

The Retired Teacher

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

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A newsletter for the retired teachers of Nova Scotia

A MEMBER OF ACER/CART

From The Desk of the President...

Alyson Hillier

Spring Greetings!

It was very encouraging that for the first time in three years, we could hold our AGM in May and welcome all interested members. While there are still challenges due to the pandemic, we are looking forward to making plans for the coming months and connecting with our members once again, in person!



Throughout the past year, we have endeavoured to maintain our scheduled meetings of the Executive, Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, Insurance Trustees, NSTU Liaison Committee, and Branch Presidents. We even held our bi-annual Wellness Symposium in April. While many of these events were held in person, some were conducted via Zoom. Through the newsletter and the website we have maintained the flow of information to our members. It is important to acknowledge the efforts of our leaders to make these things happen and we are extremely grateful to them for their dedication.

The Executive has responded to a number of issues and initiated discussions and actions to support our Branches and members.

Nova Scotia Teachers' Pension Plan Panel

While pension discussions are always at the top of the list for us, the appointment of the Pension Review Panel

in October 2020 was an important step in addressing the challenges facing the Teachers' Pension Plan. The panel has a mandate to review and analyze the NSTPP, educate and consult with stakeholders, and make non-binding recommendations to fully fund the NSTPP within a reasonable time.

They began meetings in November with all stakeholder groups and prepared a video providing background on the pension plan and the challenges facing it. In April, they hosted consultations and invited all plan members to share their views and feedback directly to the panel members.

The non-binding recommendations will be submitted to the province and the NSTU by July 31, 2022. It is the intention of the RTO to continue to follow the process through upcoming months.

Ad Hoc Committee

At the AGM in September, 2021, Resolution 2021-1 New Business was passed:

Be it resolved that the RTO establish an ADHOC Committee to consider hiring of a part-time staff person to carry out duties related to the varied administrative tasks required to properly service the provincial organization and its 23 Branches.

The members appointed were Jim Kavanaugh, who served as Chair, Gary Archibald, Jack Boyd, Pat Hillier, Peter Lewis, and Alyson Hillier. The Committee met eight times via Zoom and prepared four resolutions to present to AGM 2021. Many thanks to the Committee members for their work and to the staff at the NSTU for their support and guidance in the discussion.

Recruiting and Succession Planning

Recruiting continues to be a strong focus for the RTO. NSTU participants in the pre-retirement seminars are introduced to the organization in their region through a half-hour presentation within the session. This year, we were invited to the pre-retirement seminars held by PSAANS (since they receive their pension from NSTPP, they are eligible to join the RTO). Each retiring teacher across the province receives an information package during their final month of teaching which contains information on the RTO and a registration form. These have proven to be well received. In 2021, 64% of the retirees joined the RTO upon retirement.

This year, we circulated a poster promoting the benefits of membership via the provincial NSTU mailout and asked school reps for it to be displayed in their staff rooms. The Insurance Trustees allowed us to include a double-sided RTO promotion sheet in the province-wide mailout to all TPP recipients in April. This enabled us to capture the attention of those retired teachers who are not currently members of the RTO.

At Strategic Planning in August of 2021, we discussed the importance of not only recruiting new members but also of engaging our current members within our Branches. Many Branches have reported difficulty filling the positions on their executives and establishing a succession plan for consistency in leadership at the Branch and Provincial levels.

In our discussions with Branch Presidents and other organizations, recruiting from within the membership has been a challenge. This prompted the Executive to plan a provincial initiative which would see regional meetings in the seven areas of the province to promote the organization. It is our hope that the Branches in each region will meet together, with members from their Branches in attendance. The Members-at-Large, in conjunction with the Branch Presidents, will develop a program to inform the members about the structure of the organization and the benefits of membership, highlighting many of the insurance benefits and sharing in discussions on their strategies and successes. These sessions are financed using RTO surplus funds from the past two years of the pandemic. To-date, these programs have taken place successfully in both the Valley and the Cape Breton-Victoria regions.

CAREpath DigitalHealth

At our meeting with the Insurance Trustees in the fall, we were informed that the uptake on the CAREpath DigitalHealth program was very low and that this is an expensive program to maintain. We also learned that the Insurance Trustees would have to consider cancellation if this continued. Stacy Samson spoke to the Branch Presidents at their November meeting and did a presentation on the benefits of the plan, asking those present to promote it to their members. The RTO recognizes that it is important that our members are familiar with the program and can access virtual health care at any time. We have encouraged CAREpath DigitalHealth presentations across the province on an ongoing basis.

We continue to adjust our policies to meet the changing world in which we are living. With the increased cost of gas, the meterage rate was adjusted to \$0.46 per kilometre from \$0.44; a further adjustment will be made in September, 2022 to \$0.50 per kilometre. Meal allowances for breakfast were increased to \$13 and for lunch to \$15. We will be monitoring the costs of meals and gas as they continue to rise.

A significant number of Branches have applied for Branch Initiative Program Grants (BIP) in the past year. Creative and innovative programs demonstrate the willingness to get members together. Please keep in mind as you start your planning that each Branch can apply for \$1,500 during the 2022 year to supplement activities for their members.

We are all aware that, as a responsible organization, we need to do our part to reduce our carbon footprint. Over the past two years we have reduced our paper copies for meetings and increased the use of electronic copies, upon request. While the pandemic forced us to conduct virtual meetings, the RTO will be discussing the possibilities of using this format to reduce travel for meetings on occasion, particularly during the winter months. This can realize financial savings as well.

At the upcoming Strategic Planning in August, we will continue our discussions on membership (dues paying), review the members equity policies, review our practice of using personal email addresses (to reduce the use of scams), and review the cost sharing practices for AGM delegates.

With thanks ...

As the 2021-2022 year comes to close, we thank all those who have given both time and talent to the organization. We are blessed to have so many committed and knowledgeable members who give strong leadership to us. In particular, I want to acknowledge the significant work done by the Branch Presidents through the pandemic. Your patience was most appreciated and was essential to connect us to our members.

Farewells

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to members of the Executive who are retiring. Eileen Coady, Vice President, has been with the Executive for six years. Prior to coming on as VP, she served for four years as Secretary to the Executive. Having strong connections

to the NSTU and familiarity with both Cape Breton and Yarmouth, she provided a clear voice for rural members. Her attention to detail and willingness to take on tasks have made her an asset in all aspects of our work.

Deb Featherby, Member-at-Large for the South Shore, will also be leaving us after the AGM. Deb's background in financial matters has been invaluable at the Finance Committee Table. Her understanding of the intricate details of budget and her hands-on experience as a Branch President provided us with a valuable voice that demonstrated her commitment to the RTO.

Cathy Reimer, Member-at-Large for the Valley Region, was appointed to the Executive last spring and served her region with energy and spirit. She embraced her responsibility for the Legacy Foundation with purpose, resulting in ten successful grants at the Foundation's April AGM. Her contributions to the discussions at the Executive Table were always thoughtful and revealed a strong commitment to our work.

Welcome

With these departures, we are pleased to welcome three new members to the Executive for the 2022-2023 year. Ambrose White will take on the Vice President position, Shelley Morse becomes Member-at-Large for the Valley Region, and Chuck McLellan will become Member-at-Large for the South Shore Region.

We appreciate their willingness to take on these leadership positions and look forward to working with them.

In closing

I want to express my own appreciation for the support I have received from across the province in the past two years. The RTO is successful because of the combined efforts of all our members. Thank you for all you do!

Best wishes for a relaxing summer wherever you are spending it. I look forward to see everyone as we get back to business in the fall!

Take care,

Alyson Hillier



A message from NSTU President ... Paul Wozney



Dear RTO Members,

It's the time of year retired teachers can look back on fondly from the distance retirement affords. As one journey nears a close and the mind steels itself to finish the job at hand as well as can be managed, thoughts also turn towards the journey to unfold in the near future, full of potential and change.

It's the space teachers live in at the end of a school year. It's the space those about to retire live in before they leave their classroom for the final time, to begin a long awaited chapter in their lives. It's also the space I am in as my final term as NSTU President draws to a close and a return to teaching beckons.

These spaces draw out reflection for us all. To you who have transitioned to retirement after a career invested in students, colleagues, and community, I can only imagine the faces and moments and memories that must have flooded to the surface during your final days in the classroom.

I have had the pleasure of attending a number of retirement events hosted by NSTU Locals over the past few weeks. One of the joys of those opportunities is conversation with those who are transitioning to where you are now. What becomes clear in those chats are things like the immense gratitude for having been an important part in the lives of students, families, and communities; relief that the burden of lifting the next generation falls to the hands of those who come after and who share your passion for public education; and the excited anticipation of a wide new horizon to be explored without the obligations of a deeply demanding role.

Where this is my final message in the RTO newsletter, I share many of these feelings.

It has been an honour to re-establish the kinship between the RTO and the NSTU. It is also a relief to know that Ryan Lutes, NSTU President Elect, will step immediately into a relationship based on trust, respect, and common ground from which both retirees and active teachers act together to advocate powerfully for students, staff, and community. This common ground is ripe with possibility that should inspire and motivate us all to pull together in realizing the shared difference we can make.

I want to thank all of you for the willingness to turn the page on a troubling chapter and invest in restoring the bond that should always stand between the RTO and NSTU. Thank you, too, for your encouragement and solidarity through more challenges than I can name here over four years. I'm humbled and grateful, and will remember this part of my time as NSTU President always.

Please extend the same warmth, support, and solidarity I have known to Ryan as he takes up his role. I believe my job as Past President is to see him well-established and successful, and I hope that you will join me heartily in that work. We're better together! I look forward to a continued partnership that benefits retired teachers, current teachers, and the work all of us love so dearly.

All my best,

Paul Wozney, NSTU President

A Note from the Editor..

Glynda Wimmer

Sunshine, trees and flowers in bloom, lighter clothes, outdoor activities, reconnecting with family and friends - as spring morphs into summer our spirits tend to soar. We shake off the heavy clothes and grey moods of winter and, despite continuing challenges like COVID, world unrest, and inflation, we hope for better days to come and new beginnings.

For some, new beginnings means starting a new life in a new country. For others, it might mean exercising and eating better, trying to becoming a healthier person. And for still others, it might mean becoming more accepting and forgiving of past wrongs, or catching up on long neglected chores.

Luckily, there are many who are willing to help along the way. Volunteers are ready to help resettle refugees and those needing assistance, health practitioners facilitate and encourage positive lifestyle changes, and friends and caring individuals are willing to lend an ear or offer support.

I have several challenges that need to be addressed. Improving my health and well-being is a priority for without it, everything else would be impossible.

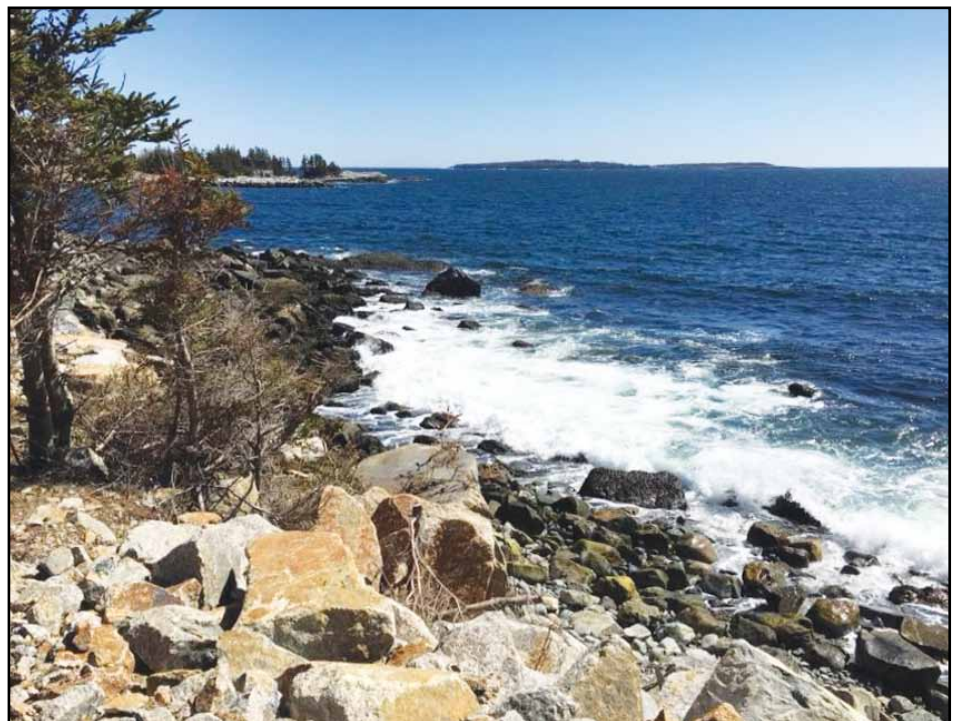
Supporting a Ukrainian family is important to me, too - perhaps tutoring them in English or helping get them settled in the community. And, of course, supporting my relatives who are still living the nightmare in Ukraine.

When I retired in 2013, my goals were to purge all the extra stuff I no longer needed in my life and to finally organize my photo albums. Neither has happened yet. They're still on my 'to do' list so wish me luck!

Now is the time 'to get with the program' and start achieving those long forgotten objectives. New beginnings - they say it's never too late to make a start!

Wishing you all a wonderful summer! Take care of those goals, take care of yourself, and make lots of happy memories along the way.

Glynda



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Committee Reports

Communications Committee

Members of the 2021-2022 Communications Committee included Jacinta Gracie, Dave Jones, John MacKay, Newsletter Editor Glynda Wimmer, Webmaster Colin Campbell, and Chair Marlene Boyd. Meetings were held on October 6, November 17, February 8, and April 6.

- The AGM Financial Report 2021, as recommended by the Committee, was submitted to the fall newsletter which made this information available to more RTO members.
- The Committee recommended to the Executive that they consider changing all active links and personal information on the RTO website and in our newsletter. This has been investigated and work on this issue is continuing by the RTO President and Executive.
- Revisions to the RTO Member Information Form were recommended to the Executive and approved. The form is now available on the RTO website, in the RTO newsletter, and copies were also provided to Branch Presidents.
- While the Group Insurance Benefits and Programs for Retired Teachers are currently online, the Committee members strongly feel that there is also a need for a condensed hard copy. The RTO Executive Insurance Liaison, Bill Berryman, discussed this request with Johnson and is continuing to follow up.
- There was discussion and consensus by the Committee on the importance of developing an RTO Website Scavenger Hunt to help members become more familiar with the website and the great information and resources it provides.

Newsletter

Sincere thanks and appreciation to all who have contributed to our newsletter. Deadlines for 2022-2023

remain the same: November 15, February 15, and May 15. Editor Glynda Wimmer has worked diligently this year to continue to provide information and recommendations to Branch Presidents that would be helpful in making submissions to the newsletter. Her attendance at the Branch Presidents meeting in March was also very appreciated. Our great thanks to Glynda for continuing to do such an amazing job!!

Webmaster

Webmaster Colin Campbell has put in a great deal of effort during the year updating the RTO website in many different areas, which is very time consuming. He also works extremely hard to ensure that there is a wealth of information and incredible resources available for our members to access. Members are encouraged to visit @ rto.nstu.ca. Our great thanks to Colin for continuing to do such a remarkable job!!

Recommendations for 2022-2023

- 1) The Communications Committee recommends that Colin Campbell and Glynda Wimmer continue in their positions as RTO Webmaster and Editor for the upcoming 2022-2023 year.
- 2) The Communications Committee recommends the continued investigation of the concerns around active links and personal information publishing.
- 3) The Communications Committee recommends a condensed hard copy of the NSTU Group Insurance Benefits and Programs for Retired Teachers.

A huge thank you to Jacinta, Dave, John, Glynda, and Colin for your great work and contribution to this Committee. I so enjoyed working with you and your support was truly appreciated!!

—Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Boyd, Chair, Communications Committee

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has been reviewing the monthly financials of the RTO Organization and the RTO Legacy Foundation. These two separate entities each have monthly financials to complete and report to the Finance Committee and the RTO Executive.

