

STONY BRIDGES

Issue 93

A Newsletter for the members of



North York, District 23

February 2008

Anniversaries



& NORTH YORK'S

35th

~See page 3 for the story



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Calendar of Events

February

6 Executive Meeting	9:15 a.m.
7 Strollers	10:00 a.m.
12 Bridge	1:00 p.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 p.m.
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 noon
25 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
26 Book Club	2:00 p.m.

April

1 Bridge	1:30 p.m.
3 Strollers	10:00 a.m.
8 Bridge	1:30 p.m.
9 Exec. Mtg	9:15 a.m.
15 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
22 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
29 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
30 Book Club	2:00 p.m.

May

1 Strollers	10:00 a.m.
1 Spring Luncheon	11:00 a.m.
6 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
6 Shaw Festival	9:15 a.m.
7 Exec. Meeting	9:15
13 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
20 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
27 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
28 Book Club	2:00 p.m.

June

3 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
4 Exec. Meeting	9:15 a.m.
5 Strollers	10:00 a.m.
5 Golf	8:45 a.m.
10 AGM	10:00 a.m.
10 Bridge	1:00 pm.
17 Bridge	1:00 p.m.
24 Bridge	1:00 p.m.

September

19 Music Man	9:15 a.m.
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Submissions

STONY Bridges welcomes submissions and letters to the editor 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.

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Deadline

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

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

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President's Message

by Margaret Schuman



It seems as if little time has passed since last I wrote to you, the members of District 23, North York, but 2008 is well established, and a lot has already happened. The year promises to be exciting and busy for District 23.

The big news is that 2008 is the 40th anniversary of RTO/ERO, which has grown to become the primary voice of retired teachers in Ontario. Membership is expected to exceed 60,000 this year.

The provincial body of RTO/ERO will mark the 40th in special ways, as will we in District 23, North York, but we have an additional reason to celebrate – it's been 35 years since our founding as a district in 1973.

District 23, North York has always been supported by talented, dedicated and involved educators. Thus, it is our plan to remember and celebrate our friendships and accomplishments.

These are some of our plans:

a) We have struck a committee to unearth

the accumulated pictures and records since 1973. It is our hope to put them all on CDs for display at the various events throughout 2008.

b) At our spring luncheon, we hope to gather former members who have taken a leadership role during the past 35 years. Among them would be three founding members and former presidents.

c) At our June Annual General Meeting, we plan to celebrate our 35th Birthday in a special and appropriate way.

d) At our Champagne Pour, we will welcome new retirees, introduce them to the benefits of belonging to RTO/ERO, and celebrate 40 years of advocacy for members. We urge you to invite friends and former colleagues, who are not yet members of RTO/ERO, to accompany you.

e) In late November, we have planned a Health Cavalcade. At this event, members may receive their flu shot, listen to a few speakers on wellness subjects, and then enjoy lunch with friends and other

RTO/ERO members.

Hopefully, the 35th Anniversary celebrations will remind us of our illustrious past and also reunite friends and former colleagues. I invite all of you to be a part of these celebrations.

District 23, North York has always been a vibrant, friendly and very active community. Many members have given their time and skill over the years. However, there are still many others - with a multitude of skills and talents to share - that we would like to hear from. If you're one of them, and want to be involved, I invite you to consider the options. They are too numerous to list but I am including a few suggestions.

You could:

1) Volunteer to be a convener.

There are two vacancies. We need a travelogue convener and as of February 1,

~See PRESIDENT/page 4

~PRESIDENT/Continued from page 3

2008, we also need a Goodwill Convener. We regret that our current convener, Eileen Justesen, has resigned. While we thank her for her careful and detailed attention to this important work, we also seek her replacement.

2) Volunteer to serve on one of our subcommittees.

3) Volunteer to take on the challenge of being 2nd Vice President.

4) Volunteer to send out cards to members on various occasions.

5) Submit pictures, which you think fellow members would enjoy.

6) Submit articles or poems to Stony Bridges.

7) Submit letters to the editor of

Stony Bridges.

8) Start a new group (craft, knitting, movies in the afternoon or evening. All these would generate interest.)

You can give as much or as little as you wish. But please consider becoming more involved. Besides, it's fun and you meet wonderful and interesting people. Feel free to contact any of the executive if you have questions, or if you are willing to take on a "job".

Please come out and celebrate with the other members of District 23/North York, and please extend invitations to friends and former colleagues who are not yet members of RTO/ERO. Membership in RTO/ERO is 'a good thing' and should be shared.

May you enjoy health and happiness throughout 2008. ❖

The Founding of RTO/ERO and North York- District 23

by George Meek

The Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO/ERO) was founded formally in 1968 (40 years ago) as the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (STO) with about 5000 members.

Today, membership in RTO/ERO approaches 60,000.

STO grew out of an Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF) committee, and around the issue of the founding of the Canada Pension Plan and how it should relate to our Teachers' Superannuation Fund of the day.

North York – District 23 was founded as a separate district officially in 1973 (35 years ago) and the Founding Members were: Ruth Bradshaw, Jean Featherstone*, Viva Heaton, Helen Lang, Dick Webster*, and Dorothy Young. The first President was Bruce Dawson*.

Membership in District 23 today approaches 2200.

Since 1973 we have had 35 Presidents: Bruce Dawson*, Dr. John McIntosh*, Gertrude Paterson*, Dr. David Tough*, George Hosie*, Fraser Bradshaw*,

Margaret Bates*, Eileen Carter*, Ruth Bick*, Ken McKee*, Jack Foote, Ruth Robson, John Allen, Joe Bilson*, Elaine Wyles, Mary Scanlan*, Don Hazell, Geoff Arnold, John Wilson, Aileen Thomas, Betty Nagle, Gord Claus, Mildred Frank, Clair Piche, Nancy Walsh, George Meek, Marion Taylor, Rob Fraser, Beverley Wood, Andree Nottage, David Fleming, Frank Salianni, Helen Wiber, Mary Ellen Lawless, and currently Margaret Schuman.

* Deceased

These people along with the members of their Executives are our past and present, and our hope for the future.

We plan to 'Celebrate Our Past' at the Spring Luncheon on Thursday, May 1.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Founding Members, Presidents and their respective Executive Members can expect an individual invitation.

We shall also 'Celebrate Our Past' at our Annual General Meeting on June 10, 2008. ❖

Note: Founding member, Ruth Bradshaw's picture appears on page 14

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.

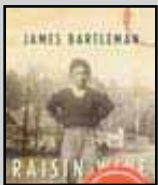
Your information is kept confidential. I have the only copy of the e-mail list. I do not distribute it, or sell it to anyone else. Please note that when you receive an e-mail from this service, it does not show anyone else's e-mail address.

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

BOOK CLUB

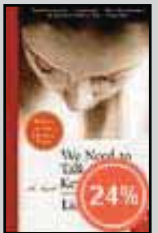
The Book Club meets the last Wednesday of each month at Edithvale Community Centre (Finch and Edithvale - on south side west of Yonge St.) from 2 to 4 p.m.

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 is 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.**

WALKING THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

by Lorretta Skinner



Stan and I were married October 12, 1957, so last year was our 50th year of marriage, and we decided to celebrate - all year! We started by having a Katsura tree planted in the Toronto Botanical Garden, then we wanted to do something extraordinary.

For years, Stan and I talked about walking the Camino de Santiago, which is an ancient Christian Pilgrims' route in northern Spain. A hip replacement in November 2006 at last freed me, and my surgeon's OK three months later encouraged me. We chose May as the best time to go as our agent, Teachers Travel, told us that the wild flowers would be in bloom and the countryside would be green. The walk is 795 km., with bus support, meals were included, and we had two guides (one male, one female.)

