



# 34th STORY

District 34 - York Region

Vol. 34 No. 1 - January 2022



## *Lean on Me*

Creative Pebble Art by Nancy Banks

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**District 34 York Region  
Executive and  
Committee Chair  
Persons  
2021 - 2022**

**PRESIDENT**

Jose Fernandes.....416-618-8869  
president34@districts.rtoero.ca

**PAST PRESIDENT**

Susan Phillips.....905-859-4583  
susanphillips@gmail.com

**FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT**

Bob Sandiford.....289-231-7300  
bob.sandiford@sympatico.ca

**SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT AND  
PROJECT SERVICE TO OTHERS REP.**

Regine Baker.....416-293-3514  
reginebaker@rogers.com

**SECRETARY AND  
EMAIL COMMUNICATION REP.**

Angela Stewart.....905-471-3706  
34thstoryreminders@gmail.com

**TREASURER**

Dan Reynolds  
treasurer34@districts.rtoero.ca

**MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR**

Lori MacDonald-Blundon  
District34Membership@outlook.com

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER**

Ann Evans.....905-830-0407  
annlesleyevans1945@gmail.com

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER**

Craig Lee.....905-884-4957  
c.m.lee@sympatico.ca

**BENEFITS REP.**

Susan Leppington.....905-235-4225  
susanleppington@rogers.com

**GOODWILL REP.**

Betty Tobin.....905-884-8958  
bettytobin75@hotmail.com

**RECRUITMENT CO-CONVENOR**

John Pickett.....647-273-0790  
john.pickett@rogers.com

**RECRUITMENT CO-CONVENOR**

Cindy Ranieri.....905-889-7305  
cindy\_ranieri@hotmail.com

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Chris Prefontaine.....905-471-4624  
7chris.prefontaine@gmail.com

**FOUNDATION REP. AND POLITICAL  
ADVOCACY CO-CONVENOR**

Elaine Adam.....905-898-6050  
feats@rogers.com

**POLITICAL ADVOCACY  
CO-CONVENOR**

Dave Szollosy.....905-722-1088  
daveszol@rogers.com

**SOCIAL CONVENOR**

Ernie Polsoni.....905-773-5814  
ernpol@yahoo.ca

**WEBMASTER**

Grant Dale.....905-508-8164  
gdale@sympatico.ca

## For Your 2022 Calendar

### **Zoom Yoga**

Tuesday, January 4  
 Tuesday, February 1  
 Tuesday, March 1  
 Tuesday, April 5

### **Join Us For a Walk**

Thursday, January 20  
 Wednesday, February 16  
 Thursday, March 4  
 Wednesday, April 6

### **Fall Prevention Workshop**

Saturday, January 15

### **No Exit**

Sunday, January 30 or  
 Friday, February 4

### **Opal's Husband**

Friday, February 4 or  
 Saturday, February 5

### **Tempting Providence**

Wednesday, April 6

### **Lonely Planet,**

Sunday, April 24 or  
 Friday, April 29

### **Adam's Family**

Saturday, April 30



*Jose Fernandes, President*

## President's Message

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What will 2022 bring? Hopefully a more manageable and safer way to live with COVID-19. At the time of writing this message, we are close to the end of 2021. We are very hopeful and somewhat positive about the new year. As a district, we paused many of our activities during the last two years. That means that we did not offer many of the activities that you liked and attended. It has been a tough couple of years. We are looking forward to re-opening and charging a new course. We have missed you. We have missed each other. Time to get back together again.

Your district board executive is cautiously moving toward organizing in person activities. That means walks, Hava Javas, and theater outings etc. will resume. We will have to follow strict health protocols such as proof of vaccination but we are prepared for that. We have also started planning an in-person Annual Meeting and Spring Luncheon to be held on Thursday, May 26, 2022.

This means that we will have elections. Consider putting your name forward to join the District 34 executive. We will be keeping you informed, so please check the newsletters and the District 34 monthly reminders.

National office does have your email, but for monthly district reminders we need you to let Angela Stewart know that you are interested in receiving these reminders. Contact Angela at [34thstoryreminders@gmail.com](mailto:34thstoryreminders@gmail.com) You can also check our website at [our34thstory.com](http://our34thstory.com)

I am very excited about the “bench” project that First Vice-President Bob Sandiford has been working on. This year,

District 34 will provide four benches to be placed along trails in Newmarket, Aurora and King Township. We have many walkers among our members and this is a way of giving back to you and the constituents of the larger community a “rest”. It is also an opportunity to give back to the community in general. Look for additional information in this and future newsletters.

This year, we have also donated on your behalf to the food banks in each of our municipalities. The need to assist those in the communities where we live is greater particularly at the time of the festive season.

I am not sure what awaits us in the new year, but I am confident that better days are ahead. Take good care of yourself and those dear to you.



## RTOERO Community Grant

By Regine Baker

For the next two years (2022 and 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 Community Grants programme.

In each of these years, one local community charity from each District of RTOERO 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.

### How to apply:

In late January, application forms for this grant will be available on the RTOERO website ([rtoero.ca](http://rtoero.ca)). For 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 15, 2022. The District 34 executive will review all submissions and select one to be forwarded to the RTOERO Community Grants Committee for review and approval. All entrants will be notified of the executive's decision.

## Seven Ways to Make the Most of Your RTOERO Insurance Plan

- RTOERO

1) Set up direct deposit.

You can choose to have claim payments deposited into your bank account. To set up direct deposit, submit a VOID cheque to our insurance service administrator. Contact the service administrator at 1-877-406-9007 or email them at [pbclaimsontario@johnson.ca](mailto:pbclaimsontario@johnson.ca) for more information.

2) Set up your account for online claims.

Online submission is easy and convenient. Your first step is to set up your online claims account. Choose 'Register' in the 'New to this' section at

insurance.johnson.ca/. Once registered, bookmark the online claims login page or find it anytime on the 'Claims' page in the 'Insurance' section of the RTOERO website.

3) Submit claims right away and file your receipts.

Develop a habit of submitting claims right away so you don't forget. Claims must be submitted no later than the end of the calendar year following the year in which the expenses were incurred. Set up a place to store your receipts after you've submitted the claims. Photocopies of receipts are acceptable. Like other financial documents, it's best to keep receipts for seven years.

4) Explore your retirement health coverage.

Health insurance can help you stay healthy. It provides peace of mind that your health needs will be taken care of and gives you access to services to help you maintain and optimize your health and well-being. Familiarize yourself with what's covered so you can decide how to use your insurance to best support your health needs.

Summaries of the extended health care plan, dental plan and hospital and convalescent care plan, are available on the RTOERO website at [rtoero.ca/insurance/](http://rtoero.ca/insurance/).

5) Call the claims team before major aids and appliances purchases.

Your plan covers a large variety of aids and appliances, including wigs, hearing aids, CPAP units, orthotics and more. We suggest contacting the claims team before your purchase to review the eligibility and maximums and help you get the best value. Reach the claims team at 416-920-7248 or 1-877-406-9007 or [pbclaimsontario@johnson.ca](mailto:pbclaimsontario@johnson.ca).

6) Carry your RTOERO benefits card with you.

You'll need your benefits card at pharmacies and especially when travelling. It's a good idea to keep it in your wallet at all times, so you have our contact information close at hand.

7) Make sure you have proof of travel dates.