Investments are reviewed on a regular basis and additional investments are made in the appropriate amount, to maximize interest obtained. Due to COVID-19, the interest on investments has been quite low. Maturing Term Deposits (TDs) have been invested for a period of one year. It is hoped that interest returns on investments

Committee Reports

will soon rise and we can look at longer term investments.

Branches have continued to apply for the Branch Initiatives/Programs (BIPs) in fiscal 2022. To-date, 16 BIPs have been approved by the Finance Committee in the total amount of \$19,065. Some of the approved activities were: walking tours in various parts of the province, wine tours/events (no alcohol was paid for by the RTO!), museum/multicultural tours, pickleball, yoga, sea glass, card making, trivia, photography, Advance Care Planning, CAREpath DigitalHealth presentations, Nordic Walking, Platinum Anniversary, golfing, and various social get-togethers – many, many fine ideas!

The Committee is conducting a review of the current formulas regarding travel for AGM cost-shared delegates/members attending Regional Initiatives events. Further deliberations will occur at Strategic Planning in August.

I wish to thank the members of the Finance Committee

for their continued support. The 2021-2022 members have been: President Alyson Hillier, Vice President Eileen Coady, Past President Bill Berryman, Secretary Bonnie Mahaney, and Executive Member Debra Featherby. Eileen and Debra will be leaving the Committee at the adjournment of AGM 2022. I wish to thank both of these fine persons for their support and advice throughout 2021-2022! I hope to see you both at future RTO events or meetings.

Finally, I also wish to welcome incoming Vice President Ambrose White to the Committee. I look forward to working with you, Ambrose!

Although it has been challenging and busy, it has been a very rewarding year for the RTO! Enjoy your summer!

—*Respectfully submitted,*

Peter Lewis, RTO Treasurer and Chair, Finance Committee

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee held four meetings during 2021-2022 - three were in-person and one was via Zoom.

During the course of the year, we discussed and took action on the following:

- the issue of discrepancies in the membership lists
- the re-engagement of our members into RTO activities as COVID-19 restrictions changed
- the importance and value of “The Wall”
- efforts to attract newly retired members to join the RTO plus, those who retired previously but have not joined
- the dissemination of information to and from our members in a timely fashion
- the topic of selection of new merchandise for sale to our membership

Finding ways to encourage retirees to join the RTO has taken up a large portion of our time. Gary Archibald did extensive research on what is done in other jurisdictions across the country and beyond. There are some very interesting ideas out there. The Committee will examine

these more closely with a view to making recommendations to the Executive.

Thanks to the work of JoAnn Cuvelier, we have recommended to the Executive that pens and playing cards with the RTO lettering and logo be purchased. It is hoped that they will be available for the AGM in May.

A number of surveys were held to learn how various Branches reach out to new retirees, and what activities are being held as we try to move forward post-COVID and beyond. It is amazing how long a list was compiled.

One survey provided us with the information that five Branches charge a local membership fee and fifteen do not. (20/23 Branches responded)

Goals for 2022-2023 will focus on:

1. learning from other jurisdictions as to what strategies are used to encourage new retirees to become actively involved in the RTO
2. updating information on the RTO website
3. updating pictures on “The Wall” for NSTU members to learn about the RTO and to see what types of activities our members are engaged in

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4. reviewing the materials in the Pre-Retirement kits and making any necessary updates

To the committee members, JoAnn Cuvelier, Ambrose White, Gary Archibald, and Mike Knowles - thank you

for your dedication and fine work.

—*Respectfully submitted,*
Jim Harpell, Chair, Membership Committee

Pension and Benefits Committee

The Pension and Benefits Committee members worked hard on behalf of the RTO during the 2021-2022 year. The Committee closely followed the Pension Review Panel and participated with the RTO Executive in the Educational Session.

All Committee members registered for the April 6 session with the Panel and joined the session as a group. Jim Kavanaugh made a presentation on behalf of the Committee detailing the concerns of the RTO and all retirees. The concerns included: indexing CPI-1 percent, spouse and survivor pension, investment returns, our plan being a mature plan, to keep our defined benefit plan, and the question for the need to be 100 percent funded. The presentation was well received and Jim was asked to provide a hard copy.

The position of the RTO is that no retiree should lose benefits. The Committee will closely follow the process to advocate for RTO members and all retirees.

The final Review Panel Report is to be submitted to the sponsors (NSTU and Government) on/or before the end of July. The final decisions on the recommendations will be made by the sponsors. The Panel indicated in their comments during the Consultation Sessions was that the report will go to the sponsors as per their Mandate.

On April 29, the Annual Report of the NSTPP was released. The entire report can be found on the Pension website. The good news is that assets increased by \$227 million and the funded level increased from 79 percent

to 82.4 percent.

Much of the Committee's time was taken up by the Panel Review, however, there were several other concerns during the year. Members should be aware of Insurance gains from the last NSTU Provincial Agreement. Also, Merit Travel is our go to travel partner — Halifax @Merit travel.com or 902-482-8000. Those who attended the Wellness Symposium were able to visit their display.

Any questions members have should be directed to the sponsoring group. Pension questions go to the NSTPP — visit their website, or phone 902-424-5070 or 1-800-774-5070 (toll free). NSTU Group Insurance concerns should be directed to Johnson Inc. 902-453-9543 or 1-800-453-9543 (toll free). The Retired Teachers' Insurance Profile is available for viewing at www.nstuinsurance.ca or on the RTO website.

The RTO website can be accessed by going to rto.nstu.ca. The site includes the comprehensive list of Deals and Discounts that RTO members can benefit from, various RTO contact information, and RTO forms.

I wish to thank Jim Kavanaugh, Brian Faught, Ann Jesome, and Joyce Lively for their dedicated work on the Committee over the last year. Their efforts on behalf of the RTO membership and all retirees is greatly appreciated.

—*Respectfully submitted,*
Brian D. Noble, Chair, Pension and Benefits Committee



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Committee Reports

Programs Committee

The Programs Committee continued their RTO Wellness Symposium planning throughout this past year. With the threat of COVID present, we waited and hoped that the world would recover allowing us to proceed with the planned in-person event. We held three in-person meetings at the Future Inns, Halifax (on October 6, November 17, and April 6) and one Zoom meeting on February 7.

Jude Gerrard, an Indigenous leader, attended our November meeting to discuss ways that an Indigenous content could be included in the symposium. He gave numerous valuable suggestions, including a slight change to our land acknowledgement statement which is read at each gathering. He offered suggestions of topics to explore and also contacts to make when we inquired about Indigenous tourism representation at the symposium. He generously gave of his time and told us that he had booked April 27 to be with us for the day, if we wanted.

Each meeting brought us closer to the big event as we discussed challenges and workable solutions so that the symposium would run smoothly. Challenges included the day's format, amount of time spent sitting, allowing time to move about, and providing valuable information for the delegates, securing guest speakers, feeding the delegates, arranging Mini-Expo participants, and gathering door prizes along with 'swag' for the delegates to take home. Registration forms had to be updated and given to all Branches in a timely manner so that delegates could be selected from across the province. The uncertainty of whether the Redwood Restaurant would be open to provide

breakfast and lunch for the event was a great concern until March, when confirmation was received of their plans to open in time for the symposium.

"From Isolation to Connectivity" became a reality on April 27, 2022! Our guest speakers – Honourable Barbara Adams, N.S. Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care; John Hamblin, Technology and IT specialist; Dr. Olive Bryanton, Advocate for Seniors and Researcher; and Jude Gerard, Indigenous leader and educator – did not disappoint. The four unique personalities provided information and inspiration to delegates to carry back to their Branches, and hopefully develop programs for members across Nova Scotia.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Programs Committee for their support and conversations over the last two years. As a team, we bounced ideas off each other, and had good discussion and cooperation at every meeting. So, to Cathy Anderson, Jack Boyd, Maureen Duffy-Mason, and Holly MacDonald - a huge thank you for all your efforts to make this Committee and the symposium a huge success! I must also thank Linda MacNeil who sat on this Committee in 2020-2021 during the initial planning period and came back to help with the symposium. You are a fantastic group to work with!

—*Respectfully submitted,*
Judy Knowlton, Chair, Programs Committee

Research and Review Committee

The Research and Review Committee has taken on several responsibilities over the past year. Four meetings were held - three were in-person and one via Zoom.

The first task was a review of the Committee priorities. Originally, there were five priorities. As a Committee, it was noted that we needed to add one more. The newest priority is to make recommendations to the Executive to address the needs of Branch members, and find solutions as noted in the questions and answers.

Another task is to review the BIP grant applications once they have been approved by the Finance Committee. When an event has been completed by a Branch, a report and receipts must be passed in to the Treasurer. The Research and Review Chair then receives the report and it is reviewed by the Committee. The grant information is collected and entered onto a database by one of our members. This year there have been more grants to record since the onset of the program. There was a total of 21 grants in 2021, and new grants for 2022

Committee Reports

are now being filed.

The Executive sends questions to each Branch President who responds according to the wishes of their members. Two sets of questions/responses were collated by the Research and Review Committee this year. The second set, in March, were based on thoughts about CAREpath DigitalHealth - Your Wellness Program, as well as what events might be happening around the province. Branches responded positively to the CAREpath Program with the importance of a presentation to every Branch. Thoughts on how Branches could be supported locally, regionally, and provincially on such an initiative were noted and presented to the Executive.

Since things are opening up around the province, members are now ready to proceed with events - especially those held

outdoors. It was noted that safety measures will be encouraged for members to follow as they attend events. The Committee recommended to the Executive that the Presidents Regional Meetings continue to be held in the mornings. Also, all copies of responses to the questions need to be collated by the Chair of the Research and Review Committee.

As Chair of Research and Review, I would like to express my appreciation to the thoughtful, respectful, and “fun to be with” members of this Committee - Diane Davis, Linda MacNeil, Bob Hayter, and Hank Middleton. Thank you for your full support.

—*Respectfully submitted,*

Margie MacNeil, Chair, Research and Review Committee

Resolutions Committee

I am pleased to report that the Resolutions Committee received eight resolutions for this year. Two resolutions were received from one Branch prior to the December 15, 2021 deadline. The remaining six resolutions came from the Executive, of which four were put forward by the Ad Hoc Committee.

Two resolutions deal with insurance benefits, and the remaining six are related to governance matters. In addition, one resolution was tabled from the AGM in September, 2021 for the 2022 AGM. Thus, there

were a total of nine resolutions for consideration at this year's AGM.

Throughout the year, Branch Presidents were updated on the resolutions process and these resolutions have been available on the RTO website since early April.

Thank you for your interest in our organization.

—*Respectfully submitted,*

Eileen Coady, Chair, Resolutions Committee

The 2021-2022 Executive finally met in person in April!



Front row: Bill Berryman (Past President), Bonnie Mahaney (Secretary), Alyson Hillier (President), Eileen Coady (Vice President), Peter Lewis (Treasurer)

Back row: Judy Knowlton (MAL Metro), Cathy Reimer (MAL Valley), Margie MacNeil (MAL Cape Breton-Victoria), Brian Noble (MAL South West Shore)

Missing from the photo: Marlene Boyd (MAL Strait), Deb Featherby (MAL South Shore), Jim Harpell (MAL Chignecto Central)



RTO Membership Information Update

Please use this form if there is a change in any of the information the RTO has on file for you.

Member Information (Please Print)

Name _____ Current Branch _____

Professional # (NSTU) _____ Employment # (NSCC) _____

CHANGE FROM

CHANGE TO

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN/CITY: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE(h) _____

PHONE(c) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

BRANCH: _____

How would you like to receive your newsletter? Digital/email copy _____ or Paper copy? _____

NOTE: The Retired Teachers Organization (RTO) is committed to respecting privacy and protecting personal information. All personal information collected is managed and maintained according to principles outlined in the RTO Privacy Principles.

Authorization Given:

Signature _____ Date _____

Please return this form to:

Retired Teachers Organization

3106 Joseph Howe Drive

Halifax NS B3L 4L7

902-477-5621/1-800-565-6788. rtoadmin@staff.nstu.ca

It is strongly suggested that you inform your RTO Branch President as well as:

Johnson Inc: 902-453-9543/1-800-453-9543

AND: Nova Scotia Pension Services Corp 902-424-5070/1-800-774-5070

Rev. February 24th, 2022

Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

March 24, 2022

1. Mental Health for Seniors Project – Celeste Gotell, Health Promotion Specialist, Mental Health and Addictions, Eastern Zone
 - The Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre in Richmond County received funding to work on a collaborative approach to offer programming to address issues that impact older adults in the community.
 - Issues such as mental health, addictions, and social isolation during the pandemic have had a significant impact on the health and well-being of many older adults.
 - The funding helped develop a Mind, Body, and Spirit toolkit whose purpose was to share their story and provide other rural communities access to the learnings and information discovered.
 - The toolkit is divided into the following six (6) chapters:
 - Working Together Collaboratively
 - Building Capacity
 - Increase Knowledge and Create a Cultural Shift
 - Innovative and Creative Approaches
 - Evaluation
 - Additional Resources
 - The toolkit will be presented to Senior Safety Coordinators, Community Health Coordinators, Community Links Regional Coordinators, Aging Well Coalition Members, Federation of Seniors Clubs, and residents of Richmond County during the month of April.
 - The toolkit will be live for other groups/seniors on May 1, 2022 and can be accessed at: <http://drkingstoncommunityhealthcenter.com/#mbs-toolkit-section>
2. Letters from the Seniors Advisory Council
 - The letter dated February 24, 2022 on Nova Scotia Power rate increases has been received by the Utility and Review Board and its consumer advocate. The consumer advocate wrote back and requested that we stay in contact as the request proceeds.
 - A letter has been sent to Premier Tim Houston and cabinet colleagues about the excessive cost of staples including food, gas, home heating oil, clothing, and rent. This is a very difficult time for older persons, pensioners, and those on fixed incomes to meet their needs for a healthy and stable lifestyle. The letter requests the government to provide financial help for vulnerable persons in our communities to age in place in comfort and with dignity.
 - A letter was sent to Michelle MacFarlane, Executive Director Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services agreeing to delete Section 18 (1) from the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Regulations. This section states “No building, other than a residence, monument display room, or flower shop shall be attached to a funeral home.” As the cremation rate in Nova Scotia is 78% without the need for embalming, this deletion will save seniors money and provide greater consumer oversight and choice in purchasing funeral services.

