

Report Thirty-One

Fall 2020

Published by RTOERO District 31 Wellington



President's Message

Stephen O'Connell



This is my last message as District President. I have served our district since 2004. I was president from 2008 until 2011 and again from 2018 until 2020.

The pandemic has created many challenges with no options for meetings, workshops, luncheons or travel opportunities for district members.

I have maintained contact with the National Office since March by teleconference. Anne Smith and Richard Goodbrand represented Wellington - District 31 at the ZOOM meetings hosted by RTOERO. All information was shared with the district executive.

The National Office has used technology to conduct business and will continue to do so into 2021. Anne is skilled with the technologies necessary to represent Wellington. She will make a good leader as upcoming District President.

Thank you to all the members who continue to volunteer for District 31 and our community. Thank you, district executive and members, for the opportunity to have served you.

Stay safe!
Stephen



District 31

2020 - 2022 Executive

Our current Executive's term of office is ending. The change-over for the 2020 - 2022 Executive is happening in a different way this year because of COVID-19 restrictions. Usually we would hold the

election at our annual Fall Luncheon; however, RTOERO has directed that, for the foreseeable future, we hold no physical meetings. Because there is no legal obligation for us to hold an election this year, instead we have followed RTOERO's directive to send out an e-blast to those of our members who have provided us with an email address. In it, District 31 has listed the Executive positions, along with a proposed slate of officers. We have requested that any member who is interested in joining the Executive for 2020 – 2022 contact our Nomination Chair, Richard Goodbrand (rdgoodb@gmail.com), by September 15th.

However, even if you receive this newsletter after that date and you think this is something you might be interested in doing, please contact Richard. We are always looking for new recruits.

The Executive holds three meetings at the Upper Grand District School Board and attends two District luncheons each year. We would be very pleased to have you join us!

Past President's Message

Richard Goodbrand



Guelph Wellington Coalition for Social Justice

The Guelph Wellington Coalition for Social Justice (GWCSJ) is a group of representatives from various organizations in Guelph and Wellington County. These organizations have a common interest in advocating for equity, inclusivity and the well-being of our community.

I represent RTOERO District 31 - Wellington, which is a member. There are also representatives from ETFO, OECTA, OSSTF, Council of Canadians - Guelph Chapter, Wellington Water Watchers,

University of Guelph - Student Association, Fair Vote Guelph, Guelph Wellington Health Coalition, Guelph & District Labour Council, Development & Peace - Hamilton Diocesan Council, Registered Nurses Association of Ontario - Wellington Chapter, Ontario Public Interest Research Group, and KAIROS which promotes 'a more just and sustainable world'. The GWCSJ has a webpage, guelphcitizenaction.ca.

This year we have been advocating with our governments - Municipal, Provincial, and Federal - on issues such as Long-Term Care facilities, reducing our carbon footprint, universal basic income, accessible affordable public health care, and reducing the use of single-use plastic.

Webinars and meetings sponsored by GWCSJ are in accordance with RTOERO policies and advocacy. As such, they can be advertised on our Facebook page, @RTOERODistrict31Wellington.

Continue to check our District website (rto31.org) and Facebook page (RTO District 31, Wellington) for up-to-date information about RTO/ERO news and events.

Political Advocacy

Brenda McGinnis



Political advocacy on seniors' issues continues to be a focus for RTOERO.

Our Board of Directors has asked us to share the following extremely important information with you.

Our mission at RTOERO is to improve the lives of our members and all seniors in Canada. One main way we fulfill this mandate is through vigorous advocacy on issues that affect members, seniors and, in fact, all Canadians. This mandate has never been more important than right now.

One of our major areas of concern is the long-term residential care facilities.

The Chair of our Board, Martha Foster, and our Chief Executive Officer, Jim Grieve, sent a letter to the Prime Minister, the Premiers and all Ministers responsible for seniors and health care in every

Province and Territory in Canada. The letter outlined immediate actions that were needed to stop COVID-19 spread in these homes and action needed after the crisis has subsided.

The letter states: "For decades across Canada, long-term residential care has languished despite the calls for reform for help. The sector has been characterized by under-funding and a lack not only of enough staff, but of appropriately skilled and compensated staff. Sadly, it is no surprise to anyone that around 50% of the deaths in Canada due to COVID-19 have occurred in long-term residential care facilities."

To keep up the momentum and to focus on vital transformation needed regarding long-term care in Canada, we are encouraging our members to let your elected officials know your views.

To assist members in contacting your federal and provincial elected representatives, we have created an easy-to-use form on our advocacy website.

