

# LIVEWIRES

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## HAVE YOU MOVED?

Be sure to let us know if you have moved, changed your email address, or changed your phone number. We want to be sure you don't miss any important communications. Email [cammaert@nrtco.net](mailto:cammaert@nrtco.net) with your changes.

## STAYING ACTIVE THIS WINTER: EMBRACING THE SEASON

As winter settles in, the snowy landscapes and crisp air invite us to find creative ways to stay active and engaged. While the cold and icy conditions may seem like a challenge, they also offer unique opportunities to embrace the season and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

For those who enjoy the outdoors, bundling up for a walk can be invigorating. Whether it's a stroll around your neighborhood or a hike on a nearby trail, the fresh air and natural beauty can do wonders for your spirit and well-being. If icy paths are a concern, investing in slip-resistant footwear or cleats can help keep you steady.

Prefer to stay cozy indoors? Consider joining a local gym, signing up for a fitness class, or trying an online workout program tailored to your pace. Yoga, stretching, or low-impact aerobics are excellent options to keep your body moving.

Winter is also a great time to explore hobbies that combine movement with fun, such as dancing, tai chi, or even organizing indoor group activities with friends. Staying active not only keeps you physically fit but also boosts your mood and energy levels.

This winter, let's commit to staying active, embracing the season, and keeping our bodies and minds strong.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year and welcome to 2025!

I hope everyone has enjoyed the holiday season and had the opportunity to spend time with friends, loved ones, and family. Over the past two and a half years, we've faced significant challenges, from navigating the impacts of COVID to adapting to the ongoing digital revolution. Through it all, we've remained resilient and focused on finding innovative ways to foster engagement among our members in District activities. As we look ahead, I encourage you to explore our latest issue of Livewires. It's filled with information about the events we have planned for the coming year. Additionally, our district website, [District21.rtoero.ca](http://District21.rtoero.ca), is a valuable resource where you can find answers to insurance questions, access back issues of Livewires, and discover other member benefits.



If you'd like to receive occasional updates on Chimp Chatter about District 21 activities, please ensure that Gus Cammaert ([cammaert@nrtco.net](mailto:cammaert@nrtco.net)) has your email address so you can be added to his publication list. You're also invited to join the District 21 Facebook page, where we share news about local events and other topics of interest to our members.

We want to ensure that we're supporting each other as a community. If you know of any members facing serious health challenges or who have passed away, please notify Myrtle Carroll, our Goodwill Coordinator, at [myrtlecarroll4@gmail.com](mailto:myrtlecarroll4@gmail.com) so we can extend our support and condolences.

I'm also excited to announce that the Board has introduced a new District Award for Community Service. This award will recognize members who volunteer their time and energy to make a difference in their communities. The criteria for selection are currently being developed, and we will share more details about this initiative soon.

Thank you for your continued involvement and dedication to District 21. Here is to a year of connection, growth, and celebration!

Warm regards,  
Jacqueline Asselin, President, District 21

# 2024 CHRISTMAS PARTY

RTOERO District 21 celebrated its members at our annual Christmas party on December 1st from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Eganville Legion.

Nearly 70 members enjoyed a delicious lunch of various appetizers and finger foods catered by Metro plus delicious fruitcake made by our very own Myrtle Carrol. A talented trio entertained us with lively popular and seasonal dance music, and there was even a fun skit performed by members of the District 21 Executive (Jacqueline Asselin, Carol Sulpher, Myrtle Carroll, and Barb Asselin).

A great big thanks to Myrtle Carroll for organizing another wonderful event!

Our annual Christmas Party is always held in early December at the Eganville Legion. Be sure to watch this space for next year's party date and put it in your calendar!



# TIME TO MOVE ON

The 2012 fall edition of Livewires was the last kick at that can by Mike Laverty who had been editor for 12 years. He had produced 28 editions and decided at that point it was time to retire. Not wanting to see our newsletter stop because of lack of an editor I volunteered to take on the job for a year to give the executive a chance to fill that position. Well, you know how that goes. I put in 12 years and cobbled together 35 Livewires.