- The SAC still has not received a response from Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness to our October 18, 2021 letter requesting that the high dose trivalent influenza vaccine be provided free of charge to seniors over age 65. Doctors Nova Scotia have agreed to our position and hope that their Board will endorse this at their April 29, 2022 Board meeting. The SAC has recently been informed that Saskatchewan will cover this benefit for seniors in the fall of 2022.
3. The SAC approved a position paper entitled “Future of Continuing Care in Nova Scotia” from the Continuing Care Sub-Committee. The Committee’s documents comprise the following:
 - Briefing note on the purpose, goals in preparing the paper, and background
 - The position paper indicating who we are, our perspective
 - Our call to action with high quality, accessible, responsive and accountable continuing care province-wide
 - A six-page background reference document of materials reviewed by the Committee
 - The SAC will be presenting this position paper at the face-to-face meeting with the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care as it was felt that we needed to speak directly to the Minister and not have third party representatives explain our position.
 4. The SAC wants the Department of Health and Wellness to update the Dementia Strategy with help from the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia.
 5. Rural High Speed (Fibre Op) Internet – Deborah Page, Director Marketing and Communications and Kevin Kline, Project Manager, Develop Nova Scotia
 - The SAC has been very concerned about social isolation of seniors during the pandemic and the lack of accessible internet in rural Nova Scotia. As well, many of the older population need training and assistance to access hardware and software to be able to function effectively.
 - The federal and provincial government Internet Funding Trust has \$193 million available to provide fibre op for 99% of Nova Scotians by December 2023.
 - The minimum speed would be 50 Mbps/10Mbps wired and 25 Mbps/5Mbps wireless.
 - At the present time 92,000 of the 102,000 underserved homes/businesses have projects underway or have been completed.
 - Develop Nova Scotia has a 10 year service delivery agreement with Bell Canada which covers network performance, customer service, and pricing.
 - Information, project pages, and FAQs are available on their website: internet.developns.ca
 - Responses to residents’ concerns can be addressed by calling 1-833-422-6591 or info@developns.ca

—*Bill Berryman*

Vice-Chair, Seniors Advisory Council

Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

April 28, 2022

1. Another letter will be sent to Premier Tim Houston and cabinet colleagues indicating our concern that the recent provincial budget did not provide financial help for seniors dealing with the high costs of food, gas, home heating oil, clothing, and rent. Inflation is having a negative impact on older persons, pensioners, and those on fixed incomes who are attempting to meet their needs for a healthy and comfortable lifestyle.
2. The SAC received a negative response from Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness to our request that the NACI recommended high dose vaccine be provided free of charge to all seniors over

- age 65. The SAC will continue working with Doctors Nova Scotia to convince the government that this vaccine is necessary for seniors who wish to age well in their own homes and communities.
3. The SAC was pleased to see the announcement from Develop Nova Scotia that another 400 homes will receive fibre-optic cable this year with extra funding of \$2.5 million from the N.S. Internet Funding Trust.
 4. The SAC reviewed documents on the recent federal budget and were disappointed that there was nothing on a National Pharmacare Plan, a National Seniors Strategy, the establishment of a Federal Office of Seniors Advocate, and funding for NACI recommended high dose flu, pneumonia, and shingles vaccines.
 - The budget did announce the formation of an expert panel to study the idea of an Aging at Home Benefit and \$20 million for the Canadian Institute of Health Research to study dementia and brain health, and improve treatment and outcomes for people living with dementia.
 - The budget also provided \$4 billion for long-term institutional care and \$1 billion for the Universal Broadband Internet Fund for funding in rural and remote communities.
 5. Housing Nova Scotia 2022-2023 Budget Overview – George Murphy, Director of Finance, Housing Nova Scotia
 - The provincial budget has allocated \$40 million in new funding for housing/rents/rent supplements initiatives
 - \$15 million for more Affordable Housing programs to address the urgent need for improved affordable housing in NS
 - There will be \$8 million for creation of new supply and \$5 million for landlords to maintain existing affordable rentals
 - \$3 million to continue 425 Quick Start rent supplements and \$4 million to create 550 new rent supplements
 - \$5 million to increase provincial cost match to leverage federal government housing strategy funding
 - Total investments of \$514 million over the next 10 years with matching amounts by both governments
 - Expectation is that \$55 million will be spent this year to reduce housing needs for up to 900 households
 - \$2 million to support the joint planning task force in HRM
 - Expectation is to provide 22,600 new residential units in Dartmouth, Bedford, and Lower Sackville over the next 10 years
 - Rents for these housing units will range from 60 to 80% of average market rents and must be kept affordable for 20 years
 - \$1 million for housing related provincially-owned land transfer initiatives suitable for profit and not-for-profit development
 6. The SAC formed its third sub-committee to update its priorities, update the Structure and Operating Procedures document, and develop a protocol when dealing with political parties.
 7. The SAC will be meeting with Barb Adams, Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care on May 26, 2022 to present the “Position Statement on the Future of Continuing Care in Nova Scotia” and have a discussion on the new department’s priorities over the next year and her thoughts on the role of the SAC in her capacity as Minister.
 8. The SAC was provided a brief update on the new regulations under the Powers of Attorney Act. Here are three key improvements:
 - New requirements for the valid execution of a power of attorney, including that it be in writing, dated, and witnessed by 2 people;

- Incorporating modern concepts of capacity, including an outline of the required approach to decision making; and
 - Outlining the donor’s rights and protections, including new safeguards such as the option to appoint a monitor to whom the attorney must report to periodically and upon request.
9. Review of the Adult Capacity and Decision Making Act – Allyson O’Shea, Senior Policy Analyst, Nova Scotia Department of Justice
- A working group comprised of various stakeholders has developed recommendations on updating the Act and are now responsible to develop a plan of action
 - The 26 recommendations identified issues in the following areas:
 - Preserving and enhancing autonomy
 - Education and assistance
 - Application process under the Act
 - Capacity assessment
 - Supported decision making
 - Some of the key elements being considered include:
 - Establishing a monitoring system to check in with adults and their substitute decision makers
 - Establishing ease of access such as a single point of contact accessible through multiple channels
 - Navigation channels to provide assistance in preparing an application and referring families to counselling and dispute resolution services
 - Procedures to connect adults with independent legal counsel, including services offered by N.S. Legal Aid, and where the adult wishes, arrange a consultation
 - Providing a litigation guardian to an adult incapable of instructing counsel in an ACDMA proceeding
 - Developing a specialized decision making body outside the traditional court system to decide consent and capacity matters under Nova Scotia laws
 - Appointing more Public Trustees to handle the backlog of cases
10. Seniors Care Grant – Kim Silver, Director of Home and Community Care, Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
- Program is co-managed with Service Nova Scotia and this helps getting the information to seniors
 - Up until April 18, 2022 there have been 22,852 grants approved totalling \$11 million to assist seniors to reside in their own homes
 - The Department will be providing a similar grant next year and is looking for feedback prior to July, 2022 on how the program was received and what other types of expenses could be permitted
 - There were questions about the need for receipts and Kim indicated that the government wanted some accountability on how the money was spent. The receipts do not have to be detailed but need to show how the money was spent, who received payment for services, taxi receipts, etc.
 - The SAC advised Kim that the Senior Safety Coordinators across the province should have written materials on the grant and help seniors complete the forms
11. Dementia Strategy
- The Department will be updating the strategy and incorporating it within the Continuing Care Blueprint for Change.
 - The SAC is pleased to see the department working collaboratively with the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia on the revised document.

—*Bill Berryman*
Vice-Chair, Seniors Advisory Council

1. Long-Term Care Construction and Renovations – Brian Darrell, Director Infrastructure Management, Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
 - Province is providing funding to build or renovate 27 long-term care facilities and adding 500 more rooms in HRM
 - The projects are at various stages of development and the first facilities will open in 2023
 - At the present time there are 1,946 people on the long-term care wait list and 283 waiting in hospital
 - The mandate letter to the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care requests her department renovate or build 2,500 new single-bed rooms over the next three years
 - There are on-going discussions with the federal government in requesting funding for another 1,000 rooms
 - The department has done a thorough analysis/assessment of all 132 facilities in Nova Scotia which provide long-term care services in large and small facilities
2. Seniors Care Grant
 - The department will be once again providing the \$500 grant next year and is looking at possibly expanding the eligible household services covered with some flexibility
 - To qualify for the grant the net household income must be \$37,500 or less, and the client must live independently in their own home or have a residential lease agreement with the client's name on it
 - There are still concerns that the application process is on-line and the need to provide receipts for the services received
 - The province had budgeted \$29 million for the grant over the past year with the deadline for application May 31, 2022
3. Sub-Committee on SAC Priorities and Changes in the Structure and Operating Procedures
 - The SAC has established a committee of six members to determine where the organization fits as an advisory body to government, and determine our role as an advocacy body for older adults in Nova Scotia
 - The committee is examining our priorities in the new Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care and determining the challenges facing the SAC in this new department
 - The SAC received an excellent workshop on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion on May 27, 2022 by Ann Devine, CEO Ashanti Leadership and PDS Inc.
 - The sub-committee will be working over the summer analyzing the discussion/questions/concerns from the May 27, meeting
4. The SAC is not pleased with the negative response from the Minister of Health and Wellness for our request that the NACI High Dose Trivalent Vaccine be provided free of charge to all seniors over age 65
 - The SAC will continue advocating for this benefit with help from Doctors Nova Scotia
5. Action Plan for Health – A Strategic Plan 2022-2026 – Kim Barro, Senior Executive Director, Policy and Planning Department and Jonathon Veale, Chief Design Officer, Department of Health and Wellness
 - This multi-year plan sets out the government's agenda to change the health care experience and health culture
 - The plan outlines six solutions for transforming health

- Become a magnet for health providers
 - Provide the care Nova Scotians need and deserve
 - Cultivate excellence on the frontlines
 - Build in accountability at every level
 - Be responsive and resilient
 - Address the factors affecting health and well-being
 - The plan will develop 30 objectives over the next four years and updates will be provided on the Department of Health website
 - The plan takes a whole system approach with input from the Department of Health and Wellness, Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care, Addictions and Mental Health, Office of Healthcare Professionals, Recruitment Nova Scotia, and the Health Authority
 - The plan is not a static plan and will highlight accomplishments and actions to come
6. Barb Adams, Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care
- The Minister received a copy of the SAC “Position Statement on the Future of Continuing Care in Nova Scotia” and spoke favourably about our call to action for high quality accessible, responsive, and accountable changes in continuing care
 - The Minister acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic hit many older adults hard and their vulnerability to the disease and their need for protection from the worst effect exacerbated weaknesses in the health care system and left many feeling isolated
 - In 2022-2023, her department will continue to provide older adults with a range of initiatives aimed at ensuring they receive the supports they need at all stages of the aging continuum – from fit seniors actively contributing to their communities to those requiring progressive levels of help with the activities of daily living
 - The Minister spoke on the following initiatives over the next four years:
 - \$67 million to attract and retain continuing care workers and add more beds in long-term care facilities
 - \$66 million to provide continuing care workers a 23% raise
 - Recruitment and train the new and existing professional caregivers with the hiring goal of 600 nurses and 1,400 CCAs
 - \$25 million to lift the standards of care of at least 4.1 hours of care per day per resident
 - The introduction of a new consolidated Continuing Care Act to include standardized hours of care per resident and to provide a modernized foundation to support the Nova Scotia aging population over the decades to come
 - The Minister acknowledged that she has been laser focused on continuing care issues since last September and has not provided the same focus to seniors
 - The Minister promised she is now prepared to deal with the SAC issues and looks forward to continuing working with us for years to come
 - The Minister also acknowledged that the SAC advises many other government department on seniors issues and this was noted in the SHIFT document
 - The Minister also indicated that there are up to 20 agencies delivering home care and many do not communicate with each other and this is now a priority issue with her department
 - The Minister ended the meeting requesting a follow up meeting to discuss a new SHIFT document, the SAC role in her department, and the need for all groups to work together

—*Bill Berryman*
Vice-Chair, Seniors Advisory Council

Branch Updates

Annapolis

The Annapolis County RTO delivered a total of \$1,600 to the local schools in Annapolis County. All schools asked us to give them gift cards or gift certificates from local retailers.

- Annapolis East Elementary School - \$200 gift card from Foodland
- Lawrencetown Elementary School - \$200 gift card from Heather's Independent



Bridgetown Regional

- Bridgetown Regional School - \$200 gift card from Graves Grocery
- Clark Rutherford School, Annapolis West School, and Champlain School - \$200 gift card each from the Independent Store in Annapolis Royal



Clark Rutherford

- Lawrencetown Education Center and Middleton Regional High School - \$200 gift certificates each from Valley Flax Flour

Antigonish/Guysborough

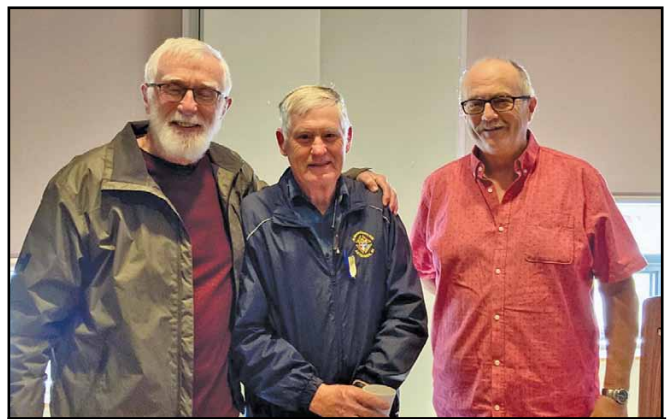
Spring always brings new life and it is no different in the RTO. It is a busy time with various elections, retirement dinners, Branch meetings and AGMs, and spring rituals such as the Provincial AGM. President Laureen Murphy and incoming President Anne Morris attended the Provincial AGM.

At the Branch level, we were fortunate to have Past President Penny Hemens act as Chair of our Nominating Committee, along with retired teachers Deanna Henry and Sheri Lambourne. They were successful in having candidates put their names forward for vacant positions. Many of our members will remain on the Executive, so you can look forward to a seamless transition.

Although we have had several meetings, we did not hold any events due to the lingering threat of COVID. However, on May 2 we held both our AGM and a CAREpath DigitalHealth presentation by Stacy Samson.

Our Branch was represented at the active teachers' retirement dinner on May 13. We also made a \$200 donation to the People's Place Library - a truly wonderful facility which we have accessed for meetings many times.

Many of our members participated in the Pension Panel



Donnie Campbell, Basil Ludlow, and Keith Skinner

Branch Updates



Incoming VP Tammy Landry and Stacy Samson

discussion and found it very informative, and we were well represented at the Wellness Symposium by Effie Beaton. We look forward hearing her thoughts about that event.

We received a BIP grant for a Pickleball Clinic and dinner, for which we were very grateful. Held on June 7 at the Airisaig Community Hall, this was the first big gathering since pre-COVID.

As this is my last Branch update, I would like to thank everyone I have worked with over the course of my involvement with the RTO - especially my Branch Executive. I want to give a special shout-out to Marlene Boyd, our Member-at-Large. She was an invaluable resource for me as I learned more and more about the depth of



Joan MacNeil, Mary MacDougall, Chrissy Arbuckle, and Tammy Landry

the RTO. It is an awesome organization that works hard on your behalf in many, many areas. If you might like to join in some capacity, consider joining a committee at the Provincial level or taking on an Executive position at the Branch level. It is never dull!!

Happy Summer Everyone!!

Lauren Murphy

CPX

A very interesting and informative day was spent attending the Wellness Symposium in Halifax on April 27. Many thanks to Judy Knowlton and her Committee for their time and energy in making this day a true success!!!

CPXers will be celebrating Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee on June 15 with a dinner at the Hope Church Hall in Halifax.

Cumberland

The Cumberland Executive met over the past few months to begin planning a Branch gathering that would be both safe and successful. While there are many challenges to address, we were able to hold our AGM/turkey dinner on May 31 at the Springhill Baptist Church.

The Executive for 2022-2023 is:

- President Pat Hillier
- Vice President Holly MacDonald
- Treasurer Jack Boyd
- Secretary Gail Walsh
- Past President Lawry MacLeod
- Branch Member-at-Large Marie Osborne

The Cumberland Branch will be hosting the Curling Bonspiel at the Amherst Curling Rink in 2023-2024. Planning will soon get underway and volunteers are needed to help organize. Please reach out if you are interested to Pat Hillier at pahillier@nstu.ca. Other

Branch Updates



events are also in the works for this fall to welcome members back to the RTO.

On April 27, President Pat Hillier and Vice President Holly Faulkner attended the Wellness Symposium at the Future Inn, Halifax. This event was well planned and offered excellent guest speakers with information on aging well and using technology to help in our homes. There was also a presentation on our Indigenous culture and history.

The Executive wishes all members a safe and enjoyable summer. Stay tuned for event information in September.



Branch Updates

Glace Bay

Eighty RTO members gathered at the Reserve Pensioner's Club for our annual Christmas luncheon meeting on the afternoon of December 10, 2021. To highlight the spirit of giving, hats and mittens were donated for elementary school children and food items for the Glace Bay Food Bank.

The hot turkey meal was delicious and the mood joyous, accentuated by lively Christmas music performed by Vice President Mickey Gouthro. President Reg Johnston welcomed four new members, in addition to four members who transferred in from other Branches. He also made it a point to thank the "Callers" who are an essential communication component that keeps the organization vibrant. It was a wonderful way to kick off the holiday season.



Lori Ross, Alan Nicholson, and Pauline MacIssac



Reg donates hats and mittens to Shauna White, Principal of John Bernard Croak V.C. Memorial School



Fred Courtney, long-time member and former Branch President, was recognized for his recent induction into the Glace Bay Hall of Fame. His storied hockey exploits made him a legend in Glace Bay. He had previously been inducted into the Cape Breton Sport Heritage Hall of Fame in 2011.



Theresa MacDonald, George Pyke, and Peggy Whyte



Fred Courtney was recognized for his induction into the Glace Bay Sports Hall of Fame

The first luncheon meeting for 2022 was held at the Warden United Church in Glace Bay on April 21. The membership got to enjoy another delicious buffet meal.

