



Third Age Network (TAN)

an association of lifelong learning groups in Ontario

www.thirdagenetwork.ca

Newsletter

March 2020

Report from your Executive

I can't believe how much our world has changed in the last few weeks. In the midst of the decisions and actions taken to manage COVID-19, we have seen people world-wide pull together with acts of understanding and kindness – making significant sacrifices in their daily lives and relationships to keep one another safe. Our TAN members have made the hard decisions to terminate ongoing programs or postpone programs that were due to get underway this spring. This sort of decision is very difficult to make, as Boards try to balance a rapidly changing situation with the understanding of how important our programs are for our members. Well done for making the decisions to keep your members safe. The TAN community will continue to support one another through the challenges that the coming weeks may bring.

I am pleased to announce that Sandra Kerr has agreed to join the TAN Executive as a Director-at-Large. From the profile on Sandra in this issue you will see what tremendous experience and energy she will bring to our Board. We are very pleased to have her. Welcome, Sandra.

It is wonderful to announce that TAN membership inquiries have been coming at a regular and steady pace over the past few months. Recently we have welcomed groups from Durham Region and Wasaga Beach, and several others are working their way through the process at the moment. Many thanks to Louise Pope and our Membership group who give so much time, effort, and TLC to get new groups up and running. If you know of anyone who may be interested in forming a third age learning group, please encourage them to contact us at info@thirdagenetwork.ca.

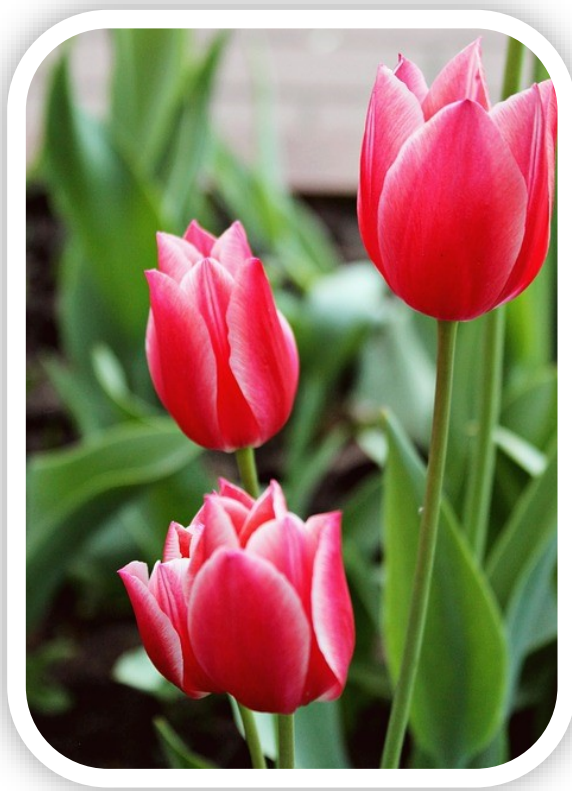
We regularly receive inquiries regarding items in our newsletter which people have found valuable and wish to consult again, but they don't recall in which issue they appeared. To help you out, we have created an index to the newsletter issues so that you can easily find what you need. The index is posted on our website in the News

section. This is a good opportunity to thank you all for the material you submit, and for the dedicated efforts of our editor Sheilagh Hickie.

Given the speed with which things are changing, we are currently assessing our TAN activities for the next while. We are assessing the timing for our next Board meeting, AGM and information sharing events, and will investigate how we can use technology to "get together" in the interim. We will keep you up-to-date as we move forward.

Stay safe and healthy!

Cathy Spark, President



Sandra Kerr Retires

By Mary Vourakes

Program Manager, Programs for 50+ and Community Engagement, Ryerson University

Editor's Note; Having worked with Sandra since 2007, I know how much she has given to TAN and thank her for her help and advice over the years since.

After 23 years at The Chang School (Ryerson University), Sandra Kerr retired this past December. There was a celebration held with her family, friends and colleagues both old and new, including past Deans Marilyn Booth and Marie Bountrogianni.

Sandra is highly passionate about programming for older adults. She had devoted her time at The Chang School to championing exceptional offerings for older adult learners interested in developing new skills, making social connections, and engaging in the community. Sandra is also highly regarded for her effective relationship with community organizations such as the LIFE Institute, Baycrest and Third Age Network (TAN).

Under her direction, Programs for 50+ grew to serve over 3,500 older adult learners. Sandra's enthusiasm for



volunteerism and social service further demonstrate her commitment to community building. Even in retirement, she continues to work with the Programs for 50+.

