

Special Points of Interest:

- Join Us For The Annual Labour Day Parade
- It's Time Again For Farewell to The Bell!
- Meandering With Mike: "Kissimmee Blogs and Harry Potter's Singing Frogs"
- An Afternoon of Fun at The Spring Luncheon

We're on the Web!
WWW.RTOERO-DISTRICT14.ORG

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Our President's Message

Spring has finally arrived! It was great to meet with many of our members at the Spring Luncheon at Legends Golf Club. Thanks again to Mary Hesser and her committee. Congratulations to Wayne Scott and Clarice West-Hobbs who received the RTO/ERO Recognition Award for all their hard work and leadership skills with RTO/ERO Branch 14 Niagara. Out of our over 3000 members, a small group of dedicated people work hard to organize our lunches, trips, attend Senate and serve as your Executive and Table Officers. We would welcome anyone who is interested in serving on a committee or the Executive to join us. This is your organization and we need more members to get involved.

The Project Service to Others has been selected for this year. S.M.A.R.T.S.: Steeldrums - Multiculturalism - Arts - Respect - Teamwork - Self esteem. PK Hummingbird steel orchestra has been teaching steeldrum music to the youth of Niagara since 1998. They will provide access to all interested, region of Niagara, elementary school students to teach them to play the steeldrums from April 1st to December 20th, 2011. Various schools have consented to allowing them to teach steel drum music lessons free of charge to 30 students, at a time. Each participating school will be allotted 10 hours of music instruction. Students wishing to continue learning will be invited to general free band practices and have the opportunity to play in public forums such as community parades and cultural festivals. Part of the mandate will be to demonstrate to working teachers, administration, support staff, parents, students and the general public that, through our sponsorship of the music lessons, retired teachers continue to invest in youth education and the community.

Potential members will be able to see that belonging to RTO/ERO will continue to open up a variety of diverse opportunities for them to positively impact the lives of young people. This group will participate in the Folk Arts Festival at the end of May at Montebello Park, and the Labour Day Parade in Merritton in September. Come out and give them your support!

Anne Dean





RTO/ERO District 14

Niagara Peninsula

District Executive

Anne Dean	President	905-685-7826
Joe McDonald	Past President	905-732-4073
Bill Doyle	1st Vice President	905-894-8004
Marilyn Malton	2nd Vice President	905-354-1831
Bonnie Bryan	Secretary	905-562-7773
Kathy Smith	Treasurer	289-820-7615
	Archives	
Chereen Osborne	Communications	905-646-2640
Mary Hesser	Events	905-871-4353
Margot Fraser	Good Will	905-892-2408
Joe Santone	Health Services	905-732-2298
Fred Sullivan	Membership	905-735-7746
John Shaw	Membership	905-685-8779
	Pension Concerns	
Larry Rendall	Political Advocacy	905-945-5241
Stan Connor	Public Relations	905-358-6135
Bonnie Bryan	Grapevine Editor	905-562-7773
John Carruthers	Webmaster	905-356-9620
Robert Halfyard	Data Base	905-935-2197

Area Representatives

Fort Erie, Ridgeway, Stevensville, Crystal Beach, Sherkston

Bill Szollosy 905-991-9779

Niagara Falls

Frank Pascuzzi 905-356-8859

Bill Houston 905-356-6524

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Virgil, Queenston, St. David's

Dorothy Lees 905-468-7575

Welland, Port Robinson

Mary Ann Stocco 905-835-5709

Jo-Anne Fabris 905-732-1509

Port Colborne

Norma Sieber 905-835-8340

Jan Taylor 905-834-9577

St. Catharines

Charleen Avedesian 905-934-2704

Kathy Main 905-688-0702

Thorold

Jane Michaud 905-227-1961

Wainfleet, Wellandport, Lowbanks, St. Ann's, Smithville,

Caistor Center

Lois Tobias 905-774-6604

Grimsby, Beamsville, Lincoln, Jordan Station,

Jordan/Vineland Station, Vineland

Phyllis Dowd 905-563-3242

Mary Jane Tanner 905-562-7667

Fonthill, Fenwick, Ridgeville, North Pelham

Margot Smith 905-892-1891

David Whitehead 905-892-9793

NOTE: Additional Reps are needed for Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and St. Catharines. If you are interested, please call Margot Fraser at 905-892-2408.