Branch member Steve Zwuran, a Ukrainian ex-pat, addressed the gathering to enlighten those in attendance of the horrors taking place in his native country and the difficulty his family members had in getting to safety.

Branch Updates

He outlined his efforts to get them to Canada. A special collection was made on behalf of Ukraine, as well as a donation. These were presented to Steve.



Steve Zwarun (L) accepts a donation for Ukraine from Branch Treasurer Wayne Hurley

President Reg Johnston, Vice President Mickey Gouthro, and Communications Chair Anita MacDonald represented the Branch at the provincial Wellness Symposium in Halifax on April 27. It was a busy, informative day kicked-off by greetings from the Honourable Barbara Adams, Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care. The keynote address was delivered by John Hamblin. John



Reg enjoyed the opportunity to re-connect with former committee member, Peggy Ludlow



Mickey Gouthro, Anita MacDonald, and Reg Johnston await the commencement of the Wellness Symposium

informed the gathering on how the use of innovative technology can assist seniors. A mini-expo provided the attendees with a wealth of valuable wellness information.

Halifax City

The Halifax City Branch of the RTO received BIP funding to conduct a successful Advance Care Planning workshop and a Nordic Pole Walking session.

Currently, we are organizing for our AGM which will be held September 28 and we are looking for members interested in serving on our Executive. You can join us as a Member-at-Large which would allow you to get a feel of what we're all about. If you are interested, please let us know at RTOHfxCity@gmail.com.

If you, or other retired teachers you know, haven't heard from the Halifax City Branch, RTO for a while please make sure that your contact information is updated. You can update it via email at RTOHfxCity@gmail.com.

Halifax County

We are becoming experts at the COVID pivot dance!

After a fun-filled fall with in-person activities and events, we returned to some of our online offerings as the winter brought a returned need to stay safe. We've been slowly emerging with caution and trying to find ways to connect and stay active once again!

Our Branch received a BIP grant to subsidize both the spring Pickleball Skills and Drills sessions, and a celebration meal/reception for our members. However, due to the recent increase in COVID numbers, our Executive decided to postpone our celebration meal until late summer or early fall. We are exploring a few different ideas for how we will organize our celebratory event and more information will be available at that time.

This spring, members were invited to attend a free Low Impact Cardio and Light Weights class. The hourly online sessions lasted for five weeks during April and May. Sixteen members registered for the class that was paid for by Halifax County Branch funds.

Branch Updates

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and in one case – life changing! Not only were people excited by the chance to exercise in the comfort of their own homes, but instructor Jeannie Ward’s expertise was demonstrated once again in her ability to seamlessly modify the classes for a range of abilities, even suggesting options for injuries on both the floor and from a chair. Participants loved Jeannie’s upbeat and enthusiastic approach which brought smiles to many faces, especially with her music choices that were familiar for so many of us! People feel uplifted and energized, and the only complaint was that the classes were over too soon!

Here is some of the wonderful feedback:

- The cardio sessions with Jeannie have been life-changing for me. For two years now I was unable to go to a gym to do aerobics like I had done for years prior to COVID. Having a Zoom class with Jeannie, right in my own home, with great music and wonderful exercises that left me feeling uplifted and energized has been wonderful; so wonderful that I plan to register for her classes here in Lakeside once the RTO’s sessions stop. I am reluctant to go to a gym but what other choice do we have if we want this quality of exercise? I am so grateful and thankful for the Halifax County RTO to have done this for us.
- The cardio and light weights workshop was great. The pace of the activities was appropriate for me and Jeannie made modifications to allow me to participate in all the activities by using a chair when needed. Her directions were clear and the music was fantastic! My only complaint is that it is ending!
- Thank you for offering this low impact program. Jeannie Ward is an enthusiastic/flexible teacher who adjusts her teaching for chair participants without missing a beat. She’s clear with instructions and the best part is her music - so fun. Thoroughly enjoyed the Zoom class. Hope you run this program again.
- I have really enjoyed the Zoom workshop. Jeannie sets a good pace, gives clear instructions, and has shown how to do some of the activities from a chair for those of us who are not comfortable getting on the floor. These sessions have been a great incentive to

get moving. I would highly recommend them.

At present, we are trying to reschedule a bird watching field trip with a member of the Nova Scotia Bird Society later in the spring or early summer. We hope to learn a little more about some of the bird species and their habitats in our area, as well as the spring arrivals that make their way back here to Nova Scotia each year. We hope to advertise this event in the coming weeks.

We are extending warm welcomes to Marilyn Jardine, our new Vice President, as she assumes her role with our Branch. Marilyn has been a member of our Executive for the last couple of years and we are all very excited to have her join us, as we know she has so much to offer our members!

Please keep your email and mailing addresses updated with the Provincial RTO so we can continue to keep you informed about important topics and resources for retired teachers. If you know of a newly retired teacher, please reach out and connect them with us as well!

Inverness

After two challenging years, the Inverness, RTO will be hosting our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, June 7. Once again it will be held at St. Patrick’s Parish Hall in Northeast Margaree and it will include a delicious meal.

The Executive met in late April to discuss this upcoming meeting and the changes to the Executive which will be confirmed on June 7. We hope to welcome new members to our Branch of the NSTU Retired Teachers Organization.

Kings

The Kings Branch of the RTO has continued to adapt to COVID-19, taking care not to put members at risk.

Shelley Morse, Past President of the NSTU and CTF, was recently elected as Member-at-Large for the Provincial RTO Executive. She will be taking Cathy Reimer’s place.

Kings Branch would like to thank Cathy for her excellent service as MAL for the Valley. She has done a great deal

Branch Updates

to organize events for us and to maintain communication between both the Provincial and Branch Executives. Shelley will bring a wealth of experience to the Provincial table and will serve us well, too.

Cathy Reimer organized a day in April to introduce recent retirees to the RTO and its benefits. Entitled “What the RTO Does for You”, it was a well-attended event. Alyson Hillier and Bill Berryman gave presentations on the RTO and the many benefits of membership. Presidents Wendy Rodda (Annapolis), Mike Knowles (West Hants), and Peter Sheppard (Kings) gave presentations on their Branches and highlighted many of their achievements over the last year.



Kings chose two delegates, Tracey Webb and Heather MacDonald, to attend the RTO Wellness Symposium in Halifax on April 27. They both enjoyed the sessions and reported that it was quite informative on the kinds of issues and concerns retirees often face and how they might deal with them.

Our winter Teacher Appreciation campaign was very successful, as was our online Yoga program.

Our Executive continued to meet on Zoom, avoiding the new variants of COVID which have proven to be so contagious. The screen shot from our April 12 Executive meeting features Nancy Henry, Peter Sheppard, and Michele Jeffery in the top row, and Dave Jones, Wendy Spicer, and Ellen Boyd in the bottom row. Shelley Morse and Mary Lou Rockwell were absent.

We began planning a Branch AGM for June or early July. We hope to combine it with an opportunity for our

members to join with friends in a safe environment and are looking for either an outdoor venue or large indoor space, depending on weather.



Kings Branch purchased two Bocce Ball sets for members to borrow. The weather is now warm enough, and the ground dry enough, for members to borrow either one or both sets. These are made available to members to encourage safe social interaction and to stay active with family and friends. Bocce is an easy game and can be played on a lawn or gravel space that is not too large. Members can contact Peter Sheppard, or any other member of our Executive, to borrow them. We will also make them available to RTO members in both Annapolis and West Hants.

Remember that most of our communication with members is through email. If you've recently changed your email address, or if you stop receiving emails from the RTO, contact Peter Sheppard at peter.sheppard1@gmail.com to update your information.

Pictou

The COVID pandemic has surely shut down events in Pictou Branch for the past two years. However, in early December, we decided to have a Christmas Dinner amidst rising COVID numbers, mandatory masking, and social distancing. It was a great event, filling the capacity of the local restaurant in New Glasgow with 40 members in attendance. Upon arriving, each member was given \$10 to offset the cost of the delicious turkey dinner, and door prizes were given out throughout the night.

Immediately after this event, COVID numbers increased to the point that we felt it was not worth putting our members at risk - until recently. We held a Let's Get

Branch Updates



Back Together event - a Wine and Cheese Social which was held at a local event space. This space has a cozy living room vibe that lends itself to great conversations and catching up with members who had not come together for some time. The charcuterie board provided by the RTO was enjoyed by all and the bar at the space was open for refreshments.

The Pictou Branch will be having our first AGM in two years on June 5, 2022. The Executive is currently planning events that will start in the fall - a Back To School breakfast will be held on the first day of school, and a



local Golf Tournament is scheduled in early September for our sports minded members.

Stay tuned Pictou Branch Members!! There is much more to come. We are ready to plan events that will provide opportunities for members to be out and about again!

Richmond

Richmond Branch recently received a BIP Grant to assist us with “Reconnecting with our Members” and recruiting new retirees to join our Branch.

We will be participating in the following activities:

- Pancake Breakfast - where donations will be made to a charity, namely Transition House in Port Hawkesbury
- A day outing in the fall to Baddeck with a tour of the Alexander Graham Bell Museum, a walk on their waterfront boardwalk, and lunch
- A tour of the “Friends United” multicultural centre in Cleveland

Also, the Richmond/Inverness Branches are hosting a CAREpath DigitalHealth presentation for our members. The session will be presented by NSTU Executive Staff Officer Stacy Samson at the Civic Centre in Port Hawkesbury.

The NSTU Local has extended an invitation to all RTO members to attend the Local’s Retirement celebration.

Our hope is that these activities will excel our efforts to reconnect our members after COVID-19.



President Phyllis Coté and VP Donna Machin working on a BIP grant

Branch Updates

Shelburne County

Although COVID is still with us, the Shelburne Branch RTO Executive met to discuss some possible events and meetings for the members.

We have applied for the Branch Initiative Program grant to support a few activities and events.

Our AGM will be held in June in a beautiful spacious location and we will be having a presentation for Advance Care Planning, as well.

Our latest endeavour took some of our members to neighbouring Queens County to enjoy the beautiful concrete creations. This will be reported on in a future BIP report.

Be safe everyone!

Yarmouth/Argyle

On April 19, the Yarmouth Local of the NSTU once again organized its “Realities of Retirement” panel for their members who are contemplating retirement in the next few years. The Yarmouth/Argyle Branch of the RTO provided the presenters for the panel, as we have done for several years in the past.

Panel members have varying lengths of retirement (from 1-17 years) and various amounts of pension and personal circumstances. President Stephen Surette was joined by Brian Noble, Wendy Woodworth, Maureen Duffy-Mason, and Wendy Day-Surette who all spoke on some of their experiences as retirees. They discussed financial implications, the joys of volunteering and new involvements, substituting, free time, and sudden realities which might arise. Our comments, cautions, and obvious pleasures in retirement were very well received and appreciated by the teachers attending. Thanks to Susan O’Brien of the NSTU Local for organizing and hosting this event! It was well worthwhile for all!

The April 27 Wellness Symposium in Halifax, which was presented by the Provincial Programs Committee, was very interesting and especially well organized! Branch delegate Wendy Woodworth attended, as well as MAL Brian Noble and Programs Committee member

Maureen Duffy-Mason. Many thanks to the Provincial Executive for offering this conference. By the high level of enthusiasm of the delegates, it is obvious that our members are uplifted about reconnecting again and organizing their Branch activities. Thanks to Judy Knowlton and her Programs Committee for a job well done!

Ann Jones, editor of our Branch newsletter *Beyond the Classroom*, has produced two editions this year. Thanks, Ann, for finding interesting items to publish in this time of a ‘dearth’ of group activities that could be planned.

Our Branch IS planning a turkey luncheon at our Annual General Meeting on June 10! Elections for all Executive positions will be open for nomination and vote. Members have been invited by group email to put their names forward for any position. Our Telephone Committee will get back in action by contacting all members for their attendance plans for the AGM/luncheon.

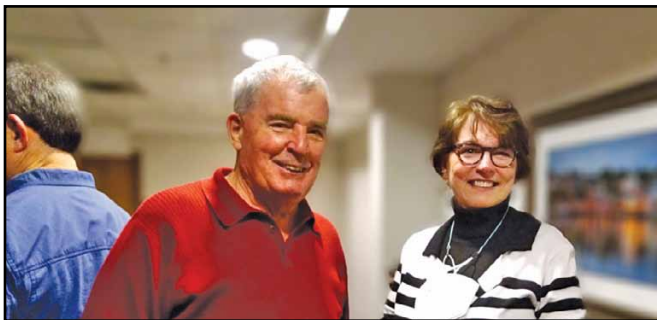
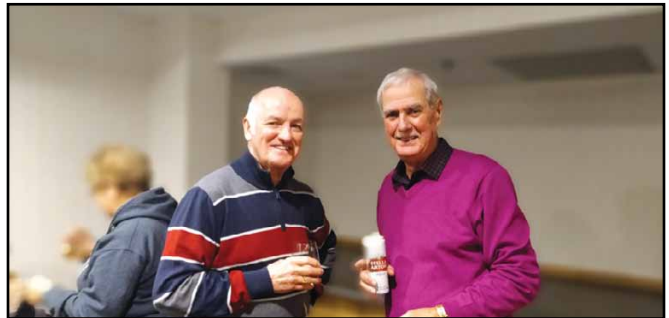
Yarmouth/Argyle Branch offers many thanks to our former colleague and once Branch member, Eileen Coady. Eileen has spent many years highly involved in the NSTU and RTO for the benefit of education, educators, and retirees. Eileen, we wish you all the best as you step away from your Provincial Vice Presidency!!



The latest Deals and Discounts for Retired Members are now online.

rto.nstu.ca

Branch President's Meeting - March 30, 2022



Branch President's Meeting - March 30, 2022

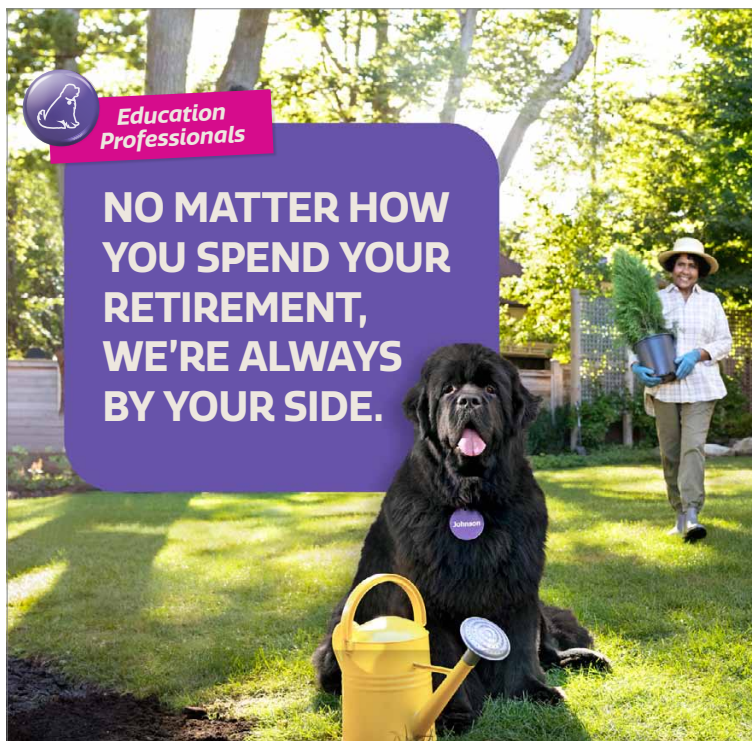
Branch Presidents met for a day-long program on Wednesday, March 30 at the Future Inn, Bayers Lake. This meeting, which was close to its typical pre-COVID calendar date, provided an opportunity to focus on issues of interest and concern at the Branch level.

All twenty-three Branches were represented and the meeting was chaired by Eileen Coady, RTO Vice President. The day began with a report from President Alyson Hillier, with updates from the Executive as we continue to move forward.

The agenda included an excellent presentation by Dale Roode, CEO, Teachers Plus Credit Union, on the current concern with scams and frauds and their impact on seniors. The information Dale provided has been shared with Branch Presidents, allowing for potential presentations on the topic to members across the province. Reports from the RTO Standing Committees and Affiliates were reviewed, and Glynda Wimmer and John MacKay provided useful information related to our RTO communications. Branch Presidents had an opportunity to meet as regional groups to discuss Branch and regional plans for working together.

