

STONY BRIDGES

Issue 92

A Newsletter for the members of



District 23, North York

November 2007

Book Club
& Strollers
~ See pg. 6

The Beaver Show
~ See pg. 12

70's Fever
~ See pg. 14

Cookin' With Gus
~ See pg. 17

Christmas
Luncheon
~ See pg. 18

Retirement
Planning
~ See page 19

Murder Mystery
~ See pg. 25

Bridge
~ See pg. 26

This is our Past.... The Future's Inside

Plus

Reports from the President, Senate,
District Committees, Guest Columns,
Poetry, Award Winners,
Reunion Announcements,
New Executive Members, Changes to the
Health Plan and Constitution.

Past President
Mary Ellen Lawless
416-223-4969
med.lawless
@sympatico.ca

President
Margaret Schuman
416-924-0267
m.p.schuman
@sympatico.ca

Ist. Vice President
Michael Sheffe
905-731-1125
msheffe
@rogers.com

2nd Vice President
Luci Soncin
416-746-5103
asoncin
@rogers.com

Treasurer
Beverly Henricks
416-293-3890
bhenricks
@rogers.com

Secretary
Helen Wiber
416-485-0131
wiber MCCowan
@sympatico.ca

Membership
Jean Wilson
647-341-6896
jgwilson
@rogers.com

Recruitment
David Fleming
416-444-4704
david.fleming3
@sympatico.ca

Pension, Retirement Concerns & Photography
Andrée Nottage
905-472-3784
anotta0172
@rogers.com

Newsletter Distribution & Health Services
George Meek
416-226-3568
george.meek
@sympatico.ca

Goodwill
Eileen Justesen
416-222-0706
wayne.justesen
@sympatico.ca

Bridge
Alan Ward
905-889-3687
alanward
@interlog.com

Strollers
Joanne Famiglietti
416-483-4968

Book Club
Irene Kitchell
416-733-8711
irenekitchell
@hotmail.com

Social
Mildred Frank
416-221-5328
speakingfrankly
@hotmail.com

Trips
Doug Tallon
416-441-4096
doug tours
@rogers.com

Bernadette Walsh
416-449-8780

Newsletter Editor
Rob Fraser
705-752-5697
robertpf
@hotmail.com

Archivist
Kathleen Elliott
905-889-1664

Assistant Treasurer
Jean King
905-764-1125
reclgk@yahoo.ca

Webmaster
416-229-2696
diannefair
@rogers.com

Political Action
Claire Knapp
416-250-6218
knappc
@interlog.com

Calendar of Events

November

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| 1 Strollers | 10:00 a.m. |
| 6 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 8 Drayton Festival | 8:45 a.m. |
| 13 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 14 Executive Meeting | 9:15 a.m. |
| 20 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 27 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 27 Sony Centre | 2:00 p.m. |
| 28 Book Club | 2:00 p.m. |

December

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| 6 Strollers | 10:00 a.m. |
| 4 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 7 Luncheon | 11:00 a.m. |
| 11 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 12 Exec Mtg. | 9:15 a.m. |
| 18 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |

January

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| 8 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 9 Exec. Mtg | 9:15 a.m. |
| 15 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 16 70's Fever | 11:00 a.m. |
| 22 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 29 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 30 Book Club | 2:00 p.m. |

February

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| 5 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 7 Strollers | 10:00 a.m. |
| 12 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 13 Exec Mtg. | 9:15 a.m. |
| 19 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 20 Old Mill Mystery | 11:30 a.m. |
| 26 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 27 Book Club | 2:00 p.m. |

March

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| 6 Strollers | 10:00 a.m. |
| 11 Bridge | 1:00 pm. |
| 12 Exec. Mtg. | 9:15 a.m. |
| 12 Beaver Show | 1:30 p.m. |
| 18 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 20 Cookin with Gus | 12:00 noon |
| 25 Bridge | 1:00 p.m. |
| 26 Book Club | 2:00 p.m. |

Submissions

STONY Bridges welcomes submissions from members. Please include name, address and telephone number (for identification only) and some past and present biographical information (for publication). Pictures are also welcome. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters or submissions.

Send them to:

Rob Fraser
116A Hinchberger Bay Dr.,
Callander ON P0H 1H0
Phone: 705-752-5697
email: robertpf@hotmail.com

✕

No Newsletter?

1) If you are a member of RTO/ERO, District 23 North York or any other RTO/ERO District, call George Meek at 416-226-3568.

2) If you are not a member of RTO/ERO, then you will need to join to receive a newsletter. Call RTO/ERO provincial office at 416-962-9463, then call George Meek.

✕

Change of Information

Please use the form found on the back page of this newsletter to notify RTO/ERO and us of your new information.

✕

Deadline

The deadline for materials
for the next issue is
January 15, 2008

Stony Bridges publishes in February, June and November for the Retired Teachers of North York, District 23.

Contents

| | | |
|---|----|---------------------------------|
| President's Message | 3 | Margaret Schuman |
| E-Mail Service | 4 | Michael Sheffe |
| Book Club | 5 | Edithvale Community Centre |
| Strollers | 5 | Various Locations |
| Founding Member Award | 6 | George Meek |
| Membership | 7 | Jean Wilson |
| Health Services and Insurance Report | 8 | George Meek |
| The Beaver Show | 12 | Martin Grove Secondary School |
| Goodwill Report | 13 | Eileen Justesen |
| 70's Fever | 14 | Stage West Theatre Restaurant |
| In Memoriam | 15 | Jean Wilson |
| Cookin' With Gus | 17 | Herongate Barn Theatre |
| Christmas Luncheon | 18 | Granite Club |
| Retirement Planning Workshops | 19 | Various Locations/David Fleming |
| Murder Mystery | 25 | The Old Mill |
| Bridge Report | 26 | Alan Ward |
| Tear Offs | 31 | |

President's Message

by Margaret Schuman

On September 18, at the Annual General Meeting, I was honoured to accept the position of President. I am humbled to work with the talented, skilled and dedicated executive and members of the vibrant and dynamic RTO/ERO, North York, District 23.

Under the very capable leadership of Mary Ellen Lawless, Past President, the executive focused on who we are, what we are about and where we want to go as a district. Our priorities were identified as

- ~ Recruitment
- ~ Budget Procedures and Priorities
- ~ Communications
- ~ Membership Needs

So, as a district, we have direction.

Our first priority is recruitment and involvement of new members. David Fleming, recruitment convener, diligently locates, keeps track of, contacts and welcomes new members. Together with the other three Toronto Districts, he cooperates in planning, organizing and presenting workshops for teachers considering retire-

ment. We invite our membership to take an active part in inviting friends and former colleagues to join District 23 in order to reap the benefits and rewards of RTO/ERO membership. See page 19 details about the Retirement Planning Workshop.

The Executive is delighted to announce and welcome the following members who have stepped forward to serve North York, District 23: Joanne Famiglietti as Convener for the North York Strollers, Lucianna Soncin, as Second Vice President and Bernadette Walsh as Co-Convener for Trips. They are now a part of some twenty-five volunteers who meet each month to plan events, plan strategies, advocate for members, and attempt to meet the needs of all the membership.

Along with the executive, I invite all of you, our members, to take an active part in the district happenings, and also to volunteer your time and talents. There are numerous jobs both large and small that need to be done. Some require minimal time i.e. phone members, prepare name tags

for events, assist a convener for a short period of time. The list goes on and changes constantly.

Additionally, we are always looking for new events or activities. The options are endless and we welcome your ideas and suggestions.

Last year, members of the executive spent considerable time examining how and why we do things in the district. As a result, we updated our constitution to reflect the changing needs of the membership. Many changes were cosmetic and merely simplified or clarified the language of the document. Other changes included budget procedures and the duties of the executive. In addition, we redefined more clearly how we subsidize some member activities.

A more notable change is the date of our Annual General Meeting (AGM). Traditionally, our AGM has been held in September. However, other Toronto

~See PRESIDENT/page 4

~PRESIDENT/Continued from page 3

districts meet in the spring, and because we work cooperatively on common initiatives, our AGM has been changed to June. The common timeline, between the districts, will make planning much easier and more effective.

As a district, communications have been given very high priority. Our Newsletter has been our main means of communication with members. George Meek and Rob Fraser will continue to provide the high quality of service and information. The Newsletter will continue to be published three times annually. However, members will now have the option of receiving STONY BRIDGES on line. Members are being encouraged to subscribe to on line reception of our newsletter.

Dianne Fair, our very capable Webmaster, has expanded and updated the North York, District 23 website. She is constantly updating information on pertinent news and activities. You will also find tear-offs for activities, as well as WEB CLASSIFIEDS on the website. If you have not visited our website, do try to do so soon at <http://rtoerotorontodistricts.org>. You will be pleasantly surprised.

To provide members with reminders, current and developing information, our First Vice President, Michael Sheffe, sends e-mails to those members who have provided their e-mail information to him. If you would like to be included on the mailing list, see his column on the right.

In addition, any member of the executive is available by e-mail or phone should there be any concerns. From this you can see that communication with the membership is another priority.

Member needs are of the highest priority in North York, District 23. All of our efforts are devoted to members. Action and activities are planned with members in mind. There are numerous plans in place to ensure we meet this goal. The committee conveners of GoodWill, Health Services and Insurance, Political Action, Pension & Retirement Concerns are committed to providing pertinent, timely and valuable information to our members. Our Goodwill Committee continues to be committed to

contacting our sick, shut-in and bereaved members. During this year and in subsequent years, the committee will recognize milestone birthdays and events.

The conveners for Book Club, Bridge, North York Strollers, Social and Trips plan and organize numerous events to which all members are invited and welcomed. In addition, our Social Convener plans and organizes our Annual General Meeting and the Christmas and Spring Luncheons as well as the Welcome Reception (Champagne Pour) for new members.

Our Annual General Meeting and Christmas and Spring Luncheons will continue to be subsidized for members, and our Welcoming Reception for New Members (Champagne Pour) will continue to be free for new members.

This year some monies have been allocated to subsidize some of the Trips.

In October some members of the executive represented the interests of District 23 at the annual Senate Meetings. Issues concerning Health Care and Pensions, as well as issues pertaining to seniors in general, were presented and discussed. Then Senators from District 23 voted in the interest of its members.

Service to members is definitely a priority.

Once again, District 23, North York, submitted a successful proposal for a "Service to Others" grant from Provincial RTO/ERO. We received three thousand dollars to assist the Bereaved Families of Ontario - Toronto Chapter. The award was presented at the AGM and will assist youth with the grieving process through the use of ipod technology.

Also at our AGM, we paid special tribute to Kathleen Elliott, Sam Habib and Nancy Walsh, who received awards from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for their long service to RTO/ERO. It is the commitment and generosity of volunteers like them that have made North York, District 23 such a welcoming and dynamic district.

2007/2008 promises to be a busy, exciting and fulfilling year. I look forward to serving as your president and look forward to meeting you at our many events and activities. ❖

E-mail Service

(For Fast Breaking News)

Occasionally, RTO-ERO District 23 has items of interest to share with its members, which arise between published issues of *Stony Bridges*.

We have an e-mail fan-out service, which we use to inform our members of such events. This is an efficient, expeditious, and economical way to deliver important information to our members. If you would like to be included, please e-mail your name and e-mail address to: msheffe@rogers.com

For the Subject line, please use, "Add me to the District 23 e-mail list." For your convenience, there is also a link to this service from the RTO website at: - <http://www.rtoerotorontodistricts.org/> Just follow the links, once on this website.

