



THE WESTERN CONNECTION

DISTRICT 42 / MAINLAND BRITISH COLUMBIA

NEWSLETTER

The Retired Teachers of Ontario / les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario

November, 2010

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Check our District web site at
www.rtoerodistrict42.ca

Be a contributor—send in your favourite photograph (TIFF or JPEG at >150 ppi preferred). Send in reports or stories. We cannot accept over 500 words plus a photo in any one story.

President's Message

The Executive extends greetings to all members and a special welcome to those who have recently joined us. Our district is divided into two units: The Interior, Unit 422, and the Lower Mainland Sunshine Coast, Unit 421. Geography is the singular reason for this division.

The fast approaching Christmas Season is an opportune time for members to connect with each other and to enjoy the festivities planned by the Unit executive committees. Check the following pages for details about the social events that have been organized and the venues for these events.

Some members of our District Executive attended workshops in Toronto during April, May and June. Excellent workshops important to the development of our organization were presented in Health Care, Goodwill, Website Technology, Treasurer's Update, and Executive Leadership.

RTO/ERO President, Margaret Couture and Executive Director, Harold Brathwaite attended our District AGM providing details about RTO/ERO's goals and initiatives for the next few years. Another highlight of the AGM was the presentation by Lori MacDonald-Blundon, Senior Consultant of Johnson Inc., our Health Insurance administrator.

Special thanks to the Executives of the District Units for assisting in planning a successful AGM at Harrison Hot Springs Resort in September. You will find much information on the District website including visuals of the AGM, changes and additions to our Health Plan, the latest Health Matters newsletter, the Provincial LIAISON newsletter, and much more.

Walt Duncan and I attended the Fall Senate of RTO/ERO held in Toronto on October 26-27, 2010. A summary report of the Senate proceedings can be found on page 6 of this newsletter.

In closing, sincere thanks to each member who is serving as an executive or committee member for the District or one of the Units. We are especially pleased to welcome the new members who have been elected to Unit Executive Committees.

May you all enjoy the Christmas Season and may you all experience good health and contentment throughout 2011. I look forward to seeing you at the 2011 AGM in September, if not before.

Lionel Brathwaite, President
RTO/ERO District 42



Lionel Brathwaite



Harrison Lake, BC

Site of the District 42
Annual General Meeting

September 8-9, 2010.

PRESIDENT COUTURE AND FOCUS

President Margaret Couture emphasized that RTO/ERO's focus is always centred on the concerns of its members first. However, the organization will always support advocacy for all seniors. Hence, the initiatives taken to improve health care for our membership, for example, will also have a spin-off effect for seniors across the country. The proposal to fund a Geriatric Chair at the University of Toronto is a classic example.



cause it has the established infrastructure for exploring and expanding research in geriatric medicine. The long term goal is to encourage the private sector to become involved. Hopefully, this singular step, a first by a non-profit body of citizens like ourselves, will result in drawing attention to this faculty, and consequently encourage other institutions and governments to take the necessary steps to improve care for the elderly.

The medical faculty in Canada lacks the required number of Geriatric staff for the aging population, and daily the various media carry news of grave concern about this situation. What efforts are there to encourage doctors to specialize in this area of medicine?

President Margaret Couture speaking at the District 42 Annual General Meeting in Harrison Hot Springs Resort, B.C, September 9, 2010.

Another point of note is that RTO/ERO's membership is 65,000 plus and growing and has

established links with other seniors' groups. There is power in numbers, and RTO/ERO continues to refine its tactics for political advocacy.

RTO/ERO has taken the initiative and selected the U of T be-



Executive Director Harold Brathwaite described the procedure for establishing the chair in geriatrics. He explained that Canada Revenue requires a Charitable Foundation be created to fund the Chair. This is a requirement for all non-profit charities; under this Foundation RTO/ERO may fund other needs. The Executive has brought other funding proposals to the October Senate for consideration. For example; "to provide one-time financial and/or other support to students, seniors and aging members of the public who are in distress." This motion would allow RTO/ERO to provide one-time financial aid to a member or members who have fallen on hard times. RTO/ERO is concerned first and foremost about you.



