

# The Grapevine



The Newsletter of District 14 - Niagara

SPRING 2023

### Special Points of Interest:

- Join us for the AGM & Spring Luncheon - pg. 6 & pg. 8
- Farewell to a Special Member - pg. 3
- An Update on "The Clarice West-Hobbs Contemplative Garden" - pg. 7

**We're on the Web!**  
[district14.rtoero.ca](http://district14.rtoero.ca)



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## The President's Message

Dear Members,



For the past years we have lived, and in some cases continue to live, under the cloud of the COVID variants and the flu. This cloud has, if nothing else, made us more aware of isolation and loneliness.

I have chosen to share snippets of material from our Foundation. I encourage you to go to the website <https://rtoero.ca/social-isolation-and-loneliness> for more information.

### Social isolation and loneliness: what's the difference, and what can we do?

Social isolation and loneliness are often used interchangeably, but are they the same thing? Not exactly.

#### What is social isolation?

Social isolation refers to a measurable deficiency in the number of social relationships a person has - so it's about the frequency of social interaction and the number of connections you have.

#### What is loneliness?

Loneliness is related but different - it's more subjective. It's an unpleasant sensation when your social relationships are lacking in quality and quantity compared to what you want.

#### What's the relationship between social isolation and loneliness?

While the terms mean different things, their impact is related, as are the approaches for dealing with them. A 2019 survey from the Angus Reid Institute showed that those who are very isolated were also more likely to be very lonely. And if the lack of quality contacts can lead to loneliness, then efforts to reduce social isolation, for example, through group activities, can also impact loneliness by creating opportunities for meaningful connection.

Let us take advantage of the quality group activities RTOERO District 14 offers you to overcome social isolation and loneliness. Join in our various activities and share your talents locally by participating as either an onlooker or as a member of a Committee. I again encourage you to go to the RTOERO website to watch/participate in their various webinars.

**Be involved!**

Bill Doyle



**RTOERO District 14**  
**Niagara Peninsula**  
**District Executive Board**

Bill Doyle	President	289-668-2721
Chereen Osborne	Past President	905-646-2640
	1st Vice President	
Bill Szollosy	2nd Vice President	905-991-9779
Brian Carty	Secretary	905-468-7129
Bob Grand	Treasurer	289-821-4052
John Carruthers	Archives	905-356-9620
Bonnie Bryan	Communications	905-562-7773
Diane Conklin	Events	289-303-7103
Diane Conklin	Charitable Foundation	289-303-7103
Chereen Osborne	Goodwill	905-646-2640
Marilyn Malton	Health Services	289-397-0637
Bill Doyle	Membership	289-668-2721
Janice Taylor	Pension Issues	905-834-9577
Diane Conklin	Political Advocacy	289-303-7103
Bonnie Bryan	Grapevine Editor	905-562-7773
John Carruthers	Webmaster	905-356-9620
Donna Van Nest	Data Base	905-359-1644
Luba Beange	Bereavement Co-ord.	905-262-4685
	Francophone Liaison	

<b>RTOERO</b>	<b>1-800-361-9888</b>
<b>Johnson's Insurance</b>	<b>1-877-406-9007</b>
<b>Best Doctors</b>	<b>1-877-419-2378</b>
<b>Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan</b>	<b>1-800-668-0105</b>
<b>Seniors' Safety Line</b>	<b>1-866-299-1011</b>

**Area Representatives**

**Fort Erie, Ridgeway, Stevensville,**  
**Crystal Beach, Sherkston**

Nina McCutcheon 289-360-9343

**Niagara Falls**

Linda L. Dueck 905-358-6931

**Niagara-on-the-Lake, Virgil, Queenston, St. David's**

Brian Carty 905-468-7129

**Welland, Port Robinson**

Carolyn Boyd 905-295-1121

**Port Colborne**

Jan Taylor 905-834-9577

**St. Catharines**

Charleen Avedesian 905-934-2704

Mary Wright 905-321-0074

**Thorold**

Jane Michaud 905-227-1961

**Wainfleet, Wellandport, Lowbanks, St. Ann's,**

**Smithville, Caistor Center**

Lois Houser 905-563-0485

Glynis Parsons 905-563-8713 (C. 905-902-8713)