If you have been receiving these e-mail notices during October 2007, you need not do anything, as the database is up-to-date. Some members may have received these e-mails in the past, but no longer are receiving them. In that case, please send me your current e-mail address. Ensure that you set your *Preferences* to receive e-mail from the above e-mail address. If your e-mail address changes, please let me know.

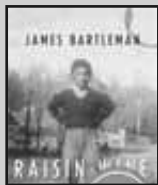
Your information is kept confidential. I have the only copy of the e-mail list. I do not distribute it, or sell it to anyone else. Please note that when you receive an e-mail from this service, it does not show anyone else's e-mail address.

Thank you,
Michael Sheffe,
First Vice-President RTO-ERO District 23, North York.

BOOK CLUB

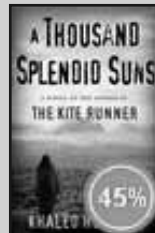
The Book Club meets the last Wednesday of each month at Edithvale Community Centre (Finch and Edithvale - on south side west of Yonge St.) from 2 to 4 p.m.

Books to be discussed



January 30, 2008
Raisin Wine
by James Bartleman

February 27, 2008
A Thousand
Splendid Suns
by Khaled Hosseini



March 26, 2008
We Need to Talk
About Kevin by
Anita Shriver

April 30, 2008
The Leap of
Faith
by Queen Noor
of Jordan



May 28, 2008
Jade Peony
by Wayson Choy

Contacts:

Irene Kitchell- 416-733-8711
Mary Ellen Lawless- 416-223-4969

North York Strollers

The North York Strollers are a friendly and enthusiastic group who have been investigating and discovering various locations within the city of Toronto. The goals of the walks are: to enjoy the companionship of other nature lovers, to enjoy the natural beauty of our city and the changing seasons, to explore neighbourhoods and to exercise a few muscles in the process.

Walks are planned with a minimal number of steps and grades. The pace of the walk is determined by the needs and desires of the group. A refreshment and washroom break is usually planned approximately one hour into the walk. Walks last approximately two hours, but we have been known to continue a little longer and some often enjoy lunch together at the conclusion of our stroll. We've had four interesting walks this fall, with many new members joining in the fun.

New walkers are always welcome.

We walk on the first Thursday of every month, regardless of the weather - rain or shine. Meeting places are listed for each walk.

Walks begin at 10:00 am

Thursday February 7, 2008

Ryerson University

Led by Joanne Famiglietti

Meet at Dundas St. Subway Station (Dundas Street exit)

March 6, 2008

**Exploring Sculptures in Mid-Town Toronto
and Mount Pleasant Cemetery**

Led by Rose Labate & Joanne Famiglietti

Meet at Davisville Subway Station

April 3, 2008

Upper Marshes Creek

Led by Ernie Walker

Meet at Warden Subway Station

May 1, 2008

Humber River, Old Mill Marshes

Led by Rose Labate & Joanne Famiglietti

Meet at Old Mill Subway Station

June 5, 2008

Humber Arboretum

250 Humber College Blvd.

Led by Terry Gri & Annie Conway

Meet at the Arboretum (Adjacent to Humber College)

- a) Take 96 or 96B Wilson bus W., to Humber College Blvd. (1 Hour)
- b) Take 36B from Finch Subway to Humberline & Humber College Blvd. (3/4 Hr)
- c) Take Express 191 from Kipling Station to Humber College Blvd. (1/2 Hr)

For more information and/or directions please call Joanne Famiglietti (416) 483-4968 or Margaret Schuman at (416) 924-0267.

RTO/ERO Founding Member Award

In 1981, the Provincial Executive of the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (STO), (now RTO/ERO), agreed that the tradition of recognizing people for outstanding service in the interest of STO should be made more formal, and it approved the inception of the *Founding Member Award* to take the form of a presentation of a framed certificate signed by the Executive Director and the President, and a wallet with a \$100 bill enclosed. (A donation of \$500 is now made to a charitable organization of the recipient's choice in place of the \$100 bill.)

That year the first Founding Member Award was presented to both J.R. Causley for services to STO in his position as Director of the Teachers' Superannuation Commission and Arthur McAdam as the first President of STO.

The Award is not necessarily made annually, but has been presented to members each year, with the exception of 1987, 1989, 1990, 1995 and 1999.

In 1995 new guidelines for selection for the Award were developed and, on an annual basis since then, nominations for the Founding Member Award have been

invited from Districts.

In 1997, eligibility for the Award was limited to a member "in recognition of outstanding voluntary work with and contributions to RTO/ERO at the provincial level" and by "excluding Past Presidents and Executive Directors as recipients".

RTO/ERO members currently actively serving in any capacity at the provincial level are not eligible for nomination.

The names of the recipients are displayed on plaques in the Provincial Office. ❖

And the Winner This Year is.....

George Meek

George, a Past President of our District, was awarded RTO/ERO's highest award for outstanding service at the provincial level from 1996 to 2005 by President Ron Poste. He was its 23rd recipient since the award's inception in 1980 and North York-District 23's 2nd recipient-Jack Foote was the honoured recipient in 1992. George's work and contributions at Senate (1996-2005), his pragmatic leadership as member and Chair of the Health Services and Insurance Committee (HSI Committee)(1996-2002), and his contributions as a member on the Constitution Committee, and his parliamentary work as a member of the Speaker's team at Senate (2002-2005) earned him this honour. It was con-



ferred on him by the Provincial Executive at

the 2007 Fall meeting of the Senate based on an application submitted by your own North York-District 23 Executive. George retired from active provincial participation in 2005 but continues

to be very active in the District. What did he do?

~ George's attendance at Senate over the years contributed to the quality of debate and decision-making, and questions asked. ~ While on the Constitution Committee he provided experienced advice and questions to the Committee, the Speaker, the Executive, and Senate on matters relating to the Constitution, resolutions, policy, Constitution amendments, and meeting procedures, and took leadership in ensuring that RTO/ERO's Letters Patent were current.

~ George's leadership on the HSI

Committee led RTO/ERO through such initiatives as: two major premium increases, which resulted in the needed building of substantial reserves, and the stabilizing of premiums for the next five years; the introduction of many positive benefit changes to the Health plans, including the increase of the longstanding \$1200 cap on drugs twice; the introduction of a number of plan member-friendly changes such as direct deposit, the use of the member card as a direct drug payment card, and dentist direct submission to Johnson Inc.; cessation of the use of the Social Insurance Number (SIN) as the health plans' member number; progress in getting members to realize that RTO/ERO is the owner of the three Health plans and that Johnson Inc. serves RTO/ERO; the es-

tablishment of the Long Term Care Plan; developed (with the expert support of Johnson Inc.) a sophisticated actuarial model to assist the HSI Committee in predicting the growth of member participation and costs; a regular newsletter to District and Unit HIS Representatives, and George often wrote articles for the RTO/ERO Magazine/Renaissance; began to emphasize the importance of wellness programs; initiated the meeting which led to RTO/ERO's partnership with CARP; and, increasing the membership in the three plans to over 35,000 members with over \$40,000,000 in premiums.

In summary, George contributed much to our well managed, financed RTO/ERO owned group health plans

which in turn have contributed substantially to the success and growth of RTO/ERO as the real voice for retired teachers in Ontario. 2007 marks the 25th anniversary of RTO/ERO, providing group health insurance plans for retired teachers, non-teacher school employees, and their families, and 2008 marks the 40th anniversary of RTO/ERO.

George expressed his usual fine thank-you's and appreciation to: his District for the nomination, his family, the members of the Executive and other members of Senate, members of the Staff, members of the Johnson Inc. Staff, and to guests. George's best supporters - wife, Joy, daughter Julie, and son Jeffrey, were present for the dinner and presentation. ❖

Membership Report

*From May 1, 2007
by Jean Wilson*

As of September 30, 2007 we are pleased to report that District 23, North York has 2149 members. Your executive welcomes all new members who have joined in May, June, July, August, and September.

The following information was taken from RTO/ERO, Provincial Office in monthly membership updates. I apologise for any errors or omissions. Every effort has been made to contact all new members and welcome them to District 23, North York. Newsletters are sent to all new members shortly after our monthly updates have been received.

May 2007

Bernie Grossman, Victoria McCusker.

June 2007

Brian Balsdon, Rosalyn Cherry, Laurence C. Cromien, Lynne Czutrin, Victoria DeMarco, Irene Henry, Lawrence Otis, Jo-Anne Shaw.

July 2007

Farouk M. Aboobaker, Muriel Back, Rosemarie Barbuto, Pamela J. Bell, Elaine Bisgould, Gwendoline Bumbury, Maria Camputaro, Lucy Cohen, David Connell, Mary-Theresa De Biasio, Coleta M. De Souza, Patti Delany, Rose Dodgson, Hughes Excellent, Harry Wing Chiu Fong, Rosemary Fontaine, Fraser Gordon, Kimberly Gordon, Thomas Hall,

Raechelle Isen, Susan Jurkowitz, Juri Laansoo, Joanne C Laing, Joyce Leung, Lloyd Mayeda, Yvette Moore, Antonietta Morano, Victor Page, Arlene Poizner, Catherine Ponesse, Luciana Soncin, Adele Steinberg, Nicoletta Vaccaro, Ronald Whittaker, Patricia A. Wright, Lynne Youngson.

August 2007

Barbara Antflyck, M. Jean Babcock, Robert Freeman, Sandy Levine, Angelina Parravano, Paula Taube.

September 2007

Sharon Bishop, Nancy Bruno, Jim Gusz, Susan Phillips, Mary Rockman, Paul Roger, Robert G. Smith, Grace M Sorley, E. Jane Wright.

Health Services and Insurance Report

by George Meek, Convener

The RTO/ERO Health Services and Insurance Committee (HS&IC) discussed at length the Health Plan change requests that had been received since last fall's Senate. All such requests are taken seriously. They are considered in the context of their value to participants, potential effect on the levels of the premiums, and their potential for increasing the marketability of our Plans. The issue of maintaining a Plan that meets or exceeds those of our potential competition, while maintaining a level of affordability for all of our members, regardless of income, continues to be a major focus for the HS&IC. The final decision on any possible plan/premium changes for 2008 will be made during our October HS&IC meeting, in time for presentation to the 2007 Fall Senate (see elsewhere in this Stony for this report).

2. The HS&IC has studied, over several meetings, the potential financial impacts on the Health Plans of a possible Pandemic, both in Canada and abroad. While the magnitude of the impacts would be a function of the severity and duration of the Pandemic, there is no question that there could be a meaningful impact on the plan's financial integrity. We have recommended that the Provincial Executive establish a reserve of up to \$5 million from the existing Health Premium Stabilization Reserve, currently held by RTO/ERO, as a Pandemic Reserve, and develop an appropriate pandemic action plan.

3. As RTO/ERO approaches its 40th year, and we prepare to accept our 60,000th member, Districts will observe an increased level of marketing that will focus on RTO/ERO as a full-service organization that offers a variety of benefits to members, while continuing to own, manage, and provide Health Plans that are comprehensive, competitive and affordable and comprise the largest retired educator Plan in Canada.