You (and your spouse/friend) are cordially invited to:

RTO/ERO District 42's
2011

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

By popular demand once again at

The Penticton Lakeside Resort

With all of the amenities offered in 2009 plus a few extras.

The dates are set for September 7th and 8th, 2011

Full details will be published in the Spring 2011
Western Connection

PROVINCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Notes

- Members are urged to send their updated e-mail addresses to the Provincial Office e-mail address membership@rto-ero.org and to their District news letter editor at bobjim@shaw.ca.
- Districts should continue to notify Dianne Vezeau at membership@rto-ero.org of District changes.
- The Committee is planning to hold a Communications Conference in June 2011 pending Senate approval.
- Districts are invited to explore the new RTO/ERO website and its many new features, including: online change of address form, interactive District map, and a new classified/reunion section.
- Visit www.rto-ero.org



HEALTH CARE

Lori MacDonald Blundon
Johnson Insurance



Lori's address to a very attentive audience elicited a wide variety of questions:

1. Should members take generic drugs over patented brand name drugs?
Financially it would be cost effective; you pay less for more. The maximum allowed by your plan will cover more of the generic brand; you do not sacrifice quality.
2. Is direct payment by Johnson (Mondial) restricted to specific pharmacies?
Johnson will provide coded number if the pharmacy you select will accept. Check with both Johnson and the pharmacy about procedure.
3. Is ambulance service covered by the plan?
The plan covers only those circumstances defined as emergency or critical. If the use does meet the criteria, you pay. Check and decide.
4. A member takes more than one trip out of province a year for a total that exceeds 62 days. What is covered for health care? How does the 62 day premium paid coverage apply?
Each trip is considered a new holiday if taken separately and if each is within the 62 day limit. Your premium covers health care costs for each trip.
But there is a stipulation: the traveller must return to the province of residence at the end of each trip within the 62 day limit. If not, then the trip count exceeds the 62-day limit by the number of days away before the return home. You pay for the additional days.
5. Is a member limited to specific pharmacies for prescription drug purchases?

The law disallows any limitation by pharmacies as to whom they serve prescription drugs. For example you do not have to be a member of Costco to use their pharmaceu

tical services. You enter by the general exit entrance that leads directly to the Costco pharmacy.

TIP (from a member of the audience) Costco is reported to charge the lowest dispensing fees.

6. What guarantee of coverage is there if one travels with a minor ailment?
You would be wise to check with your doctor about your condition and suitability for travel. Even if the doctor gives consent for travel, check with Mondial. If they agree with the doctor's consent for travel, you may well be advised to obtain a document from Mondial stating that you are free to travel and that you are not limited by a **PRE-EXISTING CONDITION**. If it is then your misfortune to become ill while out of province, you will be covered.

This session was a very intensely interesting presentation by Lori. What we have reported here is a sample of the Question and Answer segment of the program.

The AGM was a positive experience: a calming atmosphere for relaxation, a reconnecting with colleagues and friends, and the gathering of bits and bites of information: hope you are there next year.



Doctors are renowned for their terse and sometimes cryptic notes on patient records. Consider these notes reported from some medical documents in the UK:

- She has two teenage children. No other abnormalities.
- Occasional, constant, infrequent headaches.
- By the time he was admitted his rapid heart had stopped and he was feeling better.
- The patient has no past history of suicides.
- On the second day the knee was better and on the third day it had completely disappeared.
- She has no rigor or chills—husband reports she was hot in bed last night.



RTO/ERO District 42 Interior Unit



Annual Christmas Luncheon
December 9, 2010

At the
Historic ELDORADO HOTEL
Kelowna, BC

Social at 11:00 a.m. — Lunch at 12:00 Noon
Cost per person \$20



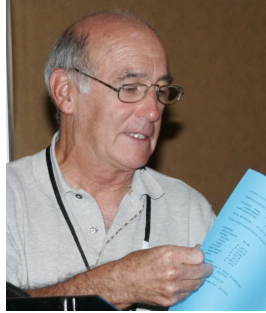
Interior Unit is covering all taxes and gratuities.

More information will be out in the mail soon.

