



Third Age Network (TAN)
an association of lifelong learning groups in Ontario
www.thirdagenetwork.ca

Newsletter

June 2017

SYMPOSIUM

Learning is Ageless

Our third symposium was once again held in the excellent facilities offered by Ryerson University in Toronto. While smaller than in past years (60 attendees) it seemed to the organizers that TAN members in attendance were perhaps more engaged in the day's activities than in past symposia. As one of the three people facilitating a workshop, I was impressed by the lively discussions in my session.

And we were so delighted by our keynote speaker, Dr. Andrée-Ann Cyr from Glendon College, York University. Dr. Cyr managed to talk to a bunch of seniors about learning and memory in a way that was both enlightening and respectful. Many in the audience were planning to ask her to speak to their groups.



The weather was beautiful, enabling many to eat outside in the courtyard while a small group of long term members met to talk about TAN's future, out of which came many helpful ideas.

By the time the Open Forum came along late in the day, once again there was a good give and take on issues of interest to attendees.

The day concluded with the Annual General Meeting.

Reports on the AGM, the three workshops and the keynote speech are found in this newsletter.

Members can peruse the evaluations of the day on <http://www.thirdagenetwork.ca/sympreport2017.html>

Sheilagh Hickie



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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

Dr. Andrée-Ann Cyr

Dr. Cyr gave an engaging and encouraging session to the Symposium members. Some highlights of her presentation:

Seniors do not learn in fundamentally different ways than younger adults. Episodic memory is of events linked to specific times and places. This decreases as we age.

Semantic memory is of general knowledge and the meaning of concepts increases as we age. Shifting the episodic content to semantic is difficult. One needs to do something with the information, perhaps use it in conversation, but not to "cram." Relevance matters to older adults and the motivation to learn is different for them. Testing is counterproductive and threatening.

Staying engaged is very important. Commercial brain games are not transferable. Learning new skills is challenging, but important, as is the variety of activities, including physical and mental



exercises. She spoke about technology, that learning to use it is good, but that retention is better when we write by hand!

It is necessary to write things down and use mnemonic techniques - associations. One should choose activities that are reasonably complex and varied and that interest you. Sleep is a friend of memory. Older adults

learn better in the morning, teenagers in the evening. The more you retrieve a memory the easier it is to recall, and distractions make it harder to focus.

Dr. Cyr used visuals that increased the clarity of her presentation. She was very helpful in understanding the aging/learning/memory process. I, for one will no longer worry when I walk down the hall to retrieve something and forget what it is by the time I get there!

Maureen Somerville

Workshops Through the Day

Beyond the Classroom / What Else

Facilitator: Maureen Somerville

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Andrée-Ann Cyr offered our members several suggestions to continue to develop our minds, one of them being learning new things. **What Else** offered us an opportunity to go beyond the classroom where many TAN members offer their programming.

Facilitator Maureen Somerville shared existing examples being offered by some of our member groups. She told of one group which organizes theatre trips and tours of their city.

Another organization, which offers summer programs, organized a trip to Sudbury to see its revitalization. This year they are off to Kingston to take a tour of the Kingston Penitentiary, recently closed as an institution, but now opened for tours!

Yet another puts on lunches and walking tours of special areas of their communities. One TAN member also does some fundraising to subsidize members' trips to the Stratford or Shaw Festival.

The discussion widened to how to advertise new programs in our communities. The attendees shared the suggestions they each have used. Word of mouth was



often mentioned. "Offer a good program and they will come"!

Interest was also expressed in the programs where members learn from each other such as the Ulyssean Society and the Academy for Lifelong Learning. Some information was exchanged about this issue too. It would seem that some vehicle for sharing our programs with each other may be useful.

A final area of discussion which attracted considerable discussion was what about the multicultural nature of many of our communities. It was acknowledged that few of our groups attracted other than white, Anglo-Saxons in any great numbers. Some ideas were exchanged, but this may be a topic for future workshops?

This workshop demonstrated a basic principle of adult learning. Our members knew what they wanted to find out and knew how to articulate their needs. Attendees got some of their questions answered to enhance their knowledge base and hopefully improve their own programs.

Margaret McGovern

Effective Volunteer Governance

Facilitator: Mandy Thompson

This workshop focused on key governance issues volunteer groups need in place to be successful organizations. The Facilitator focused on four important aspects of governance:

- Governance structure
- People Management
- Getting value from board meetings
- Effective communication



recruitment mode always being on the look out for new and seasoned members of the organization who could fill certain key roles either as a chair of a committee or filling a board position such as Secretary or Treasurer. By having someone enter a new position at the assistant level for one year before becoming a chair provides vital experience to perform the role with confidence.