Evaluations from the meeting indicate that it was a successful day, with a "thumbs up" for having a restaurant lunch together and a welcome chance to meet again. The next Branch Presidents meeting will be a short one, scheduled for the afternoon prior to the Annual General Meeting in May.

—Eileen Coady, Chair, Branch Presidents Meeting



Education Professionals

NO MATTER HOW YOU SPEND YOUR RETIREMENT, WE'RE ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE.

The advertisement shows a woman in a white shirt and hat carrying a potted plant in a garden. A large black dog sits in the foreground next to a yellow watering can. A purple speech bubble contains the text "NO MATTER HOW YOU SPEND YOUR RETIREMENT, WE'RE ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE." A small icon of a dog is in the top left corner.

Johnson Insurance provides NSTU retired members with access to helpful services and products that take care of your home and car insurance needs. Plus, you'll have access to:



up to **\$800.00**
in savings when you
bundle home & car insurance*

YOUR GROUP CODE FOR DISCOUNTS: 62

Call Johnson today at **1.855.616.6708**

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23rd Annual Retired Teachers Golfing Tournament



Mountain Golf Club

Wednesday, September 7, 2022 (Rain date 14th)

Shotgun Start - 12:30 pm for 1:00 pm

Fee of \$70 includes green fee, power cart and full meal

Sponsored by Colchester-East Hants RTO

- Applications, handicap and fees must be received by August 26, 2022
- Our cut-off number this year is 100 allowing for some spousal, non-teacher partners of retired teacher golfers
- Please register early
- Overall Gross Tournament Winner
- Overall Net Tournament Winner
- 1st Gross and 1st Net in each Division
- Special Competition in each Division Closest to Hole, Closest to Line

- Please enclose fee & handicap with application
- Putting Contest with Prizes, a Fund Raiser
- Host Motel Super 8 Motel (902-895-8884) - Special price \$119 per room, includes a free breakfast buffet
- Spousal (Non - Teacher) partners may golf with a retired teacher golfer or in another twosome, provided their partners are in another twosome
- Vaccination required



Golf Carts: Provided
for ALL golfers

Inquiries & Registration

Chester Sabean,
12901 HWY 2
Lower Onslow, NS B6L 5G1
902-897-7274 or 902-897-7758
cdeesabean@eastlink.ca

OR:

Bob Jordan -
CEH-RTO@uniserve.com

Directions: This 18 hole course is located at 1195 Pictou Road at East Mountain, just outside Bible Hill and Valley
For travellers from Halifax/Cape Breton/Valley just leave highway 104 at Valley and go north on Pictou Road for about 3 minutes

Registration Form Retired Teachers Golfing Tournament 2022

Name: _____ - Handicap _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____ RTO Member: Yes No

Member of (if applicable) _____ Golf Club

Money Enclosed: (\$70) _____ Guest \$20 (Meal only) _____

Partner: _____ Handicap _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____ RTO Member: Yes No

Member of (if applicable) _____ Golf Club

Money Enclosed: (\$70) _____ Guest \$20 (Meal only) _____

Make Cheque payable to RTO Golf Tournament

Send to: Chester Sabeau, 12901 HWY 2, Lower Onslow, NS B6L 5G1

Application Fees & handicap should be received by August 26, 2022

Notes:

1. If you wish to play and do not have a partner you will be paired with a golfer by the committee.
2. Overall Handicap Differential for each team cannot be greater than six (6). If you submit more than (6) the team handicap will be reduced. Each team will have at least **one RTO Member** (*or Member's partner*).
3. Shot-Gun start at 12:30 PM for 1:00 PM, September 7, 2022. Rain date 14th.
4. We welcome both Retired Teacher golfers and their non-teacher golfing spouses or partners to join us golfing. Registered non-golfing spouses/partners are also invited to the meal.
5. Vaccination required.

STILL ACTIVE, STILL CONTRIBUTING

Submitted by Mark DeWolf, Halifax City Branch

It was a retired Halifax teacher who, in 2012, first introduced me to Spencer House - the very friendly drop-in centre for seniors on Halifax's Morris Street.

My friend was playing piano for the Centre's Wednesday lunch crowd and he suggested I come along to sing. Before I knew it, I was using my experience directing plays at J.L. Ilsley High to direct the one-act plays that the Centre had begun staging.

One of my actors was Glen Amirault, a retired teacher of French and ESL. He had been supporting local seniors with his therapy dog and originally came to Spencer House to help out with repairs and renovation projects. Another actor was Judy Bonnell, a retired teacher from Jubilee School in Sydney Mines who eventually became Chair of the Centre's Board of Directors.

The plays became more ambitious. Soon we were performing full-length musicals and taking some of our productions to local seniors residences and Halifax's Central Library.

Judy doesn't hesitate to list the various activities at Spencer House that she still enjoys: cribbage, book club, dancing, karaoke, and enjoying the company of other people. Give Spencer House a look!

For information about Spencer House, see

<https://www.spencerhouse.ca>



Lovestruck Boat Cast



Spencer House dance with Comeback

Fulfillment in a Small Town

Submitted by Mary Le Blanc and Laureen Murphy, Antigonish/Guysborough Branch

Mary LeBlanc is celebrating 50 years in a community she holds dear. This article should be an inspiration to anyone entering the teaching profession, and a reflection for many retirees who have travelled similar paths.

Thank you, Mary, for sharing your story.

Mary (Miller) LeBlanc was born, raised, and educated in Margaree, Cape Breton. Graduating in 1967, she then attended St FX earning a BSc in Physical Education in 1971. She followed that up with a BEd, with a concentration in science and French, in 1972.

There were many areas in Nova Scotia looking for French teachers but Mary accepted an interview in Canso. Why Canso? Two of her best friends from high school were nurses there and she was not interested in teaching in a large school, but one more like the school in which she was educated.

So, in June 1972, she drove to Canso. She recalls that her interview with Bernie MacLean was not 'if' but 'would' she commit to two years, as there had been a constant turnover of French teachers.

So began a 33-year teaching career that saw her teach students many courses in one school. Being in a small school, there was an expectation that one taught outside one's comfort area. Mary taught PE, Junior High Science, Elementary/Junior and High School French, History, and Communication English. However, Chemistry and high school Math were her favourites. She did Guidance for a year, was VP for two years, and finished her career as Principal for five years. Her claim to fame is that she taught anyone in Canso aged 66 and younger!

This year, Mary is celebrating 50 years in the community she calls home. She married Edmund in 1973 and they raised five children. When talking about their years growing up in Canso, she does not think that any other community would have given them anything more. Their education was excellent

and made them competitive at university with students from other areas of Canada. They had ample opportunities to be involved in sports and activities,



in both the school and the community. Mary is proud that she, her husband, and all of her children are X-grads - all with different degrees.

Mary knows that volunteers are what makes a community great. She started volunteering during her first year there, and still continues to be involved. Volunteering began at school: coaching, graduations, school-based groups, etc. However, it was in the community where she logged many, many hours. Some of the groups she was, and still is, involved in are Figure Skating, Minor Hockey, the Day Care Board, Star of the Sea Church, StanFest, Ratepayers Association, Family Patient Advisory, Arena Commission, Garden Club, Eastern Tip Trails Association, and the Canso Curling Club, the one most near and dear.

Mary was a Partyliner (which later became Community Contact) for CBC Radio for 30 years. She only retired from this gig a few months ago! When she was originally asked, she thought it was a one-time thing. She figures she spoke with the director Eileen and with hosts Don or Portia at least 180 times, letting people know about what was happening in Canso and area. I'm sure you heard her on early morning radio shortly after 6 AM sharing her insights about the community. Do you think many would take that on today, raise five children and teach full time? She is thankful to the many people who helped her get information on an event, a group, or a person in Canso! What a legacy!

Mary saw Canso reach an economic boom in the 80s, with an inshore fishery and a plant employing 600

plus. Then came the downturn in the early 90s and the demise of the fishery. The plant closed and the population plummeted. Eventually the school closed and students from P to 12 all went to Fanning/Canso, located in Hazel Hill. Eventually, Canso lost its town status and became part of the Municipality of Guysborough. There is a smaller fish plant in Canso now which employs 40-50 in the spring/summer. For those with licenses, there is a lucrative lobster and crab fishery, as well as shrimp and tuna.

Canso is smaller now and many of the current citizens are seniors. People still care for each other, take care of each other, and you can still be as active and involved as you want. Small communities allow for self-fulfillment and Canso does not disappoint!

Did You Know ...

Blister Packaging

(Also known as 'Pill packages' and 'Compliance packages')



Did you know – medical non-adherence costs the Canadian health care system billions of dollars per year.

Blister packaging offers a solution to this problem by creating a daily bubble package that gives the recipient specific information on day and time that the medication should be taken.

By having the medication in one neat package and laid out in a way that is understandable to the recipient or their healthcare provider, the goal is to reduce medical non-adherence as much as possible.

Blister packs also make it easier for the recipient, their physician, and other health care practitioners to identify the appropriate medication schedule and existing medical conditions quickly and reliably.

If you, or someone you know, is required to take multiple medications at different times of the day, it can be a challenge to manage. Your pharmacy's blister packaging service is a great way to manage medications and make keeping track of refills much easier.

Your pharmacy team can custom package most medications, including over-the-counter medications or supplements according to your schedule. This ensures that the correct medication is taken at the required time, everyday.

Fees for this service are quite small, but may vary by pharmacy.

For more information check your local pharmacist.



Branch Initiatives

Dartmouth

The Executive of the Dartmouth Branch, RTO is very pleased to have been given a BIP grant to assist with the cost of two Spring activities.

The first was a Welcome Back Luncheon held on May 3, at Brightwood. The grant enabled us to pay half of the luncheon cost for the 30 members in attendance, as well as purchase some door prizes.

After the meal, RTO Provincial President Alyson Hillier gave a very informative presentation on CAREpath DigitalHealth, answered questions from members, provided handouts, and explained how to find further information on the RTO website. Alyson also gave a review of the Pension Annual Report and allowed time for questions. All members in attendance were very pleased with the information they received.

The second activity made possible by our BIP grant was a bus trip on May 31 to the Swiss Air Memorial in Peggy's Cove and the SS Atlantic Memorial in Terrance Bay. The bus can accommodate two wheelchairs if needed, and the cost of the bus was covered by our BIP grant. Lunch was at the Peggy's Cove restaurant, the Sou'Wester.

The Dartmouth Branch Executive and members would like to thank the committee overseeing the BIP grants for approving our requests, and the Provincial RTO for their continued support. It is much appreciated.



Branch Initiatives

Halifax City

The Halifax City Branch, RTO held an Advance Care Planning (ACP) Café on Wednesday, April 20 at Hope United Church Hall. The session was facilitated by Alyson Hillier in coordination with Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care.

The workshop was attended by nine members and was an opportunity to learn more about the important process of planning in advance. The ACP program was recently relaunched after the pandemic. Since April 16 was Advance Care Planning Day in Canada, it was an opportunity to once again provide information and tools to our members to prepare their own plan and discuss their wishes with family.

Advance Care Planning is a process of reflection and communication. It is a time to reflect on your values and wishes and to let people know what kind of health and personal care you would want in the future, if you were unable to speak for yourself.

Since the group was small and the participants were all former colleagues, they were able to engage in valuable discussion amongst themselves. This made what can sometimes be a difficult discussion more comfortable and productive. Café goodies were generously provided through our BIP funding.

A Nordic Pole Walking session will be scheduled in the fall.

Many thanks to the RTO for their continued support to help us make these sessions happen for our members.



Halifax County

The Halifax County Branch was grateful to receive a BIP grant to cover some of the costs associated with our Pickleball sessions, held at the Zatzman Sportsplex in Dartmouth from April 6 to May 11.

Fifteen participants enjoyed reconnecting with friends and colleagues while learning a great deal about how to improve skills such as dinking, serving, third shot drop, and game strategy. All equipment was provided.

This activity was guided by Coach J.D. MacKinnon who has shared his knowledge and expertise with our county members in previous classes. Participants were excited about the opportunities to use the Pickleball toss machines to practice reaction time and ball placement. So much fun!!! With renewed confidence, some participants are hoping to try the outdoor courts for a little Pickleball fun this summer!

The cost to run this program (rental, equipment, instructor) was \$1,145. We collected a total of \$405 from our participants. The registration fee for members was \$25 and we charged the few friends of members that at-



Branch Initiatives

tended \$35. The BIP grant covered the remaining \$740.

Much gratitude was expressed by our members to our Branch Executive for organizing the sessions, and to the Provincial Executive for their continued support in providing our Halifax County members with these BIP funds. We are grateful for the activities this enables us to provide in our efforts to stay healthy and well!

Inverness

The Inverness, RTO looks forward to a number of proposed events for our members this year. Another enjoyable walk along the Ceilidh Trail is set for Tuesday, June 14 to be followed by lunch at the Red Shoe Pub in Mabou. Watch for further details or contact eileencoady.80@gmail.com for the walk/ lunch event.

We will break for the summer months and once again meet in the colourful fall for a possible walk and lunch in the Margarees. Also planned is an informative tour of the Superstore, with the emphasis on health and nutrition. Another Trivia afternoon is in the works for early November.

Lunenburg County

Ten members of the Lunenburg County, RTO gathered at Wile's Woolies on May 24 to learn the art of felting. Felting is where you use a specialized needle to poke wool through a backing to create a picture. It was a grand afternoon, with much socializing and creativity in evidence. All participants reported having a lovely



afternoon and asked if another session could be planned!

West Hants

The West Hants Branch recently applied for a BIP grant to offer some events to RTO members. One of these was to hear Stacy Samson, Staff Officer from the NSTU, provide information on health care help opportunities through CAREpath DigitalHealth.

This presentation was held at the Three Mile Plains Community Hall on May 20. An invitation was extended to members of both the Kings and Annapolis Branches, as well.

Although the number of members present was lower than was hoped for, Stacy offered an excellent presentation. Many great questions were both asked and answered.



West Hants, Kings, and Annapolis

The West Hants, Kings, and Annapolis Branches recently applied for a grant to offer online Yoga to its members. The month-long sessions were offered between February 21 and March 25. This BIP application was jointly done by the three Branches.

We felt that members needed another avenue for activity during the long winter months and during COVID times. Both traditional Yoga and a seated version were offered. The regular Yoga, however, was better attended.

Joint BIP applications with other Branches provides a way to spread the wealth and offers an excellent opportunity for Branches to work together.

MyHealthCare Navigator



Chronic Disease

Our Chronic Disease program is a healthcare navigation service that provides comprehensive and personalized support to employees and their families in the event of illness or other health crises.

Acting as partners and advocates for employees and their families, Carepath Nurse Case Managers use their expert knowledge of the healthcare system to help employees understand their condition, test results, and treatments while offering emotional support.

Our Services include:

- Comprehensive health assessment, including a review of medical records. In-depth review of treatment plans to ensure they are consistent with best-practices.
- Explanation of diagnosis, tests and treatments. Explore alternative treatment or symptom management options.
- Education on how to manage symptoms to minimize treatment side effects.
- Facilitate access to diagnostic tests, treatments and clinical trials. Explore alternative treatment or symptom management options.
- Ongoing virtual nursing support, health education, and coaching throughout navigation to ensure the individual has the information needed to make informed health care decisions.
- Virtual second opinion when needed.



Mental Health

Our Mental Health program helps employees and their families suffering from mild to severe mental health disorders, as well as those struggling mentally or emotionally due to another health condition or life event.

Carepath provides psychoeducation and counseling to employees and their families, providing multiple levels of support and guidance using distance technologies such as telephone and virtual resources (mobile app, email, and secured video call).

We provide two levels of support: navigation and counselling.

- *Navigation* is provided by qualified mental health clinicians, when someone is experiencing mild to moderate distress. Our service includes a psychoeducation assessment, supportive counseling, and coaching with the goal of enhancing self-care strategies and management of concerns.
- *Counselling* is provided by advanced practitioners, for employees and their families (individual, couples) experiencing moderate to severe symptoms, including for chronic illness with mental health/wellness components.
- When the situation warrants, access to in-depth psychiatric assessment, consultation, and assistance with care planning is available.