You don't need to let us know when you're travelling, but you do need to make sure you have proof

of your departure and return dates. That could be plane tickets and boarding passes, passport stamp, transaction receipts like gas, hotel or purchase that show travel leaving and returning to your province of residence.

Learn more: read the full article on the RTOERO website at [rtoero.ca/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-your-retirement-health-insurance-plan](http://rtoero.ca/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-your-retirement-health-insurance-plan).

## Plein-Air

*By Ann Evans*

**A** small group of us got together and participated in a plein-air art activity.

Plein-air painting is basically the practice of painting landscapes out-of-doors. It is an activity that began in France in the 1830's.

French impressionist painters such as Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, and Renoir advocated plein-air painting, and much of their work was done outdoors in the diffused light of a large white umbrella. It became popular with many famous artists including the Group of Seven in Canada.

Plein-air is usually a freer, looser rendition of the subject matter. One has to travel light, so consideration must be given to a simpler palette, lightweight materials, portable chairs. Every one brought their painting kits, choice of medium, and chose their own view.

It was nice to paint and chat as we worked. Of course, one does have to be careful that paint brushes don't end up in the river or, such necessary items like a chair doesn't get left at home. (Like mine did!!!)

I think this is an activity to which we can look forward. Hopefully more of us can participate in 2022. Getting together again as an art group will be fun. It will be wonderful to see everyone and interesting to see their work.



## Don't Miss Out

By Angela Stewart

**R**TOERO – District 34 publishes a newsletter three times a year and it is full of many fun and interesting events.

We know that retirement is a busy time and it's hard to keep track of everything, so don't miss out on reminders, last minute events, and special notices. If you would like to keep informed of all the wonderful events that District 34 offer, in the form of a monthly email, please contact Angela at: [34thstoryreminders@gmail.com](mailto:34thstoryreminders@gmail.com).



## From the Editor's Desk

By Chris Prefontaine

**I** hope that this edition of *The 34th Story* finds you well and looking toward a light at the end of that COVID -19 tunnel! The District 34 executive, taking health protocols into consideration, is finally able to

schedule events and activities for our membership. I so look forward to getting together again for our executive meetings or meeting up with friends in a theatre lobby before a play. And imagine... hopefully an annual general meeting and luncheon! Woo Hoo!!

For everyone who sent me a contest ballot to win your ticket to the Spring Luncheon (It will be on May 26 this year!) be sure that I have not forgotten. We will be doing the draw at the next meeting to determine the winner. Of course it has been so long since we started that contest that I will have to remember where I put them... ha, ha, just kidding. I know exactly where they are!

In the last issue, members were asked to submit their works of art for inclusion in *The 34th Story*. I hope you enjoy the showcase of amazing creations that we received. I am awe-struck by the artistic talent among our members. Not only do we have wonderful photographers and talented painters but this month, member Dean Gessie has shared his latest award-winning poem entitled "Terra Australis Incognita".

Our cover image, *Lean on Me* was created by Nancy Banks and yes, those are stones which have been arranged in a shadow box.

With our RTOERO focus on isolation and its devastating effects on many seniors, the message “Lean on Me” seems quite appropriate - even more so during these COVID times.

All art tells a story in some way and a different medium has been chosen for this one. Nancy not only arranges stones into pictures but she also paints on them. You will find her messages of hope placed throughout the pages among the articles. Thank you to everyone who shared their creations providing a bit of light for all to enjoy! May you experience health and good fortune in 2022!



## What Is Elder Abuse

**F**inancial elder abuse is one of the most common forms of elder abuse. It can take many forms – from financial exploitation to criminal fraud.

### Some examples include:

- a door-to-door salesperson persuading an older adult to buy a 92-year old to buy energy-efficient roofing because it will pay for itself over 20 years;
- a friendly seniors centre volunteer who offers to help seniors manage their banking – only to drain the accounts dry;
- a scammer who extorts money from a 75-year old pretending to be a relative in trouble abroad or someone from the tax department;
- a financial advisor who recommends unnecessary trades to increase her fees;
- a child who abuses their power of attorney to finance his lifestyle; and

- a caregiver who gets their client to loan them a large amount of money.

Victims often don't realize or don't want to consider that they've been victimized. When they are aware, they may be too embarrassed to report it or even share their situation with close family members.

**Some of the signs that someone you know is at risk for financial abuse include:**

- out-of-character withdrawals or transfers of funds from bank or investment accounts by an older account holder;
- sudden or large withdrawals or transfers of funds from bank or investment accounts by an attorney or someone claiming to act for the older account holder;
- changes to living arrangements, such as someone unexpectedly moving in and potentially living there rent-free, or the sudden sale of their home;
- efforts by a third party to limit contact with family, friends and advisors;

- refusal by a power of attorney to make the grantor available to confirm instructions; and

- arrival on the scene of a new romantic interest who insists on taking control of their new partner's finances.

**Signs you've been a target of financial abuse:**

- feeling pressured to give or invest money and too-good-to-be-true investment opportunities;
- being forced to sign unfamiliar legal or financial documents, or pressured to change a will or give power of attorney;
- cheques being cashed without your permission or unexpected withdrawals from your accounts;
- unexplained disappearances of possessions and valuables; and
- new people coming into your life who take too much interest in your finances.

Abusers and criminals count on their victims' silence – the sooner a light is shone on their activities, the less harm they can inflict. If you think you may be a

victim, share your concerns with someone you trust who is not closely related to the abuser.

### What to do:

- if an older person tells you someone is taking advantage of them, take their claims seriously, ask questions and offer support;
- if you or someone you know may be a victim of financial elder abuse, contact the appropriate authorities, including local police, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre or Seniors Safety Line at 1-866-299-1011; and
- notify the appropriate financial institutions.

*The information in this article has been reprinted with permission from RTOERO.*



*Nancy Banks*

## Zoom Yoga

*By Angela Stewart*



Let yoga be a part of your healthy lifestyle with classes that will focus on deep breathing, stretching, and creating a sense of calm. You will be able to practice a gentle yoga class from the comfort of your home. No need to travel to a studio, no need to wear a mask, and no need to make payments as District 34 will be covering the cost.

Our instructor, Christina DeFranco, is a 200-hour certified yoga instructor who is currently enrolled in an advanced 300-hour yoga course. She has extensive training in anatomy and is skilled at modifying moves to either a more gentle option or a more advanced one.

Christina enjoys teaching to our mature population, and her understanding of our potential limitations is very helpful. Her

class will be for all levels and all abilities. For more information, feel free to visit her website at [rootedtrewellnessstudio.com](http://rootedtrewellnessstudio.com)

The sessions will take place on the first Tuesday of the month, running from January through April at 7 p.m. Please login five to 10 minutes early, if you are trying Zoom Yoga for the first time, to make sure everything is working.

**Dates:**

Tuesday, January 4th  
 Tuesday, February 1st  
 Tuesday, March 1st  
 Tuesday, April 5th

**Time:** 7 p.m.

Using a web browser enter the following link to sign up for one or more classes: [bit.ly/rto-yoga](http://bit.ly/rto-yoga)

Here is a quick tutorial on HOW to register in case you have trouble figuring out the booking system: [bit.ly/rto-tutorial](http://bit.ly/rto-tutorial)

You will receive an initial email upon registration, and a reminder email one hour prior to the class.

I look forward to “seeing” you in class.

## Congratulations to the Community Grant Recipients

*By Regine Baker*

**D**istrict 34 York Region received the good news in early October that our 2021 application for one of the RTOERO Community Grants, submitted by Ernie Polsoni and John Pickett, had been approved.

