



# Thyrobulletin

Spring 2015

## In this issue:

- 35<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting
- Hidden Thyroid Dysfunction can Wreak Havoc
- Mary's Story
- Thyroid Research
- Ben's Story & Thyroid Health Days
- In Memoriam

## 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Thyroid Foundation of Canada

Kingston Ontario



June 13, 2015



*Set sail for Kingston!*



Thyroid Foundation of Canada  
La Fondation canadienne de la Thyroïde



**FOUNDER / FONDATRICE**

Diana Meltzer Abramsky, C.M., B.A.  
1915 - 2000



We are the Voice and Face  
of Thyroid Health in Canada

Thyroid Foundation of Canada  
La Fondation canadienne de la Thyroïde

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**In this Issue:**

A Message from the President	2
Call for Nominations	3
35 <sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting	4
In Memoriam	5
Metamorphosis	8
Hidden Thyroid Dysfunction can Wreak Havoc	9
Mary's Story	10
Thyroid Research	11
Ben's Story & Thyroid Health Days	12
Coming Events/ News and Events	13

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**Thyroid Foundation of Canada  
P.O. Box 298, Bath ON, K0H 1G0**

**www.thyroid.ca • 1.800.267.8822**





## A message from the president



## Un message de votre présidente

Dear Readers and TFC members:

Spring has returned and with it comes a reminder to look around us for signs of continuing life and new growth. I find it is a good time to look back and look ahead to assess how the Foundation is doing. Looking back we honour the tremendous contribution of four women who dedicated many years to the Foundation.

This June, we will be celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Foundation and holding our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Patient Forum in Kingston, the birthplace of the Foundation. You may wonder about the importance of the AGM. In order to be a Registered Charity with authorization to issue official tax receipts and qualify for various programs and funding, one of the requirements is to hold an Annual General Meeting with elections. At the AGM, members hear reports from the national Board and the Chapters regarding the Foundation's activities over the year, and review the financial statements. Members have the opportunity to ask questions about the Foundation's activities, revenue and expenses, and provide input regarding their concerns. Each year, the Foundation seeks interested, talented persons who care about thyroid disease and want to be involved at the Board level. The AGM is your chance to meet the Board members from across the country and elect new Board members as there is usually some turnover of Directors. Some years, a President is elected to serve for a 3-year term. Will this be your year to step forward and get involved on the Board?

The Foundation continues to receive letters, emails and phone messages from thyroid patients across the country asking for information about thyroid disease and access to good diagnosis and treatment. One exciting development over the past year has been the first ever series of Thyroid Health Days at pharmacies across Canada. Members of the public are able to discuss their symptoms with a nurse to find out whether they should have their thyroid checked by a doctor. Hopefully, these Health Days will continue to take place across the country so that more patients will be able to get information and answers to their questions.

Looking ahead, there are several initiatives underway to increase the visibility of the Foundation, e.g. a digital poster that will appear in clinics across the Greater Toronto Area.

Chers lecteurs et membres de la FCT:

Le printemps est de retour et au même temps un rappel à contempler autour de nous des signes de vie continue et d'une nouvelle évolution. Je trouve que c'est le moment propice pour réfléchir et viser vers l'avenir pour évaluer la façon dont la Fondation est en train de continuer. Au mois de juin prochain, nous célébrerons le 35<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Fondation et nous tiendrons notre assemblée générale annuelle (AGA) et le forum de patients à Kingston, le lieu de naissance de la Fondation. En voyant retrospectivement, nous honorons l'importante contribution de quatre femmes qui ont consacré de nombreuses années à la Fondation.

Vous pouvez vous demander peut-être sur l'importance de l'AGA. Afin d'être un organisme de bienfaisance enregistré avec l'autorisation de délivrer des reçus officiels et de se qualifier pour divers programmes de financement, une des exigences est de tenir une assemblée générale annuelle où des élections ont lieu. Lors de l'AGA, les membres s'informent sur les rapports du Conseil d'administration national et ses Chapitres, sur les activités de la Fondation au cours de la dernière année; et aussi révisent les états financiers. À cette occasion, les membres ont la possibilité de poser des questions sur les activités, les recettes et les dépenses de la Fondation, et d'en fournir des commentaires au sujet de leurs préoccupations. Chaque année, la Fondation recherche des personnes intéressées et talentueuses qui se préoccupent de la maladie de la thyroïde et qui veulent être impliqués au niveau du Conseil. L'AGA est votre opportunité de rencontrer les membres du Conseil de tout le pays et d'élire de nouveaux membres du conseil d'administration car il y a généralement un certain nombre de renouvellement de directeurs(trices). Certaines années, un(e) Président(e) est élu(e) pour un mandat de trois ans. Sera cette année-ci où vous vous impliquerez au sein du Conseil d'administration national?

La Fondation continue à recevoir des lettres, des courriels et des messages téléphoniques de patients atteints de la thyroïde à travers le pays pour en demander des informations sur les maladies de la thyroïde et comment obtenir un diagnostic et traitement précis. Au cours de l'année passée, un développement exceptionnel a eu lieu pour la première fois : le lancement dans les pharmacies à travers le Canada des *Journées de la Santé de la Thyroïde*. Les patients sont en mesure d'en discuter sur leurs symptômes avec une infirmière pour savoir si ils/elles doivent se faire examiner leur thyroïde par un médecin. Nous espérons que ces Journées de la Santé de la Thyroïde continueront à avoir lieu à travers le pays afin que nombreux patients puissent obtenir des informations et des réponses à leurs questions.





