

The Retired Teacher

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Volume 51, Number 2, Winter 2020

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Submissions should be directed to the editorial staff c/o RTO Newsletter, 3106 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, NS B3L 4L7.

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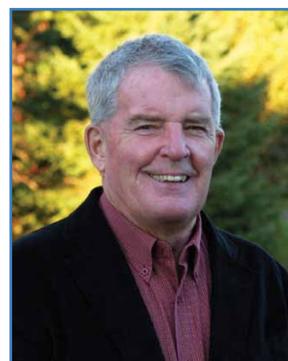
A newsletter for the retired teachers of Nova Scotia

A MEMBER OF ACER/CART

From The Desk of the President...

Bill Berryman

On behalf of the RTO Executive I wish to extend best wishes to all RTO members for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2020. With your continued support and that of our twenty-three Branch Executives, your Executive remains committed to fulfilling the RTO Mission Statement which states “the RTO is the official body representing the retired teachers of Nova Scotia and will advance, promote, and protect the welfare of its members”.



Teachers Pension Plan

In the fall issue of *The Retired Teacher* I indicated that the Teachers Pension Plan Sponsors hired Kathryn Bush, an independent pension consultant and lawyer from Toronto, to review the plan. Her mandate was “to identify meaningful changes in order to improve the long-term financial sustainability of the Plan and increase the retirement security of its members”. Kathryn Bush was to have her report completed later in 2019 and at this time the Pension Sponsors Board has not received the final report. I am in constant touch with NSTU President Paul Wozney to make sure that the RTO receives the report’s recommendations as the RTO has the legal right to be consulted if any changes could affect our members. As President, it is my responsibility to keep our 7,350 members informed and that will be done through communications with the Branch Presidents and information posted on the RTO website.

(continued on page 2)

Changes in Retired Members Substituting

It has come to the attention of the Retired Teachers Organization (RTO) that there has been a change in the Regulations under the Teachers' Pension Plan for retired teachers substituting for the 2019-2020 school year.

Retired teachers continue to be limited to a maximum of 69.5 days worked on a term contract. Retired teachers can also substitute for a maximum of 99.5 days on a day to day basis. In other words the total number of days if on a 69.5 term contract and 99.5 days, can now total 169 days without affecting the retired teacher's pension.

This provision came to my attention in early February and was immediately conveyed to the Branch Presidents.

Liability Insurance

Over the past year there has been a lot of discussion at RTO Executive or Branch Presidents meetings on the need for liability insurance at RTO events. One is constantly reminded of this by the numerous serious injury law firms promoting their products and advertising their services on the media. I am pleased to report that effective January 1, 2020 the RTO has a \$2 million policy with Marsh Insurance that covers non-profit directors' and officers' liability and commercial general liability. This insurance covers all provincial RTO meetings and events as well as Branch operations such as business meetings and events. Of vital importance to the organization this insurance also covers Branch Initiative/Program Fund events which have become very popular in the past three years.

Mandate Letters

On October 21, 2019 the Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was re-elected, but as a minority government. In November Prime Minister announced that Patty Hajdu would become Minister of Health and Deb Schulte would become Minister of Seniors. I received copies of their mandate letters and provided copies to the RTO Executive and Branch Presidents.

It is noteworthy and interesting to see the following two priorities in Minister Hajdu's mandate letter:

- continue to implement national, universal pharmacare, including the establishment of the Canada Drug Agency, and implementing a national formulary and rare disease strategy to help Canadian families save money on high-cost drugs

- work to ensuring greater access to doctors in primary health care, setting national standards for mental health access, supporting homecare and palliative care

It is noteworthy and interesting to see the following two priorities in Minister Schulte's mandate letter:

- lead a review of government's capacity to connect seniors to benefits and programs of which they are eligible
- increase Old Age Security by 10% when seniors turn 75, indexed to inflation thereafter and increase survivor benefits with the Canada Pension Plan by 25%

It is now our responsibility to meet and engage Members of Parliament to advocate for these priorities over the next few years and, in particular, we can't wait for another election in order to have a national, universal pharmacare plan implemented.

Branch Presidents' Meeting

The second Branch Presidents' meeting for 2019-2020 will be held at the NSTU Building on March 4, 2020. The meeting will open with a presentation by Barry Walker, Community Outreach Coordinator for Efficiency Nova Scotia.

Now that the NSTU Insurance Trustees have agreed to meet with the RTO three times a year, most of the questions at this meeting will focus on requesting new and improved group insurance benefits during the Branch Presidents Roundtable. Here are the questions to be discussed:

1. At the October 22-23, 2019 Branch Presidents' meeting we discussed what kind of group insurance benefits your members would like being added and/or increased in the plans. Now that you have had an opportunity to speak to your members after the meeting can you provide answers today?
2. How have you used the information provided by the NSTU Insurance Trustees (Stacy Samson and Paul Sarty) at the October 22-23, 2019 Branch Presidents' meeting with your members?
3. What kind of information on group insurance benefits do your members request in the RTO newsletter?
4. Members have heard presentations from Dr. Keri Leigh Cassidy (Fountain of Health) and Heather de-Berdt Romilly (It's in Your Hands: Legal Information for Seniors and Families). Does your Branch or Region wish to have presentations on one or both of these?

5. There can be value in year-long planning for Branch presentations and activities. Keeping in mind that there is up to \$1,000 Branch Initiative/Program Fund grants yearly, has your Branch had success in this approach to planning?

AGM 2020

Evaluation feedback from the past few years indicates a strong desire to continue holding the Annual General Meeting in Halifax with the same arrangements. Therefore the RTO AGM Planning Committee, under the leadership of Dorothy Smith, has scheduled the AGM to take place at the NSTU Building on May 21, 2020 with all members welcome. A dinner for delegates and guests will be held the

evening before at Brightwood Golf and Country Club in Dartmouth. A reception will follow in the Harbourview Deck Suite of the Hotel Halifax after the dinner.

Please see the registration form in this issue of the newsletter. Hotel accommodation will be at the Hotel Halifax (formerly Delta Halifax downtown) with a special room rate of \$99.00 plus tax which includes a hot buffet breakfast and free parking. Reservations must be made no later than April 20, 2020. The completed registration form must be sent to Marie MacInnis no later than May 5, 2020 in order to have accurate numbers attending the RTO AGM dinner at Brightwood. Hope to see many of you at the AGM events.

A message from NSTU President ... Paul Wozney

Kwé, Bonjour, Failte and Hello!

It's amazing how much happens in a few short months. Since I last brought greetings, Canada elected a minority government. Sixty-three Canadians perished in Iran as the world teeters uneasily on the edge of global conflict. Teachers across Canada are mobilizing to fight the dismantling of public education in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Here in Nova Scotia, the government's arbitrary removal of School Psychologists, Speech Language Pathologists, Audiologists, and other school-based specialists was overturned by arbitrator Eric Slone, only to see the government thumb its nose at the award.

At a time of year when our days are the shortest and light is fleeting, it's difficult to sustain hope and optimism in the face of such dreary tides. How does one rally against such forces and hold back fierce, angry waves?

In Ontario, teachers and community are standing together, united in condemning sweeping cuts and confronting government spin and lies. In Parliament, parties are navigating how to move legislation forward through partnerships knowing that Canadians are in no hurry to return to the polls.

Together. Partnerships. Solidarity. Unity.

These are our lessons in the long, bitter days of winter. Together we stay warm in the cold. The light that doesn't shine in the sky shines in the laughter and company of those we gather with. When the snow falls heavy and it's too much to handle on our own, we lean on friends and neighbours to clear a path and get on with living and caring for those we love.

I am grateful that in the struggle to advocate for public education and the rights of NSTU members that RTO members remain close allies. You know what it is to carry our burden and share the passion to see students thrive. Thank you for your stalwart support. The phone calls and letters to MLAs, the partnerships with NSTU Locals, and your ongoing support of Professional Associations are much appreciated. It means the world to NSTU members to know there are those who value and stand with them. On their behalf, I thank you.

Whether you're navigating winter in Bluenose country or somewhere warmer, may the year to come bring you full health, love, and fulfillment. Looking forward to seeing you all at your spring AGM!

All my best,

Paul Wozney, President, Nova Scotia Teachers Union



A Note from the Editor...

Betty Anne McGinnis

You will read about many Branch Christmas celebrations in this issue. Although we are three months past Christmas, the memories remain with us longer each year. Perhaps the passage of time enhances our appreciation of this season of joy. This is my last opportunity to share with you a special Christmas memory from my childhood.

This tiny velveteen stocking hanging on my tree takes me back long ago. Stockings have always been a big Christmas tradition. Today's stockings are most often beautifully decorated velvet or knitted stockings, all personalized with names, and filled with valuable and expensive items. Flashback to the early 50s! You'd be in for a shock. We had stockings then, too. But they were our own long brown cotton stockings that were held up with garters! They would droop, and they might run, especially after falling on your knees and tearing holes in them. They were as ugly as could be! But my two sisters and I gathered stockings for each of us, even lending one to our brother. And on Christmas Eve, those unsightly leg warmers became treasure chests! them out on a table or chair since we had no fireplace. Keep in mind stockings were easily three feet long stretched out. Then we'd go to dream of what Santa would bring. We were never disappointed. stockings were stuffed! Apples and oranges. Maybe even a pear or All kinds of nuts waiting to be cracked to reveal their sweet meats. canes! Rock hard candy that my mother coincidentally bought in bucket. These were usually square in shape and multi-coloured in of flavours. The red and white striped peppermint were my favourite toys! These were large hard candies made into fancy shapes, animal and toy designs. They were clear like stained glass - yellow, green. You could suck on them for days before they would disappear. And ribbon candy, shaped like folded ribbons in rainbow colours. And we can't forget chocolates. My mother used to buy big boxes at Moirs factory downtown. I liked the cherry chocolates or caramels best. No one liked the jelly ones, and you'd often find several lying around with bites out of them. All found in that stocking. Keep in mind that as Catholic children, we would attend mass on Christmas morning and the older ones - just me in our family - would receive communion after having fasted since midnight. Thus finding that stocking stuffed to the brim with those glorious gifts was somewhat heart-breaking, knowing I had to wait till we came home from church to dig in, while my younger siblings sampled everything in sight. But the discovery was the best part. The waiting I could handle. Those stockings usually had other treats to be found. Perhaps a small toy of some kind. A dinky toy for my brother. A small piece of jewellery for the girls. A book. Maybe mittens or socks. Just something inexpensive hiding at the bottom of that elongated ugly brown stocking to add to the excitement already existing. Even in difficult times, we had other gifts. Dolls, trains. Teddy bears. New pyjamas. Clothes. Books...always books for me. A sled or toboggan. Even skates! Santa never forgot us. But it was those stockings that held our attention as we dug through to the bottom, just waiting to savour all those glorious gifts inside. Even the memory makes me smile as I visit my childhood once more and I realize how very lucky I was to be raised in times when the simplest gifts were so much appreciated. In times when my family could not afford expensive gifts or fancy stockings...either to wear or to hang up. In times when Christmas was more about a family's love and not their income. In times when an old brown stocking with holes in the toe could become more precious than the most extravagantly wrapped gift today, because that stocking was filled with so much care and family love, from the top all the way down to the toe.



We'd lay that these bed and Those grapes! Candy a big tin a variety ites. And including red, and

Thank you to all who continue to make this newsletter the success that it is. To those retired teachers who have passed away since our last issue, and to those active teachers who never had the opportunity to retire – you are missed.

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46th NS TEACHERS ANNUAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT 2020

**NEW TEAMS ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE
(Team = Min. 5 – Max. 8)**

DATES: APRIL 25-26, 2020

LOCATION: Woodside Bowlarama (Dartmouth)

HOSTED THIS YEAR BY: Halifax County Teachers

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: March 31, 2020



Cost \$260.00 per team

Individual teachers can contact Peter Balcom to be placed on a team.

Tournament Chair

Peter Balcom Telephone: (902) 462-5952 c. 292-2230

E-Mail pgbalcom@gmail.com pgbalcom@nstu.ca



Committee Reports

Membership Committee

All Committee members were present on Dec. 4, 2019 for the second meeting of the year. We are very pleased that Marie MacInnis will be the RTO contact at the NSTU. She may be reached by email mamacinnis@staff.nstu.ca or phone (902) 477-5621 for local calls or Toll-free 1-800-565-6788. Marie has been working extensively on the database to update and correct information. She has done a comparison with the Johnson list and noted some discrepancies. Courtney Munroe is the new receptionist and will be taking your bookings for hotels when you are in town for a meeting with the RTO.

The committee spent considerable time exploring items to recommend for purchase with the RTO logo. The choices of the committee in order of preference were Velcro Suitcase Handle Wrap, Multi-Tool and Flashlight. A cost sheet and names of local companies were supplied to the Table Officers for consideration. I am pleased to note that the Executive approved the purchase of the Velcro Suitcase Handle Wrap. They are on order and will be available for purchase start-

ing at the next Presidents' meeting on March 4.

The committee also had a lengthy discussion around the challenge of contacting new members. We noted that all Branches have different levels of contact with their NSTU local and would benefit from being invited to the NSTU Retirement function in their area. As well, Branches could invite the new retirees to the first function by placing an invitation to the event in the New Retiree Package that is handed out. If you are lucky enough to roam the local school without a body guard, you can personally speak to the new members with the Package in hand. Due to security protocols in many schools, it is difficult to make contact with new members in this way.

The Wall was updated with pictures of fall events, including the Presidents' meeting, Wellness Symposium, and Branch activity pictures.

— Submitted by Judy Knowlton,
Membership Committee Chair

Research and Review Committee

The Research and Review Committee held its second meeting on November 20, 2019. Chair Reg Johnston, Peggy Ludlow, Brian Faught, Garland Standing, and Sharon Sullivan were in attendance. The agenda and minutes from Sept. 12, 2019 were circulated and approved. Brian Faught was appointed as the Recorder for the meeting. The following action items were completed:

1. The chair provided a detailed update on the Wellness Symposium.
2. The electronic Branch Initiative Program (BIP) Database was updated and circulated.
3. An updated BIP summary sheet was circulated and amended.
4. The replies to the presidents' questions collected at the October Presidents' Meeting were circulated. The responses will be recorded and distributed at

the February Presidents' Meeting.

Nancy Barkhouse of Halifax County made a presentation that was of interest to our committee. She uses a survey program where respondents put their answers directly into an Internet link she could provide. Upon submission, these responses can be transferred to a spreadsheet for summation and evaluation. Several advantages of this process were discussed. It was decided that we would tabulate with the Presidents' responses the way we did in the past so that Reg has information for the February Presidents' meeting. We will then use the link provided by Nancy to input the same data to evaluate its effectiveness as a time-saver.

— Submitted by Reg Johnston
Chair, Research and Review Committee

Committee Reports

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee met on November 20, 2019 with all members present. Report to the Executive- September 2019 - Members of the committee reviewed the report with the recommendations made at their September 12 meeting, and discussed the response to each recommendation by the Executive. The decision by Branch Presidents at a meeting on October 23 that Branch Updates and Branch Initiative Program Grants should remain as separate and distinct reports was discussed.

Newsletter:

- Newsletter Editor Betty Anne McGinnis reviewed the process involved, shared information, and discussed issues relating to the preparation of the Fall Issue of the newsletter.
- The importance of the newsletter as our main communication method continues to be recognized with the Fall Issue consisting of 64 pages.
- Your Insurance Benefits at a Glance, Revised 2019, handout from Paul Sarty, submitted to the Fall newsletter, was shared by the Editor with committee members.
- Following her presentation to Branch Presidents in October, there was interest expressed and a

request made to the Editor to send a follow-up letter with a summary of points and information to Branch Presidents.