INTERIOR UNIT UPDATE

By Walt Duncan

The Interior Unit has 122 members as of the end of September, 2010. We hold three meetings each year which usually includes the District 42 AGM which is held in early September. Our Unit meetings take place in the Okanagan Valley with one in the greater Vernon area and the second between Kelowna and Penticton. These meetings are held in this area because the majority of our Interior members live within a 2 hour drive of the Okanagan.



The Interior Unit of District 42 encompasses the largest geographic area of all RTO/ERO districts and we realize it is difficult for many of our members to attend Unit meetings or the District AGM. We urge every member to read the District newsletter, The Western Connection, which is published twice each year; the Unit Newsletter which is inserted in the Christmas Card and our District Website, www.rtoerodistrict42.ca, which is updated frequently.

We invite all RTO/ERO members to join with us at any of our scheduled meetings. We enjoy a good meal, a short business meeting and always have time for renewing or making new acquaintances. Meeting dates and places are always published in The Western Connection, our District newsletter and also on the District website at: www.rtoerodistrict42.ca, or in our Annual Christmas Card mailout.

Should you wish to attend one of our meetings and have difficulty over transportation just call one of our executive about ten days prior to the meeting date. We have enough members available to form car pools for those who would like to take advantage of one. Call Walt Duncan at 250-558-5051, e-mail coppdunc@shaw.ca; or Social Convenor Larry Hunt at 250-861-8460, e-mail larry_hunt@telus.net.

The RTO/ERO magazine "Renaissance" is mailed out from Toronto to each member 4 times a year and contains important information for all members.

The Unit Executive welcomes members to come forward and join the Unit Executive in some capacity to serve or help our fellow members. Please contact Unit President, Walt Duncan if you would like to help in any capacity. Any member of the executive is available to answer questions or take your comments about any matter concerning the RTO/ERO at the Unit or Provincial level.

Advance notice of the 2011 Annual General Meeting of District 42 in Penticton is printed elsewhere in this letter. Complete details will be available in the spring edition of The Western Connection. We hope to see you there.



CAREGIVERS' BILL OF RIGHTS



1. You must survive and you have that right!
2. Sometimes you need a few hours away from the person you are caring for. You have the right to go off and find yourself again in some personal pursuit.
3. You have the right to get help!
You are not indispensable - others can act in your place.
4. You have the right to be patient with yourself and your limitations. It is one thing to be patient with the person you care for: it is even more important to be patient with yourself.

Reprinted from "Elder Care" and adapted for all Caregivers:
By James Kenny and Stephen Spicer.

WE FEATURE OUR MEMBERS

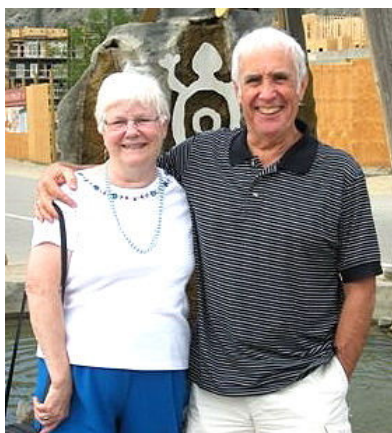
Don Hill

Don grew up on a farm in “Stoney Keppel”, near Warton, Ontario. He attended Stratford Normal School in 1952. His first five years of teaching were at Quaker Road Public School near Welland, followed by four years as Principal of Parkview Public in Hagersville, a new six-room school. During this period he was working on his degree extramurally, at McMaster University in Hamilton.

In 1962 Don decided he wanted some secondary school experience and the family moved to Kingston with four young sons. The move was good for a salary increase of \$100.00 per year and an increase of 100% in the cost of living.

Don never did quite make it back to the elementary panel. He quite enjoyed the challenges offered at Queen Elizabeth Collegiate in north Kingston as well as the comradeship of a young and vibrant staff. Don became a Guidance Counselor and taught geography, special education and other good stuff.

In 1985 Don arranged a teaching exchange to Port Lincoln,



Betty and Don Hill

South Australia. He and his wife Betty used every opportunity while in Australia to travel extensively, thinking that they would never likely have occasion to return.