In terms of governance structure it is important to have a Board of Directors with a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and maybe an Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer. In some boards committee Chairs and Assistant Chairs are members of the board.

There should be a limit on the Directors' terms of office. Literature suggests three-year terms are ideal for board members. A combination of new and seasoned board members results in a dynamic vitality. An administrative manual with clear job and task descriptions should be available for new board members. It is also important to provide comprehensive orientation for new board members. Sometimes pairing a new board member with a seasoned member is beneficial.

People management was another aspect the facilitator emphasized. Members of a board need to be in constant

To get value from Board Meetings be sure to provide the following features:

- Timed agendas
- Use of Roberts' rules
- Minutes sent out within a week of the meeting and highlight items needing action.
- Code of Conduct for Board members to follow (e.g. respect for other speakers, only one speaker at a time, confidentiality of discussion, setting goals at the beginning of meetings,)

The last item discussed was the need for effective communication within organizations by providing up to date Websites and Newsletters. This workshop provided valuable information for effective volunteer governance.

Debrah Weiss

Enticing Communications

Facilitator: Sheilagh Hickie

Sheilagh shared ideas of how 3AL organizations could improve communication with its members through the organization's webpage and newsletter.

The session started with a viewing of a 15 minute Australian video on YouTube, How to make a website. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaVOBy13beo>). This video is full of ideas of how to construct a webpage, the use of white space, different fonts and photos to capture the site visitors' attention. The purpose of the website needs to be prominent with a hook to draw the visitor in and then a call to action, such as registration. Visitors to the site will judge the book by its cover, so the site needs to be easy to navigate and mobile friendly. More people search the internet on mobile devices than on personal computers. This site gave lots of ideas of how we can improve our current site or create a new webpage.

Sheilagh showed several international 3AL websites to highlight these ideas and help the audience to think critically about what works and what doesn't.



As the editor of the TAN newsletter, Sheilagh spoke from the heart as she shared her knowledge of newsletter design. She suggested that when starting out to design a newsletter, look at other organizations to see what catches the reader's attention. Some are not welcoming as they lay out the rules first. Photos are an important element of making the newsletter look interesting but they need to capture people having fun. Photos of guest speakers and social events work well.

Sections for a newsletter may include a message from our president, the organization's vision on the home page, a news section and a link to TAN webpage.

This session was informative with lots of practical ideas of how to enhance websites and newsletters. The audience also had an opportunity to apply some of these ideas as we reviewed and critiqued a number of newsletters together. An enjoyable session with the use of a variety of teaching modalities, video, lecture and discussion!

Nora McAuliffe

Annual General Meeting

Following a busy day at Symposium 2017, representatives of member organizations attended the Annual Meeting of TAN.

Chaired by myself, the meeting provided an opportunity to review TAN activities over the past year, and to interact with Officers and Directors of the organization. I began by exploring the differences between a networking organization and a more traditional organization and then outlined the efforts of TAN's leadership to operationalize networking elements in TAN. Networks are based on trust not control, humility not brand, nodes not hubs, and mission not organization. These are principles that TAN endeavors to integrate as it engages with members in organizational networking.

Highlights of the year included:

The introduction of an insurance program for TAN members which is more comprehensive and less expensive than insurance which members can obtain on an individual basis. Julian Sale (Third Age Learning Guelph) reported that half of TAN members have purchased insurance through this plan already, and at least 4 others were in the planning phase of doing so.

Louise Pope (Third Age Barrie) reported on the template developed by her team from Barrie for managing privacy issues within our organizations.

TAN's starter kit – a very useful document prepared by Austin Knowlton (Third Age Burlington) is in the process of being of expanded and revised.

Expansion of the online newsletter and inclusion of reports from members has strengthened our knowledge of each other and how we operate.