4. Over 2, 300 of our members, or just under 4%, participate in the RTO/ERO

sponsored Long Term Care (LTC) Plans offered by Johnson Inc. The insurance company, Manulife Financial, has confirmed that for policies issued on or after April 1, 2004 there will be no change to the revised rate basis at their next renewal. As part of the renewal process, the LTC policyholders receive a letter from Johnson Inc. 60-days prior to their individual policy anniversary date. With respect to upcoming renewals:

- The original LTC policies effective prior to April 1, 2004 that renew after their initial five-year rate guarantee and up until December 31, 2008 will renew under the revised rate basis that became effective for new or renewing policies on or after April 1, 2004.

- LTC policies effective April 1, 2004 and later that are renewing between now and the end of 2008 will have no change in rates.

5. There are two new enhancements to the 'Johnson's Members Only' website:

a) Plan Benefit Claims Limit Information Members can now view their remaining limit on their eyeglass or paramedical claim maximums. By simply clicking on "Claim Information" and choosing the benefit they would like to enquire about, the system will display a member's claims limits and/or frequencies along with a recent transaction history.

b) Request an Income Tax Letter Members are now able to generate an Income Tax Letter, mid-year, for information purposes. The member would click on 'Claims Information' then, 'Request Income Tax Letter' and choose the dates for which the member would like to have the letter produced. Upon submittal, the letter will be available to view and print in the Communications Center.

6. Food Safety Hazards:
Common Myths

If you think that you are doing a good job of

avoiding food-safety hazards in your kitchen, think again.

The Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education reports that only 50% of Canadians follow safe cleaning practices in their kitchen.

Have you heard?

a) "It's safest to rinse chicken and meat before cooking it."

Incorrect. This is not recommended. Rinsing raw meat prior to cooking may actually increase your risk of food poisoning by scattering bacteria to the countertop and other, ready-to-eat foods.

b) "Raw cookie dough is safe to eat."

Incorrect. If the cookie dough contains eggs, you run the risk of salmonella food poisoning. Recipes containing eggs should be cooked to a temperature of at least 71C (160F) to kill the bacteria; refrigeration does not.

c) "It's best to cool the leftovers on the counter before storing."

Incorrect. Allowing hot foods to sit at room temperatures creates a breeding ground for germs. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours. To ensure safe, rapid cooling, put containers of hot food into cold water or ice baths to drop their temperature.

Some simple ways to avoid food-safety hazards in the kitchen include:

- Check expiry dates on packages
- Avoid controversial additives
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat and for vegetables
- Always wash your hands before handling food

7. Johnson announces the AIR MILES® Reward Program Partnership Effective June 1, 2007, Johnson Inc. home and auto insurance partnered with the AIR MILES Reward Program. This affiliation provides the home and auto policyholders with added value and further differentiates Johnson from other insurance providers. Johnson policyholders who are

AIR MILES Collectors can earn 1 reward mile for every \$20 in premium paid (including taxes on home insurance) on regular market home and auto insurance policies underwritten by Unifund Assurance Company. The offer is available on Auto and Home insurance policies in Ontario, Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, and on home insurance in British Columbia.

8. Pedometers - As part of the HS&IC sponsored walking initiative launched at our 2006 Seminar for District Health Services Conveners our District members purchased pedometers from the RTO/ERO Provincial Office through me. We are pleased to announce that these pedometers are now available through Souvenir Canada in the same manner as ordering any other RTO/ERO product. An advertisement in most issues of Renaissance provides the necessary information for ordering (see page 18 of the Summer 2007 edition). Pedometers are no longer avail-

able through me. Members of this North York- District 23 are to be commended as our members have purchased more pedometers than (nearly) all of the other 46 RTO/ERO Districts.

9. MedsCheck - The provincial government has begun a program whereby any Ontario resident who takes three or more prescription medications may arrange for a thirty minute consultation with their pharmacist to discuss the medications and any interactions. There is no charge to the individual.

10. Out-of-Province/Canada Medical Claims - We have become aware that some U.S. medical facilities try to bill participants for claims incurred even though World Access (WAC) has already paid the bill. In some cases, the facilities have even turned the demand for payment over to a collection agency. This can be most disturbing to the individual participant but unfortunately seems to be becoming a more common occurrence in the travel industry. Please make your members aware

that if they are contacted for payment of a travel claim that they've made under the RTO/ERO Health Plans, to contact WAC immediately.

11. The current Health Insurance Plans Booklet and the Out of Province/Canada Travel Booklet are being revised and will be sent to every group health plan participant early in 2008. This is done once every three years- please retain it carefully.

12. Health Plans Information~ Four Page Insert in Fall Renaissance
In the most recent Fall 2007 edition you will find on pages 13-16 this insert entitled 'Of Benefit to You' prepared by the HS & IC Committee. Please review this important information carefully and detach and file it with your current and later with your new 2008 Health Insurance Plans Booklet and information.

Finally (*As Sam Habib still says*) :

"Take care of your finances !

Take care of your health !"

Welcome To...

Luciana Soncin



District 23 is pleased to announce the election of Luciana Soncin as **2nd vice-president**. Luciana retired in June 2007 from the Toronto Catholic District School Board following a distinguished career as teacher, vice-principal

and principal.

Luciana has been an active executive member of the Toronto Catholic Principals' and Vice-principals' Association (TCPVA), most recently serving as a vice-president. In that capacity, she was also a member of the Director's Liaison Committee. She was also chair of the Educational Conference Committee that plans overseas conferences for TCPVA. In addition, Luciana was on a committee working on the updated *Principals' Toolkit* for the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO).

She has also been an active participant in CPCO's Council of District Representatives.

In addition to being a skilled and experienced educator, Luciana is the proud mother of two daughters and a son.

Welcome Luciana to District 23!



Claire Knapp

Our **Political Action Convener** sits on a joint Toronto Districts Committee to consider issues impor-

~Continued on page 10

tant to Retired Teachers in the Toronto area.

Claire Tierney Knapp graduated from St. Michael's College at University of Toronto with an Honour B.A. in Modern Languages. She began her teaching career at Sir Sandford Fleming S.S. in North York where she taught French and German.

This was rather short-lived for she then began part-time at Associated Hebrew Schools and the Community Hebrew Academy while her children were growing up.

Career opportunities took the family westwards to Vancouver and Lethbridge, Alberta and each time Claire became re-certified and taught part-time. Upon their return to Toronto, Claire joined the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and taught French and Extended French as well as serving as Modern Language Department Head until her official retirement.

She continues to supply teach but has time to pursue other activities such as involvement in RTO/ERO, bridge, tennis, travelling and of course, being more available for her six grandchildren.

Joanne Famiglietti



We are pleased to announce that Joanne Famiglietti has consented to become our **Strollers Convener**. Joanne retired in June 2005 after a lengthy career as an itinerant French Teacher with the Toronto Catholic District School Board. Joanne was always involved in planning, organizing and implementing social and sports activities within the schools where she taught. One of her many contributions was to begin a walking club for students.

Madame Joanne was loved and respected by students, parents and staff.

We welcome Joanne to the executive of District 23.

Irene Kitchell



Irene Kitchell has very capably led the **Book Club** for the past three years. The group has had some very interesting and fruitful discussions about a variety of books. The titles of the books are decided among the group, and members take turns leading discussions. Irene retired in 2002 after a lengthy career as an itinerant French Teacher with Toronto Catholic Dis-

trict School Board. She is a golfer, an avid gardener and a talented and creative flower arranger. Irene is the proud mother of three adult children and the very proud grandmother of three very precious and active grandsons. We thank Irene for continuing in her position of **Book Club Convener**.

Bernadette Walsh



We welcome Bernadette Walsh to District 23 as Trip Convener along with Doug Talon. Bernadette retired in June 2005 from the Toronto Catholic District School Board following a distinguished career spanning several levels of elementary teaching. She was born and raised in Owen Sound and taught in elementary schools in Guelph, Halifax and Toronto. Bernadette was also a vice-principal and elementary school principal in Toronto.

Bernadette is a cottager and she is very active in the Saubo Beach community. In addition, she is an avid Bridge player and is very active in the St. Bonaventure Parish Community. She is the very proud mother of two daughters. We thank Bernadette for stepping forward to share her time and talents in District 23.



Andrée Nottage Photograph

Champagne Pour Breakfast Prize Winners

Requiescat

Flattened cars,
Bereft of dash and power,
Sandwiched in heaps,
Tilt awkwardly.

Rusted engines, faded chrome,
Sprawled in junkyards,
Inert and lifeless,
Relics of yesterday's glory.

Banished to grassy pastures,
They sink in resignation;
An ignominious end to
Their assembly line promise.

Carole A. Martyn

Get Your Stony Bridges On Line

If you've already submitted your request to George Meek, and received an acknowledgment, it is unnecessary to do this again.

Currently we send a copy of Stony Bridges in February, June and November to each of our 2100+ members by mail. This costs about \$1.40 per copy for printing and mailing. Members in many organizations have chosen to receive such newsletters 'on-line' rather than in hard copy **thus saving costs to their organization while making a real contribution towards the environmentally-friendly program of 'reducing and recycling'.**

For members like you who are on the Internet, we can offer this opportunity to you. This is the way it works:

~ the program would begin for you with the February 2008 Stony Bridges;

~when this and future Stony Bridges have been posted, you will receive a prompt e-mail to that affect including a

direct link to www.rtoerotorontodistricts.org where it is posted;

~go to **North York-District 23** and then go to **Newsletter** (at the top). A user-friendly copy **in blue** of the current Stony appears. Copies of forms or coupons are made easy to print. If you wish to print certain parts of the Stony, use the 'cut, paste, and print' process; if you wish to see Stony as it was printed and sent as hard copy to members then go to **(Download the PDF Version here)** which is just under the title **STONY BRIDGES**. If you wish to print certain parts of the Stony, use the 'cut, paste and print' process.

~to implement this option, please consult the 'Information Required' immediately below and send it to Diane

Fair (our Webmaster) by e-mail at diannefair@rogers.com. *Dianne will be working with George Meek, (Newsletter Distribution Convener) in implementing this program.*

We hope you will try this process in the interests of the environment and saving costs to the District (which can be used elsewhere in the interests of the members). The November 2007 Stony is already posted on our website as indicated above in both formats. Please go there and see how user-friendly it really is.

Note: Previous editions of Stony for the current year are also available 'on-line'. If after you have tried Stony 'on-line' and find it does not meet your needs, please let Dianne know by e-mail and you will begin to receive your Stony in hard copy by mail

Stony Bridges Online

Cut - Off Date: January 15, 2008

I would like to receive my copy of Stony Bridges beginning with February 2008 edition on line.

Name: _____ Tel #: _____ E-mail Address: _____
Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Please send this information to Dianne Fair by e-mail at diannefair@rogers.com
If your mailing and/or e-mail address(es) changes please let Dianne know.



