

The Retired Teacher

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Volume 43, Number 2, February 2012

The Retired Teacher is available online at rto.nstu.ca. To download Adobe Reader, go to www.adobe.com

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The Retired Teacher, a newsletter for retired teachers, is published by the Retired Teachers Organization, an affiliate of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

The opinions expressed in stories or articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy of the Retired Teachers Organization or the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, its professional staff or elected provincial representatives.

We assume no responsibility for the loss or damage of any unsolicited photographs or articles.

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

RTO Seeks the Support of NSTU Locals

At the 2009 RTO Annual General Meeting, the delegates unanimously passed a resolution asking the Executive to approach the NSTU with a request that the Union take whatever steps were necessary in order to have one retired teacher appointed to the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees.

Early in 2010, the RTO Executive met with the NSTU Provincial Executive and put this request to them through a power-point presentation. When no response was received, the RTO contacted the NSTU and learned that the Provincial Executive had not brought the request to a vote.

This topic was placed on the agenda of several Liaison Committee meetings, but the NSTU response was always negative. Additionally, the NSTU indicated that they did not want to discuss the matter any further. The Liaison Committee meets three times per year, and representing the NSTU on the Committee are the President, the Executive Director and the Assistant Executive Director. The RTO is represented by the President, the Vice-President and the Past President.

At the 2011 RTO Annual General Meeting, the delegates reiterated their desire to have the Executive pursue any avenue that might accomplish the intent of the 2009 Resolution. Accordingly, the RTO Executive undertook to have a resolution submitted to NSTU's Annual Council meeting that will be held in May, 2012. However, because it is not permissible for the RTO to submit a resolution on its own, the Executive sought out one or more NSTU Locals which would be willing to sponsor the resolution. The RTO Executive is pleased to report that, to date, one NSTU Local has indicated its willingness to send the resolution to Annual Council. The RTO looks forward to the resolution being considered and debated at the May meeting.

continued on page 2



**A newsletter for the
retired teachers of
Nova Scotia
A MEMBER OF ACER/CART**

continued from page 1

The following is the submitted resolution and the accompanying brief.

Be it resolved that one retired teacher be appointed to serve as a member of the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees.

BRIEF:

Presently there are eight (8) Trustees serving on the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees. Six (6) of the Trustees are active teachers appointed by the NSTU, a 7th Trustee is appointed by the Government and the 8th Trustee is appointed by the NS Community College. The 11,000 plus retired teachers in Nova Scotia have no representation on this body. Similar Teacher Insurance Trustee bodies are in existence in the other three Atlantic Provinces and the following is the teacher make-up of each of their Boards.

- PEI: 6 Active Teachers and 1 Retired Teacher
- NF: 6 Active Teachers and 1 Retired Teacher
- NB: 8 Active Teachers and 2 Retired Teachers
- NS: 6 Active Teachers and NO Retired Teachers

If it is reasonable and appropriate for retired teachers to have representation in each of these three other Atlantic Provinces, why not Nova Scotia?

The six active teacher Insurance Trustees in Nova Scotia are appointed on a regional basis and this worthwhile arrangement allows these Trustees to communicate regularly with the active teachers and the Locals in each of their areas. The appointment of a retired teacher to the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees will resolve an existing communication problem by giving retired teachers in Nova Scotia the same, insurance-related, communication opportunities as active teachers.

Not unlike retired teachers in these other three provinces, retired teachers in Nova Scotia participate in all of the Insurance Plans, except LTD, which are administered by the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees. Because of this, retired teachers in Nova Scotia have the same vested interest in these plans as do active teachers. Therefore, it is natural and most appropriate for retired teachers to feel entitled to help carry out the Trust Deed mandate and that is, "To ensure the long-term viability of all Group Insurance Programs".

The two major concerns of retired teachers are Pensions and Insurance Benefits. One retired teacher serves on the Teachers Pension Plan Trustee Inc. and this request is to have similar representation for Insurance Benefits.

Giving retired teachers one seat on the Insurance Trustees Committee takes nothing away from active teachers.

There are numerous retired teachers who possess a tremendous amount of knowledge and related experience that could most positively impact the work of the Insurance Trustee Board. At the same time, retired teachers in Nova Scotia would, finally, feel confident that their views are being presented for consideration while "ensuring the long-term viability of all Group Insurance Programs".

Approval of this resolution will give retired teachers the representation they rightly deserve.

RTO 2012 Annual General Meeting

The RTO Annual General Meeting will be held in Yarmouth at the Grand Hotel on Friday, May 25, 2012 starting at 9:00 a.m. The AGM Luncheon will follow. On Thursday the 24th, the Yarmouth/Argyle RTO Branch will host a social with munchies and entertainment for RTO members and their guests.

We encourage all RTO members to come to the social, the AGM, and the dinner. These events provide excellent opportunities to see your RTO in action, to learn what your RTO does, and to share time with old and new friends.

Registration forms will be available in the next edition of *The Retired Teacher*.

Reservations can be made at the Grand Hotel - mention the RTO Conference: 1-902-742-2446, toll free 1-800-565-7633 or online <http://www.roddvacations.com/rodd-grand-yarmouth>

AGM 2012 Resolutions

The RTO Assessment Committee will be receiving resolutions to the 2012 Annual General meeting in Yarmouth on May 25, 2012 no later than March 25, 2012. The following procedure is outlined in the Operational Procedures. Motions are as follows:

1. Resolutions can be submitted by the RTO executive, RTO Branches or individual RTO Members.
2. All resolutions shall be accompanied by supporting briefs at the time of the submission.

Please submit your resolution(s) to Lise Meunier at the following address: RTO Resolutions Committee, Attention: Lise Meunier, 3106 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, N.S. B3L 4L7

From the Desk of the President... Randy Holmesdale

Welcome to another year! With the dawn of 2012, your RTO Executive has been busy on your behalf, and as you read about our progress, hopefully, the efforts we have put forth will please you. As of December 31, 2011, membership in the RTO was 6807.

