

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION

For the complete history of the Provincial Organization, refer to the publication *The Provincial*

History of OASWT (revised, 1994)

During the late 1940's and early 1950's, small groups of retired women teachers in various parts

of Ontario were meeting for fun and fellowship. A Toronto group known as *The Rendezvous Club*

organized the inaugural meeting to form a provincial organization which became the Ontario

Association of Superannuated Women Teachers (OASWT).

Formation of OASWT—April 3, 1956

- Retired women teachers first organized to protest the low pensions paid to retired women teachers of Ontario.
- Twelve Ontario centres were represented at the organizational meeting.
- Miss Anna Hunter convened the first meeting in Toronto in April, 1956.
- The first group of women presented briefs to the Premier of Ontario requesting pensions equal to those of male teachers in the province.
- No progress was made because the government argued that the women did not represent all retired teachers.
- Annual membership fees ranged from \$0.25 to \$1.00 for pensions from \$600 to slightly more than \$1,000.

Growth of OASWT—1958-1962

- The first constitution was drafted in 1958.
- Membership increased to 1935 members.
- Five new branches were formed in 1962—an increase from 14 to 19 branches.

Unique Health Insurance Plan Introduced—1963

- The unique OASWT Post-Hospital Insurance Plan designed especially for retired women teachers was first introduced at a relatively low cost.

Formation of Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (STO)—1966

- Retired men and women teachers joined forces to form one organization, the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (STO).
- STO therefore became the group that officially represented all the retired teachers and was recognized by the Ontario Government.
- STO had to negotiate through the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF)—the combined group of active, working teachers.

Financial Support from the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario—1966

- FWTAO gave OASWT a grant of \$100,000 to assist retired elementary women teachers whose pensions were less than \$900 per year.
- The money was distributed to 481 teachers that year.

Continued Growth of OASWT—1971

- Membership had grown to 4,444 members now organized into 51 branches.
- The province was divided into 15 areas.
- An Area Director was appointed for each district to assist the branches with their work and to act as liaison with the provincial Board of Directors.

Provincial Office Established in Peterborough—1971

- Cora Bailey was appointed the first Executive Secretary of OASWT.
- The Provincial Office was located in Peterborough.
- A Framework Committee was organized to set out the duties and responsibilities of the

position.

20th Anniversary of OASWT–1976

- OASWT celebrated its 20th Anniversary in Ottawa in 1976.
- An official OASWT logo was chosen to be used on all printed documents.
- The Ontario Government approved a pension escalation clause based on the increase in the cost of living.
- Cora Bailey wrote the first history of OASWT covering the years 1956-1976.

OASWT Official Publications–1980

- The first OASWT Handbook, which included the Constitution and other pertinent information for the Board of Directors and Branches, was published.
- An *Invitation to Join* brochure was prepared and distributed.

OASWT Celebrates its Silver Jubilee–1981

- OASWT celebrated its Silver Jubilee at the Annual Meeting in Hamilton.
- The first theme or motto *Sharing with Enthusiasm* was introduced.

New Executive Secretary Appointed–1982

- After 11 years of service, Cora Bailey, the driving force behind the formation and early growth of the organization, retired from the position of Executive Secretary.
- Dorothy Montgomery was appointed as her replacement.
- Provincial Office remained in Peterborough.

Highlights–1983-1986

- In 1983, an official OASWT pin was designed and made available to all members.
- In 1985, the first compact version of the OASWT Handbook was published.
- In 1985, Provincial Honorary Life Memberships were established.
- In 1986, to mark the 30th Anniversary, each branch was given a gift of \$30 from the Board of Directors.
- A Certificate of Appreciation was produced for Branches to present to members in recognition of outstanding service at the local level.

Executive Secretary's Responsibilities Expanded–1989

- The responsibility for keeping the financial records was transferred to the Provincial Office.
- Dorothy Montgomery became the first Executive Secretary-Treasurer of OASWT.

OASWT Provincial Past President's Pin–1990

- An official OASWT Provincial Past President's pin was designed.
- One of these pins was presented to all living Provincial Past Presidents at the Annual Meeting in Trenton.

Improved OASWT Post-Hospital Insurance Plan–1990

- An improved OASWT Post-Hospital Insurance Plan was introduced by Citadel Insurance Company.
- OASWT negotiated an annual rebate from Citadel of 1% of all premiums paid which added revenue to the Provincial Treasury.
- Insurance agents were no longer employed by Citadel to sell the plan. OASWT members could apply directly for the insurance by mail.