Organizations which have Directors for 2017- 2018:

Academy for Lifelong Learning, Toronto
Sharon Harris
Lifelong Learning Mississauga
Nora McAuliffe
Georgian Triangle, Collingwood
David Green
Living and Learning in Retirement, Toronto
Linda Somers
Third Age Learning Burlington
Austin Knowlton
LIFE Institute, Toronto
Barb Atlas
Society for Learning in Retirement, London
Jacqui Griffin
Third Age Barrie
Louise Pope
Third Age Learning, Guelph
Joanna McMaster
University of Toronto Senior Alumni Association
Maureen Somerville

Officers:

President	Nancy Christie
Vice President	Judith Levkoe
Secretary	Loretta fines
Treasurer	Carole Langford
Directors at Large:	Gillian Anchel, Austin Knowlton
	Sandra Kerr continues as Advisor



Nancy Christie

What I Learned on the Way to My Presentation – Peer-Based, Self-Directed Learning at the Academy for Lifelong Learning

For Third-Agers in Toronto, there is a wealth of things for older people, keen on learning and experiencing something new, to do and to enjoy: interesting lectures, book clubs, musical events, and culture-based travel. The Academy for Lifelong Learning at the University of Toronto's Knox College adds another component to the mix – a program of peer-led workshops based on self-directed learning.

What does that mean exactly?

As the Academy's website, www.allto.ca, explains, all of the workshops are facilitated by members, and each workshop hour is led by a member who researches a topic and then makes a presentation to the other people in the workshop. In the 2016-2017 academic year, the Academy held 37 workshops, on issues that range from ancient Rome and Toronto architecture to the Ottoman empire and jazz appreciation.

One of the benefits of this method of learning, say Academy members, is the chance to learn something unique when they carry out the research for their presentations. At times it's a small kernel of knowledge they probably wouldn't have learned had they not carried out the research themselves – a unique bit of knowledge that becomes their "own" once they uncover it.

Sometimes original research comes with surprises. Exploring her topic for a Music Appreciation workshop, Academy member Arlene Smith looked into the work of three highly respected musicians who were profoundly deaf. "Ultimately, they changed my thoughts on what hearing really means ... From listening to them perform and talk about how they heard, I have grown to understand that true hearing is felt through our entire bodies."

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Third Age Learning (TAL) – Guelph achieves a 3-decade milestone

On May 31, 2017 The Board of TAL – Guelph invited its members, past and present, to commemorate its 30-year anniversary at the River Run Centre. To give back to the community that has become integral to our success, the party doubled as a benefit event for The Stephen Lewis Foundation, which is supported by Guelph GoGo Grandmothers.

Our audience was captivated by our keynote speaker Ilana Landsberg-Lewis' presentation "From Survival to Social Justice: African Grandmothers mobilizing to end AIDS." The lecture was followed by a reception that included music, refreshments and a marketplace. One thing has remained constant throughout our 30-year history. Our Third Age programs are educational, entertaining, and spark many discussions and debates.

Professor Pierre Vellas, Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Toulouse, France is credited with beginning the third age movement in 1973. U3A was open to anyone over retirement age, no qualifications or prerequisites were required, and fees were kept to a minimum. When the movement reached Britain it became largely community-based and membership-led with no distinction between teachers and those being taught.

In the late 1970s, Professor Mark Waldron of the University of Guelph, together with his family, spent a year's sabbatical in Switzerland. Here Mark discovered - and was inspired by - Professor Vellas' initiative and brought the concept of third age learning home to Guelph.



*Guelph members
Marguerite Urban and Bill
Chapman*



*Keynote speaker Ilana
Landsberg Lewis*

He gathered together a committee of active and retired members of the University of Guelph's staff and faculty to found Third Age Learning - Guelph. Our chapter is fortunate to have in our Archives a recorded discussion among the founding members: John Hurst, Anne St. John, Mark Waldron, and Archibald McIntyre.

A planning session established one very important caveat: the members were to take charge of the programs. We are not affiliated with the university although meetings are held at the Arboretum Centre, and we do rely on its help in accessing speakers and bookings.

A cross between the French and British models, TAL - Guelph is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides educational opportunities. We offer four sets of lectures annually, two in the winter and two in the fall. Lectures typically run 45 minutes, are followed by a 15-minute coffee break, and then a 45-minute question and answer period. During the break, members submit their questions in writing.

We are 100 per cent funded through membership fees and single lecture charges. Initially, lectures were presented by academics from Ontario universities. In recent years our pool of expertise has expanded to include speakers from business, industry associations, and community groups depending on the topic. Today the background of the Board members is largely business and community-based as opposed to being strictly academic. The lectures have expanded to explore a variety of topics from politics and economics, to architecture, travel, and religion.