I must say, I've enjoyed the work. It challenges your creativity and using the computer to put it together keeps you learning. I thank the executive for giving me the opportunity to fill this role and now hand over the reigns to Barb Asselin who will become the new editor starting with the January issue. Barb comes well qualified.

I had asked Barb to give me a short bio so that I could introduce you to her and she provided the following:

Barb Asselin is an educator, author, and entrepreneur. She recently retired from Algonquin College after 20 years of teaching legal professionals. She is both traditionally published with four textbooks for students in law programs, and self-published with a variety of fiction and nonfiction books on Amazon.

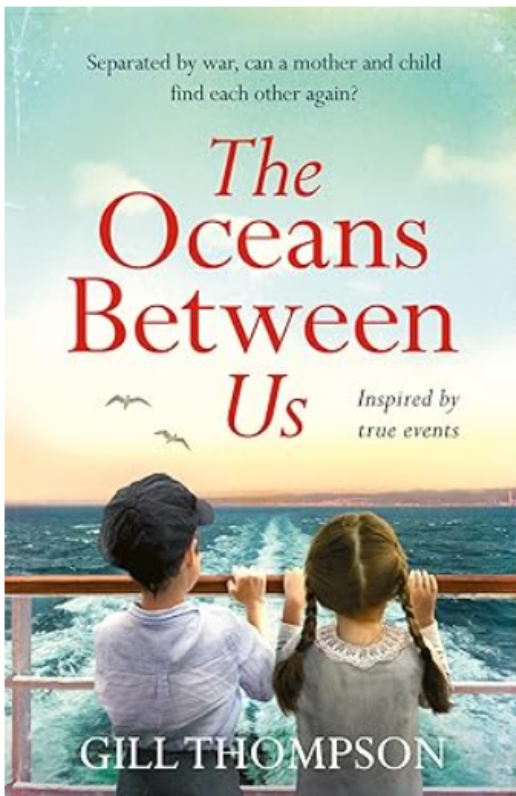
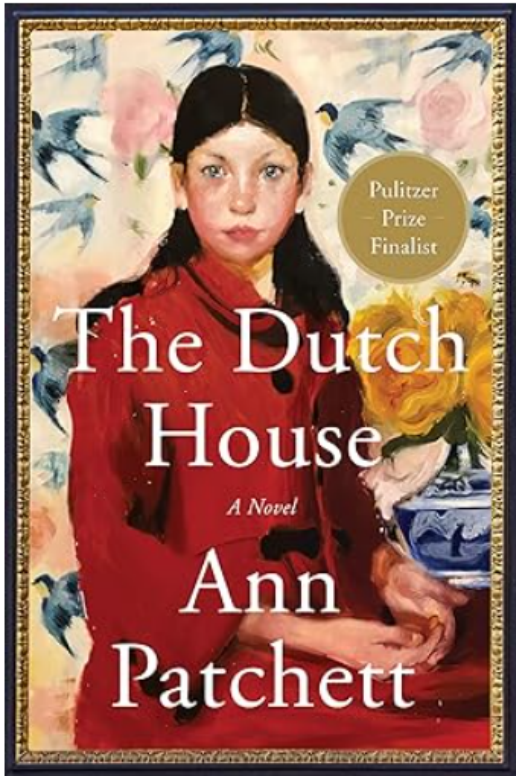
Professionally, Barb continues to keep busy by writing new books and by creating digital products for authors and small business owners. Personally, she is an avid golfer, sings with the Arnprior Community Choir, and plays flute in the Valley Concert Band. Barb and her husband, Mike, have two adult daughters currently attending post-secondary schools. Their daily adventures including walking and training their Golden Retriever puppy, Scout.

