



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

## **Newsletter**

**September 2018**



### ***TAN Participates in International Conference***

Five Third Age Learning members presented a workshop at the 14th Global Conference on Ageing on August 8 at Ryerson University.

The International Federation on Ageing was formed in 1973 and now has consultative status at the United Nations and its agencies. According to president Bjarne Hastrup, it is “working towards changing attitudes and creating a world where older people have a right to a good quality of life and are accepted and welcomed as contributing, active members of our communities.”

Most of the presentations revolved around health, housing, age-friendly cities, reducing isolation and loneliness, professional care and innovations in care giving. Our one-hour session was titled, “Third age learning: a cognitive approach to healthy ageing” and

was, therefore, different from most workshops.

Sandra Kerr, TAN member and director, Programs for the 50+ at Ryerson; TAN’s current president, Nancy Christie; David Green, president of Georgian Triangle, Collingwood; Sheilagh Hickie, Academy for Lifelong Living, Toronto; and Gaby Arato, TAN executive member were our presenters.

An estimated 30 people in the audience listened to Sandra explain how third age learning developed around the world and its current status while Nancy focused on TAN, our purpose and our growth. The other three members discussed lecture series and how they work (David), peer learning (Sheilagh) and videoconferencing (Gaby).

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### ***Revised Website Up and Running***

A new updated website came together over the summer and it now available at [www.thirdagenetwork.ca](http://www.thirdagenetwork.ca). Designed by Legacy Designs’ capable Gisele Grenier, the website is hopefully easier to navigate and more attractive, especially to a new user. TAN’s webmaster, Margaret Robertson and newsletter editor, Sheilagh Hickie were aided by president, Nancy Christie.

Please take a few minutes to study it and if you have any comments, ideas, problems, etc. with it, send them to [info@thirdagenetwork.ca](mailto:info@thirdagenetwork.ca) Thanks.



## *New Group Underway in Stouffville*

by Harry Renaud

As a result of the success enjoyed by Lifelong Learning chapters in Markham and Aurora, where so many Stouffvillites were registered members, a group of us thought we could organize our own chapter. Charlotte Cave, Gail and Bob Priestman, Norma Card, Shonna Froebel, Jim and Marlene Gillies and my wife Barbara and I came together as a group to formalize a chapter.

We were encouraged by Les Gagnon at Markham who introduced us to Stouffville resident Carole Langford, the walking encyclopedia of LifeLong Learning and now we have a formal Board of Directors and an infant structure.

Our first challenge was to learn about Speakers and how they are resourced. We are very fortunate to have Carole Langford with us which has resulted in a line up of speakers being confirmed by end of August. Then we secured a venue that will properly accommodate our expected first 150 attendees.

We are scheduled to start April 1, 2019 at Spring Lakes Golf Club. We opened the necessary bank account and will have our web site ready to go by October with on line registration. The sight will be: [www.lifelonglearningstouffville.com](http://www.lifelonglearningstouffville.com). The technical aspects of audio and visual are being organized as well



*James Gillies, Harry Renaud, (president), Charlotte Cave, Judy Renaud, Norma Card and Carole Langford.*

as the hospitality aspects for each event.

We are developing a logo and a tag line “bet you didn’t know” which we will introduce this Fall to tell the world we are open for business and attract registrations.

Our format will be lecture only with an AV mandate. The lecture series will consist of two, 6 lecture sessions, Spring and Fall, held in the afternoon to avoid any conflicts with our neighbouring chapters in Markham and Aurora.

### *Booklet on TAN on Website*

TAN has designed a booklet to be used by members to promote the concept of third age learning In their communities (libraries, community centres, social groups) as well as with potential new groups in their area.

It is succinct, small and can be sent electronically or printed (at about \$1 per copy) . Take a look at it at

<https://thirdagenetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/About-TAN.pdf>

Cover page

**3A** Third Age Network (TAN)  
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**Keep Your Brain Working**

**Look into the Third Age Network, which helps older adults form learning groups.**

Interested in learning in collegial settings? Join a group in your area or start one. The Third Age Network is now in its tenth year of helping Ontario adults set up and administer lifelong learning groups . Contact Third Age Network and help yourself and your neighbours to a healthier and more engaged senior age.

