President*

### President's Message

**A**s I assume the presidency of District 34, I recognize that undoubtedly, I have before me some quite challenging times. Fortunately though, I will be working with an executive who is experienced and diligent. So, let us together face this adversity and overcome it.

Let me first thank Lynn Hitsman who since March 2020 has held the helm with patience and determination. As you know, everything came to a standstill at the local and national levels of our organization. Lynn kept us together in York Region. Thank you Lynn; have a good and deserved rest.

Evelyn Lawrence has also decided to retire from the

executive after many years of involvement. Our thanks and our best wishes to her as well.

We also enter our new year remembering George McKelvey who began working on the District 34 executive in 2015. We will miss his guidance and humour dearly.

We are fortunate though to welcome three new members to the team: Dan Reynolds who will assume the role of treasurer, Cindy Ranieri, who will work with John Pickett in the area of membership recruitment and finally, Dave Szollosy who will work with Elaine Adam in the area of political advocacy. These new members bring with them a diverse and wealthy experience and a commitment to serve the membership. Great time to join!

Now let's turn to what is ahead. The executive had its first "Zoom" meeting on November 3. We are determined to get our events going again. But how do we deliver a slate of activities in these pandemic times? What tools do we have at hand? What delivery models can we access to connect with our members?

I can assure you that we are all working at that, and when appropriate, we will inform you.

At the local level our main focus has always been social activities and YOU can help. Please let us know about some activities you want, and if possible, let us know how we can do it under the restrictions we face. As of today, RTOERO does not allow in person activities, and for that matter neither does our Regional Health Unit.

Our members have been through many challenges during our careers. This is just another one of them. Today perhaps, many of us would have preferred to be somewhere else. But we are not. The great Irish poet Shamus Heaney once wrote that “If we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere”. Let’s make the best of it, as undoubtedly you are. Please keep in contact, stay safe and we will “summer” again.

## New Community Grants Replace PSTO

*By Regine Baker*

For the next three years (2021-2023) RTOERO funds, usually reserved for the Project Service to Others programme (\$100,000) as well as the funds usually reserved for the Special Grant (\$10,000) along with funds from reserves, will be allocated to a new Community Grants Programme.

In each of these years, one local community charity from each RTOERO district will be eligible to receive \$2,500. This proposal was put forth in response to the devastating impact that Covid-19 has had on local charities whose usual fund-raising activities have been seriously curtailed.

In late January, application forms for this grant will be available on the RTOERO website. For the District 34 York Region, the completed forms, stating how the money will be used, should be sent to Regine Baker, PSTO Rep. at [reginebaker@rogers.com](mailto:reginebaker@rogers.com) by Friday, April 16, 2021. The District 34 executive will review all submissions and

select one to be forwarded to the RTOERO Service to Others Committee for review and approval. All entrants will be notified of the executive's decision.

## Email Communications

*By Angela Stewart*

**R**TOERO – District 34 publishes a newsletter three times a year and it is usually full of many fun and interesting events. Note that, due to Covid-19, all events have been suspended. Once we are able to hold events again, you will start to receive monthly reminders of upcoming socials, luncheons, meetings, etc.

New members will be automatically added to the reminders list. If you are a current member, not receiving reminder emails, and would like reminders of our events, in the form of a monthly email, please contact Angela at: [34thstoryreminders@gmail.com](mailto:34thstoryreminders@gmail.com)

Emails that affect all District 34 members, i.e. the

recent list of this year's board members, will go out to everyone, using a different data base. These communiqués are written by District 34 and sent to all members via the computer gurus at the National Office.

The National Office of RTOERO also sends out emails to all members. They usually pertain to campaigns, decisions, and nation-wide information that need to go out to all districts.

## Fraud Warning

*Reprinted with Permission from the York Region Police*

FRAUD WARNING REGARDING  
ONLINE INVESTMENT AND  
ROMANCE SCAMS

**I**nvestigators with the York Regional Police Financial Crimes Unit would like to remind citizens to be wary of online investment and romance scams after an increase in incidents being reported.

Fraudsters have been targeting victims through messages on social media, emails, dating sites and online advertisements. Victims are often introduced to an investment opportunity or

asked to receive money on behalf of the fraudster. In some cases, they are claiming to know cryptocurrency traders/investors or to be one themselves and they promise large returns. They will go as far as setting up websites where victims can log in and see funds in their accounts.

In many instances, these fraudsters are using fake names and identities or impersonating existing legal companies to solicit victims and to appear legitimate. The fraudster will continually ask for more money and fees and eventually, victims can't get any of their invested money back.

In romance type scams, fraudsters will build trust with a victim, then ask them to receive money and forward that money to others. In most cases, this money has been obtained from other online fraud victims and is essentially being laundered.

If someone is asking you to send cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Litecoin, Ethereum and other cryptocurrencies – be very cautious. These online investments and investors are not licensed or regulated in Ontario.

York Regional Police is

reminding citizens to be cautious if you receive solicitations or notifications for any type of cryptocurrency trading or investing as this type of currency is designed to be anonymous and can rarely be tracked. If a situation feels suspicious, trust your instincts - never invest in something you do not fully understand or with people or businesses that you cannot confirm are legitimate. Do not receive money transfers or deposits from unknown persons.

We encourage citizens to share fraud prevention tips with friends and family, especially seniors or newcomers to Canada, who are frequently the targeted victims of frauds and scams.

If you have been a victim of a fraud, and have lost money, report the incident promptly to the York Regional Police Financial Crimes Unit either online at [www.yrp.ca/en/online-reporting/Report-a-Crime.asp](http://www.yrp.ca/en/online-reporting/Report-a-Crime.asp) or by calling 1-866-876-5423, ext. 6627.

To report frauds where no money has been lost, contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre online or by calling 1-888-495-8501.

## Political Advocacy Report

By Elaine Adam

The Political Advocacy Committee of RTOERO has chosen three issues to focus on: A Seniors Strategy, Environmental Stewardship and Geriatric Health Care. Each district is asked to focus on one issue. The position papers on each of these topics can be found throughout this issue of *The 34<sup>th</sup> Story*.

District 34 has chosen Geriatric Health Care because of the situation in York Region: the number of seniors residences, apartment buildings and long term care homes; the serious number of Covid-19 outbreaks and deaths in the long term care homes; the location of three and soon to be four regional hospitals; and the fact that Christine Elliott, provincial Health Minister, represents the Newmarket Aurora provincial riding.

It was announced in the fall that Southlake Hospital in Newmarket will let ninety-seven nurses go. PAC has been lobbying at the federal and provincial levels and has met with the leaders of the

four provincial parties.

Individual members are asked to get involved as well. Consider arranging a meeting with your MPP and MP via Zoom, copy and/or send the position paper to your local municipal council members.

If you would like to send an email, RTO's Vibrant Voices has one available on their website. Go to Vibrant Voices RTOERO, scroll down to Long Term Care Advocacy Form, fill in your name and address and your federal and provincial representatives' names will appear. You may add to the email provided or send it as is.

Click on "Add Your Voice" and you are done. You will receive a copy of your email. I added my concerns about private long term care homes being run for profit by major corporations by squeezing basic care out of those homes.

We are 81,000 members strong and our association has a powerful voice. Let's use it!

# Geriatric Health Care



## What's the issue?

Canada's population is aging. In 2012, almost one in seven Canadians was a senior. Now the number is more than one in six. By 2030, that will jump to nearly one in four. Our health care system (and social systems) needs to re-think how to address the rising needs of this huge demographic. The health system, too, has tended to be oriented to deal with acute care, not for the chronic needs of seniors. The system has also been hospital-based, with less focus on home care and community-based care.

