



PEIRTA Newsletter

Prince Edward Island Retired Teachers' Association

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SPRING, 2024

From the President

Spring has finally arrived, and I hope you are getting into summer mode as you remember those busy June days of the past.

On behalf of the RTA, I wish to thank the staff of the Public Schools Branch, the French Language School Board, and the staff of the PEI Teachers' Federation for all their work on behalf of students and teachers of PEI. May you take the summer months to rejuvenate after another busy year. Also, we wish to thank the retired teachers who have volunteered in various roles within the schools and communities of PEI during the past year.

I attended the pre-retirement seminar at the Loyalist Inn on April 6 with over 50 teachers present. Lise Morin attended the

seminar at the Delta on April 20 with over 90 teachers registered. We introduced the upcoming retirees to the RTA mandate and encouraged them to become involved. Some of the topics included the low cost of \$2 monthly for RTA membership, three newsletters throughout the year, our work with Atlantic and national retired teacher associations, curling bonspiel and golf tournaments, and the AGM. We are so fortunate to have voting members on the pension and insurance committees. The RTA continues to advocate for all seniors, especially on issues related to health and wellness. The RTA will also be attending the reception held by the Public Schools Branch for the active teachers who are retiring.

On April 9, I took part in a Zoom meeting for executive members of the East Coast Retired Teachers' Organization. One of the topics discussed was the encouragement of membership in retired teacher organizations at the provincial, regional, and federal levels. Updates from each of the member organizations included work on advocacy and health for seniors, membership initiatives, pensions and indexing, and support for active



teacher issues. Retired teachers on Prince Edward Island are fortunate to have CPI indexing of their pensions, as well as having representation on group insurance and pension committees. Many of the retired teachers' organizations across Canada do not have this.

PEIRTA is very appreciative of the work being done by ACER-CART, our national organization, particularly in the area of advocating for seniors. Pharmacare and aging in place continue to be the 2024 priorities for all seniors. At a Zoom meeting on February 1, a discussion was held on the new structure due to

See President, 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Page 2—To/From the Editor; Executive
- Page 3— 7th Annual Golf Tournament
- Page 4— Senior's Guide
- Page 5— Group Insurance; Good Life
- Page 6—RTA Curling Bondpiel
- Page 7—PEITF Corner
- Page 8— ACER-CART; Class Reunion

**Visit our website at
www.peirta.com**

From the Editor

The newly updated Prince Edward Island Seniors' Guide recently became available. This guide contains a wealth of information for Island seniors about programs and services provided by government, community organizations, and other service providers.

For information about services/programs for seniors, visit www.princeedwardisland.ca; email seniors@gov.pe.ca; or call toll free 1-866-770-0588. For a copy of the guide, write to Attn:Seniors' Secretariat, PO Box 2000, 11 Kent Street, Ch'town, C1A7N8; email seniors@gov.pe.ca; phone 902-520-3785 or toll free at 1-866-770-0588; or visit an Access PEI office.

The guide is published annually, and things may change between issues. Readers are reminded that the online version may have more up-to-date information.

See page 4 of this newsletter for useful

specific information from the guide.

On page 8 you will see a letter from ACER-CART president Bill Berryman re the federal dental plan. You might recall that our last newsletter had information on this as well. There have since been some new developments.

Last month, in an interview with *Island Morning*, PEI Dental Association president Dr. Brian Barrett expressed concern about the amount of paperwork involved in the program and the fees it was offering to dentists—not comparable to actual charges. He also revealed that 90% of dentists in PEI were not willing to sign up.

Since then, a number of changes have been made. There have been efforts to clarify eligibility and costs. Eligibility depends on not currently having access to dental coverage (unless you opted out of a plan before Dec 11, 2023 and can't opt back in, in which case you may be eligible); initially upon age; and upon family income (currently under \$70,000, or \$70-\$90,000 with a

co-pay.) Dentists no longer have to sign up, but may simply bill Sun Life for services rendered. There may be a co-pay for the client.

