



# THIRD AGE LEARNING YORK REGION

Ninth Annual General Meeting  
October 30th, 2023 – 12:00 noon  
Via Zoom Meeting

## President's Report For the Year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

It is my great privilege to give my third report as President of TALYR. Once again, we faced several challenges and, based on our best judgments as well as clear feedback from our Members, we decided that the offerings for the year 2022-2023 would again be exclusively via Zoom. 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

The entire year's offering was done virtually, via Zoom, once again. Our trial over the past 2 years of offering 4 lectures via Zoom in the Winter free of charge to all Active (paid-up) Members has now been incorporated as a regular annual event. That means that we will now offer 3 full series annually, Winter (free) as well as Spring and Fall (paid).

As before, our lectures were not "themed", 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 summary of some of the more pertinent "success metrics" of our 2022-2023 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 2022   | 7                                 | 126                                       | 95%  |
| Winter 2023 | 4                                 | 174*                                      | 93%  |
| Spring 2023 | 5<br>(Amb. Bob Rae was postponed) | 141*                                      | 92%  |

Viewership typically varied from Series to Series. The asterisk in the table for viewers in Winter and Spring of 2023 is to note that we started a new policy with those 2 Series: making recordings of the Zoom webinars available under strict limitations, so that Members could have more flexibility to watch the recorded webinar at a time other than the Monday morning “live” presentation time. Indeed, we found that in some cases as many as 25% of the unique views came not on webinar day but a later view of the recording. We also noted that, in our user satisfaction surveys, the ability to view a recorded webinar was roundly welcomed and highly valued. This was clearly a very popular change in policy.

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 In-Person vs Virtual (Zoom) Presentations

In December 2022, we sent out a planning survey to all active Members and were gratified to have about 220 responses, an unheard of 80% response rate, especially right in the middle of the Holiday season. We were so grateful for your input which proved very valuable. The key takeaways were:

- At the time of the survey, almost 80% of respondents said they **preferred** to stay only with Zoom for at least the Spring of 2023
- However, we then asked respondents to go beyond their “preference” and to tell us if they would or would not **actually attend** if all presentations were via Zoom, vs if all presentations were in person:
  - Just over 45% (98 out of 216 respondents) said they would NOT attend if the lectures were in-person.
  - Just under 5% (10 out of 216 respondents) said they would NOT attend if the presentations were all via Zoom.
- When reminded of TALYR’s Mission to foster continuous learning and promote intellectual challenge, and asked which format better meets respondent’s personal needs in fulfilling this mission (in-person vs online) about 13% said that in-person lectures better met their personal needs, whereas 43% said that online lectures better met their personal needs. About 44% said that their personal needs were equally met by online or in-person lectures.
- In the comments, the main reasons given for In-person preference were socialization, direct interaction with the speaker and a need to get out of the house (14 comments in total).
- In the comments, the main reasons given for Zoom preference (in order of frequency of response) were convenience to watch at home or ability to watch recording later (49), travel/distance concerns (31), ability to engage speakers from around the world (22) and ongoing health concerns (20).

When taken together, this told us there was still a very strong mandate for TALYR to remain virtual, via Zoom, for at least Spring of 2023, which of course is what we did.

What will clearly complicate our decision-making going forward is that, while a significant number of respondents still hope for a return to in-person lectures, an even larger number have come to prefer webinars via Zoom, even when public health issues are no longer a factor.

Our Board will be keeping a close watch on the wishes of our members to ensure that we serve you the programming you want! [As you know, we decided for the current Fall 2023 Series to do a mixed platform of some in-person and some Zoom presentations, and we will very carefully evaluate your preferences once this 'experiment' is completed. Stay tuned to next year's annual report!]