## *Ideas from International Conference*

by Nancy Christie

Some of the interesting presentations at the August Global Conference on Ageing included:

Keynote Address by Dr. John Beard, Director of Department of Ageing and Life Course, World Health Organization.

1. A 62 year old by his own admission, who is being forced to retire from WHO because of the organization's age limitations, Dr. Baird was highly sensitive to the ageism that this mandatory retirement revealed. His 4 key points as to how to create a positive global approach to ageing were:
  - Countries and organizations must truly invest and commit to changing attitudes
  - Ageism must be continually and directly combatted
  - Passion for the cause is the key to making real change; use the power of older adults and their supporters to effect change
  - There must be a clear vision as to the direction to be taken, and progress must be closely monitored
2. Interdisciplinary research leading to evidence informed policy – Mc Master I Institute for Research on Ageing (MIRA)

Three researchers, an occupational therapist, an engineer and a political scientist discussed three



***“ageism must be continually and directly combatted.”***

different areas of activity which are linked through MIRA.

The occupational therapist spoke about the issues related to testing and assessing capacity of an individual to drive and the importance of careful assessment before removing a driver's license.

The engineer talked about some of the fascinating devices that allow one to control a wide range of equipment in one's home. An old house donated to McMaster is being outfitted as a smart home and will showcase many of these devices.

Most interesting was the political scientist who spoke about how to influence decision makers; the first step is to provide evidence-based scientific information to the key people. The second step involves applying the appropriate political pressure through activating citizen groups which the researchers have mobilized in the community. In his view it takes both to be successful.

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## *Gift from LIFE to TAN*

by Virginia Bosomworth

The LIFE Institute has just celebrated 28 years of providing learning and engagement opportunities for our members. Recently we expanded our goals to foster three key elements for our members as part of LIFE's mandate : Learn, Socialize and Contribute.

The Board felt that an important way to contribute and enhance opportunities for learning and socialization for the 55 plus population would be to assist The Third Age Network in supporting the establishment of other adult learning groups. We believe that the financial support we are providing will enable newer groups to secure rental facilities, book engaging speakers and to develop communication vehicles with their target groups.

Our hope is that as each group gets established they will then support the next group so that seniors, wherever they live will be able to continue learning and developing for effective brain health and a stimulating life-style.

### Editor's Note:

This gift of \$5,000 is indeed a wonderful gesture by LIFE Institute in Toronto and is much appreciated by TAN.

It will be used to promote new lifelong learning groups in Ontario. TAN currently has 31 members and the interest in establishing such groups continues to be high.

When we first met in Toronto in 2007 to discuss if some sort of cooperation was possible, we hoped but never really anticipated such growth.

Formalization of TAN took place in the years following 2007 with bylaws, insurance, help for potential groups, conferences and workshops offered. A website has been available for some time and was recently revised.

As with other organizations, though, most of the work has been undertaken by a small number of volunteers. If you would like to participate, be in touch at [info@thirdagenetwork.ca](mailto:info@thirdagenetwork.ca)

## *Orillia Group Underway*

Article ran in *Orillia Matters* newspaper on August 30, 2018

On Tuesday evening, Third Age Learning launched a new chapter in Orillia at Lakehead University, and it seems that lifelong learning is a passion for many. A sell-out crowd of 200 members of the senior community gathered at Lakehead Orillia to hear Dr. Beth Visser's lecture, "Is Trump a Narcissistic Psychopath?"

The audience was given the clinical criteria to make their own armchair diagnosis and discuss their findings - both hilarious and horrific - over wine and cheese.

A partnership between the Third Age Network and Lakehead University Orillia, the goal of Third Age Learning at Lakehead (TAL) is to provide seniors with informed presentations from experts in their field along with an opportunity to socialize and discuss issues and ideas.

