



PEIRTA Newsletter

Prince Edward Island Retired Teachers' Association

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SPRING 2011

Apologies from Editor ~ Previous issue carries wrong date

Previous edition should have been dated Winter 2011, not Spring 2011. Volume and Issue are correct as printed. With the intention of not further complicating the situation, I have simply reverted to correct date for this issue.

From the President

Spring is upon us once more and we have completed our round of spring socials. These events are meant to be a time to renew acquaintances as well as to transact a bit of business. This year we also had the task of electing representatives to the provincial executive for the next two years, beginning January 2012. It was encouraging to see that each region was able to produce an able representative for our executive. As we now prepare for the election of a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary at our annual meeting on November 3, it is important that our organization gives some thought to who should represent us for the next two years. Our organization has within its ranks many people with excellent leadership skills. These people are sought by organizations all across our province. As the ranks of seniors swell, providing adequate re-

sources, both monetary and social, becomes more and more important. Expect that your next executive will have pressures from a number of groups to provide support as well as guidance.

There are still a number of former educators who could belong to our organization but do not. In some cases these people do not even realize that they are not members and would join if approached. I appeal to our membership to locate these people and suggest that they join our ranks. All you need do is notify any member of our executive and it will be taken care of. Contact information for all executive members is given in this newsletter.

In early June Pat McCardle and I will be representing you at the annual meeting of ACER-CART in Ottawa. We will bring the concerns of PEI to the meeting as well as take part in all discussions and sessions. Our national organization has grown into a strong voice for retired teachers in particular and seniors in general. We have been blessed with a strong national executive as well as an excellent executive director. When we return from this meeting we will be reporting to our executive as well as to you through our fall newsletter.



In closing, I want to wish each of you a pleasant and rewarding summer season. In the fall we will again get ready to take on another PEI winter.

Address Changes

If your address changes, or if you know anyone who has had a change of address and/or is not receiving this newsletter, please have him or her notify our membership chair (contact info on page 2).

Visit our website at
www.peirta.com

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From the Editor

The only excuse I can offer for the error in the date of the previous issue is my advanced (and advancing) age. Didn't notice it until after the newsletters had gone out, so my only recourse was to acknowledge the mistake, apologize, and eat crow.

You may notice that some messages are being repeated from issue to issue (usually boxed and/or shaded, so as to stand out). This repetition is intentional, not the result of either old age or stupidity.

Almost every issue, we get a number of newsletters back because we have the wrong address. Either we have never had it right, or the individual has moved and we have not been told. Sometimes someone on the executive will know where one of these individuals is living, and we can track down a specific address. But for the most part we rely on the member who moves to let us know. Unfortunately, sometimes that individual is unable to do so—in

which case it is helpful if someone else fills us in. Ideally the information should be sent to the membership chair, but if it comes to me or to any executive member, it will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

At the annual meeting a number of people indicated that they would like to read the newsletter online. I sent emails to all of them, using the addresses provided, but if I didn't receive a response, I assumed that a) the individual doesn't check email regularly, b) I had the wrong email address, or c) the member had changed his or her mind. I therefore did not ask Pat to remove their names from the snail-mail list, and I did not send them emails to indicate when the newsletter would be posted online. If there is anyone still out there who would prefer to read the online version, please let me know (margstewart@pei.eastlink.ca) and we'll make the changes.

The other message that I keep repeating has to do with group insurance, drug coverage, and the DCAP. Recall

that for members over age 65, many prescriptions are paid for by the provincial DCAP—but only for a 30-day supply. Some pharmacies are still providing a 90-day supply of these drugs, which means that our plan (Medavie Blue Cross) is billed for a 60-day supply when in fact there should be no charge to our plan except for the dispensing fee. Please help us stay on top of this.

PEIRTA Executive does not necessarily agree with opinions expressed in material authored by those other than official representatives of the PEIRTA, and information about opportunities offered by others is for information only—no endorsement is implied.

Next issue in early October. Submit material to margstewart@pei.eastlink.ca.

If you wish to read this newsletter online, instead of receiving a hard copy, send me an email and I will let you know when each issue should appear on our site and on the PEITF site.

Letters to the editor should be a maximum of 200 words, must include a one-line bio, and may be edited for length.

