



Third Age Network (TAN)

an association of lifelong learning groups in Ontario

www.thirdagenetwork.ca

Newsletter

January 2018

A Heads Up from TAN

As the number of retiring Baby Boomers increases, so will the demand for membership in our Third Age Learning Groups. At the end of April 2018, TAN is holding a forum in Hamilton to discuss the impact that the Boomers may have in joining the ranks of Third Age Learners.

The forum will explore the possibility of the need for adaptations to operations and programs that might be required as well as identify ways to engage new members as leaders in Third Age organizations.

The forum will launch with a summary of information about the Boomer Generation based on Michelle Gold's research; this will be followed by breakout groups where participants will react to the data presented and outline their own experience. Michelle's research will include reviewing experience to date in the US, UK and Canada and selected members of TAN.

Anticipating the impact of the Boomer generation will help to shape our future Third Age learning organiza-



tions. For maximum benefit, organizers are requesting that each TAN member organization send at least 2 representatives to participate in the forum.

Further details will follow.

New Items from your TAN Board

New Executive Committee Member: Louise Pope, Third Age Barrie. (see also October newsletter) . Resigned: Gillian Anchel, Austin Knowlton.

Louise and Pat Mansfield a colleague from Barrie have gone to North Bay to assist in setting up a new TAL organization there. Compliments to Third Age Barrie which supported this effort by paying the delegates' travel and accommodation costs. Several other budding organizations were identified. In most cases, a TAN member has approached them with an offer of help.

A major plan for growing Third Age organizations prepared by Julian Sale is underway. This includes encouraging and supporting the development of new Third Age organizations across the province.

TAN has two grant requests at the moment: Trillium Foundation and New Horizons. No response is expected until the New Year.

The Starter Kit is currently being revised by a member from Lifelong Learning Mississauga. It is planned that an updated booklet – hard copy and on line – will be available.

TAN will make a workshop presentation at the International Federation of Aging conference being held in Toronto Aug 8-10, 2018. Several member organizations will be invited to participate. Anyone can attend the conference!

Shortly, a sample document which can be used for fundraising for start up funds will be available on the TAN website.

There is a new template for a privacy document on line, thanks again to Louise Pope.

Fees remain at \$75.per organization in 2018.

No response has come from the membership generally to the question posed in the October newsletter; should we continue to produce biennial symposia? The Board feels it should continue with some changes.

The TAN website is being redesigned.

A workshop on how our organizations may need to respond to the new cadre of Boomers which will be joining Third Age learning organizations is planned for spring 2018.

Five Years for Hamilton

By Gillian Anchel

The fall of 2017 marked the 5th year of Hamilton Third Age Learning (HTAL). Starting with the first series of 6 lectures in September 2012, the HTAL lectures have become a highly anticipated event among many retirees in the Hamilton community such that our seating capacity has been consistently reached within the first half hour of opening the online registration process. In all, 10 lecture series have been presented covering a variety of topics under the general theme of "Understanding the 21st Century".

The lectures are held in the McMaster Innovation Park Centre which provides state of the art audio visual equipment as well as an attractive and spacious atrium in which people enjoy coffee and socializing during the break. Speakers have come from Hamilton, Toronto, Waterloo and from Vancouver and have received overwhelmingly positive ratings on the evaluation forms that participants complete at the end of each lecture series. A list of both past and upcoming speakers can be found by going to our website, www.htal.ca.

In 2014 we held a half day retreat to consider how

we might go forward as an organization and what other initiatives we might develop to meet the interests of our audience. After conducting a questionnaire we decided to pilot a documentary film series during the winter of 2018. We have chosen 4 films directed by Jennifer Baichwal, a Montreal documentary film maker, and hope to include a guest speaker as well as an opportunity for discussion. The films will be shown at the Discovery Centre Theatre located on the Hamilton waterfront. Ticket sales went quickly and we look forward to this pilot becoming a permanent addition to HTAL's programming.

As any organization will know, its success depends upon the commitment of the volunteers who serve on the board and on the various committees. To acknowledge their importance we have so far honoured and welcomed them to 2 Volunteer Luncheons at the Hamilton Golf and Country Club. We have included all of our volunteers as well as our Honorary Board Members who contributed so much when we were going from an idea to becoming a fully- fledged organization.



Hamilton Board , from the left: Mona Levenstein, Les King, Rosemary Knechtel, Gillian Howarth, Carolyn Rosenthal, Sharron Johnston, Judith McCulloch, Mae Radford (Hamilton Council on Aging Representative), Gillian Anchel, and Graham Knight .

Whose Truth? What Reconciliation? Learning to Share Turtle Island

**By Pat Mansfield
Co-Founder, Third Age Barrie**

“We acknowledge the traditional territory of the Anishinabek and Wahta First Nation, as well as the historic Metis communities in our region. We also acknowledge that Simcoe-Muskoka is the home of many First nation, Metis and Inuit people as part of an intricate nationhood that reaches across Turtle Island.

At this time of truth and reconciliation, we welcome the opportunity to work together toward new understandings and new relationships. We ask for guidance in all that we do.”

This territorial agreement began each of the five lectures in Third Age Barrie’s sold out fall 2017 series, “Whose Truth? What Reconciliation? Learning to Share Turtle Island”. Indigenous leaders and experts shared their experiences and insights to add to our knowledge and understanding of some of the most critical issues our country is facing.

Each speaker challenged us to explore the experiences of Indigenous people since the arrival of the first settlers. By learning about their beliefs, customs, values and experiences through many different perspectives, we gained some understanding of what they have lost. Ger-tie Beaucage, a member of the Bear Clan of the Ojibwa-Anishinabek Nation, for example, brought her perspective as a Traditional Healer and Elder to share her experiences as a child and the impact of colonization on the First



Nations people who lived here for centuries.

