



Third Age Network (TAN)

an association of lifelong learning groups in Ontario

www.thirdagenetwork.ca

Newsletter

February 2017

SYMPOSIUM

Learning is Ageless

This is a great opportunity to introduce new or incoming board members to TAN and for them to learn how to better administer a lifelong learning group.

Plan to include them.

- When:** Wednesday, May 17, 2017, 9 am to 4:30 pm
- Where:** Ted Rogers School of Management
Ryerson University, 55 Dundas Street West, Toronto
- What:** Three workshops repeated throughout the day,
a noted keynote speaker, lunch, time to meet
and discuss with fellow TAN members

See Page 2 for more details and Page 3 to sign up online..



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Optimizing Learning and Memory: Tips and Tricks for the Aging Brain.

Andrée-Ann Cyr, Ph.D.
 Assistant professor/professeure adjoint
 Department of Psychology/département de psychologie
 Glendon College/Collège universitaire Glendon York University/Université York

Workshops Through the Day

Three workshops will be repeated throughout the day so that all participants can attend each one.

Effective Volunteer Governance: Recruitment of board members, structuring your organization: Mandy Thomson, Academy for Lifelong Learning

What Else?: Events and activities beyond the classroom: Maureen Somerville, University of Toronto Senior Alumni Association

Enticing Communication: Examples of good websites and newsletters and why they are important: Sheilagh Hickie, Academy for Lifelong Learning

Meeting Other Groups

At lunch, a chance to meet and discuss areas of common interest. This is a good opportunity to find out how others are handling issues.

Bull Pit Session: Time to ask questions and offer ideas to the group at the end of the workshops..

Annual General Meeting: Find out how TAN is developing, our need to grow, why a network such as ours will be important in our aging population. Finally, participate in the formal meeting as a member.

Register Today - Save Money

Early Bird registration (until April 14, 2017):
\$60.00 for TAN members; \$80.00 for non members

(after April 14, 2017)
\$70.00 for TAN members; \$80 for non members

**REGISTER YOUR EXISTING AND NEW BOARD MEMBERS
ONLINE AT:**

<http://thirdagenetwork.ca/attendsymp.html>



Photo from our last Symposium in 2015 at Ryerson

Successful Workshop on Videoconferencing

by Frank Nicholson

On January 30, twelve representatives from eight TAN member organizations participated in a “virtual” workshop on ways that videoconferencing technology can be used to enhance third-age learning programs. All the participants were sitting at their home computers, able to see and hear each other and view the meeting agenda and watch a slideshow together in real time. The organizations represented at the table were:

Academy for Lifelong Learning, Toronto

Lifelong Learning Niagara

Third Age Barrie

Georgian Triangle Lifelong Learning Institute

LifeLong Learning Markham

Third Age Learning York Region

Beaver Valley Association for Lifelong Learning

Hamilton Third Age Learning

Barrie’s representative participated from in Mexico (where he was on vacation), while Georgian Triangle LLI’s rep (being on a Caribbean cruise) contributed through a pre-recorded talk.

During the hour and a half that the event lasted, the group discussed such questions as:

Q. What is web-based videoconferencing? A. The use of the World Wide Web to share text, audio, screens and video in real time.

Q. Why is the technology more affordable and accessible today than previously? A. Because of the decreasing cost of Internet bandwidth and the proliferation of laptops, tablets and other devices with webcams

Q. How can third-age learning organizations use videoconferencing? A. Easy-to-do uses include one-on-one collaboration, 100% “virtual” committee meetings and bringing in out-of-town speakers. More challenging uses include allowing remote attendance at in-person committee meetings and livestreaming lectures to members and into the community (e.g., retirement homes).

Q. What equipment is needed? A. Depends on the use: Just webcam-equipped devices for easy-to-do uses, fancier equipment for more challenging ones. In addition, high-speed Internet access (pretty common these days) is required.



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Q. What about software? A. There are several solutions available, ranging from Skype, a free software that many seniors use to stay in touch with family, to high-end, expensive business solutions such as Webex, Adobe Connect and GoToMeeting. Toronto’s Academy for Lifelong Learning reported its positive experience using a free/minimal -cost software called Zoom for the past year.

Q. What about such issues as cost-recovery, copyright, security and cannibalizing in-person attendance at lectures? A. These must be considered, but all seem manageable.