- 1) Go to vibrantvoices.ca. There you can read our position papers on geriatric health care and seniors' strategy, to learn more about the issues.
- 2) On the page is a self-serve form to send a message to your elected officials. Simply fill in your name, address and email address.
- 3) Once you have added your mailing address, the form will show you federal and provincial elected officials. You can choose to send your message to either one or both.
- 4) We have helped you get started with messaging that reflects RTOERO's advocacy messages on the issue. We encourage you to personalize the letter with your own story, which you add to the form.
- 5) When finished, click on the 'Add your Voice' button. Your message will be mailed to the officials you selected.
- 6) You will receive an emailed copy of your letter for your records.

We know that governments are paying attention. By sharing your views with your elected representatives, you can help keep this issue at the top of the government's agendas.

As I write this, another important issue that has been on the minds of many of us is the safe return of

children, teachers and staff to school this fall. As parents, grandparents and seniors worried about another surge in outbreaks of the virus, we have a very vested interest in this issue. As individuals, we can support our colleagues in the unions by visiting their websites and offering our support. I know many of us have signed petitions and made our voices heard about providing the necessary conditions for a safe return to school for everybody in Ontario.

All of us can become strong political advocates for these two very important causes from the safety of our homes.

Pension and Retirement Concerns

Marina Howlett



Annual Reports

OTPP, April 2020

On March 31, 2020, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan released its results for 2019. For a seventh consecutive year, the Plan was fully funded and had a funding surplus of \$6.1 billion as of January 1, 2020. Net assets reached \$207.4 billion, a \$16.3 billion increase in investment income in 2019. OTPP earned \$20.2 billion in investment income in 2019, the highest earnings in OTPP's history.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and the Ontario Government, as co-sponsors of the Plan, decided to file the January 1, 2020 funding valuation with the regulatory authorities and to classify the \$6.1 billion surplus as a contingency reserve. The purpose of the contingency reserve is to reduce volatility in the Plan's funded position and to facilitate stability in Plan Members' contributions and benefits. It will also provide inflation protection for the next three years because another funding valuation is not required until 2023.

Filing a funding valuation in January 2020 was a very significant decision prior to COVID-19. In the midst of the pandemic, OTPP announced its mid-year report (June 30, 2020) showing a total net fund loss of 0.4%. The net assets were reduced from \$207.4 billion to 204.7 billion. COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the global economy. Financial markets have experienced unprecedented volatility

and significant challenges for investors. OTPP has been quite resilient with its high-quality portfolio and long-term investment approach but must remain focussed and vigilant to weather the financial outcome and determine the full impact of the pandemic. In the midst of the financial crisis, a loss of only 0.4% is a significant statement about the strength of our pension plan.

OMERS Annual Report 2019

OMERS reported net assets of \$109 billion, up from \$97 billion reported in 2018. The 2019 net investment rate of return was 11.8% which represents a 9.6% increase from the previous year. The plan is 97% funded.

OMERS is a high-quality, well-diversified portfolio which has produced strong results for its members. OMERS funded status has improved for the seventh consecutive year and is on target to be fully funded by 2025. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, OMERS remains focussed on its strategy to offer a sustainable, affordable and fully-funded plan for its members.

Significant changes were implemented as a result of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Review for the OMERS Membership. Effective January 1, 2023, Shared Risk Indexing will be implemented. Shared Risk Indexing means that inflation increases (cost of living increases) will be conditional on the financial health of the Plan. Benefits earned on or before December 31, 2022 will be granted full inflation protection and benefits earned on or after January 1, 2023 will be conditional on the financial health of the Plan.

Another important change is the removal of the 35-year cap on pension contributions. Effective January 1, 2021, Plan members will not have the credited service capped at thirty-five years. Members who continue to work beyond the usual retirement date will be eligible to continue to contribute to the Plan and gain additional credited service. This will increase the members' pension income at retirement.

As a result of the pandemic, new provisions were introduced to allow Plan members the opportunity to purchase credit for the period of time lost because of temporary lay-offs.

For more specific details, all members are encouraged to review Plan details on the OMERS website, www.omers.com.

Important Travel Update

(Published by RTOERO on August 13, 2020)

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

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

Q. Am I covered for travel within Canada?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. Am I covered for cancellation of international trips?

- A. *You are not covered for trip cancellation related to COVID-19 for trips booked during the government travel advisory.*
- *For trips booked after the travel advisory is lifted, you will be covered.*
 - *For complete details of trip cancellation/interruption coverage, see page 72 to 76 in the RTOERO Insurance Plans Booklet.*
 - *If you receive a voucher instead of a refund, you can submit a claim for any unused portion if it expires.*

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

- A. *You are covered for reasons outlined on page 72 to 76 in the RTOERO Insurance Plans Booklet.*
- *While traveling outside Canada, you are **not** covered for trip interruption related to COVID-19 during the current travel advisory.*
 - *For interruptions after the advisory is lifted, you will be covered for reasons related to COVID-19*

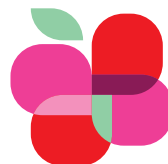
Q. While travelling, will I be covered if my return flight is cancelled?