Elder Care

Our Elder Care program provides employees and their aging loved one's support to address evolving elder care needs.

Our Nurse Case Managers work with you and your family 1 on 1 to help you understand and navigate the health care system so you can make informed decisions and appropriate arrangements for care.

Our Services include:

- Providing information about hospice organizations and home care support services provided by local and respected organizations and assisting as needed.
- Providing information and access to local community resources (i.e., primary care physicians, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, dietitian services, meal delivery, transportation services) and volunteer organizations that can provide additional support.
- Helping navigate and accessing provincially and federally funded benefits, including other insurance benefits.
- One-on-one coaching about how to have difficult conversations in terms of aging care needs and life-changing moments, such as losing a spouse or moving into a retirement home.
- Accessing the Social for Seniors platform to connect seniors with seniors.

FROM ISOLATION TO CONNECTIVITY

RTO WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM REPORT

Forty-six delegates from RTO Branches across Nova Scotia, along with invited guests and RTO Executive, gathered to participate in the third RTO Wellness Symposium on April 27, 2022. The Future Inns was selected as the host site due to previous favourable comments about the facility and location.

Delegates were met by Jack Boyd and Holly MacDonald at the registration table, along with RTO VP Eileen Coady and other Executive members who handed out “Swag bags”.

Indigenous leader Jude Gerrard opened the symposium with a Smudging, along with an explanation of its purpose. The Honourable Barbara Adams, N.S. Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, then brought greetings and had everyone on their feet with simple daily exercises that, if done regularly, will help prevent falls.



Jude Gerrard opening the day with Smudging

During the Mini-Expo, delegates were encouraged to visit, chat, and gather information to take back to their respective areas for sharing within their communities. Participants who graciously gave of their time to attend included: Northwood Intouch, Seniors Safety and Scams, Community Links, 211, NS Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network, Annapolis

Valley Health Foods, Merit Travel, Efficiency NS, the NS Health Authority, and Advance Care Planning. These participants were eager to contribute and expressed thanks for the opportunity to meet and promote their various areas of expertise.

Keynote speaker John Hamblin gave an inspirational presentation regarding smart technology and the way things may proceed in the future, especially using modern technologies and gadgets in the home. He is a strong believer that ‘Grey, grey matter, matters!’ Loneliness is a major threat to healthy aging and can create many problems which can be alleviated by smart home technology. Some benefits include: as a monitor for health conditions, in home safety, information, convenience, social contact, and pure entertainment. After the lunch break, John provided more information on low-cost devices that may help support us as we age at home. There are 35,000



Keynote Speaker John Hamblin

devices accessible to us and directions for use can be easily acquired.

Betty Jean Aucoin, retired NSTU staff officer, led the group via Zoom in a gentle stretch break. Space was tight in the room, but delegates were willing to try the moves that Betty Jean presented to keep us relaxed and limber.

Dr. Olive Bryanton, a long-time advocate for seniors and a lifelong learner herself, addressed the groups

after lunch. She was a true inspiration as she shared her ways of staying connected with family and those she has met in her life. She is a prime example of lifelong learning, having earned her PhD at age 82 from UPEI in 2019. She continues to research at UPEI and to spread the message that older adults must be visible and recognized as integral parts of our society.

The sessions closed with Jude Gerrard's presentation on the "Indigenous Context in Nova Scotia". The fast-paced bingo game was truly enlightening and we learned more about the history of Indigenous people in Canada.

As Jude said in a tweet after the symposium, "Today was such an uplifting day. Opening smudge, prayer, and talk to an amazing group of retired teachers (the Retired Teachers Organization of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union) and a wonderful session on the Indigenous Context in NS. When we talk about the legacy of colonialism and Indian Residential schools, we are not calling you out, we are calling out to you. Thank you all for the invite!"

The Programs Committee consisted of Cathy Anderson, Jack Boyd, Maureen Duffy-Mason, Linda MacNeil (year one), Holly MacDonald (year two), and Chair Judy Knowlton. The group worked through much uncertainty over a two-year period to bring this event to life.

In closing, the Programs Committee thanks the speakers who graciously gave their time and energy to help the RTO stay informed and who inspired delegates to return and share their new knowledge. The energy and comments from all of you were truly rewarding! Rest assured that all comments - bricks or bouquets - have been reviewed and will be forwarded to the next planning committee for consideration.

—Respectfully submitted,
Judy Knowlton, Chair, RTO Programs Committee



(L-R) Hon. Barb Adams, Dr. Olive Bryanton, Judy Knowlton, John Hamblin, and Bill Berryman



Dr. Olive Bryanton

RTO Members Contact Update

RTO Members are asked to notify their Branch Presidents of changes in their contact information, including phone numbers, email, and mailing addresses. Branch Presidents can be reached through both the RTO Newsletter and the RTO Website at <http://rto.nstu.ca>.

Also, please update your contact information at the NSTU Office for the RTO Newsletter mailing list:

email RTOAdmin@staff.nstu.ca

or phone **1-800-565-6788**

Please state whether you would like to receive an electronic subscription—as opposed to a paper copy—by leaving your email address.

FROM ISOLATION TO CONNECTIVITY



REFLECTIONS ON THE WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

Submitted by Tracy Webb, King Branch

On April 27, I enjoyed participating in a day-long symposium related to various aspects of well-being which included physical, mental, financial, and house-wise aspects!

There was an Expo with displays and many informative pamphlets, booklets, calendars, and demonstrations. These included:

- NS Health Authority with info about frailty, how to determine the degrees of frailty, and “falling” markers for health - how likely one may be at risk for falling and injury
- Efficiency NS and home energy assessments
- Merit Travel and various planned trips abroad
- Annapolis Valley Health Foods and Valley Flax Flour - with delicious samples and blueberry lemon muffins, along with other related products
- NS Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network with many great projects underway - for more info please contact Robert Bernard at nsiten.rb@gmail.com or website - nsiten.com
- 211 - displays about how to access this resource help@ns.211.ca
- Community Links and volunteerism, plus a calendar with lots of tips
- Seniors Safety and Scams info, along with a great Digital Security guide magazine
- Northwood Intouch
- Advance Care Planning
- CAREpath Mental Health programs through the NSTU Group Insurance Trust

We also had wonderful speakers over the course of the day, starting and ending with Jude Gerrard, Indigenous leader and member of the Millbrook First Nation. He spoke of the context of indigenous peoples in NS, and later walked us through an Indigenous Bingo which was very eye-opening as there was a lot we did not collectively know or remember. Most of us in the Valley would know Jude, as he worked with our board for quite a few years. It was a neat way to start the day with a smudging ceremony led by Jude, and listening to his stories.

There was a keynote address by John Hamblin who spoke of technology applications that help make life easier with low-cost devices to provide communication and support. John works with Google and as part of a worldwide team “Aging2” which examines all aspects, requirements, and impediments to ensuring that seniors everywhere can take full advantage of technology to enjoy a higher quality of life.

Smart Tech is becoming increasingly embedded into our daily lives and, like all Smart devices, there are incredible benefits. The down side can include the of loss of privacy and the possibilities of being hacked but one can hope that the cyber-security is keeping pace with the artificial intelligences that we may bring into our lives.

We also had a very inspirational session with Olive Bryanton, who is a long-time advocate for older adults. She did her BA in 1980, MEd in 2009, and recently graduated with her PhD in 2018 at the age of 82! When she presented at the virtual launch of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Baseline Report for the Decade of Healthy Ageing, she shared a key finding that at least 14 per cent of all people aged 60 years and over (more than 142 million people worldwide) are currently unable to meet all their basic daily needs. In 2017, Olive was appointed by the Minister of Health, PEI to serve as an executive advisor for the development of the recent Seniors Health and Wellness Strategy for Prince Edward Island.

I would like to thank RTO for sponsoring this symposium, and for supporting my participation in the event. It was a truly enjoyable day and so lovely to connect with other retired teachers from around the province!

Regional Initiatives Events

Annapolis, Kings, and West Hants Region - Submitted by Cathy Reimer (MAL)

On April 13, the Valley Region of the RTO held an event at the Louis Millet Center in New Minas. Entitled "What Your RTO Does for YOU!", it is the first in a series of events to be held all over the province in hopes of educating members about the RTO and encouraging retired teachers to become involved. It was not a large event due to the pandemic.

Cathy Reimer emceed and welcomed members from all three Branches in the Region. Presidents Peter Sheppard (Kings), Wendy Rodda (Annapolis), and Mike Knowles (West Hants) were on hand to share some of the things happening in the Valley and to answer any questions.

RTO President Alyson Hillier presented a fresh new PowerPoint filled with pictures and information about the RTO. This included info about opportunities on how to get involved and on how the organization works. Past President Bill Berryman also shared important information related to our benefits such as CAREpath DigitalHealth and insurance.

There were a number of questions and the feedback was positive. Both presentations were excellent. Many thanks to all who helped organize and those who attended.



Regional Initiatives Events

Cape Breton-Victoria Region - Submitted by Margie MacNeil (MAL)

On May 5, 2022 the first Regional Initiative Event for the Cape Breton-Victoria Region was held at the Cambridge Suites, Sydney. The Cape Breton-Victoria Region includes four branches: Sydney, New Waterford, North Sydney, and Glace Bay.

This new initiative was approved and encouraged by the RTO Executive after much discussion last year. The purpose of the initiative "Getting to Know Your RTO" is to educate Branch members around the province about topics such as what the RTO does for members, benefits of joining the RTO, and pension issues. Each of the four Branch Presidents invited members from their Branches. All invited members attended with enthusiasm and showed great interest in these topics. Many questions were asked by members and answered by the presenters.

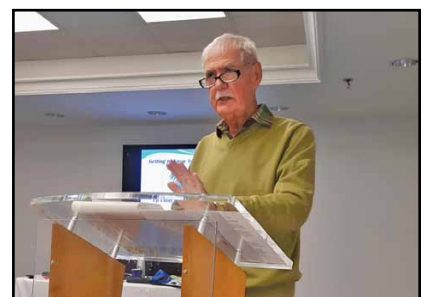
The presenters included President Alyson Hillier and VP Eileen Coady. They discussed how to join and why it's important to join the RTO. Both Alyson and Eileen gave an up-to-date information session on the privileges received by being a member, events put on in the Branches, the benefits of BIP grants, and the fun and friendship folks experience because of their membership. They also informed members on how to join an RTO Standing Committee.

Past President Bill Berryman discussed and informed attendees on what is available for members in retirement before age 65, and what changes occur after 65. Topics covered were medical, dental and insurance coverage. CAREpath DigitalHealth was highlighted and the importance of accessing this program by retired teachers was evident. Bill also reviewed the RTO requests for resolutions for the coming year, Insurance Trustees Initiatives, and what devices are available to members from Northwood Medical.

The final topic of the day was on pensions and was given by Jim Kavanaugh. Jim has been concerned and consistently learning about teachers pensions for many years. He shared his extensive wealth of knowledge on pensions and did a follow up on the Pension Expert Review Panel Consultation session. It was well received.

The evaluations by participants proved it was a successful event.

Best of luck to all MALs hosting their event. We encourage and challenge all members around the province to attend, participate, learn, and enjoy your regional event when it happens in your area. A big thank you to my team in helping with the planning: Ambrose White, Cathy Anderson, Laurie MacIntosh, and Reg Johnston.





Seventy-year old Dominion native, Mickey Gouthro, has gone from being an educator to a popular entertainer. He performs both locally and on the seas, on the *Argentia* - the Newfoundland run for the Marine Atlantic ferries.

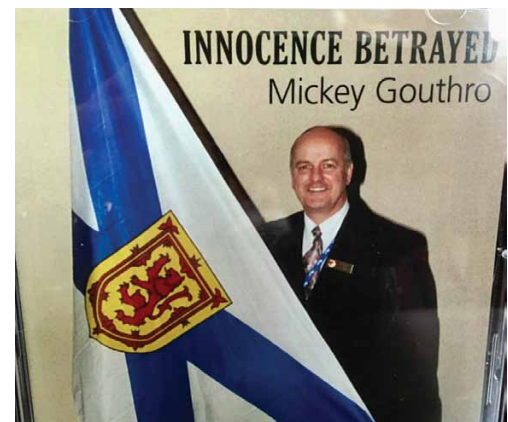
His third album, *Innocence Betrayed*, includes original music dealing with topics such as COVID-19, the tragedy in Portapique, and the experiences and emotions that have engulfed people in Nova Scotia during the last few challenging years.

Mickey says, "The album is focused on the pandemic. While I was working on the CD, tragically we ended up with our Nova Scotia massacre - our province faced an unfathomable, lethal assault which claimed the lives of 22 innocent people, hence the title *Innocence Betrayed*."

A teacher and principal for 37 years, Mickey retired in 2008 from Morrison Junior High in Glace Bay. He then moved to Alberta and became principal at St Michael's School in Pincher Creek and in 2011, he retired again!

Music has always been an inspiration and a way of communicating and connecting with people. Mickey would often include it as part of his lessons, playing guitar in the classroom for his students. They responded well and eventually, Mickey found himself doing some formal entertaining. He has become more serious with it during the last 10 years.

The CD is available in several locations in Cape Breton, or through Mickey himself (mickeygouthro@gmail.com or 902-849-8525).



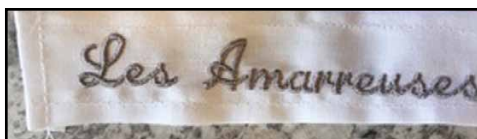
Not getting your newsletter or RTO mail-outs??

RTO Members are reminded to notify Johnsons and their Branch Presidents of changes in contact information (phone numbers, email, mailing address). The Member Update form is posted further on in this newsletter, and on the website.

Also, please update your contact information with RTO Administrator at the NSTU Office for the RTO Newsletter mailing list. Remember to indicate whether you would like to receive an electronic subscription via email, or a paper copy through Canada Post.

• email RTOAdmin@staff.nstu.ca • phone 1-800-565-6788

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us keep your contact information up-to-date.



Étiquettes - Label for quilts

DES NOEUDS D'AMITIÉ ET D'AMOUR

Soumis par Association des Enseignants retraités - région Baie Sainte-Marie



Pour aider l'Ukraine - helping Ukraine

Faire une couverture pour une autre personne c'est faire un beau geste d'amour. L'oeuvre représente des heures de travail à la main, soigneusement faite, afin de rendre confort à la personne qui la reçoit. Les Amarreuses c'est un groupe de treize femmes qui a repris la vieille tradition de compléter des couvertes en équipe afin de les offrir en cadeau à des personnes en besoin à cause de maladie. On communique un message important: "tu n'es pas seul(e); nous pensons à toi."

Chaque samedi durant l'hiver, ces amies se rassemblent dans la cuisine de Patsy Blinn, une enseignante à la retraite, pour "amarrer une couverture", assemblée et cousue par des membres du groupe. Ces femmes renouent leur amitié, tout en rendant un grand service à leur communauté.

Piquer une couverture a traditionnellement été un travail d'équipe dans plusieurs cultures. En Acadie, on dit "couverture" plutôt que "couverture", puis "piquer" c'est la technique de matelasser. Quelle belle façon de passer du temps ensemble, surtout quand les femmes, trop occupées avec les enfants et le ménage, avaient rarement le temps de se rendre visite. Autour d'une couverture, les femmes la complétaient en se rattrapant sur les nouvelles de la communauté. Maintenant l'art de faire des couvertes n'est plus une activité réservée aux femmes; plusieurs hommes en font aussi.



Loretta et Nicole au travail

Cette belle oeuvre des Amarreuses a commencé il y a cinq ans, lorsqu'une famille de la région était en besoin parce qu'un feu avait détruit leur maison. Maintenant, elles en donnent aux personnes qui sont malades, ou qui ont besoin de réconfort. Et ces amies ont de l'appui pour leur beau travail. Des gens de la communauté leur fournissent tout le tissu et les matériaux pour faire ces couvertes. Ça leur a permis de donner plus de 250 couvertes depuis cinq ans. C'est remarquable!