Barb is both excited and terrified to take over the Livewire Newsletter. "Gus is a seasoned and well-respected professional. After 12 years of producing our district newsletter, his are big shoes to fill, but I'm willing to give it my best. Wish me luck!"

Livewires is the primary means of communication in our district, and I thank each of you for your interest and faithful following.

Gus Cammaert





## DISTRICT 21 BOOK CLUB

Have you heard that District 21 has its very own book club? Member Trish Turner has inspired members to join her initiative to discuss a variety of books.

The Book Club is currently reading *The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett and they will meet in person on January 23rd at 2:00 p.m. in the Program Room at the Renfrew Library for what promises to be a lively discussion led by Barb Bristow

The Book Club's next book will be *The Oceans Between Us* by Gill Thompson.

The group meets on the third Thursday of every second month at 2:00 p.m. For more information and to join the Book Club, contact Trish Turner at [t-turner@sympatico.ca](mailto:t-turner@sympatico.ca)

## WE COULD USE YOUR HELP

When we want to get the word out, we count on our callers. Some of our callers have volunteered for a number of years and are now ready to hang up the phone.

The District is now looking for replacement volunteers. It's an easy and enjoyable where you get to talk to nice people 2 or 3 times a year.

If you're interested, please contact Myrtle Carroll at:  
Phone: 613-732-3066  
Email: [myrtlecarroll4@gmail.com](mailto:myrtlecarroll4@gmail.com)

**“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” - Mahatma Gandhi**

# BALLINTOTAS ALPACAS: WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS COZY! (Part 1)

by Shannon Cassidy-Rouleau (RTOERO Member)

Stay tuned for our next issue of *Livewires* to learn more about Shannon's family farm and their alpaca journey.

Located in the heart of the Ottawa Valley, Ballintotas Alpacas was born in 2003 from a desire to balance our busy working lives with a return to country values. Twenty-one years later, many things on the farm have changed, but our love for alpacas and their amazing fibre has remained steadfast.

## ALPACA FACTS

Although they are much more common today, people are still curious about alpacas. There are two types of alpacas: the suri (possessing long fibre with silky locks) and the huacaya (exhibiting shorter, dense, crimped fibre). Alpacas belong to the camelid family and are cousins to the llama and camel. They chew their cud like a cow but have three-chambered stomachs instead of four. Standing approximately 3 feet high to the shoulder and 5 feet to the top of the head, alpacas weigh between 100-180 pounds with a lifespan of 15-20+ years. They have a long gestation period of 11-12 months with predominantly single births. Alpaca babies are called "cria".

Gentle and curious animals, alpacas are easily handled and trained to a halter. They do not challenge fences but do require predator fencing to keep them safe from dogs or coyotes. They are light eaters who rely on pasture or hay, a vitamin pellet supplement, fresh water, shade in summer, and shelter in winter. Most medical care can be carried out by the owner, specifically annual immunizations, yearly shearing, toenail clipping, and deworming.



*Top: Alpacas in the winter*

*Middle: The barn*

*Bottom: Fairy Dust as a "cria"*

# BALLINTOTAS ALPACAS - Continued



Top 2: Shearing day  
Middle: Knitwear  
Bottom: Dyed yarn

Alpacas have some unique characteristics. They do spit, but usually over food and not often at people. They use “communal dung piles” and have one waste area in each pasture making daily clean up easy. A male will “orgle” (a throaty vocalization) in the ear of the female he is courting and breedings are often successful on the first attempt. Farmers know that the female is pregnant because she will “spit” at the male if he tries to approach her. Alpacas “hum” when distressed or worried and produce a staccato “alarm call” to alert the herd to anything questionable on the horizon.

Sheared each spring, alpacas produce a luxurious fleece. Available in 22 natural colours, their fibre surpasses other natural fibres in softness and warmth. It’s an organic and sustainable resource that contains no lanolin, is processed without chemicals, wicks moisture away, and resists acquired odours. For this reason, alpaca socks can be worn over and over between washings and never smell!