**Grimsby, Beamsville, Lincoln, Jordan Station,**

**Jordan/Vineland Station, Vineland**

Marion Woodcock 905-562-7935

**Fonthill, Fenwick, Ridgeville, North Pelham**

Wilma McNall 905-892-6834

Margot Fraser 905-892-2408

**Out of District Members**

Margot Smith 905-892-1891

**NOTE: Additional Reps are needed for Niagara Falls; Grimsby;  
and**

**The St. Catharines areas. If you are interested, please call  
Chereen Osborne at 905-646-2640.**

**RTOERO DISTRICT 14 NEEDS YOU!**

***We are always in need of interested volunteers to fill Executive Board positions and Committees. We would also like to offer opportunities for interested members to mentor with Executive Board Members in all positions to prepare for future openings.***

***We also need a new Charitable Foundation Liaison and a Francophone Liaison. Please see the article on page 8 for details.***

***Please contact Chereen Osborne if you are interested.***

***We also have openings for a Goodwill Chair & Goodwill Reps in the many Areas. If you are interested in these roles which involves passing information along about illnesses, birthdays, or other significant life events that need recognition, please contact Chereen Osborne at 905-646-2640.***

## WE BID FAREWELL TO ANOTHER TREASURED MEMBER



We are sad to announce that Don Gray, a member of our District 14 Board, passed away in his 76th year in St. Catharines, Ontario on November 9, 2022.

Don was born on December 2nd 1946, in Campbellton, NB. A graduate of Brock University, Don spent his career teaching with the District School Board of Niagara. After working for several years as an elementary French teacher, he spent 20 years as the teacher responsible for the educational program offered through the St. Catharines General Hospital mental health department. His commitment to education continued in retirement where he was a member of RTOERO, including an extended period of time as President and other positions on our Board/Executive. Don also served as our Foundation Liaison. Because of his connection to Habitat for Humanity, Don spearheaded the collection of donations to this organization at each of our annual AGM and Fall Festival Luncheons (you may remember the small blue "house banks" on each table).

Don was also active in the community, serving in various capacities with Design for a New Tomorrow, Habitat for Humanity, and his church Silver Spire. He enjoyed reading, gardening, skiing, spending time with family, travelling to warm destinations, and telling stories and jokes. A friendly and outgoing Maritimer, Don was always stopping for a chat with a neighbour or finding a way to help a friend in need.

We will all miss Don's friendship, his wonderful wit and sense of humour, and his deep commitment to helping others.

## KEEPING US UP-TO-DATE

?? **Have you changed your home address??**  
**Have you changed your phone number?**  
**Have you changed your email address?**

Change is often good and RTOERO District 14 would love to keep in touch with you after you make a change. We don't want you to miss hearing about things that are happening in the District such as our Spring and Fall luncheons or our Social Outings. When you are notifying the Ontario Teachers' Pension Board, the Canada Pension Plan and other important contacts of your new information, please include RTOERO Provincial at (416) 962-9463 or Toll Free: 1-800-361-9888. They will notify District 14 of this in a monthly Change Report and we can then update our database.

## IN MEMORIAM

*It is with sadness that we share with you the passing of the following members:*

Mary Adams	Betty Hamm
Edwin Ball	Craig Hanyan
Margaret Bassett	Gregory Hassim
Yash Bhatia	N Joanne Haynes
Eleanor Black	Gerald Hendricks
Kathleen Black	Kathie Herr
M Ellenor Black	David Hutton
Harry Borsato	Felicitas Mandeville
Shirley Brooks	Ronald McChesney
Elfrieda Budarick	Robert Mills
Arleen Bush	James Mulligan
Gilda De Bonis	Gladys Smith
Jeanne De Montigny	Marie Smyte
Wayne Devitt	Garry Stevenson
Lenore Ellsworth	Sasha Valliant
Henry Froese	Pieter Westveer
Fredrick Goldrup	Stanley Wilson
Donald Gray	John Wise

***May they live forever in our memories.***




***Each year, District 14 makes a large donation to the RTOERO Charitable Foundation in memory of all of our members who have passed away.***

## WE ARE MORE THAN JUST AN INSURANCE COMPANY!

At its last meeting, the Board of District 14 voted to donate \$1,000 to the Red Cross Turkey-Syria Earthquake Relief Fund. This is only one of many activities in which we participate to make our world a better place for our members and all people!