A scholarship was also established called the Sandra Kerr Award in Community Engagement which provides financial support to students registered in The Chang School's Certificate Programs in Community Engagement, Leadership, and Development and Aging and Gerontology. If you wish to donate you can click [here](#).

A Partnership in Lifelong Learning

By Anne Hilliard, Lakehead Orillia Third Age Learning

It seems that Third Age Learning Lakehead (TALL) in the Sunshine City of Orillia was an idea that was just waiting to be launched. From a single fundraising lecture with wine and cheese in September 2018, we have grown to a much anticipated event for seniors for three series of five morning lectures each a year. Our attendance now reaches almost 400 at each lecture.

Orillia is a town that draws many retirees to the quiet city situated on two beautiful lakes. It has a thriving arts community, a brand new library and is a reasonable distance from larger cities. Lifelong learning was an easy sell for our elder demographic. Our group's success is largely due to the close partnership we have with Lakehead University. At the same moment we were getting ready to start, LU had established a mandate to reach out to the community.

TALL became a natural channel to do just that. Community Engagement In Lifelong Learning (CELL) is the umbrella department under which TALL thrives. It offers us the benefit of the LU website, marketing, accounting and the administrative time of CELL Director, Dr. Linda Rodenburg.

On lecture days we also have four LU students to help with coffee and tickets. Our committee of four community members and Dr. Rodenburg decides on events and themes and suggests speakers who are then contacted by the university.

Another aspect of our lecture series is the link we have created with several retirement homes in our city. In cooperation with students in the School of Social Work at LU, we have created an outreach program. Students present a filmed mini version of our lecture followed by a short discussion with the residents. For this we have received a municipal grant that makes our high quality videos accessible to a greater number of people. We have intentionally set the bar very high for our series. This is what we feel our community demands.

Our speakers are very well-versed in their field and vetted for the quality of their delivery. From a grass roots need we have created a much-appreciated and enjoyable opportunity to celebrate learning with our senior community. Very rewarding for those of us making it happen!

Rethinking Climate Change: Resilience and Transformation

By Ann Magner

Margaret Atwood calls 'Climate Change, Everything Change'. The speakers in the popular Bluewater Association for Lifelong Learning's (BALL) lecture series titled, *Building Resilience*, effectively drove that concept home. In six thought-provoking lectures filled with hope and inspiration, key findings from research institutes, universities, governments and communities on building climate resilience and adaptation skills were well presented to an engaged audience of several hundred participants.

Be Prepared: In the first lecture Dr. Blair Feltmate, Head of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, University of Waterloo, delivered a pragmatic approach to climate adaptation. The Centre generates cost-effective and practical ways to help lower the risks for Canadian homeowners and the communities in which they live, from the cost of extreme weather events such as flooding.

Create a Resilient and Fair Food System: Dr. Thorsten Arnold, who initiated the collaborative food-marketing venture, *Eat Local Grey Bruce*, an online farmers market with over 300 local products available for purchase, addressed the complexities of climate change. We need to recognize, protect, and regenerate the biosphere, which plays a key role in the earth's climate, says Arnold. Agriculture can be a partner in biosphere regulation. We also need to be strategic and transition to regenerative practices, while monitoring outcomes. Resilient food systems require a partnership between farmers and the community. By regenerating biodiversity through agroecology, (new management approaches to the study of agriculture), rewarding new green management principles and removing subsidies for degenerative agriculture, farmers become part of the solution.

Hear All Voices: How Local Government & Community Can Work Together to Build Resilience in a Changing World. The previous lecture provided a natural transition to the third presentation in this series, this time by lecturer Dr. Karen Farbridge, who is known as a 'thoughtful change agent'. Under her leadership as past mayor, the community of Guelph gained a reputation for building local resilience and sustainability. By delivering various examples through storytelling, Farbridge shared how to successfully engage communities to challenge the status quo and make lasting change.

Resilience and Indigenous Teachings: Doran Ritchie of the Bear Clan and Manager of Resources and Infrastructure at the Saugeen Ojibway Nation Environment Office, and award-winning writer David McLaren, both spoke about the original caretakers of the land. The visible and vocal presence of Indigenous peoples in protecting treaty rights and lands from unbridled industry, demonstrates lessons about resilience, which have emerged from their history.



Three volunteers serve Bluewater's members, from the left: Helen Harrison, Audrey Armstrong and Shawna Macivor.