...stay tuned for Part 2 of Shannon’s family farm and their alpaca journey in the next issue of Livewires.



The Cassidy-Rouleau family

# UPCOMING LUNCH DATES

Looking for a fun outing with your fellow RTOERO District 21 members? Consider joining us for lunch at one of the following locations:

## ARNPRIOR/RENFREW/COBDEN

Join us on the following dates at 11:30 a.m. (usually the second Tuesday of each month):

January 14 - Arnprior: Jim's Restaurant at 11:30 a.m.  
February 11 - Renfrew: Boston Pizza at 11:30 a.m.  
March 11 - Arnprior: The Cupboard at 11:30 a.m.  
April 8 - Renfrew: Bonnechere Bakery at 11:30 a.m.

## PEMBROKE

Join us on the first Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at the following locations (note September is a breakfast at 9:00 a.m. on the first day of school):

February 5 - Pembroke: Finnigans at 11:30 a.m.  
March 5 - Pembroke: Boston Pizza at 11:30 a.m.  
April 2 - Pembroke: Chuck's Roadhouse at 11:30 a.m.  
May 7 - Pembroke: Finnigans at 11:30 a.m.  
June 4 - Pembroke: Boston Pizza at 11:30 a.m.  
September (1st day of school) - Pembroke: breakfast at Finnigans at 9:00 a.m.  
October 1 - Pembroke: Chuck's Roadhouse at 11:30 a.m.  
November 5 - Pembroke: Finnigans at 11:30 a.m.

## QUEBEC

Join us on the third Thursday of each month at 12:00 noon at The Waltham Station:

January 16 - The Waltham Station at 12:00 noon  
February 20 - The Waltham Station at 12:00 noon  
March 20 - The Waltham Station at 12:00 noon  
April 17 - The Waltham Station at 12:00 noon  
May 15 - The Waltham Station at 12:00 noon  
June 19 - The Waltham Station at 12:00 noon

# MEET YOUR DISTRICT 21 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Membership & Recruitment  
Gus Cammaert

Marketing & Communications  
Barb Asselin

Political Advocacy  
Carol Sulpher

Goodwill - Myrtle Carroll

Nominations - Rosemary Cammaert

Awards - Anne Guest

Social - Trish Turner

Travel - Trish Turner

Archivist - Sue Larkin

Watch for our quarterly Livewires in January, April, July, and October. In between these quarterly Livewires, look for our mini eLivewires, which will be delivered by email on the 1st of the remaining months of the year. Email [cammaert@nrtco.net](mailto:cammaert@nrtco.net) if you're not on the email list.

Elementary  
teachers

High school  
teachers



# MOVIE TIME IN DISTRICT 21!

Who doesn't love a good movie?

On a beautiful October afternoon, District 21 members and their guests gathered for a special matinee at the O'Brien Theatre in Arnprior. It was Thursday, October 24th, and the film on the screen was *White Bird*—a poignant tale of resilience and hope. Set against the harrowing backdrop of Nazi-occupied France, the story followed a young Jewish girl's survival through World War 2 with the courage and kindness of an unexpected ally, a classmate. As the credits rolled, the audience sat in silence, many brushing away tears, deeply moved by the film's powerful message.

On December 5th, our members and their guests attended the O'Brien Theatre in Renfrew to see *Wicked*. A whimsical, musical mastery with vocal performances that "defied gravity", *Wicked* left everyone humming all the way home.

A big thanks to Trish Turner for arranging our movie days. Watch our Facebook group as well as future issues of *Chimp Chatter* and *Livewires* to join us at the movies!

## YOU CAN GET PUBLISHED!

There are lots of ways to get involved in our *Livewires* newsletter. Consider submitting one or more of the following:

- A photo for our monthly photo contest (your choice for the subject of the photo)
- A short article (100-300 words) about a district event you attended
- A photo from an event you attended with a caption
- A short story you've written
- Information about a book or books you have written, whether traditionally published or self-published.