We continue our efforts to place a retired teacher on the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees. The AGM 2009 passed a resolution asking us to approach the NSTU on this matter, which we have done, though to no avail. We are working with a number of NSTU Locals to submit a resolution that would go to Annual Council – to provide for a retired teacher to serve on the Insurance Trustees. On October 24, 2011, the RTO Executive met with Therese Forsythe, Chair of the Insurance Trustees; Joan Ling, NSTU Staff Officer; and Paul Sarty, Johnson Inc. Discussion ranged across a number of topics, including the new Profile Plus 65 booklets, MEDOC

– rates and banding by age, critical illness, and presentations at RTO Branches.

RTO standing committees have been busy with their assigned tasks. These committees meet four times a year, with much of their work done between meetings. It is this committee work that is the backbone of our organization. In February, the RTO Branch Presidents meet for two days at the NSTU building. This meeting provides an opportunity for the Presidents to ask questions and to get updates on the activities of the RTO Executive.

The RTO continues to work with other RTO member organizations across Canada regarding a National Drug Plan. I shall ask the other members of the Group of IX to support us on this issue.

Other articles in this newsletter report on many of the issues that we have worked on. Please approach your Branch president with any concerns



or questions, and he or she will bring them to the meetings with the Executive in February.

Our AGM will be held in Yarmouth on May 25, 2012. I invite you to attend and to participate in the discussions on matters related to all retired teachers.

I thank the RTO Executive and the many members and friends who emailed or called me in November when I had a heart valve replaced. This health issue took me out of action for six weeks, but I am well on the road to recovery and am able to carry out my duties as your RTO President.

Greetings from The NSTU President

Happy New Year! As teachers head back to school after a holiday break, retirees continue with their lives outside the classroom, with travel plans, RTO events, and many other activities. However, as retired teachers, a facet of you will always be involved with the status of education in our province. 2012 appears to be another year of challenges. The Minister of Education, Ramona Jennex, has indicated her NDP government will stay-the-course on balancing the budget, and no doubt that will mean more cuts to the education budget this year. We are braced to make sure the public knows what is at stake if our excellent education system is cut further.

There are three ways you can help.

- 1. Talk to your MLA.** On March 2, MLAs have been invited to go back to school. Please check our website at nstu.ca and confirm that your MLA has signed up to participate. Call or write a letter encouraging him or her to attend that day. If a previous commitment is cited, urge commitment to a different day.
- 2. Sign the petition.** Our petition at kidsnotcuts.ca is alive and well, and we want more signatures. Please inform your family and friends about it and think about events whereby you can gather petitions the old-fashioned way—with a pen and paper. We want the government to see how many people are against further cuts.
- 3. Go to public meetings.** If your area school board holds public meetings on proposed budget cuts, please make an appearance and have your say. You, better than many, know the result of cuts to education. Direct appeals to the boards help show that there is nothing left to cut.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time the NSTU has faced a government unwilling to make the right commitment to education, and, probably, it will not be the last. Having the experience and the expertise of retired teachers fighting the battle with us strengthens our position. Together the NSTU and the RTO can help to protect public education in Nova Scotia.



Alexis Allen

Assessment Committee

On January 4, 2012, the RTO Assessment Committee held its third meeting of the 2011-2012 year at the NSTU Building. All Committee members attended this meeting.

The committee reviewed copies of the approved document to be completed by Members-at-Large prior to the RTO Annual General Meeting and the DRAFT Request to Host RTO Golf Tournament document.

The committee was apprised of the RTO Executive decision on the three changes to the RTO Operational Procedures, the date change for Branch Presidents to submit a name for the Member-at-Large election, and the disposition of the RTO Executive Strategic Planning – AGM Items and the Education in Nova Scotia documents.

The Committee revisited the RTO Branch Summary of Questionnaire Results – Invitation to New Retirees to Join the RTO produced by the 2010-2011 Membership Committee. Once again the Assessment Committee is not prepared to recommend minimum standards of Branch bylaws province-wide. The Assessment Committee believes there should be guidelines: the number of meetings, election of Executive Members, minutes taken at business meetings, and an up-to-date Constitution for all Branches.

The Assessment Committee was advised that this year's Membership Committee has sought the same information as the October 2009 questionnaire. The Committee believes it would be prudent to review the new information and look for commonality of results or major changes, and, therefore, requests a delay in preparing a document on guidelines that would be placed under Tab 3 of the Operations Handbook.

The Committee reviewed the British Columbia Retired Teachers Association proposed addition of "virtual meetings" to the BCRTA Rules of Order. At this time the Committee did not see the need of holding virtual meetings between the regular meetings of the RTO Executive. The Committee recommends that this document be placed in the Assessment Committee binder to be available for future reference.

The Committee was brought up-to-date with the Executive campaign to have NSTU Locals support the RTO Resolution that a retired teacher be appointed to serve as member of the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees. Committee members were in full support of the strategy and are prepared to help the Executive achieve its desire to have a retired teacher on the Insurance Trustees.

The Committee spent considerable time discussing Conflict of Interest at RTO Committee meetings, Executive meetings, and Presidents' meetings. The Committee is drawing up changes in the RTO Constitution by adding a definition to Item J Conflict of Interest. The Committee is also developing guidelines on voluntary disclosure and having members complete a sign-off form which would be placed under Conflict of Interest Items in the Operating Procedures.

—Submitted by Bill Berryman, Chair

4 February 2012, *The Retired Teacher*

Pensions & Benefits Committee Report

The Committee met on September 7 and on October 12, 2011, and the Chair attended the NSTU Pension Committee on October 7.

Highlights of the Sept. 7 meeting:

- Nova Scotia Teachers Pension Plan (N.S.T.P.P.) Quarterly Report March 31, 2011 showed a 2.69% rate of return.
- N.S.T.P.P. Annual Report 2010 indicated the Plan is 78.7% funded, a mature plan with 11.6 pensioners to 13.8 members.
- N.S.T.P.P. COLA for C.P.I. minus 1 members in July 1, 2011 of 1.1% and Variable Indexing members of 0%.