The \$2,500 has been used to purchase an electric wheelchair for use by parishioners and community members at Our Lady of the Annunciation Church in Oak Ridges. The pastor of the church, Fr. Peter Lackmanec, offers a heartfelt thank you to RTOERO District 34.

Congratulations and well done!



## Donations to Food Banks by District 34

By Craig Lee

With the rising cost of groceries and the continuing effects of COVID, our food banks and food pantries are facing increasing demand for their services. RTOERO is once again making donations to the nine municipalities that make up York Region. Each of the nine food banks has received a cheque for \$1,000. You are also encouraged if possible to make individual contributions to our food banks either with groceries or monetary donations.

It has been our experience that the cheques are very much appreciated. In general 50% of the need is to help seniors and children.



*Oak Ridges (Richmond Hill)  
St. Vincent de Paul Society's  
President Sandra Garcia accepts  
our donation from executive  
member Craig Lee.*



*Carol Ann Trabert of the King  
Township Food Bank accepts our  
donation from past president,  
Susan Phillips.*



*Political Advocacy Co-Convenor  
Dave Szollosy presents our  
cheque to Cesar Caneo who is  
the Executive Director of the  
Georgina Food Pantry.*

# The Beauty of a Snowflake

*A Water Colour Painting by Ann Evans*

“To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to play out in the snow.” - Aristotle.



*Nancy Banks*

## Join Us For a Walk

*By Ann Evans*

**W**inter is here again! It seems to be safe to resume enjoying our cold weather walks. We have always enjoyed the lively chats and I'm sure we will have lots to say.

Walks in the winter will begin at 10 a.m. To avoid unfavourable walking conditions, we will confine ourselves to the north and south trails of Fairy Lake in Newmarket as these paths are well maintained.

Parking is at the main entrance to Fairy Lake, 500 Water Street, Newmarket (just east of the south end of Main Street.) The days may vary but we will always start at 10 a.m.

### **Dates:**

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Thursday, March 24

Come alone or bring a friend, In case of very inclement weather, please call me to ensure that the walk is still happening:  
905-830-0407.

In the past we have enjoyed a cup of steaming coffee to warm up. Hopefully we will be able to do this again - all health protocols will be followed. I think it is fair to ask that everyone who joins us be vaccinated.

## From Teacher to Writer

*By Dean Gessie*

**M**y career as a poet and a short story writer began the day after I retired from the classroom. Actually, I began preparing for this transition even before I entered the teaching profession.

A long time ago, after graduating with my Master of English degree, I found work in Toronto as an office assistant in an advertising firm, ostensibly to spend my early mornings and evenings writing. After which, I lived for one year in Peru and Ecuador and produced my first novel.

My work was not successful – not commercially, not artistically; but, in hindsight, it was an investment in the future. I was paying it forward, helping someone I

would only become thirty years later. In other words, each and every model of a learning curve starts at zero. The important thing is to start.

I decided to study for a career as an English teacher for two reasons. Firstly, I loved literature and I knew I would love reading and discussing it with my students. Secondly, I thought I could continue my development as a writer in my spare time. My goodness, was I right. And, my goodness, was I wrong.

I spent twenty-five years as Head of English – for the most part – at a small, independent school. And ten years as director of a specialized program in creative writing. Much to my surprise, I did little to no writing because my days and nights were occupied with teaching and with all the related professional tasks. I had been naïve, to say the least. But, for a variety of reasons, I was not disappointed.

I loved working with thousands of students through the years in the study of English texts of all sorts. I was blessed with a family of which any potential husband

and father would dream. And, to be frank, on some level, I knew I couldn't fail again as a writer, if there was no opportunity to try. But that is not to say that teaching did not incubate the writer within me.

Over many years, I conferenced with hundreds of students concerning their poetry, fiction and non-fiction. And over the course of thousands of cooperative decisions, we all learned about how to produce the very best work possible. I was never so proud as when I saw many of them publish their stories and poems in journals and magazines or, in one particular year, when dozens of our senior school students won a national writing contest and hard cover publication of their collected works.

My students provided me with a dizzying number of exemplars of the very finest fiction and poetry. I owed them, and I owe them, a great debt. So, when I got out of the classroom and into my home office, I was ready. Because of my age, my sense of urgency was doubled. How could I have the biggest impact with my

creative writing career and how could I achieve that as quickly as possible? Well, I decided I would set my sights high and, as they say, let the cards fall as they may.

I would enter international contests and compete with some of the very best writers in the world. If you don't aim high, your goals have no lift and no trajectory. As a result, I began writing four or five hours a day. Typically, I would read newspapers online, curate articles of interest, research these and related topics, and trust my imagination, instincts and training to produce unique characters and points of view. And then it happened. One of my stories was a finalist in an international contest in England.

I was shocked, elated and humbled. I'll never forget what my wife said to me, "This is only the beginning." I was fearful of her faith in me. Surely, I couldn't do something like that, again. But she was right and I was as surprised as anyone. Since that moment, I have won or placed in more than one hundred international contests for short stories and poetry. I

have published three novellas and my short story collection, called *Anthropocene*, won an Eyelands Book Award in Greece and the Uncollected Press Prize in Maryland in addition to runner-up in both the Los Angeles and San Francisco Book Festival Competitions.

Most recently, I won the Editors' Prize from the Spoon River Poetry Review in Illinois, first place from among 1200 entries. The prize includes \$1500.00 and travel costs and accommodations in the spring of 2022 to read my poetry at a gala event.

I have been truly blessed to pursue with good success my two, chief professional passions. And I wish as much and more for all my retired colleagues.



*Nancy Banks*

## RTOERO Foundation Webinar Report

By Elaine Adam

*Practical Ways to Address the Growing Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation in Older Adults*

This October the Foundation's fourth annual campaign to focus on social isolation hosted a webinar featuring well-known geriatrician, Dr. Samir Sinha. Dr. Sinha is the Director of Geriatrics at Sinai Health and UHN, as well as the National Institute on Aging's Director of Health Policy Research. He is a professor at the University of Toronto's Medical School, is a member of the National Seniors Council and is leading a new seniors standards initiative. He has also authored a policy paper for RTO through a grant for the NIA.

Dr. Sinha defines social isolation as an objective measurable lack of contacts, such as family, friends and neighbours. Loneliness is an undesirable subjective experience, related to unfulfilled intimate and social needs. A person may be lonely or isolated or both.

In a 2019 pre-pandemic Angus poll, 62% of Canadians wanted more time with others, 14% felt their social life was very good. 33% said they didn't have someone to help financially, 18% felt they didn't have someone to rely on for emotional support in a crisis. 49% of those who called an ambulance were lonely, 37% were very lonely.

Older adults may have health and mobility issues and face the following risks: over the age of eighty, no children or family, changing family structures, transportation inaccessibility, low income and living alone. One in four lives alone, 24% have three or more health issues, 350 000 have low income, 43% living in retirement or long term care home are lonely. 51% of those under fifty five and 40% over fifty five are lonely. 67% of Canadians feel isolation hurts health and well being.

Older people have fewer but deeper friendships. They have endured much during their lives and are resilient. COVID made things worse. During COVID, 70% of those under fifty five and 55% of those over fifty five suffered social isolation.

