



# Third Age Network (TAN)

an association of lifelong learning groups in Ontario

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

## Newsletter

June 2018

### BOOMER ALERT: TAN Forum in Hamilton

by Barry Everatt

Lifelong Learning Mississauga

Michelle Gold is a strategist who uses both advanced methodological training and deep content knowledge to measure social change and organizational improvements in a variety of settings and sectors. Michelle led the forum in a discussion of baby boomers' impact on later life learning organizations.

Michelle described interviews she had conducted with later life learning groups in Canada and abroad where she had asked questions about how they operate currently and how baby boomers might fit into today's models and future operations.

Baby boomers were born over an 18-year period from 1946 to 1964. This generation comes with certain characteristics that will affect later life learning groups, including challenging the status quo, speaking out, redefining social convention and self-fulfillment. Studies have found that they are not attracted to events or activities that use the word "senior."

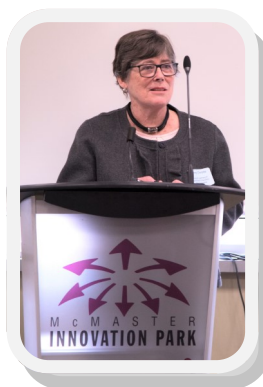
Because of baby boomers' facility with social media and the web and their reliance on handheld devices (cell phones and tablets), later life learning groups that want to attract them will need to enhance their websites to ensure that they are both search engine optimized (SEO) and mobile optimized. If later life learning groups do not adapt, they may find that their membership / participation will decline as older adults who are tech-savvy start looking for learning opportunities.

This information seemed contrary to the experience of many later life learning groups at the forum whose lectures are regularly oversubscribed or sold out. Michelle encouraged current groups to identify adaptations and engage boomers so that later life learning can continue to operate at full capacity.

We moved into small groups and discussed several topics concerned with attracting baby boomers to future later life learning events. The

forum provided an excellent opportunity to network. We learned that there is no "one size fits all" for later life learning. Groups offer lectures (both series and one-off) and a peer-led approach, which can include discussions of a wide range of topics as well as book reviews, walking tours and visits to historic sites.

From my perspective, this was a worthwhile forum and the networking was excellent as usual with TAN events.



*Michelle Gold and Norm Archer, our speakers and president Nancy Christie*



## FEEDBACK - BOOMER ALERT FORUM

Third Age Network

April 21, 2018

	Participant Feedback				# of responses	
Rating	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	No Re- sponse	Total
Overall	0	0	13	19	1	33
Date & Time	0	0	12	21	0	33
Location	0	0	8	25	0	33
Speaker	0	2	11	19	1	33
Food & Beverage	0	1	8	24	0	33

	Participant Feedback				% of responses	
Rating	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	No Re- sponse	Total
Overall	0	0	39	58	3	100
Date & Time	0	0	36	64	0	100
Location	0	0	24	76	0	100
Speaker	0	6	33	58	3	100
Food & Beverage	0	3	24	73	0	100

### What did you like most about the forum?

- The sharing of ideas, experiences and challenges
- Being introduced to peer led learning
- The random seating of participants
- Being outside of Toronto

### How could the forum be improved?

- Asking more focused questions
- Streamline discussion to avoid repetition and recapping the same points.
- Skip feedback sessions

### Do you have suggestions or comments to help us improve future events?

- Allot more time for sharing and networking
- Streamline reporting of group discussions
- =Consider topics such as programming, volunteerism, finances, becoming more culturally diverse.

### What new ideas or concepts will you take away from the forum?

- Using technology to increase access to lectures
- 
- Ideas to attract volunteers
- The need to be open to change and new ideas

## President's Report to AGM on April 21, 2018

TAN's vision that people across the province should be able to readily access and enjoy stimulating educational courses continues to drive our programs and activities. An increased emphasis on outreach and networking within our groups supports our mandate. Experienced members from established organizations have helped start new groups – in North Bay, Richmond Hill, Markham for example - and there are others just beginning, mostly in southern Ontario.

Following a contact through the TAN website, Later Life Learning Barrie was approached by a group in North Bay asking for help in setting up a Third Age Learning organization. Later Life Learning Barrie sponsored two of their members - including Louise Pope of TAN's Executive Committee - to travel to North Bay and stay overnight to assist a local group in the creation of a brand new third age learning organization. They met with the core group in North Bay and with people from Retired Teachers of Ontario, people who were interested in new Third Age Learning opportunities. Interestingly, the local group was headed by Renata Smolikova, a professor at Nipissing University - originally from Czech Republic - who was familiar with later life learning organizations in her home country.

The TAN Starter Kit (which, as you know, is on line and has been used by a number of newly forming organizations) is a center piece for start ups, and is often enriched by the dedication of individuals with experience, people who are so generous with their time and energy to help make the new organizations successful. A revised version of the Starter Kit is nearing completion, thanks to Sandy Leppan of Lifelong Learning Mississauga.