RTO DISTRICT 14 NEEDS YOU!

We are still in need of interested volunteers to fill three Executive positions. The role of Archivist is still open. We now have a secure storage facility for our records, but need someone to continue to add to them, and hopefully transfer them to an electronic Archive. We are also in need of a new Pension Concerns Chair. Finally, with the passage of Constitutional Changes, we need people to serve on our new Public Relations Committee, one of whom will take on the role of Chair, temporarily held by Stan Connor. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Anne Dean, or any other member of the Table Officers for further information.

GOODWILL REPORT

As the chair of the Goodwill Committee please remember that there will be no vacation for your area representatives or me. I will continue to send out birthday cards to members who join the 80 year club and to those who celebrate 85 and 90+ years. Lu Beange will continue to handle the death of any member, as names are given to her from Toronto. At this time, memorial donations are given to Doctors Without Borders. Your area reps will continue to welcome new members, send out get-well cards or recognize important events in members' lives. We need your assistance to do our important work. We need you to keep us informed about members who are in need of such recognition. Call your area rep whose telephone number appears on page 2 of the Grapevine, on our District 14 Website, or on our RTO/ERO business cards. Help us continue to work for all of our members.

Margot Fraser
Good Will Chair

HOW DO WE COMPARE TO THE REST OF CANADA?

At the federal level ACER/CART includes all retired teacher groups across Canada. RTO/ERO is well represented and without our support the organization would have difficulty surviving. In June one of our former RTO/ERO Provincial Presidents will take over the role of President of this organization. Arnold Hull lives in London, Ontario and has visited our district a number of times. One of the things you learn when attending this organization is where Ontario fits into the puzzle.



In Ontario, the pensions paid to retirees by the OTPP contain a yearly COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment). We are very fortunate to have an independent organization, RTO/ERO, which is separate from any of the teachers' unions/associations/federations. All other provincial retiree groups are affiliated with the active teachers' unions, and they negotiate any benefit that may be given to their retired teachers.

In contrast to our situation, the Retired Teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador are affiliated with the active teachers' union and have had NO COLA increase paid since 1989. In effect their pension is paid at 1989 dollar values. The Manitoba Teachers' Society negotiated a 10 year agreement for the COLA for the Manitoba Retired Teachers which gives each retired teacher a monthly increase of approximately \$14.23. However, the BC Teachers Association and the Yukon Teachers Association negotiated a COLA for their retirees of 4.5% to 5.5%. In the Yukon Retirees Association there are only 80 members so the COLA is negligible

compared to Ontario with over 110,000 retirees. There are 5 Retired Teacher Associations in Quebec. Their COLA ranges from .05% to 2.5%.

So we are the lucky ones and our COLA is tied closely to that given by OMERS. Now doesn't that make you feel good to be a retired Ontario teacher?

Clarice West-Hobbs

IN MEMORIAM

It is with sadness that we share with you the passing of the following members.

Joseph Belanger
Helen Botterill
Vic Ceccato
Douglas Drennan
Chrissie English
Mary Glanfield
Christina Hutchinson
Gail Imre
Konrad Koch
Carol Leppert
Joan Lloyd
Ruth Mahon
James McNulty
Mildred Mouland
Angelina Prokich
Barbara Smisko
Marjorie Vasiloff

May they live forever in our memories.

CALLING ALL FORMER D.S.B.N. STAFF

Come and Renew Old Friendships
on
Thursday, September 29
at
Henley Island
for

The 2nd Annual DSBN Staff Reunion
2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

For more details contact Dara Goulet at
905-641-1550 Ext. 54103



NOT A MEMBER?