Dr Barrett is optimistic that these changes will entice more dentists to become involved.

For more detailed information you can visit the official Canadian Dental Care Plan website. Remember to consult the official sources for the most up-to-date details!

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 October, 2025. 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)

the Ontario Teachers' Organization leaving ACER-CART. Moving forward, the executive will be made up of 7 members—the president, vice-president, past president, two representatives from the east, and two from the west. At the April 10 meeting, further discussion was held on the legislative changes needed at the AGM due to the Ontario Teachers' Organization departure. These will be voted on at the AGM in June. More discussion was held on the confusion around the federal dental program.

Lise Morin, our vice-president, and Cynthia MacDonald will attend the ACER-CART annual meeting in Ottawa on June 1 and 2. This is an opportunity for all retired teachers' organizations across the country to meet and share ideas.

Wayne Denman, past president, is working on plans for the September retired teachers' golf tournament. On behalf of all retired teachers, I wish to thank Wayne for all his work in organizing this tournament over the years. Also, thank you to Kimball Blanchard, Marg Stewart, and Eugene Murphy for planning the curling bonspiel which was held in March. The executive is looking at hosting another curling bonspiel in the fall. More details will be available in the fall.

Each year, the RTA awards scholarships and bursaries to PEI students in pursuit of a career in education. The following are the criteria for applying for the awards:

- a worthy Island student in the BED program at UPEI who has attended a Prince Edward Island high school;
- a student graduating from the BED program at UPEI who has attended a Prince Edward Island high school;
- a student entering the second year in the Early Childhood Care and Education program at Holland College who

attended a Prince Edward Island high school;

- a student entering the second year in the Early Childhood Care and Education Program at College de L'île who attended a Prince Edward Island high school;

- a Young Leader award to one graduating student in each high school in the Public Schools Branch (PSB), one student in the Commission scolaire de langue française (CSLF) West, and one in the East; and

- a \$2000 scholarship for a graduate of an Island high school who is entering a BEd or MEd program as a full-time student at a university with a recognized program in those areas of study. See the PEIRTA website for more details.

The PEIRTA has entered into an agreement with the Community Foundation of PEI to administer the \$2000 BEd/MEd scholarship. Three RTA members—Kimball Blanchard, Judy Hughes, and Anne Marie Muise—were appointed to sit on a committee to make the selection.

PEIRTA is planning to get a corporate membership for GoodLife Fitness if numbers warrant. See more details in this newsletter.

The annual general meeting of the P.E.I. Retired Teachers' Association will be held at Red Shores in Charlottetown on Thursday, November 7, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.. More information will be in the fall newsletter.

The executive has been reviewing the Constitution and By-Laws at recent meetings. This process involved editorial changes and the addition of changes which had been approved at the last few AGM meetings. When completed, the results will be shared with the membership.

Feel free to contact me or any of the Executive members if you have any questions or concerns. I hope you

have a sunny, relaxing summer with family and friends!

7TH ANNUAL PEIRTA GOLF TOURNAMENT**Eagles Glenn on Sept 4, 2024**

- Four-person scramble (male, female, or mixed)—at least two of whom are retired teachers
- 20 teams (May be space for more if needed)
- Tee times: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

PEIRTA members: \$50.00 plus HST for green fee, power cart, on-course games, silent auction, etc.
Non-members: \$75.00 plus HST.

Register as a team on the Eagles Glenn website between June 1 and Sept. 1. Problems? Call the pro shop at 902-963-3600, or toll-free at 1-866-963-3600. Identify retired teachers and RTA members, and include a telephone number and email address for contact purposes. If you have a preferred tee-time, indicate as much. Pay upon arrival at the course.

*Teams registered by August 28 will be eligible for a draw for a free entry.