## Some challenges

**GERIATRIC TRAINING:** Canada faces a shortage of geriatricians. Over the next two decades, the numbers of Canadians aged 65-plus will double, and those 85 and over will quadruple. Yet there are only about 300 geriatricians working in Canada (half of those in Ontario). We need to graduate more specialists, but the number geriatric specialization is capped. Beyond that, a wide range of health care professionals, from pharmacists to occupational therapists, work with older adults all the time. They need increased training on serving the seniors population.

**HEALTHY AGING:** Healthy aging encompasses active lifestyles, social inclusion, mental health, age-friendly communities and coping with change. Yet care, services and policies for seniors can often focus more narrowly on physical health.

**LONG-TERM CARE:** The number of seniors, and longer lifespans, are creating multiple pressures on LTC. There's a shortage of spaces, a shortage of personal support workers, and those arriving in LTC often require more extensive support.

**ELDER ABUSE:** Up to 10% of seniors experience some form of elder abuse - physical, psychological, emotional, financial - each year. Still, the awareness of the issue, and resources available to prevent abuse and help victims, remain lacking.



## Questions for politicians

- How can we better meet the ongoing and often complex care needs of seniors, in hospital and in the community?
- What sort of geriatric training should be mandatory across health care?
- What are your public policy priorities to boost the overall well-being of seniors?
- What human resources, structural or funding changes can increase the capacity of long-term care?
- How should we invest in serving the victims and raising the profile of elder abuse?

## Travel Insurance Update

By Susan Leppington

This Q and A offers information about updates to your RTOERO travel insurance resulting from the global pandemic.

For complete details of emergency medical coverage, please refer to pages 50 to 67 of the Insurance Plans Booklet.

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. 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 leaving. This coverage applies even during the government's advisory to avoid travel outside of Canada due to the pandemic.

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 covered 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.

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.

For more information on travel during the pandemic visit <https://rtoero.ca/rtoero-pandemic-preparedness/>

## In Memoriam

**With sorrow we have learned of the passing of the following members of District 34. To their families we extend our heartfelt sympathy.**

Cornelius Bos  
 Jean Rudman  
 Allan Borsellino  
 George Cameron  
 Bruce Carmody  
 David Clark  
 Donald Clattenburg  
 Joseph C. Colantonio  
 Kristina Dontigny  
 Eugene D'Orazio  
 Diana L Findlay  
 Lillian Forgrave  
 Elinor Graham  
 Douglas Holyoke  
 Roy Lawrence  
 Margaret MacDonald  
 Linda Manson  
 Bryan Marsh  
 John Marshall  
 James Metzler  
 Robert Morrow  
 Frederick Pombiere  
 Doreen Silverstone  
 Sharron Taylor  
 Alan Whittaker



## A Call to Action on Long Term Care in Ontario

By *Nicole Gaudet and Lynda Newman*

In April 2020, as Covid-19 cases skyrocketed in Ontario and the developing tragedy in Long Term Care became evident, a group of retired housing, health and educational professionals with experience at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government, came together to advocate for immediate and lasting change in the publicly-funded Ontario system of nursing homes.

Action Not Words is now working with many others who are striving for 1) immediate action that protects seniors now and, 2) ongoing care and quality of life that all persons in long term care deserve. We are six months into our work and this is a long term effort to which we are committed.

In June, we released a Call to Action ([www.actionnotwords.ca](http://www.actionnotwords.ca)). At that time, 80% of all Canadian and Ontarian deaths were of seniors in Long Term Care. This

was noted as being the highest rate anywhere in the world... shameful on a global scale!

The pandemic has laid bare the dreadful state of the Long Term Care system in Ontario. This public failure has developed over decades and all governments and political parties must assume some of the blame and shame. All Ontarians must recognize that we collectively have not 'seen and acknowledged' this failure. We must act now.

We are very pleased that the Patient Ombudsman and the LTC Commission have quickly released findings and recommendations touching upon several of our priorities for action.

There are multiple staffing issues and the LTC Commission has called for the immediate increase in staffing to allow a guarantee of four hours per day per resident of direct care.

Days ago, Dr. Fullerton, Minister of LTC stated that a staffing strategy will be released by year end. We should all pay close attention to the details including

whether the strategy is fully funded and permanent, not temporary.

The Patient Ombudsman focused on the importance of family councils and caregivers. We know that family and friends are not just visitors. Their importance in monitoring the standard of care in homes has never been more obvious.

An interesting statistic is that prior to Covid-19, approximately 30% of essential care was being provided by caregivers. The vital role of these caregivers in ensuring the mental and emotional well-being of their loved ones and the quality of their lives should never again be ignored.

There was a failure of emergency planning and infection control largely driven by: lack of insufficient protocols and provincial oversight and enforcement of standards; lack of staff training; and lack of emergency supplies such as PPE (personal protective equipment). These failures were most evident in the for-profit residences. While municipalities, who operate

public nursing homes have largely replaced old buildings containing dormitory rooms, the for-profit operators still have many. Replacement of these buildings was mandated decades ago but neither these operators nor government ensured investment in new buildings.

More action is needed. More advocacy is needed. More public pressure is needed. Sustainable funding is needed. The Province must make the budgetary commitments needed.

The funding transferred to operators must reflect the actual cost of operating nursing homes at a standard Ontarians demand. Currently, municipalities are subsidizing their nursing homes from the property tax base. This is not sustainable.

The Province has direct obligations to Long Term Care and must also return to a level of operation that supports the vigorous inspections of homes. An aggressive program of rebuilding is needed and capital funding must be available on an ongoing basis.

By far, the most Covid-19 cases and deaths occurred in for-profit nursing homes. The issues are especially concerning among the large corporate owners. This requires serious attention and the Province of Ontario must be pushed into a formal review of the for-profit operators and a fundamental change in the relationship of the Province with these licensees.

We must all become engaged. Seniors needing care demand our attention. Regarding long term care, you can talk to your MPP. The Province controls all the standards, licensing and funding of nursing homes. You can talk to your Regional Councillors. regional/county governments operate the publicly owned homes. The Federal Government can play a bigger role in long term care and you can talk to your MP.

*Lynda Newman is the ANW  
Chairperson*

*Nicole Gaudet, is a member of  
ANW and RTO*

## York Communities for Public Education

*By Elaine Adam*

**Y**ork Communities for Public Education (YCFPE) is a coalition of parents, students, educators, education workers, and community allies from both the Catholic and Public systems who share an interest in maintaining the high standard for public education in York Region. It was formed in June 2019 with a mandate to protect this important resource.

Due to Covid-19, the situation in education has become even more urgent.

YCFPE members organized and ran a solidarity day camp for elementary students during the one day strikes in February, in consensus with education workers and educators. The group has worked with other parent groups as well as the Toronto and York Labour Councils to have a safe return to school for students, teachers, education workers and staff.

With Italian Canadians for Black Lives, they wrote letters to Regional Councillors, Mayors, local MPP's and Trustees to ask for tangible solutions to the anti-Black racism in schools.

A late fall 2019 Georgina Cable program episode of *Insights and Issues with Dave Szollosy* featured two members of YCFPE who spoke on the effects of education cuts and why it is hurting all students.

A parent and two students gave a deputation to YRDSB on October 20 of this year that dealt with the serious issues around the delivery of education and the impact on mental health during the pandemic, and the problems that students are faced with: class size, physical distancing in class and on the buses, mandatory masks for K-Grade 12, problems with the various models of teaching (online, in class and hybrid), communication and transparency.