During their 27 years in Kingston the Hills acquired some lakefront property at Bancroft, a two hour drive northwest of Kingston. There they hand-crafted a chalet/cottage to which they eventually retired in 1988. In the meantime one of their four sons had become established in mining in Australia. Don and Betty have been back to Australia three more times. Last year they wintered in Tasmania on their son’s horse/cattle farm occupying time with farm chores, golf and a side trip to New Zealand.

Six years ago the Hills moved into the Okanagan Valley and they enjoy it “heaps”. Two of their sons now reside in Kelowna. The eldest son has lived in Scotland for twenty-five years. Of course that has given them reason to travel and visit Scotland many times. Don says, “Retirement is great.”



HEALTH COMMITTEE—DISTRICT 42

By Audrey Neumann

Out of Province/Canada travel plan services are now delivered by Mondial Assistance. Here are some lesser know services available to you through Mondial.

Pre-Trip Assistance

- Information on required shots or visa requirements.
- Emergency messages centre.
- Emergency communications with family from abroad.
- Emergency translation services.

A global network provides local health affiliates world wide.

Always review the terms of the RTO/ERO out of Province/Canada travel benefits before you leave.

Claims under the travel plan.

Require proof of identification meeting three (3) criteria:

1. Must show name in full with signature.
2. Specify and prove the date.
3. Indicate transactions took place in your province of residence.

Remember to keep all bills, invoices, receipts, including telephone bills.



Passport covers are being reprinted. Any members who did not receive one will receive theirs with their renewal letter in November.

Any plan or premium rate changes will be communicated to members with the November renewal letter.

The updated Group Benefits Program Booklet and the Travel Booklet will be distributed with the Winter Renaissance.

If you require assistance or more information feel free to contact me by e-mail, audneumann@hotmail.com, or telephone 604-738-5951. Or, call Larry Hunt at 250-861-8460, e-mail, larry_hunt@telus.net.

Direct contact with Johnson Insurance can be made through the internet at www.johnson.ca, telephone 1-877-406-9007.

Direct contact with Mondial Assistance can be made on the internet at www.mondial/assistance.ca, telephone 1-800-249-6556.



RTO/ERO FALL SENATE

Report by Lionel Brathwaite

The Fall Senate will be remembered for its near acrimonious debate, and prolonged, heated discussion. What precipitated such controversy were questions raised by some members about probable changes to the designation of members' fees and proposed changes for a reduction to current funding for districts. It appeared that some members were convinced that funding of the Charitable Foundation for future projects would compromise the existing funding procedures.

The Provincial Executive was pressed to allay such concerns, and the misunderstanding or misinformation was finally resolved when attention was directed to the constitutional requirement that all financial issues or proposals had to meet Senate approval.

The proposed budget for 2011 was finally approved as were most proposals brought before Senate.

For example:

- The funding for the establishment of a Board of Directors to chart the way for the creation of a Charitable Foundation for the funding of future projects such as a Geriatric Chair at the University of Toronto. This step is required by law as stated by Revenue Canada.
- The provision for funding for the Emergency Assistance Program for post-secondary academic scholarships remains unchanged.
- Political advocacy receives increased funding in preparation for the probability of federal and provincial elections in 2011.

- The Member Services Commission also receives increased funding for liaison with other groups.

All such proposals will impact our members and other seniors. For example; information gathered and strategies developed by the Political Advocacy Committee will be shared with all districts and with other groups with whom RTO/ERO communicates. You are encouraged to visit the RTO/ERO website at www.rtoero.org for more information about the Fall Senate. Take note of the technological improvements for information transfer.



Walt Duncan, Margaret Couture, Joan Murphy, Lionel Brathwaite at the Fall Senmate, 2010.

The New RTO/ERO Executives:
Joan Murphy, RTO/ERO President
Margaret Clarke
Margaret Couture
Leo Normandeau
Norbert Normandeau
Jim Sparrow

There will be a modest increase of 1.4% in members' pensions beginning in January 2011.



Lionel Brathwaite, Lori-MacDonald-Blundon and Walt Duncan at the Fall Senate, 2010.