By 2031, over 25% of Canadians, or 9 million people, will be over sixty five. The consequences of social isolation and loneliness are myriad: poor health, behaviour leading to poor health outcomes, more drug and alcohol use, mental health problems, a 65% increase in dementia, early deaths due to suicide, and accidents. These problems equate with smoking fifteen cigarettes a day.

All of this means excess health care, longer stays in hospital and increased health care costs. Other countries are dealing with this now. The United Kingdom has a Ministry of Loneliness and there is AGE-UK, a charity set up to start community based support.

Japan engages seniors in activities and connects them to activities and information through “The Basic Act of Measures for the Aging Society”. Australia has the Coalition to End Loneliness, targeting government and community programs that integrate university and community volunteers.

New Zealand provides financial security, health, housing, and social connections through

the Loneliness New Zealand charity. The United States has the Experience Corps, where retired people are linked to children in school.

Canada has provincial and federal programs. The federal government has the New Horizons for Seniors Program, providing one time financing of up to \$25,000 for an event. British Columbia provides transportation for seniors, Nova Scotia has the Shift Plan for Seniors, Ontario has the Seniors Community Grant Program, Quebec has a Five Year Action Plan.

The Social Prescribing Project encourages doctors to prescribe activities, Home Share Canada has a successful and expanding program of intergenerational home-sharing, RTO’s Foundation provides grants for studies and activities, Hamilton’s Seniors Isolation Impact Plan involved 200 organizations and businesses over three years, This project was a grantee and follow up studies showed that people became more active and felt less lonely. It is important to evaluate the programs and decide what works

both physically and mentally. Society must be made aware of isolation and its consequences.

More research, evidence collection and mapping should be done. Access to information and public attention is needed and cities must be designed and retrofitted to be age friendly. Canada needs a National Strategy with the following points to be included: clear definitions, raising awareness and promoting best tactics, telling the public and government of the negative health impacts and costs if it is not dealt with, research to learn more and to evaluate what works, inclusion and accessibility, more resources for existing organizations.

An effective use of research and development is to use other countries' successful ideas, older adults should have input, quality of life and care are needed in long term care homes for residents' emotional and social well being, modifiable health problems should be identified. Go to [nationalseniorsstrategy.ca](http://nationalseniorsstrategy.ca) for more information.

## RTOERO Health Benefits and COVID-19

*By Susan Leppington*

**M**embers have emergency medical coverage, including coverage for COVID-19, while traveling, as long as you did not have any symptoms within 90 days prior to leaving.

This coverage includes, but is not limited to hospital accommodation, physician charges and prescriptions.

With regard to trip cancellation, our travel plan 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.

For up-to-date information on travelling during the global pandemic, please visit RTOERO's pandemic preparedness page at [rtoero.ca/prepared](http://rtoero.ca/prepared).

## Terra Australis Incognita

*By Dean Gessie*

Winner of the UN-aligned International Poetry Competition  
Helsinki, Finland

and those black fellas believed these white fellas spirits of their ancestors (pale time travellers of everywhen) and those black fellas received venereal, opium, rum and pox and they returned witchetty grubs, honey ants and fruit bats and the white fellas killed no one with their guns because the new land was called terra nullius (land belonging to no one) and it was fair to say that these white fellas did not include themselves nor irony in their census taking and the captain struck the collarbone of the elder (he that had helped himself to the white fellas shovel) and the aborigine elder embraced the captain and spread his arm to indicate everything he could see and the captain surrendered his shovel of wrought iron just as black fellas shared their axes of polished greenstone and so it was with ropes and stakes and sacred land; these white fellas pushed the black fellas further from the sea, scattered burial totems of coral, red basket and seagull feather and there was bile and spleen between the groups and dead black fellas (females and young, too) and the aborigine elder pushed the collarbone of the captain and the captain knew it was wrong to survey and deed what wasn't theirs and he was ashamed and he agreed that his voice was no greater than the magpie or the blue winged kookaburra and he negotiated to settle the interior space of terra nullius (that ground that was less hospitable like them) and handcuffs and leg irons fell from the poors and politicals and these made a mountain of metal where everyone was free to piss and the captain cast off his blue jacket and white waistcoat and humbled himself to learn yellomundi (or storyteller) and butbut (or heart) and he was granted initiation by they that met and decided he was ten years old and he was painted with red clay and fat of the wallroo and wombat and he received cuts to his chest, arms, shoulders and buttocks and sand in each produced voluminous scars and the penis of this white fella was split with a stone knife and a front tooth was knocked out to mark him as community and he danced the tree lion climbing

ripping and pulling but laying in peace with brother and sister alike and he sang the song lines that trek creation and he blew didjerry didjerry through termite eucalyptus, pressed his lips to beeswax and shook out grins and guffaws and the black fellas did not call him apostle but he returned his blind eye seeing to the white sails of sirius of the orion and he stayed the cannons and six-pounder guns and his voice was dreamtime and ancestral beings and why it is that men and women walk upright and those that saw and heard were ashamed and they pushed the collarbone one of the other and they agreed against greed to call this place “the unknown land to the south” and it remains so to this day

## Freedom - Snowy Owl

A 10 x 14 oil painting on gallery wrapped canvas by Donna Greenstein

The work was inspired from a public domain image by James Bekkers of the bird combined with a photo of the landscape from a nearby farm.



## Volunteer Opportunity

*By Akashdeep Dhillon*

*-Nanny Angels*

**T**he Nanny Angel Network (NAN) is a charitable organization aiming to lessen the impact of cancer on families through specialized in-home and virtual childcare. They envision a world where no mother must choose between her life-saving treatment and caring for her children.

Currently, they provide service for families in regions such as the GTA, Peel, Durham, Halton, and Kingston. They provide free, specialized in-home relief and childcare support for mothers who have been diagnosed with cancer, for those requiring palliative care and for families requiring additional relief during the bereavement period. Nanny Angels hope to lessen the impact of cancer on families, by engaging children in enjoyable, age-appropriate activities to help reduce any stress or anxiety they may be experiencing due to their mom's illness or death.

By visiting weekly, building trust, and having fun, Nanny Angels

help mothers gain the confidence and peace of mind to rest or attend appointments, knowing their children are cared for and supported by knowledgeable and compassionate volunteers.

Volunteers receive specialized training - including children's grief and bereavement and receive the support of NAN's Child Life Specialist throughout their volunteering time.

Due to COVID, they have extended their support to include virtual programs such as Homework Angel and Activity Angel. (The minimum age for their virtual programs is 16 years old.)

Homework Angels and Activity Angels provide two hours of weekly virtual support through video conferencing. Both virtual programs provide children with normalcy, routine, and engagement with a safe and trusted adult.

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information please visit [nannyangelnetwork.com](http://nannyangelnetwork.com).

## Fall Prevention Workshop

*By Angela Stewart*

**O**ur yoga instructor, Christina DeFranco, has developed a very important fall prevention workshop for our members. You will learn the biomechanics of fall prevention, daily exercises you can do to reduce fall risks, and how to fall safely (if you trip or slip). This workshop will be presented via Zoom.

**Date:**

Saturday, January 15, 2022

**Time:** 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Here is an overview of what we'll be covering:

1. Causes and Risk Factors for Falls
2. How to Fall Safely
3. How to Get Up If You Do Fall
4. Exercises to Proactively Prevent Falls
5. Proactive Lifestyle Steps to Prevent Falls

We recommend taking notes (if that is how you learn), or you are welcome to just absorb the information!

Use of a yoga mat and chair is also recommended as we will be practicing some exercises.