I want to acknowledge the ongoing partnership between the Foundation and Abbott Pharmaceuticals which has contributed to the success of the Thyroid Health Days. Partnerships are essential to the health and strength of the Foundation and they come in many forms:

- The hardworking volunteers and advisors who dedicate time to carry out the goals of the organization,
- The organizations that provide funding for the work of the Foundation;
- The patients who take time to tell others about their experiences with thyroid disease and provide support to others;
- The families and friends who donate generously to support the causes of education and research.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM in June! Remember to watch for updates on the website about the Patient Forum to be held in Kingston too!

Donna Miniely

Envisageant l'avenir, il y a plusieurs initiatives en cours pour augmenter la visibilité de la Fondation, ex. une affiche numérique qui apparaîtra dans les cliniques de la région du Grand Toronto.

Je tiens à souligner le partenariat en cours entre la Fondation et les Laboratoires Abbott qui a contribué au succès des *Journées de la Santé de la Thyroïde*. Les partenariats sont essentiels à la santé et la force de la Fondation et se présentent en diverses formes:

- Les bénévoles et les conseillers qui travaillent dur et consacrent du temps pour obtenir les objectifs de l'organisation,
- Les organisations qui facilitent du financement pour les tâches à accomplir de la Fondation;
- Les patients qui prennent le temps de partager leurs expériences avec la maladie de la thyroïde et de fournir un soutien aux autres;
- Les familles et les amis qui donnent généreusement pour soutenir les causes de l'éducation et de la recherche des maladies de la thyroïde.

Nous avons hâte de vous voir lors de l'AGA en juin! Ne oubliez pas d'être vigilants aux mises à jour dans le site Web concernant le Forum des patients qui aura lieu aussi à Kingston!

Donna Miniely

### Thyroid Foundation of Canada CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 2015-2016

#### The National Board is accepting nominations for vacant positions on the Board for the coming year 2015-2016

As per Article No. 17 (a) - The Board shall consist of a minimum of seven directors and up to a maximum of 15 directors elected by the membership plus the immediate past-President if s/he agrees to serve. If vacancies exist on the Board, the Board may appoint directors up to a maximum of one-third of the Board. The term of any appointed director shall expire at the close of the next general meeting.

At present, there are 4 director positions on the National Board that will be vacant this year. The positions of directors are not designated to any specific title or responsibility. The roles will be determined subsequent to the AGM at the first meeting of members of the National Board.

If you are interested or know of anyone who might be interested, please have them complete the Nomination form and forward along with a CV to the Nominating Committee Chair Angela O'Connell at [angelad.oconnell@gmail.com](mailto:angelad.oconnell@gmail.com) no later than May 22, 2015.

*(Copies of the nomination form may be obtained at [www.thyroid.ca](http://www.thyroid.ca) or by calling 1-800-267-8822)*

### La Fondation canadienne de la Thyroïde APPEL DE CANDIDATURES 2015 – 2016

#### Le Conseil national accepte des candidatures pour des postes ouverts sur son Conseil d'administration pour l'année 2015-2016

Conformément à l'article n ° 17 (a) - Le Conseil d'administration est composé d'un minimum de sept directeurs/trices et jusqu'à un maximum de 15 directeurs/trices élus par les membres en plus du/de la Président(e) sortant (e) si il / elle s'engage à continuer. Si les postes vacants existent au sein du conseil, le Conseil d'administration peut nommer des directeurs/trices jusqu' à un maximum d'un tiers du conseil. Le terme de tout directeur/trice nommé fini à la fin de la prochaine assemblée générale.

Présentement, il y a 4 postes de directeurs/trices au sein du Conseil national qui seront vacants cette année. Les postes de directeurs/trices ne sont pas désignés à un titre ou une responsabilité spécifiques. Les rôles seront déterminés à la suite de l'AGA à la première réunion des membres du Conseil national.

Si vous êtes intéressé ou connaissez quelqu'un qui pourrait être intéressé, s'il vous plaît remplir le formulaire de candidature et l'expédier, accompagné du CV du candidat au président du Comité de mise en candidature Angela O'Connell à [angelad.oconnell@gmail.com](mailto:angelad.oconnell@gmail.com) au plus tard le 22 mai 2015.

*(Des copies du formulaire de mise en candidature peuvent être obtenus à [www.thyroid.ca](http://www.thyroid.ca) ou par composant le 1-800-267-8822)*



# THYROID FOUNDATION OF CANADA 35TH ANNIVERSARY

KINGSTON ONTARIO  
Saturday June 13, 2015

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

9 :00 pm – 11:30 pm

## THYROID PUBLIC FORUM

2 :00 pm – 4:00 pm

## EVENING RECEPTION AND DINNER

(time and details TBA)