Highlights of the Oct. 7 meeting:

- N.S.T.P.P. Quarterly Report to June 30, 2011 showed a 0.0% rate of return.
- 300 of the 700 Disability Pensions affected by changes to the Plan to be in compliance with the Income Tax Act.
- Pension Partners Board meets on December 6, 2011.

Highlights of the Oct. 12, meeting:

- "Deals and Discounts" list updated to September 2011.
- RTO Maritime Travel Club has 589 members with a Vacation Superstore scheduled at the World Trade and Conference Centre on January 14, 2012.
- Medoc questions concerning number of days in base plan, age-banding, and trip cancellation sent to the Executive.
- The Committee meets again on January 4, 2012 and the Pension Committee on February 3, 2012.

—Submitted by S. Albert Johnson

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Finance Committee

Since resuming our 2011-2012 year's activities, the Finance Committee has met three times.



Members of the committee are, from (l-r): RTO President and ex-officio member, Randy Holmesdale; Treasurer and Chair, Pierre Belliveau; Past President, Phyllis Côté; Vice-President, Jim Kavanaugh; and Member-at-Large, Steve Hogan.

Some of the topics brought up for discussion and action: **Travel insurance:** Travel insurance coverage is provided through Johnson Inc. It covers the elected Executive Members, Members-at-Large, committee members, and Branch Presidents while they are on RTO business. The RTO pays the premium.

RTO Branch grants: As foreseen, the RTO Branch grants for the year 2011-2012 were remitted at the end of September 2011. Beginning this fiscal year only one payment will be sent, saving both time and money. All 23 Branches of our organization have submitted their yearly reports, making it possible to forward cheques to each of them. Our Committee, as well as the Executive, is appreciative of Branch efforts in this regard. A thank you to your treasurers.

Budget: It is time to begin preparation of next year's budget, and we shall begin discussions at our next meeting.

Office manager: Preliminary discussions have entertained expanded services to our members, and this position is one that is being considered.

Fiscal year: We presently have less than one month available to prepare the year's financial reports. Action needs to be taken before long and we are looking into it.

Foundation: The same problem has been encountered with the Foundation, as noted with the Fiscal Year above. Positive results have been forthcoming since the appointment of George Landry as coordinator. It is encouraging to note that we have received a Legacy from a deceased member.

—Submitted by Pierre Belliveau, Chair

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Communications Committee

The RTO Communications Committee has two main responsibilities: to oversee the production of *The Retired Teacher*, and to maintain the RTO website. This year the Committee was fortunate to be able to recommend to the RTO Executive that Betty Anne McGinnis be the editor of our newsletter and that Colin Campbell be our webmaster.

The Committee members have now produced two newsletters. They have gathered information from many sources, including RTO executive Members, NSTU Staff, RTO Branch Presidents and peer newsletters. They are particularly impressed with the input of our Branch Presidents and their reports of the varied activities within their Branches. They provide a valued service to their members.

The RTO website has been updated and continues to grow. In the coming months, the Committee will consider additions to the website.

The Committee has reviewed its mandate and made recommendations for changes which have been accepted by the RTO Executive.

Even as this issue of *The Retired Teacher* goes to the publisher, Committee members are making plans for the third newsletter which will be in the hands of RTO Members in April.

—Submitted by Gary Archibald, Chair



Communications Committee: Seated (l to r) are Betty Anne McGinnis, Gary Archibald and Betty Farrell. Standing (l to r) are Colin Campbell, Reg Johnson and Ken MacDonald.

Nominating Committee Report

1. The following positions are open for the year 2012:
President – 2-year position
Vice-President – 2-year position
Deadline for Nominations: February 28/12
2. Member-at-Large:
 - a) Cape Breton/Victoria – 2-year position
 - b) Valley – 2-year positionDeadline for nominations: April 30/12

Branch Presidents must receive applications by April 15/12. Only one candidate per Branch is eligible. If in a particular Branch more than one candidate offers for Member-at-Large, then an election at the Branch level must be held. Only one name goes forward. A Returning Officer (appointed at the February Presidents Meeting) is named. After April 30/12, the Returning Officer calls a meeting of the candidates, plus three voting delegates from each participating Branch, conducts an election, and submits the winning candidate to the Nominating Committee Chair by May 15/12. Names of winning candidates will be announced at AGM 2012 in Yarmouth.

3. Committees: One-year term. (All positions open)
We strongly recommend that each Branch encourage its members to apply for the various Committees: Committees meet approximately four times per year – September, October, January and March or April. The Nominating Committee would like to see a cross-section of applicants from all areas of the province.

There are four standing Committees. The duties are briefly outlined below:

Assessment Committee – This committee's responsibilities are to periodically edit the RTO Handbook to keep the RTO Constitution, Operating Procedures, Pension and Insurance Information, and the RTO Deals and Discounts up-to-date. This Committee deals mainly with organization within the RTO.

Communications Committee – This Committee's responsibilities are to publish *The Retired Teacher* Newsletter at least three times a year and to keep the RTO Website up-to-date. The Committee must ensure that the newsletter contains reports from the RTO committees, a President's message, pictures and reports from the Branches, and information for those interested in offering for RTO Executive and committee positions.

Membership Committee – This Committee's responsibilities are to ensure the membership database is current and accurate and, as active teachers retire, to establish procedures to recruit new members to the RTO. The Committee prepares materials, including

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Branch membership lists and application forms which are presented to Branch Presidents at their meetings.

Pension and Benefits Committee – This Committee's responsibilities are to keep RTO members up-to-date on pension and insurance matters and to propose improvements in pension and insurance matters to the RTO Executive. This Committee prepares information which is regularly published in the RTO Newsletter. As well, the Committee seeks discounts and special offers for RTO members.

There are five members on each Committee, including the chair, an Executive member who reports regularly to the Executive. The success of the RTO depends on the participation of members from all parts of the province. Applications are available in your Presidents Handbook and on the RTO Website @ www.rto.nstu.ca

—Submitted by Phyllis Côté, Chair

Notice of RTO Membership dues paid. (Formal receipts are not issued as the deduction is not accepted by Revenue Canada.)

