



# THIRD AGE LEARNING YORK REGION

Eighth Annual General Meeting  
October 17th, 2022 – 12:00 noon  
Via Zoom Meeting

## President's Report

It is my great privilege to give my second report as President of TALYR. As we all know and appreciate, this past year, like the 2 before it, has not been a normal one by any stretch. That said, I remain very proud of our organization and our ability to be flexible in the face of uncertain times, and above all else, to mount a hugely successful (virtual) program that ensured the health and safety of all our members.

### Speaker Programs

Since there was no opportunity to return safely to any in-person lectures, the entire year's offering was done virtually, via Zoom, for the second year in row. We did our usual Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 (7 lectures per series) via Zoom. We made the determination that we would continue the Winter series, first piloted last year, as a permanent feature. In the past we had been reluctant to offer in-person lectures in the winter because of the higher likelihood of inclement weather and because many of our members took the opportunity to travel in winter to warmer climes. However, now that we and our Members seem fully comfortable using Zoom for virtual webinars, the TALYR Board has decided to offer at least 4 virtual lectures per year, in January and February, and if possible, to offer these extra 4 Webinars free of charge to all paid-up active Members as our way of thanking them for their ongoing support.

As before, our lectures were not "themed" per se, but we strove to present varied and wide-ranging sets of lectures over a broad range of topics that our Members told us were of interest.

A brief summary of some of the more pertinent "success metrics" of our 2021-2022 Series of Zoom Webinars can be found below.

	Number of Webinars Presented	Number of Unique Viewers (Series Average)	Ratings of Either "Excellent" or "Good" (Series Average)
Fall 2021	7	184	90.3%
Winter 2022	4	142	86.9%
Spring 2022	7 (1 more than usual)	146	95.7%

As you can see from the table above, we expanded our offering in the Spring from the usual 6 lectures by adding a seventh one. Viewership was in the typical range, although it varied a lot from the Fall to the other 2 Series.

Of special note is our overall attendee satisfaction (as measured by your ratings of each webinar/lecturer as either “Excellent” or “Good”) which is enviable for any organization. We are justifiably proud of the quality of the program we have been presenting, and the level of engagement and appreciation of our Members.

### The Future of Using Zoom

In May, we sent out a planning survey to all Members and were gratified to have over 150 responses. Some of the key takeaways that you told us were:

- At the time of the survey, fully 70% of respondents were more comfortable staying with Zoom (which is what we did of course).
- However, even when asked to imagine a fully “Post-COVID” scenario, twice as many of you said you preferred to stay with only Zoom compared to those who wanted only in person. Of course, that “snapshot” was taken in May 2022 - reactions and preferences may be very different in the future.
- When given a list of “priorities” to rank in order of importance, the number 1 priority you told us was the ability to recruit speakers from outside our usual geographic area. [In fact, this past year saw lectures originating from Dublin, Portland, Buffalo, Kingston, Waterloo, Montreal, and Ottawa (twice)].

When taken together, this tells us there is still considerable appetite for virtual lectures via Zoom even when public health concerns allow us to go back to “normal”. Many of you said you felt a mixed program of some in-person lectures and some Zoom lectures might make for a good balance of priorities.

Needless to say, our Board will be keeping its finger on the pulse of the wishes of our members to ensure that we serve you the programming you want!

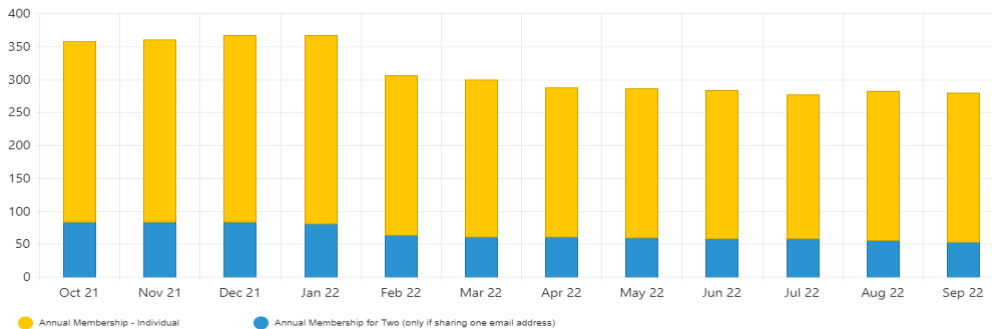
### Venue Update

Despite our obvious success with virtual webinars via Zoom, it is of course our hope to one day return to in-person meetings! To that end, we still do not have any reliable estimate of when our former home at the Aurora Cultural Center (ACC) may again be available to us, even if we were ready to return. The massive renovations and construction to build the now officially named “Aurora Town Square” (a \$60M project of which a new and improved ACC will be an integral part) are still underway and we do not know when in 2023 it will officially re-open. For that matter, we do not yet have any idea of the fee structure for renting the new venue, so it remains to be seen whether we will be able to afford it or not.

Accordingly, we are still keeping the option open of renting space at the Cineplex Odeon Theatre complex in Aurora (whether as an interim measure while we wait for the ACC, or as a more permanent measure in case the newly renovated ACC is no longer affordable to us). The Cineplex theatre continues to indicate their willingness and enthusiasm for us to consider the theatre if need be.

