

Special Points of Interest:

- Find Out How You Can Get RTO/ERO Funding For A Special Project
- Photos From District Events - Were You There?
- Meandering With Mike: "Tasting Beer Where They Invented Pilsener"
- Announcing a New Contest!



Our President's Message

Thank you for your encouragement and support. As President, I look forward to continuing to address the needs of RTO/ERO Niagara District 14. Please note that for our District to continue its successful traditions you are essential to making it happen.

In our working years, many of you were involved in Association/Union activities. Our retirement does not mean an end to our volunteerism. We encourage you to be involved in your Niagara District. You can be active as:

- A Committee Member;
- An Executive Member;
- A participant in our District activities/events.

RTTO/ERO provides an excellent Health Benefit Package. Each year members review the package to improve it. An avenue used to promote the Health Benefit Package is the *Personal Retirement Planning Workshop*. Encourage your relatives and friends, planning their retirement from educational institutions, to attend our workshop on February 16, 2012. For more information, contact Pat Davis, Membership Chair at 905-835-8056.

Plans are well underway to offer a full range of social activities. Friday, January 20 marks the return of Curling to our District. Check the Grapevine and our website www.rtoero-district14.org for events and dates. Some of our other events include:

- "War Horse" at the Princess of Wales Theatre;
- The Blue Jays host the Rangers at the Rogers Centre;
- The Spring Luncheon at the Hilton Garden Inn in N.O.T.L.

This past year RTO/ERO established the RTO/ERO CHARITABLE FOUNDATION. The Foundation will coordinate and undertake research initiatives to help maintain the quality and dignity of the lives of older Canadians by better meeting their health care needs. We are all encouraged to support this initiative through personal donations.

A Happy New Year to you all!

Bill

We're on the Web!

WWW.RTOERO-DISTRICT14.ORG

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RTO/ERO District 14

Niagara Peninsula

District Executive

Bill Doyle	President	289-668-2721
Anne Dean	Past President	905-685-7826
Marilyn Malton	1st Vice President	905-354-1831
Bill Szollosy	2nd Vice President	905-991-9779
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
Pat Davis	Membership	905-835-8056
Marion Woodcock	Pension Concerns	905-562-7935
	Political Advocacy	
Stan Connors	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/ERO DISTRICT 14 NEEDS YOU!

We are always in need of interested volunteers to fill Executive positions and Committees. 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 Political Advocacy Chair and a Membership & Recruitment Assistant Chair. Finally, with the passage of Constitutional Changes, we need people to serve on our new Public Relations Committee chaired by Stan Connors.

If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Bill Doyle, or any other member of the Table Officers for further information.

HEALTH TIPS by Joe Santone

Canadians travelling to Europe are urged to carry proof of supplemental health insurance as various governments now require visitors to have adequate medical coverage while in their respective countries. All Canadians travelling abroad are advised to check the Department of Foreign Affairs website at http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp and click on the countries they are planning to visit to determine what the medical insurance requirements are.



When travelling it is important to know what coverage travel benefits, if any, that you have on your credit card. Trip interruption insurance protects you if you get sick while you are away. Trip cancellation insurance protects you if you get sick before you travel. Be sure to understand credit card fine print. Also, check with your credit card company to see if you are covered for insurance if you got a free trip with reward points. The Credit Card Navigator, available at www.insureye.com, allows you to browse through a data base of information about more than 150 credit cards from major banks and retailers.

The following RTO/ERO Benefit Plan enhancements will be in place on January 1, 2012:

- The Prescription Drug benefit maximum will increase to \$2600 per insured person per calendar year;
- The Post Surgical Supplies maximum will increase to \$200 per insured person every two calendar years;
- The maximum for Incontinence Supplies will increase to \$500 per insured person per calendar year;
- The Paramedical Practitioners maximum will increase to \$900 per insured person per calendar year;
- The Dental Plan reimbursement will be updated to the 2012 Fee Guide for General Practitioners;
- The Major Restorative Benefit for bridges and partial dentures, crowns, posts, onlays and inlays will increase to \$800 per insured person per calendar year;
- Convalescent Home Care has been enhanced to include a temporary stay in a long term care facility following a 24 hour hospitalization, subject to the convalescent Home Care maximum of \$75 per day for up to 30 days per calendar year.