If you are reading this newsletter and are interested in becoming a member here is how to do it. If you or your spouse ever worked for an Educational Institution in Ontario (like a public or separate school, a government accredited private school, a community college, or a university) in any capacity (teaching, support staff, clerical, maintenance, etc.) you are eligible to join our organization as either a statutory or associate member. Your membership entitles you to receive our award winning publications, to participate in any of our activities, and to join our Benefit Plans which include Extended Health, Semi-Private Hospital and Long Term Care, Dental Care, and Travel Cancellation and Out of Country Health Coverage. To join, go to the RTO/ERO website at: www.ero-rto.org and click on "Membership Application Form" under Quick Links.

Who Can Become an Associate Member?

1. A retired teacher who is receiving a pension in his/her own right from the Ontario Teachers' Pension fund, and whose spouse is a Full Member;
2. A retired teacher who opted for the commuted value of his/her contributions to the OTPP;
3. A retired teacher who is not eligible to receive a pension from the OTPP;
4. The spouse of a Full or Associate member who, in his/her own right, is not eligible to receive a teacher's pension;
5. The surviving spouse of a Full or Associate member who, in his/her own right is not eligible to receive a teacher's pension;
6. A retired educator who is receiving a pension from the Ontario Public Service or the equivalent from a Canadian jurisdiction outside of Canada;
7. A retired educator who is receiving a pension from a University or College in Canada;
8. A person who holds a teaching certificate and, upon retirement, will be eligible to receive a pension from the OTPP, and is a member of the RTO/ERO Long Term Care Plan;
9. A person who holds a teaching certificate, who is not retired, is contributing to the Ontario Public Services Pension Fund or equivalent in a Canadian jurisdiction outside of Ontario, and is a member of the RTO/ERO Long Term Care Plan;
10. A person who holds a teaching certificate, who is not retired, is contributing to an Ontario University or College Pension Fund or equivalent in a Canadian jurisdiction outside of Ontario, and is a member of the RTO/ERO Long Term Care Plan;
11. A retired teacher whose qualifications are from a country other than Canada;
12. The holder of a teachers' certificate who is employed under a form of contract that is not a Standard Form of Contract and is a member of the OTPP;
13. A non educator divorced spouse of a Full or Associated member;
14. A retired non educator employee of an Ontario School

- Board, who is in receipt of a pension;
15. A retired non-educator employee of an Ontario educational organization who is in receipt of a pension.

Please note that the rights and privileges of associate members differ depending upon the category into which they fall. Please call John Shaw at 905-646-1367 or Chereen Osborne at 905-646-2640 or Chereen@cogeco.ca

PAC REPORT- THE DSBN LEARNING ACADEMY



Along with many District 14 members we have been following with interest several media releases and pro and con opinions expressed in "Letters To The Editor" regarding DSBN's "Achievement Through Opportunity" initiative. Although we were aware that the Academy was already a done deal, so to speak, we thought it opportune to hear directly from the Project Coordinator, Tom Reynolds, and to share his information with our District 14 members. High-lights from Tom's presentation included the following details:

The goal of the DSBN Academy is to level the playing field for children of parents who have never attended college or university by removing barriers that keep many students from progressing to post secondary education. Applicants who voluntarily apply must have their school's recommendation. They must demonstrate motivation, and be working at or close to their current grade level expectations. They must also show the potential for developing good or excellent learning skills, which include initiative, independent work habits and responsibility. Students must also be willing to participate in enrichment programs such as those offered by the Y.M.C.A. Parent involvement will be required including 15 hours of voluntary service at the school with an additional 10 hours for a second child.

The Academy will be staffed by committed, motivated teachers and support personnel selected from voluntary applicants from current DSBN staff. The program will offer grades 6 to 12, single academic track. Students will receive intensive tutoring, mentoring, counselling, and remedial support, along with post-secondary preparation including information about financial support through scholarships, grants and loans. Transportation will be provided to the Academy's temporary location in Empire School, Welland from all Niagara communities. Hopefully the Academy will subsequently be located on either the Brock or Niagara College Campus.