PEIRTA Executive and Officers 2009-2011

President: James MacAulay (961-2818)	festival@eastlink.ca
Vice-President: Spurgeon Robbins (436-7335)	spurgeonrobbins@hotmail.com
Past President: John Rowe (838-2098)	rowe@pei.sympatico.ca
Secretary: Barb Foster (367-1253)	BFOSTER1991@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Pat McCardle (892-1915)	patricia.mccardle@pei.sympatico.ca
Representatives by County	
Prince: Sherrill Barwise (859-2775)	annbarwise@eastlink.ca
Queens: Sheridith MacNeill (892-4440)	e.macneil@pei.sympatico.ca
Kings: George Knox (961-2604)	
Membership Chair: Joyce McCardle (436-6960)	joyce.mccardle@pei.sympatico.ca
Pension Committee Representative: Frank McQuaid	
Group Insurance Representative: Kimball Blanchard	
PEIRTA Webmaster: Bill Oehlke	oehlke@islandtelecom.com
Newsletter Editor: Marg Stewart	margstewart@pei.eastlink.ca

Tom Gaskell Addresses Retired Teachers of Prince Edward Island

First, my sincere thanks to all those of you at the AGM who provided such a warm welcome. President Jim certainly has a right to be proud of his Executive and membership generally.

During my visit I had the opportunity to speak with those in attendance and it was obvious that many were keenly interested in what was happening in several areas. As a follow-up and with the co-operation of your newsletter editor, who indeed does a fine job, I would like to provide some additional comments which may be of interest to the general membership.

On the question of the high price we pay for drugs, it appears our message is getting through. In B.C. for example, the brand Lipitor, which is coming off patent protection, currently costs \$208.90 for a prescription. By 2012 the "new" generic will cost \$81.26 (actual prescription cost - \$13.10; "rebate" - \$54.42; markup - \$5.24; dispensing fee - \$10.50). While we may take issue with the "rebate" system, the provincial and private/employer plans will save almost \$400 million per year. This will free up monies for ER's, surgeries, research, etc.

In Manitoba, their health system now covers Lucentis at no cost to the pa-

tient. The drug, used to treat wet macular degeneration of the eye, will be centrally distributed at first and then expanded to other areas. Manitoba also became the first province to commit to co-funding MS treatments.

As related to you earlier, the province of Ontario now has lowered the pricing of generic drugs. As a consequence of the arrangements Quebec has with the pharmaceutical companies, that province now has the lowest generic prices in Canada and should save some \$164 million per year on drug purchases.

With the above being said, it appears ever more logical to have a pan-Canadian drug plan and formulary. Our postal code system is not only unfair, it is also not economical. The fact that our four maritime provinces can co-operate should be a signal to all Canadians that we have more in common than what keeps us apart. We must keep on our politicians—both Federal and Provincial—to make sure that we the people are their clients and not the pharmaceuticals.

A few random thoughts:
Frauds and scams target seniors. Having a close relative duped out of \$16,000 on E-bay has convinced me that anybody can be a victim. Make sure you are the one who initiates contact when you are giving out financial information. And even then, be careful.

Travel insurance (Medoc for many retiree organizations) varies consid-

erably from one organization to another. Should we not be looking at a national plan?

A neurologist states that if a stroke victim is treated within 3 hours, he can totally reverse the effects. Recognize the signs—ask the victim to SMILE, say a simple sentence (TALK), RAISE both arms, and STICK out his/her TONGUE to make sure it is not twisted to one side. We can not only save a life but restore quality.

I again want to express my thanks to President Jim for his untiring efforts on behalf of all retirees. You have a hard working group looking after insurance benefits, pension stability, etc., and I'm sure you realize that. Thank you all so much and I look forward to continuing to work on your behalf.

Tom Gaskell, Region Atlantic Ex.
ACER-CART.

ELDER ABUSE IN CANADA ~

by Norbert Boudreau,
Executive Director of ACER-CART

Did you know that thousands of seniors are being repeatedly abused or neglected in Canada? What's most shocking is that they are being mistreated by someone close to them. Can you imagine a relative, a caregiver, or any persons in a position of trust maltreating citizens unable to help themselves! What's most interesting as well is that this exploitation often goes on →

2011 AGM

November 3, 2011

Rodd Royalty Inn, Charlottetown

Further details, when finalized, will appear in next newsletter and on website

unnoticed and, regrettably, unreported.

There are many ways of physically or emotionally mistreating elders, but the most common form of elder abuse is of a financial nature. What can be easier than misusing bank accounts, or credit or debit cards, when one has a power of attorney over the affairs of a parent. Having a joint account with a loved one is a rather simple way to abuse too. Trusted unscrupulous individuals can steal from a vulnerable senior almost at will. This is not to say that all trusted persons are crooks. In most cases having free reign over the affairs of a parent, for example, is a necessity and is quite beneficial to the elderly person who is unable to pay his/her bills, for example.

