



Third Age Network (TAN)

an association of lifelong learning groups in Ontario
www.thirdagenetwork.ca

Newsletter

May 2016



LUNCH AND LEARN *A Networking Opportunity* **Annual and Board Meetings**



*Wrap it up in one day! Join TAN leaders
and activists on May 31
to decide, share and network.*

TAN's spring networking event will be held **Tuesday May 31** at the North York Y at Bayview and the 401 in Toronto (Sheppard subway station) in conjunction with TAN Annual and Board meetings

Topics: 4 key topics have been identified so far: program development, videoconferencing, registration and membership, and Board and volunteer recruitment. If you have additional topics you feel should be added, please contact Carole Langford at langford@egate.net

Who should attend? Anyone involved in planning and executing Third Age learning programs will learn new techniques and strategies. Experienced people are needed as well as those new to Third Age learning. A number of people who are forming new groups will be attending, and they need to hear from those of you who have experience in organizing and managing Third Age learning organizations and events. Sharing what we know is a central tenet of TAN philosophy, so please consider attending even if you have no burning issues of your own. You can help someone else!

Registration

Please email Carole Langford (langford@egate.net) by May 24 if you plan to attend. We would also appreciate having the name of your organization and your email addresses.

Directors who are planning to stay after the Board meeting for lunch and networking should also register so arrangements for lunch can be accurate.

Lunch cost: \$20 for members; \$30 for non members (pay on arrival)

Schedule:

Board	10:00 - 11:45 AM
Lunch and Networking	11:45 – 3:00 PM
Annual Meeting	3:00 – 3:45 PM

A Passion for Peer-Learning:

The Academy for Lifelong Learning Turns 25 Next Year

By Josie Szczasiuk, Chair, 25th Anniversary Committee

A quarter of a century ago, a half dozen individuals formed an organization to learn together about the world. Rather than be entertained by experts in lectures, they chose to do it by themselves for themselves and with other like-minded men and women. In rented rooms on the U of T campus, the Academy for Lifelong Learning was born.

There were a few guiding principles. The emphasis would be on active 'workshops'. These workshops would be facilitated discussion groups not passive, lectured 'classes'.

In a workshop each member would:

- choose areas of personal interest and do their own research,
- present their findings to fellow workshop members,
- participate in ensuing discussions,
- and volunteer their time in administering this autonomous organization.

This last point was crucial. In order for everyone to benefit from the intellectual 'play' that the Academy could provide, everyone



was expected to 'work' to help make it happen. Members' time was valuable and limited, so the Academy emphasized time-efficiency and thrift.

In the first year, 1991, there were just over a hundred members and 8 workshops on offer. A decade later membership had increased three fold and 42 workshops were listed. Subjects

ranged from medieval history to world politics, from poetry to opera to *The Economist* Readers. In addition there were lectures in the spring, film groups and book groups. To add to the intellectual offerings, there was a vibrant social life: special events, outings, luncheons, ski parties, warm weather walks.

Today, about 360 people play intellectually and socially at the Academy. Besides books, journals and newspapers, members now use computers and the Internet in their research and presentations. Look us up on our website. <http://www.allto.ca>.

Our passion to actively learn and play together continues and in September 2016 we'll be celebrating 25 years of having fun. Come join us and help make the next quarter century even better!



*Knox College at the University of Toronto
where the Academy meets*

Singing at SLR in London

By Gina Barber

For the past few years, a handful of members of the Society for Learning in Retirement have been getting together at noon on Fridays to raise their voices in song. Everyone is welcome to join; reading music, carrying a tune, ability to harmonize—that's just a bonus.

As for the music, we select well-known songs and write new lyrics to them. For example, we sang "Senior in Love" by creating new words for Teenager in Love" and used Gordon Lightfoot's "In the early morning rain" for a song about how it feels to do a presentation. We called the song "In a class at SLR." We have also done a spoof on "When I'm 64" and created new lyrics for "Edelweiss." Currently, we are working on Verdi's "Song of the Hebrew Slaves"

from the opera *Nabucco*. Our version is entitled, "We're Retired". There's always a punch line and we laugh a lot.

After several years of informal rehearsals and recruitment by word of mouth, the singing group-- which calls itself *Seriously Little Rehearsed (SLR)*-- now will have an official place on the SLR Fall Program as one of many Interest Groups that we provide in addition to our full roster of Study Groups, Activity Groups and Discussion Groups. Now that we're on the official program, we may soon have enough members to be a choir!