We left Toronto on May 9 and met the other 20 members in Bilbao, including our son John. From there, the group went to the pilgrims' hotel in Roncesvalles. The next morning, we went by bus to Saint John-Pied-du-Port, on the French side of the Pyrenees - and there we began walking the Camino de Santiago.

This walk proved to be a lesson in humility! We've realized that we are getting

older, and our first look at our fellow pilgrims emphasized it - we were at least 10 to 15 years older than the rest. The youngest in the group was 23 years old - a male law student from Halifax. (We had to reveal our ages to the agent, who said that he had never taken anybody "that old"!). However, we believed that we were walkers and in good health and that we had plenty of energy. As well, we've done long-distance walks: we've walked the Bruce Trail, many of the trails in Banff National Park, and in England we've walked Hadrian's Wall, the coastal walk from Wood Bay to Lynmouth, as well as across the Long Mynd, Shropshire. We walk about four miles every morning in the ravines and parks here in Don Mills. But most of that was at our speed; we had never walked with an organized group. Now, someone else was setting the pace - and we had to carry backpacks.

On the trail, we had a choice of how much we wanted to walk each day - 12 kms or 22 kms. We chose the shorter walk each day, and this was where the bus came into it. We would walk from morning to lunch time then ride most of the afternoon. Having completed the walk, we each got a certificate issued by Teacher Travel as evidence of our achievement.

As well as the profound spiritual satisfactions, there were many other wonderful things about this long walk, including the camaraderie of the group, the scenery, the varied - and excellent - Spanish food and wines, the unique hotels and Paradors where we stopped each night. All made this trip an experience of a lifetime.

The villages, towns, and cities along the trail came into existence to support the pilgrimage; most of the Templars' castles are now in ruins, many monasteries and convents are still in use by pilgrims and are still operated by monks and nuns. Paradors were most often part of a monastery, a convent or a castle converted into a luxury hotel - it was sometimes hard to leave these lovely places in the morning!

Despite the changes that more than 800 years have made, it was not difficult to imagine what it must have been like to walk the Camino in the Middle Ages. And the Camino itself has not really changed: it is still just a well-used trail and the wayside crosses and markers still point the way to Santiago. It would take a great effort for us to count the number of chapels, churches, convents and monasteries we visited, all of them centuries old. I should also mention the wonderful, welcoming bars in every village.

There were, naturally, a few things we had to get used to. There are no "Johnnie-on-the-spots" along the trail. Now, this was not too great a problem in the mountains and heavily wooded areas - once the guide pointed out to the women in the group which were the burning nettles and the poison ivy. However, the bald plain proved yet another obstacle. And then there was the rain, so boots and socks were often wet, but we soon learned that the hotel hair dryers could be used to dry more than hair.

The countryside was beautiful. Wild flowers were everywhere: ranunculus, aquilegias, primulas, geraniums and many that I could not name. And the trees in the Pyrenees were a little different from

the North American species but still easily recognizable: birches, silver firs, Scots pine and bearberries were the most common. On the plains, farmers were growing olives and grapes as well as market gardening. The farmers mostly lived in the villages since valuable land cannot be wasted on farmsteads.

There were also several large cities through which the trail snaked, and once we were in a city, we quickly became tourists.

In Pamplona, we saw where the running of the bulls takes place.

Burgos has a huge cathedral where we stood watching a wedding party gather for the ceremony.

The cathedral in Leon has few rivals for sheer beauty, and it has the most stained glass of any Cathedral in Europe, with the possible exception of Chartres in France. The interior of the Leon Cathedral is flood lit at midnight for one hour, so my husband and I actually got up, dressed and went to see it. Yes, it was worth the effort; it was breathtakingly beautiful.

In Panferrada, in the yard of the Templar's Castle, we saw a massive wisteria in full bloom. It was said to be nearly 300 hundred years old.

Astorga on a high hill still has its medieval wall with a path along it, which invited us to walk even more kilometres. Its cracks and crannies had Joe Pie weed growing in them. I was chagrined because many of my attempts to grow it had failed.

On the 15th day, we arrived at the Mount of Joy - the high hill from which the Medieval pilgrims got their first view of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostello. A welcome sight, even to us - only seven more kilometres to walk. Santiago de Compostello is an amazing jumble of the ancient and the new. The 34,000 university students keep the city a lively place. No one ever seemed to go to bed.

The Cathedral is massive and ornate. There were many a ritual to be observed, and naturally, we climbed behind the altar to hug the statue of St. James. On Sunday, there was also a special pilgrims' mass at noon, which was a moving experi-

ence. A nun, with a voice like an operatic mezzo-soprano, taught the packed congregation to sing the mass in Latin. Then the Bishop, priests, and altar boys entered in procession. Pilgrims had come from all over the world, and we met and talked with many there, as we had done along the Camino. Since John speaks French, German and Italian, we learned their stories and their reasons for walking the Camino. And, imagine, in the cathedral I sat beside a woman from Norway who knew well my mother's home town!

This pilgrimage was indeed a special way for us to celebrate 50 years of marriage. We had the opportunity to reflect on, and be thankful for, our time together and to pray for many more years. ❖

Lorretta Skinner retired from George S. Henry Academy in 1992. She and her husband, Stan have travelled extensively since then. They have used RTO/ERO's Travel Guild for nine of those trips.

Membership Report

*From October, 2007
by Jean Wilson*

As of December 31, 2007 we are pleased to report that District 23, North York has 2165 members. Your executive welcomes all new members who have joined in October, November and December.

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.

October 2007

Gilda A. Akler, Marguerite Alfred, Ellen Branscombe, Louise Elkin, David Elms, Lies Ferriman, Beverley Gorbet, Teresa Hui, Mary R. Iafano, Kenneth Jones, Jennifer Kennedy, John Killer, Emily Manson, Joyce M.

McRorie, J. Crawford Murphy, Sharon Nugent, Mary K Samuelson, Helle Soomer, Andrew Stevens, Glenn Way, Joanne Williams

November 2007

Esther Goldman, Sharron M. Hiez, Jo-Anne McNeill, Craig Williamson

December 2007

Desmond A. G. Kelly (associate)
Brian G. Krasman, Nina Pollock

Health Services and Insurance Report

by George Meek, Convener

Mission Statement

The Health Services and Insurance Committee (HS&IC) 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.

1. New Health Insurance Booklets

On the Way: The Committee has approved the final draft of the 2008/2010 RTO/ERO Health Plans Booklet and the RTO/ERO Out-Of-Province/Canada Travel Booklet. Distribution of the Booklets is scheduled for February, 2008.

You are encouraged to read the materials carefully to understand the benefits you are entitled to receive. Please place the Booklets in a safe and known location as it will be three years until the next printing. Updates over this period should be read when received and then placed in the Booklets. If members need clarification to ensure that they are covered for specific benefits then they should contact Johnson Inc.'s Claims Department at 905-764-4888 before making any claims.

Members are encouraged to discard/recycle their old Booklets and dated materials except for the materials received in the most recent December 2007 mailing including 'Going Places' so that you have only current information available.

2. Health Plan Enhancement: Approval was given to accept the new Health Plans Enhancement Submissions Form, formerly known as Requests for Plan Changes. The form is available from Melanie Johnson at 18 Spadina Road Provincial Office (416 962 9463). A pre-stamped envelope comes with the form to make it easier for RTO/ERO Health Plan Members to complete and return. A first reminder to all, that the April HS&IC meeting will be the initial screening of requests for 2009.