Fortunately, there are often signs of elder abuse. Unexplained bruises, ongoing tension on the part of elderly seniors, loss of weight, untreated rashes and sores should be investigated. An elderly person dressed in dirty clothes, especially when you know that this person would never want to be seen in public in such a state, needs to be checked. Being withdrawn or even depressed are often signs of elder abuse.

Preventing and protecting our loved ones against senior abuse is of prime importance. Seniors are urged to get their financial affairs in order with a trusted lawyer while they are still of sound mind. This includes preparing a will and naming an honest and trusted individual with appropriate power of attorney.

Relatives and friends can help as well by regularly visiting loved ones in private or public seniors' residences. It doesn't have to be a long visit, but it would be useful to go at different times of the day to get a better perspective on how the residence is run.

Finally, it is important to recognize elder abuse and to know what you can do to protect the dignity and the safety of citizens that can't help themselves. If you suspect abuse, a simple call to the police is in order.

Show the world you care about ending elder abuse and neglect by wearing something purple on June 15, 2011 as we observe the 6th annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD).

Cruising the Mexican Riviera and the Joys of Getting There ~ by Joyce McCardle



Back in August, 2010, I saw a wonderful price for a seven-day

cruise out of Long Beach, Calif., going down the Mexican Riviera. Since I also had some air miles kicking around, I figured it would be a nice winter getaway, so I booked for my daughter and me. I put all the information away because this was not happening till February, 2011.

The first indication of trouble raised its ugly head when our travel agent noted the discrepancy between my airline ticket and my passport!! My ticket was booked for "Joyce"; my passport had "Mary Joyce." I was assured that I would not be allowed into US with this name difference. The saga of the name mix-up began. I thought changing the airline ticket would be simple; I could

just have them put "Mary" in front of "Joyce." WRONG! The ticket I had must be cancelled and a whole new ticket had to be issued. Guess what? There were no seats on the dates I needed to fly.

Next step in the saga! I thought I had lots of time to change the name on my passport. WRONG again! This could only happen if I had "Joyce" on my driver's license; I didn't; it was "Mary Joyce." That blasted Mary was everywhere I turned. I was on the verge of getting my name legally changed to "Joyce" (that dratted Mary had to go) when I decided to give Aeroplan one more try. Lo and behold, I was able to get two seats on the date requested. It was now well into September, but things were fixed; I breathed a heavy sigh of relief and relaxed.

Lesson Learned: ALWAYS BOOK YOUR TICKET IN THE NAME ON

YOUR PASSPORT. IT'S ONE I WON'T FORGET SOON.

Christmas came and went, and I started to look forward to my cruise. Shortly after Christmas, I received a call from my Expedia agent. The ship we were booked on was the Carnival Splendor. Yep, you guessed it! That was the one floating around for several days with no power. It seems all the repairs weren't finished and we couldn't go out Feb. 10. Since I'd rather miss the cruise than float with no power or something else wrong, I resigned myself to no cruise. However, our agent assured us she would find something to replace it. Bless her heart, she did find a great bargain for us; we would sail on the Carnival Spirit out of San Diego for a nine-day cruise at the same price. Whoopee!!

My thoughts turned to the misery of re-booking our flight (Expedia also picked up the difference here). Lo and

behold, luck was with us and we got connections; mind you, we were on a bit of a milk run with lots of ups and downs, but it was doable. We were set to leave Feb. 10, and we relaxed till we had to start packing. We put in a special request for no snow on that day.

The departure day finally came and we left Charlottetown Airport for our first stop in Toronto where we would go through customs. Due to arthritic mobility, I had booked a wheel chair. (Note to anyone with similar problems: DO NOT let false pride and an unwillingness to admit you're not as young as you used to be deter you from using these services. The bloody airports make you walk a gazillion miles.) SO!! I roll up to collect my baggage for customs. Oh yes, the bird of happiness has once again flown up my nose!!! No luggage! How the Hades can luggage get lost on a non-stop flight? Yes, we missed our connecting flight to San Diego.

The gentleman we dealt with for Air Canada could not have been more helpful. He booked us into the Crowne Plaza for the night and gave us each a \$32 chit for supper; I opted for only a hamburger because I felt I not only needed but deserved a double rum as part of my meal. A shuttle took us to the hotel and we were ready for supper. He also got us out on a direct flight to San Diego the next morning in time to board the ship.