*For more information:* 1-800-267-8822  
www.thyroid.ca info@thyroid.ca

## FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON

285 King St E, Kingston, ON K7L 3B2  
*Please join us!*



IN MEMORIAM



**Professor A.  
Margaret Evans,  
Founder,  
Kitchener-Waterloo**



**Helen Goldsworthy,  
Founding Member,  
Kitchener-Waterloo  
Chapter**

Dr. A. Margaret Evans was born on January 18, 1914 on a 50-acre farm just north of Hensall, Ontario. We very sadly lost her on December 20, 2014, just before her 101st birthday. Anyone who knew Margaret, was shocked when we found out she was celebrating her 100th birthday in 2014. Her age was her most carefully guarded secret for all of the years that I knew her. She was one of the most amazing women I ever met. She married Professor Wellesley Dorland Evans in 1945 and lost him in 1954. This meant she would be raising 3 children (2 boys and a girl) on her own. Her children were very proud of their mother and she also was of them. Margaret had 5 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. She won Scholarships in Mathematics and Chemistry to be admitted to the University of Western Ontario at the age of 15 years but had to wait until she was 16 to attend. Attending University during the Great Depression, she was told that her education was a waste because, being a woman, she would get married and then not use it. Again, at Western, she won 2 Gold Medals the same year and because she was a woman, the university tried to give her only one.

On November 9, 1982, Margaret and a group of local thyroid patients including Helen Goldsworthy sat around the table in Margaret's kitchen and formed our local Kitchener-Waterloo Area Chapter which is still in full operation to this day. In 1980, Margaret was diagnosed with Graves' thyroid disease and was determined not to let the disease run her life. Concerned with the lack of information locally on thyroid problems, she heard about the Thyroid Foundation of Canada in Kingston and decided a Chapter was needed in Kitchener-Waterloo (K-W). I believe she told me that the first meeting was held at the Waterloo Public Library where she was able to creatively obtain a room for free, as she was on the Board there. We have been extremely fortunate now to be a part of the Kitchener Public Library Health Program and still have the room, equipment, advertising and staff, who support our Chapter tremendously. Margaret was able to form a working Board and conduct education meetings to qualify to start our Chapter. This year, our Chapter celebrates 33 years of assisting thyroid patients and their families, by offering moral support, awareness and thyroid education. We still have a full working Board with an impressive

*Continued p. 6*

Helen was born on February 9, 1923 on the 100-acre Goodhope Farm in Downie Township, Perth County, Ontario. We were very sad to lose Helen on January 1, 2015, so close to the time we also lost her dear friend of many years, Margaret Evans.

Helen suffered with both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism at different times in her life. On November 9, 1982, Helen assisted Margaret in establishing a complete working Board. They all worked around Margaret's kitchen table preparing materials to use for educating thyroid patients. They managed to conduct education meetings on thyroid disease to assist thyroid patients and their families with 5 meetings each year. This made them qualified for a Charter to become the K-W Area Chapter. She and Margaret Evans worked so hard for so many years while filling different positions on the Board of the K-W Area Chapter. Thirty-three years later, we are still using the display with the backdrop hand-made at that time - complete with hand-drawn artwork probably done by Helen with her artistic talent. We also still use the large banner with hand-cut felt letters glued onto it.

Helen's husband, John Goldsworthy, was always at the education meetings to lend support where needed. They were both wonderful, amazing people very dedicated to helping stressed thyroid patients and their families. Helen was a great advocate of more research and personal learning on all forms of thyroid disease. She always encouraged many people to attend the local Chapter meetings. I remember the night that Helen asked me if I would consider doing the position of Program Chairman in 1996 just for a couple of years. At the time, I was the Assistant Education Chairman. I had no idea what was involved or even if I could do this position at all. Helen handed me all of the materials and explained how I just needed to call 5 doctors or someone dealing with thyroid disease each year. Watching how well she did the job, it

*Continued p. 6*





thyroid education program with two very knowledgeable speakers.

For many years, Margaret answered single-handedly all of the Chapter's help-line calls on a 24-hour basis, mailed out health guides and thyroid questionnaires to anyone in need of information. She spent many hours discussing thyroid disease with patients and informed them of local Chapter meetings and endocrinologists available on a referral basis. Margaret kept current on ongoing thyroid research and used her wealth of knowledge, educating patients through speeches at meetings and on radio and television. When I had our new Education Program ready for the new year, she would insist on addressing by hand and mailing out every program to our members, doctors, pharmacies, hospitals, etc. She answered all of the enquiry calls resulting from the free media advertising. I could never convince her to get a computer. This is something she was happy to do while watching television! Margaret was always the optimist and you didn't dare suggest that something could not be done. In June 2012, at the first and only Annual General Meeting of the Thyroid Foundation of Canada held in the K-W area, Margaret spoke at great length about her experience founding our Chapter and serving in every position on the Board since that time. Margaret would also tell you about her cat with hyperthyroidism who would constantly run up her drapes until it was diagnosed and treated. She dearly loved her animals and wrote and published a book about them - "Beloved Companions". She donated copies for one of our fundraisers.

When Margaret was suffering from undiagnosed hyperthyroidism for several years, it affected her voice and led her to stop teaching. Instead, she organized the university archives, working in the basement room where she did not need to speak.

For Margaret's Doctoral thesis, she wrote a book on "Sir Oliver Mowat". It was described as a thorough, well-written study of the life and career of Oliver Mowat, a Father of Confederation who served as Ontario Premier for 24 years from 1872 –1896. He was one of the longest serving Premiers in Canada and he also served concurrently as Ontario Attorney-General. He went on to serve as Federal Minister of Justice in Wilfrid Laurier's cabinet and then as Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

She was also co-author and co-publisher of "Century One: A History of the Ontario Veterinary Association 1874 – 1974. It was an important contribution to the history of medicine in Canada.