A roundtable on pandemic learning and teaching was held with NDP Education critic Marit Stiles, students from YCFPE and a health care expert.

To learn more, go to [www.yorkcommunitiesfored.ca](http://www.yorkcommunitiesfored.ca) YCFPE is also on facebook (@YCFPE), Twitter (@YORK4\_PUBLIC\_ED) and Instagram(@YORKCOMMUNITIESFORED)

## Student Awards 2020

By Lynn Hitsman

Please be informed that the following students, sponsored by District 34 members, were selected as recipients of a \$1,500 RTOERO Scholarship this year:

Name of the student:

Shara Birnbaum

Sponsor: Susan Gould

Name of the student:

Vanessa Garofalo

Sponsor: Maria Garofalo

Name of the student:

Erin Milner

Sponsor: Joyce Milner



# Seniors Strategy



## What's the issue?

Seniors are Canada's fastest growing demographic. Gaps in our healthcare and social policies are creating barriers – to seniors' independence, and to their essential role in vibrant, 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 evolving needs of seniors.

## Some challenges

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

**UNIVERSAL PUBLIC PHARMACARE:** Canada is the only country in the world with universal health care that lacks universal drug coverage. We consistently pay among the highest prices for prescription drugs. Ten per cent of citizens don't have adequate coverage to meet their needs. One in four households can't afford to fill their prescriptions.

**SOCIAL ISOLATION:** Meaningful connections with others keep us engaged and socially active. In contrast, socially isolation can affect emotional, mental and physical health. That can happen to anyone, but is a risk after when people retire, lose a spouse, or experience decreased mobility or cognitive decline. According to the Government of Ontario, upwards of 30% of seniors are in danger of becoming socially isolated.

**AGING 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.



## Questions for politicians

- How do you propose to strengthen defined benefits, protect accrued benefits, and protect employees and retirees ensnared in corporate insolvencies?
- What are you doing to support a federal pharmacare overhaul, or any other measures that could reduced medication costs?
- What plans do you have to find more ways to connect seniors - to family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and their communities?
- How will you improve access to the services/supports that help seniors to live independently, in their home or community, for as long as desired and possible?

## Books For Our Times

*Intro By Chris Prefontaine*

*Review By Maret Kapp*

If you have ever glanced at the back cover of your copy of *The 34<sup>th</sup> Story*, you would have noticed a list of suggestions for article submissions. The third down from the top is “a good book to recommend.”

District 34 member Maret Kapp actually sent me three! “I have been doing quite a bit of reading during these quieter, more isolated times”, Maret wrote, “and thought that I would write a couple of book reviews to keep the brain stimulated. If you can use them in the newsletter, feel free to do so. If not, no problem at all. (I wrote mostly to see if I could still string words together in cohesive thought!)”

Maret’s reviews of two books on Donald Trump are interesting enough to make me want to read at least one of them. Although, after suffering through all of the media coverage of the tumultuous American election, it might take me a while before I delve into trying to understand the

psychological underpinnings of America’s 45th president.

*Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World’s Most Dangerous Man*  
by Mary L. Trump, PhD

AND

*American Oligarchs: The Kushners, the Trumps, and the Marriage of Money and Power*  
by Andrea Bernstein

Mary Trump’s page-turning narrative of her family’s history appeared in a most timely fashion as the world’s eyes focused on the presidential elections that were unfolding in the United States.

Her book reveals how Fred and Mary Trump, Donald’s parents, failed to create an atmosphere of warmth and support for their children. Fred, a callous, money and power-hungry man was married to a woman who suffered from various physical and mental illnesses.

The result, according to the author who is both a niece of Donald Trump as well as a trained clinical psychologist, is that their son, Donald, always trying to curry favour with his harsh father,

became a complex combination of psychopathologies.

The self-aggrandizing, self-righteous and deceitful leader, who in spite of his bungling of business and government affairs made a second bid for the highest office in the land and in Mary's view, poses a real danger to democracy and her country.

What makes Mary Trump's book particularly fascinating is that having an insider's unique access to the family, she is able to reveal details about the different members to which another writer would not have been able. She also has the advantage of looking at her relatives with the eye of a trained clinician, a fact, which enables her to make sense of their behaviours, particularly that of Donald Trump.

This page-turner is well-written although there are definite undertones of bitterness caused by Mary's belief that the family "destroyed" her father, Freddy Trump. Nevertheless, in light of the current political situation, this is a must-read and well worth the time.

While Mary Trump's work takes a close look at Donald's childhood influences that created the personality and resultant conduct of the man we have come to know, Andrea Bernstein's compelling book, *American Oligarchs: The Kushners, the Trumps, and the Marriage of Money and Power* presents an exhaustive account of his business dealings along with those of his in-laws, the Kushners.

The author, an award-winning journalist, has drawn on two hundred interviews and more than one hundred thousand pages of documents to reveal how these two influential families repeatedly broke laws and resorted to secrecy, intimidation and prosecutorial and judicial power to avoid legal actions being taken against them.

Bernstein who is to be commended for her thorough research has produced a work that is very dense with detail, which often makes reading rather slow. She introduces so many players that her work occasionally resembles a Russian novel where one must continually look up the

cast of characters.

Although the writing could use a little more editing, it is, nevertheless, a gripping book that explains how the American government has been employed as another tool for advancing the dynastic wealth and power of the Trumps and Kushners.

*Before retirement, Maret Kapp worked as a French immersion teacher and librarian at Sam Chapman P.S. Since retirement, she has continued to do some occasional teaching in those areas, but in light of the current situation, thinks that she will be unlikely to return any time soon. She already misses the students and working with them in the classroom and library. She guesses that writing was like a little bit of therapy.*

And in these crazy, isolating times of Covid-19, we can probably all use a little therapy. Thank you, Maret!



## Distinguished Member Award

*By Regine Baker*

This award is given to District 34 members, not currently serving on the District 34 executive, in recognition of their outstanding or long-term contributions to the work of RTOERO at the District level.

Each year up to two winners of this award will be invited to attend the District 34 May Luncheon at District 34's expense to receive a plaque and be recognized by their colleagues.

To be eligible for this award a candidate must be nominated by a fellow member. The nominator will submit an outline of the candidate's contributions and other relevant information to the District 34 Second Vice President by the end of March. The Executive will exam all submissions and determine the winner(s).

For 2021, submissions may be sent to Regine Baker at [reginebaker@rogers.com](mailto:reginebaker@rogers.com)

## Road Watering

*Shared By Chris Prefontaine*

**H**ave you ever noticed city or regional trucks out watering the roads before a storm? Seems a bit odd, doesn't it? Those trucks are spreading 'brine', a mixture of salt and water which dries but later reactivates when the snow falls. It is one line of offense that the cities and region have to help melt snow and ice in order to keep the roads safe for drivers.

If you would like to read more about this practice of "road brining", an interesting article can be found at [www.driving.ca/auto-news/news/how-it-works-road-salt-and-de-icing](http://www.driving.ca/auto-news/news/how-it-works-road-salt-and-de-icing)

## Zoom Zoom

*By Chris Prefontaine*

**T**en or eleven months ago, if I heard you say "Zoom", I would probably have envisioned myself speeding along a beautiful countryside or taking a lovely drive along a scenic oceanfront highway - of course in my new Mazda.

