

Report Thirty-One

Winter 2008-9

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No. 41



President's Message



I want to begin my first message by thanking Marina for the hard work undertaken by her during her presidency. I am thankful that I can count on her wisdom and experience as I embark on this new journey. I began my teaching career in 1974 with the Wellington Catholic District School Board as it is now called. I taught at St. Francis, St. Patrick, Holy

Rosary and St. Stanislaus schools until I retired in June 2004. Teaching was a call to serve and it meant sacrifice but there were many rewards. My new role is very similar in this regard. There are many good reasons to belong to RTO/ERO. The Health Plans, Advocacy and Social Circle are reasons enough for me. Since I joined our local executive, I have met teachers and other educational workers in the Upper Grand District School Board, as well as members from other districts in Ontario and British Columbia. We all have needs that RTO/ERO meets for us in one way or another.

“The beauty of our organization is that we own it and we are on a steady march of self-improvement.” (Brian Kenny, Renaissance Fall 2008). Your district leadership looks for ways to serve you better. Please remember that we are volunteers who work to keep District 31 vibrant. Your interest and involvement are key to our success.

Participate in local social events and trips if you are able. Get to know your local executive. Enjoy your retirement!



Stephen O'Connell

DISTRICT PRESIDENTS' WORKSHOP

The first District Presidents' Workshop was held on September 23-24, 2008 at the Inter-Continental Yorkville Hotel, Toronto. The theme of the workshop was “Enhancing Effective Leadership” and its purpose was to

strengthen lines of communication between the Provincial Executive, the Provincial Office and District Presidents, providing an opportunity for Presidents to better understand the goals of RTO/ERO and to share best practices with colleagues.

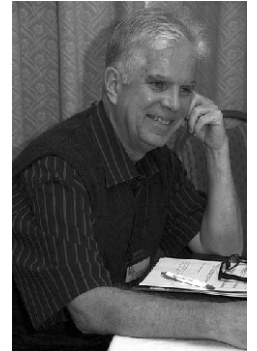


Photo by Renee Mercuri, Provincial RTO



Senate Matters

Fall Senate 2008

The following resolutions were among those passed at the fall senate held in Toronto on October 28-29, 2008:

- that budget lines be granted for a District Presidents workshop, a Pension and Retirement Concerns Workshop, a Political Action Workshop and a District Health Representatives Workshop in 2009;
- that some Bylaws be amended to promote membership recruitment and the use of guidelines for District Goodwill Committees;
- that approval be given to a Charitable Donations Policy for RTO/ERO;
- that the Project Service to Others Committee consider expanding the Scholarship Fund to persons who are studying to be doctors or registered nurses, particularly those interested in a career in geriatrics; and
- that the Provincial Executive petition the Provincial Government to take immediate action to reopen wings and floors in Ontario hospitals to accommodate long-term care patients and, in so doing, free up hospital beds for urgent-care patients.



Political Action



Political Action Report – January 2009
Federal politics certainly became very exciting at the end of 2008! Everyone, even members who are not particularly interested in politics, seemed to be closely following and talking about the events that were unfolding at a dramatic pace in Ottawa at the end of November and beginning of December. Now, after

a few weeks of calming holidays, Canadians are anxiously waiting for Parliament to resume at the end of January to see if the Tories will present a budget and financial plan that will help to stimulate and improve the economy. Political insiders and commentators are reluctant to hazard a prediction as to what will happen. Let's just hope that whatever happens, it will be positive for the country.

In any case, everyone seems to agree that the economy will dominate the political scene on the federal, provincial, and municipal levels for the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, everyone is also agreed that 2009 will be a rough year for Canadians. One major concern that people have is that the focus on the economy will overshadow discussions of other important issues like the environment and prevent other programs from being implemented like the war on poverty and improvements in health care. There is hope, however, in that many politicians are viewing improvements to the environment, infrastructure, and health care as opportunities to improve the economic situation. Let's hope that our political leaders work together creatively to solve the many problems that are facing us.

At the Senate in October, the political action committee identified two specific areas for special consideration. RTO/ERO will lobby the government on property assessment and long term care. RTO/ERO wants to ensure that people who are living on fixed incomes will not be forced to sell their property because they cannot afford to pay their taxes. The political action committee is devoting a great deal of time and effort on this topic and is working hard to convince the government to review its system of assessing properties. A motion was also passed at the Senate that RTO/ERO petition the government to take immediate action to reopen wings and floors in Ontario Hospitals to accommodate long term care patients and in so doing, free up hospital beds for urgent care patients. Another idea suggested at the Senate was that RTO/ERO might provide scholarships – much like the ones we provide for students who are attending

Teachers Colleges – to young people studying to become doctors and nurses. This idea has been referred to the Provincial executive for study and report back to the next Senate.