Five of the Seriously Little Rehearsed: Bill Mainer, Doug Bell, Diana Lloyd, Cathy Campbell and Margaret Cowan,.

Insurance Update

Members will recall that the subject of insurance has come up in past meetings. The idea was to explore possibilities of getting the insurance we need at group rates.

Julian Sale from Third Age Learning Guelph has been looking into this for us. He has spoken with insurance agencies who have recently told him it will take more time to put together a proposal for us.

He said that the third age coverage is not considered big business by the industry which may well be the reason for a rather slow response. However, he will keep at it and hopes to have something concrete for us in the next little while.



Our Easternmost Group in Kingston

One of our recent members is Later Life Learning of Kingston (our eastern boundary at this point) and the following is an article submitted by Natalie Holland, current president.

Our founder in 1985 was Lorraine Singer and although we do not have a membership as such, we normally attract 300 people per lecture. We offer hour-long lectures followed by a coffee break and then a question and answer period. This year, we had lectures on Epidemics and Pandemics and Music, Motif & Melody, to name two, plus a workshop on creative writing. Here are some comments from Ms Singer:

"I founded Later Life Learning in 1985 in Kingston, Ont. two years after I completed my Master's Degree, where I specialized in gerontology. Because I was a teacher and am imbued with a love of learning, it seemed that I was suited for the job!



Natalie (on the left) and Lorraine

After organizing a four part series on the City of Kingston, with the help of Professor Brian Osborne, I advertised the programme, and to my great surprise, over a hundred people showed up. It was clear that I had tapped into a need among Kingston's retired population. What became evident was the need for an intellectually oriented programme. WE offered this to Kingstonians with lectures given primarily by Queen's professors as well as RMC professors, and sometimes even speakers from Toronto.

What I learned was that the most important ingredient of this type of program, or any other, is respect. People who deal with the elderly in any kind of way, should never think of the "elderly" as not valuable. Our participants are professionals, well educated, and they possess a great body of knowledge. It is a gift to have them in our midst."

Partners in Learning at Ryerson's LIFE

By Judith Levkoe, Chair, LIFE Institute Jack Brown Awards Committee

On Wednesday, March 23, more than 100 guests and members enjoyed LIFE's signature event, **Partners in Learning**, where we awarded five Ryerson Students with \$1,000 bursaries, in recognition of their interest in pursuing studies that are assisting older adults.

This event is so important because it brings together all aspects of LIFE,

*Our long-standing partnership with Ryerson
Affirming our charitable/philanthropic status
Our love of learning*

*The joy of mingling with fellow Ryerson
students, recognizing and celebrating
their achievements together*

Each student told their story of how they became interested in seniors' issues and how their studies will equip them for the challenges ahead. One of the highlights was that LIFE Board of Directors members had the opportunity to host each of the students, their family members and guests. This helped the students feel welcomed and comfortable at this event and enabled the hosts to gain additional insight into the student's life journey. The gathering was a tangible message to all LIFE members of how we contribute to the lives of Ryerson students.

Among our guests were Chang School Dean, Marie Bountrogianni and Ryerson Vice Provost of Students, Heather Lane Vetere, who told us about her projects to learn and understand more about the life of students, through her immersion as a Fashion Student and a member of the Ryerson Rams Girls Basketball team.

This brings us to a total of 90 students who have received LIFE Bursaries in the 20 years that we have been awarding them. Our goal is to reach 100 by next year!



**(L to R) Virginia Bosomworth, President of LIFE Institute, 2015-16 LIJBA Winners; Katherine Nguyen, Lina Kontoh, Adam Jefford, Sasha Mallya and Dr. Marie Bountrogianni, Dean of The Chang School
(Two additional award winners absent from the photo are Jenna ChianDET and Isaura Menezes.)**

Other Canadian Networks

By Sheilagh Hickie

While we know about other lifelong learning groups in Europe, the U.S. and Australia, many of us are surprised that in Canada we too had early networks.

LLIR (Living and Learning in Retirement) at Glendon was not only our first lifelong learning group but one of its members was involved in an organization called Third Age Learning Associates. Janet McPhee, D.Lit., even put together a small booklet, *Keeping Your Mind Alive* which was published in 1986.

It's a fascinating read. The first part of the ninety-page publication deals with why we should keep on learning and quotes from people like Marshall McLuhan, Margaret Mead, Andre Gide and Walter Pitman. Not surprisingly, the pamphlet comes down heavily on the need for physical exercise along with mental stimulation and encourages the Baby Boomers to do likewise.