Now, however, since the introduction of Covid-19 and our

need to stay at home, zooming has taken on a whole new meaning! Instead of driving, you boot your computer, and after a couple of clicks, you can be talking and enjoying the "virtual" company of friends or loved ones. You can enjoy their smiles and laughter all from the safety of your home.

The District 34 executive is sorely missing seeing so many of our members and joining them for the fun activities that we organize throughout the year. Because of that, we have purchased a Zoom account and will start 2021 with a couple of virtual activities to see how well they go and if you enjoy this forum. Both activities will be in February; on February 16, Elaine Adam will run our annual Trivia Contest and on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Christina Iaboni will return with her colleague Leigh Merotto to talk about staying healthy during a pandemic.

To help you get going with Zoom, here are some instructions and a link to a short YouTube video if you prefer to watch rather than read. ([youtu.be/9isp3qPeQ0E](https://youtu.be/9isp3qPeQ0E)).

## How to Zoom

*By Chris Prefontaine*

Zoom can be fun! So take a deep breath and follow the steps below and you'll be ZOOMING, before you know it! Most people start out by joining a Zoom meeting that has already been organized and set up by someone else.

**Here are the easy steps to join a Zoom call for the first time.**

1. When you have been invited to a Zoom meeting, you will receive an email that will look something like this:

“Name of Organizer” is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Organizer’s Zoom Meeting

Time: November 23, 2020 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71144761143?pwd=NEJoVFA5V3pUZTR3dVpJL2t2NjRkQT09>

Meeting ID: 711 4476 1143

Passcode: 7AY28R

2. Click the link that begins with “https:” This will take you to the meeting through your browser. You can also install the Zoom Client if you want to have quick access from your desktop; however, you do NOT have to download the app nor do you need to sign up for an account.

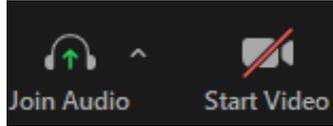
3. After your browser opens, click “Join a Meeting”. If asked for the password enter the letters/numbers that you received in the email.

4. If you are not signed in, then enter a display name.

5. Click to select if you want to connect with video and then you will be asked if you want to join with “computer audio”. Click those

buttons to select. (Make sure your computer’s camera and microphone work, before you start the whole process.)

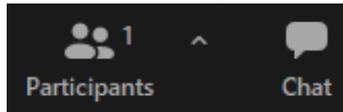
7. It’s as easy as that! Once you are in, you will see some small symbols at the bottom of your screen on the left, that will give you the option of muting/unmuting your audio and one to turn your video off/on. .



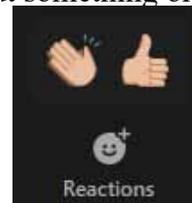
8. You should join with the AUDIO in the MUTE position, then the presenter can turn them on from their end, or you can turn it on whenever you want to talk. (if you leave the audio on all the time, everyone can hear you blow your nose, your dog bark, etc.)

9. You will see a big square appear in the middle of your screen, and that means you are IN the meeting. You may see a larger picture in the middle, which is the presenter of the meeting. Your picture and the other attendees will be in smaller photos around the edge. This is called “Gallery View”. If you’re in a business meeting, you may only want to see the presenter. Then you or the presenter, would change the box at the top right, to “Speaker View”.

10. You will also see a some symbols along the lower right of your screen. By clicking on “Participants” you will see who the members of the group are and by clicking “Chat”, you can type something that you would like to say to someone.



11. And finally, notice the “reactions” symbol. This will allow you to let the participants know how you are feeling about something or to let your speaker know that you would ask a question.



## Zoom Tutorials

*By Chris Prefontaine*

For our visual learners here are a couple of links that you might find helpful.

Marcia Chadly has a great how to video for Zoom beginners that will cover walk you through:

- Understanding the Zoom access information sent to you;
- Downloading the free Zoom app;
- Using the access information to join;
- How to turn your video off and on; and
- How to mute and unmute.

She spends a bit too much time on installing the app for my liking but you might find the information useful. <https://youtu.be/9isp3qPeQ0E>

You might also try Claudia Carlucci's Zoom for Dummies: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iagJnvY6lLY>

And of course you can also visit the Zoom Help Center: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-meeting>

## Trivia

*By Elaine Adam*

In keeping with our tradition of an annual winter trivia lunch, we will attempt an online Trivia game via Zoom this year, on the afternoon of Tuesday February 16.

We anticipate teams of four so you can sign up as an individual, with a partner or with a complete team of four. If you are familiar with using Zoom, you know that you can “chat” with your partners during the game.

To sign up, each player needs to email me so I have their email address. Please indicate whether you are playing with someone else or wish to be placed on a team. We will take ten teams of four. The prize this year will be bragging rights!

Once I have organized the teams, I will send you an email indicating that you are “in”. I will also include the Zoom meeting information that you will need.

Please wait to send me your request to play until after January 2, 2021, to make sure that everyone has received their

copy of *The 34<sup>th</sup> Story* by then.

Send your request to Elaine Adam at [feats@rogers.com](mailto:feats@rogers.com). Looking forward to another fun game (albeit a bit differently!)

## Foundation News

By Elaine Adam

The RTO Charitable Foundation's Social Isolation Awareness Month Campaign wrapped up at the end of October. It is particularly fitting, considering our current pandemic. Before COVID-19, an estimated 30% of Canadian seniors were at risk of becoming socially isolated. We can and should be proactive to reduce this risk.

In each of the four weeks, members who signed up were given a challenge to complete to reach out to those who may not have contact with many people. These challenges included phoning, visiting at a social distance, running errands, offering to do outdoor tasks, teaching someone in your social bubble to use technology, finding out about virtual activities at the local seniors centre to connect them with, and donating to our

Charitable Foundation.

The Foundation holds regular webinars with our grantees so we can learn about who we are funding and what they are doing. On October 28, Michael Nicin of the National Institute on Ageing at Ryerson University presented the pre-COVID research study on Ageing in Isolation, entitled "*What Do We Know and Where Do We Go From Here?*"

The study found that those faced with social isolation saw mental and physical decline due to the low quantitative and qualitative interaction with others. The opposite of social isolation is social capital, which doesn't exist for many older people since our Western society does not see the multigenerational family model as often. Statistics were given to compare different age groups and seniors came out as more accepting or more resilient of being alone than young people.

Risks for social isolation include living alone, being over the age of eighty, having health issues, no children, no transportation, having a low income, and undergoing a change in family

structure. It is worse for those with chronic health issues, immigrants and seniors with language issues, being from the LGBTQ community, and having dependence on children for financial assistance. There is a four to five per cent greater chance of being hospitalized with a longer stay which drives up hospital costs.

Health costs match those who smoke fifteen cigarettes a day and those who drink excessively. 49% of those who called EMS five times in a year identified as being lonely and 37% rated themselves as extremely lonely. There are solutions. The UK appears to lead the world right now, with a Minister of Loneliness and uses letter carriers to track those living alone through their daily rounds.

Japan has developed effective programs for seniors. Major interventions that work include physical and virtual contact, and services that connect people. The Canadian federal government runs the New Horizons Fund; British Columbia provides transportation services; Nova Scotia has a Shift Plan for Seniors; Ontario runs the Seniors

Community Grant Program; and Quebec has a Seniors Action Plan.

Community based programs exist like the Social Prescribing Pilot where life style, not pills, is seen as the solution; Home Share Canada matches a senior with a young roommate, often a student in need of housing; and our RTO Foundation provides for grants to organizations and studies that deal with seniors issues - one of the few foundations to do so.