Tom reported that he had made several presentations to interested parents, and that grade 6 and 7 entry classes were close to being filled. Eventually, when the Academy is providing a complete grade 6-12 program, approximately 500 students will be enrolled. Tom also reported that the original controversial low family income criterion for application for the Academy was no longer required.

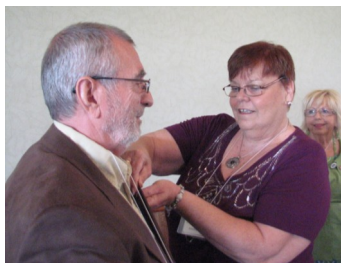
Respectfully submitted,
Marg Newby



THE SPRING LUNCHEON

The Annual District 14 Spring Luncheon was held at the beautiful Legends on the Niagara in Chippewa on Thursday, May 12, 2011.

Our President, Anne Dean, presented two members with recognition for their service to District 14 and the Retired Teachers of Ontario provincially. Clarice West-Hobb's strong leadership skills were evident to all as she proceeded through the chairs on the executive and became President. As well she was on two provincial committees and earned the respect of many across the province. Clarice was elected to the provincial executive and also second and first vice president. Congratulations Clarice on receiving this deserved recognition! Wayne Scott has also served in many capacities within the District and became President. His leadership in the area of technology assisted us in the development of an updated website and a new format for the Newsletter. Wayne mentored many on the executive in the area of technology and is recognized across the province for his articles, "Computer Ease", in the RTO/ERO publication Renaissance. Congratulations Wayne!



Our speaker was a true inspiration with her message that it is never too late to follow your dreams. At age 73 Dorothy Seabourne was getting ready to ride her motorcycle to Port Dover the next day for the Friday the 13th motorcycle gathering. She related her personal tragedies and how she overcame them with her passion for riding her bike. She married her interests in travel, photography and motorcycle riding as she travelled around Europe and the North America on different bikes. She encouraged all of us to have dreams no matter what our age. She also shares her experiences in her new book "I Did, You Can Too" telling her tale of evolution and adventure while overcoming adversity and fear. Many were able to identify with Dorothy's quest to live out her dreams.



The next time we get together to socialize with old friends and new will be at the Farewell to the Bell. We hope to see many of you there. Let us know how you have followed you dreams.

Thanks to Mary Hesser, Eileen Savage, and the Events Committee for their hard work organizing and operating this annual celebration!



Summer 2011
Kissimmee Blogs and Harry Potter's Singing Frogs
 © by Mike Keenan, Travel Editor

Since getting into travel writing a few years back, I've experienced some great adventures which include riding a camel in the same Jordanian desert that Lawrence of Arabia crossed to defeat the Turks at Aqaba (their unsuspecting canons faced the sea as opposed to the desert behind them), snorkelling in pristine waters near Grenada in the West Indies, checking out the Che Guevara Memorial in Cuba, watching New Zealand's famed "All Blacks" rugby team play Wales in Cardiff's beautiful stadium and sky-diving in central Florida. Admittedly, my family was not entirely pleased with the sky-diving, but I also ballooned there which was literally a gas.

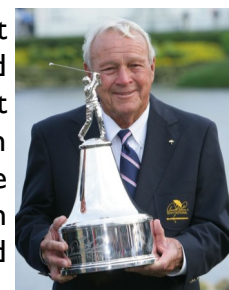
Florida will always be a big draw for Canadians who wish to avoid Niagara's winter. This season, I spent 19 days there, seven in Kissimmee where I was paid \$100 per day to blog! As well, all admissions which were in the \$80 range, were free at Sea World, Epcot, Universal Studios (where we saw Harry Potter's singing frogs) and a host of other attractions which you can read about on the iSeeKissimmee blog: <http://i.seeKissimmee.com/author/mike-keenan/> rather than my repeating here. We took in several pre-season baseball games (free), and I was surprised to see the best tickets run as high as \$40. No wonder many players become millionaires. Orlando features the Atlanta Braves, Kissimmee, the Houston Astros.