3. New Governance Manual: The initial draft of the HS&IC Governance Manual was completed. A review of topics

mentioned in the October newsletter was completed and discussion and acceptance of wording for the following important topics was accomplished: Document Retention, Member Disputes, Privacy Policy, Document Library, Management and Compliance, and the Committee Mandate. The next step is to have our legal counsel review the draft Manual for possible suggestions.

4. UNIFUND HOME and AUTO

Insurance: Johnson Inc. presented the 2007 update of the services offered to the RTO/ERO Home and Auto participants.

17.7% of RTO/ERO members have purchased the Home-Auto Plan. The retention or renewal rate is 96%. Several enhancements were announced which will be readily accepted by Home and Auto Plan participants. Please contact Mr. Brad Gajria of Johnson Inc. at 905 764-4921 for more information on this matter

5. Pharmacist Interview Available:

You are reminded that if you are over the age of 65 years and require three or more prescription drugs, a personal, confidential interview is available from your pharmacist upon request. Discussion will concern the correct use and cautions to be aware of in the use of the drugs prescribed. There is no financial charge for this service.

6. French Language Health Services:

The provincial government is creating a new advisory council on health care issues facing the province's Francophone community. The French Language Health Services Advisory Council is mandated under the Local Health System Integration Act (LHSIA). The council will provide advice to the Minister about health and service delivery issues related to Francophone communities, and the ongoing development of policies and strategies that contribute towards helping Franco-Ontarians access, in French, the care they need. The initiative is part of the provincial government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors

and nurses.

Source: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, November 26, 2007

Finally (As Sam Habib still says) :

**“Take care of your finances !
Take care of your health !”**

Note: The most accurate information about our Health Plan is found on the RTO/ERO website: www.rto-ero.org.

Drug Information and Updates

Safety Advisory on Abbott's Precision Xtra

Health Canada has issued an advisory regarding the potential for damage to the Precision Xtra blood glucose monitor. Abbott Laboratories has found that Precision Xtra Monitors distributed between May 2007 and August 2007 may experience damaged displays when dropped onto a hard surface.

Abbott recommends that patients keep their monitor in the wallet that is provided, as this provides protection against accidental falls. They also recommend the importance of performing a Display Check as outlined in the first section of the User Guide: "Important Information – Getting to Know Your Monitor's Features" section. If the monitor display does not match the picture exactly, the monitor should not be used.

If you have any questions or need to replace a damaged monitor, contact the Abbott Customer Care Centre at 1.888.519.6890.

Source: Health Canada, October 2007

Exubera Discontinued Worldwide

Pfizer is discontinuing the sale of its inhaled human insulin product, *Exubera*, worldwide. Pfizer had planned to introduce *Exubera* in Canada on October 24, 2007. Several factors contributed to the product's demise: poor sales in existing markets, a bulky delivery device, uncertain long-term risks, no therapeutic advantage over injectable insulin, and market share competition from other newly emerging classes of diabetes drugs. The further development of inhaled insulin products is questionable.

Source: Pharmacy Gateway,
October 18, 2007

Prexige Market Withdrawal

Health Canada is advising consumers that it has stopped the sale of the anti-inflammatory drug *Prexige* (lumiracoxib) in Canada and will cancel the drug's market authorization due to the potential for serious liver-related adverse events. The drug, a Cox-2 selective inhibitor non-steroidal anti-inflammatory has been marketed in Canada since November 2006 for the treatment of the signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis in adults. *Prexige* was withdrawn from the Australian market in August.

Regulators speculated that the higher dose employed in Australia and Europe (200mg- 400mg/day) lead to the increase risk of adverse events. However, of the four reports of serious liver damage from *Prexige* worldwide, two of them were at the lower dose, thus ending speculation that this is a dose-related effect. The withdrawal of this product leaves Celebrex as the only COX-2 Inhibitor on the Canadian market.

Source: Health Canada, October 2007

Aging Parents

by Lynda Pogue

Sometimes I wish that life came with a few rulebooks. Most of us stumble through our personal journeys just doing the best we can. And, it's so lovely when someone gives you a little help, isn't it?

What are the rules for assisting aging parents? As many of you know it's extremely difficult if parents have been independent all their lives and now need to lean on you either a little or a lot. It's particularly tough on them because of their perceived

“A big move, for some seniors, is actually fatal so find a way to go gently into this...”

loss of dignity; their self-assurance is in question. It's tough on you for countless reasons. Time. Money. Unresolved issues. And, most difficult is helping where help is needed but not wanted. Whew.

The role reversal is something to consider. You hear this phrase: Now I'm the parent.

Well, no, that's not true. You didn't give birth to them. They brought you into this world and if you think of yourself as the parent of your parent then you just might be demeaning them unwittingly. Now it's your turn to step up to the plate as *best you can* as the child who's a supportive and caring daughter or son.

Money helps and if you haven't got bucketsful then you need to know alternatives.

I have learned two tremendously important things that you must know if you are about to assist an aging parent:

First, the whole process of helping your parents move from their own home to wherever else they may be going all starts here: CCAC (Community Care Access

Centre) www.oaccac.on.ca That's your absolute first point of contact. They ask all the right questions and give excellent directions to you. (Note: Stay in as close contact as you can without “bugging” them! Form a partnership.)

Second, as a responsible adult, you have already written your will and chosen your executor... however have you also designated your Power of Attorneys? Do it right away. Both for *Personal Care* and *Continuing Care*. And if you are helping an aging parent, do it for/with them immediately. Read about it. Here's the info and free form: <http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/poa.pdf>.

If parents haven't made any plans for their golden years then this is really difficult for a caregiver. Big Time. This is literally a deadly serious issue. A big move, for some seniors, is actually fatal so find a way to go gently into this (the geriatric nurses and doctors associated with CCAC are fabulous!) while you yourself ask for support from friends and family or possibly you might seek professional help.

People mean well and yet we all blurt out the wrong things sometimes. PLEASE... If you have a friend who's going through a rough time helping a parent into a new living situation such as a Retirement/Nursing Home or hospital... please *do not say something like* “Everyone has to go through this” or “Welcome to my world” or anything else that negates your friend's feelings. Honour their struggle and give them a shoulder to cry on or a glass of wine or rent a Marx Brothers movie or send funny cards every day for a week or give the gift of a foot massage. You get the picture. You don't talk. Your friend talks and you listen. The gift of pure, quiet, focused, solid listening is the absolute best gift of all. Maybe there is a rulebook for helping aging parents after all... and you just read a part of it. ❖

New Documents Reveal Soaring Costs and Capacity Cuts in New Brampton P3 Hospital

*Health Coalition Releases Indictment of Government Cover-Up
& Recommends Full Investigation*

In a detailed report, using internal government and hospital documents and public announcements, the Ontario Health Coalition revealed a litany of broken promises, cost overruns, capacity cuts, delays and secrecy in Ontario's first privatized P3 hospital.

The new Brampton Civic Hospital was supposed to be the flagship of a new privatized hospital development program. Termed P3 or "Public Private Partnership", a multinational consortium of for-profit companies built the hospital and will run the building and 50% of its patient support services in a 25-year lease-to-own arrangement. The total deal will cost more than \$3 billion.

The hospital has been in the centre of a swirl of controversy since it opened in late October. Protests have been growing since community fundraising targets have more than doubled, plans for the redevelopment of the old hospital site have been cut, and two patients have died amid claims by family and friends of extraordinary waits for care.