IN MEMORIAM

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

Joseph Bulanda
 Thomas Clail
 Marjorie Davies
 Harry Fee
 Delora Juhlke
 Alexander McGlynn
 David Milencoff
 Maria Mirecki
 John Nott
 Doris Olesky
 Roy Santarelli
 James Skehin
 Sheila Smith
 Harold Swallow
 William Wiley

May they live forever in our memories.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-PLANNING

We frequently receive inquiries from the friends, spouse, or family of deceased members wondering who they need to contact. Pre-planning for your own passing can save your survivors a lot of stress, and can insure that your spouse quickly receives their Survivor's Pensions and RTO/ERO Medical Benefits.

At our recent Annual General Meeting, all participants received a copy of the book "Family Documents" (Waterside House Publishing), a guide book and organized record keeper created by two of our District Members, Walter and Esther Dueck. This is an invaluable tool to aid you in the pre-planning process, and gives your family all the information they will need to deal with your estate. The RTO/ERO Provincial Website also has an excellent series of Fact Sheets, two of which deal with this topic. Just go to the "Members Only" section of the Website for this information.

Most importantly, let your survivors know that they need to contact RTO/ERO Provincial Office (1-800-361-9888), the Teachers' Pension Plan (1-800-668-0813) or OMERS (1-800-387-0813), and the Government of Canada (1-877-277-9914) to set in motion the necessary changes to insure the continuation of Pension and Medical Benefits. We cannot do it at the local level.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Tuesday, November 7, over 140 of our members gathered at Hernder Estate Winery to choose a new Executive for our District, to honour our new 80 year old members, and to be feasted, then entertained by one of our own local stars. The list of our new Executive can be found on page two of the Grapevine. Of the sixty-nine new members of our 80+ Club, twelve were treated to this event. They are: Nettie Rahn, Peter Lannon, Nestor Chrabatynko, Ken Clark, Edward McQuade, Donald Gram, Joe Dimarco, Roger Swinton, Ruth Buchanan, Betty Hamm, Stella Buck, and Claire Noonan. Congratulations to them all! We also honoured the long service to District 14 of former Executive Member, John Shaw. Then, after a fabulous meal, we were all treated to the vocal renditions of Niagara Falls native, and world famous tenor, Brett Polegatto. A great time was had by all!



New President Bill Doyle



Some of our new 80+ Club Members



Brett Polegatto



2012 Executive



John Shaw & Anne Dean



CALLING ALL NEW MEMBERS!

If you joined RTO/ERO District 14 since January 1, 2011 watch for an invitation to an upcoming Wine & Cheese gathering being planned for late April 2012. We would like to renew our acquaintance with you, and find out how the wonderful world of retirement is treating you, and maybe how we can help you enjoy it even more. So watch for the exact details which will be released in the Spring Newsletter.

NORDIXX WALKING CLINIC

On Thursday, October 20, District 14 sponsored a Nordixx Walking Clinic at the Welland Historical Museum. Twenty eight game participants gathered on a slightly damp day to discover the joys this outstanding form of exercise. The use of two specially designed poles helps to burn 20 to 46% more calories, reduces stress to the hips, knees, ankles, and promotes greater stability, balance and posture. It is a complete workout involving all the major muscles of the body, especially the abdominal region and the upper body. The technique was easy to learn, and a good time was had by all regardless of their age or fitness level. Poles were loaned to the participants, but everyone bought their own set by the end of the workshop. A percentage of these purchases is being returned to our District for donation to the RTO/ERO Charitable Foundation.



This clinic was so popular that we are considering running another one sometime this year. Watch the Spring Grapevine and our Website for more details.

WHAT DOES YOUR RTO/ERO DISTRICT 14 POLITICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE DO FOR YOU?

Your committee monitors the LHIN activities with special focus on long term care needs here in Niagara

We prepared and submitted advertising in an effort to encourage participation by our members and the public in the federal and provincial elections. In collaboration with the Niagara Health Coalition, we sponsored candidate nights for the Ontario provincial election (thanks to Marg, Charleen, Chereen & Sue for extra work on this). Our committee members Marg, Bill and Chereen were actively involved in Candidate Nights throughout our district. We can see the benefits to RTO/ERO members by continuing to work with coalitions whose goals parallel ours.

Thanks to leadership from Bill Doyle, we have had entries in three successive Labour Day parades in Merriton, and actively participated in Remembrance Day services in seven of our communities. He invited the P K Hummingbird Steel Orchestra which our District sponsored (through Project Service to Others) to participate in this year's parade. This band visits school in our community upon requests and offers 'steel drum' lessons to children. We encourage continued support for this organization.

We are seeking new members to join our committee and give thanks to Phylis Dowd for her service to this committee and RTO/ERO. Special thanks to Charleen for acting as secretary for our committee for many years.