The Third Age Network exists all over the world, but is particularly active in Ontario. With its senior population on the rise, Orillia seemed like a natural place to establish a new member group.

This fall, TAL will host an inaugural lecture series titled, *The 1960s: The decade that changed the world*. The five-part series will focus on the impact the events of the 1960s have had on today's culture: social justice through reconciliation, surveillance and security, music for the new social order, activism and social media, and who won the space race.

Each lecture will be held at St. Paul's Centre, 62 Peter St. N. Orillia, at 9:30 a.m. Cost is \$59 plus HST.



Members of the advisory committee who helped launch a new chapter of the Third Age Learning group in Orillia are shown. From left: Anne Hilliard, Scott Maclagan, Natalie Little, Barb Jones, Liz Rayfield, Mary Hick and Linda Rodenburg. (Jaclyn Bucik photo)

A revised Startup Kit for potential lifelong learning groups is now available at

<https://thirdagenetwork.ca/starting-a-third-age-group/>

Many thanks to Sandy Leppan from Mississauga for her revisions to the original material supplied by Austin Knowlton from Burlington Third Age Learning. This is just one example of the various documents on our website for members and potential groups.

*From an email sent to president Nancy Christie by Australian lifelong learning group following the carnage by auto on Yonge Street*

Northern Illawarra U3A join with me in sympathising with the citizens of Toronto as they deal with the horrendous action in their beautiful city. Our thoughts are with the friends and relatives of those killed and injured.



## *Academy's Comedy Workshop*

by Cathy Spark

One thing that Third Age Learning groups share is the desire to provide their intellectually curious members with robust, responsive, and dynamic ways to explore and understand the world, share ideas, and interact with others who have similar interests. They also share the challenge of determining what form such an approach might take.

For those groups that include classes or workshops, the discussion frequently revolves how "academic" the topics should be; should they be scholarly, intellectual, theoretical, and based on mental stimulation? Or should they be creative, practical or "hands-on"? Or a combination of both? Can a Third Age Learning group meet its objectives with a slate of offerings on gardening, painting, photography, etc.?

To make that determination, many groups are introducing a focus on individual personal development in the wider sense, so that things that make members grow as individuals are as valid as things that expand their minds.

The Academy for Lifelong Learning in Toronto explored this approach with its workshop on stand-up comedy for seniors that was a successful part of the Academy's 2017/18 offerings. Ten participants, presented with a list of 60 topics related to aging, such as hearing and memory loss, fear of loneliness and dying, loss of identity after retirement, technology and computer challenges; money issues; and loss of a spouse or partner, were challenged to take these topics and change them into humour. The goal was to write original jokes and perform them at a stand-up comedy show just eight months after the first class. None of the students in the class had any prior experience with comedy writing.

The workshop was a great success, and the final performance was very enjoyable, but it was in speaking with the newly created comedy stars that it became obvious how valuable a topic such as this is when it comes to being challenged and personal development. Here are thoughts of some of the workshop members that demonstrate the point.

"I never imagined that I would experience both writing and performing my own jokes in front of a crowd. It was a very fulfilling event. I learned to find humour in everyday life and observe the wonder and absurdity of we humans. Laughter is wonderful medicine. It is much more difficult to write jokes than you think. It is wise not to try them out on family and friends if you are expecting a laugh

because humour is very personal. You may not get the response you expect, but don't let this discourage you, you must be brave and enjoy the process."

Janet Broadley, a retired Property Administrator for the Metro Toronto Housing Authority, sings in a choir, and volunteers for Tafelmusik and the Toronto Consort. She also takes art classes and is a member of lawn bowls and curling teams.

"I was dealing with some serious health issues, and had just started retirement when I took the plunge and signed up for the comedy workshop at the Academy. The workshop helped me see the humour in challenges that we all face as we age. I've worked as a writer my whole professional life, but had never written any comedy. I wanted to challenge myself, and this workshop certainly did that!

Ian Darragh, a retired journalist and communications professional, volunteers for the Academy for Lifelong Learning and Heritage Toronto.