Despite repeated promises of transparency and public accountability, the details of the P3 deal were kept secret until a court order last spring. Using new documents and a detailed review of the history of government claims and promises, the coalition has traced the evolution of Brampton hospital bed planning and the costs of the P3 project. The report shows, irrefutably, that as the costs increased from \$350 million to \$650 million (capital costs alone), one of the three clinical care buildings was cut, the number of ORs was cut, and the total number of beds planned for the community was reduced from 720 to 479 (with a new promise to open 608 beds by 2012). The bed total is now only half of the projected need for 930 beds in Brampton

by 2008, according to the latest hospital infrastructure planning review done by the Halton-Peel District Health Council in 2003.

Key findings:

1. Significant cost increases of 186% from the beginning of the P3 negotiations with the for-profit consortium to the end of construction. The hospital was projected to cost \$350 million. It was finally built for \$650 million, plus equipment and service privatization contracts amounting to a total of more than \$3 billion.

2. Changes to the hospital plans from a three-building facility with 20 operating rooms to a two-building facility housing 12 operating rooms.

3. Significant bed reductions of 22% (from 608 to 479 beds) in the new facility alone, and 34% across the two hospital sites in Brampton (from 720 to 479 beds). These bed reductions occurred as the costs increased in the P3 deal. This is in line with British Medical Journal findings that the high P3 costs led to an average 30% bed cuts.

4. More than two years delay in the construction deadlines

5. An increase in the local community fundraising burden of more than 200% (from an announced target of \$60 - 100 million to a final figure of \$270 million) as the costs escalated in the P3 scheme.

The government has repeatedly claimed the hospital P3 model is justified, despite higher financing costs because it will deliver projects "on time and in budget". McGuinty has now announced more than 30 hospital P3s as part of a \$30 billion infrastructure program, the most aggressive hospital P3 privatization plan in Canada. The new documents reveal that

successive governments have misled the public about the following:

- a. The model used in hospital financing and development
- b. The increasing costs of the hospital and the consequent reductions in planned beds and capacity
- c. The progress of the construction
- d. The amendments to the P3 deal
- e. The unprecedented extent of privatization.
- f. The cancellation of the planned new hospital at the Peel Memorial site after the P3 cost increases

The coalition released a set of recommendations calling for a full audit, full provincial funding for the Brampton hospital, reinstatement of plans to rebuild the Peel Memorial site as a 112-bed public hospital (not a P3), and a moratorium and review of the P3 privatization policy.

The summary and report are available at www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca
Note: Since this article was written, the Minister of Health has appointed a Supervisor to this site.

RETIRED WOMEN TEACHERS OF ONTARIO

All retired women teachers are invited to join the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario-RWTO York North. We meet regularly for lunches and other activities. For further information call Elsie Watson at 905-201-9516 or email her at js.watson@sympatico.ca

WEB ALERT

From your webmaster, Dianne Fair



WOW !

To date, 102 members have opted to receive their STONY Bridges on-line. You can get yours on-line too. See details below.

Remember ~

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 diannefair@rogers.com with questions.

Get Your Stony Bridges On Line

If you've already submitted your request 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 June 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 starting with the next edition.

Stony Bridges Online

Cut - Off Date: May 15, 2008

I would like to receive my copy of Stony Bridges beginning with June 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

Volunteer Opportunity

Meals on Wheels & More

If helping those in need through volunteerism is important to you then Meals on Wheels and More, North York, is the place for you to get involved.

We urgently require drivers and runners to assist in the delivery of meals to clients living in North York.

Volunteer opportunities are available on a flexible schedule Monday-Sunday between the hours of 11:00am – 1:30 pm.

Mileage is compensated and training and orientation is provided.

For details, please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator,
Carol Newman at 416-225-6041.

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 for October, November, and December.

Ronald G. Hanson	01/10/2007
James Hunt	05/10/2007
Elizabeth Falker	14/11/2007
Josephine Farmer	28/11/2007
Fred C. French	20/11/2007
Florence E. Newby	15/11/2007
Janet F. Ower	26/11/2007
E. T. (Tom) Pherill	26/07/2007
Shirley C. Wilkinson	12/11/2007

Christmas Luncheon 2007

By George Meek

Our annual Christmas Luncheon was held at the Granite Club with approximately 140 members and guests in attendance. It was quite a celebration. We had many opportunities for conversation and the renewal and reinforcement of friendships and acquaintances as we mingled over cocktails and then enjoyed the sumptuous lunch.

Our host for this event was Granite Club member, Christine Kouyoumdjian.

While we call this a Christmas Luncheon, we do acknowledge the celebration of many religious festivals that take place at this time of year: Divali, Eid, Hanukah, Christmases & Quanza.

The organization of this (and every social event) was under the capable leadership of our Social Convener, Mildred Frank, assisted by many members of the Executive.



Shane Jeffrey, aka Elvis

President, Margaret Schuman welcomed everyone and introduced the Executive members present and acknowledged the Past Presidents.

The entertainment after lunch was called, 'A Remembrance of Elvis and His Friends.' Shane Jeffrey was the Elvis impressionist and Jeffrey Smith provided the background music.

Shane is a graduate of the Etobicoke School for the Arts and the winner of the Elvis contest in Collingwood in 2000.

It was quite an energetic performance, complete with costume changes and audience involvement, which everyone appreciated.

George Meek also treated us to a few seasonal stories during the costume changes, and led the singing of some well known Christmas songs, to fit the occasion. Jeffrey Smith provided the musical background.

There were also a few lucky door prizes given out, and a good time was had by all.

Mildred Frank, Social Convener, reminded us to mark our calendars for our Spring Luncheon at the Thornhill Golf and Country Club on Thursday, May 1, 2008.

Again-a big thank you is extended to Mildred for all of her work behind the scenes that led to this successful event.



Social Convener, Mildred Frank.

Andrée Nottage Photograph

GOODWILL REPORT

Convener

Vacant *

Cards

Judy Neilson (over 80's)
416-256-2731

Sick, Shut-ins etc.
Position vacant *

* If interested in either of these positions, call Mary Ellen Lawless
416-223-4969

Telephone Calls

Vinny Coetzee
416-621-6681

Note: The Goodwill Committee 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?

We will invite you 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 also attempt to contact those who are ill or shut-in. But we need your help with that.

If you know of someone, please contact any Executive member listed on page 2.



Your 'second career' can be your most rewarding!

Retired volunteers play an important role at *Habitat for Humanity Toronto*. Many are available during the week, and their skills and experience are critical to our organization. Whether in the office, on a build site, in the Restores/Salvage area or promoting Habitat for Humanity through speaking engagements - we welcome and appreciate retired volunteers!

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, learn new skills AND contribute to a great cause.

**NO EXPERIENCE IS
NECESSARY!!**

Call Monica Kronfli at
416 755 7353 #240
for more information.

About Habitat for Humanity Toronto

Habitat for Humanity Toronto is a non-profit, non denominational organization that is transforming lives by uniting Torontonians around the goal of eliminating poverty housing. Habitat Toronto believes in:

- ~ offering a hand up: not a hand out
- ~ empowering low-income families
- ~ the volunteer spirit
- ~ diversity and inclusiveness

We help families who currently live in substandard housing; are willing to volunteer 500 hours of "sweat equity;" will repay a zero-down payment, interest free mortgage over 25 years

Mortgage payments from Habitat homeowners go directly into a trust to build more Habitat homes. Every donated dollar goes directly towards building homes with families in need. Profits from the Restores cover 100% of our administrative costs.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, Ruth Bradshaw

Retiring after 17 years of service above self to North York, District 23

by Margaret Schuman

After seventeen years of faithful and loyal service, Ruth Bradshaw has tendered her resignation from the Goodwill Committee. For seventeen years, Ruth has devotedly sent out cards to RTO/ERO members who were sick, or unable to 'get out and about'.

Ruth has brightened the days and lives of many District 23 members with her cards at Easter, Christmas and other holidays.

