



Third Age Network (TAN)  
an association of lifelong learning groups in Ontario  
[www.thirdagenetwork.ca](http://www.thirdagenetwork.ca)

## Newsletter

March 2016

### *Our Newest Member*

By Paul Ward, Woodstock Learning Unlimited

When I moved to Woodstock in 1990, I was interested to learn that Woodstock's lifelong learning group, Learning Unlimited (Oxford) had already been in existence for about eight years. A glance at the Third Age Network website suggests that only a handful of other similar groups are older. So our group was a pioneer in promoting educational opportunities for seniors.

*"Learning Unlimited (Oxford) owes its existence to Eva Latham who was a brilliant and inspirational leader. She was the founder and the driving force, She and they believed that 'using the mind preserves it' and that older people need educational stimulation if they are to stay alive in the community."*  
(brochure)

Each spring and fall, Learning Unlimited (Oxford) offers a series of 16 lectures over an eight week session for a total of 32 speakers over the course of a year. This year our 2016 spring session has around 230 registrants. Soon we will have to re-open our waiting list. Over the years we have managed to keep down our costs - each eight week session cost \$30.00.

The presentations are aimed at a general audience and each talk covers a self-contained topic rather than forming

a set course of related lectures. People often pick and choose from among the offerings but from my experience it is wise not to pre-judge. The most unpromising topic on paper comes to life in the hands of the right presenter.

The Learning Unlimited experience is more than just the lectures. People gather early to chat and for coffee and biscuits. During our lunch break a full meal is on offer at a modest cost. I don't always stay for lunch and for me it is always a great feeling when I return and hear the happy sounds of people talking and laughing.

Our board consists of up to 15 members while a five member executive directs the day-to-day activities of the organization. The key to the success of our Learning Unlimited group lies with our ten-member Program committee. We are fortunate that academics from the four area universities will often make the 50-minute drive..

The board members at Learning Unlimited (Oxford) are pleased to have become part of the Third Age Network. We can see many areas where sharing the experiences of similar organizations will prove helpful to all members of the TAN community.



*The Learning Unlimited Board, from the left, back row: Eric Booth, Don MacPherson, Jim Elliott, Paul Ward, Patricia Moody, Irene Lazenby, Jerry Klages, Dan Byers. Front row: Carol Corkish, June Pye, Patricia Sissing, Beth White, Bernice Vink and Diane Older.*

### Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars. The Annual Meeting of TAN will be held on at 3PM on Tuesday, May 31, 2016 at the YMCA on Sheppard Avenue in Toronto. This will be in conjunction with a Networking Meeting from 12 -3 the same day.

## *Report of the Executive Committee*

By Nancy Christie



### **Board meeting**

The spring Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 31, from 10AM – 11:45AM. All Directors should plan to attend. Prior to the meeting a detailed agenda and supporting information will be provided to Directors. Directors who wish to place items on the agenda should contact Nancy Christie with details prior to May 15 at [nancy.christie@utoronto.ca](mailto:nancy.christie@utoronto.ca)

### **Spring event 2016 – Networking Meeting**

In response to requests from members, a Networking Meeting will be held on Wednesday May 31 from noon to 3pm at the YWCA on Sheppard Avenue in Toronto. The event will be of interest to all people who are involved in managing and organizing third age learning organizations. This is the same location that our meeting was held in November. It is a great location, on the subway or free parking is available.

Members are invited to submit topics they would like discussed to organizers by May 4. Topics under consideration include: our biggest success; our major concern; engaging new volunteers, how to make your website more effective, board recruitment, board orientation, etc. If you have specific ideas for discussion groups, pass them along to Nancy Christie at [nancy.christie@utoronto.ca](mailto:nancy.christie@utoronto.ca) or Carole Langford at [langford@egate.net](mailto:langford@egate.net) We want to hear from you.

### **Symposium 2017**

Plans are underway for our biennial symposium in the spring of 2017. Once again, we will link with events at Ryerson University's 50+ program to make a few days in Toronto well worthwhile for Third Age learners and organizers from across the province. Under the leadership of Margaret McGovern a committee initiated plans for the Symposium. More details will follow as plans are formalized.