Ms McPhee details the history of LLIR at Glendon and the apparent need for a network to help the concept of lifelong learning grow in North America. Much help was given by Glendon's principals and in 1980, a conference was held at Glendon with a grant from New Horizons.

Their mandate sounds familiar – "TALA offers advice and help to seniors in planning, initiating, programming and administering their own self-managed groups." From a half dozen groups in 1980, by 1986, there were 28 in the province.

TALA had an eleven-member board but unfortunately, none of them appear to be around so it's not possible to find out what happened to the network. It would be helpful to know what was accomplished since 1986 and of course, why it apparently disappeared from the scene.

The other network is more current and many of our member groups knew about CATALIST. Located at the University of Regina, it was a Canada-wide entity, funded by the Federal Government.

Here is what we have been able to glean about CATALIST:

According to Sandra Kerr of Ryerson, it grew out of the Year of the Older Person in 1999 when Ryerson hosted a conference in the field of seniors' education. A few years later, Wilfred Laurier University hosted a mini conference in Waterloo which was attended by existing Catalist members. The Catalist website says this about their network:



"CATALIST: Canadian Network for Third Age Learning is a bilingual, Canadian Network of organizations that foster third age learning through shared knowledge, expertise, research, and resources. By serving as the "point of contact" for collaboration about later life learning, the network serves to encourage and enhance learning opportunities for all Canadian Seniors. Canada is rapidly

becoming a nation of "the third age". Third age learning organizations are seeing increased enrollment in their programs. New later life learning organizations are being created to meet the growing demand. Both new and established Canadian Senior learning organizations have identified a need to collaborate with one another to share ideas and resources for the betterment of all senior learners. The CATALIST network will provide later life learning organizations the tools to accomplish this collaboration. New communication and technology make the creation and operation of this network possible now - as it has never before! "CATALIST has received funding from the Office of Learning Technologies, Human Resource Management. It is based at the Seniors' Education Centre, University of Regina."

Unfortunately, the website information is out of date because CATALIST has ceased to operate. The funding ran out and that was that. Perhaps a lesson on our not depending too much on grants.

Still, it's interesting to know that there is "nothing new under the sun". What happens now with TAN depends very much on leadership from our member groups, creative ideas and willingness to participate. May we not be written up by some future group as another initiative that did not survive.

Please send news of your association and photos of your members to Sheilagh Hickie at shickie@bell.net

Barrie Lectures on DVD

TAB's (Third Age Barrie, Lifelong Learning Association) lecture series entitled "Our Amazing Universe" <http://www.thirdagebarrie.ca/lectureFall2015.htm> is now out on DVD. TAB was very fortunate that Dr. Robert Mann, a world renown cosmologist and explainer extraordinaire, was able to persuade like minded colleagues to bring their knowledge "down to Earth" for folks like us. Since it's rare to be able to assemble such an esteemed group, TAB hired a professional video company to record them, their slides, and the ensuing Q&A for posterity.

TAB is making the DVDs available for select audiences (such as high schools and other Third Age groups) to enjoy and learn. Contact paul.bassett@sympatico.ca for details on how to obtain the DVDs.



Guelph is 30 Years Old

by Grant Ward

May of 2017 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the origins of Third Age Learning- Guelph (TAL-G). Recently I had the opportunity to watch a DVD of an interview with some of the founding members of TAL-G. The key person in introducing the idea of Third Age in Guelph was Professor Mark Walden who brought the concept back to Guelph after a year long sabbatical in Europe. We had hoped to include Mark in our anniversary celebrations next May but unfortunately he recently passed away.

Watching and listening to these pioneers in adult education speak three points, in particular, struck me as being extremely important to pass along to relatively new groups. First, when starting out, don't forget that funding is available. Guelph started with an \$8,000 New Horizons grant. Second, establish an archive of your organization from day one.

Guelph's founders lament the fact that they were into their eighth or ninth year before establishing an archive. At that

From the Executive Committee

by Nancy Christie, President, TAN

The Executive Committee has done a trial run of Zoom to assess how well this technology might work for meetings when it is difficult for all members to attend in person. Having individuals connect from their own computers at home could be an excellent way of facilitating participation from people who are more remote from a central meeting place. We will continue to explore this possibility and encourage committees of TAN to try it as well.