Christina has kindly offered to run this workshop free of charge. Please plan to attend.

Use the following link to sign up: [rootedtrewellnessstudio.com/fall-prevention-workshop-rto](https://rootedtrewellnessstudio.com/fall-prevention-workshop-rto).

You will receive an email of confirmation right away, and a reminder one hour prior to the workshop. If you have any trouble, contact Christina at [hello@rootedtrewellnessstudio.com](mailto:hello@rootedtrewellnessstudio.com).



## Path to Wellness For Older People

By Elaine Adam

**V**ibrant Voices held its third webinar of the fall on November 3, featuring

Isobel MacKenzie, Seniors Advocate for the Province of British Columbia, and Dr. Kerileigh Cassidy MDRCPC, a psychiatrist and pioneer in new areas for treatment of dementia.

In 2014, the BC government mandated an office to analyze seniors' issues, and make recommendations to the government and service providers to address systemic issues.

There was a call for paid sick leave and more staff in LTC homes to prevent COVID deaths; the pandemic changed patient care due to the fact that that people were released from hospital too early; and there was a concern with increased anti-psychotic drug use by LTC homes.

Ms. MacKenzie shared BC statistics that mirror the rest of Canada. 93% of people 65 + and 72% of 85 year olds live independently, 10% of 85 year

olds live in retirement homes and 15% of those 85 and older live in LTC homes. The median income is \$29,500 and many do not have pensions. Most people will remain independent.

Under the age of 65, 0% are in LTC homes, less than 1% have dementia and 1% have complex health issues; among all groups over 65, 4% are in LTC, 6% have dementia and 19% have complex health issues. Of 65-84 year olds, 3% have dementia, 2% are in LTC and 17% have complex health issues. The last group, over the age of 85, causes the numbers of the second group to be skewed. 15% of this oldest age group is in LTC, 20% have dementia and 35% have complex health issues.

Ms. MacKenzie's comment was that most seniors will "keep their marbles" and most will not be faced with these complex health issues. A concern this past summer was the heat dome in BC, causing over 800 seniors to die, many of whom lived alone in apartments in isolated circumstances. Isolated seniors living alone suffer from falls and medical emergencies that can be missed for hours or days.

The federal government provides income supplements but the provincial governments have the responsibility of looking after seniors. New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador are the other provinces with an official Seniors Advocate. For more information, go to [seniorsadvocatebc.ca](http://seniorsadvocatebc.ca)

Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy spoke on how to thrive in retirement. A common fantasy is escapism with no responsibilities. On the other hand, people fear that life will be boring and dull and that they will be lonely and isolated. There is a great deal of stress due to global political and natural realities. Family members are aging, adult children are now caregivers for two generations, and older people are developing chronic conditions.

We must limit screen time, put ourselves on a media diet and turn off media thirty minutes before going to bed. To thrive during difficult times, we need to grow and flourish and to progress towards or realize a goal. Do we have the tools?

Dr. Cassidy established the Fountain of Health (FOH) to

offer the tools and training to promote well-being. The Wellness Continuum moves us out of our comfort level or “false wellness”. The brain’s neuroplasticity allows the brain to continue to develop. 20% of our brain power is genetic. We need to concentrate on optimism, positive, kind and compassionate thoughts, good health habits, healthy relationship habits, and engage in new interests and brain challenges. All of this will increase mental flow.

Establishment of a strong value system and emotional habits, how we relax and how we deal with stressful situations is important. Positive outlook can add seven and a half years to a life. Happiness is independent of money or ethnicity. It is caused by generosity, social engagement, gratitude, compassion, kindness, optimism and good citizenship. Self-esteem is too tied to accomplishments.

Dr. Cassidy has worked with doctors experiencing burnout from the stress of COVID. She has a three step approach: do a self assessment, set a goal (make it small), and track progress. There will be a cognitive ripple effect, an “I can do it!” attitude.

She has trained over 2000 clinicians to use it with their patients and over 80% of patients completed some successes.

At age 85, the body might still be functioning but the brain starts to fade. It is important for someone to take their time when their thought process slows down.

Social engagement is different for different people and they must be allowed to choose where to live. It is wrong to assume what an older person wants. To meet the needs of an ethnic community, it is important to first dialogue to learn about the culture and to create activities and opportunities based on this. We should look to Indigenous Communities, who value age. Ageism must be changed.

Dr. Cassidy has a wellness app which can be found at [wellnessapp.ca](http://wellnessapp.ca). Her website is [fountainofhealth.ca](http://fountainofhealth.ca). RTO has Chime In which is an online social discussion group on Wednesdays from 1 to 2 p.m. All are invited to participate. Go to the RTO Foundation website and register there. RTOERO is also a participant in the UN Study of Longevity.

## District 34 Distinguished Member Award

*By Regine Baker*

Now is the time to think about recognizing an active District 34 York Region colleague by nominating him/her for the Distinguished Member Award. This award is given to District 34 members, not currently serving on the 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 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.

For 2022, submissions may be sent to Regine Baker at [reginebaker@rogers.com](mailto:reginebaker@rogers.com).

# Winter Stream

*Painting By Dawn Stanojev*



## Oak Ridges Moraine Webinars

*By Ann Evans*

The Oak Ridges Moraine protects 60 properties, totaling 4,480 acres of precious habitat, and they are working to protect more which include sensitive habitats and nature reserves for wild and at risk species that live in this area. They want to expand public green spaces where people can bike, hike, and ski.

In September, Sheila Colla, an assistant professor of Environmental and Urban Change at York University, spoke about bees native to this area. She is a local, native pollinator expert and gave many ideas as to how we may identify and support our local bees. In a national geographic poll it was found that there is huge support for bees and butterflies.

Conserving wild bees would be beneficial for agriculture as there would be an increase in quality and weight of the yield. The threats to bees survival include climate change, invasive species, pesticide use and habitat loss. It was suggested that an important

way to support the health of bees was to plant native plants, especially early flowering shrubs. There were several illustrations of the various bees including Leaf Cutter bees, Mining bees and Sweat bees. Interestingly native bees dive into the ground, are solitary, cannot sting and come in a variety of colours. Even more surprising to me was that none make honey!

In October, Aileen Barclay presented an interesting topic entitled Southern Ontario Tree Talk. She informed us of many interesting facts about common trees in this area, their benefits and how we may identify them, to keep them and the environment healthy. Some benefits include the provision of shade and protection from the wind. Trees defuse heavy rain and improve air quality.

Most interestingly, they improve soil structure and send chemical signals to each other which supports struggling trees. Surprisingly, studies have also shown that children who study trees and nature do better on tests. There are also many birds, insects and mammals that benefit from

trees for either all, or part, of their life. Aileen also gave numerous ways of how to identify many trees.

In November, Kristen Martyn, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, was the presenter who persuaded us that Birding is not just for the summer! Leaves aren't the only thing to change in the fall – birds can change colours too! This change in behaviour can make the fall an especially fun time for birding.

The change in colour of birds depends on a couple of things. Molting occurs after the young birds have left the nest in a less than pristine condition and the adult birds want to freshen their plumage. Also, the coloured plumage is no longer needed after breeding as they now no longer need to attract the opposite sex.

Migration does depend on the weather. Some migrant birds like hawks gather in large groups, wait for good weather and fly only during the day to take advantage of thermals. There are also small birds, such as sparrows and thrushes that only fly long distances at night. They land

to rest and feed during daylight hours. Incredibly, there are also small birds that fly non-stop over incredibly long stretches of water.