The pamphlet which says "Keep Your Brain Working" on the front - is a draft of what will be placed in libraries and community centres across Ontario to get people thinking about the possibility of starting a new group. TAN offers to be a resource for this effort.

Other evidence of successful networking is the sharing of information on topics of mutual interest through email and our online newsletter. Someone asks *How do you handle this?* Or, *what is your experience with that?* And others respond. While participants in the consultations are informed of the outcome, the results of those "consultations" can be found on the TAN website in the Members Only section for all to see.

We had dreams of significantly expanding TAN's outreach activities, but our applications to New Horizons and Trillium were not successful. Still, we continue to use the TAN network to build toward expansion of Third Age learning opportunities in Ontario – through less grandiose plans, in a slow and deliberate way. To-day's Forum is another step in this process as we recognize the potential impact of Boomers on our kinds of programs.

**New Communication tool** With the encouragement and support of Frank Nicholson, the Executive Committee and the Forum Planning Committee have made good use of ZOOM, a web conferencing tool which makes it easier for groups of people who are geographically spread out across

the province to meet on line.

The **TAN insurance program** has been very successful in providing valuable benefits for member organizations. It was designed to meet the needs of TAN members and provides both liability and directors and officers insurance plans. By joining together through TAN, member organizations can obtain these essential products at an extremely competitive price saving significant dollars for their own organization. If you haven't looked into this option, you should! Check out the information on the TAN website. Julian Sale (Guelph) continues to be available to consult about the TAN insurance program.

**Newsletter** Sheilagh Hickie, with your help and input, continues to produce a great newsletter on line, sharing what our colleagues are doing in other parts of the province as well as across the globe. You are always encouraged to send articles to Sheilagh for publication in the newsletter. TAN representatives receive these directly, and we ask them to circulate them to all of their Board members. Anyone can view the newsletter on line.

**Website** The TAN website is undergoing changes to update and upgrade it. It is central to our communication efforts. Check out the new version in the fall!

**Fundraising Template** A new document on line is a template for approaching potential funders. Adapted from a winning document used by the Barrie organization, it provides guidance on how to find start up funds. This is the second practical document shared by the Third Age Barrie, following one on privacy that added last year.

This August, TAN will be represented at the **International Federation on Ageing Conference** to be held in Toronto. The presentation will focus on the joy and health and social benefits of Third Age learning and will involve representatives of several of our member organizations. Anyone can attend the conference. For more information, go to the website, [IFA 2018](#)

**Symposium 2019** We are seeking a location and a leader for the 2019 Symposium. Initial thinking is that outside experts in adult education would lead the symposium. If you know of someone who would enjoy working on this event, please let me know.

**Moving Forward** At the recent Board meeting, a discussion paper prepared by Judith Levkoe entitled *Moving Forward* was considered. It summarized TAN's accomplishments to date and asked "What is still needed?" At the same time, it recognized that TAN has a huge potential to make a difference for older adults in this Province by providing intellectual stimulation within a social

Most of us have waiting lists for admission to our programs. There are many people who would like to join our ranks. And, new "older adults" deserve to have the opportunities that we have – but that will only be possible if there are more, many more programs like ours available. Working through its members, TAN can be active in creating and encouraging and supporting new groups of Third Agers, including new organizations in our own backyards. There is room for all--- if the waiting lists are any indication.

## *Guelph's Summer Club*

**By Graham Ford**

In attending the Third Age Network Forum on April 21st to share ideas about how to attract baby boomers, I discovered that among our table of eight I was the only attendee who was too old to be a boomer! Not only are the boomers well represented, they are taking over Third Age Learning and bringing new ideas and energy to our movement. As we "senior" members pass the baton, we can look forward to recent retirees exploring many different directions to enrich the third age experience. I was struck by the plethora of new ideas that recent retirees bring to the table.

Guelph's Summer Lectures Club came about three years ago when a group of Guelph third age members learnt that a third age stalwart, the late Dr. Hans Reichenfeld, was to deliver to a lecture on aspects of the history of psychiatry at a prestigious international symposium in Vienna, Austria, and he generously agreed to join us at the Guelph Public Library and share the talk with us. This was the spark that led to the experiment of hosting a short series of lectures on unrelated topics.

We have grown from an informal, unstructured group meeting over the summer, with the agility to vote on lists of speakers submitted by members. Members strive to find knowledgeable lecturers from whom we can all learn. This has had the accidental but significant benefit that all members join in, see some of their ideas pursued, and feel ownership of the process. Our mantra is "general interest, useful knowledge, and current issues".