### **Membership**

Membership renewal has been successfully completed and Membership Chair, Austin Knowlton [aknowlton1@cogeco.ca](mailto:aknowlton1@cogeco.ca), continues to identify potential new organizations that are unaware of the benefits of membership in TAN. If you know of an organization that would benefit from affiliating with TAN, please let provide Austin with the name and contact information.

### **Resignation**

Margaret Robertson (Academy for Lifelong Learning, Toronto) has resigned from the Executive Committee of TAN. Margaret has provided wonderful assistance to TAN as it went through its start up phase, creating the website, chairing Symposium 2015, developing logos and letterhead for TAN as well as offering valuable advice as a member of the Executive Committee. Margaret will continue to manage TAN's website. Thank you Margaret.

## *A few photos of our member groups*



Above: a workshop at the Academy for Lifelong Learning; top right, the beautiful Whitby library where Durham Lifelong Learning meets.



A happy trio at Burlington Third Age Learning.

## *Learning from Australian Experience*

by Margaret Robertson

When comparing lifelong learning for retirees in Canada with lifelong learning in the rest of the world, English-speaking Canada tends to look either to its southern neighbor, the United States, or to Britain which has a large number of U3A lifelong learning groups.

French-speaking Canada looks to U3A Universités du troisième âge founded in France in 1973 where U3As are traditionally part of, or associated with Universities. This is the model that has spread throughout continental Europe. Canada's English-speaking model was originally based on the U.S. model of Institutes for Learning in Retirement which started in New York in 1962. This also called for such groups to be sponsored by an institute of higher education such as Harvard or McGill.

Today, although of different origins, both English and French groups in Canada, have tended to adhere to the academic standards of the university model and have tried to form a connection or collaboration with local universities and colleges.

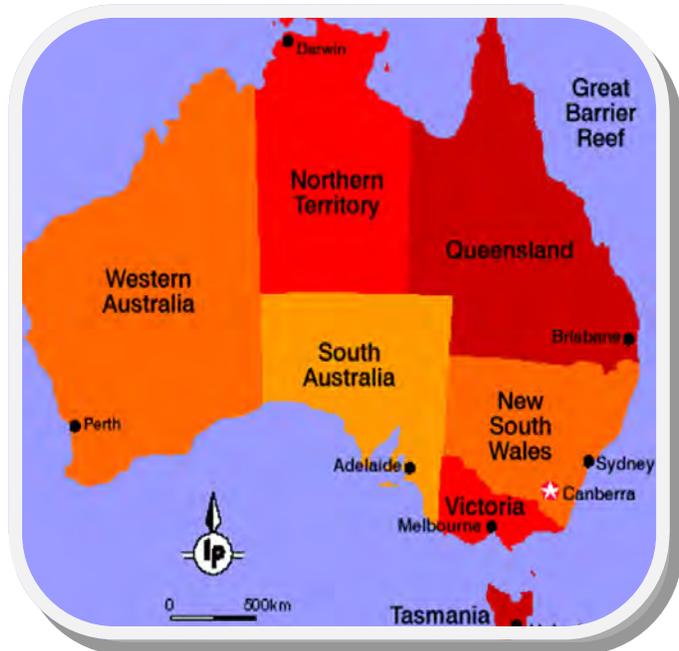
Britain, on the other hand, while maintaining the French U3A (University of the Third Age) designation, moved away from the university model and adopted what has become known as the Cambridge model with classes and activities ranging among academic, recreational, physical and cultural with members facilitating the teaching as well as being the taught. This is the model that has also been adopted in Australia.

Why look at Australia? Like Canada, Australia is a country with a very large geographic area spread across several time zones and with challenging distances to contend with. Its population of 23+ million is smaller but comparable to Canada's 35+ million. Despite its smaller population, Australia now has 250 U3A groups spread among its states and territories, representing 40,000+ U3A members.

These groups also now have networks representing them in each state, in the same way that TAN represents its Ontario members in Canada. There are now seven U3A Networks (<http://www.u3aaa.org/contacts.htm>) in Australia. Representing these networks is also an alliance network (<http://www.u3aaa.org>) whose objective

is to further the movement's interest at a national level as well as looking outward to its neighbours in the Asia Pacific area.