Website

- Webmaster Colin Campbell shared information with committee members including the updates to the RTO Website.
- Operational Procedures – Webmaster offered to put any updates/changes on website.
- Avoiding BIG Data Roaming Charges when Travelling Abroad – Webmaster shared an article by Terrie Kozaczynski, Membership Director, Quebec Retired Teachers Association.
- Webmaster shared information on the new Insurance Trustees website at <https://nstuinsurance.ca>. To communicate this information to all retired teachers the committee members agreed it is very important to also have paper copies available of this updated 2019 booklet that is now online.

Resolutions – Members discussed the decision by the Executive to have RTO Resolutions in our Winter Issue and the Disposition of Resolutions AGM 2019 in the Spring Issue.

— Submitted by *Marlene Boyd*
Chair, Communications Committee

Pension and Benefits Committee

The Pension and Benefits Committee continues to wait for the Kathryn Bush Report and her suggestions/recommendations to deal with the unfunded liability of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Pension Plan. This report may have implications for retired teachers as well as active NSTU members.

The Committee is examining the importance of informing RTO Members of their benefits. One way to pass information along that is not being utilized fully is a Branch Newsletter. The Committee is reviewing how to encourage Branches that do not have newsletters to do so.

One benefit that the Committee continues to look at is the Travel Club. Members are encouraged to review the benefits that the Travel Club offers and how it could

assist you in your travel plans.

RTO members are encouraged to visit the RTO website to look at the list of benefits/discounts available to members. There are also many benefits that stores/merchants offer to SENIORS that RTO members could be using to their advantage. The website also includes information about Insurance, Medical Plan, Dental Plan, Medoc Travel, and other important items.

— Submitted by *Brian D. Noble*
Chair, Pension and Benefits Committee

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Since the last issue of *The Retired Teacher*, the Finance Committee has met in December, January, and February. Committee members review the monthly financial statements of The Legacy Foundation and RTO Organization. Each line of the Organization Budget is reviewed at each meeting. The Committee is now preparing the RTO Organization 2021 Budget and Notes, which will be presented at the AGM on May 21, 2020. As well, the Financial Statements for fiscal 2019, which ended on December 31, are being reviewed and notes prepared. These will also be presented at the AGM in May. The 2019 Annual Financials for the RTO Legacy Foundation are being prepared for the Foundation AGM to be held on April 21, 2020.

The Committee continues to note an increase in applications for Branch Initiative Programs (BIP) Grants. During fiscal 2019, 15 Branches received a total of 20 Grants totalling \$11,917.94. If a Branch does not spend all of their grant, the unspent portion is refunded. Since the beginning of the BIP Program in 2016, 20 of the 23 Branches have received Grants. We have already received applications for 2020. For fiscal 2020, there is \$23,000 available for BIP grants. Each Branch can apply for a grant(s) of up to \$1000 using the form available for this purpose. These forms have been distributed to Branch Presidents and are available on the RTO website. All Branches are encouraged to apply for a BIP Grant. These Grants are an excellent method to provide greater service to our members.

The Finance Committee reviews the investment portfolio of both the Organization and the Foundation on a regular basis. Recommendations on appropriate action will be made to the Executive. RTO invests in five-year TDs (Terms of Deposit) which yield the best interest rate. The Committee and the Executive have been taking actions to reduce expenses where possible. One example where this has been possible has been in the costs of lodging.

The Committee is pleased to note that there has been an increase in donations to the Legacy Foundation during 2019. At the 2020 AGM of the Legacy foundation, there will be more monies available for the organizations and groups that work with children and youth under the age of 21.

The Committee and its Chair, Treasurer Peter Lewis, wish to thank the Executive and all Branches for their continued support and cooperation. In particular, the Committee wishes to thank the Programs Committee members for their excellent work in organizing the Wellness Symposium in October. Their diligence was much appreciated by the Treasurer as many claims had to be processed.

— *Submitted by Peter Lewis*
RTO Treasurer

Programs Committee

The RTO Programs Committee held its second meeting on November 20 at the NSTU building. Those in attendance were Bonnie Mahaney (Chair), Margie MacNeil (Recorder), Linda MacNeil, Bob Hayter, and Ambrose White. The minutes of the September 12 meeting were approved. Meeting Cancellation and Storm Cancellation Guidelines were distributed and discussed.

The center of discussion and criteria for the meeting was to recap and review the October 28, 2019 Wellness Symposium. The following items and components were addressed: Registration, Key Note Speaker and Group Presenters, Panel Discussion, Mini Seniors Expo-format and participants, Nutrition Break and Buffet Lunch, Accommodations at Future Inns, Swag Bags, Door Prizes, Venue, and Photographs of the event. Numerous recommendations were compiled and presented to the

Committee Reports

Provincial Executive, at their December 5 meeting for consideration and approval.

A portion of the agenda dealt with processing the Evaluation Forms, completed by the delegates and attendees. The responses were extremely favorable, and comments strongly indicated it was an excellent, informative symposium. The comments were tabulated and will be a valuable tool for future planning.

The Programs Committee agreed that the Wellness Symposium was a success in terms of meeting the RTO Mission Statement and addressing the identified goals. These goals were to expand members understanding of the importance of an active healthy lifestyle, familiarize

participants with the resources and organizations available throughout the province, and support Branches in implementing a wellness event in their region.

I would like to thank the Programs Committee members for their hard work and commitment in making the Wellness Symposium an interactive, productive, and informative day for all. They did an outstanding job!

We look forward to focusing on new projects and programming in 2020.

— Submitted by *Bonnie G. Mahaney,*
Programs Committee Chair

Creating an Archive for RTO



Over the past few years we have accumulated several items which tell the stories and pictures that show the evolution of the history of the Retired Teachers Organization (previously the Association). These items hold many cherished memories of this organization. As an Executive, we would like to bring these items together to create an archive of our evolution and history.

We fully appreciate that most of the development was achieved at the Branch level and many of the special events and programs were a fundamental factor in our growth. To ensure our collection is as complete as possible, we invite Branches to submit pictures, newsletters, and items which show and celebrate the early days of our organization.

If you have anything to contribute, please forward them to Alyson Hillier via your president to the March Presidents' Meeting or contact me at hillieac@gmail.com to make arrangements.

Thank you for your support with this project. We are proud of our organization and through this collection, we hope to be able to maintain and share our history for future generations.

Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

October 24, 2019

1. Efficiency Nova Scotia – Barry Walker, Community Outreach Co-ordinator
 - Third party administrator of energy efficiency (electric and non-electric)
 - Independent from government and Nova Scotia Power
 - Led by an independent Board of Directors
 - Since 2015 has sold cost-effective “saved energy” to Nova Scotia Power
 - Canada’s first energy efficiency utility
 - Why Energy Efficiency?
 - Reduces energy costs, improves business productivity and competitiveness
 - Investing in local economy; fewer emissions to help meet federal and provincial requirements; health benefits by improving the environment
 - Home Energy Assessment open to existing homes regardless of their primary heating source
 - Provides information for increasing home’s efficiency rating through insulation; air sealing; Energy Star windows, doors and skylights
 - Cost of assessment in \$99 and upgrades need to be completed within 12 months
 - Rebates for qualified improvements up to \$5,000 or low interest financing up to \$25,000
 - Provides information on efficient lighting, hot water saving measures, smart power bars, NEST thermostats, and weather sealing windows
 - Home-warming initiative helps low income Nova Scotians save money and feel more comfortable in their homes all year-round
 - Participants receive low cost energy assessments and where appropriate, energy efficient upgrades like insulation and draft proofing
 - Co-administered in partnership with Efficiency Nova Scotia and Clean Foundation
 - Energy efficiency has reduced annual need for electricity by 10%
 - 15 programs and 15 pilots providing incentives, financing, technical support, and installation
 - Mercury collection and appliance retirement some examples
 - Solar homes rebate to home owners who install photovoltaic modules in their homes
 - Funded by Federal government \$56 million contribution to Nova Scotia’s Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund
 - Must be pre-approved for equipment and installers
2. Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia – Lloyd Brown, former Executive Director
 - Spoke on what was successful and not successful in the 3 year provincial Dementia Strategy
 - Would like Department of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia Health Authority, and Alzheimer Society to continue working on recommendations not implemented
 - Alzheimer Society is pleased that the Department of Health and Wellness continues to provide funding to retain case workers hired under Dementia Strategy
 - Believes money will be available to the provinces under the \$50 million Federal Government Dementia Strategy

3. Council members agreed to follow up on Dr. Robert Strang's suggestion of working with provincial recreational directors on formulating a package of materials on Lyme Disease and encourage seniors to get out and enjoy the outdoors, but take precautions.
4. Council members continue to hear negative comments and concerns from seniors about the reaction to Nova Scotia Power and the telecoms during and after post-tropical storm Dorian.
 - Deputy Minister of Seniors is also Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines and he agreed to bring our concerns to the Minister
 - Nova Scotia Power was a member of the Emergency Measures Organization team during the storm, but the telecoms were not and that needs to be rectified in the future
5. Communications Nova Scotia – Fiona Gibb, Communications Advisor
 - Council members had a frank discussion on the Positive Aging Directory
 - Seniors continue to want to receive hard copies and not the on-line version
 - Discussion took place on how to get the document in the hands of seniors and the very important information provided in the directory
 - Department of Seniors want the directory to be “self-supporting” and therefore there was discussion on what kinds of advertising should be permitted
 - Deputy Minister spoke in favour of continuing the directory in print format and looks forward to continue working with Council members on how to improve its resources
6. Canadian Frailty Network
 - This network is working on how to improve health care and social supports for Nova Scotia's growing seniors' population living with frailty, and how to best support the increasing caregiver population
 - The network had a conference on October 17, 2019 which focused on frailty and how it impacts older Nova Scotians and their family/friend caregivers
 - Other discussion featured researchers, clinicians, caregivers and representatives from local organizations discussing not only ageing, but how to improve the care landscape for Nova Scotians and what older adults can do to AVOID frailty
 - Council members want to follow up with this network and agreed to have Dr. Kenneth Rockwood, Professor of Geriatric Medicine and Neurology, Dalhousie University speak on this issue in the new year.

— *Submitted by Bill Berryman*
Chair, Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

December 5, 2019

1.1. Diabetics Access to Care Challenges in Nova Scotia – Dr. Nicholas Giacomantonio, Director of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation, Dalhousie University and Jake Reid, National Director, Government Relations Public Affairs and Advocacy, Diabetes Canada

- Diabetes Canada has a mission to lead the fight against diabetes by helping those affected to live healthy lives, preventing the onset and consequences of diabetes and discovering a cure
- In Nova Scotia all people with Type 2 diabetes are required to try therapy with insulin or a Sulfonylurea after treatment with Metformin which is inconsistent with most up-to-date research and recommendations for diabetes care
- Recent research has indicated that specific new drugs with the CLP-1R agonist and

SGLT-2 inhibitor classes of medication significantly improve the overall health and management for patients with Type 2 diabetes and pre-existing cardiovascular disease

- The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health have published recommendations that support specific SGLT-2 inhibitors for second line therapy after Metformin
- These new medications are on the Seniors Pharmacare Formulary, but doctors need to complete a “Request for Insured Coverage of Oral Antidiabetic Agents” in order for their patients to have access to them
- Diabetes Canada and doctors are very upset that provincial adjudicators are denying these medications when clinicians have determined these patients meet current provincial criteria and would benefit from their use
- These medications which cost \$100 a month could reduce cardiovascular death, as well as decrease the incidence of hospitalization due to cardiovascular disease, in lieu of less effective treatments
- Council members were impressed with the presentation and agreed to lobby Seniors Pharmacare to accept the request for coverage with less intrusive adjudications

2. Principles of Healthy Aging

- This is a one day training through Recreation Nova Scotia that provided insights into the unique needs of older adults when participating in recreation and leisure activities in municipal, not-for-profit, and retirement communities
- This training is ideal for program supervisors/coordinators/general interest program instructors and group fitness and aqua fitness instructors
- If interested please contact dbauld@recreationns.ns.ca

3. VolunteerNS.ca

- Non-profit organizations, community groups, and clubs can post their vacant opportunities on the website making it easy to find a volunteer with the skills needed
- Those looking to offer their time and expertise to their communities can easily browse or search for the right opportunities for them
 - Since November 2, 2018, the website has had more than 20,000 visitors who applied for vacant positions nearly 2,700 times

4. Priorities 2019-2020

- Council members decided to continue using the 2018-2019 priorities as they continue to be topical and are the main concerns of seniors at this time
- Two new issues that will require conversation in 2020 include:
 - Shortage of drugs such as Tamoxifen and generics with only 30 day supply
 - Nursing home patients without a primary care physician in their community and their nursing home not having physicians available for caring individual groups of residents

5. Nova Scotia Seniors Pharmacare – Marina Keeping, Manager Pharmacy Division, Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

- Council members questioned Marina on the issues from the first speakers
- Marina admitted there is a problem and concern and will be re-doing the application form to make it easier for doctors to complete
- Marina indicated that the National Common Drug Review Agency recommends placing the

- patient on insulin first
- She was happy with the federal government appointing the Central Drug Agency with the ability to negotiate for all provinces and have one formulary for Canada
 - There will be no changes in Seniors Pharmacare for 2020-2021 as the government is hopeful there will be a National Pharmacare Program and money will be available for catastrophic drugs starting in 2022
 - The following information was provided by Marina:
 - Number of beneficiaries 135,835; number of claimants 124,928
 - Number paying full premium (\$424) 64,650; number paying partial premium (\$255.45) 8,715; numbers not paying as Guaranteed Income Supplement recipients 59,897
 - Total projected cost 2019-2020 \$188,213,000
 - Member contributions 2019-2020 \$57,445,000
 - Projected cost 2020-2021 \$196,506,000
 - Projected member contributions 2020-2021 \$57,452,000

— *Submitted by Bill Berryman*
Chair, Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

January 23, 2020

1. Meeting with Ministers of the Crown and Deputy Ministers
 - There were 4 Ministers and 5 Deputy Ministers present
 - Chair reviewed guest speakers and topics from 2019 meetings and the 2019-2020 Council Priorities
 - Discussion took place on the doctor shortages, wait times, shortage of nursing home beds, Lyme Disease, housing options, Dementia Strategy, Deprescribing medicines, national pharmacare program, retirement income, seniors and entrepreneurs, support for caregivers
2. Canadian Deprescribing Network
 - Alyson Hillier provided information on the December 5, 2019 telephone call as a follow up to the September 27, 2019 conference in Moncton
 - Members want to continue this discussion and will invite Dr. Cheryl Smith to provide a presentation on the topic at a future meeting
3. Members continue to request updates on VolunteerNS.ca website and the Engaging Nova Scotia: Measuring What Happens final report
4. Follow up to Shannex Debert and Truro Nursing Homes issues
 - Council members continue to be concerned that doctors might not be available to provide coverage for nursing home patients
 - This will be an on-going topic as Council members will be requesting input into the updated Continuing Care Strategy

5. Silver Economy Summit
 - The third Department of Seniors initiated summit will take place on May 19-20, 2020 at Acadia University with the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre as partner

6. Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Seniors Forum
 - Presently engaging research to better understand the social and economic impacts of ageism in Canada
 - Consultations to take place in late April/May 2020
 - There will be an on-line questionnaire which will allow individuals and/or representatives of organizations to contribute their insights

7. Letter to Minister of Health and Wellness
 - As a follow up to the guest speakers from Diabetes Canada at the December 5, 2019 meeting a letter has been written requesting the Department of Health and Wellness expedite the issuing of SGLT-2 inhibitors in the treatment of Type 2 Diabetes under the provincial pharmacare program
 - Council members are concerned about the Department's high rejection requests by physicians as these medications are highly recommended if heart problems are present

8. Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness
 - The department has hired Dr. Kevin Orrell, an orthopaedic surgeon from Sydney, to the position commencing April 1, 2020
 - In his presentation to the hiring committee he addressed issues such as wait times, medical manpower, and long-term care
 - He also commented on overburdened emergency departments, doctor recruitment and retention, and doctor remuneration

9. Property Tax Capped Assessment Program
 - A New Version of Aging In Canada (CARP) presented the Seniors Advisory Council position on this to the All-Party Committee of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities on January 30, 2020
 - The Seniors Advisory Council members are opposed to lifting the cap for the following reasons:
 - Seniors CANNOT afford to have the cap removed as many are on fixed incomes and live off small pensions
 - Property is one's primary asset earned after many years of working while paying mortgage interest rates, property taxes, and sacrificing other assets and enjoyments to be able to afford a home to raise their families
 - Knowing that their property tax will remain reasonably stable allows seniors to plan for living within their means
 - This proposal is of self-interest to the municipalities and the protection they propose to offer through legislation is vague and to be determined later
 - Municipalities should be giving seniors tax break incentives to encourage them to stay in their homes and communities longer
 - Lowering property taxes for older adults would promote housing opportunities for those who have left the province and would like to return

— *Submitted by Bill Berryman*
Chair, Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia

Branch Updates

AER BAIE SAINTE MARIE

AER Baie Sainte-Marie holds two luncheon meetings per year, spring and fall. On November 5, 2019, at Clare Golf and Country Club in Comeauville, over 50 retirees were in attendance including Brian Noble, our MAL from Yarmouth.