The Provincial Government has published a great resource book for seniors: *A Guide to Programs and Services for Seniors in Ontario*. This excellent resource addresses issues ranging from Care Facilities and Disability Supports to Active Living, Leisure and Volunteering. Copies are available at www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/seniors or by calling 1-888-910-1999. This Guide is a truly valuable resource for all seniors.

One prediction that all political pundits are confident in making is that politics will continue to be fascinating and dramatic in 2009!



Brenda McGinnis

RENAISSANCE PROPOSALS WANTED

Would you like to see your name/photo in print? Renaissance is beginning themed issues and is inviting contributions (art/opinions/photos/experiences) for:

Summer: The Green Issue due Feb. 27th

Fall: Authorship and Publishing due May 1st

Winter: Community Grassroots Action due Aug. 7th

Submit to renaissance@rto-ero.org.



Service to Others

RTO/ERO Scholarships

2009 Scholarship Application forms are available online in both official languages on the main page of the provincial website (www.rto-ero.org). Scholarships are available to relatives of RTO members who are completing education programs that will directly lead to a career in teaching in Canada. As retired educators, RTO fully supports this scholarship program. Please inform members of your family who may be eligible to apply for this scholarship. Complete details of eligibility are posted on the website.

N.B. Scholarship applications for 2009 will only be accepted on-line through the RTO/ERO website.

Deadline - September 8, 2009 prior to the close of business.



RTO District 31 Scholarship Recipient

My name is Amanda Christie and I was recently awarded a \$1500 scholarship from Johnson Insurance Company. I learned of this opportunity through the RTO newsletter. This scholarship was based on my high school average (worth 65%), a reference letter from a school faculty member (worth 25%) and a personal letter describing my school and community activities and future plans (worth 10%). This scholarship will help pay for my education at Queen's University as I pursue an Honours B.A. in Global Development Studies and Women's Studies. I am very thankful to Johnson Insurance Company for their contribution to my education, and I encourage others to pursue this opportunity. The scholarship is open to any Canadian student completing high school and beginning post-secondary education. There are 100 awarded annually.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Health Services and Insurance Committee of the Retired Teachers of Ontario will provide a most cost effective, high quality and competitive group insurance plan that meets the needs of the majority of the membership.

BENEFITS INFORMATION ON-LINE

www.johnson.ca

To access your secure personal benefits information on this site, you will need to complete a form. Once you receive your username and password, you have access to all details regarding your benefits coverage, both current and past. Although, at times, access may be a bit problematic since it is secure, you do have an excellent resource at your disposal. Members have access to the Group Benefits



Program and all other plans offered to RTO/ERO members through our Plan Administrator, Johnson Inc. The coverage and claims information on the website is in real-time.

PRESCRIPTION DISPENSING FEES

Remember that pharmacies set their own dispensing fees and that not all are equal. For example, in Guelph, as of November, Zehrs was charging \$8.99, Shoppers' Drug Mart \$11.99 and PharmaPlus \$10.99.

Consider checking with several to get the best rate for your needs.

NEW FOR 2009

Rates beginning February 1, 2009:

- Monthly rates for Semi-Private Hospital Care will decrease by 10%.
- Extended Health Care and Dental Plans rates will increase by 2%.

Coverage Changes effective January 1, 2009:

- Semi-private hospital room coverage will increase to 95%.
- Convalescent Home Care benefit will increase to \$75/day and the maximum number of days will increase to three following non-elective surgery.
- Hearing aid benefit will increase to \$1000 every three consecutive calendar years.
- Orthotics benefit will increase to \$500 every two consecutive calendar years.
- Prescription Drug coverage will increase to \$2300 per calendar year.
- Vision care for eyewear coverage will increase to \$300 every two consecutive calendar years.
- Vision care for eye exams will increase to \$75 every two consecutive calendar years.
- Dental care reimbursement will be based on the 2009 Guide for General Practitioners.

JOHNSON INC.
 RTO/ERO Health Benefit Plan
 Administrator
 Service 1-800-461-4597 or
 905-764-4884
 Claims 1-800-461-4597 or
 905-764-4888
 Website <http://www.johnson.ca>

Goodwill Committee Report



Christmas greetings were mailed to our “over 80” colleagues, and, hopefully, they were all received. This is a pleasant way to have a personal touch with our professional friends and to help them keep in touch with their organization. I was thinking about this today while taking a second look at the messages received on some of my own cards.