The professional dues for a member of the Retired Teachers' Organization (RTO) of Nova Scotia for the year 2011-2012 were \$36.

Membership Committee Report

It is the responsibility of the RTO Membership Committee to keep the RTO membership list as up-to-date as possible. This is a challenging task because there is no automatic registration as is the case for active teachers. Belonging to the RTO is a voluntary act. The RTO maintains a list at NSTU.

The membership committee works diligently, collating input from many sources, including the Branches. Membership lists are sent to the Branches for annual updates. Membership can be updated at any time. The contacts are noted later in this report.

We have approximately 6800 RTO members. For the last several years, membership application forms have been included in the retirement materials that are sent to active teachers as they make application for a pension. This was not always the case. RTO Branches receive an incentive to sign up at least 75% of the annual retirees as members of the RTO. Successful Branches are recognized at the Annual General Meeting of the RTO held each May or June.

There is strength in numbers. We have interests that are specific to us: pensions, insurance, seniors' pharmacare, to name a few. A strong RTO is important to all of us. It is never too late to sign up. Membership forms are available from your Branch President or by email from mderoche@staff.nstu.ca or by phone at 1-800-565-6788.

At NSTU, there is a Wall devoted to the activities of RTO. Visiting members will see a plaque with the names of Past Presidents of the RTO. A display case contains photos of the RTO Executive and photos submitted by various Branches. RTO Branches may send photos to Committee Chair, Peter Lewis, at lewis@ns.sympatico.ca or by mail to NSTU/RTO 3106 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, NS B3L 4L7.

The Membership Committee prepares retiree packages for active teachers who are planning to retire. These packages contain a letter from the RTO President, Randy

From the Editor...

As I complete the editing of this edition of The Retired Teacher, I reflect upon the importance of these sixteen pages. Depending on the roles they play, active teachers receive NSTU information from a multitude of sources. They attend staff meetings where they receive regular updates on business. They have school reps on site. They have the opportunity to attend Executive and General Meetings of their NSTU Local. They may participate in conferences where further news and information is disseminated. Along with face-to-face contact, they are inundated with print: The Teacher, bulletins, notices and memos of all types.

On the other hand, retired teachers have limited opportunities to receive information. They do not have 'staff meetings' (although I have yet to meet one retiree who regrets this). Few receive The Teacher. Branch Presidents and their Executives hold meetings to provide some information in a more informal manner, but not all retirees are able to attend these. Retired teachers do not have NSTU liaison officers assigned to their meetings. They do not have an Insurance Trustee as a contact. The most readily accessible source of information available to a retired teacher is, in fact, The Retired Teacher.

The RTO Newsletter brings retirees up-to-date on pension and health benefits. They learn of available deals and discounts. They become aware of travel tips and concerns. They discover activities available to them in their own locale – activities that provide exercise both for their bodies and their minds, as well as being just plain fun. They are exposed to new ideas and reconnected to old friends. And, most importantly, they become aware that their elected representatives remain in the forefront, working for their benefit. From front page to final, your newsletter provides information for retirees to consider and to act upon. Yes, The Retired Teacher is of singular importance to the retirees of Nova Scotia.

What I find most remarkable is that it is the retirees themselves who produce this essential document. Without the retired teachers serving on and chairing committees; the retired teachers who inform us of Branch activities and upcoming events; and the retired teachers who, as our Executive members, strive to improve the benefits of more than six thousand of their peers – there would be no newsletter. I am impressed that these individuals, once driven by strength, expertise, and integrity to make the NSTU a union to be proud of, continue to do the same for the RTO. I am equally impressed that this small-but-mighty newsletter plays the key role in this endeavour.

Please continue your support of The Retired Teacher. Your reports, your photos, your feedback, and your featured stories are its lifeblood. Your comments and critiques are also welcome. Please forward them to me, your editor, at bettyanne@eastlink.ca. And don't forget to send along your answers to our first Movie Pun Trivia "The Pun Also Rises".

My final words are words of thanks – to Gary, Randy, Colin, Ken, Reg, Betty, Emily, Sonia and Bill. You make it happen.

Holmesdale; an RTO pamphlet; RTO Deals and Discounts (another benefit from belonging to RTO); application forms; and Branch information. Additionally, the RTO makes a presentation at pre-retirement

seminars. These activities familiarize active teachers with the RTO, and encourage them to become RTO members when they retire.

—Submitted by Peter Lewis, Chair

TC5—MORE THAN A LICENCE TO TEACH

In the mid 70s I attended one of my initial NSTU Local “unsatisfactory contract” rallies. I was struck by the determined political vigour of the teachers in that packed room, but what really pulled me in was the pulsating beat of great music, generated by a small rock and roll band whose lyrics and easy harmonies energized the crowd. That band was TC5, a group of young junior high teachers who had a strong sense of ‘the power of union’, and a stronger sense of the power of music.

Thirty years later I walked into my first Local Retired Teachers meeting ... and there it was again. The same spirited beat and smooth, close harmonies of TC5 that had inaugurated me into the NSTU were still alive, this time to ease my passage into the RTO. Full circle!

Their story:

In 1975 at the then Sydney Mines Junior High, five young teachers, sitting around the staffroom table, brainstorming ways to motivate the school population, discovered a common passion - a love of rock and roll. They decided to dress up as ‘greasers’ and perform a song at the school assembly. Three of them, Henry DiPersio, Bob Winship and Mike MacNeil, had a background in music. They handed Jim Prince and Mike MacIsaac guitars

and taught them a two-chord song. The intrepid group performed at the assembly, were a big hit with the kids, and were hooked. Mike MacIsaac dubbed the five-man group TC5, a play on Nova Scotia’s method of teacher certification.

