

Report Thirty-One



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Richard Goodbrand

Welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter.

You have noticed a couple of changes in our organization.

First, we are no longer RTOERO but Entente Education Canada. This is as a result of our changing membership demographics (our membership is no longer only teachers nor is our membership only in Ontario). It was authorized by the Corporate Members at our May 2025 Annual Meeting after several years of consultation with members and Districts.

Second, our Insurance Plan is now called Entente Plus and is being administered by Greenshield. This was approved by our National Board of Directors. Although our insurance plan is being administered by a new group, Greenshield, our insurance plan remains the same. There have been no changes to the plan itself.

The changeover has NOT been as seamless as our Organization had hoped and for that the Board apologizes. There are strategies being put in place to overcome the current difficulties and execute strategies for the future to ensure better service for our growing membership.

In addition, District Benefit Coordinators were informed last year that their new title was to be Health Coordinators and that any questions

about our Entente Plus Insurance or any member difficulties with it were to be referred to Entente Plus directly.

Pension fund matters are handled by the individual plans. Any and all information about each of the funds is available through their website or, if necessary, by direct contact.

Our Events and Travel Committees are active and elsewhere in the newsletter you are encouraged to join other members in the events they are planning. The first one is a Trivia night on **February 28, 2026** so register quickly if you haven't yet. It has already been posted on Facebook and on our website.

Also keep the date of April 30, 2028 from 10:30-2:30 open to join us for our District Annual Meeting at the ICC (Italian Canadian Club) in Guelph. More details will follow.

My contact information is given later in this Newsletter. It is always pleasant to talk with, and assist, members of our beautiful District.

Save the Date

February 28, 2026

Trivia Night, Royal City Brewery at 6:00pm

April 17, 2026

Deadline for Spring Luncheon reservations

April 30, 2026

Spring District Luncheon (ICC Guelph)
at 10:30am



POLITICAL ADVOCACY REPORT

Brenda McGinnis

Entente Education Canada (formerly known as RTOERO) has recently updated its position papers to reflect clear recommendations in our three priority areas for political advocacy: a comprehensive seniors strategy, tailored health care that meets the realities of aging, and strong environmental stewardship to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations. Entente has prepared separate papers for provincial and federal decision makers. Each paper provides context on the issue, highlights key statistics and offers specific policy recommendations. You can read these position papers on Entente's website.

Recently, there has been a great deal of news about the environment and climate change. These reports can be depressing and overwhelming. As individuals, we are always trying to find ways that we can help to improve the situation. While some of these suggestions might seem quite small, they are ways in which we can at least do something positive.

Staples Stores have added to their already extensive list of items that can be recycled. In addition to tech items, printer cartridges, and batteries, Staples will now recycle school supplies – backpacks and lunch bags, crayons and coloured pencils, glue sticks and empty glue bottles, pencils and pencil pouches, pens, markers and highlighters, poly folders and binders, rulers and drafting tools, and bags and luggage. Once collected, these items are sent to TerraCycle where they are cleaned, sorted, and transformed into raw materials for new products such as outdoor furniture, storage bins, and playground surfaces. Since its inception last summer, the program has successfully diverted over 10 million writing instruments from landfills.

As individuals, we might want to google and check out some practical, 'what can I do?' sites. Some suggestions are: Take the Jump – try making 6 shifts in your life to protect our earth and live with joy; David Suzuki's Foundation – how to make a difference every day; and Project Drawdown's list of most impactful actions individuals/households can take.

One issue that our executive wants to pursue with our local politicians and the Ministry of the Environment is that of the recycling of used tires. This is an issue that has become quite a crisis in that hundreds of thousands of used tires are piling up across Ontario as some companies responsible for tire recycling have stopped processing tires amid reduced provincial recycling regulations for tire producers. According to a CBC report, "The result is growing flammable stockpiles of tires while consumers continue to pay recycling fees and recycling businesses face layoffs and shutdowns." In January 2025, the provincial government eliminated collection targets for used tires. Tire producers are now only required to recycle 65 per cent of used tires collected by weight, rather than 85 per cent. Once tire producers meet their recycling targets, the current regulations allow them to dispose of used tires in landfills or to incinerate them, or ship them to the U.S. for incineration or disposal in landfills. Recycling businesses are petitioning the provincial government to raise the required recycling rates and legislate stricter enforcement for tire producers. Our executive is joining these recycling businesses in their petition. According to people in the industry, everyone's biggest fear is another Hagersville, the massive 1990 tire fire outside Hamilton that burned through 14 million scrap tires and extensively damaged the environment.