Leaning Towards Water: Art, Activism and Resilience in the Anthropocene: Liz Zetlin, an award-winning poet, filmmaker, artist and activist brought the audience to their feet with resounding applause, when she shared the movement she has spear-headed to make Owen Sound a 'Blue Community, which prioritizes access to clean, safe, public water sources.

Her talk on water protection was delivered through personal stories, art, poetry and film. One of Liz's latest projects is the prize-winning movie she produced, directed and edited called '*Resilience Transforming Our Community, A Climate Change Film of Hope*'. <https://resiliencedoc.info/>

Resilience Through Transformation: The series ended with the dynamic Assistant Professor from Brock University, Dr. Jessica Blythe, and her lecture on fostering transformations as a viable solution to many of the planet's environmental and social challenges. Transformations are defined as "*actions designed to challenge, rather than accommodate, environmental change and interrelated societal challenges such as inequality, poverty, and social discontent.*" (Pelling 2010, O'Brien 2012, Brown et al. 2013). Blythe reports that we are in the beginning of transformation, and that we all, both individually and collectively, have a role to play.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

Our gratitude for this lecture series is extended to our Chair of the Program Committee, Shawna Macivor, and two outstanding volunteer BALL Series Coordinators, Gord Edwards, and Judy Mapleson.

Innis in the News

By Daria Mancino in student newspaper,(February 13, 2020—edited)

On any given day, you can see Innis students, staff, and faculty bustling around the College, creating the vibrant sense of community that I instantly fell in love with here at Innis. But there's another group that calls Innis home and is deeply interwoven into the fabric of our community—the Later Life Learners.

Every semester, the Later Life Learners can be found listening attentively to one of several lectures in town hall, hosting group discussions in the Innis Residence Events Room, mingling in the Innis College lobby, or chatting with friends over lunch at the Innis Cafe. Spending more time in Town Hall than the average Innis student, the Later Life Learners are a testament to the benefits of forming strong bonds between the college and our surrounding community.

As an Innis student who has frequently run into the Later Life Learners during my four years here, I was keen to learn more about the program. I sat down with Merle McMurray, current President of Later Life Learning, to find out more about the program's history, operations, and the benefits it provides to both its members and the Innis College community.

The Later Life Learning program was founded in 1981 and currently serves over 1600 members, all of whom are retirees. The program offers seven lecture series per year—four in the fall and three in the winter—on a wide range of ever-changing topics. This year's winter courses include: Best of Ballet, taught by ballet-enthusiast and former Canadian Oxford Dictionary editor Katherine Barber; A Guide to the Outer Edges of Cinema, taught by award-winning Canadian filmmaker Guy Maddin; and Black History in Canada, taught by Channon Oyeneran, Vice President of the Ontario Black History Society. Lecture series, which run for ten weeks, cost a modest \$65 for members and often fill up within minutes of the online registration opening.

Merle joined Later Life Learning in 2001 after hearing about the program from a friend of a friend. She was able to get a spot in an under-enrolled course entitled "Water" in the winter of 2002, which then allowed her to bypass the lengthy waiting list and join the in-demand program. She's been an active member and never missed a session since.

The program has evolved in many ways over the almost twenty years that Merle has been involved in Later Life

Learning. About ten years ago, Later Life Learning began



Merle McMurray (left) and members of Innis Board

offering a new program: a weekly Current Events discussion group. The Current Events group, capped at 35 members, meets once a week in the Innis Residence events room and discusses a different topical issue each week. The topics are chosen by participants at the first session and each week one member will give a presentation to the rest of the group

and facilitate a group discussion. The group occasionally brings in guest speakers, but Current Events is primarily curated and delivered by Later Life Learners themselves.

Another recent development to the program has been the formation of the Books & Beyond discussion group. This course started two years ago and is similarly self-directed. Members choose four books to read over ten weeks and participants take turns leading the course presentations which alternate between discussions of the book itself and of topics inspired by the books. This course is similar to a book club and as such its registration is capped at twenty people to help facilitate lively discussion. These smaller discussion groups cost only \$40 per session.

Offering eleven programs per year to hundreds of members is no easy task and requires dozens of dedicated volunteers. At the core of the program is the Later Life Learning Board of Directors, a team of twenty volunteers that oversees everything from registration, to facilities, communications, donations, and finance. The Board is also responsible for coming up with potential topics for the upcoming year's lecture series—planning that begins a full year in advance. The Board of Directors is supported by two paid staff—one program coordinator who finds lecturers based on the Board's topic suggestions and another staff person who helps in the office as needed. The program is also supported by other volunteer members who assist with lecture check-ins, hosting speakers, and coffee service.