AER Executive members

Two executive members, Loretta Blin and Dianne Thibault, who attended this year's RTO Wellness Symposium, presented the day's agenda, which included special emphasis on The Fountain of Health Initiative for Optimal Ageing and the Health Care Assist Program.



After a delicious buffet, we introduced our guest speakers from the Clare Medical Centre Foundation, Dr. Lionel d'Entremont, retired, accompanied by Janice Bilodeau, manager of the clinic and Wayne Gaudet, President of the Foundation. Their message was to deliver the goal of this foundation: raising funds to purchase much needed medical equipment that will serve the entire community. So far, the Foundation has raised over \$170,000. Their



message made us all aware how we can contribute to the well-being of ourselves and our community by making donations to this fund.

There were five door prizes, mainly gift cards and a 50/50 of \$100.



ANNAPOLIS

The Annapolis RTO held their "Heck No We Won't Go" Back to School Breakfast on September 5, 2019 at Eden Golf & Country Club in West Paradise, with thirty-eight members in attendance. New retirees Karen



Bower, Linda Winott, Janet Nichols, Krista Wright, and Jim Gushue were welcomed.

President Wendy Rodda welcomed Member-at-Large Bev Roy to the meeting. Bev updated the group regarding

the review of pensions and the Legacy Foundation, which she chairs.

We have a Group



Branch Updates



page on Facebook to update members. Members with Facebook accounts are encouraged to join the page. Reminders of meetings and notices will be posted there.



Following the meeting a question and answer card game was played and enjoyed by all.



Our annual Christmas Dinner gathering was held at the Antigonish Legion. The Antigonish Branch of CACL



ANTIGONISH/GUYSBOROUGH



were the caterers. A traditional Christmas turkey dinner was served with strawberry shortcake for dessert. Over 100 teachers and their guests attended. Newly retired teachers were recognized by our President Lauren Murphy. The dinner was preceded by a happy hour which

Branch Updates



gave everyone a chance to mix and mingle. There were retired teachers who took the opportunity to reconnect with some of the retired teachers who had taught them when they were in elementary school. Special thanks to Chrissy Arbuckle and Mary Mac-

Dougall for all their work organizing and planning this very successful event. Special thanks to Michel de Noncourt for the photographs.



Contact your Branch President for RTO HATS. Cost is \$20 each.



COLCHESTER EAST HANTS

On October 28 Branch members attended a Wellness Symposium hosted by the provincial RTO in Halifax to highlight and provide information on health issues that impact retirees. The responsibility of delegates Bob Jordan, Chester Sabeau, and Greg MacLeod was to bring back and share this information to the Branch. A short oral presentation was made at the November meeting. To reinforce the importance of a wellness lifestyle and to elaborate that message, there will be a follow-up with an email and an article in the April Contact.

The symposium keynote address was given by Dr. Keri Leigh Cassidy, a geriatric psychiatrist on the faculty of Dalhousie University. Her topic was 'The Fountain of Health Initiative - Promoting Brain Health and Resiliency'. The Fountain of Health is a national not-for-profit that supports and promotes an initiative on optimal ageing. For more information on the Fountain of Health see their web site-fountainofhealth.ca. It is well worth exploring.

Evidence suggests that about 25% of an individual's longevity is inherited. The remaining 75% is accounted for by lifestyle and health behaviour. This suggests we can make a significant impact on our lifespan. Research shows that there are five actions one can take to maximize health and happiness regardless of age. These are Physical Activity, Social Activity, Brain Challenge, Positive Thinking, and Mental Health. In her address Dr. Cassidy focussed on Brain Challenge and the concept of neuroplasticity - the ability of the brain to change continually throughout an individual's lifespan.

When it comes to brain health, keeping our minds active is always a good idea. Your brain improves with use so challenge it with regular exercise. Here are some suggestions from the F of H website to get you started: daily word or number puzzles, challenge your brain to learn something new, join and use the public library system, discover what a computer can do, and make the most of your hobbies and interests. As we enter a new year, let us make a commitment to do more for ourselves by investing in our health and happiness.

Branch Updates

There is a slide presentation of Dr Cassidy's address on the RTO-NSTU website, see side bar on web site.

We encourage members to apply for a Branch Initiative Project Grant-a wide range of grant ideas have been approved. Some examples include nature walk, mental health workshop, kindness rock workshop, nutrition workshop, glass wind chime making, and card making.

CPX

A Fall Luncheon was held at Boondocks Restaurant in Eastern Passage. While waiting for our meals to be served, Jeannie Fillier read a Halloween joke book to us and treated Barbara Burke to a dessert for having the most correct answers. Lots of laughter!!!

Our Christmas Dinner took place at Hope Church in Halifax. Members continued our tradition of bringing gifts for the residents at Ivy Meadows Continuing Care Facility....these are given to them on Christmas Day.

The names of our deceased members were read aloud and one minute of silence was observed in their honour. The names of our sick/shut-ins were then read aloud. The Executive and some members go together to visit these ladies before Christmas, taking a gift of a potted plant and a card.

Sue Kent said Grace and we enjoyed a delicious dinner.

This is the only occasion that we have a Head Table and this time we had the pleasure of being joined by RTO Vice-President Alyson Hillier, Metro MAL Judy Knowlton, and Dartmouth Branch President Audrey Matheson.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year!!!

CUMBERLAND

Good food, loads of laughter, and copious conversations seem to fill the room each time the Cumberland Branch

members of the RTO get together. This was clearly evident in November as members gathered first for the



BIP Grant event at the Oxford Legion November 19 for an entertaining Dinner Theatre entitled 'Happy Hollandaise', then on November 26 for a Branch meeting, which began with a delightful turkey dinner. With over 90 members in attendance at both events, it is safe to say that everyone had a wonderful time reconnecting and catching up with friends and colleagues.

The November 26 meeting was short on business items to allow for reconnecting and some seasonal cheer. Many members contributed non-perishable food items and / or monetary donations for the Cumberland Food Bank. Holly Faulkner was welcomed onto the Executive as Vice-President. NSTU Staff officer Stacy Samson will do a presentation on the Group Insurance Trust benefits, jointly with Cumberland Local teachers, date to be determined. Each meeting the Branch holds a ticket raffle with proceeds going towards our annual scholarship fund. Following the prize draw, Past President Lawry Macleod led the audience in some seasonal Christmas songs and carols. Our next meeting is March 31 at the Oxford Legion.



Branch Updates



DARTMOUTH

On Tuesday, October 8, the Dartmouth Branch held its annual Fall Luncheon at Brightwood Golf and Country Club in Dartmouth. Members enjoyed a delicious meal of ham and potato scallop with apple crisp for dessert. Much chatter and laughter filled the room as members reconnected and shared teaching experiences. The 50/50 draw was won by Cecilia Waller, while other door prizes were won by Beth Lamont, Ruth Durrant, Cindy MacFarlan, and Berthe Ferron.



On Tuesday, December 10, the Dartmouth Branch enjoyed its Christmas Luncheon at Brightwood Golf and Country Club. The area had a power outage at the time but, undaunted by the lack of lights and electricity, the 92 hardy souls stayed and enjoyed a complete turkey dinner thanks to the incredible staff at Brightwood who had to eventually fire up their propane ovens. The delay in serving the meal didn't seem to bother the group as much chatter and laughter was evident. We had three vendors selling their wares for those last minute Christmas shoppers. The tables were adorned by Christmas Poinsettias which were won by the teacher who had the



Branch Updates



most teaching years at each table. There were also ten door prizes given out to lucky recipients.

Our next activity will be a Casual Lunch at the MicMac Bar and Grill in February followed by a Luncheon in May when Bill Berryman will be our speaker.

GLACE BAY DISTRICT

Our fourth meeting of the year was held on October 10, at the Port Morien Legion. The turnout was quite large considering it preceded the Thanksgiving weekend. After enjoying a tasty roast beef lunch, the gathering was treated to an informative session



Maggie Roach-Ganaway presentation



Former Branch VP Jack MacNeil socializes with friends Stewart Donovan, Teddy Morrison and his wife Mary Morrison.



Sharon MacLeod and Jean Ann Farrow



Belinda Hoffman (L) enjoys the festive atmosphere with friend, Linda MacKay.

about Caregivers NS. It was presented by Maggie Roach-Ganaway, a consultant for the local association. Federal election booklets, published and distributed by Acer-Cart, were handed out, followed by a discussion



Ken MacDonald, Leroy Peach, Steve Andrecyk, and Steve Hogan

on the issues outlined in the booklet.

On Thursday, December 12, the District Branch once again held its Christmas luncheon meeting at St. Leo's Church



Kevin Peach, Rita MacLean, and Mickey Gouthro

Hall. The gathering was treated to a delicious turkey meal with all the trimmings. Vice-President Mickey Gouthro entertained the members with traditional Christmas classics. Recognizing the Season of Giving,

Branch Updates



Marlane MacNeil, Judy Patten, and Ed Davis



Newest member Ellen Baldwin is welcomed to her first Branch luncheon by President Reg Johnston

the meeting was highlighted by the presentation of gifts to committee volunteers who had donated their time to the organization over the past year.

HALIFAX CITY

Halifax City Branch RTO invited speaker Reverend Dianne Parker to attend our November 6, 2019 membership luncheon. Dianne spoke on the issue



November meeting



New member Lori Ross is greeted by one of the longest serving members, Peggy White.



of social isolation as it pertains to seniors. Her words were thought-provoking and provided guidance for all. Dianne discussed the feelings of isolation as a result of loss or grief. Life's transitions (loss of loved ones, illness, retirement, moving, financial loss, etc.) can contribute to feelings and real instances of isolation. Gratitude practices, such as reminiscing, journaling, and forgive-



Marilyn Campbell and Ceci MacNeil enjoy the festive decorations.



Donna Mastin and Reverend Dianne Parker

Branch Updates



Christmas luncheon

ness (of self and others) can become a positive habit. Small amounts of gratitude can have a significant impact and can create new neural pathways. We need to affirm a person for who they are and encourage each to offer what they can. Halifax City Branch RTO members enjoyed a lovely luncheon as well as the inspirational talk by Reverend Dianne Parker.



The annual Christmas luncheon was held once again at the Saraguay Club on Nov. 28, 2019. Around 60 members attended and enjoyed a lovely turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Greg Doyle and Kaye Pottie teamed up to lead us in holiday songs. A 50/50 draw was held and Diane Tomes-Low won \$75. Poinsettia door prizes were won by Laura Branton, Ruth Robillard, and David Cunningham.

HALIFAX COUNTY

Halifax County RTO slid into the December mode with two well-attended events to prepare us for the Christmas season.

Our Annual Fall Craft and Art Fair at the East Dart-



mouth Community Centre attracted 22 vendors and over 100 members. All attendees enjoyed the talents of the artists and crafters, the many door prizes, the 50-50 draw, and the yummy treats of tea, biscuits, and muffins...with homemade jams. Lots of Christmas shopping occurred and the deals were amazing. Many of our grandchildren benefited from the handmade sweaters, hats, caps, mitten, and socks. Each year, our selection for our buyers improves and we hope to attract even more vendors for next year.

Returning this year, was our traditional Christmas Tea. It was held in December at historic Oakwood House on Lake Banook and it featured sandwiches, fruit and delicious sweets. The house was beautifully decorated for the holiday season, putting everyone in a festive mood. It was another Sold Out event and attendees enjoyed the lovely decorations and the time to sit and enjoy conver-





sations with friends and colleagues, while listening to background Christmas music. Door prize winners left with beautiful potted poinsettias and our 50-50 winner received Christmas shopping money. Thank you to our executive members who did the organizing, ticket sales, serving, and the washing and matching of tea cups, to make this event the success that it was.



At our two events, we collected school supplies and caps and mittens which were presented to Harbour View Elementary. The gifts were received with much gratitude. Next year we will select another school to support. We appreciate the kindness of our members in thinking of the students in our schools.

Halifax County RTO, under the wonderful leadership



of Peter Balcom, is hosting the Provincial RTO Bowling event again. This year's competition will be held on April 25-26 at Woodlawn Bowlarama in Dartmouth and there are spaces open for you and your friends to sign up. See the notice in this newsletter. There will be lots of bowling, pizza, and prizes. Don't miss it!



We welcome Marilyn Jardine who has joined our executive as Member-at-Large. Marilyn has been an active RTO member and we are excited to have her join in a leadership role.

Our Education Series at Woodlawn Library and our Book Club continue. See our website for info about all upcoming events.

KINGS COUNTY

Kings Branch RTO held two very successful events during November and December of last year.



Bill addresses group

Our first was a completely new idea for our Branch. About twenty-five RTO members gathered on the afternoon of Nov. 27 at Centre Stage in Kentville to take part in our first Kitchen Ceilidh. Donna Rhodenizer, well known music teacher, composer, and performer, agreed to act as the host for the afternoon. She arrived after a day of subbing in school. She soon had everyone up on their feet, singing and dancing. It didn't matter



Sandi Carmichael speaking to Fred and Pam Crouse

if we couldn't sing. There was so much energy in the room that everyone joined it. Donna and her husband played keyboard, guitar, fiddle, and accordion. They had instruments there for everyone else to play, too. It was so much fun everyone wanted us to sponsor another afternoon like it. Afterwards, some of the participants went to local pubs to enjoy supper together.



*Front - Nancy Henry, Cathy Reimer, Betty Lister, Janice Wheaton
Back - Peter Sheppard, Peter Mowat, Janice Henderson*

Our second big event was our RTO Annual Christmas Dinner. We held it at The Berwick Lions Club in the Kings Mutual Centre in Berwick, with about 60 retired teachers and friends in attendance. This was such a special time of the year, and we all enjoyed catching up with everyone. In fact it was difficult to get everyone to sit down and enjoy their dinner.

The meal was prepared by the Lions Club, with retired



Donna Rhodenizer and Andy Duinker

members Bert Layton and John Rainforth overseeing the kitchen staff. John Prall also helped. They always prepared an excellent meal for us in the past, and this year was no exception.

LUNENBURG

Lunenburg County RTO had a busy fall, starting with our "No Bell" breakfast in September. A large turnout of retired teachers welcomed a new school year with a delicious breakfast and great camaraderie. New retirees were welcomed into the group and seemed to be relaxed and smiling. Several retired teachers brought along their art and craft work to display for the members and to remind them they now have the time to pursue their own hobbies. A collection was taken for a free meal and conversation program run by one of our members in Lunenburg.