We would like to hear from other district members, especially recently retired ones, who may find our activities interesting and would like to join us. **Contact Larry Rendall or any of our members for more details.** Fresh ideas and enthusiasm are always welcome. Join us and share your talents with your fellow RTO/ERO members. Our activities cover a wide spectrum of what is "political" and are of importance to all citizens.

Members of the Committee: Larry Rendall, Chair; Charleen Avedisian, secretary; Bill Doyle, 1st V.P; Chereen Osborne; Marg Newby; Rick Kent; Sue Hotte; Joe McDonald PDP

★

★ NOTICE OF MOTION ★

★

★ The Executive has reviewed and updated the District
★ 14 Constitution, and will be bringing it to the Mem-
★ bership for a vote at the Spring Luncheon. You can
★ find a copy of the updated version on our Website, or
★ request a printed copy from Bonnie Bryan, 905-562-
★ 7773.
★

PROJECT SERVICE TO OTHERS

RTO/ERO proudly operates a grant program for its 47 Districts, providing \$100,000 to sponsor local community projects. Through Project - Service to Others, Districts apply for individual projects that support local, national and international programs that often involve children and/or disadvantaged groups, to a maximum of \$4,000 per project. Then a provincial committee of RTO/ERO assesses the merit of each Project - Service to Others submission according to established criteria, including level of member and District participation in the project. Examples of types of projects receiving funding include: local heritage and culture projects, special arts and education programs for children, support for initiatives in developing countries, literacy and numeracy programs, and school day care for the children of single teenage mothers.

If you are involved in a project like one of these that needs funding, we encourage you to submit an application to District 14 for consideration. **Application Forms** and a list of previously approved projects (which are a good resource for ideas) can be found on the RTO/ERO Website – www.ero-rto.org/project-service-others. **We require your completed application to be submitted to President Bill Doyle no later than February 17, 2012.** For his address or more information call 289-668-2721.

THE RTO/ERO CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Throughout this past year, the Grapevine has published articles on the creation of the RTO/ERO Charitable Foundation and its CEO, Gordon Cressey. We were fortunate to host Gordon at our Annual General Meeting where he spoke about the work of the foundation, and our organization's campaign to involve you, the grassroots members, in making it a reality. Just recently, you received a request and donation envelope with the last issue of Renaissance, our Provincial Magazine. We encourage you to consider making a contribution to this very worthwhile cause that will establish, maintain and support the RTO/ERO Endowed Chair in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Toronto. The University of Toronto Department of Medicine houses the largest geriatric medicine specialty training program in Canada. Furthermore, the RTO/ERO Chair will have a national and international impact by generating money to support innovative models of geriatric care and education. Visit the RTO/ERO Charitable Foundation website (foundation@rto-ero.org) to learn more about how you can contribute to this important cause.

Tasting Beer Where They Invented Pilsener by Mike Keenan

Why fly over eight hours and a distance of 6,844 kilometres? To drink beer, of course! Not just any beer, but Czech beer, often judged the world's best. What's their big secret? Prized yeast and Bohemian hops, I discover, so cherished that the former is hermetically sealed and kept safe in three major European cities in case of a local disaster and the latter – would you believe that the Czechs celebrate an annual hops festival and that they built an over-sized museum referred to as the Temple of Hops and Beer!

Yes, Czechs are serious about their suds. They lead rivals in per capita beer consumption at 160 litres per year, far ahead of such slackers as Ireland, Germany, Austria and Australia next in line in the pecking order. (Canada is ranked 20th)

The majority of Czech beers (97%) are deliciously light, bottom-fermented beers in the Pilsner style, invented in Plzen. In Prague, beer is served almost everywhere, even in breakfast cafés! Most Czech beers are lagers, and Czechs like their beer best at cellar temperature with a creamy, tall head. When ordering draught beer, I learn to ask for the “male pivo” (10 ounces) or “pivo” (17 ounces), enjoying the smooth taste of the original Pilsner Urquell, Staropramen, Budweiser and many other Czech beers.

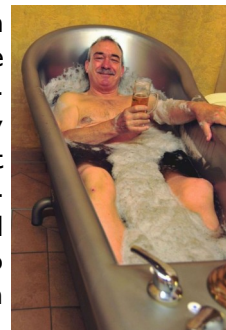
The Czech Republic consists of three major regions – Bohemia in the west, Moravia in the middle (which favours wine) and much smaller Silesia in the north-east. Bohemia, enclosed by mountains, boasts ideal weather and fertile agricultural conditions, making it a superb area to grow the treasured hops, traced back as early as 859 A.D. Bohemian hops are so prized that King Wenceslas ordered the death penalty for anyone caught exporting cuttings. Czech Saaz hops are the international standard for hops of highest quality. I visit several mini-breweries in Bohemia, and in each case, the brew master explains the local process and leads me on a tour through cooking kettles and vats and myriad equipment that ferments and produces tasty beer.