On a positive note, a Federal Court of Appeal overturned a lower court's decision and is

allowing the Federal government to continue the ban on the manufacturing of six types of single use plastics, including straws, grocery bags, cutlery, and the six-pack rings holding pop and beer cans together.

On a final note, it is encouraging to see that Canadians are still advocating for Canada by buying Canadian products and by not travelling to the United States. These actions have been very effective in encouraging American citizens to put pressure on elected officials in the United States to remember that we are good neighbours who have contributed a great deal to their country and we are to be respected as a separate, and proud and strong nation.



“People who care about each other enjoy doing things for one another.”

Thanks to the members of the Entente District 31 Goodwill Committee, (formerly RTOERO District 31 Goodwill Committee) consisting of Brenda, Marina, Mary, Nancy, Sherry, Irene and Joyce who sent over 450 Birthday and Christmas cards to our members who were 80 plus in 2025. Twenty-two floral arrangements were sent to members who were 90, 95 and 100+ in 2025. Many get-well, sympathy and congratulatory cards were also sent.

In 2026, the Goodwill Committee members look forward to adding happiness and caring to improve the quality of our members’ lives. Please help us to do this by contacting any of the members of the District 31 Goodwill Committee:

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

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

Brenda McGinnis
519-824-5263
dmcginc602@rogers.com

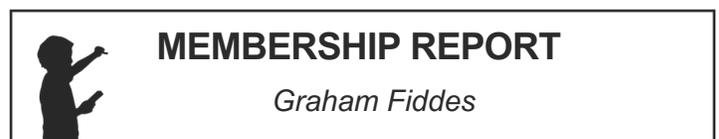
Nancy Baker
519-822-6653
nancyida@sympatico.ca

Mary Hermann
519-821-3892
maryhermann@rogers.com

Irene Simmons
519-836-8646
irene@simmons.ca

Sherry Fleming
519-831-6639
sherryf3@gmail.com

Keep smiling;
Keep caring for one another,
Joyce Barnes



Whitened by falling and drifting snow, elevated by blue winter skies, rejuvenated by cozy indoors with family, friends and pets, we look ahead.

Our most recent membership numbers include:

- 1428 members
- 39 actively-working Entente members.
- 63 members are over the age of 90
- 39 of our members are under the age of 54

If you have family or friends who are still working in education, please remind them that they can join Entente Education Canada before they retire without an annual fee. When they retire, the annual membership fee is waived if they purchase Entente Plus benefits. The benefits cover more than other educational insurance plans.

Welcome to our newest members!

August

Marilyn Abraham, Earl Evans, and
Richard Michalski

September

Frances McDonald, Mary Reynolds, and
William Weddig

October

Heather Hocken, Lorena William McIlroy,
Joyce Howlett, Caitlin Meanwell, Sharen Nuxoll,
and Audrey St. Louis

November

Brian O'Connor and Lucas Weiler

December

Scott Barclay, Elizabeth Cecchetto, Jody Hubert,
Mardell Miller, Adrian Renzetti,
Ann Sheppard, and
Heather Smith

On a final note, we are trying to be as environmentally friendly as possible. We are aiming to get as close as possible to attain 100% of our members receiving the newsletter digitally.

In Memoriam

"In memory of our colleagues and friends who have left us with wonderful legacies of character building and knowledge."

Entente District 31 extends sympathy to all the families and friends of our departed loved ones:

Steve Armbruster Elora

Daniel Plessis Belair Palmerston

Paul Cook Elora

Arnold Davison Elora

Heather Farnworth Elora

Joan Hall Fergus

Frederick Howlett Guelph

Audrey Johnson Guelph

Stephen O'Connell Guelph

David Pocock Guelph

Brenda Sloane Ancaster

Sara Smith Guelph



SOMETHING TO SHOUT ABOUT
Brenda McGinnis

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 will be appearing as the landlady for D'Artagnan in the Elora Community Theatre production of "The Three Musketeers" at the Fergus Grand Theatre, May 1-3 and May 8-10, 2026. It is a high energy tale with sword clashing, intrigue, courage, and camaraderie.

Joanne Guidoccio released her new work, *Hippie Mermaid*, which became available on Amazon.ca in October 2025. Joanne is a member of Crime Writers of Canada, Sisters in Crime, and the Women Fiction Writers Association. She writes paranormal romances, cozy mysteries and inspirational stories.