Peter and Gee Garrow, father and son, of the Mohawks of Akwesasne First Nations in Cornwall, shared traditional teachings as well as their experiences as a Director of Education and Federal Government employee. Maya Chacaby brought to life through her vivid retelling of her experience as a missing Indigenous woman, some of the realities of being an Indigenous woman in the twenty-first century. Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux has dedicated her life to building bridges of understanding between people. One of the amazing initiatives she has undertaken is the Canadian Roots Exchange that helps students from urban centres visit and experience life on remote reservations. Dr. Jonathon Dewar, descended from Huron-Wendat, Scottish and French Canadian grandparents, finished the series with a glimpse at some of his research on the role of art and artist in truth, healing and reconciliation.

One of the important lessons that we learned from these lectures is that before reconciliation can begin to take place, recognition, respect, responsibility and relationships first need to be in place. We hope that this series moved many of us much closer to this important goal.

More information about “Whose Truth? What Reconciliation?” and Third Age Barrie, can be found on our website www.thirdagebarrie.com under Program Info.

International Outreach through Videoconferencing

By Frank Nicholson, Academy for Lifelong Learning

On January 9, members of the Academy’s European Union: Past, Present & Future workshop were - through the miracle of web-based videoconferencing! - briefed on Brexit by third-age learners in the United Kingdom.

This workshop is one of three dozen that my organization is offering this academic year. All employ the peer-learning model - that is, workshop members teach each other by researching, preparing and making short presentations, followed by Q&A and round-the table discussion.

For the EU workshop session on Brexit, the group thought it would be good to “hear it straight from the horse’s mouth.” Accordingly, my co-facilitator, Jan Roblin, and I contacted the University of the Third Age (“U3A”) Trust, the national third-age learning organization in the UK, to see what might be possible. The Trust represents 1,000 local U3As (with a total of 400,000 participants), all of which use peer-learning.

The Trust’s office in London agreed to have their globalization specialist, Bruce Jewell, a member of Stafford’s U3A, provide a briefing on the current state of Brexit negotiations. Arrangements were then made to have two other British

U3Aers sit in - Brian Jones, moderator of a U3A European Studies group in the Manchester area, and Harry Belsey, leader of a Current Affairs group in U3A Cambridge.

All three British guests were brought by means of videoconferencing from their home computers into the Academy’s classroom at the University of Toronto. Bruce’s presentation, which was framed with a slideshow, ran half an hour, interspersed by contributions from Brian and Harry. An hour of questions from, and discussion by, the Canadians in the classroom followed.

Despite a couple of technical hiccups, the experiment was judged a success. “The expert opinion of the presenter, “the opportunity to hear informed British opinions” and “an amazing extension of the Academy experience” were some of the benefits cited by participants in the follow-up evaluation survey. Further “virtual” transatlantic interactions (including ones with all participants at their computers, none in a physical classroom) are being actively pursued.

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Potential for Social Media Use

By Cathy Spark, Academy for Lifelong Learning

Social media offers a wide range of platforms that organizations and informal groups can use to share information and photos as well as to engage in discussion. While commonly used successfully for friends and families as well as for corporate applications, the use of such platforms is not as common for third age learning groups in Ontario.

Just about a year ago, the Academy for Lifelong Learning ventured into the world of social media and set up a Facebook presence in order to see if there might be useful applications for us. The decision was made to use a Facebook Group rather than a Page to begin with, so that, at least initially, we could limit participants to members who asked to join, and could monitor the postings closely to see how the platform was being used.

From the beginning, we were aware that many of the Academy members - perhaps even a majority - were not regular Facebook users or were not comfortable with social media in general. As a result, our strategy was to repurpose Academy information on Facebook for those who wished to receive it that way, rather than using the outlet to communicate unique material.

By the end of the 2016/2017 Academy year, the Group had a small but active group of members and we decided to take the trial to the next step. The timing was perfect in that the Academy was also developing a new website and contemplating changes to its newsletter, allowing us to align our Facebook presence with a broader-based communications approach.

Another key driver to our decision to proceed came from the changing demographic of potential new members. There is a growing number of individuals in their late 50s and early 60s who are taking early retirement and are looking for the kind of benefits that a third age network can provide. These particular stakeholders will

not only be comfortable with, and, indeed, expect, social media as a source for information, but will look to find the organization in this way in the first place. A dynamic Facebook site will attract them to what we have to offer and will give them a good idea of the experience of being a member.

The Academy for Lifelong Learning now has a new Facebook Page and will be making an active effort to make it a dynamic communication and conversation tool for members and potential members alike. At the end of the 2018 / 2019 "academic year" we will again assess our progress and decide where we go next with social media as a component of our overall communications strategy.

We invite you to check us out on Facebook by connecting with us at "Academy for Lifelong Learning" or @LifelongLearningToronto.



Videoconferencing (continued from Page 3)

The Academy for Lifelong Learning began experimenting with videoconferencing technology a couple of years ago. We only needed to add a \$150 webcam to our existing classroom A/V equipment. The main use to date has been enabling workshop presenters who can't make to the U of T campus because of illness, weather or travel to make their presentations remotely. Other applications

have included mounting an overflow room for heavily attended talks and helping workshop members practice presentations with fellow Academicians or by themselves (via videorecording).

Please stay tuned! Updates will be forthcoming as we gain more experience with this new tool..

Please send your articles for the newsletter

to Sheilagh Hickie

shickie@bell.net

We'll be doing another newsletter in late Spring so your stories and photos should be sent around March 30th.