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THE RETIRED TEACHERS OF ONTARIO

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Haliburton/Kawartha Lakes

January 2012 Website: www.rtoero-district18.com



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RTO Website:

www.rto-ero.org

District 18 Website:

www.rtoero-district18.com

**Do you have questions
about District 18?**

rto.d18.ckl@gmail.com

705-328-9889

District 18 AGM Approves Restructuring

At the District AGM in September, the membership approved the restructuring of the district, by redistributing the functions of the Units and the District with respect to operations. For more details on who will be doing what for whom, please see the President's Report on page 3.

A committee comprised of Wayne Cooper and Marg Valentine from Haliburton, Bob May and Marilas McInnis from Kawartha Lakes, Max Radiff (as advisor) and Ward Levine (as chair) worked out the details so that the district continues to manage business affairs and the unit committees are now primarily social entities. Watch for more excursions and events in the future.

In addition to the regular reports to the membership, inside the newsletter you will find:

- The executive for 2012 - 2014
- Mention of constitutional changes and approval
- The extension of participation vouchers across the entire District
- A report on our fabulous speaker and AGM in September

We were also glad to welcome to our AGM, Larry Hope, TLDSB Director of Education who brought greetings from the board. He expressed the board's appreciation for every contribution that retired teachers make to board programs and said, "Without retired teachers volunteering in the schools, many of the programs would not be possible. Retired volunteers make a real difference."

Recruitment Drive by RTO

RTO has over 65,000 members, but the more people who join, the greater the opportunity there will be to accrue even better benefits. If you know of a retired teacher in the district, who does not belong to RTO, please give their name to a member of the executive or to Max Radiff at 705-324-4602 or preferably at maxradiff@hotmail.com. As membership services officer, Max will contact them.

Charitable Donation

John Stouffer presents a \$500 cheque from the Haliburton unit of RTO to the ladies who run the Food For Kids Program in the elementary schools.



Inspiring Lifelong Learners

By Pauline L. Johnson

One of the joys of having grandchildren is that we get to see many of the curiosities of our world over again and discover that there is still so much to contemplate, share, enjoy and devote our time to. If we don't have grandchildren, simply having time in retirement allows us to explore aspects of our world that we skimmed over during our busy work years. Re-visiting a zoo is one of these great experiences.

Mankind has always been fascinated by the exotic which is how zoos came into existence. Royal personages put animals in cages of concrete and bars for their amusement, but zoos have evolved today into naturally designed habitats covering vast spaces, with responsibilities for breeding, educating the public and a role in helping to sustain the planet's beauty and diversity.

Shawn Blackburn, public program coordinator from the Toronto Zoo, regaled RTO members at the AGM in September with humorous and enlightening stories of some of the animals' hijinks which included intimidation attempts by Robby the kangaroo who lay back on his tail ready to kick out with his hind feet, charges by Charles the gorilla, jealous of any other male in proximity to his female family members, and Jabba the mandrill turning his behind to Shawn to show trust and allow Shawn to check for pests in his fur and crevices. What's a guy to do?

Shani, the skittish zebra, had a touching story. Shawn described how he taught her to trust people by patient manoeuvres and a daily routine of whistles and treats.

However, Shawn also left us in no doubt about our responsibilities to the animals in our environment as well as their habitats. He was certainly an amusing, educational and inspirational speaker.

Eganridge Golf and Conference Centre provided us with a lunch of comfort food at its best – cheese topped baguettes, salad, fall vegetable and beef ragout as well as bread pudding with hot sauce. We all left feeling we had taken care of business, been entertained, and been sated with a wonderful lunch, not to forget having shared excellent company.



Shawn Blackburn answers questions from eager listeners Pauline Johnson and Marilas McInnis at the District 18 AGM at Eganridge Golf and Conference Centre.

District 18 Sponsors Snow Leopard

RTO District 18 donated \$100 to sponsor a snow leopard at the Toronto Zoo. This was in lieu of an honorarium for our entertaining speaker. Shawn Blackburn's affinity to the animals at the zoo was evident in his enthusiasm and his suggestion that we support them, rather than give him compensation.