October saw a fantastic turnout for our turkey dinner and presentations by Paul Sarty of Johnson Inc. and our Provincial President, Bill Berryman. Members had an opportunity to ask questions, and were very positive about the presentations and learning more about the changes in our insurance coverage after retirement and after age 65. Bill was able to share valuable information about seniors' issues that are of importance to all of us.



A pre-retirement seminar for teachers was held in November, and MAL Bonnie Mahaney explained the role of the RTO and President Deb Featherby spoke to those soon-to-be-retirees about the benefits of retirement and belonging to the Lunenburg RTO Branch.

In December nearly a hundred retired teachers

gathered to share a beautiful turkey dinner. The South Shore Ukulele Players, including many retired teachers, entertained the group with Christmas songs. Numerous door prizes were won by the attendees.

As we head into the dead of winter, the Lunenburg County RTO Executive will be meeting to plan for the 2020 dinner meetings and applications for BIP grants. We are looking forward to a banner year!

NORTHSIDE-VICTORIA

This is a winter like 2015: Wednesday and Sunday storms and a bundle of snow to show for it! In September we had our first ever “Not Back to School” breakfast with 69 attendees including Reg Johnston



as guest speaker. I was pleased to see a number of our new retirees. We had our fall luncheon in October with Bill Berryman as guest speaker. He pro-



vided our members (70+ attending) with pertinent information. During the presentation he recognized Tom Gaskell’s role in the beginning conversation



on a national pharmacare program. When he invited Tom to take the floor I wasn’t sure Tom would give it back!



Late October Garland Standing and John Astephen attended the Wellness Symposium. They will be getting a group together to plan a wellness event in the spring.

In December we had our annual Christmas lun-



cheon with turkey dinner and all the fixings with one hundred members attending. The dessert table had something for everyone. Of course, our guests were our own TC4 (one missing). They entertained us with Christmas carols before, during, and after the get-together. It certainly puts us in a festive mood!



Doug and Eva landry, Kelvin and Anne Digout, Donna Harnish, and Rene Samson enjoy breakfast before the January meeting

I thought I had our secretary ready for this job but he went to B.C. visiting his daughter for a month... so here I am trying to be a writer.

Our next event will be a breakfast in April, weather permitting.

RICHMOND

The Richmond Branch met on November 5, 2019 and members were updated on recent events. Don Smith attended the Federal Leadership Debate on October 15, 2019 in Arichat and was pleased to report that two of the three questions submitted for the debate were presented to the candidates (one on Pharmacare and one on a National Seniors' Strategy).

Sonia Smith reported on the Wellness Symposium that Maureen Cosman-Burke and she attended in Halifax on October 28, 2019. She provided information concern-



November meeting at the Island Nest Restaurant

ing issues of importance for retired teachers, including the following items: legal issues, positive aging, and panel discussion items about wellness initiatives. She informed those present that the Richmond Wellness Committee would begin to plan Wellness Initiative activities after Christmas.

The Festival of Trees was held at the St. Peter's and Area Lions Hall on November 23-24, 2019. As usual, the Branch had a veteran team of volunteers decorating the Richmond Branch Christmas tree. The Richmond Branch held its Annual Christmas Social on December 3, 2019 at the Louisdale Lions' Den in Louisdale. The meal was catered by Louie's Cozy Corner Restaurant. Retired teachers and guests attended the festivities. Many laughs and stories were shared.



Christmas Social at Louisdale Lions' Den

The Branch held its first meeting of 2020 at Louie's Cozy Corner Restaurant in St. Peter's on January 7. Topics discussed included: plans for Wellness Activities, the changes to the Pension Plan concerning substitute teachers, Legacy Foundation applications, the need for study markers (Dept. of Ed. correspondence courses), insurance benefits, and initiative application forms.

Branch Updates

SHELBURNE COUNTY

The Shelburne Branch of the RTO meetings were held once again at Capt'n Kat's Lobster Shack in October and the Sandy Point Lighthouse Community Centre in December.

We are a small group but we do love our food. The meetings and social are always a highlight as we get to see members that we have not seen for many months. We also enjoyed the events that were sponsored by the Branch Initiative Grant and look forward to many more. Some of our members are preparing for adventures in other countries so we are looking forward to hearing their experiences - stay tuned.



Sandra Walsh and Elizabeth Acker



Faye MacKinnon, Phyllis Cunningham and Ethel Nickerson



*Sue Sinden Shirley Nicoll
Bonnie Mahaney Gail
Ringer Suzanne McKay
Linda MacAlpine*



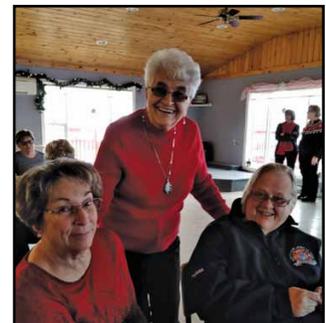
Suzanne McKay and Sue Sinden



Enjoying the Christmas feast



Sandra Walsh and Alain MacLachlan



Eliza Powell, JoAnn Newell and Donna Newell



Arthur O Connell and MaryAnn Sears



Ethel Nickerson

SYDNEY and AREA

The Sydney and Area Branch of the RTO is busy organizing several events for the winter months including card night and bowling.

Our Branch held its annual meeting and supper on November 26 at the Sydney Steelworkers and Pensioners Hall. A beautiful turkey dinner was enjoyed by 107 members. Mickey Gouthro provided enter-

Branch Updates



collected from our RTO members and delivered by President Laurie MacIntosh and Treasurer Ron MacIntosh to both the Sydney and Glace Bay Food Banks. Our next meeting and supper will be held on June 9 at the Steelworkers and Pensioners Hall.



tainment with a wonderful selection of festive tunes to usher in the Christmas spirit. Seven large storage totes of food as well as monetary donations were



WEST HANTS

On Dec. 3, 2019 the West Hants Branch held its annual Christmas dinner meeting at the Three Miles Plain Community Hall. On a snowy morning, 86 members gathered to celebrate the season. The excitement of getting together was obvious with the noise and laughter in the room. The Three Miles Plain women provided their usual amazing turkey dinner and wonderful pies for des-



Branch Updates



sert. Every RTO member and guest greatly appreciated the effort put forth in preparing and serving the meal.

After the dinner a short business meeting was held. President Phil Van Zoost gave an update on the two-day Provincial Presidents meeting held in October and a report on the Provincial RTO Wellness Symposium held at the NSTU building on Oct. 28.

At the end of the meeting it was difficult to get members to leave. More greetings and discussion kept most there well past their nap time. A SUV load of food and personal items was taken to the local food bank and to Harvest House, both serving Windsor and West Hants.



Branch Updates

YARMOUTH/ARGYLE

Mid-October provided a perfect day for our Walk 'n' Lunch at Ellenwood Park, and warm sunshine for us to enjoy sharing our lunch at the outdoor picnic tables after a hearty walk through the wood trails. A donation was made to the volunteer group, Friends of Ellenwood Park, who organize many outdoor activities at the park for young and old from October to May.

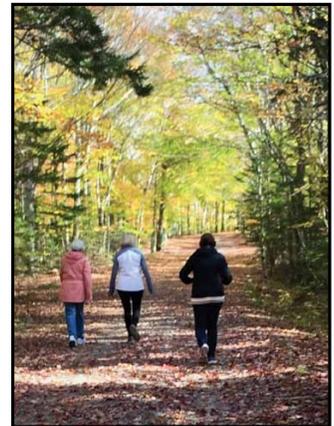


Our thanks to Sharon Sullivan for encouraging us to use the park, organizing our walks there, and providing a warm fire and hot beverages in the lakeside cabin.



Our first luncheon of the new term was held October 25 at a new venue, the Yarmouth Legion Hall, with our same caterer, Brenda Hattie, providing a new menu of Chicken Kiev and rice. Sixty members and guests were in attendance.

Dennis Point Restaurant in Pubnico once again prepared a lovely buffet for our annual pre-Dumping Day Breakfast on November 21. This has been a popular event for our Branch members and guests.



Our new Branch VP Maureen Duffy-Mason was the emcee at our very successful Christmas luncheon, also held at the Yarmouth Legion Hall. The ninety-one attendees enjoyed a traditional turkey dinner with a large variety of home-made desserts donated by various members. Following the social time and dinner, draws for twelve gift cards provided as door prizes were made from the participation ballots for each person attending a Branch event throughout the year. Thanks again to Wayne and Coral Leblanc for arranging the festive table decorations for the luncheon. Thank you to Juliette Morton for photos.



LIVING THE DREAM – CURLING IN NEW ZEALAND

by Brian Faught and Linda Harrison, RTO Cumberland Branch

Looking for something to occupy winters in Amherst, Brian Faught (retired from Halifax West) decided curling would be a pleasant pastime, and in 2005 started curling at the Amherst Curling Club, participating in Senior and mixed curling leagues. Later, Linda Harrison (retired from Spring Street Academy) took up curling as well. It was common for senior teams to travel to other clubs for Home and Away events where you would meet other curlers, socialize, and curl. Eventually, we (Brian and Linda) formed a mixed team, along with Terry Gilroy and Greg Williams (re-



Arriving in Nani, Fiji Airport at 6am. Front - Marjorie Brown, Christine Swan, Clare Christie. Back - Linda Harrison, Terry Gilroy, Brian Faught

Terry recognized that at the next Games, she would be holding us back from entering the 65 and over section, so stepped aside to add Marjorie Brown. Greg was river cruising in Europe, so Dan Jolly was recruited to fill in his spot. The curling part of the Lunenburg County Games was held in Bridgewater, and our team qualified to represent NS in the Canada 55+ Games, held in Saint John in August 2018. We had a great time, part of 2500 participants in these Games.

Brian received an e-mail shortly after the Canada Games were over, inviting us to join a group of curlers from “Welcome the World Senior Curlers (WWSC)” and curl in New Zealand in September 2019. The understanding was that this group consisted of curlers of all abilities, but loved curling. The curling would be

“jitney” style, where teams are formed by lot. Most of us were more than willing to give it a try. We signed up and committed to go.

We had Peggy Ludlow, RTO Halifax County Branch, arrange our flights to and from New Zealand. We left September 12, shortly after Tropical Storm Dorian had left town. Some of us were without power when we left. Our first stop was in Nani, Fiji Islands. (Moncton – Montreal – Los Angeles – Nani).



Recycled Schoolhouse - our lodgings during our stay in Naseby

We relaxed and toured the Island during our two day stay. Then off to New Zealand (Nani – Auckland – Queenstown). We arrived in Queenstown at night, and were picked up by Sherry Armstrong (the WWSC co-ordinator) and our driver, Muriel. We were all



Curlers outside the Maniototo Curling Club in Naseby

staying at a hotel in Remarkables Park in Queenstown. On an early morning walk the next day, I was awestruck by the surroundings. Snow-capped mountains everywhere! Quite remarkable. We spent two more days in Queen-

stown getting to know people and taking various tours. The group consisted of 49 curlers, with 9 countries represented. The curling portion of our trip took place in Naseby, a 2-3 hour drive east of Queenstown. Naseby has a resident population of 100 which swells to 3000 during the tourist season. We had reserved the “recycled schoolhouse” in Naseby, for our stay. Appropriate for retired teachers, we thought.



Bill Radcliffe, Terry, Linda, Brian, Marjorie in back, with Aileen Neilson, Michael McCreadie and Mary Radcliffe in front

We spent our days in Naseby curling in the mornings with two draws, tours of the Central Otago District in the afternoon, and fine meals and socializing in the evening. One evening, the NS curlers provided a medley of NS

music, and we presented the host club with a copy of Colleen Jones' book "Curling Secrets: How to Think and Play Like a Pro".

time world wheelchair curling champions. We had an enjoyable game.

Our final day together with the WWSC group was spent touring Central Otago District, although Linda opted for a 33 km bicycle ride through very scenic New Zealand. Then, back to Queenstown for our final night together with all the curlers. We had arranged for an eight passenger van for the six of us to continue our tour of the South Island, with the first stop at Milford Sound. We took a two-hour cruise of the fjords of Milford Sound, lunch included, and then on to an overnight in Te Anau. The following morning, we toured a "glow worm" cave, and saw more fjords in New Zealand's Fjordland. We eventually ended up in Christchurch, after visits to Dunedin, Lake Tekapo, Greymouth, and a five-hour train ride on Kiwi Rail from Greymouth to Christchurch through Arthur's Pass.



View from Larnach Castle, Dunedin, NZ

Most of the earthquake damage in central Christchurch from the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes has been remedied, although the historic Christ Church Cathedral remains unrepaired at this time. Much of the damaged area has been replaced by smaller stronger buildings as the national building codes were updated to make buildings more earthquake proof. At last it was time to leave New Zealand, exhausted but awestruck. Our homeward bound trip was

Naseby has both indoor and outdoor curling in the winter, but the Maniototo Curling Club is open year round, and has enough customers in the summer months to keep it viable. It is the only indoor curling surface in the Southern Hemisphere at this time. Also on site is a luge run, as well as a skating surfaces, both natural and artificial. We were there in early spring, so the natural ice surfaces were not frozen. A mini bonspiel was held on the third day (4 draws) and a host team from New Zealand was declared the winner.

On the last day of curling, we issued a challenge to the curlers from Scotland. We billed it as New Scotland vs Old Scotland. Little did we know that Michael and Aileen were two-

Christchurch – Auckland – Los Angeles – Toronto – Moncton. WOW! Now that we are home after a month or so, it seems we were living a dream.



Waiting for our shuttle at the Christchurch Rail Station

8 HOME BREAK-IN PREVENTION TIPS

Break-ins don't just happen when you're away on vacation. Even after a typical workday, you could come home to discover your home and your belongings have been tampered with. It's important to keep your home safe and stop potential intruders in their tracks, which is why we've created this easy-to-follow list of tips.



1. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors.
2. Ensure windows are equipped with sash locks – and that you remember to use them.
3. Leave some interior lights on when you go out and install automatic timers if you will be away for an extended period of time.
4. Install a solid metal jammer that folds up when not in use to keep sliding glass doors from being lifted off their tracks.
5. Have adequate exterior lighting. Motion-sensitive lights near grade-level windows or entrances give prowlers nowhere to hide.
6. Keep your garage door closed and locked.
7. Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
8. Be a good neighbour. If you notice anything suspicious in your neighbourhood, call 911 immediately.

Another helpful idea: Share these tips with your neighbours so that your entire neighbourhood stays safe and secure.

For more home, car and travel articles, please visit lighthouse.johnson.ca.

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EDUCATORS IN RETIREMENT

**Girl Strong Summer Retreat – A Weekend of Learning and Connecting
at Acadia University Wolfville, Nova Scotia** by Yvonne Rafuse



Retired teachers, Kym Hume, M.Ed., Sp.Ed, Admin, from the Valley, and Yvonne Rafuse M.Ed, M.Sp. Ed, from the South Shore were classroom teachers, resource teachers, and school and board level administrators in the public school system in Nova Scotia. In their retirement, they established and became co-owners and autism consultants at Autism Atlantic Consulting Services, a Nova Scotia company that has created and implemented a unique program called Girl Strong. This was the result of an identified need by families in the community for an organized program focusing on adolescent girls with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who have been historically underserved by community and health services.

Girl Strong is a first of its kind, designed specifically for adolescent girls with autism who are experiencing significant anxiety which impacts their daily lives. Most of the programs that this population participates in are school-based, social skills type programs, which are generally inclusive of both boys and girls with autism participating in small groups. While ASD is typically detected in early childhood, currently boys are diagnosed with ASD four to five times more often than girls. We know that girls with ASD present differently than boys, difficulties in making a correct for these girls with autism need needs and delivered differently. tend to camouflage their characteristics as neurotypical. This can lead to boy, which means that they have interventions as boys have. Thus, a range of mental health challenges such as panic attacks, eating disorders, and addictions, which often professionals before an ASD



The Girl Strong Summer Retreat logical next step in offering sessions for girls, opportunities to learn with other girls with autism. Parents shared in these sessions with their daughters and had the opportunity to connect with other parents who are raising girls with autism.