Margaret was a very humble lady and would never seek recognition for herself. She received many awards for all of the volunteer hours she dedicated to serving her community and everyone in it.

We miss Margaret and thank her for her hard work and dedication. To accomplish so much at a difficult time in the history of women was truly something to be very proud of!

Joan De Ville

sure didn't look as easy as she led me to believe! Both Helen and Margaret were so expert at just taking over any of the Board positions.

John and Helen have 2 sons I got to know as teenagers when they helped with the very busy family business, R. D. Goldsworthy & Co. Ltd. which dealt with commercial sewing machines. What wonderful dedicated men their sons have grown into. When John and Helen were not able to drive to the Chapter meeting, one of their sons was always there to make sure they were able to attend all of the Education Meetings. They also have 6 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. I know both Helen and John treasured each and every one of them.

Helen grew up during the Great Depression years with all of the difficulties that went with it. She attended a one-room schoolhouse for grades 1 – 9. Helen moved into Stratford to live with her maternal grandmother to be able to attend high school. There were no school buses at that time. She was able to attend Stratford Normal School, which was the teacher's college for the area. After teaching for a few years, Helen decided to accept a teaching position in Kiosk, a small lumbering community in the North West area of Algonquin Provincial Park. At that time, there were no roads into the community, only a rail line from North Bay. She was in Kiosk for only 2 years even though she loved it there. She taught until she had her family to take care of. Helen studied art under a brilliant and encouraging Czech artist, Matthew Kousal, until she had toddlers running around.

Helen was also a very humble lady and firmly believed in the importance of service. Throughout her life, she volunteered in many different areas. As a young woman, she was a United Church CGIT summer camp Director for a few years. She volunteered at the Grand River Hospital, and held many other volunteer positions.

We thank Helen for her hard work and dedication. She also accomplished so much at a difficult time in the history of women. Both Helen and Margaret set a terrific example to inspire other women.

Joan De Ville





IN MEMORIAM



Margaret Burdsall,  
National Board  
Member  
President, Kingston  
Chapter



Lottie Garfield,  
National Board Member,  
Toronto Chapter Board  
Member

Anna Margaret Burdsall  
27 September 1921 - 13 December 2014

MacDonald Institute, OAC 1941  
BHSc 1942, University of Toronto  
Honorary Companion, University Of Guelph 2004

Daughter, Sister, Wife, Mother, Aunt, Cousin  
Grandmother, Great-Grandmother  
Friend, Supermom

Dietician, Cook, Baker, Jam Maker Extraordinaire  
Best Brownie Maker in the World  
Seamstress, Mitten Maker  
Best Mender of Faded Jeans  
Avid Reader, Music Lover, Appreciator of Art  
Family Historian and Story Teller  
Room Painter, Snow Blower Operator, Gardener  
Bridge Player, Traveller  
**Volunteer**, Lifelong Learner  
*(Copied from Margaret's Memorial Card)*

**Now a few memories of Margaret Burdsall's  
Volunteer Days (and Nights) with Thyroid Foundation of Canada**

Words cannot describe or give due credit to Margaret for the many TFC volunteer roles and positions she held – for her contribution locally and nationally to the growth of the Foundation – for the support and leadership she gave to members, volunteers, patients, Board members and staff.

- \* In early 1980-1981 days, prior to TFC having published literature, Margaret sat in Diana Abramsky's dining room with other Kingston volunteers, preparing packages for the many who wrote asking for help/info about thyroid disease.
- \* She held many Foundation positions - first on the National Board, later the Kingston Chapter Board, including Chapter President.
- \* She had computer skills before many had a computer - needed when preparing national/chapter agendas, TFC documents and Thyrobuletin material.

*Continued p. 8*

Remembering Lottie Garfield, 1922-2014

My mother, the late Lottie Garfield, passed away on April 19, 2014 in her 92<sup>nd</sup> year. She is deeply missed by her family and friends, but also by the many thyroid patients and Foundation members whose lives she touched over her many years of involvement. She had been most identified with the National Board and Toronto Chapter. Working with Toronto presidents Bertha Lapidus, Joan Grosvenor, Joan Dawson, Margaret Hunter and myself she was a driving force in making the Toronto Chapter successful.

She first became involved in the Foundation in the 1980s, when I was diagnosed with thyroid disease and after she met the founder, Diana Abramsky, CM in Kingston. Many years before, she had lived there with my father, Bert, who was stationed with the Canadian Armed Forces. As the Foundation first started growing in the 1980s, she became known as a dedicated and energetic volunteer who played different leadership roles in the Foundation. Through her partnership and friendship with our founder, and our long-serving medical advisor, Dr. Robert Volpé, OC, and her experience in other organizations, she advanced the cause of improved thyroid education for patients both nationally and at the Toronto Chapter level. She was National Education and Research VP, Chapter Council Chair and Liaison Community Education in Toronto. With the support of Dr. Jay Silverberg and Dr. Ivy Fettes of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, she organized numerous Toronto patient education meetings at Sunnybrook, spoke to the media and community forums, and with Dr. Volpé, grew and consolidated our Health Guide series of education pamphlets for patients. In 1995, in conjunction with a Toronto Chapter education meeting and the assistance of other Chapters, she helped organize the first patient education forum and booth with the Thyroid Foundation of America at an International Thyroid Congress in Toronto. Although this was a time when thyroid disease had a much lower profile than today, an audience of over 400 thyroid patients and members of the public attended. Also in attendance were representatives of a number of world thyroid patient organizations who, with the encouragement and leadership of Dr. Lawrence C. Wood of Boston, met during the Congress to form the first international

*Continued p. 8*





\* She had a way with words; a calm influence in discussions; a way of listening, simplifying and coming up with the correct remark that expressed what we were trying to do/say.