"I learned it pays to go outside your comfort zone. The comedy workshop made me appreciate how really hard it is to write something that can make people laugh. I valued the positive feedback from my peers, and found ways to look at myself and make light of the consequences of aging."

Ellen Lewkowicz, retired librarian from Toronto Public Library who now runs a book club and writes and edits a newsletter for her synagogue.

The success of this workshop, and the benefits – beyond intellectual stimulation – gained by its participants will hopefully demonstrate to other Third Age Learning groups that topics need not be academic in the traditional sense to be relevant and rewarding.



The "graduates" of the Academy's comedy workshop - with guest Ron James - at their first performance

## *Facing the Big Issues in Barrie*

by Larry Black

Toronto's 'tiny perfect mayor', David Crombie, came to Barrie on 17 April 2018. He was here as the opening speaker in Third Age Barrie's (TAB) 5-part spring series titled, "City Futures: Facing the Big Issues". The series was proposed to TAB a year ago by Jeff Lehman, Mayor of Barrie, who also arranged for all five speakers. In addition to Crombie, these included Anne Golden, Director, Ryerson City Building Institute, Mike Moffat, chief economist of the Mowat Centre, Brian Bentz, CEO of Alectra Inc., and Lehman himself.

Lehman took a few minutes to introduce the series to our audience and then our speaker got down to business. Crombie's discourse, "Immediate vs. Long Term", was replete with anecdotes, humour and words of wisdom about urban concerns. He emphasized the need for community interaction and mutual cooperation, not only among individuals who live in a community but also between municipal, provincial and federal government agencies. He noted that we often fail to recognize the extent of our reliance on government services (e.g. transport, roads, schools, health care, social services), and that cuts in financial support for such services merely guarantee that much more substantial spending will be necessary in the future: Toronto's city transit served as his case in point.

Mike Moffat's lecture on "The Sharing Economy" left us with much to think about, especially in connection with adjustments we must make if we hope to successfully manage the economy of the future. Moffat compared the circumstance and characteristics of our work habits in 1977, 2018 and 2059, noting that the greatest changes developing in the area of automation and robot use, i.e. our evolving ability to produce as much, with better quality, with far fewer workers!

The third talk, by Anne Golden on "Cities and Social Challenges", took up some of the same themes addressed by Moffat. Using urban development in Toronto as her



Barrie's Mayor Jeff Lehman

model, she focussed on the rapidly growing wealth inequality and the problems it causes for society at large. Illustrating by use of urban maps how Toronto has become ghettoized by income levels since 1980, with the very wealthy occupying some parts of the city and the poor other parts, with very little place left for the middle class that used to dominate the city. It was clear from this presentation that if we didn't alter our thinking about cities, our next generation could find itself in serious difficulties.

Next came Brian Bentz to speak on "Innovative Energy Strategies". Focusing on the electricity industry in Ontario, he outlined his own 20-year career working in Barrie as an auditor for power companies before moving on to bigger and better things. Now the CEO of Alectra, the second largest community-owned utility in North America, Bentz described both the history and innovative future of electricity use in Ontario. In keeping with earlier speakers, he made it plain that the future lay with full automation of all our

electricity needs.

The series concluded on 15 May with an address by Jeff Lehman, Mayor of Barrie, under the rubric "Urban Sprawl — Is It Sustainable?" Using Barrie as his main example, he outlined the most pressing issues facing municipal government and how to best deal with them. Lehman struck a more optimistic cord than some of the previous speakers, especially on the crucial issue of housing. Mixed housing construction (single dwellings, apartments, condos, affordable housing) co-exist well, complementing each other, he said. Higher density development, inner courtyards for condos and apartment buildings, and innovative transportation techniques may provide solutions to many of the concerns raised throughout the series.

Some of the "big issues" revealed by our speakers are coming realities for which we are not yet prepared. But awareness is essential if the old motto, "be prepared", is to have purpose. The series on "City Futures" has certainly left us aware.