The Girl Strong Summer Retreat offered a quality, autism friendly educational and university experience, a chance to view possible future options, while calming possible anxiety about this important life transition into life after high school.

The "Girl Strong Summer Retreat" offered an opportunity for girls with autism in grades 7 - 12 along with a parent to experience life on campus. Participants lived in residence, and attended sessions focusing on understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder, specifically as it relates to females. They participated in a variety of leisure and academic activities, such as hands on experience in a science lab, a robotics/coding session, and boat building with engineering students. The group was treated to a pizza party, sponsored by Acadia's Dean of Science, and fun night where the girls and their parents shared their special interests and talents. These included musical, artistic, dance, and theatrical skills.

Taking the future into consideration throughout the retreat, the girls and their parents examined and set goals for growth towards self-awareness, independence, and self-advocacy. As they departed, having made friends and connections, the girls and their parents were already making plans to return to next summer's retreat.

This retreat would not have been possible without the collaboration with the staff at Acadia University. From the moment we approached them with our vision for the Girl Strong retreat, they shared in our enthusiasm and recognized the importance of making this happen for girls with autism and their families. The staff of Event Services, Student Services, the Robotics Leaders, the Science Department, along with the involvement of the WISE (Women in Science Education) Program, and Acadia Athletics supported us from the planning stage and throughout the retreat days.

Now, we are looking to the future, as we begin planning for next summer's retreat. We will be welcoming a new group of adolescent girls with autism and their families along with many returning participants, who are self-proclaimed Girl Strong Retreat Alumni!

Branch Initiatives

AER Branch Initiative

Programme d'Initiative des succursales

La succursale de l'Association des enseignants à la retraite Baie Sainte-Marie a bénéficié du premier programme



Photo de groupe chez Pete Lockett's Winery. Group photo at Pete Lockett's Winery

d'Initiatives des succursales de 1 000 \$ en août 2019. Dix-huit participants ont pris part au projet et ont joui d'une pleine journée de visites à quatre vignobles de la Vallée d'Annapolis. Le transport était fourni par Le Transport de Clare. Le groupe est parti à 9 h le 28 août de Meteghan avec deux autres arrêts en partant. La première visite était chez Lockett's Vineyards où tout le monde a apprécié un repas devant une vue panoramique de Blomidon et du Bassin des Mines. Le deuxième arrêt était chez Gaspereau Vineyards où ils ont appris comment le vin est produit depuis la plantation des raisins jusqu'à l'embouteillage. Le présentateur était très connaissant au sujet de la production du vin. Les deux autres vignobles visités étaient celles de L'Acadie Vineyards et Domaine de Grand-Pré. Un souper a suivi chez Joe's Emporium à Wolfville. Nous étions de retour à 21 h avec de bons souvenirs du voyage. Merci au programme d'Initiatives des succursales.

Clare Branch Initiative Program

The Clare Branch, Association des enseignants à la retraite (A.E.R.), took advantage of its first Initiative Program grant of \$1000 funding on August 28, 2019. The group enjoyed a full day of visiting four Annapolis Valley



wineries. Transportation was provided by Le Transport de Clare. The group left at 9 am from Meteghan with two other stops on the way out. The first stop was at Lockett's Winery where everyone enjoyed a great lunch with



exceptional views of Blomidon and the Minas Basin. The second stop was at Gaspereau Vineyards where the participants had the pleasure of having an educational



Les enseignantes à la retraite Eleanor Saulnier et Nicole Muise ont apprécié la vue de Grand-Pré. Eleanor

Branch Initiatives



presentation on the steps of wine production, from the planting of the grapes to wine bottling. The presenter was very knowledgeable on the art of winemaking. Other wineries visited were L'Acadie Vineyards and Domaine de Grand-Pré. At the end of the afternoon, supper was enjoyed by the group at Joe's Emporium in

Wolfville. One of the main highlights was visiting the UNESCO site at Grand Pré, a most important part of our Acadian heritage. Thank you to Richard Landry for photos.

The membership is looking forward to a tour of the Tusket Islands late next summer. We arrived back home at 9 pm with great memories of the day trip. Many thanks to the Branch Initiative Program.



Il y a plusieurs types de raisins utilisés pour la production du vin. There are many types of grapes used to produce wine.

Antigonish Guysborough Branch Initiative

There are some scientific studies that suggest activities such as dancing lower the risk of memory loss and dementia. Our plan was to have an activity that was healthy and lots of fun. The event, "Dance Off Dementia", was held in early November at Pipers' Pub in Antigonish. Retired teachers were encouraged to attend and bring



a guest. Well over 50 people attended. Dancing was optional. Teachers and guests could come for the social aspect, to dance or to listen to the music and to have fun. Live music was provided by Leona Williams on



Branch Initiatives



keyboard, and Stan Chapman on fiddle. Burton MacIntyre was the instructor. The dance floor was full. The music was excellent. Burton was a knowledgeable and enthusiastic instructor. Lunch was available from the menu and a \$5 voucher was provided to retired teachers towards their lunch. A good time was had by all. Many of the participants expressed interest in having this kind of activity more often.



Cumberland Branch Initiative

A large number of Cumberland RTO members were treated to a dinner-theatre on Tuesday, November 19 at the Legion Hall in Oxford. We applied for the maximum grant which would pay for 40 RTO members who could enjoy a hip of beef buffet and a Christmas comedy play



The Cast



The Buffet Line



Gathering Together

called “Happy Hollandaise”. We had voted that if more than forty members requested to attend that we would take the extra funds out of our local account. In total we were able to accommodate 81 members and 30 paying guests. It was a very successful and enjoyable evening.

Members and guests started arriving at 5:45 and had time to greet and socialize before the meal began at 6:30. After the main course, the cast performed Act 1 with great skill and hilarity. Following this opening act, the cast, still in costume, served dessert to the audience before heading back to the stage for Act 2. It was quite obvious that everyone thoroughly enjoyed



Taking the Bow

Branch Initiatives

themselves sharing a delicious meal, being entertained with a Christmas comedy of errors, and catching up with many friends they would not normally see in the run of a year. This was an event that we would consider doing again down the road.

Dartmouth Branch Initiative

Dartmouth Branch RTO enjoyed two adventures thanks to the Branch Initiative Program.

One grant gave 20 participants the opportunity to have a guided tour of Pier 21 and to visit the museum. Our guide, Zoe, was well informed and answered our many questions. A short film gave us the history of immigrants coming from all parts of the world and arriving at Pier 21 by boat to start a new life in Canada. A tour of the expansive area told of the joys and sorrows of many of our forefathers. There was time after the film for us to visit many of the exhibits on our own that depicted the history of how our country was populated. The tour was well received by all and many felt they wanted more

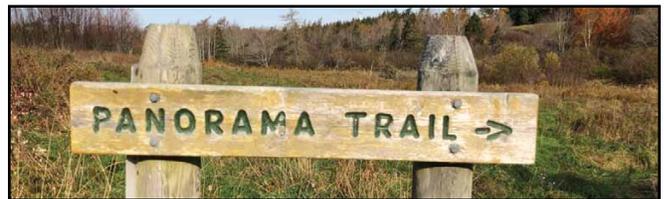


time to see all the exhibits. Afterwards we paid our own tab as we gathered to enjoy lunch at Restorante A Mano on the waterfront.

On October 25, 18 Dartmouth Branch participants enjoyed a refreshing, informative, and historic walk on the Panorama Trail, part of the Cole Harbour Parks and Trails Association that also includes the Salt Marsh Trail. After a scheduled date and rain date were cancelled by a nor'easter, the third try was successful and we enjoyed a crisp but sunny day. Our guide stopped at various



points of historic interest along the way until we reached the Poor's Farm Cemetery the resting place for many individuals who had lived at the Poor's Farm in the late



1800's. We returned via the Poor's Farm Trail to the parking lot and proceeded to a local eatery for lunch. A great historical and physical activity was enjoyed by all thanks to the RTO Branch Initiative Program grants.



Branch Initiatives

Digby Branch Initiative

Hurricane Dorian roared through, spoiling plans for a nature trail hike in September. The trail close by St. Mary's Bay Academy was in no shape for RTO members to hike or maybe it was the RTO members that couldn't manage a hike on that damaged trail.

In October and November, the Digby Branch members and guests took part in two workshops on Optimal Aging, facilitated by RTO member Jane Power-Grimm. The October 24 workshop focused on the five key research-proven lifestyle factors that improve health, well-being, and long life. The first three factors were explored in depth and participants learned how to write S.M.A.R.T. goals to apply to their own lives. The November 21 workshop brought participants together again to discuss their success (or lack of success) in reaching their goal. Also the last two beneficial lifestyle factors were explored in detail.

Altogether the workshops were incredibly informative, thought-provoking and enjoyable. After each workshop the enjoyment continued with lunch at local restaurants. After all, one of the key Optimal Aging factors is staying socially active!

Glace Bay Branch Initiative

The Glace Bay District Branch completed its second Branch Initiative Program of the year by returning to Membertou for another afternoon of bowling. The first



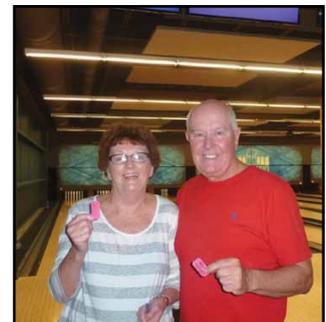
Muriel Fortune, Reg Johnston, and Paula Young show their appreciation to the RTO for the Branch Initiative grant.



Brian Spencer, a lucky prize winner, celebrates with his wife Diane (seated) and teammate Paula Young.



Sharon MacLeod and Margie Meegan cheer on teammates.



President Reg Johnston holds the winning ticket for the 50-50 draw won by Marie Bigley.



Event organizer, Anita MacDonald (third from right) welcomes participants.



Cutting-edge technology added to the enjoyment.



Just roll the ball and let the machine keep the score.

Branch Initiatives

physical activity, social interaction, and lots of laughter, not to mention, some great bowling.

Lunenburg County Branch Initiative

The Lunenburg County RTO had a very successful Glo Bowling Event, thanks to the BIP Grant Program. Fourteen enthusiastic bowlers, both experienced and new, met at Bowl More Lanes in Bridgewater for a great morning of fun and fellowship as they vied to be the first team to fill their bingo card.

Prizes were given out and after the bowling the members enjoyed a wonderful lunch together at Pizza Delight. Members expressed thanks for the event and hope that it will be repeated next year.



Pat Townsend and Florence Bush anticipate an easy win!



President Deb Featherby thanks the Branch Initiative program for supporting the event.



Verlene Silver is ready with the dauber to mark her team's bingo card.

Shelburne County Branch Initiative

The Shelburne County Branch of the RTO was pleased to once again receive a Branch Initiative Grant. Our original ideas had difficulties due to distance and transportation, so we had to do some changes to the plan, but we are educators! We are used to adapting and modifying. Eventually, we had three events.

Our first event was an acrylic painting workshop where the members enjoyed creating a winterberry wreath while learning new techniques of how to paint. This was a fine addition to a home display.

In our endeavour to choose different activities, we found a company that does horse drawn wagon rides through the woods. One member described the experience as 'magical'. We traveled through the backwoods, breathing the fresh air, enjoying the sights and sounds of nature and more than a few giggles along the way. The drivers had also planted different signs, from Santa to Frosty, amongst the trees for a children's 'I spy' activity. Afterwards, members were treated to a dessert event at Rollie's Café. It was so nice to see the smiles and catch up with the life events.

Our last event was an Art discussion meet and greet. We arranged with a new café, Salty Shores, to have a space so we can do a drop-in and chat. The members enjoyed dropping in, staying for a chat over coffee. We certainly enjoyed the atmosphere and had lots of laughs. Since it was a drop-in event, it encouraged members to take five and enjoy a visit.



Bonnie Mahaney and Wanda Nickerson



Even in the woods you can still mail Santa

Branch Initiatives



Barb MacLean & John MacKay



Finishing touches



Let's talk



Honourary Member of the RTO



Mardee Nickerson



Sign



Tea anyone?



I'm working part-time



I'm not retired yet



Paint workshop



Santa's Mail



Mary Manning and Pam Smith



Dessert for all



Wagon Ride

Branch Initiatives



Wanda Nickerson, Bonnie Mahaney and Barb MacLean
Many thanks to the provincial RTO for this Branch initiative grant to keep our members involved.

West Hants Branch Initiative

On Oct. 25, 2019, twenty-two members and guests of the West Hants Branch traveled to the Grafton Street Dinner Theatre in Halifax. Travelling on a very comfortable bus, owned and operated by the Windsor Senior Citizens Bus Society, we arrived at our destination at 5:45. Upon arrival, we had time to relax, socialize, and enjoy a drink before our evening presentation. We were able to preview the choices on the menu before we arrived



cast of five incredibly talented musicians and actors in the presentation called the Monster Mash, appropriate for Halloween. In between each set of music and acting,



we were served our courses by the actors who continued their role-playing with the audience, making the evening all that more enjoyable.

Three hours later we settled up our bills, got on our bus for a sleepy but very relaxing ride home to Windsor. The highlights of the evening were the night out without driving, great food and entertainment, and most importantly, the fellowship with our RTO members, especially with some members who have not participated



choosing from four items for each serving. This process took away the dilemma of choosing what to order on the spot.



Once we were seated and our orders were confirmed, the show began. We were entertained by a



Branch Initiatives



Grant that paid for the transportation. These grants give each Branch an opportunity to plan and enjoy a group activity that would likely not happen otherwise. I would also like to thank the West Hants members who attended. Without your participation these events would not happen.



in past events.

A special thank you to the Provincial RTO for providing the Initiative



Pictou Branch to Host 2020 RTO Golf Tournament

The 22nd annual retired teachers Golf Tournament will be played at the Abercrombie Golf Club in New Glasgow on Wednesday September 9, 2020.

Shotgun starts 12:30 p.m. for 1:00 p.m. sharp. Fee \$70.00 includes green fee, power cart and full meal (sponsored by Pictou Branch RTO)

Deadline for application is August 31. Please register early.

Prizes:

Overall Gross Tournament Winners

Overall Net Tournament Winners

1st Gross and 1st Net Divisional Winners

Additional special competition prizes / Plus draw prizes

Putting contest with prizes – (a fund raiser) also a 50/50

Options:

Come early – Play on Tuesday or “Stay and Play” on Thursday at a reduced rate

Inquiries and Registration:

John Young
147 Kennedy Court
New Glasgow, NS
B2H 1T8
902-752-0715

or

Chris Meadows
25 Pine View Crescent, P.O. Box 1443
Stellarton, NS
B0K 1S0
902-755-1774
Email: cmeadows@hotmail.ca



Registration Form

Retired Teachers Golfing Tournament 2020

NAME: _____ Index: _____

Address: _____ OR Handicap: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone # _____

Email: _____ RTO Member: Yes ___ No ___

Member of (if applicable) _____ Golf Club

Money Enclosed (\$70) _____ Guest (\$20) Meal Only _____

PARTNER: _____ Index: _____

Address: _____ OR Handicap: _____

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

SENT TO:

John Young

147 Kennedy Court

New Glasgow, NS

B2H 1T8

FEES AND INDEX SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY AUGUST 31, 2020

1. Two person scramble format.
2. Overall Index Differential for each team cannot be greater than six (6). If you submit more than (6) the team index 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 9, 2020, rain date September 16, 2020.
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.