Opportunities exist to increase social awareness, such as research, evidence gathering and mapping. Access to education and public awareness are important as is the design of age-friendly cities. Coordinated responses are needed to eliminate duplication of services because over forty thousand Canadians are living at home with unmet homecare needs.

For more information, go to [www.ryerson.ca/news-events/news/2020/07/ryersons-national-institute-on-ageing-pushes-for-change-in-care-of-seniors](http://www.ryerson.ca/news-events/news/2020/07/ryersons-national-institute-on-ageing-pushes-for-change-in-care-of-seniors)

# Environmental Stewardship



## What's the issue?

Responsible use of resources, conservation, protecting our air, land and water – improving in all areas is critical to a sustainable future. Individuals, companies, industry groups and governments all have a part to play in environmental stewardship. We need to maintain the viability of our ecosystems for ourselves, our children and grandchildren.

## Some challenges

**BAN ON SINGLE-USE PLASTICS:** The federal government will ban many single-use plastics starting in 2021. Questions remain around what items will be on the list and the phase-in period. The ban doesn't address the issue of the use of non-essential plastics.

**COMMON RECYCLING STANDARDS:** With all the recycling efforts made by municipalities and companies, there's much room to improve. For instance, Deloitte reports that just 9% of the plastic waste generated annually in Canada is recycled. One hurdle to greater progress is the lack of a harmonized approach across jurisdictions.

**ENVIRONMENTALLY-SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION:** Transportation accounts for about one-quarter of Canada's carbon emissions. As our population and economy grows, so do the number of vehicles on our roads.

**SAFEGUARDING THE WATER SUPPLY AND DRINKING WATER:** Our freshwater resources are a national treasure. The Great Lakes, for instance, holds over 20% of the entire world's surface freshwater. Pollution and misuse threatens that. Meanwhile, while urban centres enjoy access to clean water, First Nations often face drinking water advisories.

## Questions for politicians

- What kind of system approach is needed manage the entire life cycle of plastics?
- What policies or incentives should we have to move from a linear economy (ongoing consumption of resources) to a circular one (reusing resources)?
- What would you do to increase the recycling rate in Canada, and lower contamination rates (i.e. non-recyclable material in the recycling system)?
- What policies will you support to drive more sustainable transportation, i.e. electric vehicles, cleaner public transport, clean fuel standards, biking, etc.?
- What kinds of legislation and changes in business practices are needed to protect our freshwater sources?
- What steps will you take to upgrade water systems and alleviate the drinking water crisis in First Nations communities?

# Curb Appeal

## DO YOU HAVE CURB APPEAL FOR THIEVES?

Under normal circumstances, you want your home to be a safe haven—but not to thieves looking for a steal.

### WINDOWS

Keep them locked & use a screw or block so they can't be lifted.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't post vacation plans or big-end purchases on social media.

### SHRUBBERY

Ensure they are kept neat and trimmed so there is a clear view to the door.

### DOORS

Always keep the front door locked and don't post a note if you are away.

### ICE & SNOW

Make sure snow and ice are cleared if you go away.

### GARAGE DOOR

Keep the garage door and the interior garage door locked.

### LIGHTS

Purchase exterior motion-sensor lights and put lights on timers so they turn on and off at different times.

### SECURITY

Consider adding a home security system including an alarm system and video surveillance cameras.

### REMEMBER

**REPORT ANY SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE OR VEHICLES.**



## Looking Good on Video Calls

By *Chris Prefontaine*

**S**o in these days of the Covid-19 era, we practise social distancing and wear masks when we are out in public. Developments in York Region back in November (I do hope that things have improved when you are reading this!) limited us to groups of 25 if outside and we have had to decrease the number of our indoor social bubble from 10 to five. To stay safe, we avoid shopping and most activities except for those that are essential. We have not been to the hair dressers or the nail salon.

This is the new normal, and now we are asking you to get in front of a video camera to Zoom! Well, first, I guess we should address the elephant in the room: “what if we don’t like the way we look on camera!”

Well there are some tips and tricks to help us out. Here is a list of things we can do that will measurably improve our visual presence on video calls.

First of all, consider what you plan to wear. Now as you know,

the camera usually only gets you from the waist up. Most web sites suggest avoiding white tops but do suggest sticking to solids, rather than plaids or bright patterns that might make the other viewers’ eyes go numb.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I went into isolation with my son and his family. Each day, I would see my son enter his office wearing a really nice shirt - and pajama bottoms.

So who would ever know if you were less than appropriately attired below the waist? But keep in mind, you probably wouldn’t want to get up to answer the door or visit the washroom in the middle of your call!

Next thing to think about is where you will sit and therefore where the computer/laptop is placed. What will be in the background? A cluttered backdrop may distract the other viewers. You want them to focus on your face rather than what is behind you.

And then there is the issue of lighting. You want the room to be well lit but you do not want the light, say from a window, to

be directly behind you. That may wash you out. Instead, consider facing the window, or placing a lamp on the table, maybe raised so that your face is lit. And sit back from the camera so that your entire face can be seen.

Next consider how you could make your camera eye level. Could you place books under your laptop or camera so that you are eye to eye with your viewer? If the camera is low and looking up, the viewer gets the impression that they are looking up your nose. Very unflattering!

And finally, when you are speaking, look into the camera rather than at a thumbnail of another participant. This is much nicer and makes them feel that you are speaking directly to them.

I hope these tips prove to be useful as you either continue to video conference or decide it is time to begin. At any rate, we hope you join us at either the trivia event or the Staying Healthy workshop! Please don't forego any Zoom calls or activities because you are intimidated. It's easy - just follow the prompts!

## Staying Healthy at Home

*By Chris Prefontaine*

The last several months have brought on new challenges and stress for all of us. Staying healthy is more important now than ever before and healthy eating is an important component in maintaining wellness.

In this one and a half hour virtual workshop, registered dietitians Christina Iaboni and Leigh Merotto will discuss nutrition tips to stay healthy at home. Their workshop includes information on planning healthy meals, mindful eating, smart snacking and easy meal preparation. They will also discuss nutrients that are important to support immune health.

This workshop will be held on Zoom on February 24, 2021. We will begin at 1:15 p.m. with chatting and member introductions. (This will also allow us a few minutes to deal with any technical difficulties.) Christina and Leigh will join us and present from 1:30 until 2:30; with a question period from 2:30 until 2:45.

The workshop will also include a one-week simple meal plan, healthy snack list, and pantry staples that will be sent out via email after the workshop.

If you are interested in participating in this event, please register by sending your name and phone number to Chris Prefontaine (7chris.prefontaine@gmail.com) by February 8, 2021. You will receive the invitation and link to join the Zoom meeting once your registration is received. A minimum of 15 participants is required. register early as there are only 30 spots available!

## Exploring the Impact of Covid-19 on Older Adults

*By Elaine Adam*

### **The RTOERO Foundation Chair in Action**

**O**n November 18, an informative webinar was conducted by another RTO Charitable Foundation grantee, Dr. Rachel Savage, a member of Dr. Paula Rochon's

research team into Geriatrics at Women's College Hospital. Dr. Rochon holds the Chair in Geriatrics at the University of Toronto's Medical School, which is funded by our Foundation. Dr. Savage has a doctorate in public health research and epidemiology. Three hundred and twenty members attended the webinar.

In the early days of the pandemic, there was concern about the effects on older Canadians because they were underrepresented in studies. Due to the conditions at the time, it was difficult to access our elders, so the researchers approached RTO for permission to survey our members.