We have shuffled around our contact lists so a number of you will notice that your cards are coming from a different member of the committee during this coming year. Also, please note that Shirley Jackson has retired from this committee and that Jean Brodhaecker is taking her place for the Harriston-Palmerston areas.

Please check the following lists of committee members and let us know of anyone who needs some form of TLC-TEACHERS’ LIVELY CONTACT!!

Pauline Brown

LIST OF GOODWILL CONTACTS FOR EACH AREA

Arthur
Drayton
Moorefield

Marg Hall
519-846-5235
marg.carl@sympatico.ca

Elora
Fergus
Salem

Lois Eckhardt
519-846-8189

Harriston
Palmerston

Jean Brodhaecker
519-638-2291

Mt. Forest

Pat Corrigan
519-323-1147

Pauline Brown
519-323-2599
pbrown1@sympatico.ca



Erin

Anne Smith
519-833-9577
bandasmith@sympatico.ca

Rockwood

Linda Meek
519-856-9706
Linda.Meek@sympatico.ca

Ellen Thomson
519-856-9953

Guelph

Brenda McGinnis
519-824-5263
Dmccginc602@rogers.com

Rosita Lugosi
519-763-1358

Please keep us informed!



Have a Friend who is Not a Member of RTO/ERO?

The number of educators in Ontario who belong to RTO/ERO is 59 940. If you know of a retired educator who is not a member of RTO/ERO, this information may be of interest to that person.

To apply for membership, contact RTO/ERO membership services at 1-800-361-9888 for an application or go their website, www.rto-ero.org and complete the application form on line.

Please note: Membership in RTO/ERO is **not automatic** when one retires. It is necessary to complete the appropriate membership form. Membership dues are free for the balance of the calendar year in which a teacher retires and are deducted from pension cheques every January thereafter.

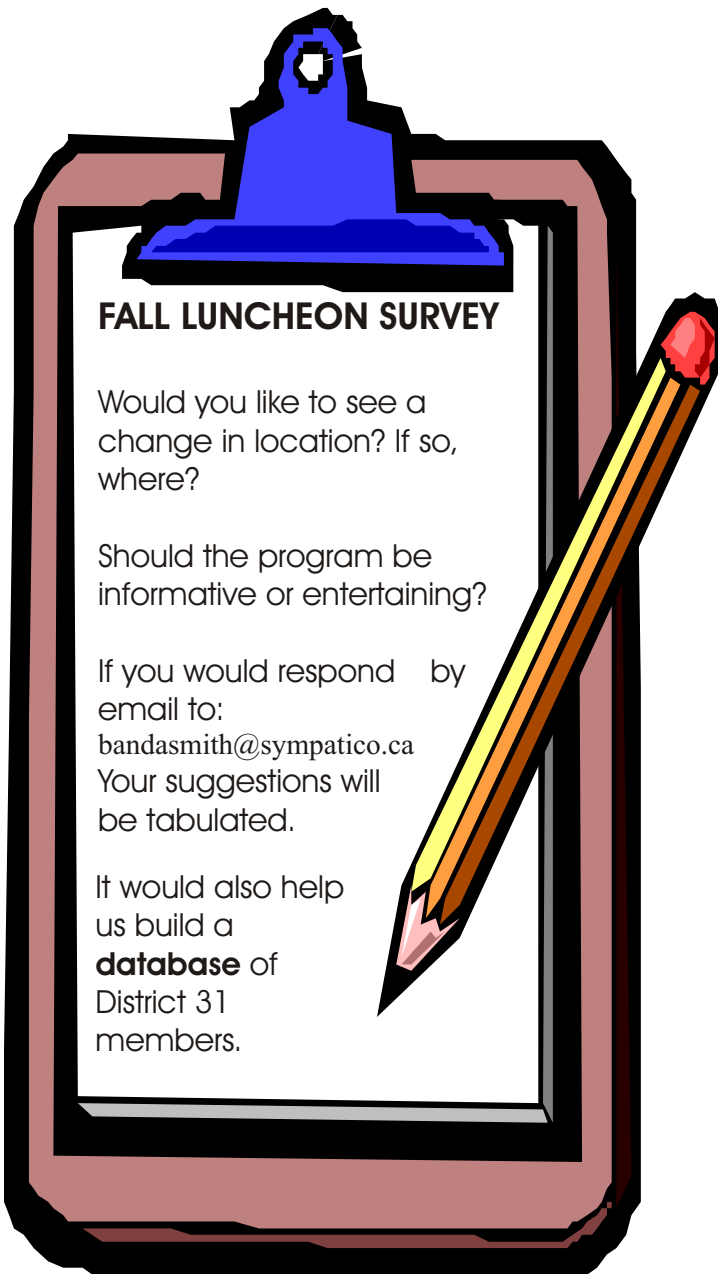
Fall General Meeting

Our Fall 2008 General Meeting was held on Wednesday, October 15th at the Arthur Community Centre beginning with a social time at 10:00 a.m., a business meeting at 10:30 and lunch at 12:15 p.m.