At first, the guys got together just to practice and to jam. Mike MacIsaac took up the drums and Jim became proficient on bass guitar. As their repertoire grew, their vocal harmonies developed, and before long TC5 gained a reputation and played dances almost every weekend, often as far away as Baddeck.

For several years the guys enjoyed the dance scene, but family responsibilities eventually ended Friday and Saturday late-night gigs. But TC5 continued their practice sessions, having great fun and learning from one another, and didn’t stop performing. Switching their emphasis to community and school-based events such as variety concerts, winter carnivals, and fundraisers, they remained busy. TC5 also played for special occasions,



But these talented musicians are also dedicated professionals and they wanted more from their music. Their collective experience as science and literacy teachers, guidance counsellors, and school administrators provided a window onto many social issues faced by today’s adolescents. And so began an avocation for these gifted troubadours.

Recognizing that children need to build coping strategies before confronting the challenges of the adolescent social system, the group designed a presentation focusing on social issues and decision-making. The popular 90-minute program targets elementary school children, and employs humour, puppets, and incredible rock and roll music to deliver important messages regarding drug and alcohol use, peer pressure, bullying, self-esteem and friendship. Tools for building positive self-image and developing decision-making skills are laid out through the interaction between two puppets, appropriately named Peter & Gordon after a popular British singing group from the 60s.

TC5 school presentations are audience-appropriate and lively. Using the infectious beat of “the old music” (to





quote their student audience), TC5 changed the lyrics of the songs to plant 'ear-worms' to empower children with the knowledge that they don't have to be victims. For example, Randy Bachmann's hit, *Taking Care of Business*, became Put Bullies out of Business, and that's an ear-worm that sticks in one's head.

TC5 have made this presentation to every elementary school in the Cape Breton School district. The guys involve the students in the skits and have children teach dance moves to the audience. A strong message with practical coping skills is delivered with tact and discretion, wrapped in rock and roll. By the end of the set, almost everyone is dancing. Both tough and timid wallflowers find their toes tapping. And that's what it's all about.

Recently TC5 have shifted in a slightly different direction. Although rock and roll will always be their first love, they have diversified. They have added new musical genres to their repertoire. Their harmonic ranges and instrumentation have broadened—as have their gigs. TC5 now perform gospel music for church services and concerts, or easy-listening music for hospital patients and guest-home residents, such as a Christmas performance at Harbourview Veterans Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre in Sydney Mines.

Still strong unionists and much in demand, TC5 entertained delegates at the Nova Scotia Retired Teachers Organization's Annual General Meeting in North Sydney several years ago, and were back for a repeat performance at this year's RTO AGM in Sydney in May. And every December TC5 entertains colleagues and friends at the Christmas Dinner Meeting of their own Northside-Victoria Branch of the RTO, where the meal is good but the music is great!

For five young teachers from the Staffroom in Sydney Mines, it has been an exciting journey. Thirty-six years and still together, still exploring new directions for their music. They've worked hard to master their instruments, to perfect their vocal harmonies - to make their gifts count. But don't tell them it was work. They'll say they've been having fun. They'll laughingly admit that they didn't accumulate cash doing it, but that they made lasting friendships and made a difference in many lives, both young and old. And they're not finished yet. Rock On, TC5!

—Betty Farrell,
Avid TC5 fan

The Pun Also Rises

Have fun with these and exercise your brain at the same time. Each statement leads to a pun on a movie title. The correct answer is that pun. [Names of actors are sometimes embedded as hints.] The first RTO member to submit a correct slate of answers to the editor (bettyanne@eastlink.ca) will be acknowledged in the subsequent issue and shall receive a 'small' prize. **Answers will be accepted between February 20 and 29 only.**

Example: From *Arachnid Castle*, the occupants were able to dominate the countryside.

Answer: *The Spider House Rules* [*The Cider House Rules*]

1. The colonel leans on the railing and stares down into the swirling current of tears.
2. Sir Lawrence notices that during the arid British summer all vegetation on the surrounding hills dries up.
3. Meryl reminisces as she re-reads the old words of greeting from the line of barberry bushes.
4. Steiger, not wanting to wake the household, walks in the dark to the kitchen, makes a beef sandwich and eats it along with the maggots that call it home.
5. Credit card in hand, Julianne Moore waits on her front steps for the arrival of the weekly flyers.
6. In order to get his shattered life to stick together, Poitier mixes up a homemade concoction of mucilage.
7. Nicholson becomes sick after kissing his flu-infected girlfriend.
8. Though the wind blows wildly, the Branches of the mighty oak make not a sound.
9. Mexican scientists study the fatal effects of alcohol on one avian species.
10. Frodo stares at the shadowy figure clutching a bunch of fruit in its hand.

Branch Updates

ANNAPOLIS BRANCH - On a sunny mid-November day, the Annapolis Golf and Country Club was the site for the fall general meeting of the Annapolis Branch RTO. Twenty-two members were present to catch up on the latest news regarding pension and benefit concerns, communication improvements, insurance, and the Branch's financial statement. (We're in the "black"!)

Vic Fleury, the guest speaker, spoke on the "Crisis in Education" - how funding reductions have negatively impacted programs and services that students have a right to expect.

Discussions also included the opportunity for our membership to provide short lessons, lectures, or demonstrations to the residents of the recently opened total-care facility in Middleton, and the Wall of Fame introduced at the NSTU facility to honour teachers for accomplishments after retirement. The meeting ended with the members' sincere appreciation for the venue, for the delicious lunch, and for the information shared.



Executive, Annapolis Branch RTO - Fall general meeting, 2011—Bill Butler - Secretary, Doug Cameron - Membership, Vicky Parker - Vice President, Gordon MacDonald - Treasurer, Neil MacNeil - President, Vic Fleury - Guest Speaker.

ANTIGONISH-GUYSBOROUGH BRANCH - The Welcome Back Golf & Recess held at the Antigonish Golf & Country Club on September 6 was a great success. Event organizer, Teri Arsenaault, did a wonderful job providing



Award winners: Honest golfers - Jim Picard & Sharon Hill, Putts - Toni Cracknell & Hilary MacIsaac, and Low Gross - Phil Hughes & Mary Lou Cameron.

a fun way to welcome in the school year that no longer concerns us. Thirty-three RTO members played golf and seven more members joined them for recess. This almost doubled the number of attendees from last year.