In response to a request that TAN consider endorsements and sponsorships from for-profit suppliers, the Executive Committee has decided that it would not consider such concepts at this time.

Committees are working on programs for Lunch and

time a base archive was established which included annual lists of Board members, the executive, the speakers and their topics.

Each year we offer four lecture series of eight lectures each. While our Program Committee is still hard at work lining up speakers, finalizing lecture titles and series names, we are all looking forward to four outstanding series. In broad terms they will educate us on a range of topics. Their working titles are: Indigenous Peoples of Canada, Spotlight on South America, The Russian Revolution One Hundred Years On and A World Migrating to Hope of a Better Life.

We are particularly excited about our series about indigenous peoples in Canada because it will include panel discussions and a trip to Six Nations and a former residential school in addition to our normal lecture format.

Learn to be held at the end of May 2016, and Symposium 2017. If you would like to participate on either of these committees, contact nancy.christie@utoronto.ca.

Communications efforts have been expanded greatly and we are excited with the new format, content and frequency of the newsletter. Contributions are always welcomed by our editor, Sheilagh Hickie (shickie@bell.net) as this is what strengthens our Network.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting which follows Lunch and Learn on May 31.

Update from Niagara on Grant

Recently, Lifelong Learning Niagara invited the public, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), and MPPs Jim Bradley to hear more about a new initiative its launching thanks to a \$52,000 OTF seed grant. The group unveiled their plans to research and develop new education programs for area seniors.

"The \$52,000 Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed grant will be a valuable investment in the senior population in Niagara as it will enable those 50 and over to participate in Lifelong Learning Niagara programs providing educational learning opportunities for many who may have been left behind in years gone by." – the Hon. Jim Bradley, MPP for St. Catharines.

"The measurable impact will include increased participation with Lifelong Learning Niagara and support to our future and growth," said Gaby Arato, President, Lifelong Learning Niagara. "This grant will enable us to hire a Research Coordinator, who will be meeting with leaders of various senior community centres throughout Niagara Region, the design of a website, our logo and some marketing tools as well as the purchase of some audio-visual equipment necessary for providing the anticipated educational programs and events. Without OTF funding, our non-profit organization would not be able to afford this important project," Arato added.

Colleagues Down Under

By Nancy Christie

On a recent visit to Australia, I was fortunate to have the opportunity of meeting Ainslie Lamb, President, and Jean de Hosson, Secretary, of the University of the Third Age (U3A) Network of New South Wales. The Network is an affiliate of U3A Alliance Australia (which Margaret Robertson outlined in our last newsletter) as a "loose national alliance" of Third Age organizations in Australia.

In New South Wales alone, the Network has 66 member organizations providing a range of programs for retired people in that state. The member organizations are diverse in their programming - as are TAN members, and have similar issues and challenges to those of TAN and its members.

The Network offers a 3 day conference each year hosted by members in various locations in the state. This year's conference had a nautical theme, and sessions were entitled " Staying in Touch, Staying Limber, Staying Alert, Staying Abreast" and "Staying Afloat, Staying Connected, Staying in Tune and Staying Healthy". The program itself is one full day, and various group meetings and the Annual Meeting are held prior to and following the main conference day.

Services offered by the Network include::



Gaby Arato (centre) receives plaque from MPP Jim Bradley and John Storm of the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

As an outcome for this project, Lifelong Learning Niagara hopes to be able to provide, on a continuous basis, various educational programs to seniors who may be isolated due to distance, physical limitations, social and economic constraints or just a general lack of awareness that contribute to limiting their direct involvement in such programs and activities. For more information on the program or organization, please contact: www.lifelonglearningniagara.com

comprehensive group liability insurance policy for member organizations; a website with subdomain sites for member U3A's; resource library of courses available to U3A's; a regular newsletter; a consultative role when requested by individual U3A's; a Starter Kit for groups wishing to start a U3A in their community; copyright, performing and recording license for authorized U3A activities



Nancy and Ainslie

In addition, the Network offers training for facilitators (most of their sessions are led by members of U3A) and has created a *brain game* exercise program for seniors on a DVD which is available to member organizations for their own use. The Network is active in developing links with government and other organizations on relevant issues. Seniors in Australia can travel any distance in a day for \$2.50. (the Australian dollar is about equivalent to-day).

It was interesting to see how similar we are, though worlds apart. The New South Wales Network has been around since 1994, and is a much larger organization than TAN. It's an inspiration for a new organization like ours.