Adele, Patsy et Jocelyne ont du plaisir

Les Amarreuses sont: Patsy Blinn, Mariette Belliveau, Nicole Muise et Jocelyne LeBlanc-Tidd, enseignantes retraitées, ainsi que leurs amies Thérèse Lombard, Dianne McKinnon, Loretta Comeau, Joan Maillet, Mariette Babin, Thérèse O'Neil, Annette Comeau, Adèle LeBlanc et Rose Marie Thimot.

TIE ONE ON WITH LOVE

Submitted by Association des Enseignants retraités - région Baie Sainte-Marie

To make a quilt as a gift for another person is a gesture of love. The finished product represents hours of work by hand, meticulously crafted, in order to give comfort to the person who receives this gift. Les Amarreuses, a group of thirteen women, has taken up the tradition of completing quilts for the purpose of offering them to people in need due to illness. This gesture conveys an important message: "you are not alone; we are thinking of you."

Each Saturday in wintertime, these friends meet in retired teacher Patsy Blinn's kitchen to "hand-tie quilts" which were pieced and sewn by group members. As they work, these women strengthen friendship bonds while making a wonderful contribution to their community.

Quilting has traditionally been team work, called quilting bees, in many cultures for centuries. The Acadians of Nova Scotia use the term "couverte" instead of "couverture" for quilt, and "piquer" for the quilting itself. It was a wonderful way for a group of women to spend some time together. These women were usually too busy with household and children duties to visit neighbours. Around a quilt, they would sew and catch up on one another's news. Now, quilting is no longer considered a woman's occupation; many men enjoy making quilts as well.

The beautiful contribution of Les Amarreuses began five years ago when a local family lost home and possessions in a house fire. Now they give quilts to persons who are ill or in need of comforting - and this group of friends have help in their mission. People from the community supply them with all the materiel and notions needed for quilt making and completing, which has so far led to the contribution of over 250 quilts. What an amazing achievement!

Les Amarreuses are: Retired teachers Patsy Blinn, Mariette Belliveau, Nicole Muise, Jocelyne LeBlanc-Tidd, and their friends Thérèse Lombard, Dianne McKinnon, Loretta Comeau, Joan Maillet, Mariette Babin, Thérèse O'Neil, Annette Comeau, Adèle LeBlanc, and Rose Marie Thimot.



Presidents John MacKay (Shelburne County), Chuck McLellan (Queens), and Deb Featherby (Lunenburg County) met in May to begin planning a co-event for the South Shore region

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HOTEL RATES IN METRO USING YOUR RTO DISCOUNT

For those of you who may be planning to travel to Halifax this summer, here are the Deals and Discounts at the **Halifax Hotel**. These rates are available to RTO members, and you may be asked to show your membership card. These rates are for leisure travel and are dependent on the occupancy at the time.

\$104.00 Leisure rate to include a \$12.00 discounted self-parking rate (when forecasting less than 95% occupancy) - Between November-April.

\$129.00 Leisure rate to include a \$12.00 discounted self-parking rate (when forecasting less than 95% occupancy) - Between May-October.

\$144.00 Leisure rate to include a \$12.00 discounted self-parking rate (when forecasting over 95% occupancy) - Between November-April.

\$169.00 Leisure rate to include a \$12.00 discounted self-parking rate (when forecasting over 95% occupancy) - Between May-October.

*Please note that the rates quoted above are net non-commissionable and do not include the current 2% Halifax Regional Municipality Marketing Levy nor 15% HST.

Future Inns on Fairfax Dr. (just off Lacewood Dr. in Halifax) offers a rate of \$111.00 plus tax to RTO members.

NSTU ANNUAL COUNCIL 2022

The RTO was again invited to have a booth at the NSTU Annual Council at the Westin Hotel on April 29, 30, and May 1. It was a busy few day with many of the delegates stopping by to learn more about the RTO and our work. MAL Judy Knowlton set up the display and answered questions regarding the registration process, benefits, and programs offered in the Branches.

Congratulations to Byron Butt from the SSREC who won our sway bag filled with RTO merchandise! Byron is looking forward to joining the RTO in two years!



WHY YOU SHOULD TRAVEL SOLO AT LEAST ONCE

Written by Merit Travel

Solo travel is not just about the trip. It's about the experience. It's about you. A solo trip is something that reminds all your senses that you are the leader of your journey.

We all have our own personal reasons for travelling solo. Here's why you should try it at least once:

Independence & Empowerment

Travellers who go on solo adventures often talk about how empowered they feel when they return from a trip. They usually come back feeling like a new person with a fresh perspective on life. Solo travel represents freedom, independence, and of course, wanderlust. It will be uncomfortable at first but give yourself a bit of time, hang in there, and your comfort zone will expand.

Freedom

The world is too big to wait for someone to go with you every time you want to go on an adventure. Solo travel is the ultimate freedom as you can go when you want, where you want, and on a budget that works for you. You and only you get to decide.

Self-discovery

On a solo trip, day by day, you will start understanding yourself better. You will know your likes, dislikes, strengths, and opportunities. It gives you a chance to listen to your gut and control what direction you take. It allows you to reflect on your decisions and discover more about what makes you, you. Spending even a minimal time in solitude will allow you to embark on an inward journey of self-discovery.

Connections & New Friendships

There is a misconception that solo travel means you're always alone. While some prefer to be alone, you can also make new friends on your journey. Travel can lead to exciting adventures and meaningful experiences with complete strangers with a long-lasting impact. Solo travel will automatically throw you into social settings and opportunities to get to know others and other cultures.

Great Deals & Perks

Solo travel isn't what it used to be. Some all-inclusive hotels are very welcoming for single travellers by either waiving the single supplement, throwing events, or welcoming and respecting solo guests in other ways. Cruise lines are also adapting to the demand, like Oceania Cruises and their solo staterooms, the perfect retreat for the solo traveller. They provide a blissful and welcoming space to relax and rejuvenate as you explore the world's most fascinating destinations.

So, the next time you become inspired to go on a trip and can't find someone to go with, do yourself a favour and book it! This time for you. It's not as scary as you think. Just do it!

Ready to start planning your next solo adventure? Merit Travel can help. Contact us by phone at 902-482-8000 or by email at Halifax@MeritTravel.com.

RETIRED TEACHERS ORGANIZATION 56TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, May 19, 2022

When more than 50 members of the RTO gathered in the Baronet Room of the Hotel Halifax there was an air of excitement, as this was the first gathering open to all members since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020.

The meeting began with an Acknowledgement of the Peace and Friendship Treaties signed in 1726 with the Mi'kmaq people, and that was followed by O Canada sung in both Mi'kmaq and English. Dorothy Smith led the 'moment of silence' and presented the list of deceased members since our last AGM in October, 2021.

Reports on the many activities of the past year were received from the President, the Treasurer, the Standing Committees, and on the work of the RTO with our Affiliates of the organization. Treasurer Peter Lewis introduced the proposed budget for 2023.

Eileen Coady, VP and Chair of the Resolutions Committee, led the discussion on the nine resolutions. The disposition of these, is posted in this newsletter. The 2023 Budget was revised to allow for the costed resolution and the budget was passed. A Financial Summary of the Budget is also available in this newsletter.

NSTU President Paul Wozney and Executive Director Steve Brooks joined the meeting for lunch. As it was Paul's last meeting before the end of his term in July, he thanked the members present for their support throughout the past very trying years. He reiterated the importance of continuing the collegial and positive relationship which now exists and serves both the NSTU and the RTO very well.

Dorothy Smith's efforts were once again recognized and celebrated. Her commitment to the event has been essential to its success.

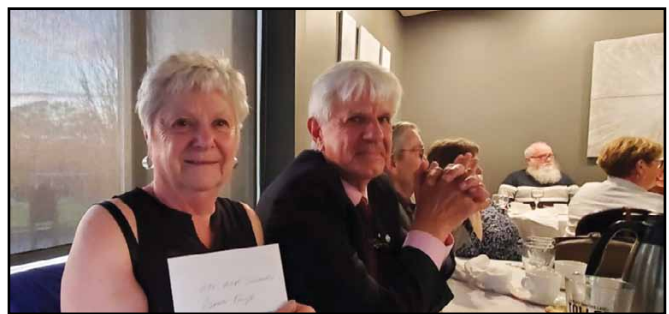
Several members were acknowledged for their service and commitment to the RTO: Eileen Coady

who has been on the Executive for six years, the first four as Secretary to the Executive and the last two as Vice President; Deb Featherby who served for two years as Member-at-Large for the South Shore Region; and Cathy Reimer who has served for the past year as Member-at-Large for the Valley Region. We thank them all for their support and contributions to the RTO.

We also welcomed three new members: Ambrose White as Vice President; Chuck MacLellan as Member-at-Large for the South Shore; and Shelley Morse as Member-at-Large for the Valley Region.

As we wrap up another year, we know that there are many people whose contributions have led to the success we have enjoyed across the province. There are too many to name, but please know we are grateful for all you do. We are looking forward to a busy fall and re-energizing the RTO in the fall of 2022!

—Submitted by Alyson Hillier
President, RTO



RETIRED TEACHERS ORGANIZATION 56TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



2022 AGM FINANCIAL REPORT

This report is a summary of the 2021 Actuals and Budget 2023 that were approved at the 2022 AGM held on May 19, 2022. The first part of this summary will highlight some items from the audited 2021 Actuals as adopted at the AGM. The second part will highlight portions of the 2023 Budget that was adopted at the AGM. It should be noted that this report is a summary, as the explanatory notes total 12 pages.

2021 ACTUALS

The RTO fiscal year is the same as the calendar year: January 1 - December 31, 2021. The 2021 RTO finances continued to be affected by COVID-19 but not as severely as in fiscal 2020. Some meetings were held by Zoom, therefore several budget lines were significantly underspent. Those lines were: AGM, Executive, Finance/Table Officers Committee, Branch Presidents' meetings (one meeting not held), and RTO Affiliations. All meetings, except for one Presidents' meeting, were either held face-to-face or by Zoom.

Many Branch Initiatives/Programs (BIPs) were held during 2021. These were completed due to the great efforts by Branch Presidents. They are to be applauded for their fine efforts while still following Public Health Guidelines. Some Branches made use of some of the \$50,000 amount set aside by the Executive, for additional funding beyond the regular \$1,500 per Branch. In total, \$28,074.85 was spent on BIPs in 2021. As well, a Special COVID-19 Grant of \$1,000 was made available to each Branch. All but one Branch used this funding for a total of \$22,000.

Some other items of interest and amounts are: revenue which is mostly made up of member fees at \$351,184; Branch Presidents' meetings at \$26,179.40; five standing committees at \$43,161.84 (all meetings were held face-to-face); NSTU charges at \$0.00 (NSTU has not charged RTO the usual administrative fee for 2021 as we have not had access to the NSTU building, however, still have access to administrative support); insurance cost of \$8,464 as we now have Travel insurance and Liability Insurance; newsletter at \$36,747.46. The budgeted symposium was not held in 2021 due to COVID-19 (but held in April 2022). The RTO made a number of \$5,000 donations to various worthy organizations: Feed Nova Scotia, Red Cross, 211 Nova Scotia, Cancer Society for the Lodge That Gives, Ronald McDonald House, IWK Foundation, Christmas Daddies, and the Legacy Foundation. These were made possible as we had a large surplus in fiscal 2020 due to COVID-19.

Budget 2021 adopted at AGM 2020 provided for a surplus of about \$13,500. The actual result was a 2021 surplus of \$47,117.38. Resolution 2021-8 provides for 75% of any surplus over \$40,000 to be returned to the Branches, on a per capita basis. This will occur in September, 2022.

BUDGET 2023

A budget is normally built on the last complete fiscal year. Normally, the 2021 fiscal year would have been used for this purpose. As fiscals 2020 and 2021 were significantly affected by COVID-19, the actuals for years prior to 2020 were used to assist in building Budget 2023. The primary assumption made in building Budget 2023 was that COVID-19 will not affect normal operations of the RTO. Of course, this remains to be seen.

A new feature for Budget 2023 is the emphasis on our carbon footprint. One resolution to AGM 2022 (and adopted by AGM 2022) asks the RTO to consider combining meetings and/or to hold meetings by Zoom. In anticipation of this resolution being adopted at AGM 2022, the Budget for 2023 was built on having two meetings of the Executive and Table Officers/Finance to be held by Zoom. As well, Budget 2023 provides for a combined meeting of one of the Presidents' meetings with the five standing committee meetings.

Further such measures may be taken in subsequent years.

Another major change for Budget 2023 was the adoption at the AGM of Resolution 2022-5 which stated: BE IT RESOLVED that the RTO approve the addition of an Administrative Assistant to the provincial structure and that this person shall be added through the implementation of a Service Contract. An Ad Hoc Committee was struck at AGM 2021 to consider this matter. The costs are expected to be \$12,000 for the Service Contract and \$6,950 for additional meeting attendance costs.

As well, the Finance Committee and the RTO Executive recommended a \$300 increase to the Branch Base Grant for a total increase of \$6,900 for all 23 Branches. Additionally, the BIP Grant is increased from \$1,500 to \$1,800 per Branch – again a total cost increase of \$6,900 for all 23 Branches. These two increases were in response to requests from RTO Branches. Other parts of the revenue and expenditures are somewhat similar to prior years. Increases were built in to include the increase in the price of gasoline. It is expected that meetings will be held at the NSTU and the administrative support fee will be charged by NSTU.

To summarize: The revenue for fiscal 2023 is expected to be \$373,325 and the expenditures are anticipated to be \$398,873. This will produce an expected deficit of \$25,548. Many questions were asked at the AGM before the resolution providing for an administrative position and the Budget itself were adopted. The RTO has a members' equity of \$513,115.73 which is about 50% more than the annual expenditures of 2021. Any actual deficit will draw down an equal portion of the members' equity. In simple terms, members' equity is the accumulation of all the annual surpluses and annual deficits since the beginning of the organization. This projected deficit is equal to 4.98% of the current members' equity.

Any questions can be directed to the Treasurer.

—*Respectfully submitted,*
Peter Lewis, Treasurer of the RTO

DISPOSITION OF THE RESOLUTIONS FROM AGM 2022

Below, please find the nine resolutions presented at the Annual General Meeting and the disposition of each.

—*Respectfully submitted,*
Eileen Coady, Resolutions Chair

Tabled from the 2021 AGM

2021 - 5 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Retired Teachers Organization, in teachers pension discussions with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, take the position that those members who retired on or prior to July 31, 2006 have their pension rights protected without loss of those rights.

Edith Arbour, RTO Member
Withdrawn

2022 – 1 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Executive of the provincial Retired Teachers Organization examine its schedule of meetings with a view to
a. consolidate and/or eliminate meetings

b. determine which meetings could be held using the Zoom (or comparable) platform.

Lunenburg County Branch
Motion Carried

2022 – 2

BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive of the provincial Retired Teachers Organization petition the Insurance Trustees, through appropriate channels, to cover the cost of intraocular lenses, pre-surgery eye tests, eye protectors and drops, related to cataract surgery.

Lunenburg County Branch
Motion Carried

2022 –3

BE IT RESOLVED that the Retired Teachers Organization request the NSTU Insurance Trustees provide the reflexology benefit in the NSTU Group Insurance Plan under Paramedical Services.

Provincial RTO Executive
Motion Carried

2022 - 4

BE IT RESOLVED that Operational Procedure V – Affiliations B.Seniors’ Advisory Council of Nova Scotia – Group of IX, add the following:

iv. Notwithstanding iii, for exceptional reasons, the Executive may select a sitting member on the Executive to act as the second representative during the second term of the President; and Renumber iv to v.

Provincial RTO Executive
Motion Carried

2022 - 5

BE IT RESOLVED that the RTO approve the addition of an Administrative Assistant to the provincial organization structure and that this person shall be added through the implementation of a Service Contract.This was a costed resolution and required a 2/3 majority.

Provincial RTO Executive
Motion Carried

2022 – 6

BE IT RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant be assigned his/her duties and responsibilities by the RTO Executive.

Provincial RTO Executive
Motion Carried

2022 – 7

BE IT RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant’s Service Contract be reviewed for renewal on an annual basis by the RTO Executive and the amount of compensation shall be determined annually by the RTO Executive.