Q. Should we do videoconferencing on our own or hire a firm? A. While easy-to-do applications can be “DIY” (do it yourself), livestreaming lectures from the hall may require outside help. Georgian Bay’s rep explained what that group had learned from its two recent trials delivering lectures into the community with the services of an outside firm.

Q. What about just videotaping lectures and distributing them on DVDs or posting them on YouTube? A. Barrie and Hamilton reported on their results (mixed) using these techniques.

The consensus at the end of the meeting was that while videoconferencing technology is still at the experimental stage, it holds out great promise for the future. TAN’s videoconferencing working group intends to continue serving as an information clearing-house. Contact Frank Nicholson (416.488.6131, fnicholson@rogers.com) if your organization would like to join the group.

25th Anniversary Video

Last year, the Academy for Lifelong Learning celebrated 25 years and produced this video:

<https://youtu.be/vPu3KbRWtB4>

Items for Newsletter

Please keep the Newsletter alive; send in stories online to Sheilagh Hickie at:

shickie@bell.net

Sally Armstrong Spellbinds Third Agers

by Paul Bassett

Sally Armstrong is spreading good news. Last November she delivered a gripping, inspirational talk to a sold out audience at Third Age Barrie: Uprising: A New Age is Dawning for Women and Girls. Having just returned from yet another trip to the middle East, she told story after amazing story about how women are quietly going about improving human rights and welfare in the developing countries.



Not only that, she achieved a journalistic coup by getting the first Western interview with ISIS fighters! Shortly after her Barrie talk you may have seen Sally's interview on CBC's The National, in which they boasted how they would kill her if they weren't in captivity.

Who is Sally Armstrong? During her career, she has revealed the plights of women and girls in conflict zones all over the world, including: Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Congo, Afghanistan, Iraq. During her tenure on the UN's International Women's Commission, she worked to pave a path to peace in the Middle East.

And her awards from other organizations are too numerous to exhaustively list. They include:

- the YWCA.
- Jewish Women International.
- Media Watch
- the International Alliance for Women
- the Red Cross
- U of T's Massey College
- Canadian Journalism Foundation.

The City of Calgary.

Oh, and by the way, Sally holds **ten** honorary doctorate degrees. And is a *Member of the Order of Canada*.

Our Third Age Barrie friends highly recommend inviting Sally to speak at one of your events.

Insurance Program Benefits Members

By Julian Sale

TAN members continue sign up for the TAN insurance program, especially after a due diligence process.

Many members are reporting a similar experience. It usually starts with very valid questions by board members such as:

Our meeting facility (often a church) already has liability insurance, so why do we need insurance too?

Why does the board need insurance? We are just volunteers and not in a high risk business. We have very few assets.

Is there better value with other insurance providers?

The results of such investigations are very similar.

The facility (church, etc) insurance would usually cover a TAN member organization using those facilities, if the TAN member is specifically named on the facility insurance policy. **However**, this is virtually never the case. So the TAN member would likely be liable for at least some situations such as lecture attendees tripping over a projector cord etc. (a hazard created by the TAN member in the facility). Insurance companies generally try to spread their liability, so even if a hazard is not clearly created by the TAN member, the member may have to hire a

lawyer to establish that fact, and those costs could be substantial.

In this increasingly litigious age, the risk of the board being sued is increasing and the actual experience of insurance companies is that people sue for many reasons, most not even realized by the board as being a risk. Even if the TAN Member could successfully defend against such suits, the legal cost could be prohibitive, and without insurance, those costs may have to be covered by individual board members. As people are becoming more aware of such risks, they are refusing to volunteer unless the organization does have Board insurance.

TAN members have checked with other insurance companies and none have been able to match the value of the TAN Insurance Program.

To our knowledge, every single TAN member who has gone through such a due diligence process has signed up for the TAN Insurance Program. What a strong endorsement of the program.

For more information on our insurance, contact:

juliansale@gmail.com or
brad_barbour@cooperators.com

Social Engagement vs Social Isolation

By Judith Levkoe

First, the bad news, folks!

People who are socially isolated have only a limited sense of belonging to the place where they are. Because of that theydo not participate fully in what is going on around them. Often they are very lonely as well, which can put them at a higher risk of depression, dementia, addiction and physical illness. The perception that one does not belong can lead to social isolation.¹ This in turn can cause communities to suffer a lack of social cohesion, higher social costs and the loss of unquantifiable wealth of experience that older adults bring to our families, neighbourhoods and communities.