An email went out to those members with email addresses and 4879 of them participated. The survey was created, vetted by the research ethics committee and sent out during the month of May. The goal was to raise the profile of this issue in newspapers, TV, radio and social media to draw attention to this important topic, and hopefully affect change.

At that time, it was known that older adults often have weakened

immune systems, underlying health issues and may live alone. The experience of the SARS outbreak led to mental health issues as people faced quarantine, isolation and fear of the unknown virus. There was a concern that these issues would be prevalent during this Covid-19 pandemic.

The survey was analyzed by June 4<sup>th</sup>. Most respondents were English speaking women between the ages of 65 and 79 with about one third of them living alone. Of the male respondents about one fifth lived alone.

There were some differences between males and females in their responses: 66% of all respondents saw a change in routines, both groups saw a similar increase in walking, using the computer and watching tv. More women answered that they spent more time talking to friends and relatives, and spent more time in the kitchen.

Both groups saw challenges in accessing PPE supplies, groceries and health care. Silver linings included a generally slower pace, more connecting, respect from the community and a feeling of

belonging as people reached out to help. 45% of men felt closer to their spouse, as did 41% of women. 16% said there was no silver lining.

The greatest concern was that a loved one would contract the virus, followed by contracting it themselves, the economy, the health system, their children and grandchildren, and loneliness and anxiety. 20% of women and 10% of men said they were lonely.

It seems that the more concerns one had, the lonelier they were. Younger responders, those in poor health, those living alone and people giving or receiving care were the loneliest. 49% of females and 28% of males had felt lonely in the past week, 9% of females and 6% of males felt lonely on a daily basis. Those feeling less lonely were people who had regular communication with others, were receiving help, whose culture meant support from the community, and who lived in multigenerational families.

Respondents felt that there was a pressing need to concentrate on Long Term Care homes,

accessible health care, social connections, support for caregivers, and physical and mental health supports. The question of ageism arose and many felt that much more needs to be done in our country to erase it. People did feel that there was more care and respect on a personal basis.

Strategies were discussed: to connect with family and friends in person, on the phone or on the internet; to get exercise and fresh air; to establish and maintain daily routines; to limit news consumption.

The results were that older Canadians are deeply affected in numerous ways: in impacts and coping strategies, in the difference between males and females, and in the need for social support, particularly for those living alone.

The next step for the study is to be peer reviewed, followed by the publication and sharing of the findings. The individual text comments will be examined in detail to qualify and quantify them. Two resources for seniors were shared: The Senior Safety Line 1-866-299-1011 and

Tech Serv tech support for seniors, set up during the pandemic [www.techserveto.com](http://www.techserveto.com)  
1-888-418-4771

The webinar will be put on our Charitable Foundation website. The Foundation funds research, post-secondary training in geriatrics, and innovative programs that involve seniors' health issues. A call for proposals is put out across Canada once a year. RTO has the only Foundation that is totally dedicated to these issues.

Please consider donating. You can go online to RTO Foundation, send a cheque in the mail to 18 Spadina Rd. Toronto M5R 2S7 or call 1-800-361-9888 x.271.

## Virtual Fun

*By Chris Prefontaine*

**S**o... stuck at home yet again on a Saturday night? No place to go and nothin' to do? Seems we are all in the same boat! Can't fix the "no place to go"; but I can sure make some suggestions as to things to do and websites to help you meet with friends to do them.

Here is a list of seven virtual games that you can organize with friends. Most of them work best on Zoom but if you only have the free account can only last 40 minutes. The get-around for that one is that when your time is up, you can just restart the meeting and have everyone sign in again.

Like Bingo? Visit *My Free Bingo*. Start out with [www.myfreebingocards.com/virtual-bingo](http://www.myfreebingocards.com/virtual-bingo) -- on this page, you will find a great video tutorial to help you get started. They have bingo card generators, a way to call out the numbers and can check the bingos.

Their virtual bingo system is packed with features and includes everything you need to run a virtual bingo game: randomized bingo cards, a bingo caller, automated winner verification; tools to send out virtual bingo links to players and virtual bingo cards that can be played on-screen or printed. And best of all it is free for up to 30 players and Zooming might be the way to see them all!

Want to see how well you know the people in your group? Here are two games to play on Zoom

to help you do that: *Never Have I Ever* and *10 Questions*. In the first game, you hold up five fingers and share something that you have never done. If someone has done that thing, they put one finger down. You take turns sharing until someone has all their fingers down. In the latter game, you list and then ask 10 interesting question to the members of the group. No matter how well you think you know each other, there are bound to be some surprises. (Here is a website with a great list of questions: [www.conversationstartersworld.com/questions-to-get-to-know-someone/](http://www.conversationstartersworld.com/questions-to-get-to-know-someone/))

Remember the board game “*Scattergories*”? You select one letter and five categories. Each person on their own has sixty seconds to come up with one thing in each category that begins with the chosen letter. When time is up, take turns reading out your answers for each category. Circle each answer that you have that no one else had and at the end total up all of your circles. After three rounds, the player with the most points wins.

You can find a free game generator at [www.scattergoriesonline.net/](http://www.scattergoriesonline.net/)

Have a *trivia contest* with your friends. Here is a random trivia generator: [\*www.randomtriviagenerator.com/#!/\*](http://www.randomtriviagenerator.com/#!/)

Like to play Backgammon, checkers or even chess? Visit [www.playingcards.io/](http://www.playingcards.io/) I have not yet personally played on this site but once you click on a game, you are provided with a link that you can share with friends.

And finally, I saved my personal favourite for last. It is *Trickster!* On [\*trickstercards.com\*](http://trickstercards.com), you can play Euchre, Bridge, Spades, Pitch, Hearts, Whist, 500, Pinochle, and Oh Hell.

Personally, I am a Euchre player and have spent many an hour playing with friends. There are buttons in the upper right corner where you can choose to learn or play right away. You can play with strangers or plan to play with friends.

You also have the choice to install the app or just play on the site. Once you launch the site, you will

be able to create a free account. Once logged in, you select the game that you want to play. You can then practise or join games in progress. If you click “Join”, you can create your own game and choose to “Invite Friends”. A code will be generated which you share with friends who also log in but then they use the code that you gave them to enter your game.

The nice thing about Trickster is that they now have audio and video capacity. You can see and hear the other players – you don’t need Zoom and there are no time limits!

Remember the words of George Bernard Shaw. We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

(Thanks to Cosmopolitan and Good Housekeeping magazines for some of these ideas.)

## Fall Prevention

By Susan Leppington

Falling is the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations among Canada's older adults and between 20 and 30% of our older folks fall each year.

Although you might think falling is a natural consequence of getting older, it is the result of several age-related factors including loss of muscle strength and balance. However, falls can be prevented by adjusting your home environment, through exercises that promote strength and balance and by being mindful about your foot health. These risk-reduction strategies include:

- **Modifying your home**  
Many older adults are choosing to stay in their homes for as long as possible; however, many homes have not been designed to accommodate their needs as they age. Making age-friendly changes (e.g. remove loose rugs, seat in the shower, multiple sources of light) can help you perform daily activities more easily and reduce the risk of falling.

- **Exercising regularly**  
Exercise – alone or in combination with other strategies – can help reduce your chances of falling. There are a number of beneficial exercises that help to improve walking speed, balance and muscle strength. Tai chi, resistance training and exercises such as yoga that improve flexibility can also help.