The next morning we were up and about early and rattling the beads that our luggage would have miraculously appeared overnight. When I entered the bathroom I told my daughter that our luck was still with us: the toilet was plugged!!! I called the desk to report and was assured all would be fixed. Shortly he called back to say maintenance wasn't in yet, but we

could have another room. Here is the place where one must realize that what you understand in your head and what comes out of your mouth may confuse the listener.

"Oh, that's OK," I told him. "We are just going to use the sink." There was dead silence on the other end of the line and Melissa was rolling on the bed laughing. I quickly corrected myself by explaining we'd wash up and get right to the airport. Upon arrival at the airport, we were told our luggage was waiting for us. I nearly got down and kissed the ground.

It was straight going from there. We got off the plane to sunny skies, green grass, and palm trees. A bus took us directly to the ship and relaxation began. Mind you, I did give a slight thought to a sinking ship, given our luck so far!

We had two days at sea before our first port. What can I say? Life aboard a cruise ship is good food, good entertainment, and good times. We took in all there was to see and do—bingo, Let's make a Deal, The Hairy Chest Contest (well, we just watched this!!), trivia, and all the other contests and demos. The big evening entertainment was great and had very talented singers and dancers; I love the array of costumes. There were comedians, magicians, and jugglers. We ate at the buffets for breakfast and lunch, but were fed very, very well in the main dining room every night.

Available space does not permit me to include all the details of our cruise, but we met some nice people on board, as always, and had very interesting stops in Puerto Vallarta, where we toured the town but avoided the expensive shops; Matzellan (we stayed on board during this one); LaPaz (beautiful beaches, friendly people, and lots of shops);

Cabo San Lucas (I maintained my couch-potato status and stayed on board while Melissa toured); and Ensenada, where I got a good chuckle during a tour to a famous blowhole.

Our guide for this tour was excellent and pointed out all points of interest on our 45 minute drive. When we got there, we had to walk quite a distance to this spot and paved walkways were not part of the journey. I huffed and puffed my way to see this great "thing" only to be slightly let down by the experience. I was not the only one, it seems, because I chuckled at this conversation. A young couple with the cutest triplets you ever saw were studiously observing this phenomenon. The husband says, "We drove an hour on the bus to see this??" Wife replies, "Don't you start!"

Honest to God, I couldn't help myself; I had to say to the young man, "They say there are only two more in the world: Hawaii and Australia." At this he turns to his wife and says, "Get me a ticket quick!" My laugh for the day; I know it takes little to amuse small minds.

After a day in San Diego (which included a visit to the zoo), we caught the red eye home and arrived with no disasters. It was good to be home, but I was not impressed with the added snow.

I'm already planning my next venture; as you can see, set-backs are not going to hold me up in my travels. My advice to anyone who likes to travel: Do it!! Don't put it off; do it now and enjoy every day. Also, don't let the fact that you are alone stop you. While I have to say travel with my late husband was much more enjoyable, I manage to make friends along the way now that I'm alone and life is still good—different, but good.

Prince County Social

~ by Sherrill Barwise

On April 28, 2011 Prince County retired teachers held their spring social at St. Paul's Centre in Summerside. The first part of the social was devoted to conversation, sandwiches, and sweets.

The Prince County rep, Sherrill Barwise, opened the meeting by introducing Art Buote, who gave a brief description of the financial services he offers.

President Jim took the floor to review the highlights of the past year, identify areas of concern, and answer questions from our members. He then conducted the election for Prince County representative. Sherrill Barwise accepted the nomination for another two-year term.



Door prizes were drawn, and donations from the following individuals/groups were noted: O'Leary Farmer's Co-op; Scotia Bank, O'Leary; Guardian Drug, O'Leary; O'Leary Home Hardware; Central Credit Union; PEIRTA; Art Buote; and Johnson Inc.

Sing Along with Me

~ by Sheridyth MacNeill

"Sing along with me" was a successful way to get everyone involved Thursday, May 5 at the Jack Blanchard Centre as about fifty retired teachers enjoyed songs led and performed by two former (now happily retired) music teachers—Hazel St. Amand and Norma Thompson. Their opening num-

ber with ukuleles was a great start to their presentation and Hazel even added her own words for a humorous but true-to-life version of "teaching days" in the song "Those Were The Days."

Prior to their well-received selections, Sheridyth MacNeill welcomed the retirees and then called on Jim MacAulay to speak about a couple of important matters regarding our medication billing, etc.

Following Jim was Art Buote who



made a presentation to the group on Primerica Financial Services.

Before we took a break for refreshments, Jim MacAulay began the election for the Queens County representative. Sheridyth MacNeill nominated Maureen MacNeill and since no other nominations came forward, Maureen was then officially declared the new representative. We wish Maureen all the best in her new endeavor and send our congratulations to her.