Teri crafted six handmade trophies which were awarded for both men's and women's low gross, putts, and most honest golfer. Six gift certificates were also presented: two for the low gross winners, and four by random draw. The certificates were from The Prissy Pig (\$25), Maritime Inn Main St. Café (\$25), Justamere Cafe (\$25), Snow Queen (2 Complimentary Breakfasts), and the last two for our RTO Christmas Dinner. Teri wishes to acknowledge Colin Boyd for providing a 40-cup thermos of Tim Horton's coffee with cups, cream, milk and sugar; Keith Cracknell for creating the teams and the scorecard; and Anne MacDonald for picking up and delivering the recess treats.

President Phil Hughes organized the 2nd Annual RTO Bowlarama held at Pinns Bowling & Entertainment Centre on November 17. Thirty-seven retirees attended. Participants were treated to two strings of bowling, lunch, trophies, and much fun and laughter. We encouraged everyone to take part, even if they had not bowled before. Some chose to attend as cheerleaders and joined in for

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Updates

the accompanying social. Local artist/retired teacher, Nancy Turniawan, created the trophies. She fashioned these individual pieces of art from beach stones, with each one representing a part of the Bowlarama experience. She also made a "King Pin" crown for Phil to wear. Prize winners were: Best score-- Paul Veitch (Men), Alicia Vink (Ladies); Most Improved (string 1 to string 2): Men - George Murphy and George Williams; Ladies - Myra MacIsaac and Lynda Armstrong; Best Effort/Least Result - Evelyn Cooke. Everyone enjoyed the event, and the recommendation is that it become a yearly, and possibly twice-yearly, activity.



Events Chairperson, Diane MacDougall, coordinated all the aspects of our Annual Christmas Dinner/General Meeting. This took place on December 8 at St. Ninian Place in Antigonish. Close to 90 of our RTO members attended. Nellie Cypher catered a full turkey dinner. Donations were collected for the Antigonish Food Bank. Anja Sampson created beautiful Christmas centre-pieces from her holly Branches and other greenery. Joan & Neil MacIsaac lent their decorating expertise to produce truly enchanting surroundings. Paul & Janet Veitch along with George Murphy greeted the guests at the door. Vice-President Derek Hayne and Treasurer Joe Martell sold 50/50 tickets and collected membership fees. Diane provided fifteen door prizes which were drawn for prior to dessert. The winner of the 50/50 tickets was Ann Wallace who took home \$144. The holiday atmosphere was tangible, and all present shared feelings of good cheer.

CUMBERLAND BRANCH - Cumberland RTO held its Christmas Dinner/Business meeting at the Anglican Church Hall in Amherst. A delicious turkey dinner with ginger cake and ice cream was served in a decorated setting. The guest presenter was Dr. Ian McCarthy. His topic - Aging Eyes. Dr. McCarthy provided the group with color pictures

of possible problems with eyesight as we age. A question-and-answer session followed.

Reports were submitted by the President, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and the Member-at-Large. Members purchased tickets on a Christmas gift to raise funds for our annual scholarship awards to the Cumberland High Schools. Member Handbook Diaries were drawn for.



President Esther Boyd chairing the Christmas general meeting.

DARTMOUTH BRANCH - Last February, our first coffee-hour session gathered a small group of members for cribbage. We hope to expand to bridge. The boardroom of our Local NSTU office on Alderney Drive was a perfect spot - free, with a coffeemaker. The Local office has since moved to Burnside.

Cecilia Morgan, one of our retirees, hosted a fun card-making workshop. We designed greeting cards to take away for a modest supply fee.

In June, we enjoyed tea and homemade desserts at the Rose & Kettle Tearoom, Cole Harbour Heritage Farm.

At the CAP site, Cole Harbour Place, the most popular sessions taught "old dogs new tricks" on computers in combination with our digital cameras. Each week, our instructor, Matt, explained digital camera features and the Picasa program to manipulate photos. In the coming weeks, we intend an e-reader tutorial at our new library. Future sessions on digital photography are planned as well.

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In September, at the newly renovated Colby Bistro, Cole Harbour, a delicious brunch was served. A second brunch was held there in November.

Also on the agenda are mini-health-info sessions, with reps from Heart & Stroke, Diabetes, and Senior Safety (Metro Police) sharing valuable tips. The VON provides the "Vial of Life" supplies for our members in which to store their medical/ medication info, in case of emergency. By joining social time with life-long learning, our members find their retirement hours more relaxing and rewarding.

Over 50 members attended our fall and winter luncheons at Brightwood. At the December gathering, we accepted donations for Feed Nova Scotia. Three of our retirees sold handmade cards, photo cards and prints, and scarves for a local charity. Lucky door-prize winners went home with samples of these wares. For 2012, a web page for our Branch is in the works, for which we seek tech support.

HALIFAX COUNTY BRANCH - In September, the Halifax County RTO Branch hosted a Volunteer Fair in Cole Harbour. Over 20 volunteer organizations set up information tables to recruit new volunteers. RTO members, the general public, and local secondary students were invited to attend. Volunteer organizations appreciated the opportunity to network with other organizations, as well as the chance to chat with potential volunteers.



Halifax County RTO President Colleen Putt with representatives from a retired teacher volunteer initiative – Changing Minds Changing Lives Reading Program.

Each year the Halifax County Branch celebrates its birthday at the June luncheon. Attendees are encouraged to bring "birthday presents" of school supplies. These supplies are shared among schools who request assistance. This year over 20 bags were delivered to schools of all levels through the HRSB office.

PICTOU BRANCH - At its meeting in October, Pictou Branch RTO was pleased to honour a long-serving member. Past President Karen Sutherland is that person.



Pictou President Fred Jeffrey and Treasurer Laurene MacDonald make a presentation to Karen Sutherland (centre).