Branch Refund Established–1990

- An annual fee return of \$1.50 from the Provincial Treasury to the branches for each provincial member of OASWT was approved with no branch receiving less than \$100.

Major Changes in the OASWT Post-Hospital Insurance Plan–1991

- A new insurance carrier, Seaboard Life Insurance Company, was chosen.
- Seabury & Smith Co. became the administrators of the plan.
- Under the leadership of Marie Vaughn, the Provincial Insurance Convenor, Seaboard Insurance Company agreed to pay OASWT an annual rebate of 2% of all premiums.

She travelled extensively across Ontario to introduce and advertise the new plan to branch members.

Further Changes in the OASWT Organization—1991

- A distinctive OASWT pin for local Branch Presidents was designed and made available at the Annual Meeting in St. Catherines.
- The second edition of the OASWT Handbook was published in 1991.

Changes in Voting Representation—1992

- An increase in the voting representation of the larger branches was approved.

Further Changes—1994

- The branch refund was increased from \$1.50 to \$3.00 for each provincial member with no branch receiving less than \$100.
- A Chartered Accountant was appointed as the Provincial Auditor.

Executive Secretary-Treasurer Changes—1995

- Dorothy Montgomery retired from her position as Executive Secretary-Treasurer after 13 years of outstanding service to OASWT. She was honoured at the Annual Meeting in Toronto.
- Johanna Hammoud (Vanderpol) was appointed Executive Secretary-Treasurer in May, 1995.

Strategic Planning Committee Formed—1995

- The first full audit of OASWT financial statements confirmed a serious financial crisis.
- The Board of Directors appointed a Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Juanita Rathbun, to look for solutions to the identified problems and to formulate a Vision Statement, Goals and Action Plans to guide the organization into the 21st century.

Constitution/Handbook Revision Committee—June, 1996

- At the Annual Meeting in Kingston an Ad Hoc Constitution/Handbook Committee, chaired by Helen Mutton, was appointed by the Board of Directors to revise the OASWT Constitution and publish an updated third edition of the Handbook.

Important Recommendations from the Strategic Planning Committee—1997-1998

- Any retired woman teacher was eligible to be a member of OASWT whether or not she was receiving a teacher's pension.
- The category of Associate Member was eliminated.
- A flat fee schedule for membership in OASWT was established.
- Women teachers who retired on or before August 30, 1980 would pay one-half the regular fee.
- Honorary members would pay the annual fee.
- The final Strategic Planning Report was presented and approved at the Annual Meeting in London in 1998.

Major Changes to the Constitution—1999

- As a result of extensive consultation with all levels of the organization, major revisions to the Constitution were approved and incorporated in a new Handbook.
- The name of the organization was changed to *Retired Women Teachers of Ontario* (RWTO).

Website and toll-free number—2000

- RWTO established its own Website and toll-free number.

Newsletter in colour—2001

- On November 2001, RWTO first published its newsletter in colour.

Home and Auto Insurance Plan—2001

- Home and Auto Insurance program was added to RWTO insurance plan.

East and West Parry Sound Amalgamation—2003

- By mutual consent, East and West Parry Sound Branches decided to amalgamate. The new branch was named East Parry Sound.

Policy Handbook --2003

- An *ad hoc* Policy Committee was struck to compile a Policy Handbook to contain all policies and procedures established by the Board. The Committee members were: Emily McBride (Chair), Carol Martin, and Eve Kendel.
- Members of the Policy Committee researched all the minutes and collected everything that referred to policies and procedures. The result was the Policy Handbook.

Provincial Membership Committee –2003

- At the Post Annual Meeting in June, a provincial Membership Committee was appointed. The following members were asked to sit on this committee: Barbara Bain (Chair), Sherri Stokes, and Sandra Train.
- The mandate was threefold: 1) to offer opportunity to retired women teachers in Ontario to join our organization by opening new branches; 2) to provide ideas of leadership to established branches to assist them to increase membership; 3) to support smaller branches with the option of amalgamation.

RWTO Travel Insurance Plan—2003

- RWTO Travel Insurance Plan was added to the other RWTO insurance plans.