The group then enjoyed some refreshments and ended off the afternoon with the lovely task of giving away the door prizes. The PEIRTA were very proud to show our newly purchased banner, along with our new memo pads. Winners of these prestigious new memo pads were Spurgeon Robbins (a parting memento), Ed Cooper, Phyllis McCabe, Faith McKenney, and Connie Doucette. Door prizes donated by Faith McKenney were won by Jean Thompson, George Knox, and Art Buote. Sherwood Pharmacy gift sets went to Breeda Foley and Linda Pat-

ton. A Thousand Villages travel bag was won by Ruthie Smith; two Maid Marion \$20 gift certificates by Annie MacPhail and Dulcinea Andrews; a \$50 gift certificate from Hickey and Burke Optometrists by Dottie Dennis; and a round of golf at Eagles Glenn by Ronnie Diamond. Last but not least, a Johnson Insurance \$50 gift certificate for a business of the winner's choice was won by Barb Foster.

All in all, the fourth annual Queens County social was a great afternoon for colleagues to share together. In closing Sheridyth only wondered—Where were the hundreds I had counted on after covering the Island with Boomer? If you weren't there, you missed a good one!!!!!!

Kings Social

~ by George Knox

The Kings County spring social was held on May 19 from 1:30 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. The sun was shining for the first time in weeks. In spite of the good weather, about twenty-five retired teachers were present.

The meeting was chaired by George Knox, who introduced the rest of the provincial executive. President Jim MacAulay spoke about the benefits of our R.T.A. and about the importance of reducing our drug costs, and reminded those over sixty-five to accept only thirty-day prescriptions.

Art Buote made a presentation about financial planning and life insurance, door prizes donated by local businesses and Johnston Insurance were drawn, and a tasty lunch prepared by Cathy Knox was enjoyed by all. George Knox was re-elected as Kings County representative for the next two years.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the afternoon.



Carrie St. Jean



Time to pass the torch

There are dozens of aphorisms that describe time: time stood still, time flies, time waits for no man, time is on our side, a race against time, all in good time, the time of our lives, time wasted, time well spent, and many others. Depending on circumstances, at one time or another (no pun intended) we have all felt like time has stopped or that time has flown. In my own personal experience, the past two years as President of the Teachers' Federation has passed quickly; comprising a whirl of experiences, encounters, events, meetings, negotiations, relationship building and growth of our organization.

It has been a special honour to work on behalf of teachers and administrators to help advance our profession and public education in

Prince Edward Island. Thank you, colleagues, for the trust and confidence that you placed in me to lead our Federation. It was a responsibility that I took to heart and to which I gave my best effort.

My work has been part of a team effort and I am most grateful for the help I have received from the staff at Federation House for the past two years. To Shaun, Bob, Michel, Sheila, Marion, Lisa, and most recently, Patrick, thank you for your support and counsel during my term. And, I thank my husband and biggest fan, Richard, for his patience and unfaltering support as the demands of the job took me hither and yon.

On July 1 President Gilles Arsenault will take office. Gilles' involvement with the Teachers' Federation spans 12 years. He

brings to the President's position a wealth of experience and administrative background. He is an organized and highly capable person who is currently serving as a well respected principal at Ecole Evangeline. Gilles has the energy, commitment and vision that will serve our Teachers' Federation well. I know all teachers will join me in extending every best wish to Gilles for a successful term. Go Gilles!

And, in closing, let me just say that I had the time of my life!

We are seeking to post on our website pictures of old schoolhouses and/or classes or teachers who met in such school houses. Please send images to Bill Oehlke at oehlkew@islandtelecom.com.

OVER 65?

Please be proactive!

Protect our plan!

Speak to your pharmacist about your drug coverage—the DCAP and Medavie Blue Cross.

Life Insurance Reminder

Are you approaching 65? Giving any thought to life insurance?

- At age 65 the term life insurance under the PEITF Group Insurance Plan automatically is reduced to \$10,000.
- Your coverage can be converted to a private plan with the same carrier without evidence of insurability if you apply within 31 days after turning 65.
- You may purchase an amount equal to your present coverage, or a lesser amount.
- Before your 65th birthday, so you will be prepared to make the decision that best suits your situation, you should check to find out whether you are insurable, and investigate market rates for the amount of insurance you may wish to carry.

Questions?

Call Johnson Inc. at 902-628-3537 or 1-800-371-9516, or visit their office at 111 Kent Street in Charlottetown.

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