In summary, there are now basically two different models for seniors' learning groups - the university



See interactive map at <http://ulissevitali.altervista.org/australia/Zones.html>

model and the wider Cambridge model. Of the two, it can be seen that the Cambridge model is the faster growing. The strict university model relies on university academics to deliver lectures. The less strict model, also based on university standards, depends on member volunteers, to act both as teachers and as those who are taught. The academic content and the wider content varies according to the locality and the nature of the membership.

Some of Canada's core lifelong learning groups in southern Ontario located close to universities have adopted the university oriented, higher academic standards for its offerings. On communities which do not have ready access to professors, third age learning groups may seek alternative academic resources and activities such as recreational, physical and cultural programs. Australia can provide ideas for doing this.

## *New Principal & Lectures at LLL, Innis College*

Later Life Learning was very happy to welcome Professor Charlie Keil as the new Principal of Innis College, University of Toronto this fall. A Professor of History and the past Director of the Cinema Studies Institute, Dr. Keil has been teaching at U of T for over 20 years and was recognized by the Faculty of Arts and Science who awarded him an Outstanding Teaching Award in 2015. He is a keen scholar of early cinema, particularly the era of the early 1910's. He is a strong supporter of LLL.

The newly renovated Town Hall is being enjoyed by all our members and has provided us with very comfortable seating and much improved audio, visual and accessibility features. Our Facilities Chair, Mary Jane McKeen, has done a wonderful job of accommodating the special needs of many of our members in the new auditorium.

### *30 Years for Guelph*

By Grant Ward

Third Age Learning - Guelph has just completed another successful year and looking forward to celebrations this year on our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Our fall lecture series of eight lectures each, were entitled "Understanding India" in the morning and "The Human Brain in its Many Dimensions" in the afternoon. These series were followed by our winter lectures entitled "How we got here from there... a whirlwind tour of English Canadian Writing" in the morning and "The Lasting Impact of the Ottoman Empire" in the afternoon.

For the first time in many years we used one

To meet the increasing numbers of seniors on our wait list we will be initiating a new lecture series in September 2016. We will be offering four lecture series of 10 weeks each and a weekly discussion group. In addition to our own personal learning experiences members of LLL have contributed generously to scholarships for Innis students and to the recent renovations.



*Professor Keil*

presenter, Gary Draper, for all eight lectures in our Canadian Writer series. Gary generated a loyal following and great enthusiasm which culminated in a standing ovation at the end of his last lecture.

An enthusiastic group of Third Age Learning - Guelph Board members, past Board members and members at large are planning a series of ten lectures throughout the spring and summer. If this proves to be successful TAL-G may become a year round provider of programs to our community.

## *Spring Talks*

Academy for Lifelong Learning

April 13 to May 18

Toronto

[www.allto.ca](http://www.allto.ca)

## *Peer Learning Session Cancelled*

Unfortunately, the peer learning session arranged by the Academy for Lifelong Learning at the Toronto Public Library has been cancelled due to extensive renovations at the Library. .

## *Our Oldest Member Group*

Submitted by Living and Learning in Retirement

When Canada turns 150 years old next year, Living and Learning in Retirement (LLIR) will be 44.

Their story is instructive and interesting. In the beginning, it started as an original idea in the minds of a few retired people. It blossomed into Living and Learning in Retirement (LLIR) the oldest third age learning group in Canada. As a result, over 1100 people now enrich their lives through general interest courses at Glendon College, York University, Toronto, Ontario.

In 1972 the federal Department of Health and Welfare established the New Horizons Program that offered grants to groups of retired people to undertake projects that would benefit them and their communities. A small group of people in North Toronto became interested in the possibilities this could offer and met with the Rev. Dr. Thomas Davies. He voiced their objective by stating, "I want to be kept up-to-date to be a full fledged citizen. I need nourishment for the mind, in the company of my contemporaries, in a program which we choose and manage for ourselves."