Her name will ring a bell, because she so often attends to business at the provincial level. Her heart is with our union. She carries Pictou County concerns to the provincial meetings and reports from her travels. During her professional career, Karen served the NSTU in many capacities. The Local executive found that Karen was a stalwart for any position needing her service. She served as president a number of times and her influence made us proud. When she retired, her involvement did not diminish, though her focus shifted to retired teachers. On behalf of the Branch, President Fred Jeffrey and Treasurer Laurene MacDonald made the presentation to honour a worker who said in response, "I just did what was in front of me." Thank you so much, Karen.

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At the same meeting we were treated to a presentation by Albert Johnson, RTO Pensions and Benefits Committee. His candid style covered our interest in the unfunded liability and prospects for the future.

On December 7 our Branch will host a Christmas Dinner and Social for retirees. Special guests and celebration will be a treat for all.

Bowling is the event in that cold month of February, and a special Birthday Banquet is slated for April. With numbers increasing at our meetings, we expect a great year.



NEW BRANCH PRESIDENTS



New Branch Presidents (left to right) - Graeme King (Kings), E. Margaret MacDonald (Dartmouth), Elizabeth Acker (Shelburne), Wendy Woodworth (Yarmouth/Argyle) and Fred Jeffery (Pictou).

YARMOUTH/ARGYLE BRANCH - At Lake Ellenwood Park on a beautiful October 23 afternoon, several members and friends enjoyed an afternoon of kayaking, canoeing, and lunching in the park cabin.



Yarmouth/Argyle members and friends enjoying kayaking and canoeing at Lake Ellenwood Park in October.

On November 11, our Branch laid two wreaths, in Yarmouth and Argyle areas respectively.

Approximately 40 members enjoyed the annual Dumping Day Breakfast at the Rodd Colony Restaurant on November 28. Many had attended the 6 a.m. sendoff at Cape Fourchu Lightstation for the local lobster fleet as it headed out on its first day of the winter fishery.

The Branch executive met for its December luncheon meeting at a new location, Marco's Restaurant in Yarmouth. We are pleased to patronize them as a regular supporter of our Branch newsletter.

Upcoming events: in February, another Walk-Snowshoe-Ski event at Ellenwood Park and our winter luncheon; in March, bowling; a bus tour to New York in April; and, most importantly, hosting the provincial Annual General Meeting of the RTO in May. We look forward to greeting and joining many of you for the meetings, the open Social Evening May 24, and the luncheon May 25. WELCOME TO THE YARMOUTH/ARGYLE AREA!

The Nova Scotia Teachers Annual Bowling Tournament History (1975 to 2011)

In May of 1975 a few teachers from L'Ardoise organized a teachers' candlepin bowling tournament in Halifax. The Nova Scotia Teachers Union endorsed the tournament by supplying a large annual trophy. That initiative created a successful, long-lasting event for hundreds of teachers in Nova Scotia. There have been other social and sporting events for teachers over the years, but none can match this record. Approximately one hundred fifty teachers bowl each year in this event.

That first tournament in 1975 was held at the Halifax Bowlarama. It was advertised as the 1st Annual Nova Scotia Men Teachers Bowling Tournament. Ten teams played in that first year, coming from the Valley, Halifax City, Dartmouth, Halifax County, Truro and L'Ardoise. By 1977, female teachers began to bowl with the men. Today, half the bowlers are women. Teams can be women, men, or mixed. To be eligible to participate, a person must be a member of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (active or reserve), or a member of the Retired Teachers Organization.

From the first tournament, it was evident that there would be an unequal distribution of skilled bowlers from around the province, and that the more skilled teams would win. A combined tournament format was set up with Championship and Handicap divisions. Each bowler receives a handicap. Handicaps enable all teams to be competitive, and teachers can bowl together as a team from one school or as a team from a school district. Prizes are equal in value for both divisions. From fourteen teams in 1976, the tournament grew quickly to twenty-four teams and for many years has remained at that level.

For years, because of lane limitations, the tournament could not accept new teams. This is no longer the case. **NEW TEAMS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE.** We invite interested members to form a team for an April weekend of fun with teacher colleagues. Stay at a hotel in Halifax and unwind. Remember, this is a tournament for the skilled bowler, but it is also for the unskilled. Don't be shy if you are not a great bowler. You will not be embarrassed. I am pleased to answer enquiries from interested teachers.

Ken Williams
Tournament Secretary
Phone (902) 443-7168 email kb.williams@ns.sympatico.ca

NSTU ANNUAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT 2012

NEW TEAMS ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

Open to members of the NSTU and RTO
(Team = Min. 5 – Max. 8)

Dates: APRIL 21st & 22nd, 2012

Location: Bayers Road Bowlarama (Halifax)

Hosted this year by: Halifax Teachers

Registration Deadline: March 23, 2012

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tournament Secretary — Ken Williams

Telephone: (902) 443-7168

Email: kb.williams@ns.sympatico.ca

RTO Display at the NSTU

The RTO has a display wall at the NSTU building. This display provides information about the RTO and how it works on behalf of and showcases retired teachers. Retired teachers form a large group engaged in many interesting projects. We are a busy lot - volunteering, working, organizing activities, and traveling. The RTO Wall is a great place to post pictures and information about our organization. Pictures should be in the JPEG format and of medium-to-high resolution. Include the names of the members shown in the pictures. The Membership Committee asks Branches to contribute to this endeavour. Send contributions to the committee by emailing Lionel Jessome at lwjessome@nstu.ca We look forward to receiving your input so that we can all share in the activities of retired teachers.

RTO Presidents' Meeting October 18-19, 2011 NSTU Building, Halifax

The RTO Presidents met on October 18 & 19, 2011, at the NSTU Building. Committee chairs presented reports. (Please see pages 4 to 7.) Al MacKinnon recorded the minutes.