OAKWOOD
COLLEGIATE
INSTITUTE
100TH
ANNIVERSARY
MAY 1 ~ 4, 2008

Events/Venues:

May 1 – Music Night,
Toronto Centre for the Arts
May 2 – Golf Tournament,
Maples of Ballantrae
May 2 – Pub Night, OCI
May 3 – School Events, OCI
May 3 – Gala Dinner,
Presidente Banquet Hall
May 4 – Memorial Wrap-up, OCI

Info/tickets:

www.oakwoodalumni.ca

To contact us about the OCAA or
the OCI 100th Anniversary
Reunion events,
please e-mail us at:
oakwoodalumni@rogers.com
or write us at: OCAA,
600 The East Mall, PO Box 11544,
Toronto ON M9B 6L1

Spring Fling 2008

The Beaver Show

A Musical Variety Show with Lots of Laughs

**Martin Grove Secondary School
Etobicoke, ON.**

Wednesday, March 12, 2008
(Cut Off Date - January 31, 2008)

\$17.00

Doors Open at 12:30; Performance at 1:30 pm

**Your tickets, and a map to the school,
will be mailed to you in late February.**

The Beaver Show is Toronto's longest running musical and comedy sketch revue. Since 1938 this annual variety show has literally entertained thousands of people with musical and comedy sketches. This is truly family entertainment. This annual event is a labour of love for the entire 150 volunteers. The Outreach committee of the Beaver Bible Class donates all net proceeds back into the community. It has been estimated that over the years, in excess of \$1,800,000 has been distributed to those less fortunate than us.

The first Beaver Show was produced by the late Jim Wilson who was then the leader of the Beaver Bible Class. It was held in church basements and later moved to various high schools and collegiates in the west end of the city. Humberside Collegiate, Central Commerce, Bloor Collegiate and Lawrence Park are a few of the venues, which hosted the Beavers over the years. The present school is Martingrove Collegiate Institute in Etobicoke.

Originally the production was a one night affair but gradually grew to a weekend production. Their present format offers 5 performances over two weekends plus a Wednesday matinee. Planning begins in June of each year and twice a week rehearsals start in early January.

The Beavers hope you will come out and support them in this worthy cause. Come and enjoy the fun. There are a limited number of tickets available to RTO District 23 so send your order as soon as possible.

~See page 31 for registration form

The Annual General Meeting

By Mildred Frank

The AGM for District 23 was held at the Thornhill Golf and Country Club on September 28th, 2007.

Approximately 65 members attended. Items on the agenda included changes to the Constitution, election of the Executive for 2007/2008 and the installation of our new president, Margaret Schuman.

Tributes and appreciation for their contributions as executive members were extended to Audrey Cousins (Travel), Sonia Walker (Secretary), Helen Wiber (Past President) and Günter Sperling (Travelogues). We hope to see them often at social events and other district activities.

A cocktail reception and delicious lunch followed the business portion of the AGM. A highlight was the recognition of three of our members who received volunteer service awards for their years of dedication from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation. Receiving

awards were Kathleen Elliot, Nancy Walsh and Sam Habib.

Guests were Gary Fick, President of Scarborough/East York District, Valerie Mah, President of the Toronto District, Lori MacDonald-Blendon of Johnsons Insurance Inc and Arlene Cohen, a representative of MeritTravel.

Brian Kenny, First Vice-President of Provincial RTO/ERO brought greetings and updates from the Provincial Executive.

Margaret Schuman then thanked Mary Ellen Lawless for a wonderful job as President of District 23, 2006 to 2007 as she was presented with a gift on behalf of the District.

The AGM is an opportunity for our membership to learn more about how your membership funds are used and the various supports that are open to us from RTO/ERO. Watch for a change of date for the AGM in future.

GOODWILL REPORT

by Eileen Justesen

Convener

Eileen Justesen
416-222-0706

Cards

Ruth Bradshaw
905-472-4142
Judy Neilson (over 80's)
416-256-2731

Telephone Calls

Vinny Coetzee
416-621-6681

Note: The Goodwill Convener and your Executive for District 23 are committed to maintaining contact with our older and/or shut-in members. We have several policies directed toward them.

a) Turning 70?

You will invited to attend the AGM and Luncheon for free.

b) Turning 80? 85? 90? 95? 100?

We will do our best to recognize those milestone birthdays.

c) We attempt to contact those who are ill or shut-in. But we need your help with that.

If you know of someone, please contact the Convener with the necessary information.



Guests from other Districts of RTO/ERO: Gary Fick from District 24, Valerie Mah from District 16, and 1st Vice President of RTO/ERO, Brian Kenny.

70's Fever: A Musical Celebration of the 70's ~A Musical Revue



**Wednesday Matinee,
January 16, 2008**

*Cut-Off Date ~
Monday, December 10th, 2007*

**Stage West Theatre
Restaurant ~**

5400 Dixie Road,

Mississauga

map & info -

www.stagewest.com

Buffet Lunch at 11:00 a.m.

Play at 12:30 p.m.

\$52.00

(gratuity & tax included)

**Please meet at the entrance at
10:45 to receive your tickets.**

Ah...the 70's.

*Many say it was the best time
of their life... disco, platform shoes,
John Travolta-style white suits and
dance moves.*

*Do you remember where you
were in the 70's? What song was
playing that made you get up and
boogie?*

*"Stayin' Alive", "We Are Fam-
ily", "YMCA"? We'll take you back to
the 70's as we pay tribute to the hits
and the hit makers... the Bee Gees,
KC and the Sunshine Band, Donna
Summer, ABBA, Earth Wind & Fire,
Kool and the Gang and others.*

*It will be hard not to be
dancin' in the aisles during this show!*

~See page 31 for registration form

Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteer opportunities exist in supporting children with Severe Combined Immunodeficiency Disease (SCID) commonly referred to as the "Bubble Boy Disease". Children diagnosed with SCID are placed in isolation for periods of six months to a year while they undergo treatment.

The Canadian Immunodeficiency Society (CI Society) is seeking volunteers for a special "buddy" program operated within the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. Potential volunteers will be required to complete a comprehensive application, orientation, and training process.

This is an opportunity to establish a very special one-to-one relationship with a child in need. Your time will brighten a child's day.

For further information please call 416-964-3434 or email at contactus@cisociety.com

The CI Society is a national registered charity ~

#87276 0897 RR001

www.cisociety.com

Irving Berlin's

WHITE CHRISTMAS



SOLD OUT
Note: The Hummingbird Centre is now
called
The Sony Centre for the
Performing Arts

Matinee

, 2007

September 4, 2007

\$56

Hummingbird Centre
(Longe Streets)

Meet Doug in the lobby of the theatre from 1:30 p.m. onward

What's New on the Website?

As a service to our members, District 23 is pleased to introduce a new web-page entitled:

CLASSIFIEDS

*Services for Members/Provided
by Members*

District 23 Members who wish to have an entry on this page should contact the RTO/ERO Toronto District 23 Webmaster.

diannefair@rogers.com

To view the format we will use, visit: <http://www.rtoerotorontodistricts.org/> and follow the District 16/Classifieds Link. Consider providing a picture or logo suitable to your business/service.

NOTE:

RTO/ERO District 23's responsibility is limited to providing this web-page only. No endorsement of any product or service is made or implied. Transactions entered into as a result of contacts made through this service are between the parties involved in that transaction only.

Did you know that you can download the Tear-Off slips right from the website? Try it and stop cutting up your STONY Bridges.

In Memoriam

We regret to inform you that some of our members have passed away. Our condolences go to family and friends and we hope they will find comfort in fond memories of days gone by.

The following information is taken from RTO/ERO, Provincial Office in monthly membership updates.

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Frederick J. Burford | 16/04/2007 |
| Eleanor Fitzgerald | 01/05/2007 |
| Gertrude Littner | 12/04/2007 |
| Louis Birenbaum | 31/05/2007 |
| Dennis W. Doyle | 06/05/2007 |
| Isobel Hale | 26/04/2007 |
| Margaret D. Gane | 05/06/2007 |
| Marjory J. McCabe | 25/06/2007 |
| Anne C. Paisley | 10/06/2007 |
| Miriam Spence | 20/06/2007 |
| Alexander Puskas | 26/05/2007 |
| M. Gaida Balins | 16/08/2007 |
| Susan Barclay | 19/08/2007 |
| Greta Hoover | 10/08/2007 |
| Arthur C. Jordan | 29/08/2007 |

An Irish Odyssey

by Rocky Sankoff, District 23 Member

So we went across the sea to Ireland. It took awhile. In fact it took quite awhile. Here's why. A bird (genus and species unknown) tried to out fly a 747 in Amsterdam and ended up slightly mangled in the engine. That meant new plane, transfer passengers, transfer luggage, transfer food and drink (most important), fly across the Atlantic, and pick us up some three hours later. Aer Lingus wouldn't wait for us in Amsterdam and we missed the connection.

KLM must have been quite upset. They rewarded us with food vouchers worth 2.5 Euros each...about \$3.64 Canadian. That bought a muffin or maybe a coffee. Because of this extravagance there will probably be no dividend on their stock next quarter. Some of us were rerouted to Dublin via Manchester, or Heathrow, except for an unfortunate trio who went via Berlin. Nevertheless, our group finally assembled in Dublin. Outside the Dublin airport is a statue of a flying pig. Very appropriate.

We had expected to be met by McNamara's Band. They're reputed to be the finest in the land, but they had repaired to the nearest pub where they tooted the flute (or tin whistle), clanged the cymbals, banged their drums, or rather Bodhrans, and played the uilleann pipes, not to mention the horns blazing away. Anyway we had a quick tour of four airports (Toronto, Amsterdam, London, Dublin), which were not listed in our itinerary. That meant several washrooms in the various airports. I didn't know a restroom tour was included. We were introduced to different soaps, sinks, toilets, loo paper, perfume machines, condom machines...so what else is new? And they say Coke is "the pause that refreshes."

We drove through the Irish countryside for the next three hours and 45 minutes seeing nothing. It was dark. For our 11 p.m. meal we had some Irish stew cooked in Guinness, soup, and sandwiches at Tramore. I had at least three helpings of Guinness stew. The stew ran out and some only had sandwiches. Tough luck. I went to bed happy. I was not responsible for the liquor spilt on the barroom floor and I did

not take Kathleen home again. It was a 28-hour day. The day's events and the bird incident have caused me to renounce my vegetarian diet and eat lots of poultry. Revenge!

The next morning, refreshed (Ha!), we began our tour. Most of the gals woke up quickly as our first stop was the Waterford Crystal Factory. That little excursion lightened a few wallets and left a lot of Irish eyes smiling. One lady sat under and touched a sheela na gig. That's the fertility goddess. You figure it out. One fellow bought a package and ate a handful of "bird peanuts" before noting the "not fit for human consumption" written quite conspicuously on the label.

We saw the Fields of Athenry, the Cliffs of Doneen, the Green Glens of Antrim, and where the dark Mourne sweeps down to the sea. We went to Dear Old Donegal. All enhanced by white sheep and bright yellow gorse. Gorse is a nice yellow plant with thorns a foot long. They may show up in some local gardens.

We saw highway construction stopped because there was a Fairy Tree (white blossomed Hawthorne) where the road was to go and the locals wouldn't let it be cut down. We heard the wind in the willows. Saw a great sign: **Herds of animals must phone before crossing.** But there was no phone booth visible! For lunch we had tossed salad. An Irish colleen tossed it on my head. We were entertained by a singer crooning Londonderry Air (Danny Boy). There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

We had fire alarms go off at 5 a.m. in Killarney and 2 a.m. in Belfast. The Belfast situation was unfortunate as our hotel, Europa, is in the Guinness book of records for most bomb incidents during the "troubles". One of the group went out with the pretty girl of Belfast City who he met as she moved through the fair.