Provincial RTO Executive
Motion Carried

2022– 8

BE IT RESOLVED that the following clause be added to the Operational Procedures of the Retired Teachers Organization Operational Procedures III - Fiscal Matters Section A Signing Officers: “v. Administrative Assistant.”

Provincial RTO Executive
Motion Carried

RTO Nominating Committee Report

Retired Teachers Organization

Annual General Meeting 2022

A. Executive Elections

Applications for interested candidates for the position of RTO President and RTO Vice-President for 2022-2024 were received by the Chair of the Nominating Committee prior to the deadline of February 28, 2022. The Committee received one application for the position of President and two applications to the position of Vice-President. Subsequent to that, one of the applicants for the position of Vice-President withdrew their application. The following were declared elected, by acclamation, and now assume these positions after the May 19, 2022 Annual General Meeting.

RTO President – Alyson Hillier

RTO Vice-President – Ambrose White

B. Member-at-Large Elections

Applications for interested candidates for three Member-at-Large positions for 2022-2024 were received by Branch Presidents in their respective regions prior to the deadline of April 1, 2022. Two regions received one application and one region had two applications necessitating an election on April 26, 2022. The following Members-at-Large will commence their two-year term following this Annual General Meeting:

Cape Breton-Victoria – Margie MacNeil (acclamation)

South Shore – Chuck McLellan (acclamation)

Valley – Shelley Morse

C. RTO Committees

Members of the five RTO Standing Committees will be selected at the June 2022 Executive meeting. There are five members on each committee, except the Communications Committee (with one extra member). Each committee is chaired by a Member-at-Large who reports to the Executive after each of the four meetings. Candidates are elected for a one-year term, but are eligible to re-apply for a second term on the same committee. Deadline for applications is June 15, 2022 and application forms are available at the AGM registration desk, in the winter edition of the RTO newsletter, and on the RTO website.

On behalf of the Executive a sincere thank you is extended to all members for their willingness to serve and provide guidance to a strong and effective organization.

—*Bill Berryman, Chair, RTO Nominating Committee*

Your trusted connection to the community and government resources, programs and services you need.



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Housing & Utility Bills



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Mental Health & Addictions



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LEGACY RECIPIENTS

The Cumberland County Dolly Parton Imagination Library was officially accepted as an affiliate of the Dollywood Canada Foundation in January, 2022. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library has partnered with the Cumberland Public Libraries in Amherst, NS who will look after the registration and the database of the eligible children.

This is a free book gifting program available to children within Cumberland County, from birth to age 5 (preschool). The purpose is to inspire a love of reading for young children and their families and to prepare them for successful preschool readiness. Age-appropriate quality books are delivered monthly to the child's home by Canada Post.

Countless research has found that investing in young children and increasing their literacy skills prior to preschool is the biggest indicator of a successful, critical thinking, lifelong learner.

Cumberland County currently has 304 registered children for this program. The cost to sponsor a child per year is only \$45 due to the purchasing power of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. We feel this is a wonderful investment in our youngest population with significant outcomes.

Additional information on the Dolly Parton Imagination Library is available at <https://imaginationlibrary.com/ca/>. We invite you to like and share our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/dpilcumberlandcounty>.



Jim Harpell (MAL, Chigencto-Central) and Pat Hillier (President, Cumberland Branch) were pleased to present a Legacy Foundation cheque to Cathy Bates (Community Champion) and Dolly

Marlene Boyd, MAL for the Strait, was very pleased to present a Legacy Foundation Grant to L'Arche Cape Breton to help fund the Ride the Wave Summer Program. This program gives youth with intellectual/physical disabilities from across Inverness County an opportunity take part in educational and physically active activities that they may not have the chance to participate in once school is out for the summer. Participants have different interests, gifts, and challenges and this is all taken into account to create an individualized program plan for everyone.

In the photo are students from Dalbrae Academy in Mabou, as well as summer students working with L'Arche and involved in offering this great program.



LEGACY RECIPIENTS

The After the School Bell Food Program respectfully provides school children who otherwise would go hungry on the weekends with a bag of food. We hope to reduce challenges associated with hunger and help our students to thrive, excelling their potential for learning as young citizens in our community

At the present time, nine schools have joined the program. We are providing a total of 120 food bags each week.

Wolfville NS is now providing 100 bags each week to eight schools, and Springhill provides 25 food bags each week to two elementary schools. This will increase in September. The Kingston Lions are planning to start in September, and several others showed interest at the Lions Convention in April

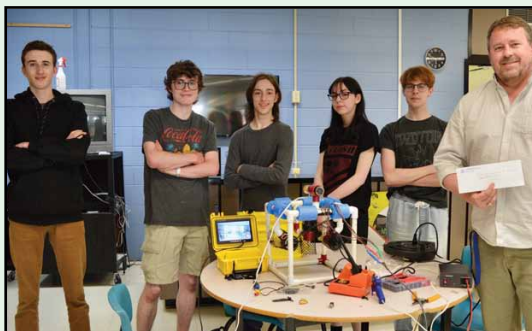
The hope is to have this program in every school to help provide children with food security. When the food bags arrive at the school, the students know they have unconditional support - not only from their school, but also from the community they belong to.



Jim Harpell (MAL, Chignecto-Central) and Pat Hillier (President, Cumberland Branch) presented a cheque to Doris Walton (Coordinator), Pat Wilson, and Greg Le Blanc

Past MAL for the South Shore, Deb Featherby, was pleased to present a Legacy Foundation cheque to Hinchinbrook Farm in Blockhouse. Hinchinbrook Farm provides horseback riding lessons to children with physical and mental challenges, mostly autism spectrum disorder. Information and experiences for families dealing with children with ASD are also provided. The Farm personnel also work with the South Shore Centre for Education on programming.

Shown with Deb in the photo are Megan Daniels, a Farm employee who is studying to develop the skills required to take over programming, and Sugarfoot, one of the therapy ponies.



Past MAL Deb Featherby presented a Legacy Foundation Grant cheque to Byron Butt, teacher-mentor with South Shore Robotics. The group has students from grades 6 to 12 who want to delve into the world of robotics and computer programming. Students choose their projects and get involved in competitions at Acadia Robotics, at Acadia University and Marine Advanced Technology Education. This group of senior high students developed an underwater robot with live feed camera technology and movement capability.

LEGACY RECIPIENTS



Cathy Reimer, MAL for the Valley, was pleased to present a Legacy Foundation cheque to Emelia Visco, employment support coordinator for the Valley Region of Autism NS.

Judy Knowlton (MAL Halifax Metro) with volunteer tutor Bill Bent, and Thelma Gregan, Director Learning Centre for Children, Halifax.



Margie MacNeil (MAL, Cape Breton-Victoria) presents a Legacy Foundation cheque to Bernadette Romeo, Riverside Elementary School for their Knowledge Path. This is a two-kilometre interactive path, inclusive of Mi'kmaq culture and teachings.



Judy Knowlton (MAL Halifax Metro) was pleased to present a Legacy cheque to Robert Cervelli, Executive Director of the Centre for Local Prosperity.



Judy Knowlton (MAL Halifax Metro) presented a Legacy Foundation cheque Alyssa Walsh of the March of Dimes.



BOWLING TOURNAMENT



The Nova Scotia Teachers/RTO Bowling Tournament was held on Saturday, April 23, 2022 at Woodside Bowlarama in Dartmouth.

Ten teams participated from Halifax, Truro, and Cape Breton. Approximately 40 retired teachers and 10 active teachers participated in the event. Prizes were awarded for the three top teams and for sixth, seventh, and eighth place teams.

The Provincial RTO contributed \$250 in support of the event, while the Halifax County Branch RTO provided lunch for all the bowlers. There were a number of draws for door prizes and Ken Williams won the 50/50 draw.

Many thanks to both the Provincial RTO and the Halifax County Branch for supporting this event and making it a success.





Johnson Insurance 2022 Scholarship Program Opens April 28th, 2022

Building on our History of Supporting Customers and Communities

For many Canadian students, the jump from high school to post-secondary education is a thrilling transition into adulthood, but one that comes with new financial responsibilities.

At Johnson, we understand the challenges faced by students during their pursuit of higher education, and we are proud to offer scholarships to help them achieve their dreams. Since 1998, Johnson has awarded over 1500 scholarships and academic grants valued at more than \$1 million to support young Canadians coast to coast in pursuing their post-secondary education.

This year, we are pleased to offer 50 scholarships worth \$1000 each to students who fall into at least one of the following categories:

- if you, your parent/guardian or grandparent have a:
 - home or car insurance policy through Johnson **or**
 - MEDOC travel insurance policy **or**
 - group benefits plan (such as health, dental or life insurance) through Johnson
- if you, your parent/guardian or grandparent are a member or employee of a Johnson recognized* group (policy not required)

Students must complete high school in 2022 and must be beginning post-secondary education this fall or CEGEP (if living in the province of Québec).

Applications for the Scholarship Program will be open starting April 28th, 2022. Completed application forms must be submitted by July 28th, 2022 and must include a transcript for the period of September 2020 to December 2021. NOTE: Recognizing the impact of COVID-19, unofficial transcripts will be accepted – bearing the student's name and date – from student accounts where official transcripts are not available.

For more information on applying, please see the online application form and Scholarship Program Guidelines to obtain full requirements and submission instructions, or please visit johnson.ca/scholarship.

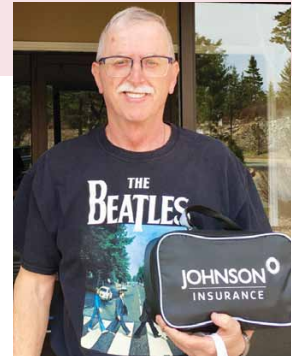
**A "recognized group" means an employer group, professional association, alumni association, union or other group that has an insurance program agreement currently in force with Johnson.*

Find Scavenger Hunt

Find the answers to the following questions and submit your entry to the editor by email (rtoeditor@gmail.com), or by mail to Glynda Wimmer, 807 Highway 329, Fox Point, NS B0J 1T0. Prizes have been generously donated by Advocate Printing, Johnson Inc, Manulife, Medavie Blue Cross, Merit Travel, the NSTU, the RTO, and Teachers Plus Credit Union.

Submissions must be received by **July 15, 2022**. A random draw among those entries with all answers correct will determine the winner. Be sure to include your name, RTO Branch, mailing address, and phone number.

The winner of the Winter 2022 contest was Lloyd Daye, Halifax City Branch.



1. How old was Dr. Bryanton when she received her PhD?
2. Who is the new VP of the RTO?
3. What did Ken Williams win?
4. How many BIP grants were filed in 2021?
5. When must a completed application form be submitted for the Johnson Insurance 2022 Scholarship Program?
6. Which Branch will be doing an outing to Baddeck?
7. Who is the new MAL for the South Shore?
8. What is the hotel rate for RTO members at the Future Inn on Fairfax Drive?
9. Who was a Partyliner for CBC Radio?
10. What drop-in centre is located on Morris Street?

Prize Alert

The following 10 questions have been taken from Jude Gerrard's presentation at the recent Wellness Symposium. How many can you answer??

TWO winners will be randomly selected from all correct entries received by **July 15**. Please send your answers to Glynda Wimmer (details listed in the Scavenger Hunt information).

Answers will be published in the next issue of *The Retired Teacher*. Enjoy!!

Indigenous Quiz

1. What year was Treaty Day established?
2. What is the name of the largest Mi'kmaq community?
3. Who is the NS Minister of Aboriginal Affairs?
4. What is the date of National Aboriginal Day?
5. When did the last residential school in Canada close?
6. What are the ancient Mi'kmaq ancestral drawings on stone called?
7. What kind of tree (species) is used in traditional basket making?
8. Who is the current Mi'kmaq Grand Council Grand Chief?
9. What Halifax street is the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre on?
10. How many provinces have Mi'kmaq communities?

Group Insurance Benefit Update

It is hard to believe we are in the middle of May already. With spring in full effect, summer is not far behind! Your NSTU Group Insurance Trustees wanted to take this opportunity to update you on the recent changes to some benefits / programs available to you.

Carepath

Carepath is the provider of a number of great programs you may already be familiar with including Cancer Care, HealthcareAssist, Seniors Care and Your Wellness Partner.

They recently have made some exciting changes which reflects their virtual care services, upcoming launch of their mobile and web-based application, and includes a new name and look to their profile and programs!

They are now known as Carepath Digital Health and their new look programs are as follows:

Chronic Disease Program

Living with a chronic disease often involves managing the symptoms through interventions like education, lifestyle modifications, and physical activity interventions that help reduce symptoms and give you the confidence you need to manage your condition and improve your quality of life.

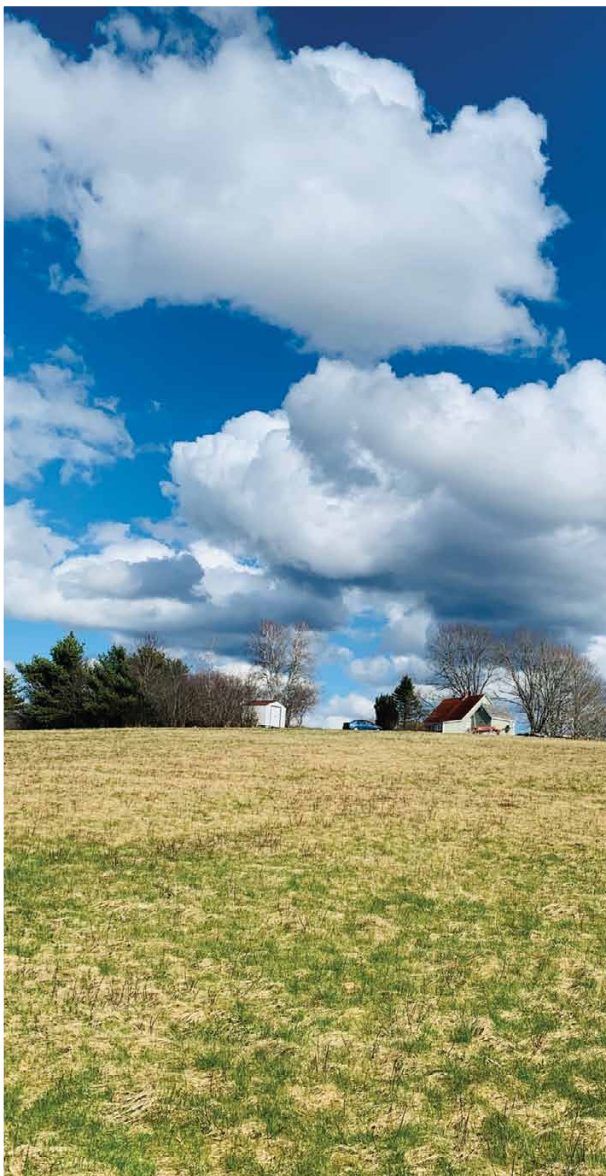
This program (formerly HealthCareAssist and includes the Cancer Care) is led by Nurse Case Managers who act as partners and advocates for you and your family. Our Nurse Case Managers will help you understand your condition, test results, and treatments and will follow the most up-to-date guidelines for all chronic conditions to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Elder Care Program

Carepath's Elder Care program (previously referred to as the Seniors Care Assistance Program) provides seniors and their families with a Nurse Case Manager to address members' evolving elder care needs. A Nurse Case Manager will work with you and your family one on one to help you understand and navigate the health care system so you can make informed decisions and appropriate arrangements for care.

This Land Is Your Land...

The RTO Newsletter invites all members to send us their photos of our beautiful province. In each issue we will showcase the life, landscape, or seascape of Nova Scotia. **Submissions must be your own photography.** Please include your name and Branch, along with the location of the photo. Please email photos to rtoeditor@gmail.com or mail to Glynda Wimmer, 807 Hwy 329, Fox Point, NS B0J 1T0. Photos sent by mail will not be returned.



*Early April greenery in rural Queens County -
Marie MacLeod, Queens Branch*



*Morning Web - Suzanne McKay,
Shelburne County Branch*

This Land Is Your Land...



Anchor in Lockeport - John MacKay, Shelburne County Branch



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your Branch
Presidents.
Price is \$5.00 each!