In addition, Ruth offered condolences to families upon the death of RTO/ERO members.

Ruth has kept a ledger of the multitudinous number of cards that she has continuously sent out for the past seventeen years.

When given praise and gratitude on behalf of District 23, Ruth replied, "I didn't do it for the praise."

Ruth has quietly proven herself to be devoted, caring and loving and has endeared herself for all the lives she has touched.

District 23 North York is proud of you Ruth and we cannot thank you enough for your devotion and faithfulness to your volunteer 'job'. ❖

Shaw08 FESTIVAL

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

(Cut- Off Date - April 1, 2008)

\$100



- 9:15 a.m. Depart Willowdale United Church
- 11:30 a.m. Lunch at Lake House Restaurant in Vineland
- 2:00 p.m. Performance of An Inspector Calls
- 5:00 p.m. Board bus for trip home
- 7:00 p.m. Arrive at the church (approx.)

Menu Choices

Angus Roast Beef

OR

Grilled Chicken Breast

OR

Penne Pollo with marinated chicken strips
with toasted pine nuts

A spring evening, 1912, and the prosperous Birling family has gathered for an intimate dinner. Their daughter's engagement to a fine young man of means is the cause for celebration, but the festivities are interrupted when a police inspector unexpectedly calls. He is looking into the death of a young woman and as Inspector Goole questions each member of the family, skeletons come clattering out of the closet and a remarkable web of connections unfolds

Theatre tickets will be distributed on the bus.

An Inspector Calls
Tuesday May 6, 2008
Cut-off date: April 1, 2008

Name _____ Email: _____ Tel: _____

Guest(s) _____

of tickets @ \$100 _____ Cheque Enclosed for \$ _____

Menu Choice: Roast Beef Chicken Pene Pollo

Make cheque payable to RTO/ERO District 23 and mail to:
RTO/ERO c/o Jean King, #869-6021 Yonge St., Toronto, Ont. M2M 3W2

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by Rocky Sankoff , District 23 Member

There are many satellite so-called "adult-lifestyle" communities in the Greater Toronto area. Many retired teachers from Toronto, North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke, East York, York, etc. live in these communities. Many have street names that tend to boggle the imagination. Here then is a tongue-in-cheek history of the beginnings of one such community.

Once upon a time there were four brothers. Actually it was three brothers and one extremely ugly sister. Just to set the record straight, the brothers were no raving beauties either. They would easily have captured win, place and show in an ugliest troll competition.

A former English teacher of mine told me, if I didn't want to be sued, not to use real names for characters, nor give descriptions which might reveal an uncanny resemblance to actual people. So to deny any analogy herewith, these four siblings were not horseback riders, and so do not associate them with the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" — Famine, Pestilence, Destruction and Death — nor are they aliases of these fabled entities of dramatic lore.

In the late 20th century, the siblings' domineering father passed to his eternal reward. It was rumoured that he had died because of a copious daily consumption of pickled herring. His nieces and nephews were consequently informed that his untimely demise was the result of eating pickled herring and that relatives should desist from such gluttonous habits since eating pickled herring always led to one's death. The youngsters were informed that everyone who had eaten pickled herring since 1860 had died. That date was conspicuous because that was when Charles Darwin published his Theory of Evolution. Two things were not mentioned. One was that everyone alive in 1860 is now dead, whether they ate pickled herring or not, and two, the old man was 98 years old.

The father's land passed to the four siblings. The land had been a large farm devoted to the production of rutabagas, brussels sprouts, and pole beans. How-

ever, toward the end of the 20th century, the gross overuse of pesticides had rendered the farm incapable of producing anything but wolfsbane and nightshade. So the four decided to parcel the farm into equal portions, and then each could go his or her own way.

Again, I caution the reader that once more there is no analogous reference here to the Three Little Pigs fairytale...neither the violent version (where the wolf consumes the three walking slabs of bacon) nor the non-violent version (where each pig runs to his brother's house and they catch the wolf and persuade him to operate a fried chicken restaurant).

One of the siblings erected a combination hockey rink-bowling alley, another constructed large barn-like edifices to grow mushrooms, a third built a housing development suitable for those of the middle-class who had been frustrated by stock market reversals, and the fourth simply levelled the land and used it as a park-campsite for nomads. The rink-bowling alley did well, especially from the resale of broken hockey sticks. The only problem was how to keep the nomads and their herds of wild pigs out of the main foyer on cold days. The mushroom growers faced a similar problem with the wanderers and their swine. The housing development thrived, except for some archaic rules, one which confined people to their houses for several hours, and another which forced them to drink recycled sewer water. They also had problems with their gardens, due to nomads and their pigs (who ate bulbs, flowers, birds, and the odd small dog).

A major point of contention among the siblings concerned the housing development, which had been named after their father. It was the naming of the streets. One wanted to name the streets after blood vessel: Aorta Alley, Renal Road, Lymphatic Lane. This was vetoed by a sibling who had undergone heart-bypass surgery.

Another wanted trade name: Carpenter Circle, Plumber's Pathway, Butcher's Boulevard, and Shoemaker's Street. A sib-

ling, while carving a piece of wood, said this would make the place look commercial and moreover, no signs were allowed.

Also unacceptable were streets named after sewer workers (Norton's Nemesis), baseball players (Carlos' Crescent), golfers (Weir's Weir) and poets (e.e.'s ecstasy, Byron's Belch).

So they decided on insects: Ant Alley, Bug Boulevard, Larva Lane, Caterpillar Crawl, Pupa Path, Gnat Gallery, Wasp Way, and Honeybee Haven.

With the problem of street names solved, the four brothers (or three brothers and the ugly sister) lived happily ever after, spending most of their time counting their money and ignoring requests from semi-satisfied customers. ❖

**COMING IN THE NEXT
STONY BRIDGES**

A Group booking to see

JERSEY BOYS

at the

**TORONTO CENTRE FOR
THE ARTS**

In the late fall.



5th Annual District 23 Golf Tournament Thursday, June 5, 2008

Check in from 8:45 to 9:45 a.m.

Shot-gun start at 10:00 a.m.

Kettle Creek Golf Club \$45 per golfer

This short, picturesque 18-hole course is at the west end of Cardinal Golf Club at Hwy 9 and Jane Street, just east of Hwy 400.

Register your team of four, two or just yourself. After April 15, 2008, members from other RTO/ERO Districts will be invited to join with us. So, register early to reserve your place.

Barbeque lunch, with salads, drinks and desserts, is included in the registration fee.

Golf carts are available for \$12 extra per golfer, and must be reserved with your registration.

Direct your questions and/or comments to Helen at 416-485-0131.

Register your team of four, two or just yourself.

~See page 27 for registration form.

Spring Luncheon

Thursday, May 1, 2008

Cut-off date: Monday, April 28, 2008
11:00 a.m. cocktails
12 noon lunch

Menu

- ~mini greens garnished with blueberries, mandarin oranges, crushed walnuts and toasted coconut with honey vinaigrette.
- ~ chicken supreme topped with homemade apple/raisin compote, finished with a chardonnay cream sauce.
- or
- ~ sole stuffed with broccoli and cheese.
- ~ fresh market potatoes and seasonal vegetables.
- ~creme caramel.

Note: Please advise Mildred of any dietary requirements.