In Krusovice, 60 km from Prague, I visit the Krusovice Brewery, amongst the oldest traditional Czech beer brands, surviving today. Then, I journey to Zatec, 32 km away. Zatec is the centre of a famous hop-producing area where I explore the Temple of Hops and Beer, an amusement and educational complex that portrays the history of brewing beer. Here, I consume the best known Czech beer, the original Pils beer or Pilsner Urquell, brewed in one of the largest breweries I have ever explored, so big that I am ferried around to the many buildings in a bus. The bottling plant reminds me of college days when I worked at Molson's Brewery in Toronto.

In Plzen, I explore the Historical Underground, a labyrinth almost 800 metres long, featuring a host of archaeological finds unveiling the history and life in the medieval city. Provided with a plastic hard hat because of the low ceilings, I easily score seven “hits” that would each stop the likes of Sidney Crosby.

In Chodova Plana, 65 km away, I stay in the “Wellness Hotel U Sladka,” the first Brewery Spa in the Czech Republic. My “treatment” is essentially a beer bath. After discarding my clothes, I am wrapped in sheet-like material and led to one of six tubs, each filled with dark beer and ample froth to hide my private parts. Beside me on a table sits a welcome glass of Czech beer, refilled when empty. I am separated from others by curtains. A lovely rendition of Hoagy Carmichael's Stardust emerges from acoustical speakers. I rest amidst shiny copper plumbing and warm beer and dream that I might be in heaven. Too soon, a burly female attendant (who speaks no English), pulls the plug and beckons me out, whereupon I am wrapped in a towel and led to a “recovery” room where I am cocooned in a blanket and left to relax supine in dim light, listening to more pleasant music. I can get used to this. Surprisingly, the next day, my legs feel stronger, and I walk with more spring in my step.



Hmm, this might well be worth another eight hours and a 6,844 kilometres flight!

Back home, in an effort to help raise Canada above the per capita rank of 20, I lift a brew with fond memories, and as the Czechs say, “Na zdravi” or “to your health!”

Mike Keenan can be reached at his website: www.whattravelwriterssay.com; visit the Niagara Blog at <http://www.whattravelwriterssay.com/wtwsblog2.html> for more suggestions and Mike's St. Catharines Standard humour column at: <http://www.whattravelwriterssay.com/indexseniorhumour.html>



Brewmaster's Coat of Arms

EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE & BE ELIGIBLE TO WIN A PRIZE!

In this issue, and the Spring Grapevine, we will announce a **SECRET WORD** that you can find somewhere on our District 14 Website.. When you find it, click on it to enter your name in a draw for prizes to be held at the Spring Luncheon on May 10. The word may appear more than once on the website, but only one will be an active link. You will know when you find it! So, visit our Website at <http://www.rtoero-district14.org> and begin your search for the Secret Word which is: "Constitution". Good Luck! (By the way, you can now find each edition of the Grapevine on the site before it is even printed and mailed to members.)

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Jane Aaviku
John Ahlstedt
Morna Ahlstedt
Ahron Ashukian
Paul Barron
Patricia Blake
Peter Bolger
Richard Bournier
George Brasovan
Carmelita Bulanda
Pat Byers
Brigitte Chess
Renate Colosimo
Josette Cornelius
Richard Coy
Michael Csikos
Thomas Culp
Carmen DeMizio
Erminia Di Giorgio
Earla Fee
Paul Fell
Henry Friesen
Joe Galaburda
Arlene Garrett
Suzanne Giroux
Patricia Goldwin
Ron Graham
John Hanrahan
Mary Hanrahan
Heather Harvey
Carol Heath



Marie-Claude Higgins
Paulene Holmes
Linda Johnston
Sheryl Johnston
Rebecca Kribs
Jane Kuipers
Diane Lachance
Vera Lenc
David Lewis
Janis Lilley
Mary MacLeod
Marie McKee
Judy Meldrum
Betty Milencoff
Christine Oczkowski
Denise Panunte
Michael Paquet
Alberina Pellegrino
Robert Perrons
Paola Principi
Timothy Rogers
Audrey Romita
Kathleen Ruzycki
Beverley Santarelli
Lonnell Schmidt
Tom Sills
John Smith
Susan Tallon
Norma Thorne
Tuula Toews
Ann Marie Tummillo

We hope you will come out and enjoy the full benefits and camaraderie of being a member of RTOIERO 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.