President's Report

By Ward Levine



As the incoming District President, I take pleasure in this opportunity to provide information on the current activities and future directions of the Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes district of the Retired Teachers of Ontario.

I have had the opportunity to be part of the district and unit executives for five years as District Secretary and Unit and District Vice President. Most recently I was a District 18 re-

presentative at Senate, presenting our district's wishes and needs to the province. I am now pleased to serve as District President.

Some important information includes:

Executive for the 2012 – 2014 term:

- President, Senator & Health Services Representative - Ward Levine
- Past President & Pension and Retirement Concerns -- Nick Pawluch
- 1st Vice President & Social Unit Chair – Wayne Cooper
- 2nd Vice President & Social Unit Chair – Bob May
- Secretary – Karen Brentnell
- Treasurer & Political Advocacy Representative – Jim Milne
- Communications Representative & Newsletter Editor – Pauline Johnson
- Member Services – Max Radiff

Check the website for contact information.

District Restructuring Approved

After much discussion and debate at the District and Unit Executive meetings and at the September AGM, approval has been given to restructure the District that reflects the functions that essentially are currently occurring. The Units are continuing to offer to the membership social and community services that meet the needs of the members while the District will provide the provincially mandated functions of all RTO districts. This move is a major improvement in creating efficiencies in the operations of the district and the delivery of

services to the members. The local social committee members are: Haliburton – Wayne Cooper and Marg Valentine; Kawartha Lakes – Bob May and Marilas McInnis. Thank you to these individuals, as well as to Max Radiff, for developing the protocol and directions that have allowed this to go forward.

Constitution Review Completed

After numerous revisions and modifications, Max Radiff has completed the review of our constitution and it has been submitted and approved with the consent of the membership at the AGM. Many thanks, Max.

Member participation payback approved: Voucher system rationalized for all District 18 members.

The voucher system, which has been in place in Kawartha Lakes, is a way to offer back to you a benefit of membership in RTO District 18, as well as a way of thanking you for supporting the activities organized by your friends and colleagues. When you attend any social activity sanctioned by the district, you will receive a \$5 voucher that you can use for any future Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes event that year. For example, if To Hell with the Bell Luncheon cost were set at \$10, with a voucher the cost to the member would be only \$5. Not bad for a social time out! More details can be obtained from your social committee representatives or any executive member.

Telephone Committees and Goodwill Services

Kawartha Lakes Unit

In past years volunteers have provided regular telephone communication with all members, to inform/remind folks of upcoming meetings and events. Such is no longer practical as we are now over 500 members and growing! However; should you like to be reminded of an upcoming event, via a phone call; if you need a ride, (or could provide a ride) or perhaps would just enjoy a 'goodwill chat' once in a while, please contact us and we will be glad to add you to our list. Bruce and Debbie Peck 705-324-3417 or e-mail bpeck19@cogeco.ca

Haliburton Unit

Telephone committees still call people before events/meetings. If you, or a friend, are not receiving a call, contact Marg Valentine at 705-454-3451 to be put on a list. You can also RSVP for events to Marg.

Our Goodwill Coordinator is Marj Baldry. She very much enjoys making calls and sending out cards for special occasions. If you have information about a member she can contact, please phone her at 705-286-4722.

Fall 2011 Senate Report

By Ward Levine and Jim Milne

Wayne Cooper, Senator #2 from Haliburton, resigned this position in order to take on the role of District VP combined with Haliburton and Social Committee Chair. We will miss his astute observation skills at Senate. "Wayne, hopefully we can carry on in your absence."

SENATE HIGHLIGHTS

Budget: There is a strong concern at Senate that grants to districts be preserved at current levels and a concern that the new gerontology foundation not become a competitor with the districts for RTO funds at least at the Provincial level. It is generally recognized that districts could use their own funds to donate to the gerontology foundation, but again that the provincial body should not because district grants should have higher priority. Senate is still coming to terms with the parameters previously set around district fee rebate adjustments. These affect each district in different ways. Northern and sparsely populated districts are still disturbed by the prospect of losing \$1,000 a year after 2015 and this issue will be discussed again. The minimum fee rebate has been frozen at \$10,978 and will begin to affect us in the years ahead, though not in 2012.