Dianne Scobie was featured in the publication "The Illegal Curve: Your Home for Hockey in Manitoba". Dianne's late son, Scott, played for the Winnipeg Jets when the team first started up. Dianne made a donation on behalf of Scott to the Toba Centre for Children and Youth which "provides a space where children and families can find comfort, healing and access to the resources they need when they've been impacted by abuse". This charity is connected to the current Winnipeg Jets' Captain, Adam Lowry. Some members of the Winnipeg Jets remembered Dianne from when her son played for the team and they were very happy that she was making a donation from Scott's estate to the Toba Centre. As a way to honour Scott and Dianne and say thanks for her support, the organization flew Dianne to Winnipeg in October so she could drop the puck at the start of the game. The reporter wrote at the time: "As Dianne steps onto the ice, surrounded by

the Jets community that embraced her son and his legacy, I'm sure Scott will be there alongside her, in spirit, as she continues to honour him in the city that once cheered him on." Dianne said that she "had a blast when she was in Winnipeg and was feeling well".

Ontario Retired Women Teachers is celebrating its 70th Anniversary this year. We wish our colleagues in Guelph Wellington Retired Women Teachers congratulations as they celebrate this milestone.



It's been launched! The Brain Injury Association Waterloo Wellington has held its first three virtual workshops for the series Digital Literacy Initiative for Entente Education Canada Wellington District 31. This was the Community Project for which they received the Entente Education Canada Community grant. The first two virtual workshops were held on January 20th and January 28th. Six members attended the first session on Frauds and Scams and four members attended the second workshop on Artificial Intelligence. The third workshop topic was Digital Literacy, and it was held on February 6th. Amazon Echoes were awarded as door prizes at each session. Five more virtual workshops remain, and the topics include: Health Monitoring, Voice Assistants, and Fall Detection. Fraud and Scams and Artificial Intelligence will be repeated in the final two workshops as it was highly requested in the preliminary survey. The remaining sessions will be held February 13th, February 27th, March 6th, March 13th, and March 27th.



TRAVEL NEWS

Sister Act at the Drayton Theatre

- July 8, 2026 for a matinee performance
- 25 tickets available, **Make cheques payable to Entente District 31**
- \$90 to be paid in full upon ordering

Included with Purchase

- Bus (subsidized by Entente District 31) Pick-up in Fergus and Guelph
- Lunch (senior portions) at the Elora Gorge Restaurant (prior to the play)

Menu Options

- Tomato Sauce Spaghetti
- Chicken Souvlaki Skewer with potatoes and veggies
- Chicken Fingers with potatoes and veggies
- All meals come with a salad starter and carrot cake dessert

Meal to be pre-ordered with the ticket. Please advise if you have any food allergies.

Contact

Lenore Ralph
lrsidebyside@hotmail.com or 519-831-8807

A Beautiful Noise: The Neil Diamond Musical at the Princess of Wales Theatre

- May 27, 2026 for a matinee performance
- 40 tickets available – **Make cheques payable to Entente District 31**
- Cost: \$185 to be paid in full upon ordering

Included with Purchase

- Bus (subsidized by Entente District 31) Pick-up in Fergus and Guelph
- Lunch (prior to the play)

Menu Options

- Chicken Parmesan
 - Tuscan Spaghetti Primavera
 - Pork Souvlaki
 - All meals come with a Salad (garden or caesar) starter and Carrot Cake dessert
- Meal to be pre-ordered with the ticket.***
Please advise if you have any food allergies.

Contact

Anne Smith
m.anne.smith@gmail.com or 519-820-6471

Something Rotten at the Stratford Festival Theatre

- September 29, 2026 for a matinee performance
- 40 tickets available until July – **Make cheques payable to Entente District 31**
- Cost: \$115 to be paid in full upon ordering

Included with Purchase

- Bus (subsidized by Entente District 31)
- Pick-ups in Fergus and Guelph
- Lunch at *Demetre's Family*

Contact

Nancy Baker
nancyida@sympatico.ca or 519 822 6653

In the Works

- Niagara – including bus and tour
- Spirit of Christmas 2026
 - Dundurn Castle

Your ideas and suggestions for future events are welcomed. Please reach out to any of the following travel committee members:

Lenore Ralph lrsidebyside@hotmail.com
Anne Smith m.anne.smith@gmail.com
Nancy Baker nancyida@sympatico.ca

Artists and Crafters

There is an opportunity for Entente members to showcase, and possibly sell, some of your amazing handmade creations at our District 31 Fall Luncheon.