Sometimes we became disillusioned. We found that things were not so good in Glocamorra because it doesn't exist. There is no Isle of Innisfree. And of all the girls we met, there was no Rose of either Tralee, Mooncoin, Clare, or Allen-

dale; nor any Connemara or Bright Blue Rose. There was no Enniskillen Dragoon. We couldn't find Uncle Knobby's steamboat. While looking for Mary of Dunloe our driver took a wrong turn and missed Carrickfergus. We also discovered that at the end of the rainbow one does not find the proverbial pot of gold, but a peat bog.

Some kissed the Blarney Stone. I did it twice. You might say we're an item. Some did the taste test at Bushmills Distillery....at 9:30 am... then nearly fell off Giant's Causeway.

We saw a strange bird by Killarney's Woods and asked our jaunting car driver what kind it was. "An Irish bird," he answered. "There are two kinds." "Oh," says I, falling into his trap - hook, line, and sinker, "What are they?"

He replied, "Male and female."

We found a "rary" among a bunch of thyme near the Lakes of Coolfin. We put it on a cart and had to walk to the Town of Ballberry to dispose of it. We had trouble tipping it out of the heavy cart after a three km trek. That's a long way to tipparary.

Speaking of tipping, we saw the Albert Clock in Belfast and many reminders in that city of the great ship Titanic.

Our final destination was Dublin's fair city. There is no rocky road to Dublin, but a four-laned highway and they drive on the wrong side. Yes, the girls were quite pretty.

There are Quare Things in Dublin. We saw sweet Molly Malone's statue, referred to as "the tart with the cart". She's just down the road from the Millennium Spire, or "the stiletto in the ghetto", and a little further on we saw Anna Livia's fountain, "the floozie in the Jacuzzi."

My clothes hadn't been washed since we left home and often were able to walk around the various hotel rooms on their own, so I searched in vain for the Irish washerwoman, but I did see Biddy Milligan, or a relative, selling her best herrings. We looked for Peggy O'Neill with the cute little brogue down by the old bog road and chanced to meet the

Spanish Lady washing her feet and brushing her hair. All sorts of folk in Dublin in the rare old times.

Some unanswered questions:

Who and where is Dicey Riley?

Is she the long lost star of County Down?

And on what garden gate does sister Kate swing?

I brought back souvenirs which are available, cheap. Like a good reproduction of the Book of Kells, a replica of the Blarney Stone, part of St Patrick's staff, shamrocks (small, medium, and large), Irish soda bread, Irish potatoes, Guinness

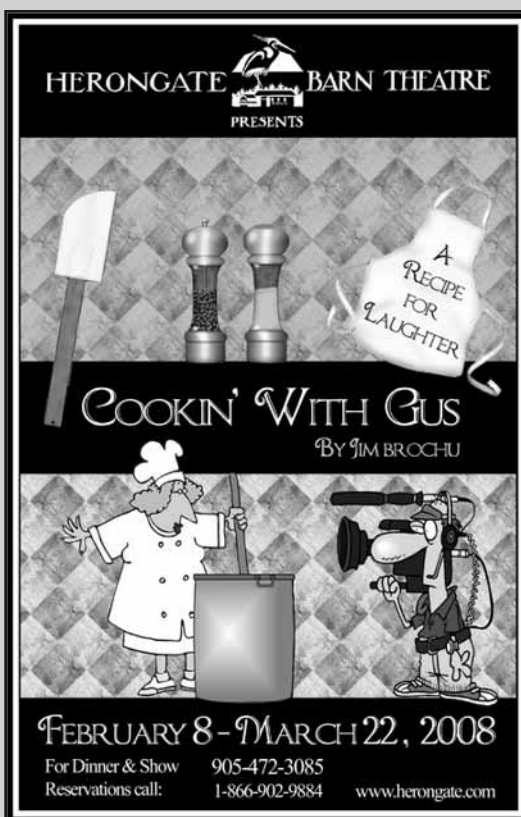
beer, shillelagh action figure dolls (with Roman or Columbine tonsures), used Waterford crystal, pieces of a ruined castle, pieces of Giant's Causeway (signed by Finn McCool), and sheep (really lambs) smuggled in a suitcase.

Memories include: cheesecake, Irish coffee, Irish breakfasts, stone fences, wild rhododendron's, gorse, pubs, gaelic signs, carpets of wild garlic in the woods, the wind on the Cliffs of Moher, Irish music in the pubs, and the difference in taste and appearance between wild and farmed salmon. There are virtually no neon lights

in the villages and small towns, the castles are square and in ruins - real fixer-uppers - and, they don't charge for restrooms.

From Dublin we boarded the plane for home. As we passed over the Emerald Isle, we couldn't see the moonrise over Claddagh, but I thought I saw the sun go down on Galway Bay.

Question. How many references to Irish songs did you find in this Odyssey?



Sunday, March 20, 2008

Cut-Off Date: February 15, 2008

2885 Altona Road Pickering

Map & Information:

www.herongate.com

Buffet Lunch at 12 noon

Play at 2:00 pm

\$44:00 (tax included)

Meet at the entrance at 12 noon to pick up your ticket.

T.V. cooking shows is the topic and "Gus" is Gussie Richardson, famous food columnist and cookbook author!

Gus finds out how difficult it can be to have your own television show, especially if you have stage fright.

Her husband, her agent and her neighbour all try to help and the result is a first class comedy spiced up with lots of delicious humor! Four unlikely characters come together in a stew of hijinks and hilarity. Fun for the actors and a great evening for the audience!

~ See page 31 for registration form

Christmas Luncheon

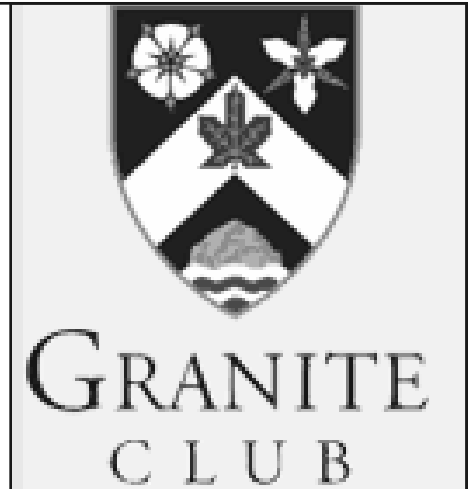
Friday, December 7, 2007

*Cut-off date: Tuesday, December 4
11:00 a.m. cocktails
12 noon lunch*

Menu

*~assorted bread basket
~roasted red pepper bisque with herb-crushed croutons and
melted woolwich goat cheese
~chicken in pommery sauce (red currant and pommery mustard)
~seasonal vegetables and potatoes
~apple strudel with vanilla creme anglaise.
~coffee and tea*

Note: Please advise Mildred of any dietary requirements.



2350 Bayview Avenue
\$8.00 underground parking
Car Pooling recommended

\$39

(\$44.17 actual cost)

Entertainment
Shane Jeffery -
A remembrance of Elvis and
his friends.

Christmas Luncheon
Friday December 7, 2007
(Cut-off Date: Tuesday, December 4, 2007)

Name: _____

Guest(s): _____

of tickets _____ @ \$39.00 = _____

Make cheque payable to: RTO/ERO North York and send to:
Mildred Frank 705-505 Cummer Ave., Toronto ON M2K 2L8
416-221-5328

*The Retired Teachers of Ontario: Toronto Districts
in conjunction with
the Toronto Catholic and Toronto District School Boards present:*

Retirement Planning Workshops for Educators

REMEMBER: OECTA RPW on Saturday, February 23, 2007 – see your union for details

Employees of either Board may choose one of the following:

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, York Mills C.I., North York (6:00 pm - 9:00 pm)

490 York Mills Road (Between Bayview and Leslie).

Saturday, March 1, 2008, Manoogian (Armenian) Centre, Scarborough (9:30am – 12:00noon)

390 Progress Ave. (East of Markham Rd.)

Wednesday, April 16, 2008, Don Bosco C.S.S., Etobicoke (6:00 pm - 9:00 pm)

2 St. Andrews Blvd. (South of Hwy. 401, West of Islington)

Learn about living a full life in retirement, and available Health Benefits
Workshop materials provided by the Retired Teachers of Ontario

Light refreshments will be served

**Cost: \$15.00 ~ pre-registered participants only
\$20.00 ~ on-site registration**

NOTE ~ All attendees/participants must register. Multiple participants for the same workshop
may submit additional names/data on a separate sheet.
To pre-register, please complete and submit the form below.

I/We wish to attend the RPW at:

A) York Mills C.I., November 14, 2007

B) Manoogian Centre, March 1, 2008

C) Don Bosco C.S.S., April 16, 2008

My/Our \$15.00/person pre-registration fee is enclosed payable to ***RTO/ERO Toronto Districts.***

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

NOTE: Your e-mail is used only for the purposes of this event.

ALL SITES OPEN TO TCDSB & TDSB EDUCATORS

Return to: **Tom Caster**, 2548 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto ON M4B 1M1

E-mail: tacaster@rogers.com Phone: 416-751-9629

Registrations must be submitted two weeks prior to the presentation date.

Space limitations may restrict on-site registration.

Health Plans ~ Changes Effective January 1, 2008

by George Meek, Health Services Convener

The Health Services and Insurance Committee (HS&IC) believes that these changes will enable our group health insurance plans to remain the best plans available to retired educators. The HS&IC has adopted the following as a Mission Statement and believes these changes will enable us to continue to adhere to that Mission Statement.

RTO/ERO Health Services and Insurance Committee 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 Health Insurance Plan that meets the needs of the majority of the membership.

Semi-Private Hospital Plan

1. Effective January 1, 2008 the Semi-Private Hospital room reimbursement level is increased to 90%, with an unlimited maximum.

Extended Health Care Plan

1. Effective January 1, 2008, the annual maximum for surgical support stockings is increased to \$300.

2. Effective January 1, 2008, the definition of the Extended Health Care Plan's Out-of-Province/Canada 'Sudden and Unforeseen

Medical Stability Clause' is revised to include the following parameters:

~ Any cancer, heart or lung condition for which, in the 90 days prior to your date of departure (or date of booking for the purpose of Trip Cancellation):

~ You were awaiting the outcome medical tests (except routine monitoring), the results of which show any irregularities, or abnormalities;

~ Except routine monitoring, you require future investigation, consultation with any physician, treatment or surgery recommended by your physician or planned before your trip.

~ Any condition for which you are admitted to hospital for a period of at least 24 hours in the 90 days prior to the date of departure (or date of booking for the purpose of Trip Cancellation).

~ Any condition for which you have been advised by a physician not to travel.

3. Effective January 1, 2008, the annual prescription drug maximum for erectile dysfunction medications is increased to \$350.

4. Effective January 1, 2008, the annual prescription drug maximum is increased to \$2,100.

5. Effective January 1, 2008, the post-surgi-

cal eyeglass restriction for laser eye surgery is removed.

Dental Plan

1. Effective January 1, 2008, dental services performed by an accredited dental hygienist, independent of a dentist, are a covered benefit.

2. Effective January 1, 2008, dental claims will be reimbursed based on the 2008 Fee Guide for Dental General Practitioners.

Group Health Plans Monthly Premiums, Effective February 1, 2008

The monthly premium rates for benefits have been increased by 0% for Semi-Private Hospital, 2% for Extended Health Care and 3% for Dental. The premium increases are required for expected inflation and utilization and include PST.