Retired Teachers Organization
of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union
Retired Teachers

LEGACY FOUNDATION GRANT APPLICATION

Society or Organization: _____ Federal Charitable Status # _____

Name of Applicant: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Program Coordinator: _____

Brief Description of Program: _____

Number of children under age of 21 involved in this program: _____

Please indicate if Society or Organization is for an educational, medical, social or similar purpose:

How will this grant make a difference? _____

Other source(s) of funding for your organization: _____

- Note:**
1. By signing this application, you will also be authorizing the Retired Teachers Foundation to verify your business number and check any other relevant facts about your organization.
 2. Please attach a one-page letter to elaborate on information requested in this form.
 3. Applications can be received in consecutive years
 4. Mandatory that Federal Charitable Status Number be on form
 5. Must be postmarked or date stamped no later than **March 31st**

reception@staff.nstu.ca (email)
or

RTO Administrative Assistant (Mail), 3106 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, NS B3L 4L7

Signature: _____ Date: _____

RTO Legacy Foundation

We continue to try to solicit funds for this important Foundation. We have reached out to NSTU Locals to request that they consider making a donation part of their annual budget and that individual members consider making donations. We are also in the process of requesting support from organizations who serve our members and will keep you updated.

The Retired Teachers Legacy Foundation was established by the RTO Executive in 1994.

Objectives of the Legacy Foundation:

1. To solicit; accept; receive; acquire by grant, donation, legacy gift, bequest; or otherwise; any kind of real or personal property and to enter and carry out agreements, undertakings and conditions in connection therewith;
2. To disburse annually the donations, Teachers Plus Credit Union rebate, return on investments and First Rate Savings interest from the previous year.

The Legacy fund will thrive only with continued support. Please consider making a donation. If you have a suggestion for a project we should fund, please fill out the application and remember the deadline is March 31.



— Submitted by Bev Roy,
Legacy Foundation Chair



Milestones

The RTO would like to acknowledge its members who have reached milestones in their lives. Members celebrating significant birthdays, anniversaries, or other events, are invited to send us a photo and a brief note. Your milestone could be published in any one of our three issues each year.

Milestones

Ruth Kennedy, a Halifax Branch RTO member who retired from Sir Charles Tupper in 1978, celebrated her 102nd birthday this past December 23rd, 2019 with her sister, who is turning 100 years old in 2020 and her family: her two daughters and their spouses, 5 grandchildren/spouses, 7 great-grandchildren. She resides at Parkland on the Lakes, Harris Hall, throughout most of the year, and spends the summer months at her home on West Lake in Mt. Uniacke, NS. On most Sunday evenings, she can be found in the parlour at Parkland playing the piano to the enjoyment of many residents. Ruth attended Normal College in Truro, graduating in 1938. Her first teaching assignment was at Seaforth School, a one-room school house with a wood stove.

In 1942, she married her husband, William Kennedy. At that time in Halifax, female teachers were not allowed to be married! Ruth had to resign her position to get married. Luckily, the following year this rule was changed and she was rehired. Ruth never ceases to amaze her family, with her sharp mind, her opinions of current events, the books she reads, and her deep interest in all we do. Congratulations, Ruth, from your RTO colleagues across Nova Scotia!



RTO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – MAY 21, 2020

The RTO Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at the NSTU Building on Thursday May 21st, 2020 at 9:30 AM. The AGM Dinner will be held at Brightwood Golf and Country Club, School Street, Dartmouth on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 6:30 PM. Busses will be available for transportation from the Hotel Halifax at 5:30 PM to Brightwood and back at 8:30 PM.

Accommodations: A block of rooms in the name of the Retired Teachers Organization has been reserved at the Hotel Halifax (formerly Delta Halifax downtown) for delegates requiring accommodation. **The room rate is \$99.00 plus tax which includes a hot buffet breakfast and free parking.** Please call the hotel at 1-902-425-6700 or 1-888-423-3582 prior to **April 20, 2020** to make reservations and book your room under the RTO block. **You will need to show your RTO card at the hotel reception desk.** There is no direct-billing, therefore delegates must pay for their room prior to checking out. Those who are eligible will be reimbursed after filling out the RTO expense form. The RTO will reimburse Branch Presidents' accommodation only for the evening of May 20, 2020.

Registration: Please complete the registration form below or copy from the RTO website (rto.nstu.ca) if you plan to attend the RTO AGM dinner and/or the RTO Annual General Meeting. Entrance to the Annual General Meeting is the front door of the NSTU Building which is wheelchair accessible and close to the elevator.

2020 RTO AGM REGISTRATION

Name: _____
Surname First Name

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Branch: _____

E-Mail: (needed to send AGM Documents) _____

RTO AGM DINNER

Tickets must be purchased by May 5, 2020 in order to determine numbers for dinner.

_____ Yes, I will be attending the AGM Dinner at Brightwood Golf and Country Club on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Guest(s) name (if any) _____

_____ Yes, I will require transportation for _____ people from the Hotel Halifax to Brightwood

_____ Yes, I will require transportation for _____ people from Brightwood to the Hotel Halifax

Dinner Ticket(s) _____ @ \$25.00/person = _____ (cheque or money order only, payable to RTO)

Dietary restrictions (e.g., gluten free) _____

Dinner tickets in your name will be held and given to you when you arrive at Brightwood.

RTO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

_____ Yes, I will be attending the AGM Business Meeting at the NSTU Building on May 21, 2020. A registration desk will be set up at 8:30 AM to distribute voting cards. AGM material will be sent electronically prior to the meeting. Hard copies will be available at the registration desk.

Guest (is an RTO member) will be attending the RTO AGM? Yes _____ No _____

Registration form and Dinner payment(s) must be received prior to May 5, 2020.

Mail to: Marie MacInnis, Nova Scotia Teachers Union, 3106 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, N.S. B3L 4L7

Resolutions for Annual General Meeting 2020

Resolution 2020-1 Lunenburg County Branch

BE IT RESOLVED that the RTO petition the NSTU to include coverage for sensor strips that are compatible with the SmartGuard Auto Mode Medtronic insulin pumps, in their negotiations with the Insurance Trustees.

BRIEF

Type 1 diabetics do not produce insulin. As a result, many Type 1 diabetics rely on insulin pumps to provide the insulin that is essential to their survival. In order for the pumps to operate at high efficiency, and to provide insulin based on constant monitoring of glucose levels, sensor strips are required.

The strips monitor the diabetic's glucose levels so that insulin levels remain at a constant level, thus avoiding the highs and lows experienced by diabetics. This greatly improves the quality of life for Type 1 diabetics.

The sensor strips that are compatible with insulin pumps cost approximately \$400.00 per month and are not covered under the current insurance plan. This places a significant financial burden on those retirees who are insulin dependent. The attached resolution asks that these sensor strips be included in negotiations with the government/insurance trustees, through the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

Resolution 2020 – 2 RTO Executive

BE IT RESOLVED that the Retired Teachers Organization develop a new membership authorization form “Affiliate Form B” for those Faculty and Professional Support Members employed by the Nova Scotia Community College and who retired after July 1, 2018 and wish to join the organization.

BRIEF

On July 1, 2018 Faculty and Professional Support Members in the bargaining units of the Nova Scotia Community College became members of the Nova Scotia Community College Academic Union.

Faculty and Professional Support Members continue to be in receipt of a pension pursuant to the Nova Scotia Teachers Pension Act or a pension pursuant to the Public Service Superannuation Act. Faculty and Professional Support Members are now in receipt of group insurance benefits from Morneau Shepell.

The monthly approved Retired Teachers Organization membership fee deduction from the Nova Scotia Teachers Pension Plan is made by Johnson Inc. and remitted to the RTO. The RTO requested the same arrangement with Morneau Shepell and it was not accepted.

Some Faculty and Professional Support members, who retired after July 1, 2018, are requesting to join the Retired Teachers Organization. The RTO Constitution Article III – Membership, Section A – Active Member indicates that due to their pension contributions they are deemed to be an active member of the organization and must pay an annual fee. The problem is the pension plan deduction through Johnson Inc.

Therefore the RTO Executive has developed a new membership authorization form entitled “Affiliate Form B”. Completion of this form would permit Faculty and Professional Support Members, who have retired after July 1, 2018, to join the organization with full rights, privileges and responsibilities of membership subject to payment of the \$48.00 annual fee by cheque each year.

Resolution 2020-3 RTO Executive

BE IT RESOLVED that the following changes be made in the RTO Constitution Article III – Membership, subject to the approval of Resolution 2020-2.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

A. Active Member:

To qualify as an active member of the Organization, a person must pay the annual fee and meet one of the following criteria:

- i. Be in receipt of a pension pursuant to the Nova Scotia Teachers' Pension Act; or
- ii. Been in the Faculty or Professional Support bargaining units of the Nova Scotia Community College prior to **July 1, 2018** and be in receipt of a pension pursuant to the **Nova Scotia Teachers Pension Act** or the Public Service Superannuation Plan; or
- iii. Been employed as a teacher pursuant to the Nova Scotia Teachers' Pension Act and in receipt of a pension pursuant to the Public Service Superannuation Plan.

B. Affiliate Member A:

A retired teacher shall be eligible for Affiliate Membership A in the Organization if that person is in receipt of a pension from outside Nova Scotia.

C. Affiliate Member B:

A retired teacher shall be eligible for Affiliate Membership B in the organization if that person has been in the Faculty or Professional Support bargaining units of the Nova Scotia Community College beginning on or after July 1, 2018 and in receipt of a pension pursuant to the Teacher's Pension Act or Public Service Superannuation Plan.

D. Associate Member:

- i. A retired teacher shall be eligible to Associate Membership in the Organization, subject to the approval of the RTO Executive; or
- ii. Any surviving spouse/partner of a retired teacher shall be eligible for membership in the Organization.

E. Life Member:

A person who has held the office of the President of the RTO shall be granted Life Membership in the Organization.

F. Honorary Member:

An Honorary Member is a person upon whom the honour has been conferred by the resolution of the Annual General Meeting for outstanding service to the RTO.

G. Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities:

The rights, privileges and responsibilities of membership shall be extended as follows:

- i. To Active, Life and Affiliate B members the full rights, privileges and responsibilities of membership;
- ii. To Affiliate A members the full rights, privileges and responsibilities of membership, except to hold provincial office in the Organization;
- iii. To Associate members the full rights, privileges and responsibilities of membership except in matters of voting and holding office; and
- iv. To Honorary members the right to attend the Annual General Meeting as an observer and the right to receive RTO publications.

H. Membership Fees:

- i. Membership fees shall be established by resolution at the Annual General Meeting of the Organization and approved by the NSTU Provincial Executive. The fee set shall endeavour to allow the Organization to become self-sufficient;
- ii. Life and Honorary members shall be exempt from membership fees;
- iii. Affiliate A and B members shall submit membership dues by cheque annually by September 30; and
- iv. A revision of membership fees requires a thirty (30) day notice-of-motion to the membership and a 2/3 vote during the Annual General Meeting of the Organization.

BRIEF

If the Annual General Meeting delegates approve Resolution 2020-2, modifications need to be made to Article III – Membership in order to include the new Affiliate Member B members.



Many teachers enjoy paddling a kayak or canoe. When they retire, they look forward to the time and freedom to take longer trips, sometimes on more challenging water. Others, like me, are new to kayaks. After retiring I spent a lot of time on the water sailing. Last summer I sold my sailboat, and one of the first things I did was buy a second-hand boat, a 17 foot long Current Designs sea-going kayak. I had done the research on dry land, and this was a highly recommended boat. I felt I was lucky to pick one up at a good price. That was until I started to use it and doubt crept into my mind. I found it was incredibly tippy. It took a lot to turn it and I worried about how I would handle things if the boat flipped over.

Everyone will tell you that after you purchase a kayak, you must take a course to learn how to use it. They never tell you to take the course before you buy your first boat. Kayaks come in a wide range of sizes, designs, and materials. People selling them, whether the kayaks are new or second-hand, will tell you why their boat is perfect for you. Perhaps it would be better to remember the old axiom in teaching – different strokes for different folks. You should keep in mind as well that a kayak is not a canoe. The strokes are similar but the boats perform differently. Falling out of one is hardly the same as the other. You need to know how to use a kayak before you start off in one. Courage is not enough to keep you safe. The person who bought my sailboat thought courage was enough until he rammed it onto a reef in Mahone Bay. If he had bought a kayak, it would have slipped right over the reef. Learn to paddle before you buy your first boat. Take the course first.

You need to try getting into and out of a kayak. Some are very stable, some feel like you will flip over if you twitch a muscle. I fell out of mine four or five times before I understood how to get in and out properly. A boat that is designed for the kind of paddling you would like to do is important. One that fits you and is adjusted properly is also a big part of it. You need to feel which muscles you use and how much flexibility and energy your boat will demand of you before making a decision. You need to flip it over in a controlled situation so that you not only get the initial panic under control, you also know how to get back into it. The kayak you need as a beginner might not be the same boat you want as you gain more experience.

Last summer I completed my first course. It was a day long and took place in a protected cove on the South Shore. It was taught by Robert Pealing, an experienced instructor who understood what he was doing and did so with a great sense of humour. He celebrated our successes and gently corrected our mistakes. The first thing he did was to teach us how to paddle in reverse. We had to hold the paddles properly and twist our bodies as we pulled our kayaks through the water. He stopped us and asked us what muscles we used. The answer was unanimous, our torsos and thighs. These, by the way, were not the muscles a rowing machine strengthened, which was what I used in the spring to get ready for kayaking. By the end of the day it was not my shoulders that were sore.

Many kayaks have pedals or footrests inside them and mine were set too far forward. I could not effectively brace my feet against them, making paddling more difficult than it had to be. We were taught to press the pedal inside with our wet foot when going forward and our dry foot when in reverse. He explained that a wet foot was not one that was wet because it was dangling over the side. It was simply the foot on the same side as the paddle in the water, the dry foot on the opposite side. I was glad he explained it, because both of my feet were soaking wet just from climbing into the kayak. I also could not use the pedals to push my butt back into my seat and sit up straight in the cockpit. This meant that I was not balanced and got tired easily. An unbalanced boat can give you the feeling you are about to be flung out of it into the cold water at the slightest movement.



We learned how to launch off the beach without falling in. We learned how to raft up, pulling all the boats together to relax and share a snack together. We learned to sit up on one buttock and tip the boat up on edge so that it would carve through the water in the same way a skier carved on snow by turning his skis on edge. We learned to use draw strokes and scull to move the boat sideways. We learned how to move an injured or sick companion to safety while they were still in their boat.

Most importantly, we learned how to flip a boat over safely and get back into it while we were in the water. This was the skill I took the course to learn. It was called a wet exit. Another student accidentally fell out of her kayak while learning to do a low brace. Our instructor stopped what we were doing and changed immediately to a rescue lesson. He told Scott, an experienced kayaker, to help her while he explained what Scott was doing. First he asked her in a loud voice if she was okay. He paddled over to her boat and told her to move to the stern. While she held the stern down by pulling her weight up onto it, he pulled her boat onto his kayak. The water drained out and he flipped it over. He rafted up with it and held it in place by reaching across aft of the cockpit and grabbing a safety line on the far side of her boat. He held onto the inside lines as well so that both boats were very stable. She grabbed hold of the side and lifted her right leg into the cockpit. She pulled herself up onto the boat so that she was lying face down on top of it, pointing towards the stern. She slid her left leg into the cockpit while staying low. She turned herself over and let her butt sink into the cockpit, pushing her legs forward. She did it as if she was a professional, but it was fairly easy because Scott was keeping her boat stable. They stayed rafted up to orient themselves. She reattached her sprayskirt. Once she had done that and he was sure they were both okay, he released her boat.

One thing you can be sure of is that you will at some point fall out of your kayak. It isn't a problem if you know how to get back in it. You need to do it in a controlled situation several times before it happens to you out on the water. It is also one of the reasons people say that you should never kayak alone, at least not as a novice. You need to control any sense of panic or confusion upside down under water. You need to be able to release your sprayskirt at the front of the cockpit and roll forward out of the boat. You need to be able to get back into your boat. And it has to be a boat you can do all of this with.