Some birds return earlier than others as they are competitive in finding the best habitat and finest partner with which to mate!

Kristen identified many species that we might see in our area even in the depths of winter. You may be interested to read more on the above webinars as well as many others by logging into the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust site.



*Nancy Banks*

# Fall Federal Election

By Dave Szollosy

As you know, RTOERO does not support specific political parties and never endorses specific candidates. We do however, have a strong Political Advocacy Committee that lends support for RTO's three priority issues. They are: Senior's Strategy, Geriatric Healthcare and Environmental Stewardship.

In advance of the fall federal election, RTOERO District 34 ran the ad below in each of the nine York Region municipality's community newspapers. The main action themes of our organization are highlighted in the ad.

**Be the voice that helps change Canada for the better**

Write to your local candidate to ask how they plan to act on policies that support every Canadian, at any age.

**Speak up for 3 issues**

**Seniors strategy**

- Transition long-term care with national standards
- Fight against through increased awareness
- Help older adults living in poverty

**Geriatric healthcare**

- Implement national public drug coverage
- Develop a concrete aging-in-place plan
- Support geriatric training for all healthcare professions

**Environment stewardship**

- Actively reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Protect our water and ensure its safety
- Cut waste and improve recycling initiatives

Let your candidates know what you expect for your vote in the September 20 election.

Speak up today at [vibrantvoices.ca/federal](http://vibrantvoices.ca/federal)

**RTOERO**

# Exit by Jean-Paul Sartre

By Craig Lee

Theatre Aurora  
Inez, Estelle and Cradeau are locked up together for eternity in one hideous room in Hell. The windows are bricked up, there are no mirrors, and there is no exit. The torture here is not of the rack and fire, but of the burning humiliation of each soul as it is stripped of its pretenses by the cruel curiosity of the damned. A witty and biting dark comedy for the ages.

“A phenomenon of the modern theatre” - The New Republic

There are two dates from which to choose. Please select one:

**Date:** Sunday, January 30, 2022

**Time** 2 p.m.

OR

**Date:** Friday, February 4, 2022

**Time:** 8 p.m.

**Location:**

150 Henderson Drive, Aurora (south end of Aurora west off Yonge St.)

**Cost:** \$20

Please place your order by  
January 14, 2022

Make your cheque out to  
**RTOERO District 34** and send it  
along with your registration form  
on page 49 to:

Craig Lee  
21 Lippincott Court  
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 7M5

All York Region Public Health  
COVID protocols will be  
followed.

Tickets may be picked up at  
the box office on the day of the  
performance. Acknowledgements  
will be emailed upon receiving  
the registration form.



## Walking Speed and Healthy Aging

*By Susan Leppington*

**I**n our Heart Health webinar  
led by Olivia Greenspan  
last June, Dr. Greenspan  
mentioned that walking speed  
and gait length is an important

indicator of healthy aging.

Mobility - being able to move  
easily and without undue  
effort - has a large impact on  
our lives regardless of age, but  
as we get older it becomes an  
essential indicator of our overall  
health. Indeed, there is research  
evidence that how you walk and  
how fast you can walk may be  
important new vital signs. It is  
known that slower walking speed  
is connected with aging in all  
people and is a dependable risk  
factor for disability, falls and  
cognitive decline.

We need to strengthen our body  
structures used in walking. We  
also need to practice walking  
while doing different activities  
(chatting, listening to music, etc.)  
which improves the control the  
brain has on our walking and  
makes our walking more efficient.

There is scientific evidence that  
improvements in gait speed  
over 1 year were associated with  
improved survival 8 years later  
on.

Walking speed can be measured  
in two ways. One, where you are  
walking at your normal self-  
selected speed and two, when you  
are told to walk as quickly as you  
can.

McMaster University's Optimal Aging website offers instructions for a personal 10-meter-walk test that you can use to judge how your speed and gait measure up. Search walking speed under Blog Posts. [mcmasteroptimalaging.org](http://mcmasteroptimalaging.org)

Be safe and go slowly as you begin to speed up.



*Nancy Banks*

## York Communities For Public Education

*By Elaine Adam*

October was a busy month for members of YCFPE. On Thanksgiving weekend, they hosted their Fall Fairness booth at the Woodbridge Fall Fair, which gave them an opportunity to talk to parents and students about the stress that our education system is under and, in particular, the problems with hybrid learning.

The Catholic board has opted to have online teachers in the

elementary panel teach those students who wish to remain at home and continue to learn online. The classroom teachers are able to concentrate totally on the students who are with them in their classrooms. The Public board on the other hand has the classroom teacher teaching both online students and those in the classroom at the same time. Both boards have the hybrid model in the secondary panel.

For Halloween, Hybrid Horror Stories was established on multiple media platforms, featuring short videos of students, parents and teachers telling their stories of life during hybrid. There were 24,000 impressions and it spread to Peel Region and Toronto.

In mid-October, an online discussion among students, parents and educators allowed them to share their experiences with hybrid and it brought out the inequities, mental anguish and disruption to education that this model causes.

The next activity being planned is participating in one of the York Region winter fairs. YCFPE is

a collaboration of interested students, parents, teachers and other education workers in York Region. The three areas of concern are the hybrid model, safe learning, and cuts to education. For more information, go to the website: [yorkcommunitiesfored.ca](http://yorkcommunitiesfored.ca).

## Opal's Husband

*By Craig Lee*

Newmarket Stage Company

**O**pal's Husband is a full-length hilarious comedy... part of John Patrick's popular "OPAL" series about the lovable and irrepressible Opal Kronkie – a colourful, middle-aged woman with a bit of a hoarding problem.

Bent as usual on doing good deeds, Opal tries to round up a husband for her best-friend Rosie by answering an ad placed by "Mister Handsome" – who, when he shows up, proves to be a ninety-five-year-old escapee from a nursing home. As expected, complications ensue, and Opal reluctantly agrees to marry him in order to keep him from the clutches of his scheming daughter.

There are two dates from which to choose. Please select one:

**Date:** Friday, February 4, 2022

**Time** 8 p.m.

OR

**Date:** Saturday, February 5, 2022

**Time:** 2 p.m.

**Location:**

Newmarket Royal Canadian Legion  
707 Srigley St., Newmarket

**Cost:** \$20.00

Please place your order by  
January 14, 2022.

Make your cheque out to  
**RTOERO District 34** and send it  
along with your registration form  
on page 49 to:

Craig Lee  
21 Lippincott Court  
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 7M5

Tickets may be picked up on the  
day of the performance at box  
office table. All York Region  
Public Health protocols will be  
followed. Acknowledgements will  
be emailed upon receiving the  
registration form.

## Cake Mountain

*An 18 x 24 Acrylic inspired by the painter's son Dennis who is an avid rock climber and cake lover.*

*By Melissa Sherman*



## Helpful Hint

*By Susan Leppington*

If you need to telephone RTOERO's main office for any reason (e.g. change of address, health benefits, etc.) here's a suggestion. On the automated answering system, first make your choice of language and then select option two for Member Services. This team of caring, knowledgeable professionals will direct your call to the person most able to help you. Explaining your concern or question to one of the Member Services team will save you time and possible frustration.