Community Outreach Project 2003-2007

- The purpose of the project was to encourage and support local outreach projects and to raise the profile of RWTO.
- A sum of \$500 was made available to each branch for community outreach.
- This one-time grant had to meet the following criteria: 1) it must be a creative local project; 2) it cannot be given to an established charity; 3) local branch members must be involved; 4) it must benefit women, children and/or be of educational betterment; 5) it must benefit more than one person.
- Each branch had to apply stating the purpose of the request, how it would be presented and how it would meet the criteria. The project had to be approved by the Provincial President and two members of the Board of Directors.
- All fifty-three branches applied for and received their grant of \$500 to be used for creative initiatives in their communities. This was a most successful endeavour, well worth the \$25 000 distributed from the Provincial Treasury to support these wonderful projects. Women and children from all over the province have benefited from Caring and Sharing shown through these projects. (The projects are listed in the 50th Annual Report on page 42.)

Cora Bailey Award—2003

- In 2003, RWTO was most proud to name a certificate of recognition of service in honour of Miss Cora Bailey, a revered member of the Peterborough Branch for many years.
- Cora Bailey had an enviable record of 42 teaching years, became a school principal when few women held such a position, and served in many organizations such as FWTAO, OTF, and STO. Upon retiring from teaching, she organized the first Central office of OASWT (now RWTO) and was Secretary-Treasurer, a position she held for ten years, retiring in 1982 with Honorary Life Membership.
- The history of OASWT from 1956-1986 was written by Cora Bailey.
- The Cora Bailey Award is therefore a very prestigious award to recognize the outstanding contributions of our members at the branch level.

Creation of Area 12—2004

- At the 2004 Annual Meeting, a resolution was passed to create a new area,

Area 12.

- Area 12 included the following branches: Lydia Snow, Mississauga, Oakville, and Peel North. Burlington Branch was moved to Area 12.

Communications Convenor Position Created—2004

- The Executive Secretary-Treasurer started both the Newsletter and RWTO web site, but she was finding it too time consuming [with all] because of her other duties and the time constraints under which she worked. The Board decided that the advantages of creating a Board position to take on this role would be twofold: it would reduce the workload of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer, [workload] and a Board member would [better] be more able to determine what would interest the membership.
- Martha Summers, who was the Recording Secretary at the time, agreed to take on this very important and demanding task.
- The Executive Secretary-Treasurer retained the responsibilities of the business aspects of the Newsletter such as printing and distributing, while the Communications Convenor became responsible for the contents.

Feather in Your Hat Award—2004

- The Feather in Your Hat Award was established by the Membership Committee to recognize creative, innovative and successful activities carried out by a Branch.

Barbara Bain Membership Award--2005

- In 2005 the Board of Directors decided to finance three cash awards totalling \$600 to be given out at the Annual General Meeting. A \$200 cash award would be presented to three branches, one each from their respective branch size group of small, medium or large, with the largest percentage increase in membership during the past year.
- This award is called the Barbara Bain Membership Award in honour of Barbara Bain who served on the Board of Directors for 11 years in the positions of Area Director, Assistant Insurance Convenor, Insurance Convenor, 1st and 2nd Vice-President, President, Past President, Honorary President, and Membership Convenor.

Convention 2006 Waterloo ringing in 50! RWTO Fiftieth Anniversary -- 2006

- The 50th Annual Convention was hosted by Area 2, with branches in Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph-Wellington, Listowel, Palmerston and Stratford working together under the leadership of Carolyn Shoup, Convention Convenor, to make this a remarkable event in the history of RWTO.
- Wellington-Guelph branch presented a Fashion Show with commentator, Marion Kasha, Area Director, featuring styles of dressing through the years. These fashions brought back many memories and many giggles too.
- The highlight of Tuesday evening was the launching of the book **Chalk, Challenge and Change** by our Past President, Carol Martin, and the Book Project Committee. The dream of publishing a book became a reality.
- The highlight of the Convention was the Wednesday evening banquet, with past Presidents of RWTO as guests. The ballroom was transformed into a magical room decked out in gold and blue. Gold foil building blocks on each table represented the learning blocks that members have shared with their students over the years. Two choirs performed: Kitchener-Waterloo Branch RWTO choir and Bluevale Collegiate Choir of sixty students. A standing ovation followed their performances. The quality of music was simply outstanding.
- Besides the grand celebration in Waterloo, the individual branches also celebrated the 50th Anniversary of RWTO in a fitting manner.