It is a process most people can learn. This includes non-swimmers and those who are afraid. We had both in our course. My partner who was my age could not swim. His life jacket kept him afloat. He was afraid at first but he handled it well and was soon safely back in his kayak as I held it steady. As he flipped over, our instructor was with us to make sure he was always safe. The look on his face as he surfaced was priceless, but I think he actually enjoyed the experience. With the wrong kayak though or with loose hatch covers that floated off easily as mine did, the outcome could be different. For many reasons you want a kayak that works for you.



In the end I was lucky. The day after the course I took my kayak out on the water in a small lake near me. I adjusted the seat so that it would hold my back properly. I made sure the pedals were in the right place. I secured the hatch covers. I balanced the boat with my paddle and climbed in. I slid it gently forward into deeper water. I set out on the water and was amazed by the difference those few simple adjustments made to the way my kayak felt. I tried all of the strokes: forwards, backwards, draws, sculls, sweeps, and carving. I worked without the rudder down and the boat performed well. I was pleased. I had purchased a boat that was suitable for me. I just as easily could have chosen one that wasn't.

Since taking the course, I have spent a lot of time on the water. My favourite paddle was from Lower Prospect to Rogues Roost. It was not at all tiring, and it was a wonderful way to spend time on the water with friends. There was an added bonus too. When Hurricane Dorian hit in September, I did not have to take a lot of time preparing an expensive sailboat to weather a violent hurricane and worry about its survival. My kayak was safe at home in my barn.

Buy a boat after you know what you are doing. You will have a much better idea of what you are looking for. Kayaking is challenging, but it is not impossible for most of us to learn. It can also be rewarding in so many ways. It is a great sport for people who are retired, as you can choose your activity level depending on where you want to paddle and the boat you choose to buy. Take the course first and never paddle alone, at least as long as you are a novice like me.

Something to Think About

Written by Brian Forbes, retired educator and former NSTU President

Recently I bought a book titled *1000 Books to Read Before You Die* by James Mustich. Now, just two months before my 72nd birthday, I think my chances of working my way through the list before my inevitable unfortunate demise are fairly negligible. Actually, I do have a pretty good start, having read a respectable number of its recommendations already. In addition, there are more than a few of the listings that I have waded into in earlier years, far enough to know that I have no particular desire to take them up again. I did recently have a second go at *The Brothers Karamazov*. I persisted until I remembered why I gave it up the first time. It will probably languish on my Kindle for the duration. The fault, I am sure is mine, not Dostoyevsky's. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* falls into the same category. Then there are those books that I have absolutely no inclination to even peek at. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* comes to mind. Still, with all those exclusions there remain many attractive choices, and I have already enjoyed several titles that I probably never would have thought of reading, except for the recommendations and descriptions of *1000 Books to Read Before You Die*. In fact I would say the author should have self-referentially included his own book, maybe as the first listing. You can spend many enjoyable hours reading about the books you should read before you die, without its being a waste of time in any way. I highly recommend it.

Nevertheless I will not be bound, in the limited time available, to attempting to make my way through another person's reading list, no matter how meritorious. There are many ways of finding good books without relying on anyone else's suggestions, opinion or advice. The most important criterion is that whatever you choose appeals to you. I have met some of my favourite books and authors quite by accident – aimlessly browsing in a bookstore or library, coming across a quotation or a passing reference in a footnote, inadvertently overhearing a conversation, and so on. Wendell Berry, Loren Eiseley, and Hermann Hesse are examples of favourites whom I basically stumbled upon.

A book I have just finished reading is a case in point. Over a period of several years I had come across occasional references to Stefan Zweig, an Austrian Jewish writer who was known throughout the world during the 1920s and 30s for his poetry, novels, essays, biographies and translations. His works were published in dozens of countries and languages at the height of his career. Zweig was a tireless advocate for internationalism and European unity, which he promoted constantly in the intellectual and cultural realms,

in collaboration with like-minded writers and artists. It was his commitment to cosmopolitanism and humane values that complicated, and eventually ruined, his life. *The World of Yesterday* is his autobiography, written while he was in exile in Argentina during World War II. It is simultaneously a memoir, a lament, and a kind of last will and testament.

Born in Austria in 1881, the son of a wealthy, non-religious Jewish family, Zweig led a privileged, thoroughly assimilated, existence. He makes clear in the opening pages of *The World of Yesterday*, that for him Austria, from the time of his birth until the outbreak of World War I, was the "Golden Age of Security". He lovingly recounts the excitement, indeed the exultation, of growing up in turn of the century Vienna, with its high regard for music, opera, theatre and literature, the glories of the Austrian monarchy, an exuberant confidence that life was just going to keep getting better and better, and that a major European war was a virtual impossibility. All of that was shattered on the outbreak of World War I, never to return.

As a chronicler of his times Zweig is fascinating, because he situates his own story within the larger context of European political, social and cultural history, and because in many instances his personal circumstances placed him, almost uncannily, in a unique position to observe some of the great events of his day. He was vacationing in Baden, near Vienna, in July 1914, when news broke of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. He notes the almost ho-hum attitude of most people once they had absorbed the facts. The Archduke had not been popular, and no one had a presentiment, on that beautiful summer day, of the cataclysm that was about to be unleashed on the world. At the end of July he found himself in Ostend, Belgium, when the carefree beach crowds suddenly realized that war, the unthinkable, had become inevitable. He was on the last train from Belgium into Germany before beginning of hostilities. The train was sidelined for several hours, allowing for the passage of troop trains headed in the opposite direction. He realized with a shock that the Germans were about to strike at France through neutral Belgium.

At the end of the war, returning from Switzerland to the devastation and chaos of defeated Austria, Zweig's train was again unexpectedly sidelined. As he stood on the station platform wondering what was happening, suddenly an unusually shiny, speeding express train thundered by.

The last of the Habsburg emperors, Karl I, stared morosely out the window, on his way into involuntary exile.

Zweig purchased a house on the hills overlooking Salzburg shortly after his return. In the early 1930s he was dismayed to find himself looking out from his home at Hitler's mountain retreat in Berchtesgaden, hardly a mile across the German border, while Austria descended into political chaos, anti-Semitism, and brutality.

In 1934 Zweig left Austria for Britain after his house was searched by the Austrian police, now in collaboration with Austrian fascists and Nazis. He experienced horror and frustration as Britain and France met Hitler's aggression time after time by incomprehension and appeasement, and despaired when his native country was annexed to Germany, making him a stateless person and a refugee in Britain. He watched as the war clouds gathered, and as the initial euphoria following Chamberlain's "peace for our time" return from Munich collapsed into grim recognition that war must eventually come. On September 1, 1939, Zweig went to the registry in Bath to apply for a license for his second marriage. Suddenly a clerk burst in with the news of Hitler's invasion of Poland. Zweig immediately realized that his status was about to change from exile and refugee to enemy alien – ironically, since the homeland he had fled was now part of the Third Reich. He went home, and packed his belongings. He and his wife immigrated to New York in early 1940, and later in the same year to Argentina, where *The World of Yesterday* was written.

Despite all the foregoing, *The World of Yesterday* is not an unremittingly gloomy book. With considerable verve, Zweig describes his high school and university years, during which he and a small group of friends overcame a stifling curriculum and uninspired teachers by constantly seeking intellectual adventures and growth on their own. He was elated by his early acceptance as a writer of importance by leading authors and prestigious publishers of the day. During World War I he was disappointed by the swift embrace, by many whom he admired, of the prevailing fanatical patriotism and militarism at the outset of war. But he, as an internationalist and a believer in a unified Europe, refused to surrender his integrity. He adopted a pacifist stance and openly colluded with like-minded intellectuals, notably Romain Rolland of France, in advocating for an end to the war, thus making himself a pariah in Germany and Austria. But eventually he gained respect for his position, as the futility of the war and the miseries of defeat became apparent to all. Both before and after the war he travelled extensively and cultivated numerous friendships among the authors and artists of many countries. The years 1924-33 he describes as a "period of relative calm and ... an unexpected gift." It was a time when his works were in demand and he became genuinely famous, when doors easily opened in welcome, and invitations to speak came from all over the

world. But with the rise of fascism and Nazism the storm clouds gathered again, and walls began to close in on him once more.

An intriguing feature of *The World of Yesterday* is the story of Zweig's many meetings and friendships with prominent literary, artistic, and even political figures of the day. He excels at limning out portraits of well-known personalities in a page or two, to create a vivid image of the person in the reader's mind. Romain Rolland, Auguste Rodin, Theodore Herzl, James Joyce, Walter Rathenau, Rainer Maria Rilke, Maxim Gorky, Richard Strauss, Sigmund Freud – all these and many others make memorable appearances in Zweig's account.

Zweig's renown seems to have faded since the end of World War II. One would not call him obscure, and he probably occupies a respectable place in university studies of European literature. His autobiography sheds important light on what it was like, as a sensitive intellectual, a secular minded Jew, an idealist and an internationalist, to live though the tumultuous first half of the twentieth century. For Zweig it meant painfully witnessing the disintegration of all the humane values, all the liberal hopes, all the dreams and illusions of international security and peace, until the brilliant, civilized society of his youth had been completely submerged in the barbarity of the 1930s. For many of us witnessing the troubling social and political developments of the past several years, it is possible that his story resonates a little more than it might have a decade or two ago.

The last paragraph of *The World of Yesterday* strikes a note of despair and resignation, and foreshadows the dénouement of Zweig's story: "As I walked home, I suddenly saw my own shadow going ahead of me, just as I had seen the shadow of the last war behind this one. That shadow had never left me all this time, it lay over my mind day and night. Perhaps its dark outline also lies over the pages of this book. But in the last resort, every shadow is also the child of light, and only those who have known the light and the dark, have seen war and peace, rise and fall, have truly lived their lives."

Living in Argentina, far from his beloved Europe, Zweig had written to a friend, "My inner crisis consists in that I am not able to identify myself with the me of the passport, the self of exile." Shortly after delivering the manuscript of his autobiography to his publisher, he and his second wife committed suicide, on February 23, 1942.

I am glad to have met him through the pages of his book. To me his was a noble and a tragic life, somehow embodying the great tragedy of the twentieth century. If James Mustich ever expands his book, say to *1,001 Books to Read Before You Die*, I hope he will include *The World of Yesterday* by Stefan Zweig.

WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM 2019

A successful Wellness Symposium was held on October 28, 2019 at the Nova Scotia Teachers Union building in Halifax, NS. This symposium was attended by 67 delegates, representing the 23 RTO Provincial Branches. The event familiarized the attendees with the resources and organizations available throughout the province to advocate for and to support retirees and senior citizens. The focus of the day-long event was how one can live a healthy, balanced, and active life in the golden years of retirement.

The Keynote Speaker was Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy addressing “The Fountain of Health Initiative for Optimal Aging”. Additional presenters included Heather deBerdt Romilly from Nova Scotia Legal Aid, and Judy Toste and Pam Gianfrancesco for Health Care Assist. A panel discussion regarding conducting workshops and the Branch Initiative Program took place with panelists Chester Sabean from Colchester-East Hants, Laureen Murphy from Antigonish-Guysborough, Mickey Guthro from Glace Bay District, and Phil VanZoost from West Hants.

A Mini Seniors Expo was held in the afternoon whereby twelve groups and organizations set up informative displays affording delegates the opportunity to circulate, ask questions, and gather information related to overall wellness. Participants at the Mini Expo included: Maritime Travel – Tracey MacDonald; Dynamic Wellness – Logan Harris; Nova Scotia 211 – Suzy Teubner; Nova Scotia Community Transportation Network – Reg Johnston; Nova Scotia Community Links – Helen MacDonald; Care Assist and CAREpath – Judy Toste and Pam Gianfrancesco; SHSP Halifax Regional Police – Delthia Miller; Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association – Colleen Cash; Johnsons Inc. – Paul Sarty; VOXX Life – Elaine

Trites; Valley FlaxFlour and Nutrition – Wendy Roda; and Holistic Health – Lori Moore.

A goal of the Wellness Symposium was to support and encourage delegates in organizing a wellness program or event in their Branch or region during the 2019-2020 year. Feedback from the evaluation forms indicated that this goal was achieved. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the valuable programs and services offered to seniors and found accumulating the resources in one place was beneficial. Additional comments indicated that the lunch buffet was delicious and the musical interlude provided by Mickey Guthro was delightful.

Thank you to the following for contributing to the Symposium door prizes and, or delegate swag bags: Medavie Blue Cross for donating the major door prize of eight seats at the Blue Cross Suite, Scotia Bank Center, for one 2019/20 Thunderbirds game; Manual Life; Teachers Plus Credit Union; Johnson Inc.; Lawtons; Shoppers Drug Mart; Future Inns; Lacewood Dentistry; and Nova Scotia Heart and Stroke Association.

An expression of gratitude goes to the members of the RTO Programs Committee consisting of Margie MacNeil, Linda MacNeil, Bob Hayter, Ambrose White, Marlene Boyd, and Chair Bonnie Mahaney for their commitment and enthusiasm in planning and conducting the symposium and to President Bill Berryman and the RTO Provincial Executive for their confidence and support.

Thank you also to the Branch members for volunteering your time to attend and participate. Best of Luck in planning your future “wellness event”!



WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM 2019



Lunch buffet



Dr Keri-Leigh Cassidy, Keynote Speaker, being introduced by Bill Berryman



Delegates in Mini Seniors' Expo



Panel Discussion with Moderator Margie MacNeil, Panelists Chester Sabeau, Laureen Murphy, and Mickey Gouthro



Delegates Kathy Reimer and Ellen Boyd



Presenters Judy Toste and Pam Gianfrancesco



Musical entertainment by Mickey Gouthro



Symposium Planning Committee Margie MacNeil, Linda MacNeil, Chair Bonnie Mahaney, Bob Hayter, and Marlene Boyd. Missing is Ambrose White.



Delegate receiving the Grand Door Prize presented by Linda MacNeil and Bonnie Mahaney

NSTC REUNION 2020

Schedule of Activities

(All at the Best Western Glengarry, except as noted)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21 IN SALON DEG

- Little White School House, Silent Auction - Take items to the LWSH by 5:00 PM.
- Please pre-register to donate them with David McKillop no later than July 31, 2020.
- Phone: 902.890.5128 or Email: davidwmckillop@gmail.com
- 6:00 – 8:00 PM – Registration (Registration will also take place Saturday morning from 9:00 AM to 12:00 AM – same location).
- 6:00 – 7:30 PM – Gather, Mix and Mingle, enjoy Food and Beverages.
- 7:30 PM - Official Opening of Reunion 2020 - Keynote Speaker – Jane Cordy ‘70
- 8:00 PM – Faculty/Staff Tribute – A great time to thank those who helped us through our years at NSNC/ NSTC – come and meet the staff.
- 8:30 PM - Institute Night/Tunes & Tankards/Coffee House. - Mix and mingle, share your musical talent, a skit perhaps, and perform just like the good old days! If you have a talent/instrument to share, bring it along. This is your night to shine...again!!!
- Friday notes:

No supper provided on site on Friday.

Friday evening activities are all at the Best Western Glengarry Hotel.

Cash bar available for Friday evening events.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

(All at the Best Western Glengarry, except as noted)

- Breakfast (see note below regarding Saturday and Sunday breakfasts)
- 9:00 AM - 12 Noon - Registration ends at 12 Noon. You must be registered for events.
- 9:00 AM– Annual Business Meeting in Salon EG – Get up to date on all aspects of the Alumni Association!
- 10:30 AM. Take donations to the Little White School House table in the Glengarry foyer for the Silent Auction. To donate them you must have pre-registered with David McKillop no later than July 31, 2020. Phone: 902.890.5128 or Email: davidwmckillop@gmail.com
- 10:30 AM– Executive Meeting following Annual Meeting
- 11:30 AM – Class photos in MacDonald Room – All Alumni registered to attend the Reunion are welcome to participate in class photos. Photos will feature honored years, executive, those who taught in a one-room schoolhouse, and “other” years - so everyone gets in at least one photo!
- 12:30 – 2:00 PM – Lunch – in Salon D (or on your own)

Entrance to ANY Reunion activity is by appropriate ticket or name badge only.