A recent study by the Stanford Center on Longevity found that people 55-to-64 are engaging less with their communities, have fewer meaningful interactions with spouses and weaker ties with family and friends. Younger and older people are not as likely to visit with neighbours or participate in community organizations as they did 20 years ago. The norms which are being set will have ramifications that may endure for generations in terms of volunteerism and giving back to communities. Purposeful engagement and volunteering are coming to be seen as beneficial to the physical and mental health of older adults.

According to the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, *"Vital Communities are characterized by strong, active and inclusive relationships between residents andcivil society organizations that work to foster individual and collective wellbeing. Vital communities are those that....create, adapt and thrive in the changing world"*

So here is some good news for us!

Participating in Continuing Education combats isolation, researchers' say.⁴ What we have observed over the last fifteen years through involvement in lifelong learning organizations, is that although most people who join, do so with the stated purpose of learning; by taking courses, attending lectures and 'keeping their aging brains active', they quickly discover that the enjoyment of being with like-minded people *and* contributing to the organization are equally as satisfying as they age. Regardless of format, the key is cognitive stimulation and engagement. The participants often talk about the sense of purpose that "reflects a commitment to broader life goals that help organize day to day activities". In addition, the scientists learned that the people with high purpose scores were 2.4 times more likely to remain free of Alzheimer's and less likely to develop disabilities. "People with purpose have a sense of their role in the community and the broader world."

Social engagement is identified as an important reason to participate in lifelong learning organizations. Learners have expressed passion for the ways in which their lives have been enriched and they describe the experience as a safe and nurturing community where they could take intellectual and emotional risks and feel 'more engaged with life'.



Those of us fortunate enough to have had many years of enrichment through our involvement with lifelong learning communities have come to understand that we are providing opportunities for mental and physical health, in addition to learning through our many varieties of

Learning experiences such as:

Attending classes and lectures
Lunch & Learn
Symposium

Social activities such as:

Celebrations, Walks , Coffee breaks

Contributing such as:

Committee leadership, Class/course leader
Event organizing, Board member

So what's stopping us?

What is missing in learning opportunities, as reported through research at the Sheridan Elder Research Centre in a variety of settings throughout Ontario?

Awareness that such programs exist
Information about what is available
Available space for additional members
Accessible Facilities for programs
Accessible Transportation to facilities
Financial support for programs

If we are fortunate enough to be given a Trillium Grant this year, TAN will work to eradicate these problems and give many more seniors the opportunities for learning and social engagement that we enjoy as members. Rather than seeing older people as needy individuals we should be looking at their skills and knowledge as a huge asset, and finding ways to harness the potential of their wider participation.

References

Cognitive Benefits of Participation in Lifelong Learning Institutes
The LLI Review, P. Simone and M. Scullin

From Your Executive...

by Nancy Christie, President

Under the leadership of the Executive and Board, TAN continues to build capacity for its member organizations.

A webinar on January 30th on video conferencing under the leadership of Frank Nicholson was well received by those from across the province - and Mexico! - who participated.

The upcoming Symposium on May 17th, *Learning is Ageless*, (detailed elsewhere in this newsletter) will present topics of interest to all those who are involved with the creation of effective organizations which have an eye on the future.

A new committee under the leadership of Louise Pope (Third Age Barrie) is working on a template for privacy policy that members can use as a reference.

The TAN Starter Kit created by Austin Knowlton which has been on our website for several years now, is being edited and expanded with the help of a professional editor.

A workshop is planned for the fall to consider how best to engage the newest third age learners who may have different expectations of our learning organizations.

We are always looking for new member organizations and have found that the best way to do this is through personal contacts. If you know of a group that shares the TAN vision, or a newly forming group that could use TAN resources, please let us know.

I look forward to meeting you in May at *Learning is Ageless* and the Annual Meeting which follows. We look forward to your input and suggestions.

Paraprosdokians

Paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and is frequently humorous.

(Winston Churchill loved them).

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you ... but it's still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up -- we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.
7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
9. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
10. In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of emergency, notify..." I answered "a doctor."
11. Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
12. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
13. I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.
14. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
15. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian, any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
16. You are never too old to learn something stupid.