\* She answered the Chapter "Help Line" - often called on to respond to the National "Help Line"

\* On train trips to national meetings, we met people who had questions about thyroid disease. Margaret would produce Foundation literature from her purse/briefcase. An amazing ambassador for TFC ...!!

\* When a volunteer was absent from a meeting due to illness/mishap, Margaret would produce a card for all to sign, mailing it on her return to Kingston.

\* She organized/staffed the chapter office, regularly volunteered at Chapter Bingos and at literature display tables.

So I say "au revoir dear friend"....

A belated "Thank You" for your support to TFC - and to me!

Nathalie Gifford  
Founding & Life Member  
Thyroid Foundation of Canada

thyroid patient organization, Thyroid Federation International. Such an organization had long been a dream of our founder, who worked with Dr. Wood in its realization. My mother was also involved in the organization of other thyroid patient education local forums such as at the Women's Health Matters Forum and Expo of Women's College Hospital and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

Although we can enumerate her many accomplishments for the Foundation, what I felt drove my mother was simply a desire to help people and improve their lives. She was determined and persuasive in this mission and, whether it is thyroid disease or other causes, I feel we can all learn from her inspiration.

On a more personal side, I can tell you that the volunteers closest to her in Toronto who have shared their memories with me, remember her for her approachability and compassion. She was always willing to listen to others' health concerns and issues and, when possible, tried to advocate for them. She could be quite diplomatic but, when necessary, never hesitated to express a strong viewpoint on behalf of those she felt were most vulnerable. She is greatly missed.

Ellen Garfield



### *Metamorphosis*

*Wings saturated with esprit  
dry on the winds of Destiny  
Awakened from its bed of silk  
the floras' nectar be its milk  
Drink to the future Royalty  
Powerful, delicate, so genteel  
flight naïvely transcendental  
Waking Chaos as it flutters-by  
Natural Order reigns celestial  
Rise of the Monarch Butterfly*

*Rachel Marchant is a Thyroid cancer survivor and Canadian poet*



# Hidden Thyroid Dysfunction can Wreak Havoc



*Tara Maltman-Just*

As the snow melts, many are getting ready for outdoor living such as gardening and physical recreation. It's time to tidy the yard. It's time to feel energized. If you have hidden hypothyroidism, however, you may need to do more sprucing up than anticipated...

Our thyroid function is critical for energy, mood, metabolism and mental clarity. When it's not doing its job, we can experience fatigue, depression, muscle weakness and weight gain.

These symptoms are pretty self-evident, one might think. Surprisingly, people with thyroid dysfunction are often unaware and some might argue, underdiagnosed. Its onset is gradual, but its impacts are unmistakable.

Have you heard of the cute furry creatures called voles? I hadn't, until my neighbour informed me that they had burrowed tunnels through his newly grassed yard, eating away the roots as they wove their way through a vast snow-covered labyrinth.

Throughout winter, the stark white abyss of repeatedly falling snow would give no sign of the turmoil underneath. It wasn't obvious until the snow started melting away, but by then the damage was done. The grass would need to be reseeded. A new start; filling the foundation from the ground up. This is not unlike the impacts of hypothyroidism on the body, when left untreated.

So how do we know if something is off? Every day, I see patients in my practice that know something is not right. They may notice dry skin, constipation and cold intolerance. They may be at their highest weight ever and can't even muster the energy to go for a walk.

One woman shared with me about her lifelong struggle with weight. Over the last year, she gained more weight than ever, despite strict meal planning. When she presented for her physical exam needing help and hope, she was instead told, "Look at you. You just need to move". Upon investigation, she

found out that she had overt hypothyroidism. Thankfully, correcting it improved her energy, muscle strength and motivation, and spurred weight loss she hadn't had in years.

For many experiencing the above symptoms, their physician astutely agrees it's worthwhile investigating. Yet after checking their thyroid, they're often told everything's "normal", left with less guidance and more guilt.

TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone) is a marker of thyroid function, measured in blood. It signals the thyroid gland to produce T4, regulating our body's energy, metabolism and hormone function. I like to describe it as nagging the thyroid gland: the higher the number, the louder it is. If the thyroid gland can't respond, the nagging will get louder, and more annoying.

TSH is well-recognized as the primary screening tool (although there are others), yet clinicians often disagree on the precise number that requires treatment, which reinforces the importance of treating the person, not merely the number.

This is especially so, since thyroid function has crossover with estradiol, progesterone, testosterone and our main stress hormone, cortisol. If you notice symptoms of the above, as well as hair loss, eyebrow thinning or heavy menstrual periods, this may be a sign your hormones aren't the only area involved.