May you experience a joyous Christmas Season and a New Year of pristine health and contentment.

PENSION NEWS

Your Teachers' pension will increase 1.4% in 2011. The method used to calculate this percentage is prescribed in the Teachers' pension plan and is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Also, if you retired this year, your inflation increase will be pro-rated.

We will apply the adjustment to your pension in January 2011 and details will appear on your pension payment details page in iAccess Web, the secure member website, at the end of January. If you aren't registered for iAccess Web, or if

you have chosen to receive personal pension information by mail, details will appear on the direct deposit notice that you will receive in early February.

For more information on how your increase is calculated, check out: <http://www.otpp.com/Inflation2011>

More information about the inflation adjustment will also follow in Pension News in late November.

Reprinted from a letter to all pensioners, October 2010

HEALTH IN THE CLASSROOM

The teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, "Now class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face."

"Yes," cried the class in unison.

"Then why is it that when I am standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't run into my feet?"

Little Jimmy piped up from the middle of the room, "Cause your feet ain't empty."

ARE YOU A CAREGIVER?

More and more of us are becoming Caregivers as the average age of the population grows older. There have always been Caregivers. Someone used to stay at home and look after aging granny or aunt Tess and people would sympathize and tut-tut about that poor soul being shut in and maybe a spinster at that. But, those situations are multiplying. Long retirement years for many of us have been a blessing and a lot of fun. For many more of us long retirement years have brought a pretty bleak kind of life. We never bargained in our early dreams of being together for the loneliness, grief, guilt, fright, anger and even despair that losing one's partner to dementia brings.

Death has a finality about it. The loss and subsequent grief are not fresh every day, endlessly. People do get on with life after a family death. In "losing" one's dearest friend and partner to dementia one is thrust into what has been termed "a long goodbye". Surely it must be akin to watching someone suffering a terminal illness. The illness is insidious in its progression affecting behaviour, cognition, memory, and motor skills.

Far too many people do not recognize the early symptoms of dementia and fall into the trap of accepting minor changes in their loved one's behaviour as aberrations which will pass. Soon one becomes a Caregiver without even having noticed it take over one's life. Soon free movement and socializing come to a halt. One is captured, a voluntary prisoner of love, isolated from the old world they both once knew. Then comes the moment of decision, shall my loved one go to a home for full-time care?

More often than not the question is asked far too late to really benefit the Caregiver. The person with the dementia probably does not know much about what is going on. The Caregiver, on the other hand, has had some time, even years, of confined living while in full cognition of the effects on that person's life. The Caregiver's life has been wasted in a sense and going into full-time care for the person suffering the dementia might even prove to be an improvement in living conditions. But, the

load on the Caregiver does not disappear. Certainly home life is no longer as restrictive. One can go out freely without worry; one can always rest assured that the loved one is safe, and being well cared for by very wonderful people.

But, a new phase of Caregiving now rears its ugly head. The Caregiver becomes guilt-ridden at having "failed" or deserted the loved one. Now the Caregiver becomes an adjunct to the staff of the nursing home, spending countless hours there comforting their loved one. It takes a long time for this tendency to continue giving succor where it is no longer perceived nor needed to diminish. As long as the needy one is in care, even someone else's care, the Caregiver is burdened with responsibility that will not go away.

Who is this person writing this stuff, you may ask? Well, he is a Caregiver. He knows. He wants you to know there is a way to live through the years of this trial. Your own inner strength; your own Faith, for those who profess that; your own plain guts, cannot win. In the end you will do exactly what he did. You will break up some dark lonely night, all alone sitting staring out the window into the blackness that life has become.

There is a way one can find some relief. Go to your local Caregivers' Support Group and look, listen and even, when you are ready, take part. This Caregiver waited too long at the start but finally did join a group. That was a couple of years before his loved one went into full-time care. Now she has been in care for three long years. They have not been easy years. But the Support Group has provided an education into the many forms of dementia. It taught him how to cope with the unpredictable swings in mood and behaviour of someone afflicted with certain types of dementia. It taught him he was not alone and even focused his mind on to some situations far worse than his own. The Group was a life saver and continues to play a significant role in his life.