To reserve your table please contact:

Nancy Baker
519 822 6653
nancyida@sympatico.ca

For all other attendees, come early to admire the talent and skills of your fellow members and perhaps do a little Christmas shopping.

Bring a Book

We are continuing our *Bring a Book* campaign so please bring a new or gently used child, teen, or adult book to our Entente District 31 Spring Luncheon. The books will be donated to *Action Read Community Literacy Centre*.

Action Read Community Literacy Centre is dedicated to changing the lives of adults and families through improved literacy, numeracy, computer, and other essential skills, using their one-to-one tutoring and group learning programs. Learn more about the centre at www.actionread.com.

PENSION & RETIREMENT CONCERNS

Marina Howlett



Inflation Adjustments Effective January 1, 2026

- Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) – 2.0%
- Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) – 2.0%

- Canada Pension Plan (CPP) – 2.0%
- Ontario Pension Plan (OPB) – 2.0%

Old Age Security (OAS) Quarterly Inflation Adjustment

(January, April, July, October)

Effective January 1, 2026, the monthly payment will be:

- \$816.54 if you are 75 years or older; and
- \$742.31 if you are 60 to 74.

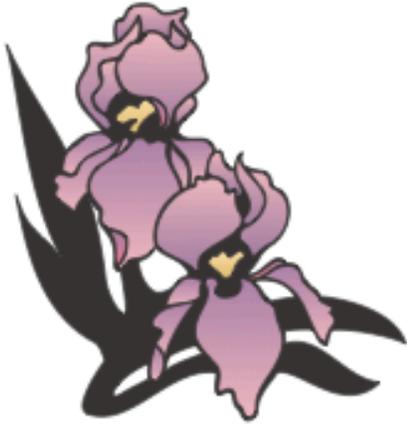
The OAS will be clawed back when the net income from all sources exceeds \$93,454. If your net income exceeds \$157,923 (ages 65-74) and \$147,418 (ages 75 and older), there will be no monthly OAS payment. The clawback is determined each year after the Notice of Assessment has been completed for the previous year. The clawback will start July 1, 2026 and end June 30, 2027.

Members are eligible to receive OAS at age 65. OAS notifies individuals about six months prior to the eligibility date. If you have not been notified prior to your 65th birthday, please contact OAS to receive your monthly payments. OAS will make retroactive payments for up to eleven months if you are a late applicant.

Reminders

- Your OTPP and OMERS pension will be reduced when you reach age 65 to reflect the deduction for the CPP offset.
- The deduction for the CPP offset starts in the month you reach age 65.
- For further information about the CPP offset, please contact Marina Howlett at
 - 519-836-8585 or
 - howlettmarina@gmail.com.

The end of year surplus/deficit of each plan will be released in the OTPP and OMERS annual reports. These reports will be available later this year.



You and your spouse/guest are cordially invited to attend the

Spring Annual Luncheon Meeting

OF ENTENTE DISTRICT 31

Italian Canadian Club, Guelph

Thursday, April 30, 2026

11:00 -11:30 Social; J.O.E. will serve coffee and jokes; /collection of new books (suitable for children, teens, or adults) for Action Read

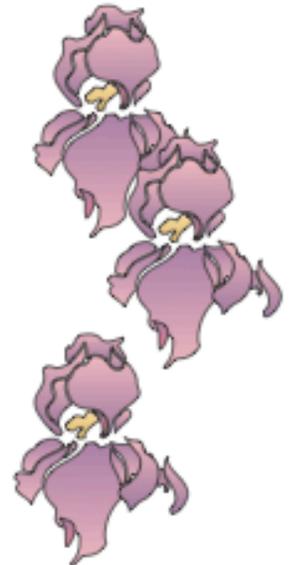
11:30 - 12:00 Business Meeting

12:00 - 1:00 Luncheon Buffet; Door Prizes during dessert

1:00 - 1:45 Entertainment: Double Impact

Buffet Menu:
Garden salad
Penne with tomato sauce
Chicken Parmigiana
Pan-roasted potatoes
Hot vegetables
Dessert buffet of fruit, assorted cakes, pies, squares

Accommodation for members with special dietary needs



Detach and send before April 17, 2026to:
Mike Curtis, Treasurer
9450 Copeland Path, RR#2 Erin, ON N0B 1T0 905-877-4134

Spring Annual Luncheon Meeting OF ENTENTE EDUCATION CANADA DISTRICT 31

Thursday, April 30, 2026

PLEASE RSVP before April 17, 2026.