Thornhill Golf and
Country Club

7994 Yonge St.,
Thornhill, ON

\$29

(actual cost)

Celebrating Our Past

Come for lunch and
celebrate 40 years of
RTO/ERO (STO)
and
35 years in North York,
District 23

Spring Luncheon
Thursday, May 1, 2008
(Cut-off Date: Monday, April 28, 2008)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Guest(s): _____

of tickets _____ @ \$29.00 = _____ Food Choice: Chicken or Sole

Make cheque payable to: RTO/ERO District 23 and send to:
Mildred Frank 705-505 Cummer Ave., Toronto ON M2K 2L8 (416-221-5328)



Annual General Meeting and Luncheon

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

Cut-off Date: Friday, June 6, 2008

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Menu

~gazpacho

~ orange/ginger and sesame chicken stir fry set over a rice medley

~fruit crisp with ice cream

Notes:

- a) *If you were born in 1938, you can dine free!*
- b) *Please advise Mildred of any dietary requirements.*

Thornhill Golf and County Club

7994 Yonge St.,
Thornhill ON

\$12

(subsidised cost)

\$24

(actual cost)

Policy: The district member and one guest pay the subsidised cost.

Additional guests will pay the actual cost.

Celebrating Our Past

Come for lunch and celebrate 40 years of RTO/ERO (STO)

and

35 years in North York, District 23

Annual General Meeting and Luncheon

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

(Cut-off Date: Friday, June 6, 2008)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Guest(s): _____

_____ tickets @ \$12 = _____ (Max. 2) _____ tickets @\$24 _____ Total: \$ _____

Born in 1938? Check here and dine free.

Make cheque payable to: RTO/ERO District 23 and send to:

Mildred Frank 705-505 Cummer Ave., Toronto ON M2K 2L8 (416-221-5328)

An Opportunity Not To Be Missed

by The Clean Air Alliance

With predictions of a colder than normal winter ahead, furnaces and boilers in thousands of apartment buildings and condominiums will be burning plenty of natural gas over the next five months to produce heat. But these buildings could be burning the same natural gas to produce both heat and electricity and, in the process, helping to pave the way for the shutdown of our dirty coal plants.

Combined heat and power (CHP) generation is really the way of the future for multi-residential buildings. And new rules for emergency power systems are making such systems even more attractive for buildings that need to replace aging systems or for new buildings that want to provide maximum comfort and energy security for their residents.

Towers of Power: Advancing combined heat and power in multi-residential buildings is a new OCAA report that looks at the big advantages that CHP systems can provide - not the least of which is significantly reduced greenhouse gas emissions. If you live in an apartment building or condo, have a friend or relative living in a long-term facility or want to know more about how we can reduce the emissions impact of all those buildings, then this is a must read.

The eight-page report is available on our website at www.cleanairalliance.org.

VON and St. Joseph's Home Care Axed In Hamilton

by the Ontario Health Coalition

In December 2007 the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) and St. Joseph's Home Care were deemed "not eligible" in a "competitive bidding" process to submit requests for proposals to provide home care services in Hamilton even though these two organizations are the largest non-profit agencies in the region and provide about 80 percent of home nursing care in the region.

St. Joe's has provided health care for more than 80 years and many of its nurses have over twenty to thirty years of service. The Hamilton VON has 107 years of service and was recently awarded the Hamilton Spectator Gold Reader's Choice Award in the home health care category.

As a result 100 years of faithful non-profit community homeware service is under threat and patients face serious service disruptions. With other contract changeovers winning agencies struggled to hire enough staff, leaving many patients in a precarious position. Nurses will lose their jobs through no fault of their own and will be facing unemployment or working for lower wages and benefits.

Profit over patients and service: background

Until the 1990's homeware was a non-profit public service provided by trusted agencies like the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Red Cross. In 1996 the provincial Conservative government cut off the non-profit grants and forced a bidding process to allow multinational for-profit companies to take over homeware contracts. An outcry over the problems with "competitive bidding" forced the province to put a moratorium on competitive bidding in 2004. However the moratorium on was lifted in fall 2007 and the bidding is again underway across Ontario.

With competitive bidding private for-profit corporations are invited to compete for contracts against the non-profit providers. 80-90% of the costs for providing homeware are nurse and homemaker salaries and benefits. The for-profit agen-

cies have consistently underbid non-profits by cutting salaries and worsening working conditions, disrupting care and leading to serious staffing shortages. Non-profits are community agencies controlled by a locally elected Board of Directors. For-profits are investor-controlled and operate (by mandate and law) to provide a profit to their investors. Homeware, as part of the healthcare system should be a public non-profit service rather than a commodity bought and sold for profit.

A 'paper exercise'

The minister of Health and the CCACs have asserted that "quality control" is given a priority in the awarding of contracts and that quality accounts for 70-80% of the points used to assess bids. But "quality" is assessed on the nature of a bidding document - not actual quality of care. It is simply a paper exercise. Agencies with few or no care staff have been awarded contracts in competitive homeware bidding based on their documents, favouring multinational companies that hire expensive consultants to write the bids.

Secrecy

What are the exact criteria that agencies are bidding on? No one knows. And the scores which resulted in a denial of funding for St. Joe's and the VON have not been released to them.

Privatization

The competitive bidding process is a privatization model. Homeware is an integral part of the continuum of health care and not a commodity to be sold or traded for profit. The bidding process has resulted in the massive growth in homeware by private for-profit companies.

Competitive bidding has resulted in:

- a. Profit-taking that siphons money away from care.
- b. Disruptions in care, frequent changes in the nurses and caregivers pro-

viding intimate personal care such as baths, medications and wound dressing.

c. The loss of small non-profit agencies providing service.

d. Severe staff shortages as staff leave the sector seeking fairer working conditions. Many staff are forced to re-apply for their jobs at lower wages and poorer working conditions.

e. A dangerous environment of secrecy. Employees are required in some cases to sign oaths of confidentiality that is so broad it prevents homecare works from telling the public about problems with homecare services.

f. Resources moved from service to administration as organizations absorb a significant financial burden to complete the application process.

Restore democratic community governance of homecare services. Visit: <http://www.web.net/ohc/LongTermCare.htm> for more information! ❖

Editor's Note:

Health Minister George Smitherman suspended the competitive bidding process for home care nursing in Ontario on January 22, 2008.

Smitherman said in a recent interview, "When I saw us coming out of the gate in Hamilton in a situation that was actually disrupting that pretty sacred relationship, (patient/nurse), I thought we should . . . take pause to examine the policy before we move forward in other parts of the province."

Good News from the Ontario Power Authority

by The Clean Air Alliance

The Ontario Power Authority (OPA) reports that it has now contracted for more than 10,600 MW of new electricity supply. This is equivalent to 165% of Ontario's current coal-fired generation capacity! Given that the vast majority of this new supply will be online within

the next two to three years, it is now well within our means to phase out our dirty coal-fired electricity generation by 2010 and keep the lights on.

Unfortunately, the OPA is recommending that we should continue to operate our dirty coal plants until 2014 for domestic purposes and to make electricity exports to the United States. This unnecessary four-year delay will be costly for our climate and our health. ❖

For more information, please go to our website at www.cleanairalliance.org

Two Steps Forward, One Back

Ontario's efforts to replace the power generated by its dirty coal plants are definitely bearing fruit. The Ontario Power Authority (OPA) has now contracted for enough new supply to replace the power currently coming from our coal plants by 2010. The province is also gradually increasing the power that comes from distributed generation sources like wind and combined heat and power plants, with close to a third of the newly contracted power set to come from these smaller sources.

But the OPA clearly still has some work to do on ramping up its demand management and conservation efforts. For example, the OPA has contracted for just 308 MW of demand response measures, compared to the more than 10,600 megawatts (MW) of new supply that it has secured. Companies that sign demand response contracts agree to reduce their power usage during peak periods, thereby helping us avoid the need to build expensive new power plants and transmission lines just to meet peak demand that may last for only a few hours a year. The potential for this kind of zero-impact replacement power is much bigger than what we are seeing in the OPA's current numbers.

