



PEIRTA Newsletter

Prince Edward Island Retired Teachers' Association

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From the President

Welcome to 2024! On behalf of the PEI Retired Teachers' Association Executive, I wish to extend greetings to PEIRTA members and their families and hope for good health and happiness in the coming years.

The PEIRTA is very fortunate to continue to have the following experienced members and committee chairs: Wayne Denman, Lise Morin, Marg Stewart, Cynthia MacDonald, Kimball Blanchard, Michel Plamondon, Bill Oehlke, Dorothy Farish, Greg MacNevin, Anne Marie Muise, Peggy MacNevin, Darlene Arsenault, and Judy Hughes. I wish to thank them for their work and support during 2023.

The PEIRTA AGM was held on November 2 in Summerside. Highlights included my report on the work accomplished by the executive during the year. Reports were presented by each of the committee chairs. Michel Plamondon had good news on our pension fund. We are getting a 6.86% increase in our pension in January 2024. Guest speakers for the meeting were Amber Wilson and Shea Callaghan, lawyers from Key Murray Law. They had an informative presentation on estate planning. We appreciate their donating their time to do this. A number of guests brought greetings: PEITF president Andy Doran; Tracey Beaulieu from PSB; Summerside Councillor Barb Gallant; and Minister of Education, Hon. Natalie Jamieson.

In the afternoon, Cynthia MacDonald and Judy Hughes led a memorial service for deceased members. A moment of silence was held in their honour.

Our 2024 AGM will be held in Charlottetown on November 7. More information will be available at a later date.

The PEIRTA is a strong voice



for seniors. Your executive works closely with provincial, territorial, and federal retired teachers' groups to ensure our voices are being heard. I participated in a Zoom meeting for the East Coast Retired Teachers' Organizations on January 16. Bill Berryman, President of ACER-CART, informed ECRTO that the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) have withdrawn their membership. ACER-CART will continue to promote itself as the national voice. It will look to collaborate with other national organizations such as the National Seniors' Federation, Canadian Association of Retired Persons, Organization of

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Visit our website at
www.peirta.com

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From the Editor

In an attempt to offer PEIRTA members additional value for their \$2.00 per month membership fee (along with advocacy, representation on pension and group insurance committees, a triannual newsletter which attempts to keep members up to date on significant issues, and an annual golf tournament with significantly reduced registration fees), the PEIRTA will sponsor a curling bonspiel with free registration for RTA members. While most of the retired teachers I know have at least a modicum of competitive spirit, the emphasis will be less on competition and more on fun, socialization, and reminiscence.

The bonspiel will be held at the Cornwall Curling Club on March 12. If it storms that day, March 14 will be the snow date. Curlers will play two six-end games, enjoy snacks and a hot lunch (main, salad, dessert, tea/coffee), and compete for token prizes.

Each team must have at least two retired teachers. Non-RTA members will pay \$15.00. The deadline for registration is March 3. Membership in a club is not a requirement, so if you used to curl but no longer belong to a club and would like to brush off your broom (or stick), please join us.

If this inaugural spiel is a success, organizers are hopeful that it can become an annual event.

Incidentally, if any of you remember the PEI teachers' bonspiel that used to be held every winter in Crapaud—don't expect the same thing!

On a different note, in an earlier issue of this newsletter I did a bit of a rant decrying the fact that Paralympians who medal have historically been paid nothing or much, much less than Olympians who do the same thing. This past week the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) announced a new program that will enable Para-

lympians to be paid \$20,000 for a gold medal, \$15,000 for silver, and \$10,000 for bronze—the same as Olympic athletes. The president of CPC president Marc-André Fabien said the change represents an "historic day for Paralympic sport in Canada, and is the cumulation of years of work to create a more equitable, inclusive space for Canada's Paralympians to compete."

They must have read my rant!!

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 early June, 2024. 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.