We still receive the \$1,000 grant for 'little' districts, between 700 and 900 members. That grant has not been

altered, grandfathered or a subject of discussion.

Constitution: A special thanks to Max Radiff who walked our constitution through revision upon revision. It has been accepted by the provincial constitution committee

Scholarship: Julie Hough, daughter-in-law to Brian and Joanne Hough, who is attending Trent University for Teacher Education, is one of 25 recipients of the Retired Teachers of Ontario scholarship awarded to family members who are pursuing careers in teaching. Congratulations, Julie, and welcome to the profession.

Notice of Motion: Included in the recent RTO mailing is more information on the Charitable Foundation and its Board of Directors. A motion for consideration at the Spring Senate is as follows. That no members fees be directed to the Charitable Foundation at neither the District or Provincial level. **YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS WOULD BE WELCOMED BY YOUR DISTRICT EXECUTIVE MEMBERS.**

Please feel free to contact either Jim milnes1094@sympatico.ca or Ward camward@cogeco.ca if you have comments or questions about senate and its actions. E-mails would be preferred as they provide a more accurate reflection of your thoughts than any notes we might take of our conversation.

Health Services and Insurance Committee (HSIC) Report

Health Plan members will have already received notification about the new premiums as well as benefit enhancements for the upcoming year.

For those who are not members of the RTO Health Plan, here are five points to consider when looking at your plan, compared to RTO's plan.

Why join the RTO Health Insurance Plan and stay joined after 65?

1. More drugs are covered than by the Ontario Drug Benefits Plan (65% of the top 20 drugs covered by RTO are either not covered or are recommended for limited use by the ODB Plan)
2. Vision Care provides additional coverage to members
3. More paramedical services such as chiropractor,

naturopath, and massage are available (without doctor referral)

4. Hearing Aids are well supported
5. TRAVEL INSURANCE IS THE BEST

COVERAGE AVAILABLE and is included in a basic premium.

For full information on the RTO/Johnson Health Insurance Plans and coverage, go to: <http://www.ero-rto.org/our-health-plans> or call Johnson at 1.877.406.9007 toll free.

Health Matters is posted on the RTO/ERO website on the "members' only" centre. Go to http://www.ero-rto.org/members_center to log in.

If you have any questions, please call your HSIC representative, Ward Levine, at 705-328-9889

I have spent 20 retirement years in the Lindsay area and found numerous opportunities to pursue interests, causes, and activities which have enriched my life and, hopefully, have been somewhat beneficial to the community.

For anyone looking for opportunities to be active and involved, here are some possibilities: Lindsay Public Library Science Presentations; KPOW (Kawartha Protect Our Water) a volunteer group watch-dogging the Trent Severn Watershed; Council Committees such as the Lindsay Ops Landfill Public Review Committee; volunteer work with COGECO Cable; Encore Children's Productions, a branch of The Lindsay Concert Foundation; Big Brothers Big Sisters School Mentoring Program where I am presently paired with an elementary Grade 5 male one hour a week, conveniently just around the corner from where I live in Lindsay.

Big Brothers Big Sisters, an international non-profit



Retirement and volunteering - a good fit

*By Hector McNeill,
District 18, RTO Member*

largely volunteer supported organization (not to be confused with The Boys' and Girls' Club) is best known for its pairing of adults with youth up to 18 years old who are in home situations where they can benefit from a long term relationship with either a Big Brother or Sister.

The School mentor relationship is less demanding, requiring one hour weekly and confined to the school property. The aim is to connect the child with a supportive adult in a friendly non-academic, activity-oriented way, without the pressure of skill remediation or disciplinary expectations.

I have found it fun to go into my old school boxes to engage my students by way of my interest in science and magic with a diversion now and then to popcorn and Rice Crispy bar production.

Retired teachers wanting to smell chalk dust and revisit the past in a pleasant, less stressful way should contact Big Brothers director, Jim De Florio, 705-324-6800 or feel free to call me at 705-320-8508.