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

More information:

For the most up-to-date information and if you have any other questions, please contact our Service Administrator at Johnson Insurance, 1-877-406-9007 or healthbenefits@johnson.ca, prior to finalizing any travel plans.

JOHNSON INC.
1-800-461-4597 or 905-764-4888
www.johnson.ca



**RTO
ERO**

District 31
Wellington

Something to Shout About...

District 31 is blessed with many talented and creative members who are engaged in many interesting and exciting activities. We continue to feature some of these achievements in our newsletters. Please let our executive know about any of our members who are involved in interesting adventures or who have received awards or special recognition for their work. We would like to acknowledge, celebrate and support the accomplishments and endeavours of our members.

Nancy Baker participated in a very unique, very creative and very entertaining Zoom production of the play Jane Eyre. Nancy had a lot of fun playing the role of the very nasty Lady Ingram.

Carol Christie is featured on the Provincial website of Retired Women Teachers of Ontario in a segment entitled "Rocking Retirement". Carol also participated in a full-day charity ride with a motorcycle group. The event raised \$1,500 for Childhood Cancer. One of the highlights for Carol occurred when she got to lead a group of about eight big tough motorcyclists on their Harleys riding from Guelph to Waterloo. She felt like a very powerful person.

Guelph Little Theatre is celebrating its 85th season and is producing some online performances. Check this out on their website. Over the years, many of our members have acted in plays, volunteered at the theatre, and enjoyed the productions that have been performed by GLT. A number of years ago, one of our Project Service to Others was helping to sponsor GLT's hosting of the Western Ontario Drama League Festival. Congratulations!!

Joanne Guidoccio is releasing her sixth book, No More Secrets, a tale of forbidden love, tragic loss and reinvention, on September 16th.

Josephine Scott was very happy that the group she works with, **J.O.E. (Jobs, Opportunity and Enterprise)**, was featured in an article in Guelph Today which highlighted how the members are keeping busy during the pandemic when their coffee kiosks are closed. Among many excellent projects, J.O.E., which has a special relationship with our District 31 members, has painted rocks with inspirational messages for Guelph General Hospital

and held a food drive for Lakeside Hope House.

Joe Tersigni wrote a fascinating and informative article for Guelph Today, "Growing Up Italian in St Patrick's Ward".

Jeff Thomson has continued, since his retirement, to teach group fitness classes at the University of Guelph and at Movati. At both gyms, he has taught former students of his, as well as parents of former students. He also volunteers teaching cycle classes at the Kitchener Y on Sundays. He received both a "Fitness Instructor of the Year Award" and a "Service and Dedication Award" from the Athletics Department, University of Guelph in 2017 and 2018.

The recipients of the District 31 June 2020 Secondary School Scholarships are: **Cas Good** from John F. Ross, **Cedar Van Stavel** from Norwell DSS, and **Chloe Roberts** from Our Lady of Lourdes.



Membership

Since our last newsletter, we have welcomed twenty-two new members to our District. These members were sent welcome emails and cards. Once we can safely resume our normal activities, these members will be invited to be our guests at one of our future luncheons.

Currently, District 31 has 1 383 members, 949 women and 434 men. Here is the breakdown by age:

11	are 54 or younger
59	are 55 - 59
130	are 60 - 64
375	are 70 - 74
244	are 75 - 79
147	are 80 - 84
98	are 85 - 89
35	are 90 - 94



Membership

*"They walk beside us every day
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
Still loved, still missed, and very dear."*
(first published in the Arizona Daily Sun)

RTO/ERO District 31 extends sympathy to all the families and friends of our departed loved ones.

Glenice Brown
Agnes Brunskill
Ralph Gray
Donald Lawson
Margaret McDonald
Donald McRitchie
Lyn McVey
Elizabeth Pavey
John Perry
Ray Post
Albert Rowan
Pamela Servos
Lois Sprague
Davina Stevens
Nancy Strachan
Marjorie Timms
Ron Trimble
Ian Turner
Jeanne Wellhauser



endeavours to reach out to our members by sending birthday cards and Christmas cards to our members who are 80 plus. Birthday cards for our members who are 80 plus will be sent at the beginning of the month, due to the Privacy Act. Sympathy cards, get well wishes or celebrations of special life events are sent to all members. Flowers are sent to members who are celebrating milestone birthdays of 90, 95 and 100 plus.