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President (Cont'd from 1)

Federal Retirees, and Vibrant Voices to name a few. There will not be any fee increases in the immediate future. There will be changes to the governance model and the corporate structure. These changes will be discussed in detail at a special Zoom meeting on Feb 1, 2024. Proposed changes will be voted on at the AGM on Thursday June 6, 2024. If accepted, the new structure will come into effect at the AGM on June 7, 2024. Other ECRT0 topics discussed at this meeting included pensions, newsletters, coalitions with other seniors' groups, wellness activities, membership recruitment, and health care.

I want to thank Marg Stewart, Kimball Blanchard, and Eugene Murphy for all their work in organizing a curling bonspiel. Look for more information in this newsletter.

Feel free to contact me or any of the executive if you have any concerns or need information.

AGM Resolutions passed at AGM

Be it resolved, that the PEIRTA fiscal year be changed to October 1 to September 30.

Be it resolved, that the PEIRTA Secretary be granted an honorarium in the same amount as that of the treasurer.

Call for Volunteers

IRSA (Immigrant & Refugee Services Association PEI)

Your expertise is needed to make a lasting impact as an EAL (English as an Additional Language) volunteer. Join our dedicated team and empower individuals from diverse backgrounds to thrive in their new language environments. Share your wealth of knowledge, teaching skills, and passion for education to engage in meaningful conversations and promote cultural exchange. Your invaluable experience will shape the lives of newcomers and help them succeed.

Join us today and be a guiding light in the journey of language learning.

Together, let's create a brighter community through education!

Phone 902-628-6009 or register with the QR code.



Hospice PEI

by Roseanne Banks

Hospice PEI is a non-profit organization offering volunteer-based support to care recipients who have a palliative or life-limiting diagnosis. Volunteers are assigned to care recipients for one-on-one visits wherever they reside—at home or in a hospital or manor. Hospice supports may include companionship, listening and conversing, reading, participating in activities and hobbies,

creating legacy photos, or providing respite breaks for unpaid caregivers. Training is available for interested individuals. Hospice services are provided in Prince and Queens counties. For more information please contact Hospice PEI at 902-368-4498; West Prince Coordinator of Hospice Services Roseanne Banks at 902-859-3949, westprince@hospicepei.ca; East Prince Coordinator Catherine Gaudet at 902-438-4231, eastprince@hospicepei.ca; or Queens Coordinator Sami Chiasson at 902-368-4095, queens@hospicepei.ca.

Spelling Bee of Canada-PEI

Alanna

MacPherson, a teacher with the PSB, is



trying to start a PEI Chapter of the Spelling Bee of Canada to offer academic-boosting after-school activities to students aged 6-14. She is seeking volunteers to help with various positions. The tentative date for the local Spelling Bee would be April 20, 2024. Some positions might just be for one day and other positions would be on a committee for coaching or organizing. Anyone interested should contact Alanna MacPherson (coordinator.pei@spellingbeeofcanada.ca) for more information.

Government programs of particular interest to seniors *by Judy Hughes*

Canada Dental Care Plan (CDCP)

The CDCP will be available to Canadian residents who

- have no access to dental insurance
- have an adjusted family net income of less than \$90,000
- are Canadian residents for tax purposes, and
- have filed their taxes in the previous year.

Applications opened for seniors aged 87+ in December 2023, and will expand in phases to those 77 to 86 in January 2024, followed by those 72 to 76 in February 2024, and then those 70 to 71 years in March 2024. Individuals in these age groups who may be eligible will receive letters inviting them to apply, with instructions on how to validate their eligibility and apply by telephone.

In May 2024, an online application portal will open for seniors 65 and older. Persons with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate and children under the age of 18 will be able to apply online as of June 2024. All remaining eligible Canadian residents will be able to apply online in 2025.

To improve oral health outcomes, the CDCP will help cover the cost of various oral health care services, on the recommendations of an oral health care provider. Services that could be covered under the CDCP include the following, with some services only becoming available in fall 2024:

- preventive services, including scaling (cleaning), polishing, sealants, and fluoride;
- diagnostic services, including examinations and x-rays;
- restorative services, including fillings;
- endodontic services, including root canal treatments;
- prosthodontic services, including complete and partial removable dentures;
- periodontal services, including deep scaling;
- oral surgery services, including extractions.