Merle is now in her second year as President of the Later Life Learning Board of Directors. Coupled with her nearly twenty years of experience with the program, she had incredible insights to shed on not only the history and operations of the program, but the benefits it creates for both its members and the wider Innis College Community.

New Adventure for Academy for Lifelong Learning

By Gillian Long

The new academic year in September will see a new location for the Academy. We are moving from our old home at Knox College on St George Street up to Tartu College on Bloor Street. The move will be tinged with nostalgia as we leave the familiar university campus where we have always been - first at Victoria University and then at Knox - but our new home offers many advantages. Not least of these is the location, very close to the Spadina subway station and near St George. In addition, Tartu is undergoing extensive renovation to make it easily accessible for our mobility-challenged members. This has always been problematic at Knox with its beautiful, heritage-protected Gothic Revival architecture. As usual, we will offer an extensive program based on our tradition of peer learning. There is ample space for socializing with fellow members and the many restaurants and cafes of the Annex are nearby.

Change is good - we are looking forward to September! Please visit us at <https://allto.ca/>



Tartu College

Niagara Numbers Growing

By Lynn Mytroen

Lifelong Learning Niagara (LLN) continues to grow in the number of attendees at each lecture and in our number of members. We offer our membership program separate from our series lectures. Our members receive perks not available to our general population, but we open our lectures to all the senior population in the Niagara Region. One of our challenges is that our region is made up of over 15 communities and although we hold our lectures in a central location within the region, it is difficult for us to entice people to want to drive the short distance to our lecture hall. That said, our numbers are growing and we have found that staying consistent with a time and day has been to our benefit. We also have a wonderfully talented volunteer who serenades our lecture attendees with his wide range of piano music.

In addition to our 2018 spring lecture, we hosted two special events. The first was an enlightening talk by Sally Armstrong about her experiences as a war reporter. Her pictures that accompanied her talk brought her experiences to life for all of us. And then this summer we had the opportunity to have Norm Foster come and entertain us with his lively and amusing stories of his life as a playwright. St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre puts on the Foster Festival each spring with at least one of Norm's premiere plays.

And now that September will soon be upon us we are all



set to start our six week fall series which runs from September 26 thru to October 31. Our format is to host different speakers each week who talk on a variety of subjects. This fall we will host:

Iain Scott; Opera 101

Dr. Joshua Tepper; The Future of our Primary Care

Dr. Agnes Nowaczek; Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism

Dr. Laurel Trainor; Music that Moves Us

Dr. Rene Van Acker; Genetically Modified Organisms

Nancy Stadler-Salt; How are the Great Lakes Doing?

And in conclusion, we will end the year with our Annual General Meeting.

Burlington Develops Exciting Programs

By Graham Swanson

3ALB continues to sell out and fill all our seats for each series. Our program committee has developed excellent exciting programs. In the fall of 2019 the theme was an eight- part series "Prosperity and Equity: "Finding Common Ground". A local economist organized and coordinated a series of speakers to address interrelated topics about the money issues that we live under. Having one person with detailed understanding of the subject and first -hand knowledge of the skilled presenters in the field created a flow of speakers that delivered a coherent and stimulating introduction into the economics of our times.

Over the winter of 2020 we have enjoyed a series of eight sessions about "My Road to Innovation" from successful innovators. We have had

our horizons broadened from a highly successful high school drop out to a Nobel Prize physicist. Our attendance is at the 250-member level, drop-ins filling seats when registered members can't be there. We have become very aware of issues around copyright infringement and have stopped posting presentations on our website. Pictures that have not

had copyright privileges paid for can be found through internet searches and infringement charges can be sought.

We have had to update our website and have created a new logo. This process has taken significant time and thought to make a site that is useful and easy for our members and facilitates Board and Program Committee functioning. It is still under construction.



A capella group serenades our group on Valentine's Day. From the left: Clive Good, Dale Wood, Graham Swanson and Ken Beard.

Current Members

Aurora	Barrie	Burlington
Collingwood	Grand Bend	Guelph (2 groups)
Hamilton	Kitchener-Waterloo	London
Markham	Mississauga	Niagara (2 groups)
Nipissing	Orillia	Oshawa
Owen Sound	Stouffville	Thornbury
Thornhill	Toronto (nine groups)	Wasaga Beach
	Woodstock	

GRAND TOTAL OF 32

Great progress from our start-up



For all these articles which help our member groups to keep in touch

Sheilagh Hickie, Editor

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