NSTC REUNION 2020

Schedule of Activities

AFTERNOON

Plan an activity with your Grad Class: visit the Truro Farmer's Market (8:00 - 1:00); Tour the old Normal College Site, now the Colchester Library, from 2 to 5 PM; Visit the Historeum to see their college display; Stroll through Truro's beautiful Victoria Park; Shop downtown and at the Truro Mall; Visit downtown Truro and enjoy the many Blueberry Festival activities. Visit the Quilt Show at St. David's Church in Bible Hill; Visit the Little white School House and bid on an item. See Margie if you'd like a drive around the Truro area. The afternoon is a great time to get together with friends and relax. If you need a space to meet, check with one of the organizing committee who will be glad to help.

- 10:30 AM - 1:30 PM - Bid on items at the LWSH Silent Auction at the Best Western foyer (Pick-up at 5:45 PM in foyer).
- 2:00 PM – Tour the former NSTC campus
- 2:00 PM - Storytelling with Clara Dugas '69. Salon A
- 2:30 PM – Tour of the Colchester Historeum, Young Street – fee \$3.00
- 2:00 - 4:00 PM - Tea and cheesecake at the Little White School House - \$5.00 cash.

EVENING IN SALON DEG

- 6:00 – 6:30 PM – Reception/Social. Music - David McKillop NSTC Prof.
- 6:30 PM – Dinner and Awards at Best Western Glengarry. Guest Speaker Lois Musselman '69.
- 9:00 PM – Dance – Dance to Jim Aylward '91 and his band Sweet Revenge. This is bound to be a great time with fun for all! Don't miss it!
- Saturday notes:

Cash bar available for the Social, Dinner, and into the evening.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

- Church Service - At Immaculate Conception, Prince Street, 9:00 AM. We will sit as a group at the church, meeting in the foyer.

Special Notes

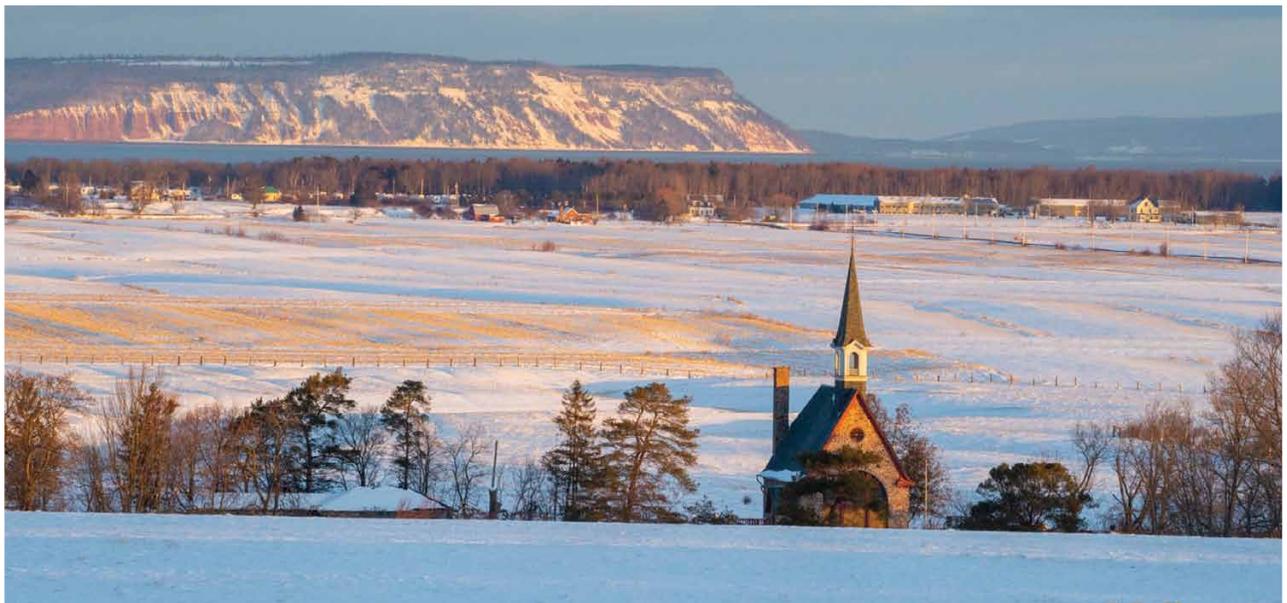
Special Draw – The first 150 registrations will be entered in a draw for the refund of your Registration Package fees (excluding membership).

Saturday and Sunday Breakfast – On your own - except for those staying at the Best Western Glengarry, breakfast is included in your room price. Can purchase at front desk for \$10.00.

A block of rooms at the Best Western Glengarry has been reserved for Alumni. The cost per night \$141.99/ double, plus \$10/person for additional occupants and requires advanced registration before July 21, 2020. Please book directly by calling 800-567-4276 or 902-893- 4311. Hot breakfast is included with each night's stay. Check-out by Noon.

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, and seascape of Nova Scotia. Submissions must be your own photography. Please include your name and the location. Not only will our newsletter continue to share information and stories with members, but your photographs will remind us why we have chosen to retire in Nova Scotia, and encourage us to explore its wonders for ourselves. Please email photos to bettyanne@eastlink.ca or mail to Betty Anne McGinnis, 6571 Highway 1, Ellershouse, NS B0N 1L0. Photos sent by mail will not be returned.



Blomidon and Grand Pré Church in Winter. Photo by Colin Chase.



*Cherry Hill Beach.
Photo by Brenda Zwicker.*

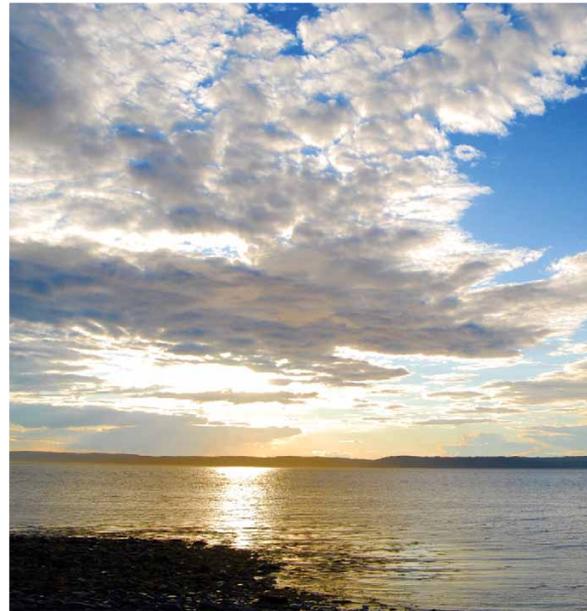


*Holly Berries on a Snowy Day, Coldbrook.
Photo by Dave Jones.*

This Land Is Your Land...



*Lunenburg County Winter.
Photo by Verlene Silver-Corkum.*



*Sunset over St. Mary's Bay.
Photo by Charlotte Brooks.*



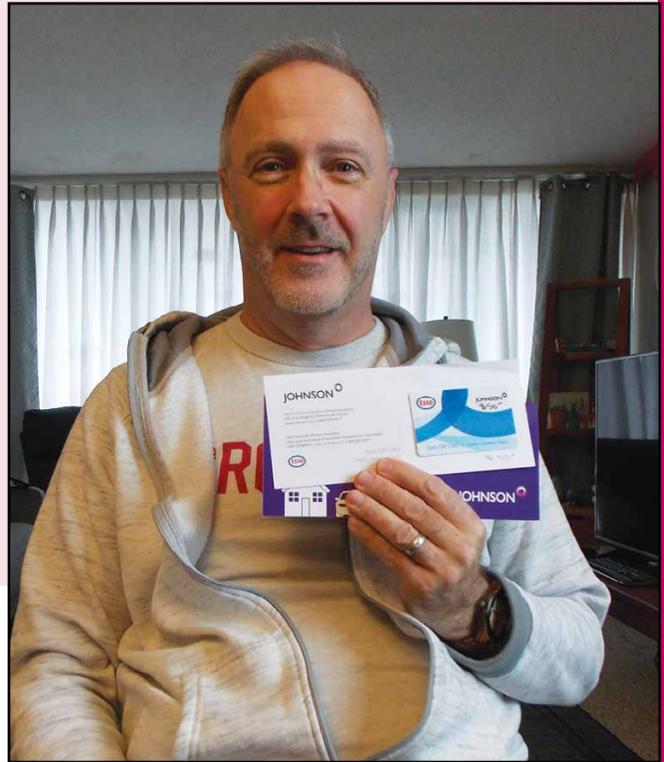
Sunrise and Sea Smoke on Country Harbour, Guysborough County. Photo by Cheryl Millard.

Find Scavenger Hunt



Find the answers to the following questions and submit your entry to the editor

by email bettyanne@eastlink.ca, or by mail to Betty Anne McGinnis, 6571 Highway 1, Ellershouse, NS B0N 1L0. Prizes have been generously donated by Medavie Blue Cross, Johnson Inc., NSTU, and Manulife. Submissions must be received by April 15, 2020. 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 Fall 2019 contest was Greg Golden, formerly West Hants Branch. Congratulations!



Greg Golden, Fall 2019 Scavenger Hunt winner

1. What is the date of the AGM 2020 dinner?
2. Who should you call or email at the NSTU Office to update your contact information?
3. Johnson's article provides 8 tips to help homeowners prevent what?
4. Which motel is the home base for the 2020 NSTC Reunion?
5. What is the deadline for submitting application for a Legacy Foundation grant?
6. What are the dates for the 2020 RTO Golf Tournament?
7. What are the dates for the 2020 NSTU/RTO Bowling Tournament?
8. As noted in the Seniors Advisory Council report for December, what changes are planned for Seniors Pharmacare for 2021-2022?
9. What is the phone number for Pension Services Corp.?
10. Peter Sheppard gives helpful information on learning a new skill. What is that skill?

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 with **Marie MacInnis at mamacinnis@staff.nstu.ca**
or **1-800-565-6788** at the NSTU Office for the RTO Newsletter mailing list.

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

Your Insurance Benefits at a Glance

NOVA SCOTIA TEACHERS UNION GROUP INSURANCE PLANS PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIRED TEACHERS		
PLAN	RETIRED (UNDER AGE 65)	RETIRED (AGE 65 & OVER)
Provincial Master Life & Accidental Death & Dismemberment	Retired After Aug. 1/2000	All coverage cancels end of month of 65 th birthday except for \$10,000 Retiree Life. Deducted from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension. Conversion option available. See booklet. This amount increased effective August 1, 2009. Therefore, retired member may be insured for a lesser amount.
	\$50,000 Life \$50,000 AD&D \$3,000 Dependent Life Spouse \$1,500 Dependent Life Children Deducted from your Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension cheque.	
Optional Life Insurance / Spousal Life Insurance	After Oct. 1/2014	After Oct. 1/2014
	\$50,000 to \$300,000. (The initial amount of Optional Life Insurance has increased over the years; therefore, you may be insured for a lesser amount). Member/spouse under 65 may apply/increase coverage by submitting medical evidence of insurability. Initial amount member/spouse - \$10,000 Spousal Life available equal to or less than member. Premium paid 100% by teacher. Deducted from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.	Cancels the end of the month of 85 th birthday. Dependent Life and Spousal Life cancels or when no longer eligible per contract. At age 70, the benefit will reduce to a maximum \$50,000. Anyone with less than \$50,000 of coverage would continue with a lesser amount. Premium paid 100% by teacher. Deducted from your Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.
Dependent Life	\$10,000 Spouse \$5,000 Dependent Children	\$10,000 Spouse \$5,000 Dependent Children
Voluntary Accidental Death & Dismemberment	\$5,000 to \$300,000 Premium paid 100% by teacher. Deducted from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension. Can only continue the coverage in effect prior to retirement. Coverage same as active	<u>Up to age 70</u> - \$5,000 to \$300,000. Coverage same as Retired under 65. <u>Age 70 to 74 inclusive</u> - \$5,000 to \$100,000. Some exclusions after age 70. Please see Group Insurance Profile. Coverage ceases the end of the month of 75 th birthday. Deducted from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.
Medical	Total Care / Medical continues. Premium paid 100% by Province of Nova Scotia for Single or Family Plan. A retired teacher must enroll in the Plan within sixty (60) days of retirement, or within sixty (60) days of first pension cheque.	Coverage transfers to the Retired Teachers Health Care Plan. Premium paid 100% by Province of Nova Scotia. No drug coverage - covered under Nova Scotia Seniors' Pharmacare Program if 65 or over. Upon death of teacher, coverage continues for spouse if in receipt of Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension (Province of Nova Scotia pays 100% of premium).
Dental	Dental Plan continues if enrolled at date of retirement. Premium paid 100% by teacher. Deducted monthly from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.	The termination date of coverage was extended beyond age 75, effective Jan. 1, 2010 for those currently insured. Premium paid 100% by teacher. Deducted monthly from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.
MEDOC® Travel Trip Cancellation / Interruption	Available to all Members. Premium based on age. Deducted monthly from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.	Available to all Members. Premium based on age. Deducted monthly from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.
Voluntary Critical Illness Insurance	Available to all Members. Premium based on age. Up to \$50,000 guarantee issue amount of insurance available. Deducted monthly from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.	Available to all Members under the age of 75. Premium based on age. Up to \$50,000 guarantee issue amount of insurance available. Deducted monthly from Nova Scotia Teacher's Pension.
CAREpath: HealthCareAssist Program Cancer Assistance Program Seniors' Care Assistance Program	Coverage continues. Paid 100% by NSTU Group Insurance Trust Fund.	Coverage continues. Paid 100% by NSTU Group Insurance Trust Fund.

RETIRED TEACHERS ORGANIZATION

Member-at-Large Application

Deadline for Application: April 1st

Name of Region: _____ RTO Branch (Applicant): _____

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

RTO Branch Activities: _____

RTO Provincial Activities: _____

Other Activities (Including NSTU Local or Provincial activities): _____

Signature of Applicant

Date

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION TO YOUR BRANCH PRESIDENT NO LATER THAN APRIL 1st.

Member-at-Large Positions

Member-at-Large positions are open for nomination in the following three regions for the 2020-22 term.

1. Cape Breton-Victoria (Glace Bay District, New Waterford, Sydney and Area, and Northside-Victoria Branches) – 2 year position
2. South Shore (Lunenburg County, Queens, and Shelburne County Branches) – 2 year position
3. Valley (Annapolis, Kings, and West Hants Branches) – 2 year position

In addition to inclusion in this issue, the application form for a Member-at-Large position is posted on the RTO website at rto.nstu.ca. Interested candidates must submit a completed application to his/her Branch President by April 1, 2020.

If a particular Branch has more than one candidate offering for Member-at-Large, then an election at that Branch level must be held prior to April 30, 2020. No more than one name may be offered by each Branch in a region. A Returning Officer for each region holding a Member-at-Large election shall be appointed at the March Presidents' meeting. Each Returning Officer will then conduct an election for Member-at-Large in his/her region after April 30, 2020, but prior to May 15, 2020. The Returning Officer shall conduct the election by calling a meeting of the candidates and three voting delegates from each participating Branch. Immediately following the election at this meeting, each Returning Officer shall submit the name of the successful candidate to the RTO Nominating Committee Chair. The names of the elected Members-at-Large will be announced at the RTO AGM on May 21, 2020.

— Submitted by Jim Kavanaugh, Nominating Committee Chair

RTO Pins are available through your Branch Presidents. Price is \$5.00 each!



Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: 3106 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, NS B3L 4L7