We had several guest speakers - Brian Kenny, RTO Provincial President; Simon Leibovitz, RTO Communications Officer; and a speaker from the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Reports were given by the committee chairs and the new executive, as listed on the last page, was installed.

Geraldine Brombal, one of our members, spoke about her book, "Only One of Many".



CODE OF ETHICS

This Code of Ethics expresses the ethical principles of The Retired Teachers of Ontario/les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario (RTO/ETO) and serves as a guide to the conduct of staff and those who act on behalf of RTO/ETFO.

INTEGRITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

- Demonstrate integrity when acting on behalf of the organization.
- Model the principles of equity, trust, fairness, and respect.
- Recognize the importance and value of RTO/ERO members and employees.
- Respect the time, energy and effort of the many volunteers who work on behalf of the organization.

GOVERNANCE

- Uphold the Constitution, Policies and Procedures established by the organization.
- Support the governance structures (Senate, Provincial Executive, Provincial Committees, Districts and Units) to ensure the organization's democratic strength.
- Manage time, expectations, costs and resources responsibly and effectively.

COMMUNICATION

- Demonstrate open, honest communication with staff, members, other professional groups and the community.
- Share information in a timely manner, using a variety of methods to enhance our philosophy of 'Service to Others'.
- Value the use of both official languages.

Donations

The following donations have been made on your behalf:

- \$100 to the Heart and Stroke Foundation
- \$500 to The Julien Project
This project's mission is to promote and demonstrate how horticulture and gardening activities can improve the lives of persons with special needs and other disadvantaged people. It operates out of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre at 5420 Highway 6 North, RR #5, Guelph.



In Memoriam

With great sadness, we inform you of the passing of the following members. We extend our condolences to their families, friends and colleagues and share fond remembrances of their contribution to the teaching profession.



Joseph Bordignon (associate)
James Brisbin
Elwin Gimblet (associate)
Joseph Glaab
Mona E. Kennedy
Eva M. McCausland (associate)
Audrey Peters (associate)
Leon Rymer (associate)
Wilma C. Rymer
Elizabeth J. Shaw
Reta M. Sternall



2008-2009 Executive R.T.O./E.R.O. District 31

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| President | Stephen O'Connell (519-822-9606) |
| Past President | Marina Howlett (519-826-8585)) |
| 1st Vice President | Terry Sullivan (519-823-9029) |
| 2nd Vice President | Brenda McGinnis (519-824-5263) |
| Secretary | Joan Miller |
| Treasurer | Mike Curtis |
| Goodwill | Pauline Brown |
| Health | Bob Paul |
| Membership | Carol Christie |
| Newsletter Editor | Anne Smith |
| Pension | Marina Howlett |
| Political Action | Brenda McGinnis |
| Travel | Lynn Morrison |
| Website | John Ritchie |
| District Counsellors | Nancy Baker Pat Bruder Joan Ksenych Pam Niesiobedski |



Dates to Remember

| | |
|---|--|
| Monday, April 6, 2009 | RTO District 31 Executive Meeting |
| Wednesday, May 11, 2008 6:00 p.m. | RTO District 31 Spring General Meeting Victoria Road East Golf Club Guelph, ON |
| Monday - Wednesday, Mary 25-27, 2009 | RTO Spring Senate Marriott Hotel Toronto, ON |



Reminders

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR STATUS

It is imperative that you let the Teacher Pension Plan Board and RTO/ERO know if you have changed your address, phone number or status. Please contact OTPPB (5650 Yonge St., Toronto M2M 4H5 or 1-800-668-0105) and RTO/ERO (1-800-361-9888 ext.23).

The mailing labels for our newsletter are made up in Toronto at RTO/ERO head office. If the label that addressed your copy is incorrect or if you are changing your address, please call Diane Vezeau at Provincial Office (1-800-361-9888 ext. 23) or e-mail her at dvezeau@rto-ero.org.



Website

Members are urged to visit our District website www.rto31.org for up-to-date information about RTO/ERO events in Wellington County. Each edition of Report Thirty-One is posted on the web usually before you receive your copy in the mail.

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R.T.O./E.R.O.
Editor - Anne Smith
833-9577
bandasmith@sympatico.ca