- **Maintaining your foot health**  
Making sure your feet are in good health is another important factor in preventing falls. Foot issues such as pain, weak muscle strength, poor range of motion in the ankle and bunions are just a few examples of problems that may contribute to a greater risk of falling. A podiatrist (included in RTOERO's Extended Health Plan) can assess, diagnose and help to improve your ability to move safely.

*Information retrieved from McMaster University Optimal Aging portal, November 2020*



F	U	N	E	V	I	T	C	A	G	N	I	C	A	R	E	S	R	O	H
I	R	L	C	O	N	C	E	R	T	S	P	L	A	S	D	R	A	W	A
N	S	I	N	P	U	B	L	U	N	C	H	A	V	A	J	A	V	A	D
D	I	S	E	I	R	E	N	I	W	R	O	U	T	A	H	C	M	O	O
M	S	L	U	N	C	H	E	O	N	S	T	G	H	T	L	A	E	H	O
R	E	P	E	E	D	E	V	A	S	W	O	H	S	T	R	A	M	O	F
E	M	E	U	W	S	S	M	I	L	E	S	T	E	T	I	S	B	E	W
N	I	E	T	A	R	T	H	E	A	T	R	E	S	D	A	T	E	S	B
J	N	P	A	L	S	T	N	I	O	J	B	R	I	D	A	G	E	R	E
O	A	R	S	K	L	A	T	O	P	E	N	H	O	U	S	E	S	I	S
Y	R	O	T	S	H	T	R	U	P	O	F	Y	T	R	I	H	T	E	H
M	S	C	H	A	R	I	T	A	B	L	E	E	E	P	R	I	Z	E	S
E	S	E	M	A	G	E	M	A	I	L	E	R	E	M	I	D	E	R	S
N	L	A	C	I	M	O	N	O	C	E	M	H	P	A	I	V	I	R	T
T	A	R	T	G	A	L	L	E	R	I	E	S	W	E	L	C	O	M	E
S	E	R	U	T	C	I	P	F	O	U	N	D	A	T	I	O	N	E	T
S	Y	A	L	P	S	E	R	V	I	C	E	T	O	O	T	H	E	R	S
Y	S	A	E	C	N	A	R	U	S	N	I	G	O	S	S	I	P	N	E
L	A	C	I	R	O	T	S	I	H	T	G	N	I	H	G	U	A	L	U
N	O	I	T	A	M	R	O	F	N	I	G	N	I	N	E	D	R	A	G

# Word Search

By Regine Baker

If you have ever attended one of our September Open Houses, you may have encountered one of Regine's Word Searches. Unfortunately, because of Covid-19 we had to cancel our 2020 Open House but here is Regine's latest! Find the words below in the word search and use the remaining letters, reading back and forth, to learn the prevailing sentiment of the members of RTO District 34 York Region. The answer can be found on page 47.

ACTIVE	ENJOYMENT	INFORMATION	PRIZES
ART GALLERIES	FIND	INSURANCE	PUB LUNCH
ART SHOWS	FOOD	ISSUES	SAVED
AWARDS	FOUNDATION	JOIN	SEMINARS
BEST	FRIENDSHIP	LAUGHING	SERVICE TO OTHERS
BRIDGE	FUN	LAUGHTER	SHEET
BUS TRIPS	GAMES	LUNCHEONS	SMILES
CHARITABLE	GARDENING	MEET	TALKS
CHAT	GOLFING	MEMBERS	THEATRE
CONCERTS	GOSSIP	NICE	THIRTY FOURTH STORY
DATES	GUEST	OPEN HOUSE	TRIVIA
DEEPER	HAVA JAVA	PALS	WALKS
EASY	HEALTH	PHOTOS	WEB SITE
ECONOMICAL	HISTORICAL	PICTURES	WELCOME
EMAIL	HORSE	PLAYS	WINERIES
REMINDERS	RACING		

## Supporting the Region's Food Pantries

By Dave Szollosy

The persistent pandemic has put great strains on the local population who experience food insecurity. As well, it has complicated the work of our volunteer-based food banks and food pantries. In-person pick-ups by the clients of the agencies have been curtailed or restricted during the partial shutdowns. Demand for donations has become more urgent. This is particularly true as we enter into the holiday season.

To address this partially, the District 34 Executive approved a donation of \$2,000 to food banks or food pantries in each of the 9 municipalities of York Region for a total donation of \$18,000. It is a way that as retired educators, we continue to address the basic needs of the members in our communities.



*Catherine Cook, Executive Director of the Georgina Food Pantry accepted our donation from Dave Szollosy our Political Advocacy Co-Chair.*



*Carol Ann Trabert accepted our donation from our Past President Susan Phillips.*

Oh behalf of the King Township Food Bank, I thank RTO for your generous donation of \$2,000. We exist to serve the community, and are entirely volunteer. Your donation not only helps our budget but also offers a vote of confidence to our dedicated teams that deliver food, food cards, produce and pet kibble to close to 200 people every month.



*Allison Stuart Board Chair of the Aurora Food Pantry accepted our donation from our Treasurer Dan Reynolds.*



*Aiden Bain of the Newmarket Food Pantry accepts our donation from Susan Leppington our Health Benefits Rep.*



*Nicki Lawrence (L) and Cathy Allison (R) accepted our donation at the Markham Food Bank.*



*Susan Smith (L) and Charlotte Chesham (R) accepted our donation at the Whitchurch Stouffville Food Bank.*



*Richmond Hill Community Food Bank Manager Lee Reynolds, and RTO member Donna Smith accept our donation from executive member Craig Lee.*

In 1986, with the help of other volunteers Donna Smith started the Richmond Hill Food Bank. It was the second one in York Region. It was thought the need would be temporary and now, 34 years later, the need continues to increase. Donna coordinated all the work of the Food Bank for twelve years.

It was a meaningful moment to present this cheque from RTO to help the RHCFB continue to provide food security to our neighbours. With the YDSB, Donna thoroughly enjoyed working with teaching developmentally delayed children. As members of RTO, we remember students who live in poverty, even lacking sufficient food to equip them for learning, and now in retirement we have given them some much needed support.



## Baked Lentil Bites

By Christina Iaboni, MHSc, RD



**T**hese lentil bites come together so easily and are perfect for a meatless main dish paired with some sweet potato fries and a salad. You can dip them in Greek yogurt or even Tzatziki would be great. The hemp hearts add additional plant-based protein and healthy fats. Sometimes I make this recipe into 4-5 patties for a vegetarian burger option.

### Ingredients:

- 1 can of lentils, drained and rinsed
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup of seasoned bread crumbs ½ cup finely diced red pepper
- 2 tbsp. hemp hearts

### Directions:

1. In a food processor, lightly pulse the lentils until they are coarsely chopped but not pureed. Alternatively, you can use a fork or potato masher to break them down a bit.
2. Add the pulsed lentils and remaining ingredients into a bowl and mix until combined.
3. Using a cooking scoop, scoop about 1 tablespoonfuls of the mixture onto a parchment lined baking tray.
4. Baked in a 400°F preheated oven for 12-15 minutes or until they are lightly browned on the bottom.
5. Allow to cool a few minutes and enjoy.

*- Christina Iaboni has been a registered dietitian since 2011 and has worked in a mental health and addiction facility since 2012. She is the owner of Cucina di Christina, a nutrition communications company. She has a passion for helping people improve their health by eating nutritious food and empowering them to cook simple but delicious food. She is also the niece of RTO member Theresa Zavaglia.*

## Welcome New Members

By Lori MacDonald-Blundon

Since our last newsletter was printed, the provincial office has informed us that the following have become members of RTOERO and have indicated their wish to be affiliated with *District 34 – York Region*. Information which is received after we go to print will be included in the next newsletter.