## Saving The Forest- Saving Us

*By Elaine Adam*

**R**TO-ERO's Political Advocacy Committee's Vibrant Voices Program hosted a webinar by Dr. Diana Beresford-Kroeger on October 13 2021. Dr. Beresford-Kroeger is a world famous author with PHD's in medical biochemistry and botany, and was awarded a Doctor of Laws degree from Carlton University for her work in Forest Medicine. She has also been honoured as one of the twenty-five female explorers of Canada.

Dr. Beresford-Kroeger opened with an ancient Irish environmental greeting. She stated that climate change is linked to COVID and advised us to eat salmon twenty-four hours before receiving a booster shot, with the same advice to eat organic garlic because it prevents clotting.

Sixty-four percent of our medicine comes from trees because they have developed antiviral components. The leaves of the sassafras albidum tree may be used for many medicinal

purposes, including reducing high fevers. Dr. Beresford-Kroeger suggested crushing the leaves and breathing in the essence.

We should look for white pine with its bundles of five needles, and walk around it with open coats, without hats or gloves, to absorb its essence. This will provide protection for our immune systems for a month. Breathe by a weeping willow for fifteen minutes and it will help cure mental health problems, which have increased due to COVID.

Ancient cultures considered the yew to have medical compounds. Eat four or five black walnuts, which contain three essential fatty acids, for brain, body and mental health. Balsam poplar was known as the medicine stick of the Cree. Tree leaves possess many nutrients including iron, which needs to be moved to oceans for the health of the oceans. The Japanese have a saying, "If you want to catch a fish, plant a tree."

Einstein studied light and found that it moved in a wave like water but he didn't know why.

He discovered that light lands on a leaf, bounces on the other leaves and provides what plants need to grow. Quantum physics occurs, oxygen and carbon are being separated. Oxygen goes into the atmosphere and carbon is absorbed into the tree. This carbon is what the tree needs to grow. Take trees down and the result is climate change.

The Celts saw trees as sacred and protected. They and Canada's Indigenous Peoples have common legends and similar cultures, languages and customs, suggesting an ancient connection.

Trees work on DNA which is similar to ours. The planet has a unity in itself, which is green and living. The carbon ratio has been under control because of this balance. Trees conduct water and influence the weather pattern. There are five huge aquifers in the world but water is disappearing. The Amazon Rainforest, the Lungs of the Planet, is being depleted at a rapid rate. She predicted that the next war will be fought over water.

Dr. Beresford-Kroeger urged us to contact our politicians

who need our support because of the power and influence of developers, that the "Church of the Almighty Dollar" is supplanting the "Cathedral of Nature". She gave some positive examples of local involvement being successful in the protection of forests, in Ottawa, British Columbia and Halifax. Clear cutting should never be allowed.

Write letters, attend meetings, involve students in school, lobby councils for tree bylaws. It is important to look after native forests. Biodiversity must occur or our immune systems will weaken even more. Cancer is a virus and carbon feeds it. Carbon dioxide buildup around the planet traps carbon, with the result being oxygen deprivation and heat problems. Women will not be able to carry babies for forty weeks without oxygen.

Rich Prophet, chair of our Board, reminded us of our white papers on the environment, which are on our website. Ontario's MPP's have been told that we are upset with the new Conservation Act, which removes powers from local municipalities and conservation authorities, putting decision

making power in the hands of the Ontario government instead. The Ontario Teachers Pension Plan has a responsible investment plan.

In closing, Dr. Beresford-Kroeger emphasized the importance to our health of forest bathing, walking in the forest on a regular basis. She listed some of the books that she has written; “To Speak for the Trees”, “The Sweetness of a Simple Life” and “The Global Forest” are a few of the titles. She has a documentary, “Call of the Forest, The Forgotten Wisdom of Trees”. Her website is [dianaberesford-kroeger.com](http://dianaberesford-kroeger.com)

All webinars may be viewed on the Vibrant Voices website.

## Tempting Providence

*By Craig Lee*

A Curtain Club Production  
**M**yra Bennett delivered more than 700 babies, extracted at least 5,000 teeth, set broken limbs, performed kitchen table operations by lamp light and was known throughout Newfoundland and Labrador as “Florence Nightingale of the North.”

This is a wonderful, heart-felt play about a pioneering legend.

**Date:** Wednesday, April 6, 2022

**Time:** 8:00 p.m..

**Location:** Curtain Club Theatre, 400 Newkirk Rd. Richmond Hill (corner of Newkirk Rd. and Elgin Mills Rd.)

**Cost:** \$20.00

Please place your order by March 24, 2022.

Make your cheque out to **RTOERO District 34** and send it along with your registration form on page 49 to:

Craig Lee

21 Lippincott Court

Richmond Hill, ON L4C 7M5

Tickets may be picked up on the night of the performance at the RTO table in the lobby after 7:15 p.m.. Acknowledgements will be emailed upon receiving the registration form.

All COVID York Region Public Health protocols will be followed.

## Gliding - Short-Eared Owl

*A 22 x 28 oil painting on hardboard.*

*The artist's rendition of a public domain photo by Richard Lee*

*Are not owls on everyone's list of beautiful animals?*

*By Donna Greenstein*



## Building an Elder Care System That Actually Cares

By Elaine Adam

**R**TOERO's Political Advocacy Vibrant Voices program hosted a webinar by Andre Picard, noted expert on Senior Care in Canada, on September 15, 2021. His talk focused on the content of his new book, *Neglected No More: The Urgent Need to Improve the Lives of Canada's Elders in the Wake of a Pandemic*.

In a national survey, 85-90% of people stated that they do not want to go into a Long Term Care (LTC) home. Over 18,000 people have died from COVID in these homes and in horrible conditions. In addition, there was collateral damage to physical and mental health to residents, families and staff. Families trust these places but were not allowed in and felt betrayed by the lack of legislation to protect the homes. Three to four person ward rooms, poor air quality and lack of staff exacerbated the problem and residents lacked basic care, such as toileting and bathing. Patients, who were safe in hospital, were

returned to these unsafe homes. Any social contract to care for the most vulnerable had been ignored. Results of all of this have included inquiries and lawsuits.

We seem to have a problem with Ageism in Canada. Other countries didn't have the deaths even though the fastest growing demographic is the elderly. Their philosophy is that elders are valued and have a place in society.

Where is our public policy? Policies must mirror today's needs and seniors must be part of the consultation. Every Canadian needs the right care at the right place at the right time. Quality of life is essential and must be protected. The generation who gave us Medicare now needs it. Enough studies have been done, action is required.

Canada has over 400,000 seniors in institutions; twice what is needed and a high number compared to other countries, who average just 7% of those over 65 in care.

LTC is not part of our health care system. Medicare looks at some

medical needs but not enough. The goal should be to stay at home as long as possible. Shift money from LTC to home care and home assistance. LTC should be a last resort, and should be small, homey homes, integrated into society and near schools.

Money should be invested in staffing for four hours of care and this care is needed immediately. More nurses are needed, standards of care must be established. The emphasis must shift from profit-centred care to patient-centred care.

Every problem has been solved in pilot projects so the answers are there. Just scale it up. Clarity on medicare funding is needed. The conditions of workers are the conditions of care. Currently, the unofficial pay scale sees hospital workers making the most money, followed by those in LTC and home care is at the bottom. Pay should be universal, including benefits.

The countries with the best record during COVID are Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand, due to lower virus numbers in the community, good labour policies

so staff do not travel from home to home, and the fact that homes do not have ward rooms.

Andre suggested that for-profit companies could build and own the buildings but should not be delivering care; it should be a separate component delivered by non-profit organizations and different government levels.