Newsletter Named "Bell Free"

By Pauline L. Johnson

Last August, we ran a Name the Newsletter Contest and Mike Catling's entry was chosen with his suggestions of

variations on the phrase Bell Free. This truly reflects our lifestyle and the spirit of being a retired educator or educational employee. Mike won a free lunch in the form of gift certificates for Tim Horton's. Thanks go out to Mike who was the former editor of this publication and to all those who submitted such wonderful ideas.

If you have anything you would like to see in our newsletter, please contact me at 705-489-3878 or e-mail pauline.l.johnson@sympatico.ca.

Surviving Spouses of RTO Members

By Max Radiff, Membership Services Officer

When one's spouse dies, there are many affairs to look after and it may not occur to someone right away that they are no longer enjoying the services or benefits they had while married to an RTO member.

While retaining a portion of the spouse's pension is automatic, membership in Retired Teachers of Ontario is not. If things like RTO medical coverage and invitations to social events and activities are to continue, the spouse must apply to join RTO as an associate member.

If you know anyone who needs this information, have them call Max Radiff, at 705-324-4602 or preferably e-mail maxradiff@hotmail.com.

Information is also on the RTO website, but it is in the Members' Centre which requires a password. People can call Dianne Vezeau at head office for assistance at 1-800-361-9888.

Chickadee Luncheon at The Pepper Mill Restaurant

By Wayne Cooper,
Social Committee Chair for Haliburton

The Chickadee Luncheon was very successful; 54 members and guests attended, including 7 members from Kawartha Lakes Unit. The food was excellent, particularly the roast beef, shrimp and bountiful salads. The fact that people tended to linger meant that they were enjoying each other's company – lots of stories, lots of reminiscing.

Diane Hagerman, of Cranberry Lake, attended her first RTO function. Doug Bothwell of Cameron won the door prize, a \$60 dinner for two at The Pepper Mill Restaurant.

Thanks to Marg Valentine for organizing the event, to Jim Milne for assisting Marg and me on the door. Thanks also to Sue Sisson for distributing draw tickets as well as Betty Mark and Robert McIvor for taking photos.



Marg Valentine (centre), organizer of the sumptuous luncheon, sits to chat with Patti Brydon (right) and Georgina Boyle.



Lois Raw, Dorothy McKenzie, Daisy Gibson, Maíja Stone and Sharon Lawrence linger to chat after the luncheon ends.

Valentine Day Friendship Luncheon

Lindsay Golf and Country Club
Monday February 13 at 12:30 p.m.

Three-course meal prepared by Chef Scott Hudson

Gourmet grilled chicken breast or filet of salmon
Choice to be indicated, when registering.

Socializing, games and door prizes!
Cost: \$20 -- Cash Bar

Deadline to register: Monday, February 6

To register, contact **Sheila Davidson at 705-324-2283**
or sheildav112@hotmail.com. Cheques may be mailed
to **80 Bond Street Lindsay, ON K9V 3R4.**

Vouchers welcome to discount the price.

If mailing a registration, include a cheque, your
name(s), choice of meal(s), and voucher(s).
Registration forms are also available on the website
at www.rtoero-district18.com

Haliburton members are most welcome.

Haliburton Tradition of Generosity

By Wayne Cooper, Haliburton V.P. of District 18

In 2011, the Haliburton Unit of RTO gave \$1100 in charitable donations on behalf of its members. RTO's provincial auditor has advised us that we can no longer do this. We are limited to donating 5% of our grant, which means we can donate \$165 in total. Our two principal benefactors are the Haliburton Highlands Secondary School Scholarship Fund and Food for Kids.

If you would like to see Haliburton's tradition of generosity maintained, please call Wayne Cooper at 705-754-3314 to make a personal pledge. He will mail you the necessary information. If you donate \$20 or more, an income tax receipt will be sent to you.

District 18 Curling Bonspiel 2011

By Karen Brentnell, Curling Convenor

Wednesday November 9, saw 48 enthusiastic curlers arrive at the curling club in Lindsay. Following registration, capably handled by Mary Hennessey, everyone enjoyed juice, coffee, homemade muffins and tea biscuits prior to playing the first game.