**JOIN WITH US & GET INVOLVED!**

## PLEASE REMEMBER!

 Even though most of us are now able to move about more freely enjoying more social interaction, some of our members and friends are still suffering from Social Isolation. If you know someone like this, please take a few minutes to check in with them, and let them know that you care!

***We are our brothers' and sisters' keeper!***





## POLITICAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The members of the PAC have been very busy these Fall and Winter months responding to the many health concerns that have crippled the Health System in the Niagara Region. One of our members reported a very dangerous situation that arose in an emergency call after she had taken a serious fall and fractured her shoulder bone. They sent a TAXI to take her to Emergency. She was unable to walk and could not sit up. The taxi driver told her that she should have given more details when she called! She then waited another 4 hours before an ambulance arrived. We decided to take action. A letter of concern was sent to three officials to inquire as to the change of EMERGENCY procedures and change in policy. We did receive responses but no clear cut answer to the question itself. We will pursue the action until we can share this vital information with all of our members.



We were directed to an online service that will give you answers to your urgent care concerns. There is no cost as it is covered by your ONTARIO HEALTH CARD. The Website address is [UrgentCareOntario.ca](http://UrgentCareOntario.ca).

RTOERO has also sent a letter to the Minister regarding the state of our health care system and the lack of funding to attract more doctors and nurses to our hospitals and clinics. The passing of Bill 7 was also addressed. Bill 7 enabled long-term care residents to be moved out of hospitals and relocated to another long-term care facility not of their choosing. All of the groups stated that this Bill promoted the use of COERCIVE TACTICS over consent. We continue to monitor this situation.



We also supported the ongoing negotiations with the Ontario government and the Education Workers union. Bill Doyle provided apples on the picket lines from District 14 Niagara members. We urge our members to continue contact any of their representatives to express their support for the Education sector workers who keep our schools open and safe.



Finally, we regret the passing of one of the long time members of PAC. Don Gray was an active participant and volunteered his time to the group as a member of PAC and was on the Executive/Board for many years. He will be missed.

Please send us any concerns or issues you may have and we will endeavour to track it for you.

Diane Conklin  
Chairperson – Political Advocacy Committee District 14  
Niagara

## ATTENTION À TOUS LES MEMBRES FRANCOPHONES!

RTOERO est un organisme bilingue qui représente de nombreux enseignants retraités dont la langue maternelle est le français. En tant que district représentant l'une des communautés les plus bilingues à l'extérieur du Québec, le District 14 offre de l'aide à ces membres.

Nous recherchons maintenant un nouveau bénévole (ou plus d'un) qui serait prêt à aider le comité exécutif et des communications avec les traductions de nos bulletins et autres correspondances/annonces. La liaison aide également les membres à trouver des ressources au bureau national qui peuvent répondre aux questions sur leurs services aux membres. C'est un poste important, mais ce n'est pas onéreux en termes de temps. Si vous êtes intéressé, veuillez contacter Diane Conklin, notre ancienne présidente ([drconklin11@bell.net](mailto:drconklin11@bell.net)) pour plus d'informations.

## FREE MEMBERSHIP WHILE ACTIVELY EMPLOYED!

We are excited to extend our offer of free membership to anyone in the education community for the duration of the individual's active employment. We encourage members of the education community to begin enjoying the benefits of RTOERO membership as soon as possible. Membership benefits include access to all of our award-winning publications, and notifications of upcoming events like Retirement Planning Workshops, and access to customized travel adventures at special rates. Our Health Benefit coverage is also now open to any members 50 years and older who do not have benefits through their employer. This coverage includes medical and cancellation travel insurance at no additional cost. Please tell all of your friends who are still working in the education sector that they can find more information about these benefits, and how to join RTOERO by visiting the Provincial Website at:

<https://rtoero.ca>



## ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED!

We are looking for members who are interested in getting more involved with District 14, but are unsure about how their skills can be used to help us. We invite all our members to observe any of our District Board Meetings, or Committee Meetings. The Board meets once a month. Most Committees meet monthly. If you are interested, please contact any member of the Executive Board (see the Contact List on Page 2).