Similarly, the OPA's spending on conservation is completely out of line with its spending on new supply. While new supply sources are costing us more than \$16 billion, the OPA has spent just \$115 million on conservation efforts. And while we always say that conservation is a much lower cost supply option than building new power plants, this gap is many times larger than it should be. Ontario really needs to match the kinds of efforts being made in places like California to increase the efficiency of our energy use and to make our industries more competitive. ❖

For more information, visit our website at www.cleanairalliance.org.



(l to r) Geri McCallister, Terry Court and Lisa Orleck at the Christmas Luncheon

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 competitive play begins promptly at 1 p.m. Normally we have between 24 and 40 members in attendance with an average of 30. For more information please contact Alan Ward through email at alanward@interlog.com or by telephone at 905-889-3687. As convenor I wish to thank David Fleming and Lee White for their assistance on those occasions when I was unable to be present in the months of October and November 2007.

The Table Champions

Congratulations to the following players who each were undefeated in five rounds once between September 25th 2007 and December 18th 2007.

Marg Jang, Inge Radko

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.

Contract Bid (made)

September 25 th	David Fleming & Nora Garvin	6 S (doubled)
October 9 th	Inge Radko & Eulaline Taylor	6 N
October 16 th	Helen Lamping & Ruth Jacobs	6 C
October 30 th	Jean Cameron & Bev Suzuki	6 N
	George Vanderverf & Carson Klinck	6 S
November 20 th	Murray Townsend & Bev Henricks	6 N (7)
December 11 th	Tony Cribbin & Mavis McKernan	6 N (7)
December 18 th	Tony Cribbin & Hardie McNeil	6 N

North	
♠	10 8 7 3
♥	J 8 7
♦	9 8 4
♣	J 10 3
West	East
♠	A Q 6
♥	A K 6
♦	Q J 10
♣	K 8 7 5
South	
♠	9 5 4
♥	10 9 4 3
♦	7 5 3
♣	9 4 2

A Bidding Challenge

In one of our December games I found myself playing South with the hand shown in the illustration. The South hand has one card higher than a 9, so is not strictly a Yarborough, but the chances of getting such a hand are about 500:1 against. West opened the bidding with 1C and East responded with 2N. West next initiated Blackwood and East showed two aces. West signed off at 6N and discovered that 7N was unbeatable.

None of us are likely to see such a combination of hands again, but it raises the question of how it should have been bid. West's opening revealed 13-14 or 18-19 HCP and denied a five card major. East has 19 HCP and also lacks a four or five card major. Even the minor suits have only seven card fits. Clearly notrump is the only possible contract, but how do East and West discover that they have 38 HCP split 19/19 between them? If you think you know, feel free to email your solution to me. After all, I might have the East or West hand next time.

Note: Our contract with the church does not permit Bridge on February 5 and March 4, 2008.

Recruitment

by David Fleming

One of the important facets of recruitment during the past three years has been the presentation of Retirement Planning Workshops by the four Toronto Districts of RTO. Three workshops have been presented annually and the numbers of participants at each workshop has been very impressive, averaging eighty per workshop.

The most recent workshop was held on Wednesday, November 14, 2007 at York Mills C. I. in North York. Eighty-five teachers attended this workshop and the feedback we received was most favourable. Power Point Presentations were given on the following topics: Mechanics of Retiring, Finances of Retirement, Health Benefits and Challenges of Retirement. Most of the presenters are members of the Retirement Planning Workshops Committee, of which District 23's Past President, Mary Ellen Lawless is Chair. One of the presenters (Health Benefits) was Tony Sawinski, Pension and Benefits Officer for the Provincial Office of RTO.

Acting as Chair of each workshop this year is Margaret Schuman, President of District 23.

Two more workshops will be taking place in the near future. **Please share this information, and encourage your friends who are currently teaching, but will be retiring prior to the end of the current school year, to register for one of the workshops.**

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

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

Light refreshments will be served.

Cost: \$15.00 - pre-registered participants

\$20.00 - on-site registration

To register, please complete and submit the form below.

Please include your cheque (\$15.00/person) payable to RTO/ERO Toronto Districts. Registrations must be submitted two weeks prior to the registration date. Space limitations may restrict on-site registrations.

I wish to attend the RPW at: A) Manoogian Centre, March 1, 2008
 B) Don Bosco C.S.S., April 16, 2008

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

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

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

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

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

Chalkdust Memories

Farcical and humorous tales submitted by our readers.

Laughton Bird and the Secret

Signal –

by Allen Strike

One of the strengths of North York Education was the early use of Subject Coordinators. Since there was so much education money floating around during the first years, the Board managers could pick the best of the country and they did. The first administrators, notably F.W.Minkler, were not afraid to give the power of directing subject development to the able people whom they had attracted.

From the beginning, the chosen subject coordinators were outstanding educators, people of principle. Subjects were central to the direction of the Board's policy. Senior High Schools had always had department heads but now the Junior High Schools also had subject specialist chairmen. This ensured subject quality. Some Elementary School teachers were wont to counter this by saying that they taught students and not subjects. I preferred to say that it was better to teach subjects to students.

The coordinators tended to be what Readers' Digest calls Unforgettable Characters. I think, at once, of Robbie

Charlesworth in English, John DelGrande in Mathematics, and particularly Laughton Bird in Music. Laughton had decided that in a world of increasing musical banality it was important that students should have the experience of hearing symphonic music. To this end he had managed to get enough money to send every student to hear the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at Massey Hall.

This was a mammoth logistical



project. Buses had to be laid on, pupils had to be assigned to the buses, teachers had to be "covered," parental permission had to be obtained, and rules of concert behaviour had to be inculcated. For some mysterious reason a few students were liable to arm themselves with rubber bands and paper clips to fire into the orchestra. The musi-

cians naturally took a dim view of this. They were in danger of losing an eye and there were very expensive instruments to protect. Besides this, who likes to be shot at? This is where the signal came in.

It was part of the preparation for the concert that the teachers were alerted to the signal for a flying paper clip. Laughton would be sitting on the stage with the orchestra and he had a large handkerchief in his top pocket. If a projectile came from the audience he would take out this handkerchief and move it in the direction of the offending marksman. In this way the dignity of the occasion would be maintained and the culprit removed quietly. We went for several years and there was no handkerchief signal and no incidents.

Then one year it happened. The orchestra was playing away and the teachers were watching Laughton. Suddenly the handkerchief came out and was waved all over the place. The teachers were electrified. Before we could move, Laughton leaped to his feet. He jabbed the air with a pointed finger, and screamed "Get that boy out of here!" The orchestra stopped playing. It was some time before the miscreant was manhandled out of the hall and the dignity of the occasion restored. ❖