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### *Ideas* (from Page 3)

#### 3. Combating Ageism: Countering Prejudicial Narratives of Older People

Ageism and (un)employment – individual, social and economic impacts

An Australian researcher reviewed the impacts of ageism on employment of older adults. Her evidence showed that older people are very reliable employees and bring experience and know-how to their work. Even so, they are often overlooked as potential employees. A program has been developed to promote the benefits of older

workers and address the attitudes toward ageism of potential employers.

'I am not old': perspectives and experiences of ageing in South Africa

This paper described the attitudes of older people in South Africa and their views of what they consider to be old age. Essentially, they described old age as someone older and less capable than themselves... whatever their own age!

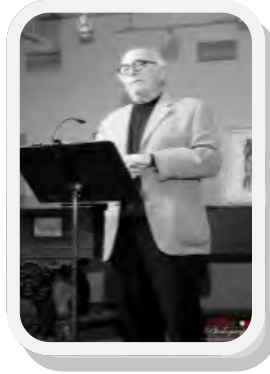
## *Programs at LLN Niagara*

by Lynn Mytroen

Lifelong Learning Niagara (LLN) continues to grow in the number of attendees at each lecture and in our number of members. We offer our membership program separate from our series lectures. Our members receive perks not available to our general population but we open our lectures to all the 'senior' population in the Niagara Region. One of our challenges is that our region is made up of over 15 communities and although we hold our lectures in a central location within the region, it is difficult for us to entice people to want to drive the short distance to our lecture hall. That said, our numbers are growing and we have found that staying consistent with a time and day has been to our benefit. We also have a wonderfully talented volunteer who serenades our lecture attendees with his wide range of piano music.

In addition to our 2018 spring lecture, we hosted two special events. The first was an enlightening talk by Sally Armstrong about her experiences as a war reporter. Her pictures that accompanied her talk brought her experiences to life for all of us. And then this summer we had the opportunity to have Norm Foster come and entertain us with his lively and amusing stories of his life as a playwright. St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre puts on the Foster Festival each spring with at least one of Norm's premiere plays.

And now that September is upon us we are all set to start our six week fall series which runs from September 26 thru to October 31. Our format is to host different speakers each week who talk on a variety of subjects.



*Norm Foster*



*Sally Armstrong*

This fall we will host:

Iain Scott; Opera 101

Dr. Joshua Tepper; The Future of our Primary Care

Dr. Agnes Nowaczek; Sustainable Tourism and Eco-tourism

Dr. Laurel Trainor; Music that Moves Us

Dr. Rene Van Acker; Genetically Modified Organisms

Nancy Stadler-Salt; How are the Great Lakes Doing?

And in conclusion, we will end the year with our Annual General Meeting. All members are invited and encouraged to attend our AGM and to become more active in our organization. To entice our members to attend we offer a speaker and lunch program before the meeting. Food and entertainment are always a winning combination.

## *Executive Report*

by Nancy Christie, president

With a new season of later life learning underway, TAN's Executive Committee met by videoconference on September 12th. Some activities are noted elsewhere in the newsletter. Highlights include:

- Gift of LIFE The Executive was thrilled to receive a gift of \$5,000 from LIFE, one of the Toronto members of TAN. This means that preparing a print version of the revised Starter Kit is a project that we can undertake immediately. Editing is complete. We are now looking for someone with experience in design and printing to undertake this task. Contact any member of the Executive Committee if you can help with this.
- New website: The Executive Committee is pleased with the new website design and looks forward to adding more content. Margaret Robertson continues to be the webmaster, and Cathy Smart, a member of the Executive committee will help expand the content on an

ongoing basis.

- 2019 TAN Symposium – Consideration is being given to holding the TAN Symposium in Guelph in May 2019. Stay tuned for further details!
- Boomer Forum Proceedings- Michelle Gold has prepared proceedings from the Forum which are now posted on the TAN website. If you weren't able to attend, check the website to find out what went on at the Forum.
- New Members – TAN members are helping to initiate new Third Age learning organizations in Orillia, Stouffville, Markham East and Mississauga. The movement is growing ....fast! Even the newest ones have sold out their memberships quickly. Look around and see where you might encourage a new group to start.