Details on how to apply and how much of the services will be covered can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2023/12/the-canadian-dental-care-plan.html>

The New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP)

Through this program, the Federal government is investing \$60 million to fund more than 3,000 community-based projects across the country, which will make a difference in the lives of over half a million seniors across Canada. These projects, which include meal services, transportation, healthy aging and other priorities, help empower seniors and help seniors across the country keep active and remain socially engaged in the community.

Age Well at Home Initiative

The Federal government has invested \$90 million through the Age Well

at Home Initiative, which will provide funding for organizations across the country to provide practical services such as meal deliveries, house-keeping, yard work and snow removal to seniors in their communities, helping them stay in their homes and communities with dignity for as long as they wish.

Safe Long-Term Care Act

The Minister of Health and Minister for Seniors just wrapped up consultations for the Safe Long-Term Care Act—a bill that will be tabled in upcoming months to help make sure that what we saw in LTCs during the pandemic never happens again.

Information provided by Sean Casey, MP

Home Heating Program

A member recently alerted me to the existence of a program that might benefit some of our members, and wanted me to share it with readers. I refer to the Home Heating Assistance Program offered by the PEI Government in partnership with the Salvation Army. .

The Home Heating Program gives eligible Islanders up to \$1,200 per calendar year. Funding is available to individuals who pay their own heating costs and make up to \$45,000 per year, and to families making up to \$60,000. It can be used to help pay for a variety of heat sources—including oil, wood, wood pellets, and electricity.

To apply, visit the Salvation Army website (<https://salvationarmy.ca/atlantic/locations/prince-edward-island/>), call 902-218-1212, or email mar.homeheatingpei@salvationarmy.ca (link sends e-mail)

Group Insurance

Inquiries *by Dale Weldon, Johnson Inc.*

The intent of this article is to deal with some service concerns and touches on phone and walk-in service in PEI.

First, the phone system. The primary issue appears to be which choices to make to ensure that you get to the proper department to assist you with questions. As you go through the process, you will be presented with a number of options. Listen carefully to the choices presented. For the purposes of this article, let's assume that you are either calling about prescription drug coverage or about extended health benefits, such as hospital or paramedical coverage, vision care, etc.—the most common types of call. The toll-free number is 1-800-371-9516. [This is not the number on the back of your card, but either seems to work.]

First, assume that you are calling to ask whether a specific drug is covered. When you get an answer you will be given three choices—Public Service/CUPE, PEITF, or other. **Select 2** for PEITF (because retired teachers' coverage is under this plan). From the next set of options, **select 1** for **All Claims**. Next, **select 1** for **Health care/dental** claims. Finally, **select 1** for prescription claims and you will be automatically transferred to Medavie Blue Cross. Have your insurance card handy as you will be asked for your policy number and ID number.

If you are calling about extended benefits, such as hospital bed coverage or vision care, instead of selecting 1 in this last step, **select 3**.

There is a review project slated to

begin in the first quarter of 2024 to revamp the existing phone system to have fewer choices and clearer wording to lessen the instances of selecting the incorrect department. A future article will outline the updated process.

Staffing in our Charlottetown office continues to be challenging. Short term medical absences and the resignation of one of the administration staff has caused a short-term backlog which should be cleared up shortly, and there is active recruitment to fill the vacant position. Currently there are four agents in the office and once a replacement is hired, there will be five. Johnsons offers a hybrid work environment where staff are allowed to work from home on a pre-determined schedule, but there will always be three staff working in the branch each day, barring any vacations or illnesses. For health claims processing, the receptionist will supply a claim form, assist with completion and ensure that all the necessary information is supplied, scan your claim form, and immediately email it to a member of the claims team for processing.

There are also many questions from members who are insured for Home and/or Automobile insurance. Any Unifund policy (owned by Johnson) will be converted to a BelAir Direct policy upon your renewal date in 2024. The reason for this is that Johnson's owner, Intact Financial Corporation, is not allowed to own two Home and Automobile insurance companies, namely Unifund and BelAir Direct, so that is the reason for the conversion. BelAir Direct offers superior coverage and benefits and in most cases is very competitive from a rate perspective. You will receive a letter notifying you of the

intent to transfer the policy and then you will be contacted by the sales team to assist you with the conversion.