## Membership

Since the last AGM, we have seen some downward trends in paid memberships (see chart below, which runs from the last AGM on Oct 25th, 2021, to October 2nd, 2022).



However, a good part of this decrease is likely due to an administrative change: in our database we were carrying a lot of “Members” whose renewals had lapsed, but who were still being labelled as “Active”. This year, we made an overt change to be more diligent in categorizing and removing the “lapsed” members from the “active” members. Therefore, a good part of the apparently sudden decrease seen in early 2022 may well be us “catching up” and reflecting all at once what was actually a much more gradual cumulative decrease over a period of time. Going forward, we will have a much better accounting of actual “active” members in real time.

## Financial Considerations

When we moved to virtual programming in the Fall of 2020, we decided to offer our Zoom Webinars to paid up members free of charge for as long as we felt it fiscally responsible to do so. In the short term, we felt we were able to use reserves and our modest annual Membership fees of \$10/person to offset the costs of the Zoom webinars and provide them to our members at no additional charge. It was our way of giving back to our Members for their continued loyalty and support though the pandemic.

As we alerted Members at the last AGM, we knew we could not sustain that practice in the future as we spent the reserves (and knowing that Membership dues only ever covered a fraction of our actual costs). Therefore, starting with the Spring 2022 Series, we again started charging a “ticket” fee to attend our lectures, even if via Zoom. That brings us back in line with every other Third Age Learning Group we are aware of, all of whom have been charging a fee even for Zoom webinars all along.

We were able, for the Spring 2022 Series, to finally apply the credit we had been carrying forward for any of the paid ticket holders of the Spring 2020 series which was cancelled outright when the pandemic struck. Any 2020 ticket holders who wanted to attend the 2022 Spring Series therefore did so at no additional charge as they were essentially “prepaid”. Any 2020 ticket holders who chose not to attend the 2022 Spring Series, or for any other reason wished to have a refund of the 2020 tickets were fully refunded upon request.

The TALYR Board very carefully considers the ongoing financial health of the organization at every meeting. As a not-for-profit, our goal is to only charge what we need to cover our actual costs, while keeping a reasonable amount in reserve to cover one year’s worth of future fixed and expected costs. Our current pricing structure, which has not changed in years, seems to strike a good balance, and offers what we believe is an exceptional value proposition. This will, as always, be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that it remains appropriate.

## Thank You to Our Volunteers

During the past year we were fortunate to recruit an additional Board member, Ms. Mary Baxter, who also sits on the Program Committee. Prior to her retirement a few years ago, Mary was the CEO and Director of Library Services for the Georgina Public Library system. She has been a wonderful addition to our Board, and we have already benefitted from her valuable perspectives and skill sets.

As you can see in the following table, we have only 2 formal bodies - the Board of Directors and a Program Committee - both of course comprised 100% of volunteers. You will also note that there is considerable overlap in the two – meaning we are getting a LOT of mileage out of the same volunteers!

That of course is a good thing (we are very efficient!), but also a bad thing (we are stretched very thinly). On balance, we really and truly need some new voices and new perspectives around our volunteer tables.

At the risk of sounding overly “dramatic”, let me be very clear – we cannot continue indefinitely to rely year after year on the same volunteers. At some point, volunteers who agree to stay in the same roles year after year because no one else has come forward to take over from them, will simply leave or burn-out. If/when that happens, the organization and the programs you have come to love will have no choice but to wind up for lack of volunteers. None of us wants to see that come to pass.

Accordingly, we will be undertaking (once again!) a bit of a push in the coming weeks to see if we can persuade any of our Members to step forward to be considered for a volunteer position. I am especially anxious to bolster the ranks of our Board members beyond the 6 currently serving (our Bylaw allows for up to nine Directors). If you have any interest in being considered, please contact me directly – we would be delighted to see some new leadership and some fresh eyes and perspectives around the Board table.

Carole Langford continues her stewardship of the Program Committee, much to our benefit and with our profound thanks. We have added a new member to the Program Committee this past year (thank you Phyllis Ryall for stepping up!). This Committee ensures that we have a lot of input and a diversity of perspectives around the Committee table. Our Lecture/Webinar program is after all, the heart and soul of what we do and who we are, so the more fulsome the input, the better.

<u>Board of Directors 2022-2023</u>	<u>Program Committee 2022-2023</u>
Michael Wosnick, President and Chair	Carole Langford, Chair
Heather MacKay, Corporate Secretary	Mary Baxter
Carole Langford, Treasurer	Blair Day
Mary Baxter	Heather MacKay
Blair Day	Patricia Montgomery-Rundle
Kathy Wosnick	Phyllis Ryall
	Kathy Wosnick
	Michael Wosnick (ex officio)

## Looking Ahead

All in all, this has been another challenging and yet rewarding year. I expect no less from 2022-2023. We will need to meet a number of challenges including, but not limited to:

- ✓ Dealing with ongoing uncertainties with COVID and/or related public health issues,
- ✓ Securing an appropriate venue for in-person lectures,
- ✓ Deciding what sort of balance works best for in-person vs. virtual programming, and
- ✓ Recruiting an expanded roster of volunteers to keep our organization a thriving concern.

I am looking forward to another successful year for TALYR as we try to present an engaging program for our appreciative community of enthusiastic Lifelong Learners.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Michael A. Wosnick, PhD**

President, Third Age Learning - York Region (TALYR)



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