We all know that there is a lack of geriatric specialists, family doctors, nurses, social and support workers with adequate knowledge of and training in geriatrics. The RTOERO Charitable Foundation's mission is to correct this situation.

Along with this focus, the Foundation has also placed an emphasis on Social Isolation which has become an even more important issue in this time of Pandemic Isolation. October is Social Isolation Awareness Month. The Foundation needs to raise funds for research to combat this serious issue. Please consider making a donation to help achieve their goal of raising \$100,000. Details of this initiative and much more useful information can be found in the Fall edition of the Foundation's newsletter, "Embrace Aging", mailed to all members in September.

The Foundation is funded in a variety of ways: by individual donations; by District fundraisers; and by Corporate donations. One meaningful and popular way that individuals and Districts can support the mission of RTOERO Foundation is with gifts made "In Memory" or "In Honour" of someone special. We ask that you consider supporting our Foundation in their quest to enrich our life-long pursuit of aging well. For more information, contact Diane Conklin, 289-303-7103.



Retirement  
Planning  
Workshops

### **RETIRING IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS OR KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS?**

Register for an RTOERO virtual retirement planning workshop designed for all those in the education sector – early years, K-12, post-secondary and more.

#### **Learn more about:**

- Planning for your financial future
- Your pension
- Health benefit needs in retirement
- RTOERO benefit plans
- Retirement insights from your peers

**All workshops have an approximate duration of 3 hours from point of check-in.**

To register for a workshop, go to the RTOERO Website at [rtoero.ca](http://rtoero.ca) and click on the Registration box at the top of the home page. Workshops are being done virtually and in person. Go to the RTOERO Website at [rtoero.ca](http://rtoero.ca) for more information.

## **WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!**


Victoria Andic-Whealy	Laura Griffin
Teresa Antoniou	Mary Hanyan
Gordon Barber	Kathleen Hendricks
John Boros	Shannon Hingston
Wilma Bussi	Barbara Hutton
Patti Devitt	Nancy MacKay
Erminia Di Giorgio	Diane McChesney
Laurie Dulong	Daniel Oettinger
Homayoun Eman	Michael Petrachenko
Scott Fedorowich	Jill Russell
Louise Gagnon	Mark Townson
Deborah Lee Goldrup	Linda Trasatti
Barbara Gray	Lynda Wilson
John Grdenic	

***We hope you will come out and enjoy the full benefits and camaraderie of being a member of RTOERO District 14 Niagara!***

## **MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT**

District 14 Niagara invites all employees of the Public and Private Schools, Colleges, and Universities in Ontario to join RTOERO. One does not need to be retired to be a member of RTOERO. While employed you can join for free and participate in our activities and receive our reading material.

Plan your retirement; don't wait until you are in your last year of employment to begin planning your retirement. Consider giving yourself a minimum five-year window to plan your retirement. One way to plan is to attend one of our "Retirement Planning Workshops". We are holding our next workshop in March 2023. Watch the RTOERO central website for this date and others available in surrounding districts. Those in attendance will hear: recommendations on planning for your retirement; exciting opportunities available when you retire; and information about the RTOERO Group Benefits Programme.

Each year we welcome new retirees to celebrate their retirement at our annual Farewell to the Bell Luncheon. One has the opportunity to meet and be reacquainted with others from the education sector. Keep Thursday 7 September 2023 open for this year's Farewell to the Bell Luncheon and Golf. 

Know of someone who is retiring soon? Encourage them to request an RTOERO Registration Kit. Please consider yourself as an RTOERO ambassador!