In that case, it's time to look deeper. You may uncover hidden thyroid dysfunction in the body, like voles under the snow. I have nothing against voles. In fact, I'd consider them to be quite sweet. Evidence shows that they are among only 3% of mammals that form close monogamous bonds with their partner for life. Behavioural studies even suggest that the female vole nags the male if he is not assisting sufficiently with the young. Let's remember this when we're sprucing up our gardens, and our health. You know your own body best, and if it's nagging at you, you'd best listen.

*Tara Maltman-Just, RPh, ABAHP, FAARFM is the executive clinician and licensed pharmacist at Vitality Integrative Medicine in Winnipeg, where she focuses on "treating the person, not just the disease". She is the 2014 winner of two Commitment to Care & Service Awards for "Empowering Patients for Optimum Health" and "Ground-breaking Care Model Inspires Future Practice".*  
[www.vitalityintegrativemedicine.com](http://www.vitalityintegrativemedicine.com)





## Mary's Story

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Mary Bodolay

About a year ago I felt a throbbing sensation in my neck when I slept on my right side. At times it would wake me up at night. I was becoming concerned and would check out my already existing goitre in the mirror frequently. Many thoughts raced through my mind: Was it my thyroid? Was it an issue with my carotid artery? I have had several years of disabling fibromyalgia, and rheumatoid arthritis; was this now another symptom of that? Something did not sit well. I had had years of swallowing issues due to the goitre; something just did not feel right.

I mentioned it during my annual physical, but all my blood work came back unchanged. Did I need to worry? A few more months passed and I felt uneasy. I went back to the family doctor who ordered an ultrasound. The results came back and now I needed a biopsy....I had had one several years back in my 30's. I am now in my mid-50s. The biopsy frightened me, along with the prospect of possible cancer. It seemed like everyone I spoke with recounted stories of people they knew in similar situations. Good or bad, these stories were offered to me and increased my anxiety.

I trawled the internet grasping every piece of information I could, not a smart move. I should have stayed exploring web sites such as the Thyroid Foundation of Canada ([www.thyroid.ca](http://www.thyroid.ca)) or the American Thyroid Foundation. On other sites, celebrities were disclosing their cancer scares, surgeries and complications, the sound of reason disappearing further as my anxiety grew. I wanted the medical system to speed up quickly to accommodate me, but who the heck am I? I'm not special. I went on what seemed a very lengthy waiting list, but in fact it was just the standard timeframe for everyone in Ontario.

I had the biopsy done near my home, north of the city. The doctor was wonderful, skilled, and he tried to ease my fears. The nurses and staff were professional but caring. I knew from all the sources of information I had digested, most nodules are benign, but some are cancer. I waited for the results, to be told the worst of my fears was now a reality and I needed surgery. I cried, made plans for my funeral, settled my debts, all before I spoke to the specialist. He was a wonderful surgeon whom I knew through a family member. He was well known in the



Mary and husband Stephen

area, a top-notch skilled surgeon with a wonderful sense of humour and a calming, caring demeanour. I felt very lucky. A month later, I had another lucky break as a cancellation in the Operating Room schedule was now mine.

The skilled surgeon and the wonderful staff at the hospital now became part of my story. I was approached by professional, caring individuals who, although they looked after many thyroidectomy patients, treated my fears and numerous questions with respect. I am now 2 weeks post op, feeling terrific, regaining my strength, and feel that my story can be a help to others.

A diagnosis of papillary thyroid cancer understandably comes with a package of fear and anxiety attached to it for the patient, but my advice to anyone who faces this is to find a reliable website such as [www.thyroid.ca](http://www.thyroid.ca), and not go into chat rooms on every site you can find, because most of what you hear is uninformed. Stick to the information you receive from the specialist, family doctor and endocrinologist; otherwise you can cause yourself unnecessary stress. If I could go back I would approach this by requesting resource material and preparing several questions on paper before seeing the specialist or surgeon to ensure I get answers to all my questions. I was glad to have a family member with me who sat and recorded all the information the specialist gave me. My anxiety would have taken over me and I would have forgotten 90% of what was said just after leaving the office.

I'm not sure where I head from here on my path to recovery although I do know I will be seeing a specialist eventually at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. I try to be a sound resource for others who have heard I had thyroid cancer and I give them your website address to go to, which is quite informative because many people do not know there are several types of thyroid cancer and treatments, and that not every nodule or growth is cancer. Every path is different, as every story is, as every person is unique. This is just my story.

*(Update: Mary had her first radioactive treatment in August last year. Her second will be July this year, and she is hopeful that will be the end of her treatment.)*





# Thyroid Research

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## **Circulating Tumor DNA as a Marker for the Diagnosis and Follow-up of Thyroid Cancer**

Over the past year, the TFC has disbursed \$8000 (proceeds from the London Fashion Show) to the London Health Science Centre for research which hopes to lead to the development of a blood test for patients with thyroid nodules that are 'inconclusive' after biopsies (this happens 40% of the time). The test could eliminate a large number of unnecessary surgeries for middle-aged women (the largest segment of the population with nodules). For further information about this research, please contact [info@thyroid.ca](mailto:info@thyroid.ca)



*Grad student Morgan Black is working with Nicole Pinto, the main researcher of this project.*