The grant was late in coming so the plans were changed to a one-day conference at Glendon College, which was held on June 20, 1973 with the support of Glendon Principal Dr. Albert Tucker.

From this conference the development of a series of lectures on Canadian Studies was born. Although planned for 50 participants, the demand was such that the registration climbed to 144. By the end of that first term, the success of the venture was evident and the volunteer directors of the Board felt confident that they could plan their own future programming.

In 1976, Dr. Michiel Horn, a professor at Glendon College, became the first Academic advisor of LLIR. He served in that function until 2005 when Prof. Geoffrey Ewen took over. Canadian Studies was the focus of programming until 1979. In that year, LLIR branched out to include other topics. Its volunteer programming committee continues to work to provide balanced programming based on



members' suggestions. Two terms are now offered, one in the Fall and one in the Winter with a total of ten courses offered every year. Members of LLIR now investigate everything from Big Ideas In Western Thought to Jazz with high quality lecturers.

From its inception, all LLIR classes were offered at the Glendon College campus of York University in Toronto. Lecture halls are rented from the University. Various facilities are accessible to members due to the excellent relationship with the college over the years. Members of LLIR donate money to "Friends of Glendon" for students in need. So far, we have raised over half a million dollars.

LLIR fees are geared to cover operating expenses. These fees are kept to a minimum due to the voluntary nature of the board of directors. Because of this, programs are very affordable. The quality of the programming and the fees make LLIR very popular with retirees in Toronto. Each year the Wait List opens early on February 1 and closes within an hour or so.

**Please send news of your association and photos of your members to Sheilagh Hickie at [shickie@bell.net](mailto:shickie@bell.net)**

## *Update on Niagara Grant*

by Gaby Arato

In early January 2016, Lifelong Learning Niagara received its initial grant instalment from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, to begin the project that would research, test and provide various forms of learning opportunities for seniors in the various Niagara communities.

A draft plan and schedule was developed for how best to utilize the grant funds, which provided for such activities as the design of a logo for the organization, launch of a new website, printing of promotional rack cards to be distributed for marketing purposes, purchasing of some audio/visual equipment and hiring a research coordinator to assist with the project research requirements.

In March 2016, LLN interviewed and recruited a qualified research coordinator from Brock University to begin the task of identifying and contacting various retirement community centers in the Niagara region that will be targeted as possible locations to test various adult educational programs and learning models. At the same time, a few Board



members developed the requirements for our new website and contracted with a website design organization that has now completed the logo design for LLN (as depicted above) and completed the design of our new website that will be going live on March 19th).

Other on-going activities include identifying some of the audio/visual equipment that will be required for providing videoconferencing capabilities for the organization and identifying possible speakers and topics that would be of interest to the members of the senior community centers that will participate in the research project.

The expected outcome for LLN will be to open up new opportunities for providing innovative educational programs and methods that will increase our membership and attendance at future programs and social events, test and provide various forms of learning opportunities for seniors in the various Niagara communities.

## *UofT Senior Alumni Turns 40*

by Maureen Somerville

U of T Senior Alumni Association has been offering lectures to alumni and friends for 40 years now. A major part of the year-long celebrations will be an address by the President of the University of Toronto, Marc Gertler at the AGM on May 2, followed by a reception.

Begun as a way of bringing grads back to the campus and offering them other ways to be involved, over 1,200 lectures have been presented over the years. We like to think we were the first and the "only game in town" at the onset of the Canadian Perspectives lecture series.

Wilson Abernethy was the force behind the initiative in 1976 to offer these lectures, as well as the beginnings of our Sen-

ior Alumni Volunteers and a now no longer offered separate lecture series on preparing for retirement. After five years of existence, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education in Washington D.C. awarded its grand prize to the group.

Many Universities learned of the effort and enquired as to how to begin outreach of their own. We operate financially independently from U of T, with assistance from staff at Alumni and Development, who also provide office space and support for the group. We hire our own part-time administrative assistant. The lectures are now handled by a hard-working committee who plan 29 lectures a year in five series.

*"It's utterly false and truly arbitrary to put all learning into childhood, all work into middle age, and all the regrets into old age."*

*Dr. Margaret Mead*