Bill Doyle, Membership Chair





# The Clarice West-Hobbs Contemplative Garden

*Creating a quiet respite at the St. Catharines Hospital*



The late Clarice West-Hobbs, a former President of District 14, 1st Vice President of RTOERO, a long-time member of the Rotary Club of St. Catharines Lakeshore and Chair of the Club's World & Community Service Committee, had a dream of establishing a beautiful garden at the St. Catharines Hospital site, where patients and staff could enjoy a brief respite. With her untimely passing in 2020, the Rotary Club decided to support her dream by developing The Clarice West-Hobbs Contemplative Garden to be located along the entire west-facing facade of the hospital building. On their behalf, District 14 submitted an application to RTOERO's Community Grant Program. We are pleased to announce that this application has been approved, and \$4,000 will go to the Rotary Club for this project. A cheque for that amount was presented to Eric Jones, the Chairperson of the Clarice West-Hobbs Contemplative Garden Committee of the St. Catharines Lakeshore Rotary Club.



The Project is now entering Phase 2 which will continue the work of creating a quiet, restful place with the placement of Sitting Rocks installed in the grassed and treed areas between the existing sidewalks and service roadway. For more detailed information about the Contemplative Garden project, and how you can personally donate to its continuing creation - more plantings, benches, pergolas, etc. go to:

<https://rotarylakeshore.com/page/support-the-clarice-west-hobbs-contemplative-garden>



Club of St. Catharines Lakeshore



## BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED



I have been tasked with the unenviable job of filling the slate of officers for the upcoming AGM. To date we have 16 positions open and only 9 people to fill those spots. If ever you have wondered what do in retirement or how can I help, please contact me at [chereen037@gmail.com](mailto:chereen037@gmail.com) or call 905-646-2640. If you are at all curious, come out to one of our monthly meetings. They are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at the Dr. Huq Library in the St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatic Centre.



Chereen Osborne  
Past Chair



### Over 1500 Email Grapevines!

Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we have your correct email address. Over 1500 copies of the Grapevine are received by email link. **If we do not have your correct email you will be missing out.** Send all changes or corrections to RTOERO Head Office who will then inform us.

### FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

Remember to visit our District 14 Niagara Website regularly for the most current Information. New, important events sometimes come up between Newsletters, but are announced on the Website. Go to [district14.rtoero.ca](http://district14.rtoero.ca) for the latest information!

**The deadline for submitting material for the Summer/Fall Grapevine is June 1, 2023**

**Editor's Note:** The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of RTOERO District 14 Niagara. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Grapevine Editor & Communications Chair, Bonnie Bryan, at 905-562-7773.



*Join Us to Celebrate Spring!*

*RTOERO District 14's*

**ANNUAL MEETING  
&  
SPRING LUNCHEON**



**Thursday, May 4, 2023  
Queenston Heights Restaurant**

**14184 Niagara Parkway  
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON**

**11 a.m. Registration  
12 p.m. – Business Meeting  
12:30 p.m. – Lunch**

**Special Presentations & Gift Card Draws following Lunch**

**Menu**

*Rolls & butter; Seasonable Vegetables;*

**CHOICE OF:**

- 1) *Herbed-crusted Chicken with roasted garlic glaze;*
- 2) *Baked Salmon with parmesan lemon pepper & Riesling sauce;*
- 3) *Wild Mushroom Ravioli with fire roasted tomato sauce;*
- 4) *Roast Prime Rib of Beef au jus.*

**PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CHOICE OF ENTRÉE ON THE FORM BELOW**

*Coffee, Tea, Milk or Soft Drinks*

*Cash Bar*

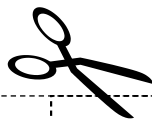
**\$30 per person**

***Honourees' lunch is complimentary!***



**Send Ticket Order & Cheque to: Diane Conklin at 19 Phipps Street, Fort Erie, L2A 2V3 by April 21, 2023!  
For more information call Diane at 289-303-7103 or email at [drconklin11@bell.net](mailto:drconklin11@bell.net).**

**NO POSTDATED CHEQUES!**



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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Number of Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$30 Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEAL CHOICE(s): Indicate the Entrée Number**

**Make cheque payable to RTOERO District 14**

**A portion or your lunch has been subsidized by District 14 - RTOERO**