*Dr. Nichols' lab group, from left: medical student Nicolas Cormier, Senior Scientist Dr. John Barrett PhD, Masters student Morgan Black, Masters student Giananthony Rizzo, PhD student Nicole Pinto and Dr. Anthony Nichols.*

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## **Anaplastic Thyroid Cancer**

In February, we were contacted by a family in Montreal who wanted to contribute In Memoriam funds for research into anaplastic thyroid cancer. Dr. Anthony Nichols provided us with the following information:

The vast majority of thyroid cancers (90%) are "well differentiated" papillary and follicular types that generally have an excellent prognosis with over 90% of patients surviving the disease. However, there are poorly differentiated and undifferentiated (anaplastic) types of thyroid cancer that are much rarer and have much poorer survival rates. Anaplastic thyroid cancer represents only 2% of thyroid cancers, but it is perhaps the most lethal human cancer with an average survival time of 2-5 months from diagnosis. Some patients succumb within days after diagnosis. Despite efforts to control the disease with a combination of surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, only 10% of patients are alive one year later. Given the lack of effective therapies, new strategies are needed to develop more effective treatment to combat this deadly disease.





# Ben's Story & Thyroid Health Days



I turned 50 in 2014 following what were three hectic years: a car accident resulting in whiplash and nine months of recuperation. Then my mom passed away followed by my younger disabled sister. So while I had found a family physician a year earlier, I was preoccupied yet I somehow felt something wasn't quite right. Yes, the accident had slowed me down; yes, the loss of two people who were important to my life had an impact but I just wasn't bouncing back the way I used to and had chalked it up to aging and maybe male menopause, something I'll eventually get around to looking into.

So when I went in for the results of my birthday physical that spring I was astounded to find out my cholesterol was extremely high. I eat well, am vegetarian and try to stay active, but then again I was slowing down. So off for more tests, and again a month later. There were tests with a cardiologist to review a nagging pain I was having in my chest, stomach issues, and a few more turning 50 things. At the time they seemed like a bunch of unrelated complaints, my checklist of items for my 'mechanic' to check over.

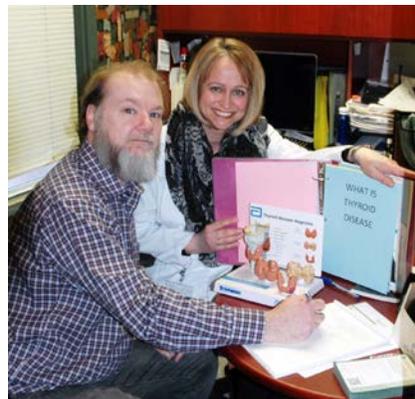
The process for me began in earnest in September – hypothyroidism and a prescription for thyroxine hormone replacement as well as cholesterol medication. For those who have begun this process, you're aware of the routine blood work. My first was in October followed by a call to "get back in here". My TSH numbers were still going in the wrong direction, up the dose, blood work, still not working, and a third increase. I was growing concerned until three days before Christmas when everything stopped working. Cold, dizzy, fatigued – if I didn't know my signs and symptoms before, I did now.

More blood work, and this time along with another increase in thyroxine, a diagnosis of Hashimoto's Hypothyroidism and a referral to an endocrinologist. I've now had my first meeting, another dosage increase, but have also started to find answers – my chest pain was related: hypothyroidism causes inflammation in the joints along the sternum, my stomach is now fine, and I'm getting closer to being me again. I tell people, "I didn't know I was sick but I'm much better now."

Along with my diagnosis, I have also become acquainted with the Thyroid Foundation of Canada. That's where I learned about Thyroid Health Days, an opportunity for those newly diagnosed

or who may have some of the symptoms to speak with a nursing professional. We talked about my medical history, general health, and medications as well as reviewed a number of symptoms – all in a safe and confidential manner. This is where I learned that a lot of my more minor complaints may very well be related to hypothyroidism and it has provided some talking points for when I see my doctor next.

I still have a ways to go, still researching and learning. As my Hashimoto's is still active I'm discovering new things like aches and pains, not that they weren't there before, it's just now I have a better understanding as to why.



Ben Benedict receives counselling for Hypothyroidism by RPN Deborah Doyle on behalf of the Thyroid Foundation of Canada, Abbott Acare and Wellington at Work



The Thyroid Health Day poster at Turner Drug Store in London, Ontario. One of many pharmacies participating across Canada

Ben Benedict is a writer and public relations professional ([www.bcreative.ca](http://www.bcreative.ca)) who was recently diagnosed with Hashimoto's Hypothyroidism.

### Thyroid Health Days Update

Since the launch of **Thyroid Health Days**, there have been 57 pharmacies participating in most provinces across Canada. This is an ongoing initiative so be sure to check back at [www.thyroid.ca](http://www.thyroid.ca) to see if a **Thyroid Health Day** is coming to your area!