Semi-Private 2008: Single \$19.52, Couple \$38.99, Family \$45.81

Extended Health Care 2008: Single \$71.43, Couple \$142.87, Family \$171.46

Dental 2008: Single \$53.43, Couple \$105.35, Family \$131.38

These changes will become official when they are announced in writing by RTO/ERO.



District 23 Conveners: Back Row (l to r): Doug Tallon, George Meek, David Fleming, Johanne Famiglietti
Front Row (l to r): Andree Nottage, Jean Wilson, Kathleen Elliott, Dianne Fair, Eileen Justesen, Claire Knapp
Absent: Mildred Frank, Rob Fraser, Jean King, Alan Ward, Bernadette Walsh, Irene Kitchell

Andree Nottage Photograph

Chalkdust Memories

Farcical and humorous tales submitted by our readers.

Lester Pearson and His No Bowl Praise

- by *Allen Strike*

Edwin Arthur Pearson, Lester Pearson's father, was an itinerant Methodist minister and, in 1897, he happened to be in Newton Brook, Ontario where Lester was born. It might be more precise, I suppose, to say that Mrs. E.A. Pearson was in Newton Brook at the time.

At any rate, in 1963-4 when the North York Board decided to build a secondary school in those parts (renamed Newtonbrook) it seemed meet, right, and a bounden duty to have Lester Pearson, now Prime Minister, to open the new school.

In those days a school opening was a gala occasion, with red carpet, flags, potted plants, silver tea pots, and butane candles. The Major Domo of all this was Wm. "Bill"

Dempsey who was later to develop festive occasions into a spectacle worthy of a Carthaginian Coronation. His whole show

would be packed into an eighteen-wheeler transport and Bill could whip-up a glittering ceremony at any location within the Township in twenty-three minutes.

In the initial planning for the school, the architects had included a Principal's Washroom, ensuite with the office. This had been the usual practice. However, during the time that the school was being built the Board, in a fit of egalitarianism, had decided that in new schools the Principal and his guests would have to endure the



rigours of public ablutions. The result was that, although the necessary piping was already in place when the stop-order came

through, the builders did no further work on the washroom. Where the toilet was meant to be there was only a hole in the floor.

The Director of Education for North York at the time was the patrician Dr. F.W. Minkler. He had the presence of a deity on sabbatical leave from Mount Olympus. When Minkler spoke about education the Board listened. He was a great educator. (A later director was to say that the era of the Great Educator was over and in his case this was certainly true.) Minkler, naturally, was on hand for the opening of Newtonbrook Secondary School.

Just before the ceremonies were set to begin Lester Pearson asked Minkler if there was a washroom that he might use. "Of course Mister Prime Minister, this way" said Minkler and shepherded him to the door of the unfinished washroom. He opened the door and Lester Pearson stepped inside. After some fifteen seconds had passed

the door opened slowly and the Prime Minister re-emerged to say, "I think that your Principal's aim must be rather better than my own."

WEB ALERT

From your webmaster, Dianne Fair

District 23 information can be found on our website. <http://www.rtoerotorontodistricts.org/>

Log on to view:

Activities Classifieds Member Services Newsletters Photos Executive Members and more.

There are numerous links including the MEMBERS ONLY section that requires registration before access is given.

Have your RTO number handy to register.

Contact dianefair@rogers.com with questions.

Prescription Medications ~ Warnings From Health Canada

Health Canada is warning Canadians about counterfeit toothpaste products from China falsely labeled as *Colgate Fluoride Toothpaste Herbal* and *Colgate Fluoride Toothpaste Maximum Cavity Protection*.

They have been found to contain high levels of harmful bacteria and unacceptable levels of diethylene glycol (DEG). DEG is a poisonous chemical used in antifreeze and as a solvent.

Consumers are being advised to discontinue use immediately and not to reuse their toothbrush.

The product should be kept out of reach of children.

Counterfeit tubes should be sealed and put into sealed bags for disposal, and wash your hands after handling the tube.

b) The University of Ottawa tested **canned albacore tuna**, also known as white tuna, for mercury levels and found it exceeded Health Canada's guideline. As a result, Health Canada issued new guidelines advising children and pregnant or breastfeeding women to limit their consumption of canned tuna. Health Canada has since noted that canned albacore tuna "is not the same as canned light tuna, which contains other tuna species such as skipjack and yellowfin, which are relatively low in mercury".

c) A very small number of **One-Touch® Ultra® Test Strip** containers (also called "vials") were discovered to contain a hole on the side. This damage can affect the test strips inside and lead to error messages or blood glucose results that are too high or too low.

Health Canada advises patients not to use test strips from damaged vials. Patients should report damaged vials to LifeScan Customer Service by calling toll-free, 1-866-395-2977 (Monday-Friday, 9:00 am to 8:00 pm, ET).

Health Canada is warning patients taking the anti-epilepsy medications Depakene 500 mg and ratio-VALPROIC 500 mg that they may not be getting the full dose of the active drug. Routine testing has indicated that the shelf life of the product is not as long as marked on the packaging, which has resulted in patients not receiving an adequate dosage of the drug and therefore, inadequate treatment for their seizures.

e) GlaxoSmithKline, in conjunction with Health Canada, addressed public concerns about the safety of **Avandia®** following a recently published article in the New England Journal of Medicine. The article raises concerns about an increased risk of heart attack and cardiovascular death in patients with type 2 diabetes treated with Avandia®. Health Canada confirms that the results of the study require further review and confirmation and any findings will be communicated when the review is complete. In Canada, Avandia® is approved when diet, weight loss, and exercise are not enough to control diabetes. It may be used alone or in combination with other diabetes medications called metformin or a sulfonylurea but it should not be used if there are heart problems.

f) **ACTOS® Tablets** – New Safety Information Eli Lilly Canada released new safety information regarding ACTOS®, a diabetes medication. Clinical trials indi-

cated an increased incidence of bone fractures in women. There was no increased risk in men. Patients (especially women) should continue their medication, but contact their doctor about their treatment options.

g) **Symbicort SMART®** - New Asthma Inhaler Approved by Health Canada. On March 6, 2007, Health Canada approved a new asthma medication called Symbicort SMART®. The inhalers combine the normally prescribed two inhalers by combining both the steroid and rescue medication in one inhaler. More than half of the people with Asthma do not have the disease under control due to non-compliance. This inhaler is designed to ensure that patients receive the proper medication with each inhalation, which will improve compliance and thus long term control of the disease.

h) **Zencore / Encore Tabs for Men Warning ~ Not Authorized for Sale in Canada**

Health Canada is warning consumers not to use the product Zencore / Encore Tabs for Men, a dietary supplement for sexual enhancement. Health Canada warns that the product contains an undeclared pharmaceutical ingredient similar to the approved drug Tadalafil. Tadalafil is a prescription medication used in the treatment of erectile dysfunction and should only be used under the care of a physician due to the serious risks it poses to individuals taking nitrate medications. Combining products containing Tadalafil with heart medications could result in the development of potentially life-threatening low blood pressure. ❖

A Real Groaner

Two friends met for the first time since graduating from high school.

One asked the other, "You were always so organized in school, did you manage to live a well planned life?"

"Yes," said the friend. "My first marriage was to a millionaire; my second marriage was to an actor; my third marriage was to a preacher; and now I'm married to an undertaker."

The friend asked, "What do those marriages have to do with a well planned life?"

"One for the money,
two for the show,
three to get ready,
and four to go."

Your District 23 Table Officers



District 23 Executive Table Officers: Standing, left to right: 2nd VP, Luciana Soncin, President, Margaret Schuman, 1st VP, Michael Sheffe, Treasurer, Beverley Henricks, Secretary, Helen Wiber, Seated - Past President, Mary Ellen Lawless

Andrée Nottage Photograph



Sonia Walker

On behalf of the members of North York RTO/ERO, we wish to extend a very big thank you to Sonia Walker for her contribution as a member of the executive and for assuming the duties of secretary for the past seven years.

The role of secretary is a very important one in any organization and Sonia has very ably and efficiently attended to all aspects of the position for District 23.

Sonia provided the executive committee with timely, concise, and well organized Minutes following meetings. She was also the secretarial archivist, and as you can appreciate, these are invaluable services for all members of the executive and especially for the president and other executive officers.

Sonia always worked with an air of calm efficiency. Her ability to focus as she

went about the business of organizing and recording all matters of the executive was admirable.

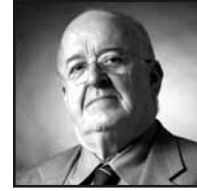
Sonia is a very capable person and successful in all she undertakes. She quietly, and with dignity, expresses concern and caring for others. Needless to say, we have been fortunate to have her as a member of the executive and as secretary.

Sonia is moving on to another stage of her retirement life. She and husband Ted are moving into a brand new home in downtown Toronto, where they will enjoy the hustle and bustle of urban life. She will have more time for her two sons and their families, for the cruises that she and Ted so enjoy, and for their home in Florida.

So it is with sadness that we see her leave our executive....but with much appreciation for her contribution to District 23, and with very best wishes for joy in her new adventures, and for continued good health.

Creativity Begins with Discipline

By Robert Fulford



Education, as education bureaucrats will tell you, is the road to the future. But in much of Canada today it's a path to mediocrity. Our system is broken and demoralized. The public has lost faith in it, partly because the public has little to do with it. We put teaching in the hands of unionized teachers and calcified bureaucrats—and the whole country suffers. The uneducated graduate becomes a drain on the economy and the culture.

The change Canada needs most is a rejuvenated educational system. We need to make it the No. 1 priority at all levels of government. It should be the obsession of our best politicians, professionals, business leaders, and intellectuals. As Malcolm Gladwell said the other day, we could greatly improve public education “if corporations publicly and loudly lined up behind the public school system.”

LOUDLY is the key word. Education needs loud, passionate champions.

Our schools have become lax and cynical. Teachers, made to feel like babysitters, act like babysitters. They automatically push students upward, a recipe for failure and resentment. If a student goes from Grade 8 to Grade 9 without understanding what the teacher in Grade 8 was saying, that student has been cheated. The result is boredom. Many high-school students seem barely able to tolerate teachers, books, and learning. We should revive the old rule: Don't promote students till they earn it. Don't let students into high school who aren't ready for it.

We should insist on parental responsibility. Anyone who sends a child off to school without a sense of purpose helps degrade the school for everyone. As Harry Giles wrote in a recent report on his experience as a pioneer of independent schools, teachers should not have to tolerate “ill-mannered, ill-educated, inatten-

tive, undisciplined children.” Everyone believes that. No public school acts upon it.

We should recognize teaching by paying excellent salaries to good teachers—and far less to the merely adequate. If the unions object, we should fight for pay flexibility in the public arena.

Give principals back the power to suspend students whose antisocial activities cripple education. Appoint in every school an ombudsman, not to defend teachers or students but to stand up for the purposes of education. (Leave the ombudsman in place only a few years, so that he or she won't become part of the establishment.) Re-create the tradition of school libraries, hire professional librarians, and go back to buying books as well as computers.

We need smaller schools and smaller bureaucracies. We need to let parents set up their own schools and direct their tax money to them—the public schools will benefit from competition. We need an end to the obsession with overly delicate speech, which now paralyzes debate. We shouldn't stop worrying about students who are harassed by teachers or other students but we should stop talking as if harassment were the central problem.

Many students coast through elementary and high school and arrive at university without knowing how to read a poem, write a sentence or explain federal-provincial relations. Teacher-dependent, they believe that education is what the schools teach; they never achieve the freedom to think and act for themselves without guidance.