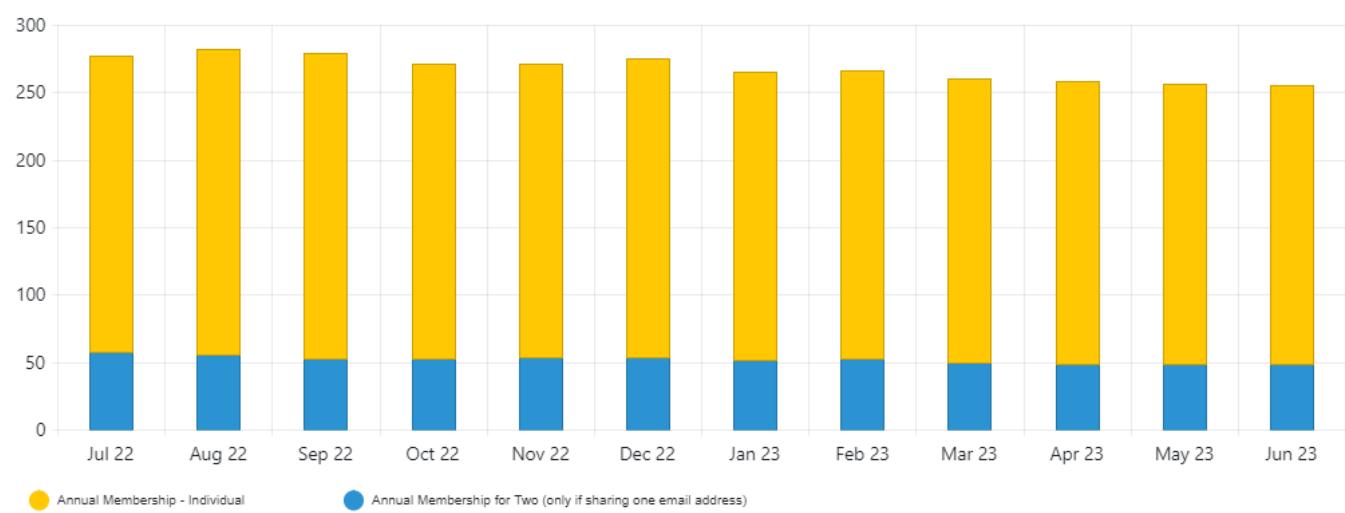
## Venue Update

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 to in-person lectures. Renovation is still underway, and we do not know when in 2024 it will officially re-open. Nor do we have any idea if the fee structure for renting the new venue will make it affordable to us or not.

Accordingly, we have kept open the option 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 or appropriate). The Cineplex theatre continued to indicate their willingness and enthusiasm for us to consider the theatre, and we have in fact signed a contract for some in-person dates for Fall 2023 – which I will detail in next year's report.

## Membership

Since the last AGM, we have seen some slight downward trend in paid memberships (see chart below, which runs from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, i.e. the TALYR fiscal year).



We do not know the reasons for the slight decline, given that satisfaction levels by Members for our programs remains as high as ever. It is true that there are many similar programs that have emerged over the past couple of years and so there may be some stiffer competition for participants. We have not considered any marketing approaches since we have not determined a) if our program is going to remain all virtual, all in-person or some mixture, and b) we do not know the capacity of the venue we choose as our more "permanent" home

for in-person lectures. We do not feel comfortable to mount any sort of aggressive marketing campaign until we resolve these issues for the future since we might just end up frustrating people, if, for example, we generate more demand than we have seats to fill for in-person lectures.

### Financial Considerations

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 pricing structure for 2022-2023 (\$50 per ticket per device), which was completely in line with our fees historically, seemed to strike a good balance, and offered what we believe was 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 two Board members, Donna Unwin, and Bev Ryan. Both were appointed during the year as Interim Directors and will be on the slate for formal election at the AGM. We have already hugely benefitted from their valuable perspectives and skill sets and we are glad to have them.

As you can see from 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 between the two – meaning we are getting a LOT of mileage out of some of the same volunteers!

Carole Langford will be passing the torch as Chair of the Program Committee to Heather MacKay, who will step down after years of service as Corporate Secretary. This will leave the Officer position of Secretary to be filled and we will be nominating Donna Unwin to fill that role going forward after the AGM.

I cannot express my gratitude enough to both Carole and Heather for their remarkable contributions to TALYR since its inception in 2014. Carole and Heather are Founder and Co-Founder, respectively, and original Board members of TALYR. I am grateful that both will remain on the Board even as their specific roles are being modified at their mutual requests. I am pleased to now have a larger cadre of enthusiastic and highly skilled Board members to whom more tasks can be distributed, but I am very grateful to have had, and to still have, both Carole and Heather on the Board.

We have added two new members to the Program Committee this past year as well (thank you Sue Holtzman and Peggy Millson for stepping up!). We now have a better mix of Board members and non-Board members around the Program Committee table and this ensures that we have broader input and a diversity of perspectives around the Committee table.

We also said goodbye to Ms. Patricia Montgomery-Rundle who stepped down from the Program Committee during the year, but we thank Trish so very much for the ideas and the value she brought to the group during her tenure.

Going forward for 2023-2024 this is the composition of your Leadership who all work tirelessly on your behalf:

| <u>Board of Directors 2023-2024</u> | <u>Program Committee 2023-2024</u>    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Michael Wosnick, President          | Heather MacKay, Chair                 |
| Donna Unwin, Corporate Secretary    | Mary Baxter                           |
| Carole Langford, Treasurer          | Sue Holtzman                          |
| Mary Baxter                         | Peggy Millson                         |
| Blair Day                           | Phyllis Ryall                         |
| Heather MacKay                      | Bev Ryan                              |
| Bev Ryan                            | Kathy Wosnick                         |
| Kathy Wosnick                       | Michael Wosnick ( <i>ex officio</i> ) |

### Looking Ahead

All in all, this has been another challenging and yet rewarding year. I expect no less from 2023-2024. We will need to meet several 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.

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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