Please make reservations for: _____ and

Name _____

Special Dietary Requirements:

Name of Guest

Vegetarian

Gluten Free

Lactose Intolerant

Other: _____

Enclosed is a cheque payable to Entente District 31 in the amount of \$_____ (\$20 per person).

This meal is subsidized by Entente District 31.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Mike Curtis

RTO District 31 Financial Report Dec. 31 2025

Income

Annual Rebate	26 025.63
Member Engagement (<i>Come from Away</i>)	9 690.00
Ont. Election exp. Rebate	1 497.50
Spring Luncheons	1 670.00
Ice rink rental refund	161.00
RTO political action rebate	502.50
Member Engagement (Grease tickets)	1 815.00
Community Service Grant	4 000.00
Fall luncheons	1 080.00
Bingman trip	2 760.00
Total	49 201.63

Expenses

Goodwill	1 543.13
Executive	1 793.50
District	9 516.29
Forum	268.65
Community Service	4 000.00
Newsletter	5 804.59
Office	95.21
Member Engagement	8382.08
Transportation	1 657.78
Website/domain	800.51
G/WC4SJ (election)	500.00
Ont. Election expenses(reimbursed)	1 634.90
Scholarships	800.00
Christmas donations (foodbanks)	1 150.00

Total	37 946.64
Surplus	11 254.99
Bank Balance	25 895.94



**ENTENTE DISTRICT 31
EXECUTIVE
2024-2026**

EXECUTIVE POSITION	NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER
Past President	Nancy Baker	nancyida@sympatico.ca	519-823-4616
President	Richard Goodbrand	president31@districts.rtoero.ca	519-291-2015
First Vice President	Tim Cunningham	timcunningham@rogers.com	416-574-6110
Second Vice President	Scott Montgomery	scottmontgomeryrto@gmail.com	519-993-1286
Secretary	Joan Miller	joan.miller5@gmail.com	519-746-4218
Treasurer	Mike Curtis	mikecurtiserin@yahoo.ca	905-877-4134
Foundation	Joan Berry	joanmarieberry50@gmail.com	519-843-6754
Goodwill	Joyce Barnes	joyce.barnes@sympatico.ca	519-848-2351
Governance	Marina Howlett	howlettmarina@gmail.com	519-836-8585
Health/Benefits	Shirley Goodbrand	shirleygoodbrand661@gmail.com	519-291-2015
Membership	Graham Fiddes	rto.gfiddes@gmail.com	226-500-2364
Newsletter Editor	Scott Montgomery	scottmontgomeryrto@gmail.com	519-993-1286
Pension/Retirement Concerns	Marina Howlett	howlettmarina@gmail.com	519-836-8585
Political Advocacy	Brenda McGinnis	dmcginc602@rogers.com	519-824-5263
Recruitment	Scott Montgomery	scottmontgomeryrto@gmail.com	519-993-1286
Social Media	Richard Goodbrand	rdgoodb@gmail.com	519-291-2015
Travel	Lenore Ralph	lrsidebyside@hotmail.com	519-822-1596
	Anne Smith	m.anne.smith@gmail.com	519-820-6471
	Nancy Baker	nancyida@sympatico.ca	519-823-4616
Webmaster/Email Manager	John Ritchie	mistercanoehed@yahoo.com	519-821-5894
Counsellors	Patrick Bruder	patrickbruder@gmail.com	519-823-2399
	Mary Hermann	maryhermann@rogers.com	519-821-3892
	Anne Smith	m.anne.smith@gmail.com	519-820-6471

Entente Education Canada 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
- your phone number or
- your status,

Please contact:

OTPP (5650 Yonge St., Toronto M2M 4H5
or 1-800-361-0105)

Entente (entente.ca or 1-800-361-9888) –

Ask for Membership.

REPORT THIRTY-ONE

National Office sends out monthly membership lists which we use to create a database for sending out newsletters. Every attempt is made to ensure that this information is correct and up-to-date. ***If you are receiving this newsletter by post, we encourage you to consider changing to the emailed version to save paper and Canada Post charges.***

REPORT THIRTY-ONE is
published three times a year
by Entente District 31.

Publisher: Scott Montgomery