A well-intentioned and perhaps good-hearted condescension has helped dilute the value of schooling. One of the greatest Canadian teachers, the late Northrop Frye, argued that only disci-

plined work will lead a student toward excitement, pleasure and success. A passionate amateur pianist as well as one of the world's great literary critics, Frye chose piano-playing as a metaphor representing the difficulties and rewards of learning. “It requires endless patient repetition until conscious learning is finally digested into unconscious skill.”

He believed in unconstrained art and thought, “but the spontaneous comes at the end of a long discipline of practice.” Education is in essence a movement toward the spontaneous. “When we practice the piano, we are setting ourselves free to play the piano. It is only the thoroughly educated who can take liberties with rules.”

Good students understand precisely what Frye meant. It's both practical and visionary, like Frye himself. But something in the spirit of the age encourages the opposite view. Perhaps the desire to enhance the self-esteem of students has created the habit of honouring any work above total incompetence. More important, we have become intoxicated by the idea of originality. Knowing that our future depends on new ideas, we forget that inspiration comes only to those who have prepared their minds for its arrival. Teachers should not neglect spontaneity but maybe they should use the word “disciplined” half a dozen times for every time they say “creative.”

Only a radically reformed structure can work these changes. We need a system that's nimble and clever, a gazelle to replace the hippopotamus that the 20th century bequeathed to us.

robert.fulford@utoronto.ca

This article recently appeared in the National Post and is reprinted here with permission of the author.

Volunteer
Service Award
Winners:
Kathleen Elliott,
Nancy Walsh
and Sam Habib



Andrée Nottage Photograph

At a June reception hosted by the Ontario Government, Kathleen Elliott, Nancy Walsh and Sam Habib, members of RTO/ERO, North York, were honoured for their long time volunteer service to RTO/ERO.

At the North York, District 23 Annual General Meeting, held in September, their many contributions were recognized, and they received the warmest appreciation from the membership.

Since the day Nancy, Kathleen and Sam retired from active service, they have lived the RTO/ERO motto - Service to Others.

Nancy served the District in many capacities including President. Kathleen continues her work as Assistant Treasurer and Archivist, and Sam served as our Health Service Convenor for more than a decade, reminding us monthly to look after our finances and our health.

Congratulations and thank you Nancy, Kathleen and Sam.

MYSTERY AT THE OLD MILL



“IT’S A WONDERFUL DEATH”*

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

Cut-Off Date -January, 21, 2008

Old Mill Restaurant
21 Old Mill Road, Etobicoke

\$44.00

11:30 am Lunch Buffet in the Main Dining Room (Meet Doug inside the Main Entrance of the Inn)

1:00 pm Mystery Begins in Brule C

* Tentative title of the mystery

~See page 31 for registration form

Bridge Report

by Alan Ward

The Bridge Club continues to meet at Willowdale United Church on Kenneth Avenue at Church St (south of Finch, east of Yonge) every Tuesday except for the first Tuesday of the month. New members are cordially invited to try us out: it is suggested that players arrive no later than 12.45 p.m., since the afternoon's play begins promptly at 1 p.m. Normally we have between 24 and 32 members in attendance. Further information is available from Alan Ward at alanward@interlog.com or by telephone at 905-889-3687.

As Convener I have been unavoidably absent on several occasions and this will continue into the 2007 – 8 season. In my absence, Duplicate will not be played unless volunteer(s) can be found who are willing to undertake the not inconsiderable task of setting up the boards and scoring the results after the play. An assistant convener who would be willing to assume responsibility during my absences on a regular basis would be eagerly welcomed. In the meantime, thanks to all the members who have generously assisted me with the running of the club and who continue to do so.

Challenge Hand Winners: Duplicate style competition

| Date | North-South Pair(s) | East-West Pair(s) |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| May 29 th | David Fleming & Mel York Donna Mighton & Alan Ward | Carson Klinck & Marsh Morris |
| June 12 th | Marilyn Storton-Butcher & Carson Klinck | Friedel Liptay & Bev Suzuki |
| September 11 th | Eulaline Taylor & Mary Lutz | Nora Garvin & David Fleming |
| September 25 th | Lee White & George Vanderwerf | Margaret Schuman & Helen Wiber |

The Table Champions

Congratulations to the following players who were undefeated in five rounds at least once between May 15th 2007 and September 25th 2007.

David Fleming, Nora Garvin, Carson Kinck, Helen Lamping (2), Hardie McNeil, Bob Radko, Marilyn Storton-Butcher, Bev Suzuki, Nancy Walsh, Lee White, Helen Wiber

The Slam Bidders

To recognise those players who have the courage of their convictions and the skills to succeed in high level contracts, a small prize will be given to any player who bids and makes at least two small slams in the course of an afternoon's play.

| | | <u>Contract Bid (made)</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| May 15 th | Helen Wiber & Dianne Fair | 6 (7) |
| May 29 th | Marsh Morris & David Fleming | 6 |
| | Marsh Morris & Alan Ward | 6 |
| June 5 th | Carson Klinck & Alan Ward | 6 |
| September 4 th | Ruth Jacobs & David Fleming | 6 |
| September 25 th | Margaret Schuman & Helen Wiber | 7 |

Highlights From Senate

October 23 & 24, 2007

Prepared by Senators Mary Ellen Lawless, Margaret Schuman and Observers: Michael Sheffe, Helen Wiber and Luci Soncin

New Provincial Executive

President~Brian Kenny,
Past President~ Ron Poste,
1st Vice President~Clarice West-Hobbes,
2nd Vice President~ Margaret Couture,
Executive Members~Robert Lamoureux
and Joan Murphy

Pension Changes

The pension increase will be 1.8% in January 2008. There will be a slight increase in RTO/ERO fees for 2008. These will be detailed in the next issue of RENAISSANCE

Constitutional Changes

Senate approved changes to reflect the actuality of 2007, similar to the procedure District 23 undertook at our AGM to reflect current practices.

RTO/ERO Goals for 2007

Service to Others, Marketing RTO/ERO, Maintaining & Strengthening Relationships, Corporate Structure and Financial Accountability.

Provincial Standing and Executive Committees.

For 2008, RTO/ERO requires **twenty five members** to volunteer for **Provincial Standing and Executive Committees**. The deadline is June 30. If interested, contact Margaret or Mary Ellen.

RTO/ERO Scholarship Program

To be eligible for a scholarship, a student must:

a) be enrolled in a full or part-time program, which will lead directly to a career in teaching in Canada, b) be a resident Canadian Citizen or a landed immigrant, c) be a child, grandchild, niece, nephew, grandniece, grandnephew, son-in-law, daughter-in-law or step-child of an RTO/ERO member.

RE-Net

RE-Net, our electronic communications system is available to the Provincial Executive, Webmasters, Newsletter Editors and some committees.

ACER-CART

RTO/ERO is one of the affiliates of The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER-CART). Two RTO/ERO members serve on the executive: Helen Biales as President and Arnold Hull as a representative.

RTO/ERO pays \$.25 per member to belong to ACER-CART, which set the following priorities in 2007 -2008: elder abuse, availability and cost of prescription drugs and the effect of escalating property taxes on seniors.

Recruitment

The Provincial Executive is offering Retirement Planning Workshops across the province, and is continuing to encourage local districts to attract new members. The goal is 60,000 members in 2008. If you know people who are not a members, invite them to join and enjoy the benefits of membership in RTO/ERO.

Guest Speakers at Senate

Maureen Davis, President of OTE, representing 155,000 active teachers in Ontario, brought greetings and the promise of continued support for RTO/ERO.

After 17 years, **Claude Lamoureux** is retiring as chief executive officer of OTTP. Under his leadership, the pension fund has been very successful.

He credited success to: building a strong team, creating a firm foundation and spending money to make money.

Further achievements:

a) In the 1990's, OTTP did the right thing and re-evaluated over 50,000 teacher pensions and repaid teachers at a cost of 260 million dollars. Some 26,000 teachers received repayments.

b) Webcast is available to retiring teachers. Webcast provides more and faster communication for teachers considering retirement. One has to register to use this service.

c) There are 170 professional investors on staff.

d) In the calculation of liabilities, actuarial reviews do not impact on pensions.

e) OTTP thinks 50 to 75 years ahead.

f) Educators are the ones who have made this province great. "Teachers effect eternity."

David Adams - a retired Canadian diplomat had some advice:

a) Travel with your eyes open, secure your travel documents at all times, keep a copy of page one of your passport on your person at all times, secure money and valuables in your hotel safe.

If you have dual citizenship, remember this - some countries will only allow admission if you are using a passport from your country of origin, but in these instances, the Canadian Consul can't represent you or intervene if you experience difficulties.

If you lose your passport, you must obtain a letter to return to Canada from the closest Canadian Consulate. The letter permits return to Canada within 48 hours.

Passports are issued worldwide only from the Quebec City office.

40th Anniversary of RTO/ERO.

Watch for information on how this will be celebrated in District 23 and throughout the province this year.

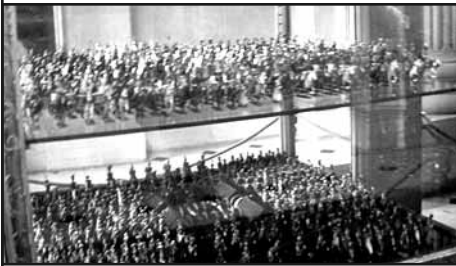


Founding Member Award winner, George Meek (left), receiving the Award at Senate, from President Ron Poste.

Michael Sheffe Photograph

Churchill's Toy Soldiers

Blenheim, England



Row upon row
shelf after shelf
toy soldiers
to practice on
to order
to command

A life of privilege
from birth
with others
to do his bidding
unquestioningly
from unlacing shoes
to dying
from drink pouring
to killing

The war arrives
warm greeted by
Churchill, who
now well practiced
bulldogs his way
in bunker safety
while real men die
and real men kill

Elka Enola

Long Term Care Facilities Minimum Care Standards

by *The Ontario Health Coalition*

Leading into the introduction of Bill 140, the new Long Term Care Homes Act, the Health Coalition joined with the major seniors' groups, residents' advocates and nurses' and caregivers' unions to set a list of public interest priorities. Out of these discussions, consensus emerged that a regulated level of care (the former regulation was removed by the Harris government) was required to protect residents and caregivers from injury, accident and neglect. The coalition made this issue a priority throughout the hearings and legislative process.

Health Minister George Smitherman was initially opposed to staffing standards: see Toronto Star (January 23, 2007 "Smitherman dismisses hours-of-care standard") and was quoted in the media during the Bill 140 hearings saying that mandating staffing hours was akin to treating seniors like widgets. He was directly quoted saying "The idea that you pretend everyone is the same and that they all need three hours ... pretends that people are widgets".

Smitherman was certainly advised by then that advocates were not calling for an individual resident-based minimum staffing standard; requiring every resident to receive 3.5 hours of care whether they needed it or not. This attempt to refute the proposition is simply disingenuous and disrespectful.

In fact, throughout the Bill 140 consultation and the earlier Commitment to Care consultation, advocates held a common position and were abundantly clear about insisting upon a staffing standard based on residents' acuity. Thus homes at the average level of acuity would be required to provide 3.5 hours of care. Homes above the average would be required to provide care at higher levels and homes below the average would staff at lower levels.