Please help us to make this world a better place by informing us of our members' needs. Contact any of the members of the District 31 Goodwill Committee listed below. We may also be contacted at the District 31 website, rto31.org

Arthur, Mount Forest, Harriston

Joyce Barnes 519-848-2351
joyce.barnes@sympatico.ca

Drayton, Moorefield, Palmerston

Jean Brodhacker 519-638-2291

Elora, Fergus, Salem, Alma

Marg Hall 519-846-5235
margcarl.hall@gmail.com

Rockwood, Hillsburgh, Erin

Marina Howlett 519-836-8585
howlettmarina@gmail.com

Guelph

Brenda McGinnis 519-824-5263
dmcginc602@rogers.com
Nancy Baker 519-822-6653
nancyida@sympatico.ca
Mary Hermann 519-821-3892
maryhermann@rogers.com

Please contact RTOERO Office at 1-800-361-9888 if you change your address so our records are up-to-date. If you have a rural route address, please use your fire number and road as your address.

Keep smiling, even under your mask,
Joyce Barnes, Goodwill Chair



Goodwill Joyce Barnes



*"Reach out and touch
Somebody's hand.
Make this world a better place
If you can."*
Diana Ross

During these times of COVID-19, it is a challenge to reach out and touch somebody's hand. There are, however, many ways we can reach out to each other - by phone, email, text or a socially-distanced visit. Please take the time to reach out and make someone's world a better place.

RTO/ERO District 31 Goodwill Committee

Executive September 1, 2020

Past President	Richard Goodbrand rdgoodb@gmail.com 519-291-2015
President:	Stephen O'Connell soconnellguelph@gmail.com 519-265-2125
1st Vice-President	Anne Smith m.anne.smith@gmail.com 519-820-6471
2nd Vice-President	Nancy Baker nancyida@sympatico.ca 519-822-6653
Secretary	Mary Hermann maryhermann@rogers.com 519-821-3892
Treasurer	Mike Curtis mikecurtiserin@yahoo.ca 905-877-4134
<hr/>	
Foundation	Joan Berry berryjoanm@wightman.ca 519-843-6754
Goodwill	Joyce Barnes joyce.barnes@sympatico.ca 519-848-2351
Health	Patrick Bruder patrickbruder@gmail.com 519-823-2399
Membership	currently vacant
Newsletter	Anne Smith m.anne.smith@gmail.com 519-820-6471
Pension	Marina Howlett x howlettmarina@gmail.com 519-820-6471
Political Advocacy	Brenda McGinnis dmcginc602@rogers.com 519-824-5263
Recruitment	currently vacant
Travel	Lynn Morrison lynnmorrison@wightman.ca 519-323-2419
Website/Email Manager	John Ritchie mistercanoehead@yahoo.com 519-821-5894
<hr/>	
District Counsellors:	Shirley Goodbrand shirleygoodbrand661@gmail.com 519-291-2015

Joan Miller
joan.miller5@gmail.com
519-746-4218
Pam Niesiobedzki-Curtis
pniesiobedzki@hotmail.com
905-877-4134

Virtual Meeting Dates

- Sept. 16 Project – Service to Others Committee
- Sept. 17 Marketing and Communications Committee
- Sept. 21 Political Advocacy Workshop Webinar
- Sept. 22 Political Advocacy Committee
- Sept. 24 Member Services Committee
- Sept. 25 Governance Committee
- Sept. 28 Corporate Members Webinar
- Oct. 1 Vibrant Voices Queen's Pk Virtual Event
- Oct. 5 DHR Webinar
- Oct. 7 Benefits Committee
- Oct. 15 Corporate Members Training
- Oct. 20 Annual Meeting
- Oct. 21 Meeting of the New Board
- Oct. 27 Forum Webinar

Financial Report June 30, 2019

INCOME

Annual Rebate	21 462.56
Bank Error	.50
Provincial Strike Rebate	500.00
TOTAL	21 963.06

EXPENSES

	185.66
Goodwill	206.61
Recruitment	2 343.12
Newsletter	24.00
Office Expenses	
Miscellaneous	
Donations to:	
•teachers' unions (3)	600.00
•RTOERO Foundation	100.00
•Scholarship (Chloe Roberts)	200.00
TOTAL	3 659.39
SURPLUS	18 303.67
BANK BALANCE	22 987.15

RTO District 31
c/o Mike Curtis, Treasurer
9450 Copeland Path, RR#2
Erin, ON
N0B 1T0

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR STATUS

It is imperative that , if you have changed:

- your postal address,
- your email address
- phone number or
- your status,

you contact:

- OTPPB (5650 Yonge St., Toronto M2M 4H5 or 1-800-668-0105);
- RTO/ERO rtoero.ca or 1-800-361-9888. Ask for Membership Dept. or email membership@rtoero.ca.

Provincial Office sends out monthly membership lists and a change report which we use to create a label database. This is used to send out the newsletters. Every attempt is made to ensure that this information is up-to-date and correct.



Website



Visit our District website at rto31.org for up-to-date information about RTOERO events in Wellington County and for photos of past events.

Each edition of Report Thirty-One is posted on the website.

If you would prefer to get your newsletter online, email John at mistercanoehead@yahoo.com. He will add you to our 'email the newsletter list'.

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