There are more pediatricians than geriatricians and there should be a conscious effort to change this. Respite care must be provided for the 800,000 full time care givers. There is currently no oversight for anyone calling themselves PSW and whether there has been any training. Families need training too. Training should have basic standards.

A Bill of Rights is needed for personal care givers. Ontario did not spend any of the \$2.7 billion from the COVID response program in the first quarter of the year; seniors care is spread over five ministries. There should be a dedicated seat in the Cabinet for Seniors Care, centralizing everything.

NORC's, Naturally Occurring

Retirement Communities, have evolved, where seniors have moved into the same apartment buildings. Home care and other activities could be coordinated to maximize supports and minimize costs and travel for the providers.

In the 1980's, Denmark established living standards that provided elders with home care and care homes that look and operate like homes. They are built near schools and day cares, with regular interactions. Traffic lights are adjusted. Dementia villages are designed to consist of small homes with community buildings and activities, allowing freedom of movement for the residents. Norway and Finland have successful policies that adjust the cost of room and board to income so care is universal.

Rich Prophet, Chair of our Board, outlined that which RTOERO has been advocating. Ontario needs to establish a Seniors Advocate, as B.C. has done. Isabel MacKenzie has changed elder care for the better in that province. Money should be spent on keeping people at home, not on building more homes. A United Nations Rights for Older

People is needed.

Jim Grieve, our CEO, added that we are advocating for pharmacare and a Seniors Strategy for Canada. We liaise with other seniors organizations across the country. There are advocacy questions in our three white papers on our website, *National Seniors Strategy*, *Environmental Stewardship and Seniors Health*.

He described Radical Resthomes, small intergenerational homes, and brought up another example, homes run by a specific ethnic group. He asked the question, are LTC homes rated?

In closing, Andre reminded us that we must keep hammering to get governments to act. The language of any government is money. There is real advantage in investing in elder care. It keeps women and immigrants in the economy. There are more cost efficient and beneficial ways to deliver care to seniors.



*Nancy Banks*

## Red Winter Sky

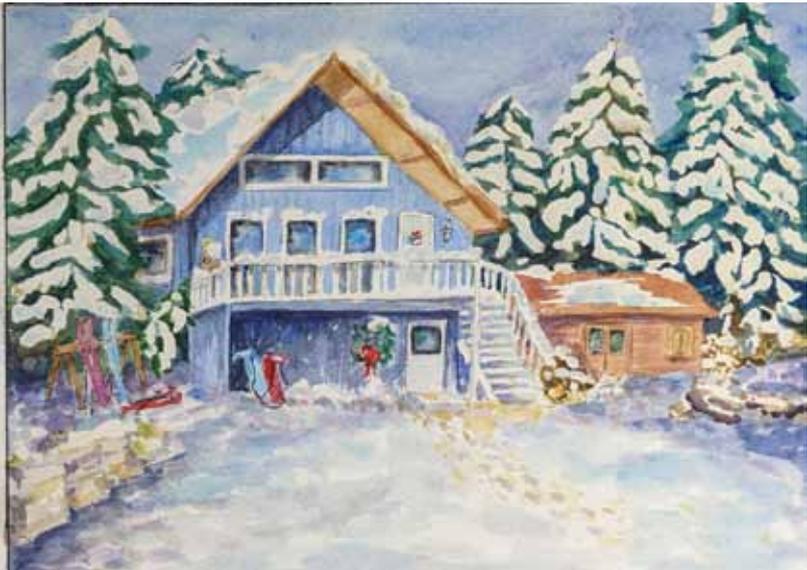
*A Watercolour Painting By Ellen Herbert*



## Snow Covered Chalet

*A Watercolour Painting By Ann Evans*

“Let Us Love Winter” - Pietro Areti



## Welcome New Members

*By Lori MacDonald-Blundon*

Since our last newsletter was printed, the national 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:

Theresa Altomare  
 Pearl Amodeo  
 Dianne Beech  
 Danielle Bergevin  
 Tracey Borg  
 Olga Butch  
 Elizabeth Clarke  
 John De Lacey  
 Kathy DeFranco  
 Sandra Dickey  
 Susan Elliott-Johns  
 Andrea Emerson  
 Douglas Evans  
 Jane Fieldus  
 Melanie Fintelman  
 Farida Govani

Joanne Jansen  
 Nicole Liberty  
 Anita Normandeau  
 Walter Ozog  
 Sonja Schroedter  
 Sandra Slosel  
 Valerie Taylor  
 Matthew Thompson  
 Barbara Wilson

## 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.**

Salvatore Amodeo  
 Shirley Brown  
 Janice Brownlee  
 Patricia Donegan  
 Paul-Henri Duchesne  
 George Huff  
 Rosetta Iulianetti  
 Carol Kettlewell  
 Anu Lellep  
 Joanne Leroux  
 Patricia Mercer  
 Glenda Mercer  
 Wendy Quance  
 Allan Tripp  
 Roy Wilson

## Save The Date Lonely Planet

*By Craig Lee*

**T**heatre Aurora will be presenting the play, “Lonely Planet” by Steven Dretz in April.

Jody is in his forties and runs a map store. Not one for the outside world, he stays in his store all the time. His friend Carl has been bringing chairs of dead friends into Jody’s store and tries to convince Jody it is not only okay to leave the store but also that he must take responsibility for his life.

District 34 is reserving tickets for April 24 at 2 p.m. and April 29 at 8 p.m. Order forms will be available in the next issue of this magazine.

## Save The Date The Addam’s Family

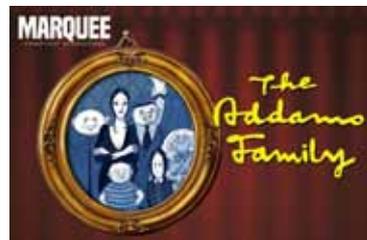
*By Craig Lee*

**T**he Marquee Theatrical Theatre Company will be presenting the musical, “The Addams Family” by Andrew

Lippa, Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice in late April.

The Addams Family is a comical feast that embraces the wackiness in every family, features an original story and it’s every father’s nightmare: Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family— a man her parents have never met. And if that wasn’t upsetting enough, Wednesday confides in her father and begs him not to tell her mother. Now, Gomez Addams must do something he’s never done before— keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday’s “normal” boyfriend and his parents.

RTO is reserving tickets for April 30 at 2 p.m. Order forms will be available in the next issue of this magazine.



## Walk With Dogs

*A Painting By Dawn Stanojev*



## Gray Muskoka Morning

*A Watercolour Painting By Ellen Herbert*



## Halle in Winter

*An 8 x 11 Acrylic Painting By Melissa Sherman*

Halle is Melissa's northern rescue so winter is Halle's season of choice.



# Registration for RTOERO District 34 York Region Events

Please print.

Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost per person: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Deadline Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone of Primary Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Pick-up: (if included in the price of the event); (check only one):	
Newmarket Location <input type="checkbox"/>	Richmond Hill Location <input type="checkbox"/>

Meal choice (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a cheque made out to **RTOERO District 34** for  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ person/people at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ each.

Send your completed registration form with your payment to the address given in the event description. Please use a separate registration form and cheque for each event request.

## 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 RTOERO 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 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.  
RTOERO 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)



*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.

### **RTOERO 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

Questions regarding membership and newsletter mailings may be directed to Lori as well.

### **DISTRICT 34 EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**

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**