Afterwards, all proceeded upstairs to visit and share laughs before enjoying a great lunch to provide energy for the next 6-end game. Thanks to May and Barb for serving such wonderful comfort food for all to enjoy.

After the last game, participants returned upstairs to await the results. When the winning team, skipped by Joe Moher, vice Dave Nigh, second Doug Morris, and lead Rosemarie Moher) was announced as victorious, the group erupted into applause. Joe has curled for most of his life and, as one of Kawartha Lakes more mature members, we were pleased to see his team emerge the winner. Congratulations to the entire team.

Each team was then announced and introduced by the skip. Photos were taken and every participant chose a gift from the prize table.

Thanks to all who take part in this event and make it such a fun day for everyone. I look forward to seeing you in November 2012. The 7th Annual Curling Bonspiel has been booked at the Lindsay Club for Wednesday, November 7, 2012. Mark your calendars now.



Winning team: Dave Nigh, Rosemary Moher, Joe Moher and Doug Morris.

Louise Cooper Receives Award

It gave me a great deal of pleasure to present RTO's Meritorious Service Award to Louise Cooper at the 2011 AGM. I was privileged to work with Louise for many years at the District Executive level – more years than Louise and I will admit to. She has held every district office at one time or another – well, maybe not Political Action – and she carried out each one of them with enthusiasm, energy and remarkable ability.



Max Radiff presents Louise Cooper with the Meritorious Service Award from RTO District 18. Louise has designated "Food For Kids" as the charity to receive the \$200 cheque that accompanies this award.

Louise was always a driving force at the district level and seldom took "no" for an answer when asking for help for RTO. One of Louise's weaknesses was that occasionally she had to take "no" for an answer which meant that she had to take on additional responsibility. Louise would never let RTO slip because there was no one to get a job done – she did it herself!

Those who served with Louise on the Haliburton Unit Executive will tell the same story of Louise's dedication, energy and leadership. If you think it was difficult to say "no" to Louise at the District level just ask the Haliburton crew how tough it was for them. No matter how good your excuse, Louise always had a reason to counteract it. As a result, during her reign Haliburton always had more members on their Executive than Kawartha Lakes or Victoria County.



Lindsay Recreation Centre Fitness Membership - 2012

Enjoy the benefits of membership at the Lindsay Recreation Centre for a fraction of the cost to the public!

As a benefit of RTO membership, the cost to join for one year, commencing March 2012 is:

- \$140.00 for RTO members (membership price for general public is \$380).
- A spouse may join with a member for \$192.10.

Offer limited to first 49 people who apply & pay. (Last year we had to turn people away.)

How to apply: (Any questions? Call Ward at 705-328-9889.)

1. Send a cheque (payable to Ward Levine) for \$60.90 by February 14, 2012 to: 8 Purdy Ct., Lindsay, ON, K9V 6E4
2. Await notification from Ward that the minimum number of people have applied with payment (if this number is not met, payments will be returned).
3. Proceed to the Rec Complex after notification and make the final payment of \$79.10 to activate your membership.
4. Enjoy the benefits of members and healthy activities (note: Aquatic Class fees are in addition to membership fees.)



Time on the Links In Sturgeon Point

By Ward Levine

The Kawartha Lakes unit's annual golf tournament, at the Sturgeon Point Golf Club on June 30, was once again a resounding success with over 40 golfers hacking their way around the course. The organizers, Rich Brien and Bob Ellis, did a fantastic job recruiting participants, setting up the teams, choosing the menu and ensuring all participants got to the prize table. On behalf of all who attended, thank you for arranging for excellent weather, delicious food, and prizes for all. Good times were had that allowed us to reconnect with friends, relax, and play. Stay tuned for details and information on next year's outing.



Second Place Team: Marj Smith, Don Druery, David McKinley, John MacDuff.



Tournament Winners: Russell Bergin, Lois Hatch, Ward Levine, and Rich Brien. Congratulations!



The Scoff, or in plain English... lunch.