After central Florida, we drove to Dunedin on the west coast. Dunedin is a tiny, attractive community, and the pre-season baseball home of the Blue Jays, but we didn't see them play. We visited with friends from Buffalo who now live full time there in a trailer park composed of 400 units, 40 of which are Canadian. While visiting, we tramped through several attractive park areas, ever watchful for Mr. & Mrs. Alligator who were plentiful as well as a dazzling array of shore birds. Our first night in the trailer park, we were treated to a pot-luck supper in one of two good-sized recreation rooms, and our retired friend, Bill, formerly a Buffalo University math prof, played his saxophone to the delight of an appreciative crowd. Dunedin is adjacent to St. Pete's, Clearwater and Tampa, so there's lots to do including dining at many restaurants that feature reasonable meals. If it's fun in the sun that you crave, the white-sand beaches, particularly at Clearwater, are truly inviting. We tried disk golf which has become quite popular, and most courses are free. All one needs to purchase is a couple of disks which are Frisbee-like but heavier, and the idea is to throw the disk into a wire-cage affair standing a few feet tall. It's a great way to get some exercise as you wind your way around scenic parks.



For real golf, before flying home on Southwest Airlines, we enjoyed our last night in Orlando at Arnold Palmer's swanky \$200 per night Bay Hill Resort and Golf Course. They had just completed his annual PGA invitational tournament won by Martin Laird, and the spectator stands and leaders' board were still in place as well as countless banners that featured previous winners. Once again, the price was right, and I enjoyed the many resort photos of Arnie and his army when years ago, he ruled the fairways with his famous late charges that inspired and thrilled his many fans.



After reading this account, you might be inspired to try travel writing. The perks are certainly nice. Send me an email if you need some help, and here's to a wonderful summer.

Contact Mike Keenan at www.whattravelwriterssay.com. Read his Niagara Blog at <http://www.whattravelwriterssay.com/wtwsblog2.html> Mike's St. Catharines Standard columns, Retired, eh? are posted at: <http://www.whattravelwriterssay.com/indexseniorhumour.html>

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR MONDAY SEPTEMBER 5?

PARTICIPATE IN THE MERRITTON COMMUNITY/ST. CATHARINES LABOUR DAY PARADE



Let's show our continued involvement in our Community ... INVITE family and friends to join you in the parade

VOLUNTEER TO WALK, DRIVE, OR RIDE. Want to walk, but "the legs aint what they used to be", complete the route by riding.

All participants will receive refreshment tickets to use at the end of the parade.

Please e-mail Bill Doyle at bill.doyle@hotmail.com or leave a phone message 209 668 2721 with the following:

- NAME
- PHONE NUMBER and/or EMAIL ADDRESS
- NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS YOU RECRUITED
- HOW YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE:
 - MARCH/WALK
 - VOLUNTEER YOUR VEHICLE and DRIVE (Convertibles, Vans, 2/4 door)
 - VOLUNTEER YOUR VEHICLE and OFFER RIDES FOR OTHERS
 - ◆ Number of passengers you can accommodate
 - FORM A MUSICAL GROUP/BAND
 - OTHER IDEAS WELCOMED!

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Micheline Boucher
Grace Bradley
Claudette Chabot
Robert Coddington
Dora Drennan
Ron Gibson
Jacqueline Kalmuk



Lillie Koch
Bonnie Nyp
Robert Paquette
Richard Rossi
Heather Schram
Judith Veld

We hope you will come out and enjoy the full benefits and camaraderie of being a member of RTO/ERO District 14 Niagara!

Over 800 Email Grapevines!

Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we have your correct email address. Over 800 copies of the Grapevine are received by email. If we do not have your correct email you will be missing out. Send all changes or corrections to chereen@cogeco.ca.