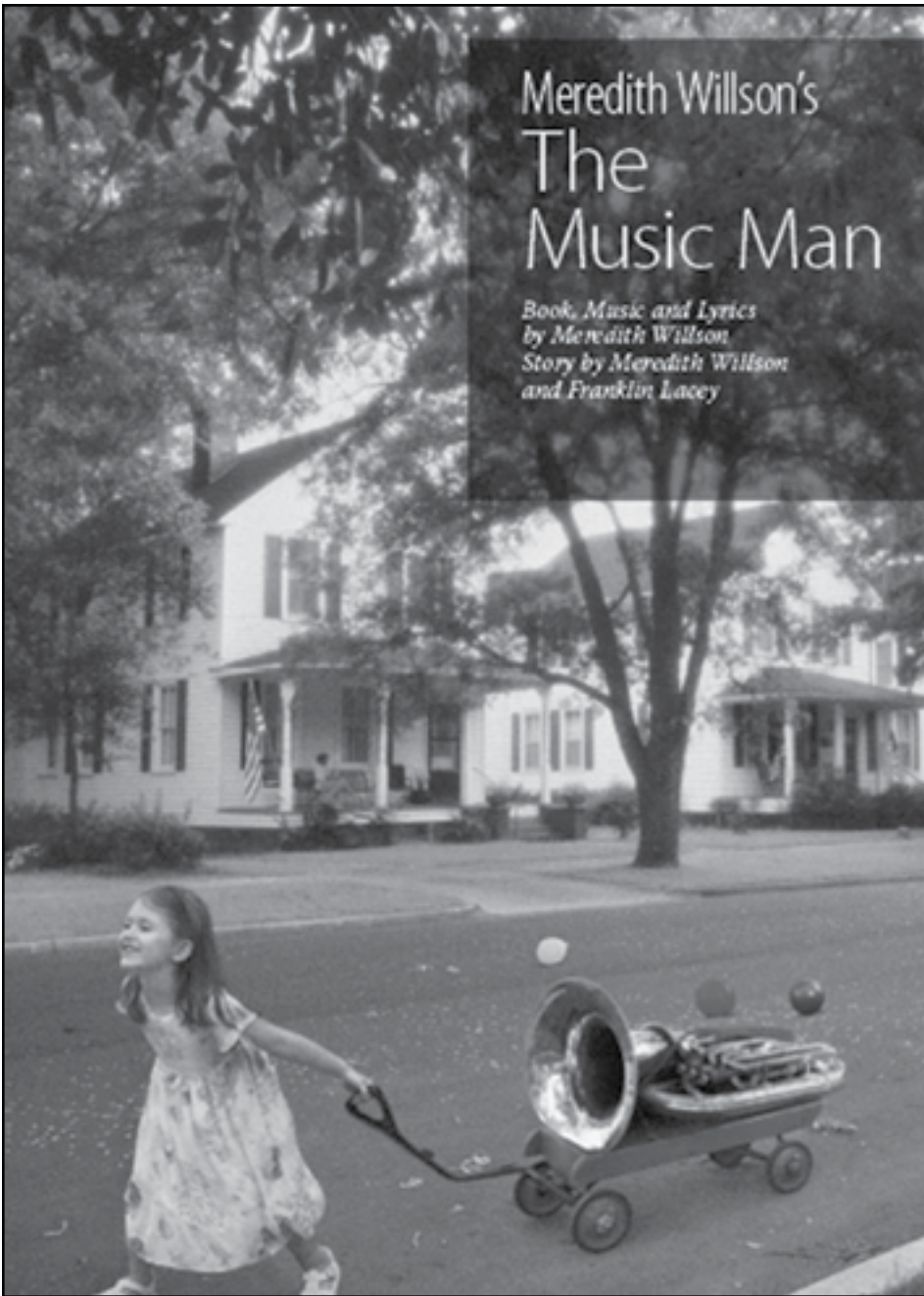
Teacher Education Scholarship Applications

For details about the RTO/ERO Scholarship program, for a member of your family, refer to page 6 the recent

edition of the RTO/ERO *Renaissance* magazine.

The deadline date for applications is July 15, 2008.

All applications must be mailed electronically.



Meredith Willson's
**The
Music Man**

*Book, Music and Lyrics
by Meredith Willson
Story by Meredith Willson
and Franklin Lacey*

Stratford Festival (Avon Theatre)

Friday, September 19, 2008
(Cut Off Date - June 27, 2008)

\$100.00

When charming huckster Harold Hill arrives in River City, Iowa, with a promise to teach the town's youth to play in a marching band, librarian Marian Paroo rightly suspects that he's a fraud. But Harold's silver-tongued gift for selling dreams may be more potent than he realizes. A warm, zany and gloriously tuneful musical comedy, set at the height of America's golden age of innocence.

- 9:15 a.m. Depart from Willowdale United Church
- 11:30 a.m. Lunch at Demetre's Family Eatery in Stratford
(Choice of Roast Beef Au Jus **OR** Char-broiled
Chicken Breast **OR** Grilled fillet of Sole)
- 2:00 p.m. Performance of The Music Man
- 5:00 p.m. Board Bus for trip home
- 7:00 p.m. Arrive at the Church (approx.)

*Theatre tickets will be
distributed on the bus.*

~See page 27 for registration form

Tea in the Orangery of
Kensington Palace,
London, England



Can't exhume memories
of poverty past
while afternoon tea-ing
at Kensington Palace

Need photo to confirm
I am dining
in royalty's home

This is
after all
a real palace
where Queen Anne
built Orangery to protect plants
in winter
and entertain friends
in summer

where kings and queens
lived and ruled
until George the Third
moved to Buckingham Palace
but his son
asthma house bound
collected fifty thousand books

where
Queen Victoria was born
and learned of her

accession
where Princess Louise
Victoria's sixth
built her own
studio
and created the sculpture of her mother
now greeting outside
where

Victoria Mary was born who
later married George the Fifth

where Prince and Princess
Michael of Kent
raise the hackles
of the proletariat
by paying
£115 a week
for five bedroom apartment
costing taxpayers
fifteen million pounds a year

where Princess Diana
created modern mythology
with her two sons
and almost
made an Egyptian arab
grandfather of a king

Elka Enola

To Ryan Hunter

R Rays of sunshine danced so gay,
Y You arrived that Autumn day;
A Another joy for Mom and Dad,
N Now sister Jaclyn is so glad!

H Hope springs for your future life,
U Unperturbed and free from strife.
N Never drift to risky shoals,
T Turn your mind to worthy goals;
E Ever seek a higher dream,
R Reaching for a noble theme.

This poem was written by Carole Ann Martyn for the baptism of her second grandchild, Ryan Hunter Martyn, on Sunday, September 2, 2007 at St. Angela Merici Church in Windsor, Ontario.

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

Tear-Offs

Please write separate cheques
for each slip.

The Music Man at Stratford
Friday, September 19, 2008
(Cut Off Date -June 27, 2008)

Name: _____ Email _____ Telephone _____
Guest(s) _____

_____ tickets @ \$100 = _____ Cheque enclosed for \$ _____

Entrée Choice (Please circle): Roast Beef Chicken Fillet of Sole

Make cheque payable to RTO/ERO District 23 and mail to
RTO/ERO c/o Jean King, #869-6021 Yonge St., Toronto, Ont. M2M 3W2

Fifth Annual Golf Tournament
Thursday, June 5, 2008
(Cut Off Date -May 29, 2008)

Golfer #1: _____ Email _____ Phone _____
Golfer #2: _____ Email _____ Phone _____
Golfer #3: _____ Email _____ Phone _____
Golfer #4: _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Power Cart? YES NO (Please Circle)

_____ golfers @ \$45 = _____ + cart (\$12 per golfer) _____ = \$ _____ Cheque enclosed for \$ _____

Make cheque payable to RTO/ERO District 23 and mail to
RTO/ERO c/o Helen Wiber, #869-6021 Yonge St., Toronto, Ont. M2M 3W2
(416-485-0131)

WANTED ~ MEMORABILIA

ETT, the Teacher Union representing Elementary Teachers employed by the Toronto District School Board, wants to build its archives.

Memorabilia from any of the predecessor Federations: East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto, City of York (OPSTF/OPSMTE, WTA, TTF).

Logos, flags, pins, Collective Agreements, milestone documents, etc.), are sought. Former officers of these organizations may be particularly helpful.

Contact: **Terry White** at twhite@ett.on.ca

Or 416-393-9930 X238

Or send to:

ETT, 300-4211 Yonge St. Toronto, ON M2P 2A9

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