Email Barb Asselin at [barbasselin@yahoo.ca](mailto:barbasselin@yahoo.ca) with your submissions.



# FEATURED AUTHOR: HEATHER CAMPBELL

## THE SHOW MUST GO ON

I was born in 1940 in Coe Hill, Wollaston Township, Ont. Our village, like many others, had no electricity until 1952. How was it, then, that we had weekly movies in our town hall and educational films at our school? It was because of the entrepreneurial spirit of my father, Howard Gunter.

It was 1947—around the time my brother, Allyn, was born—when Dad bought a Bell & Howell projector and a gas-powered generator. He already owned a Jeep, which made it very handy for transporting this equipment. Through a Toronto outlet, Dad rented movies from sources such as Warner Bros. and MGM. Not only did Dad rent the Coe Hill town hall for a weekly movie, but he also travelled to town halls within a 40-mile radius to show these movies. Those were the days of black- and-white movies. Technicolor was still in the future.

In addition to operating these makeshift theatres, Dad was hired by the North Hastings Board of Education to show educational films in more than 40 schools. He visited four schools a day, operating on a two-week circuit. Dad previewed the films at home, even writing a few questions the teachers could use.





## ARE YOU A PUBLISHED AUTHOR?

If you, or another RTOERO member, has been either self-published or traditionally published, we'd love to know!

Email Barb Asselin at [barbasselin@yahoo.ca](mailto:barbasselin@yahoo.ca) with information about the author and their published work(s) and get featured in an upcoming issue of Livewires.

Let's celebrate our published members!

## THE SHOW MUST GO ON (Cont'd)

Many schools had no way of making the room dark enough for movies—but Mom solved that problem. She used heavy black material, sewed several 36-inch sections together, then sewed pockets down the sides that accommodated poles the height of the school windows. In the classroom, Dad would set up a screen, put these curtains over the windows, start the generator, turn on the projector and presto: movies! The pupils affectionately called him “The Show Man” and loved to help him set up.

A former student of the 40's and 50's from the community of Hermon told me that it was Wednesdays when Dad brought movies to his school, and although he and his friends did not worry about missing school on other days, they never wanted to miss Wednesdays! I wonder if Dad ever knew how much he was appreciated. I have also had teachers tell me they really looked forward to seeing Dad's Jeep pull into the schoolyard.

Dad had indelible memories of some schools, one being S.S. #7, McClure Township. One winter day, he had set up his projector, curtains and screen in the classroom during outdoor recess. When recess was over, Dad put the last blackout curtain in place and started the film. Suddenly, kapow! Snowballs flew all over the classroom! It seemed each child had carefully concealed a snowball, waiting for this opportune time! I am not sure what the punishment was, but Dad chuckled every time he told this story.

Though Dad would go on to enjoy other entrepreneurial endeavours, the introduction of electricity and television to the area eventually brought the demise of Dad's itinerant showman job, a job he had truly enjoyed.

*You can read more stories about Heather's father and life in Coe Hill in her book, "The Show Must Go On".*

# IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION



Ontario Teachers' Pension  
[www.otpp.com](http://www.otpp.com)  
1-800-668-0105



Global Excel Management (Entente Booklet page 43)  
1-877-346-1467  
(Travel Insurance Claims and Pre-Travel Information)



Express Scripts (Entente Booklet page 27)  
[www.express-scripts.ca](http://www.express-scripts.ca)  
(24/7 access to a Canadian Pharmacist and home delivery of maintenance prescribed medications)  
1-855-550-6337

Cloud MD (Entente Booklet page 28)  
[www.cloudmd.ca](http://www.cloudmd.ca)  
(Personal Health Related Questions, Second Medical Opinions, Specialist Referrals and Support)  
1-800-661-8193



RTOERO District 21  
c/o 449 Flat Rapids Rd.  
Arnprior, ON  
K7S 3G8