Autism Life Skills Coach and Case Manager

About Us

We are seeking for our client a compassionate, autism-aware, and open-minded individual to be a Life Skills Coach and Case Manager for their 23-year-old trans autistic daughter located in Charlottetown, PEI. This role is instrumental in supporting her journey toward greater independence, confidence, and overall well-being.

Job Summary

As a Life Skills Coach and Case Manager for their daughter, your primary responsibility is to facilitate her growth and development. This multi-faceted role requires a dynamic individual passionate about positively impacting their daughter's life through continuous learning, planning, and effective collaboration.

To learn more about this position, visit <https://indeedhi.re/3U4twqW>.



In Memoriam

The following former PEI teachers who passed away between Oct. 2022 and Oct. 2023 were remembered and recognized during a brief ceremony at the 2023 PEIRTA AGM.



Reta Dunn
 Anne Mellish
 Helen Leslie
 Om Joshi
 Phyllis McCabe
 Maitland MacIsaac
 John Rogers
 Sterling Stratton
 Paul Steele
 James Colodey
 Walter Bradley
 Marian Reid
 James McAulay
 Magdalene MacDonald
 Micheline Mc Carron
 Theresa Gallant
 Annie Reta MacDonald

Pharmacare

The following excerpts are from a message from Bill Berryman, president of ACER-CART.

“Canada is the only developed country in the world with a universal health care program that does not include a universal prescription drug plan. We have the third-highest prescription drug costs in

the world after the United States and Switzerland. Canada has widely varying prescription drug coverage and uneven access to prescription drugs. Canadians often pay different rates for the same medication, depending on where they live. The idea of a national funded prescription drug program was recommended as the second half of the universal health care program in the Royal Commission on Health Care report in 1964.

“The **Pharmacare 2020** study

indicated that the combined purchasing power of a National Pharmacare Program would save \$4 billion to \$11 billion a year in prescriptions. Further, by using evidence and information systems to guide drug coverage and prescribing, there would be a saving of \$5 billion a year to reduce the problems of overuse, underuse, and misuse.”

To see President Berryman’s full message, go to <https://acer-cart.org/about/message-from-the-president/>.

PEI Retired Teachers' Bonspiel

Mar. 12 (storm date Mar 14)

Cornwall Curling Club

Max. 16 teams; Min. 12

Male, Female, Mixed teams

Draws at 9:00, 10:30, 12:30, 2:00

Minimum 2 retired teachers on each team

Free entry for PEI RTA members (show your card or we can look you up)

\$15. entry fee for non-members (pay on arrival)

Hot lunch, snacks, trivia, prizes

Registration deadline: Mar. 3

Email team registration to margstewart@pei.eastlink.ca. Please identify retired teachers and provide a contact phone number and email address.

Individual entries will be accepted as space allows.

****Club membership is not a requirement.**



Sponsored by PEI Retired Teachers' Association



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). Your mailing address must include a civic address and/or PO Box number, and a postal code. Going forward, if you would like to read this newsletter online instead of getting a hard copy, send the editor an email with your request.



Andy Doran

I am sure this newsletter finds many of you enjoying, or anticipating, the sun and surf in a warmer climate. Maybe you are golfing? What about cruising? I hope you are doing whatever makes you happy! You have worked hard for the right to kick back every once in a while and relax.

We are at the midway point of another school year. 2024 will be an important year for Island teachers. Our Course Correction Campaign continues with the intent to enlighten the public to the challenges faced by teachers in today's classrooms. Challenges that if left unchecked will lead to a teacher shortage. Already the CSLF and the PSB are having difficulty filling French positions within their boards and the lack of substitute teachers is having a real impact on schools in West Prince and throughout the French Board. Fewer university students are applying to the education program and there is evidence that many recent graduates are choosing other careers. We need to turn this trend around!