# Coming events

## KITCHENER-WATERLOO CHAPTER

**Monday, April 20, 2015**

*New Information on Thyroid Nodules*

**Dr. Deric Morrison, MD, FRCPC, ECNU,  
Endocrinologist**

Division of Endocrinology, Department of Medicine  
University of Western Ontario

**Tuesday, October 6, 2015**

*Getting the Message Out:  
Sensitivity to Gluten & Thyroid Disease*

**Joan Lister, Healthcare Communications Specialist**

President and CEO  
HealthComm Inc., Mississauga

Meetings are held at: Kitchener Public Library, 85 Queen Street North, Kitchener ON

Education Table available 6:00 ⌘ Business Meeting 6:30 ⌘ Speaker 7:00 - 8:45  
Wheelchair accessible

Registration opens February 20th

## SASKATCHEWAN



Watch for these canisters appearing in SK Liquor stores in September 2015 and **DONATE** generously to the work of the Thyroid Foundation!

Your donations go towards our mission goals of awareness, support and research.

## Important Dates

**April 12-18** *National Volunteer Week  
Thank a Volunteer!*

**May 25-31** *International Thyroid Awareness Week  
The focus this year is on Hypothyroidism  
Check [www.thyroid-fed.org](http://www.thyroid-fed.org) for updates*

**May 25** *World Thyroid Day*

*Do you have comments about Thyrobuletin?  
Which features do you like/dislike?  
What questions would you like to ask our  
Medical Advisor?*

*We invite your input. Send your  
thoughts/questions to: [thyrobuletin@thyroid.ca](mailto:thyrobuletin@thyroid.ca)*

**Spread Thyroid  
Awareness!**

**Think Thyroid!**



**Hold a Fundraiser!**





## News and Events



### OTTAWA CHAPTER

Eight suspects of a murder at the Sugar Shack Café gathered for a fundraising event held by the Ottawa Chapter on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Each came dressed in character – the cheerleader with her pompoms, the biker with a leather jacket and beard, the go-go dancer in mini-skirt and high boots, etc. The mystery party kit provided the hidden secrets, deadly clues and mysterious backgrounds for each character. The suspects enjoyed many laughs but had trouble deciding who the murderer was.

The juke box played music of 1963-64 era and the chef served burgers, fries and banana splits. Everyone enjoyed the dinner and the game, and the Thyroid Foundation of Canada will benefit from the \$200 raised.



### WINNIPEG

Winnipeg, Feb. 4, 2015 - Donna Miniely, President, with a display of TFC materials at a presentation on *Listening to Your Hormones*, presented by Tara Maltman-Just, RPh, ABAAHP, FAARFM, who is the author of the article on *Hidden Thyroid Dysfunction can Wreak Havoc* in this issue.

Donna had the chance to connect with a number of thyroid patients and provide them with information about thyroid conditions. There is definitely interest among thyroid patients in Winnipeg in having more patient support meetings. They also have some interesting fundraising ideas.



### FUNDRAISING AT WORK IN BRAMPTON

The Thyroid Foundation of Canada (TFC) is truly grateful for the many donations it receives from individuals and organizations throughout the year. I am personally grateful for the recent efforts of my husband, Joe Frano, in promoting a cause that is so dear to my heart, and equally important to my husband who has learned how important my little thyroid gland is.

Each year, The Beer Store Distribution Centre in Brampton, Ontario, holds a local raffle during the Christmas season. The proceeds of the raffle support various charities. This past year was no exception. My husband approached Chris Bidner, one of the organizers of the raffle, to include the TFC in the raffle. Joe was able to obtain many generous donations, one of which was a prize from WestJet for two tickets to anywhere that WestJet travels. Thanks to WestJet for such a generous prize.

My husband was surprised when some staff members approached him, after viewing the tickets and posters, and they thanked him for bringing forward such a worthy cause that was obviously important to them. The TFC and its Board members are grateful to all the Beer Store Distribution Centre staff who participated in this event. A cheque in the amount of \$894.00 was submitted to the TFC.

If your workplace supports charity events, or you can make regular contributions from your pay, consider approaching your organization and asking them to add the TFC as one of the charities they support.

Josie Frano





Do you know someone who might benefit from receiving **Thyrobuletin**? Feel free to pass this membership form along.

You can also take out a gift membership for a relative, for a friend, for your doctor's waiting room or your local library.

Just fill in the form below and help spread Thyroid Awareness!



Thyroid Foundation of Canada

La Fondation canadienne de la Thyroïde

Bus. No. 11986 4422 RR0001

MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

ADDRESS DETAILS

Name:		Is this a Gift membership? Enter your details here:	
Address:		Name:	
City:		Address:	
Province:	Postal Code	Province:	Postal Code:
Telephone:		Telephone:	
Email:		Email:	

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

<b>ONE YEAR:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$30	
<b>TWO YEAR:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$50	
Members receive <b>Thyrobuletin</b> . Please indicate your preference:			<input type="checkbox"/> by regular mail	<input type="checkbox"/> by email	<input type="checkbox"/> no Thyrobuletin

PAYMENT TOTAL

\$	Enter Membership Amount
\$	Enter Donation Amount <i>All donations support the work of the Thyroid Foundation of Canada</i>
\$	<b>TOTAL</b>

PAYMENT DETAILS

<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <i>(payable to: Thyroid Foundation of Canada)</i>
Visa/MasterCard No.:		Expiry Date:
Name on credit card:		

RECEIPT

An official receipt for income tax purposes will be issued for both membership fees and donations

Receipt preference:	<input type="checkbox"/> Receipt by regular mail	<input type="checkbox"/> Receipt by email
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Please send completed form to: **Thyroid Foundation of Canada, PO Box 298, Bath, ON K0H 1G0**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