Submitted by: Jim White, a Caregiver.

DISTRICT 42 EXECUTIVE 2010-2011

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| President | Lionel Brathwaite * | 604-555-4180 | brathwin@shaw.ca |
| Vice-President | Walt Duncan * | 250-558-5051 | coppdunc@shaw.ca |
| Treasurer | Linda Coppin | 250-558-5051 | coppdunc@shaw.ca |
| Secretary | To Be Announced * | | |
| Goodwill | Pat Solomon * | 604-733-5516 | psolomon@shaw.ca |
| LMSC Unit Rep | Shelagh Derbyshire * | 604-926-0403 | shelaghderbyshire@shaw.ca |
| LMSC Unit Rep | Audrey Neumann * | 604-738-5951 | audneumann@hotmail.com |
| Interior Rep | Larry Hunt * | 604-861-8460 | larry_hunt@telus.net |
| Interior Rep | Madeline Bestick | 604-868-9091 | madiebest@shaw.ca |

* indicates core executive. The Executive consists of the President plus three reps from each Unit.

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Health | Audrey Neumann | 604-738-5951 | audneumann@hotmail.com |
| Pensions | Shelagh Derbyshire | 604-926-0403 | shelaghderbyshire@shaw.ca |
| Political Advocacy | Pearl Cowan | 604-222-9454 | iper3@shaw.ca |
| Goodwill | Pat Solomon | 604-733-5516 | psolomon@shaw.ca |
| Membership | Walt Duncan | 250-558-5061 | coppdunc@shaw.ca |
| Newsletter/Webmaster | Jim White | 250-768-6719 | bobjim@shaw.ca |

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Lower Mainland Sunshine Coast Unit



The Sylvia Hotel Restaurant
1154 Gilford Street
Vancouver, BC
Tel. 604-681-9321

Saturday, December 4, 2010

Meet and Greet 11:30 a.m. Lunch at 12:00 Noon

This is a reminder to those members who have yet to confirm their attendance at the Christmas Luncheon. You and your spouse or friend are invited to attend. Don't forget to express any dietary concerns you have. The menu choices include vegetarian selections. Tea, coffee and dessert are included with the meal selection.

If you have misplaced your invitation please complete the form below to indicate how many will attend and send a deposit by cheque in the amount of **\$15.00, payable to RTO/ERO LMSC Unit 421, by November 23, 2010** to:

**Audrey Neumann
3577 West First Avenue
Vancouver BC V6R 1G9**

Menu #1 is not considered.

Menu #2 Cost \$19.00 + \$2.28 HST + \$3.42 grat. @ 18% = \$24.70 less \$10.00 subsidy = **\$12.70 per member**

Menu #3 Cost similarly = \$22.00 less \$10.00 subsidy = **\$12.00 per member**

Non-members are not eligible for the subsidy.

Please bring something new for the needy. Your donations will be delivered to one of the Lower Mainland Women's Shelters.

The LMSC Executive sends Greetings and Best Wishes for the Season and the New Year.

.....cut along dotted line.....



Name

Telephone

e-mail address

No. attending



Mail to : Audrey Neumann, 3577 West First Avenue, Vancouver BC V6R 1G9

LOWER MAINLAND SUNSHINE COAST CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

.....cut along dotted line.....



Have you noticed?

The person who asks you to calm down is often the one who got you mad in the first place.

Appreciate every single thing you have especially your friends. Life is too short and friends are too few.

IDEAS WANTED

The Provincial Communications staff is accepting proposals for upcoming issues of Renaissance.

The Spring issue will feature Ventures in Volunteering and the Summer Issue (due date for copy Feb. 18/11) will be Relationship Changes in Retirement

The Western Connection is distributed to all members of RTO/ERO District 42, Mainland British Columbia.
 Editor: Jim White, bobjim@shaw.ca or tel. 250-768-6719
 Members are encouraged to submit articles of general or specific interest for publication.
 Please submit material via e-mail as .txt or .doc files and photographs in jpeg format at >150 ppi.
 Typewritten or hand-printed hard copy is also acceptable.