Thus, the common call is for a minimum average standard and is consistent with the current funding practices of the Ministry as funding is not based directly on individual need but on group average needs in each facility.

According to the Ministry's own internal documents, the only stakeholder that spoke in opposition to any reinstatement of minimum staffing standards was the Ontario Long Term Care Association, the principal lobby group for the for-profit nursing home industry.

Following considerable public pressure during the Bill 140 hearings, the Ministry of Health released a press release dated January 26, 2007 says the McGuinty government had "been listening to a number of people and groups" and was "responding to make the legislation even stronger". This press release expressly lists proposed amendments to "establish staffing and care standards" and followed public commitments by George Smitherman and his Parliamentary Assistant MPP Monique Smith promising to bring in a regulation to establish a care standard.

It was known at about the same time that the Ministry was receiving reports from LTC operators indicating average staffing hours of 2.8 hours per resident. These represent paid hours, rather than 'worked' or hands-on care hours.

Consistent with those promises, Liberal MPP Monique Smith introduced a new section 15.1 to Bill 140 that would require every LTC homes to ensure it met the staffing and care standards provided for in regulations".

However, at third reading of Bill 140 on March 29, 2007; one week after the provincial budget was introduced with an

~Continued next page

Reunion

at

John G. Althouse
Middle School

130 Lloyd Manor Rd
Etobicoke, Ontario M9B 5K1

MAY 3, 2008

1:00 - 5:00 PM

www.JohnGAlthousereunion.ca
416 - 394 - 7580

anticipated surplus of \$310 million; there were neither any minimum staffing standards nor any indication when such standards would be set out in regulation.

At the end of the spring session, the Bill was passed and received Royal Assent. Still no regulation to set care standards was introduced.

Contrast that to the subsequent announcement of a \$2.3 billion surplus for 2006-07 and a forecast of \$750 million in surplus in 2007-08.

Contrast that to the subsequent announcement of an increase in the capital redevelopment per diem to \$15.00 from \$10.35 to finance the redevelopment of some 35,000 beds over 10 years that would cost an additional \$60 million in each year.

Contrast that to the subsequent announcement of an additional 1,760 new LTC beds throughout the province in 2007 that would cost a further \$236.8 million.

Contrast that to the subsequent announcement of an increase in the daily raw food allowance to \$7.00; that would cost \$25.4 million annually.

While the Liberal Government claims to have increased long-term care spending by \$800 million since 2003, they have not mandated by regulation any minimum staffing standard to ensure quality care for residents. Where are their priorities? ❖

Bad air season isn't over yet

by Ontario Clean Air Alliance

The leaves may be starting to turn, but the bad air season is still with us. Ontario has now had 50 smog days for the year, and we are steadily closing the gap on the horrendous spring, summer and fall of 2005 when the province recorded more than 60 smog days in total. With muggy weather in the forecast for this week, we'll once again have Ontario's No. 1 smog recipe in action: dirty coal plants running full out to meet demand for cooling on days with poor air quality.

Are scrubbers the answer? Not really. These expensive end-of-pipe solutions are more like a band aid than a solution — a band aid that could cost up to \$1.6 billion to install on Nanticoke alone and would reduce the total emissions of our coal plants by only 14/100ths of 1%. For the same money, we could make tremendous investments in efficiency and conservation, renewable energy and natural gas-fired combined heat and power, all of which will be dramatically cleaner than even scrubbed-up coal. And like many end-of-pipe solutions, scrubbers really just move the problem around. The little mercury they do capture, for example, ends up in ash that Ontario Power Generation sends to cement plants, which put it up the stack again. And, of course, scrubbers do absolutely nothing about greenhouse gas emissions. And that's one big hole in a \$1.6 billion-dollar band aid solution.

The Province of Ontario has issued a legally-binding regulation which requires the complete phase-out of our dirty

coal plants in 2014. Please contact the Premier and ask him if he believes that Ontario should aggressively promote energy conservation, renewable energy and natural gas-fired combined heat and power so that we can phase out coal by 2014 or sooner and keep the lights on. ❖

Advance Notice

5th Annual District 23 Golf Tournament

Thursday, June 5, 2008

Kettle Creek at
Cardinal Golf Club

Shot gun start 10 a.m.

Lunch and prizes

\$45 entry fee

Registration form in the
next issue

Questions? Call Helen

416 485 0131

Mark your calendar

Changes

to Our Constitution, Policies and Appendices

by Mary Ellen Lawless, Past President

President Margaret Schuman noted in her report that several changes had been made to the District 23 Constitution, Policies and Appendices. This article is intended to spell out those changes and why they were made.

Many of the changes were cosmetic in that they were made to tidy up the language and make one part more consistent with another. Thanks to the hard work of the Committee, assisted by our knowledgeable parliamentarian, George Meek, the updated document is as accurate as we can make it at this time. Constitutions and their ancillary support documents are always active, working documents and changes are inevitable, as times and situations change.

Major Changes and Why Constitutional Changes

2.04: Under duties of the Executive it now reads- "To hold at least one meeting of members before the end of June per year which shall be the Annual General Meeting at which the Executive shall be elected".

Rationale: Over the last three to four years the Executives of the four Districts which constitute the City of Toronto have met and established a Districts Council. Because the other three Districts all hold their AGM in June, it became important that District 23 follow suit. This will enable easier scheduling of dates for common events such as the very successful Retirement Planning Workshops, Political Action initiatives, and the annual meeting of the four Executives to share common plans and exchange ideas.

Standing Committees: "A Book Club" and "Strollers" were added to the current list of Standing Committees to reflect their existence and success over the past three years.

Recruitment was separated from Membership as each of these committees is demanding of an individual's time while both are viewed as essential to the ongoing success and growth of District 23.

The role of the Website Committee was expanded to reflect the implementation of the plan to offer Stony electronically.

Policy Changes

One of the objectives arising from our brainstorming meetings was in the area of increasing our outreach to and support for our District 23 members. The following policy changes emerged from that priority.

a) That those district members celebrating a 70th birthday that year be extended a "gratis" invitation to the Annual General Meeting and luncheon along with the Presidents of the other three Toronto Districts, the Executive Director of RTO/ERO, and other invited guests along with any guest speaker.

b) That while trying to be as invitational as possible, all district events, activities and services shall be made available to members and a spouse or one guest, on a priority basis.

c) For activities that are subsidized, the District member and one guest are entitled to pay the subsidized cost. Additional guests will pay the full advertized price.

d) After a specified date, other RTO/ERO districts' members and their guests are welcome to attend, if space permits, and will pay the full advertized price.

Rationale: Many excursions and activities are becoming very expensive and your Executive wanted the district members to be the ones who benefit from the subsidized events, such as some trips and the four social events held each year. For example, the recent trip to Oklahoma was subsidized to the tune of \$15.00 per person because of the rising costs of the tickets, the bus and the meal. Also, it is important that your executive be transparent and share this information with you. Effective in January 2008 any subsidized activities will be advertized with two prices; the actual and the cost to District 23 members and the tear-off reply forms will reflect these changes.

e) Birthday cards will be sent yearly to the district members upon their

reaching 80 years of age.

f) District members' 100th birthdays will be suitably recognized.

g) Cards will be sent to district members who are ill, shut-ins, in nursing homes or as appropriate.

Please contact our Goodwill Convener Eileen Justesen if you know of someone meeting these criteria. Her telephone number appears on page 2 of Stony.

If finances allow, the district will try to recognize those celebrating 80th, 85th, 90th, and 95th birthdays. Your next Stony will have more details about this initiative.

h) The Travel Committee title has been changed to the Trips Committee to better reflect the reality.

i) A Newsletter Liaison Committee has been established with a view to assisting Rob Fraser, our excellent Editor and to assist the Executive to track what has/had not been sent to Rob for publication.

Footnotes:

If you require a copy of the District 23 Constitution, Policies and Appendices document, please contact George Meek.

Occasionally the gremlins do creep into Stony, as happened with Mildred Frank's telephone number in the three social events advertized in the last issue. However, her correct telephone number did appear on page 2 in the list of Executive and Standing Committee members. We apologize for any inconvenience to our members because of this error.

Please, please, please, keep your copy of Stony at least until you receive the next edition. Often members call because they have thrown out their copy of Stony and then require some information from it. I would recommend that you also do the same with the Renaissance magazine from Provincial, especially for the details regarding changes to health coverage and the excellent fact sheets prepared by RTO/ERO for our use. ❖

Tear-Offs

Please write separate cheques
for each slip.

70's fever: A Musical Celebration of the 70's
Wednesday Matinee, January 16, 2008
Cut-off date: Monday, December 10, 2007

Name _____ Email: _____ Tel: _____

Guests _____

of tickets @ \$52 _____ Cheque Enclosed for \$ _____

Make cheque payable to RTO/ERO District 23 and mail to:
RTO/ERO c/o Jean King, 6 King's Inn Trail, Thornhill, ON L3T 1T7

It's a Wonderful Death
Wednesday, February 20, 2008
(Cut Off Date - January 21, 2008)

Name: _____ Email _____ Telephone _____

Guest(s) _____

_____ tickets @ \$44 = _____ Cheque enclosed for \$ _____

Make cheque payable to RTO/ERO District 23 and mail to
RTO/ERO c/o Jean King, 6 King's Inn Trail, Thornhill, ON L3T 1T7

The Beaver Show
Wednesday, March 12, 2008
(Cut Off Date - January 31, 2008)

Name: _____ Email _____ Telephone _____

Guest(s) _____

_____ tickets @ \$17 = _____ Cheque enclosed for \$ _____

Make cheque payable to RTO/ERO District 23 and mail to
RTO/ERO c/o Jean King, 6 King's Inn Trail, Thornhill, ON L3T 1T7

Cookin' With Gus at The Herongate Barn Theatre
Sunday Matinee March 20, 2008
(Cut Off Date - February 15, 2008)

Name: _____ Email _____ Telephone _____

Guest(s) _____

_____ tickets @ \$44 = _____ Cheque enclosed for \$ _____

Make cheque payable to RTO/ERO District 23 and mail to
RTO/ERO c/o Jean King, 6 King's Inn Trail, Thornhill, ON L3T 1T7

REFUND POLICY

1. All trips and events advertised in STONY BRIDGES and requiring a cheque and order form, will show a cut-off date. The date is set to enable us to comply with our commitment to pay for the event. No cheque should be post dated beyond this date.

2. Any booking can be cancelled at any time prior to the cut-off date by phoning the event organizer or Jean King, Assistant Treasurer 905-764-1125 (trips/theatre), or Mildred Frank 416-221-5328 (Social Convenor).

3. Cancellations beyond this date will only be accepted if there is a waiting list for tickets, and we can sell your ticket to someone on the waiting list.

4. Ticket holders are welcome to sell, give or transfer their place or ticket privately.

CHANGE OF INFORMATION

Send to:
RTO/ERO c/o Dianne Vezeau
Suite 300, 18 Spadina Rd.,
Toronto ON M5R 2S7
Phone: 416-962-9463 or 1-800-361-9888
www.rto-ero.org

Name: _____

New Address: _____

New Phone: _____

Old Address: _____

Old Phone: _____

Note: The Provincial Office will inform District 23 of these changes.

STONY Bridges
C/O George Meek
414 - 4005 Bayview Ave.
North York ON M2M 3Z9

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