On behalf of the Executive and all of the members of RTO ERO District 34, I extend a warm welcome to these new Members within our ranks:

Roula Anastasakos  
 Carmen Bernardo  
 Bryan Blackert  
 Nicolina Bonofiglio  
 Marian Borsellino  
 Annette Breatross  
 Joan Bullivant-Wallace  
 Frank Cannatelli  
 Connie Cinnirella  
 Judith Clattenburg  
 Nicola D'Avella  
 Donato Di Rocco  
 Jo-Anne Diamond  
 Richard Dlin  
 Angela D'Orazio  
 Angela Drascic-Gaudio  
 Vincenza Esposito-Karantakis

Katharine Ferguson  
 Joanne Folkeard  
 Kimberley Fortin  
 Jean-Pierre Francoeur  
 Kathy Friedman  
 Helen Gault  
 Kathryn Giel  
 Nuzhat Hussain  
 Barbara Jones  
 Anne Lacey  
 Mary Lane  
 Rick Le Neve  
 Lynda Levenstein  
 Kathryn Marshall  
 Antonietta Mastrangelo  
 David McAleese  
 Isabelle Mercure-Cameron  
 Frank Minchella  
 Marina Miniaci  
 Traci Mohamed  
 Linda Morrow  
 Carol Murray  
 Cheryl Neves  
 Mary Nomura  
 Reena Parathundyil  
 Roger Payerson  
 Bernadette Pombiere  
 Gifty Quartey

Daniel Reynolds  
 Rebecca Richards  
 Sherri Richardson  
 Lorie Sculthorp  
 Bettina Setton  
 Susan Steckel  
 Esther Szold-Bergman  
 Deirdre Vance  
 Fernando Violante  
 Ronald Weese  
 Beverley Whittaker  
 Christine Wittich  
 Rosemary Ziccardi  
 Elizabeth Zwicker



## A Gentleman of Moscow by Amor Towles

*Review By Maret Kapp*

Life-long house arrest in a Russian hotel? Hardly a suitable read during my own dreary confinement during the Covid-19 pandemic, I thought. What could possibly be more depressing than reading about an aristocrat who, in 1922, is found guilty of writing a seditious poem for which he is condemned to a life of imprisonment in the Metropol Hotel, his current home. As it turns out, not only is the novel far more than the opening pages might lead one to believe, but it also proves to be positively inspirational.

Stripped of his freedom and even of his personhood, Count Alexander Rostov is forced to suffer further indignities when he finds that his living quarters have been moved from a luxurious and spacious suite to a cramped attic room.

What is lovely to watch as the story unfolds is how he adjusts to his “New Reality” with dignity

and graciousness. Not one to complain, he sets about making his accommodations as comfortable as possible and makes every attempt to normalize his daily habits and routines. His life is now one “that is principally circumscribed by the four walls of this building.”

Well-educated, charming and open, Rostov proceeds to meet and make friends with the staff and eventually becomes an exceptional head waiter in the celebrated Boyarski restaurant.

The fascinating guests of the hotel: the famous actress, an ex-Red Army colonel and an American captain also come to play vital roles in providing help when Rostov finds himself in sticky situations. Hovering in the shadows of his life is his nemesis, the hotel manager, Leplevsky, aka the “Bishop”, who detests members of the Old Order and adds many interesting twists and heart-stopping moments to the plot.

His most important encounter, however, is with the nine-year old Nina who keeps him on his toes and years later entrusts her

daughter, Sofia, into the Count’s care.

The events of Rostov’s life unfold during a thirty-year period which offers glimpses into the early years of the Soviet Union. The author cleverly weaves in political, historical and cultural snippets that add richness to the reading experience.

I found myself frequently curious about certain musical, literary, and architectural references and felt compelled to do research for a more in-depth understanding. Towles’ prose is elegant and often poetic, and reveals the writer’s affinity for appealing alliteration.

This story is a testament to human resilience. Adapting to and even embracing what cannot be changed is the key to surviving life’s curve balls. It was such a necessary reminder during this year’s quarantine. As Rostov himself said “if a man does not master his circumstance, then he is bound to be mastered by them.”

## Find Us on The Web

Use the QR Code reader on your smart phone to find our website. Scan the code below to get to our website.



## Advertising Events in *The 34th Story*

The only events that are advertised in *The 34th Story* or via email communications are those that have been authorized by the executive. From time to time, our Email Communications Representative receives a request from a member to advertise an event that has not been sent to the executive for approval. Please do not send these to Angela Stewart as it is not her job to alert the executive of these requests made by other members. Please contact the president or one of the vice-presidents, if you believe that you have an event that would be of general interest to members or would supply some benefit that would be in the best interest of our District 34 members.

## PLANNING A TRIP

Before planning a trip out of the province or outside of Canada, it is wise to call Johnson Insurance to check on your RTO ERO health insurance coverage.

Changes in your health or in your prescriptions may alter your travel coverage. If an emergency should arise while you are away (after January 1, 2020), contact Global Excel Management Inc. within 48 hours of the emergency, or before medical attention is administered when the situation is non life-threatening. Contact with GEM will ensure that your care is top priority and that the medical expenses for this unforeseen health condition are effectively monitored.

Toll free in Canada/USA:  
1-877-346-1467

Toll free in Mexico:  
01-800-062-4728

Worldwide Collect Call:  
819-780-0647

Johnson Inc.  
RTO ERO Health Benefit  
Plan Administrator

**Service** 1-877-406-9007  
416-920-7248

**Claims** 1-800-638-4753  
905-764-4888

**Website**  
[www.johnson.ca](http://www.johnson.ca)

The answer hidden in the word search on page 36 which might indeed be the prevailing sentiment of the members of RTO District 34 York Region is:

## GLORIOUS RETIREMENT

*34th Story Website*  
**Check our website at**  
**[www.our34thstory.com](http://www.our34thstory.com)**

- For District 34 news,
- For additional photographs of events,
- For links to interesting websites,
- For information about your committees,
- For the District 34 constitution and policies

## Changing Your Name, Address or Phone

The District 34 membership information comes from the Provincial Office. Please contact them about any changes.

### RTO ERO PROVINCIAL OFFICE

416-962-9463  
1-800-361-9888  
FAX 416-962-1061  
Office Hours  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Monday to Friday  
[www.rto-ero.org](http://www.rto-ero.org)

### DISTRICT 34 MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Lori MacDonald-Blundon  
[District34Membership@outlook.com](mailto:District34Membership@outlook.com)  
Questions regarding membership and newsletter mailings may be directed to Lori as well.

### DISTRICT 34 EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

[34thstoryreminders@gmail.com](mailto:34thstoryreminders@gmail.com)  
For change of email address only, NOT residence address changes.

# Newsletter Submissions

Articles are required for consideration for inclusion in future issues. Please keep articles to 500 words or less. A picture is a nice touch. Do you have:

- A memorable teaching experience,
- Special memories of a colleague or student,
- A good book to recommend,
- An account of an unusual holiday,
- An important question,
- Suggestions for the editor,
- Suggestions for district trips or social activities,
- Information you would like to see in the newsletter or
- An issue you would like to raise?

**Email the editor -  
Chris Prefontaine  
7chris.prefontaine@gmail.com**

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINES**  
November 10 for January  
February 10 for April  
July 10 for September

**RETURN UNDELIVERABLE  
CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:  
432 Cunningham Dr.  
Maple, ON L6A 2G6**