At the suggestions of members we have been able to present "one-off" lectures on such divergent themes as the geology of the last ice age, the fascinating story of the find of the remains of some pre-humans found in an inaccessible cave close to Johannesburg, South Africa (*Homo Naledi*), research on threats to coral populations worldwide, the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory research that led to Dr. Arthur McDonald of Queen's University winning the Nobel prize in physics, proof of Einstein's theory of the existence of gravitational waves as well as social issues such as the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted, Canada's troubled history of caring for the intellectually challenged, and health issues including the importance of the microbial community in our guts and the growth of antibiotic resistant bacteria. In the pursuit of knowledge we have hosted hands-on trips to places of interest. We have visited such little-known gems as the open-air, three acre Urquhart Butterfly Garden in Dundas.

In 2016, our first full year of summer lectures, we made an enjoyable and richly informative three day trip by luxury bus to Sudbury where we were hosted by professors emeritus, Peter Kevan of Guelph University and Joe Shorthouse, Graeme Spiers and Peter Beckett of Laurentian University. These gentlemen obligingly provided lectures and a school-bus tour demonstrating the remarkable progress of the Sudbury Ecology Recovery Program, a truly fascinating forty-year partnership between the city of Sudbury and Laurentian University that has become a worldwide model for rehabilitation of severely damaged industrial environments.

In 2017, we followed up the Sudbury trip with a visit we organized to Kingston in search of issues of social justice. We were joined by members of Later Life Learning Kingston, and attended lectures by Catherine Latimer, Executive Director of the John Howard Society, Lawrence de Silva who spoke of human rights in prison having spent nineteen long years as a prisoner in Canada's penal system and Dianne Dowling, chair of the "Save our prison Farms Campaign" working to restore the prison farms closed by the Harper government.

Our summer lectures club offers just a couple of ways in which the Third Age Learning experience can be enriched. In presenting some ideas that our small group have explored, we are not alone in offering stand-alone lectures, nor are we alone in venturing forth on educational outings to places of interest.



*The Guelph Summer Club visits The Big Nickel in Sudbury.*



## ***Board of Directors and Officers of TAN Elected on April 21, 2018 at the AGM***

### **Board of Directors**

<u>Organization Name</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Term Finishes</u>
Academy for Lifelong Learning, Toronto	Sharon Harris	2020
Lifelong Learning, Mississauga	Sandy Leppan	2021)
Georgian Triangle, Collingwood	David Green	2019
Living & Learning in Retirement, Toronto	Linda Somers	2020
Third Age Learning, Burlington	Sharon Gibbons	2021
LIFE Institute, Toronto	Barb Atlas	2020
*Society for Learning in Retirement, London	TBA	2021
Third Age Barrie	Louise Pope	2019
Third Age Learning, Guelph	Bill Chapman	2019
University of Toronto, Senior Alumni Ass'n	Maureen Somerville	2020

### **Officers**

President	Nancy Christie	Directors at Large:	Louise Pope
Vice President	Judith Levkoe		Michelle Gold (new)
Secretary	Loretta Fines		Gaby Arato (new)
Treasurer	Carole Langford	Advisor	Cathy Spark (new)
			Sandra Kerr

## **Profiles of New Executive Commttee Members**

### **Gaby Arato, Executive Committee**

After a career as a financial professional Gaby became an instrumental part of the Niagara Community, as one of the founding board members of Lifelong Learning Niagara. He is a member of the Niagara Aging Strategy Leadership Council answering the needs of older adults living in the Niagara Region. And, I learned, much to my delight, that for recreation, he plays classical mandolin with a small local Klezmer band in St. Catharines.

### **Sharon Gibbons, Director**

Before retiring from her job in vocational rehab, Sharon would book time off work in the afternoons to attend lectures at Third Age Learning Burlington. Of course she joined as soon as she retired and is now a member of the program committee.

### **Michelle Gold, Executive Committee**

As soon as we talked with Michelle, we recognised her as just the kind of experienced professional we wished to have work with us. During her time with the Hamilton Third Age Learning program, Michelle became involved in integrating Baby Boomers into the program. She has expertise in organizational improvements, and engaging people in effective networked action and collaboration, and, as you have experienced today, she is a thoughtful and well-researched presenter.

### **Sandy Leppan, Director**

Sandy is about to take on the role of Vice Chair of the Lifelong Learning Mississauga program after four years on the Program Committee. She works part time as a

freelance editor and was previously involved in the administration of various Human Services programs as well as a number of years as a magazine editor. Currently, Sandy is assisting us by editing the TAN Start-up Kit started by Austin Knowlton.

### **Cathy Spark, Executive Committee**

Cathy is a member of the Academy for Lifelong Learning and chairs their Communications Committee. She has extensive experience in Marketing and Communications in the corporate sector and has held senior positions for more than 25 years in developing effective marketing and communication strategies in Canada as well as internationally. She is very enthusiastic about learning about and supporting our growth and development throughout the Province.



*It wasn't all talk as attendees enjoyed the lunch buffet.*