Chalk, Challenge and Change, 50th Anniversary Project--2003-2006

- The Book Project Committee members were Carol Martin (Chair), Gillian Hewitt (Project Manager), Linda Rafuse (Treasurer), Carol Bell (Secretary), Sheila Wright, Eileen Collins, Linda Spinks, and Sharron Crawford-White.
- This ambitious project evolved over three years.
- One hundred and seventy-three members, ninety and older, had memories of their teaching careers published in that book. Many other RWTO members contributed to the success of the book by interviewing, recording, editing stories, and proofreading.
- Two thousand copies were printed initially, but the book was such an overwhelming success that the Board of Directors approved a reprint of 2000 more copies.
- All the women who had their stories published received a complimentary copy.
- Copies of **Chalk, Challenge and Change** are in libraries, retirement homes, boards of education, and historical society libraries. Many are in the homes of the children and grandchildren of our storytellers.

Constitution becomes available electronically—2006-2007

- The Board assigned the task [to the Parliamentarian] of ensuring that the amendments passed at the Annual Meeting were incorporated in the Constitution to the Parliamentarian.
- The first edition of the Handbook, containing the constitution, was published in 1985. The committee members were Alma Wilson (Chair), Doris Mundle, Veronica Jantzi, and Lenore Graham .
- The second edition was published in 1991. The committee members were Norma Carrick (Chair), Daisy Wilson, Alice Hughes, Isabelle Parker, and Juanita Rathbun.
- The third edition was published in 1999. The committee members were Helen Mutton (Chair), Wilma Rymar, Eve Kendel, Marie Smith, Marie Vaughn, Anja Jokela, Isabelle Parker, Juanita Rathbun, and Johanna Vanderpol (Executive Secretary-Treasurer).
- In the previous handbook there were four sections: the History of RWTO, the Constitution, the Policy Manual, and the Hospital & Home Care Insurance Plan.
- In 2005, it was decided that the four sections would be treated separately.
- The Constitution had to be retyped. The Parliamentarian, Lee Beech, inserted the amendments that had occurred since 1999. The committee members for this project were Lee Beech (Parliamentarian), Martha Summers and Jeannine Renaud.
- Each article of the Constitution now starts on a different page so that amendments can be added without changing the page numbering. Updates are added annually.
- The Constitution is now available on the RWTO website and in hard copy from the Provincial Office.

Policies and Procedures Manual—2007

- In 2006, a committee was struck to [revise] update the Policies and Procedures Manual. The committee members were Sherri Stokes (Chair), Martha Summers, and Jeannine Renaud. The manual was completely restructured and edited.
- At the post-annual meeting in June, an *ad hoc* Policy Committee was struck to oversee new additions to the manual. The Policy Committee members

were Sherri Stokes (Chair), Martha Summers and Jeannine Renaud.

- A hard copy can be obtained from the Provincial Office.

Policy Committee becomes a standing committee—2008

•At the Annual Meeting, a resolution was passed to accept that the *ad hoc* Policy Committee be changed to a standing Policy Committee.

Name change of Grenville East to Upper Canada East—2008

•As the branch Grenville East now encompasses a larger geographical area, the Branch of Grenville East presented a resolution to have the name changed to Upper Canada East. That resolution was passed at the 2008 Annual Meeting.

List of Areas and branches as of June 2008

AREAS AND THEIR BRANCHES

Area 1

Beaver Valley
Flesherton
Highpoint-Dundalk
Owen Sound and Area
South Bruce
Warton

Area 3

Chatham-Kent
London-Middlesex
Sarnia-Lambton
St. Thomas-Elgin
Windsor-Essex

Area 5

Rendezvous
Scarborough
East York
York North

Area 7

Belleville
Durham Region North
Northumberland
Peterborough
Trenton

Area 9

Lanark
Ottawa-Carleton

Area 11

Central Algoma
Sault Ste. Marie

Area 2

Cambridge
Guelph-Wellington
Kitchener-Waterloo
Listowel
Palmerston
Stratford

Area 4

Brant
Haldimand
Hamilton-Wentworth
Lincoln West
Niagara Falls
Niagara South
St. Catharines

Area 6

Blue Mountain
Coldwater
East Parry Sound
Muskoka
Orillia

Area 8

Ganonoque
Kingston
Leeds-Brockville
Napanee
Upper Canada East

Area 10

Sudbury

Area 12

Burlington
Lydia Snow
Mississauga
Oakville

Peel North