

President's Address
IODE Annual Meeting
April 20, 2024

I am honoured to finally be able to attend an in person IODE Ontario Annual Meeting. From the excited conversations as we came together this morning, it is easy to see that you are happy to be together again. President Helen has asked me to focus on the 125th anniversary, we celebrate next year. As you know preparation for a major anniversary takes place over several years. For 2024, chapters were asked to undertake two, pre- anniversary activities. One, to freshen chapter histories and explore IODE contributions to your community even if they were made by retired chapters. Provincial chapters were asked to identify major IODE contributions in their province and Helen has kindly agreed to add them to her amazing information about IODE Ontario to make a national document. At this year's National Annual Meeting in Prince Edward Island one of the sessions is dedicated to helping chapters with this project and providing an opportunity to share what they have already learned.

This attention to our history as preparation is to ensure each member is able to speak knowledgeably about the role of IODE in her community and in Canada during the anniversary year.

The second project for 2024 was to manage our membership efforts so that IODE has at least the same number of members on December 31, 2024 as it had on December 31, 2023. This initiative is called **Every Member Counts** and developed from two years of exploring membership with the National councillors on NAC. The tree illustration you see on the screen grew out of these discussions.

The image of a 125-year-old tree is familiar to all of us. IODE chapters have been active planting trees in their communities to honour people, support the environment, provide shade. Trees lose leaves and branches, and yet they go on; producing fruit and standing tall in their communities. Like any living organism they face adversity and the ones that continue to their 125th year are hardy and usually go on much longer.

As an organization IODE is very much like a tree. Back at your chapter meetings replace the fruit on the tree illustration with your all-time favourite projects or recent projects. Leaves represent members and you probably

learned in science class that they are the factories that manufacture the food for tree growth and fruit production. Leaves are spread out to the sun and air and are supported by the branches or chapters. The trunk supports the branches and transports the materials the leaves need to produce fruit. However, the branches and trunk are two way systems and some of the food produced in the leaf factories is used to strengthen the roots that hold the tree firm against the wind; and gather water and nutrients to support the work of the leaves.

IODE stands tall, like a 125-year-old tree. It is an important part of the community, as are the big old trees in our parks, back yards and on our streets. With the help of its members, IODE will continue to grow and improve the quality of life in the communities around it. Trees grow new leaves and usually more each year than the year before. They grow new branches and the IODE tree welcomes IODE Ontario's newest chapter IODE Trillium 2023. The oldest branch, IODE Maple Leaf, has more leaves than any other chapter and bears large quantities of fruit.

In the 125th anniversary year let us grow new leaves and branches and stand proudly in our communities. Let us provide the necessary nutrients and water to our roots. Like the sounds of leaves rustling in the wind and dripping in the rain, the happy sounds of members doing the work they love and enjoying every moment of it will be heard. Just as we enjoyed getting together for this meeting. It is time to show off our projects, the longevity of our service and the fun we have doing it.

As you make your plans to celebrate IODE's 125th anniversary, plan to have fun. Do it your own way. ***Every Member Counts*** as we build for the **Future.**

Every Member Counts



*Apples symbolize Community Projects
Leaves represent IODE Members
Branches represent Chapters
Roots symbolize By-Law #1, Constitution,
Board of Directors and the National Office*

**IODE
Canada**