In addition to Committee Reports, NSTU Staff Officers made presentations. Joan Ling provided a detailed summary of the changes to the Teachers' Pension Act and its effect on disabled teachers. Contrary to previous information, she informed the meeting that the Canadian Revenue Agency did not initiate the changes. She was reluctant to provide hard copies of "sample pension calculations" from her presentation. Bruce Kelloway addressed the gathering and spoke about the recent provincial agreement. He indicated that some retirees will receive retroactive pay and adjustments to their pension calculations. The teachers affected taught one or more days after August 1, 2010.

Discussion was held on three additional matters:

1. The Presidents asked the Executive to devise an "Action Plan" to try to achieve the intent of the 2009 AGM resolution which sought a seat on the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees.
2. There is a desire for some Branches to establish their own web pages. The Executive will explore available technical support.

The 2012 AGM is to be held in Yarmouth.

NSTU MEDOC® Group Travel Plan & Trip Cancellation/Trip Interruption Plan

For many years now, the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees have made available to both active and retired members, a competitively priced Out-of-Country/Province Travel Insurance Program. The MEDOC® Travel Insurance Plan offers NSTU members complete coverage for your travel insurance needs.

The Provincial Health Insurance Plan provides limited basic coverage while members travel outside of the Province. However, this coverage is not enough. If you have a medical emergency while travelling out of Province or out of Canada, costs can easily escalate and it can cost thousands of dollars.

Covered expenses under the NSTU MEDOC® Group Travel Plan include prescription drugs, x-rays, nursing services, air emergency transportation or evacuation, emergency dental services, bedside transportation, repatriation, return of vehicle, and board and lodging.

The MEDOC® Group Travel Plan provides year-round coverage. With a 35 day annual Base Plan, you are covered for an unlimited number of trips up to 35 consecutive days per trip during the policy year. For longer periods of travel, you can purchase a Supplemental Plan for additional protection to cover the period of time that you will be away. The Supplemental Plan provides coverage for one single trip longer than 35 days and includes the annual Base Plan coverage. Premium payments are made through monthly payroll deduction to the policy renewal, which is September 1st.

NSTU Trip Cancellation/Trip Interruption Plan

For over two years now, a Trip Cancellation/Trip Interruption Plan has been available to active and retired NSTU

members. This plan helps protect travellers against unforeseen circumstances that may prevent or discontinue a trip. Coverage highlights of this plan are:

Annual Plan

- ❖ Trip Cancellation - up to a maximum of \$5,000 per insured person per annual coverage period.
- ❖ Trip Interruption - up to a maximum of \$5,000 per insured person for each covered trip.
- ❖ Up to a maximum of \$3,500 for lodging, meals, car rental, telephone calls and taxi costs (\$350/day).
- ❖ Up to a maximum of \$1,000 for loss of, or damage to, baggage and personal effects during a covered trip.
- ❖ Personal effects - actual cash value or \$500, whichever is less.
- ❖ Document replacement - up to a maximum of \$200.
- ❖ Baggage Delay - up to \$400.

You must be enrolled in the MEDOC® Group Travel Plan in order to apply for Trip Cancellation/Trip Interruption coverage. For members purchasing Trip Cancellation/Trip Interruption coverage for the first time, premiums will be pro-rated from the date your coverage is effective until the policy renewal date (September 1st). Like the MEDOC® Group Travel Plan, coverage will renew automatically on September 1st of each year. The monthly premium is very competitive with the convenience of year-round coverage.

It is easy to enroll!! Just contact Johnson Inc. at the numbers below for the application form(s). If you have any questions, please call Johnson Inc. at 453-9543 (local) or 1-800-453-9543 (toll-free).



Shirley Bradshaw, Liz Noble, Marilyn Burns, Iris Richards, Eileen Coady, and Audrey Goudey are some of the Yarmouth/Argyle members who are very active in rug-hooking groups in the area. Shown here with some of the creations, the groups' major endeavour for Yarmouth's 250th anniversary in 2011 was a large hanging, Doors of Yarmouth, proudly displayed in the photo.

RTO members Stan Surette, Imelda Currans, Joanne Leblanc Graves, and Muriel Mooney are some of several members who are part of La Choral Acadienne du Sud-Ouest, which presented two beautiful Christmas Concerts in Tusket and Clare, warming the hearts of hundreds who attended.



Retired Teachers Legacy Foundation

The RTO Legacy Foundation will be deciding the recipient of its annual award prior to the AGM. Should you know of a deserving group/organization in your area, please have them request an application form from the NSTU office (1-800-565-6788). Forms are also available on the RTO website. **Deadline for receipt of the application is May 1, 2012.**

The objectives of the Retired Teacher Foundation:

- A. to operate a fund exclusively for the benefit of sick and/or challenged children in the province of Nova Scotia;
- B. 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;
- C. to disburse annually the interest on Deposits in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - (i) This annual disbursement is to honour the life and work of former teachers in NS.
 - (ii) This annual disbursement is to benefit sick and/or challenged children.
 - (iii) This annual disbursement may benefit institutes that provide medical treatment and/or educational training for sick and/or challenged children on a not-for-profit basis.
 - (iv) This annual disbursement may benefit charitable organizations that work for the benefit of sick and/or challenged children.

The following is a list of grants given by the Foundation since 2005:

2005 - Enfield District Care Society - \$500; Special Needs Learning Care - \$500; Society for Treatment of Autism - \$500; **2006** - Conductive Education NS - \$1086; **2007** - IWK Hospital - \$1066.08; **2008** - Society for the Treatment of Autism - Cape Breton - \$352.12; West Highlands Elementary School - Amherst - \$352.12; **2009** - Youth, Peer and Parents Peace Program - Sydney - \$352.12; Highland Community, Circle of Friends Program - New Glasgow - \$352.12; **2010** - Valley Early Childhood Development Program - \$704; **2011** - Best Buddies of Halifax - \$727

Financial Update to 30/09/2011

Total Assets:	\$30,326.59
Income this year:	\$ 814.38
Donations:	\$ 400.00
Interest:	\$ 356.15
Rebate Teachers Plus:	\$ 58.38

—Submitted by George Landry, Chair



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