By early spring, we will be entering into another round of bargaining with government. Our current collective agreement is set to expire at the end of this school year. The Economic Welfare Committee has been busy doing all the necessary work to be ready for negotiations. Teachers got their opportunity to voice their opinions through an Economic Welfare Survey that was developed and sent out with a rec-

ord number of teachers responding. Over one thousand members shared their thoughts on areas of concern including working conditions, impact of inflation, lack of substitute teachers, and class composition. No change however will occur to any of these areas if government doesn't return to good faith bargaining. The last couple of bargaining rounds ended in arbitration, which often will address salary but rarely tackles the issues that will lead to meaningful changes to working conditions.

Teachers keep teaching. Despite the issues previously mentioned, teachers continue to go above and beyond. Science and Heritage Fairs are right around the corner. News platforms and social media posts are full of reports of outstanding student achievement in music, sports, drama, and academics, thanks to the many dedicated teachers who are guiding our

students to excel in all these areas. School administrators and teachers are comforting and counselling our kids through some horrific situations that have been occurring recently in many of our schools. Recent tragedies in Montague High, Vernon River Consolidated, and Tignish Elementary have shaken our communities, but thanks in large part to the leadership of our educators we are getting through it all together. You know as well as I do that teaching is so much more than standing in front of a class giving a lesson.

Meet your new insurance sweetheart.

PEIRTA members can receive exclusive savings on home and car insurance through our official insurance partner, **belairdirect.**

belairdirect.
car and home insurance

Car and home insurance, digital requirements, in relation and coverage apply to all of BC. Visit belairdirect.com for more details. Offer may change without notice. We offer car insurance and home insurance in Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island and home insurance only in British Columbia. © 2023, Belair Insurance Company Inc. All rights reserved.

Position: Principal International School in Tokyo

Employment Conditions: The successful Candidate must possess or obtain Prince Edward Island Department of Education teacher certification.

The successful candidate will have experience with the IB program.

Duties:

- Provide educational leadership.
- Administer the day-to-day operations of the school.
- Exercise general supervision of all personnel.
- Promote, in concert with others, the aims and objectives of the institution.
- Maintain accreditation of the IB PYP program and the WASC.
- Prepare curriculum and schedule of courses for kindergarten to Grade 12.
- Other duties, responsibilities, and tasks as the Board of Directors may reasonably request of the principal from time to time.

Term: August 1, 2024, through July 31, 2026

If interested, contact Eddy Teranishi, CPA,CGA, Teranishi & Associates

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ETIAS

In August [The Canadian Snowbird Association] notified members that Canadian citizens travelling to certain European countries will soon be required to obtain a permit known as a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) travel authorization. An ETIAS travel authorisation is an entry requirement for visa-exempt nationals travelling to thirty European countries.

More detailed information on the ETIAS program can be found in [CSA's] initial member advisory here, <https://www.snowbirds.org/news-releases/etias-requirement-for-travel-to-europe>.

The ETIAS program was initially

scheduled to launch [this] year, but European officials have now announced that it is expected to be rolled out in **2025**. Last week, eu-Lisa – the agency responsible for the digital system – reported that it needs additional time to implement the program.

The Canadian Snowbird Association is carefully monitoring the progress of this program and will notify members as soon as new information is made available.



PEITF Travel Insurance

Our out-of-province travel insurance plan has a 90-day medical stability clause. This means that if you have a pre-existing medical condition, it must be considered medically stable for 90 days prior to your departure date if you are to be covered in the event of a medical emergency related to this condition while you are travelling.

A pre-existing condition is considered stable if the member, in the 90 days before the departure date, has not:

1. Been treated or evaluated for new symptoms or related conditions;
2. Had symptoms that increased in frequency or severity, or examination findings indicating the condition has worsened;
3. Been prescribed a new treatment or change in treatment for the condition.
4. Been admitted to a hospital for the condition; or
5. Been awaiting new treatments or tests regarding the medical condition (does not include routine tests).

Number 3 generally does not include reductions in medication due to improvement in a condition, or regular changes in medication as part of an established treatment plan—but each case must be reviewed individually. Call Medavie Blue Cross at 1-800-667-4511, Travel Department, for clarification if you are planning to travel outside PEI.