Our 30th anniversary is a time to acknowledge our roots, and a time to look forward. So what *is* ahead for Third Age Guelph? Those in the information-technology driven working world today have a very different experience compared to those of us already in retirement. As Anne St. John observed many years ago, "the challenge is to continue to provide courses to stimulate our members' minds, but perhaps future members will look beyond our current programs to find new ways to engage seniors in our community."

Stimulating our brains is one way of helping to extend our third age, and shorten our fourth age. For this reason alone, it is important that we revisit the grass roots of TAL - Guelph and get our membership involved in its programming. Without the Board Committees, our high calibre and entertaining lectures would not take place.

We continue to invite all our members to hop on Board as we shape the next 30 years of Third Age Learning, Guelph.

Joanna McMaster

40 Years for The Ulyssean Society

The Ulyssean Society was founded in 1977 and incorporated in 1979 in Toronto. It was started by Dr. John McLeish, a professor at U of T's Continuing Education who saw that people in their later years, those over 55 years had much to offer and were just as bent on learning as their younger cohorts.

This group of like-minded individuals has always been composed of people who follow the precept of Dr. McLeish who believed that those in their middle and later years could be creative and productive until the end of their life journeys. In this regard, the Ulyssean Society, a charitable organization offers programs geared to the interests and needs of this age group.

We meet year-round, at least once a month mostly at the Tranzac Club on Brunswick Avenue in the Annex, in Toronto. It takes place in a Salon environment, usually in the round and looks like a big living room or parlour.

We are mostly educational but also social. Some of our most recent programs, in an interactive format have included the following: White Privilege, where we did a facilitated exercise to determine which of the participants was more bestowed with this term than others. It was eye-opening; Guaranteed Universal Income was discussed in February, giving opportunities to vent your favourable or not opinion about it.

Next, in March, we discussed February's topic along with The Gift Economy. We all had differing views on what this meant. Finally, in May, we talked about Dialogue and how it could possibly resolve conflicts such as ideological, military, social, familial and gender identity.

(Peer learning, from Page 4)

In researching her presentation, Sue Gaston "was amazed to discover the Hopewell culture in the Ohio Valley that flourished as early as 100 B.C," and that objects in their burial mounds could be made from materials from places as far away as the Rocky Mountains and the Gulf of Mexico. Brian Gaston, in the same workshop, was amused to learn in his research into the Gilgamesh Flood Tablet and the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus "that both objects were essentially purchased from 'Tomb Raiders,' at one point putting the modern myths of Indiana Jones and Laura Croft in perspective."

At other times, carrying out your own research makes special demands on you. Rhona Wolpert surprised herself by learning "an enormous amount about the structure of DNA and the transmission of genetic information" when she looked into the life of Nobel Prize winner Sydney Brenner, who grew up in Rhona's home town of Germiston, South Africa. Researching a topic can also intensify your feelings about an issue, says Phyrne Parker, who explored the tragic lives of women who were forced into child-marriages. "What I



In August, we are having a fine acrylic painter come and talk about art's role in society and to discuss some of his work, which he will show.

There is a monthly, "Inquiring Minds," where facilitator, Marie Paulyn brings for interaction topics and related reading material, usually

on body, mind and soul. This takes place at a public library.

We have a talented member, Linda Still, who hosts a monthly words and music salon, the first Saturday of the month in another location.

We welcome new members, and guests, of course, to try us out.

At present, we have five board members: President, Beverly Bloom, Vice-Presidents, Paul Nash and Neil Sinclair, and two members –at-large, Marie Paulyn and Joan Appelby.

In 2010, our President was Elton Brown. From 2011 to 2015 it was Virginia Rock. In 2016 to 2017 it was Neil Sinclair. From August, 2016 to present, it is Beverly Bloom. We will have our AGM in the next two months.

For more information, you can access the Ulyssean Society at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Ulyssean-Society-229021257479186/>

or: beverlybloom@hotmail.com.

Beverly Bloom

learned was heart-breaking ... it will stay with me much longer and touched me more deeply by actually researching and reading different women's stories by myself."

Gary Griesdorf's research into his topic also had a personal resonance. Taking a fascinating Academy workshop on Scams and Scammers, Gary learned we should be very careful travelling by air, especially when we go through the security line... if you're not careful, scammers working in pairs can steal your laptop or Ipad before you get through the metal detector.

What comes next is "the wealth of information and point of view that our members have to share in the follow-up discussion," says Susan Gaston. Far from worrying about talking to workshop members about her research on deaf musicians, Arlene Smith said she "was totally energized as I prepared to do my presentation. I just couldn't wait to share what I had learned."

Liz Guccione