**Register as a single and we can put you on a team.

We need volunteers for set-up, photography, scoring, soliciting prizes, etc. If you can help, contact Wayne Denman at 902-785-3048, or at Eagles Glenn Wednesday through Sunday. Or email werdenman48@gmail.com.

Our primary sponsor for this tournament is Johnson Inc. Once again, the Esther Finkle Walk for Kids will be the beneficiary of donations/profits from the tournament—helping kids realize their dreams.



From the Seniors' Guide ~ by Lise Morin

The *Prince Edward Island Seniors' Guide* is an informative resource that includes a list of known services and supports across a variety of sectors and areas of interest that are available to seniors across PEI. The paper copy is available at Access PEI offices across the province.



This guide is updated every 1-2 years by the Department of Social Development and Seniors.

Below you will find some details from the Guide.

PEI SENIORS NAVIGATORS

The role of the Seniors Navigators is to enhance access to information and the navigational experiences of near-seniors, seniors, their family members, and their caregivers.

The work of the Seniors Navigators will allow seniors to access programs and services from community organizations and municipal, provincial and federal governments in a timelier manner.

The Seniors Navigators can help in many ways:

- Assisting with information on services and programs;
- Directing to the appropriate ser-

vice and programs contacts;

- Helping with completing applications for services and programs;
- Helping to direct seniors' concerns to the appropriate avenue, and/or;
- Promoting awareness of the services and programs for seniors .

The Seniors Navigators can assist anyone in PEI who is looking for support. They offer many outreach sessions per month in communities around the Island. To find the schedules, search online for *2024 Outreach Schedule for the Seniors Navigator (East)* or *2024 Outreach Schedule for the Seniors Navigator (West)*.

The Seniors Navigators will meet with you in person through community outreach sessions listed above, or by appointment. Please contact the Seniors Navigator in your area directly by phone or email if you wish to make an in-person appointment.

The Seniors Navigator for Charlottetown (East) is Melanie Melanson.

Email: seniors@gov.pe.ca

(link sends e-mail)

Tel: 902-213-5820 or toll free
1-866-770-0588

The Seniors Navigator for Summerside (West) is Courtney Proffitt.

Email: seniors@gov.pe.ca

(link sends email)

Tel: 902-303-0450 or toll free
1-866-770-0588

You can also download the *Seniors Navigator Government of PEI* with clickable links.

PATIENT NAVIGATORS

Navigating health care can be difficult. A patient navigator can help you access health care services and support, regardless of where you live in PEI or where you are on your health care journey.

Anyone can access the patient navigator with a question or a concern about how to navigate Health PEI services, including health services that are not offered in PEI and require out-of-province travel.

Using a Health PEI patient navigator can improve the health care experience for patients and their families.

The role of the patient navigator is to ensure that you connect with the right resources and information to help you. The navigator can help ensure that you access the most appropriate service(s) for your health care needs.

The patient navigator works directly with patients, their families, caregivers, health care providers, and other individuals or organizations that provide patient services and supports in PEI.

They can

- work with health care programs and providers who can support you;
- help you find and access community resources;
- help coordinate health care services you require; and
- answer questions you have about the health care system.

The patient navigator **cannot** offer treatment suggestions or adjust wait times for procedures or the Patient Registry.

Provincial Patient Navigator

Write PO Box 2000, Charlottetown,
PEI, C1A7N8

Email: patientnavigator@gov.pe.ca
(link sends email)

Tel: (902) 620-3418 or toll free 1-844-
882-3141

Fax (902) 368-6136

Cancer Patient Navigator

Search online for *Cancer Patient Navigation Program*

Email: cancerpatientnavigator@ihis.org (link sends

email)

Tel: 902-894-2552 or toll free 1-877-511-5177

Stroke patient navigator

Search online for *Stroke Care Program*

Email: strokenavigator@ihis.org
(link sends e-mail)

Tel: 1-844-871-0634 (toll free)

Mental Health and Addictions Patient Navigator

Search online for *Mental Health and Addictions Services PEI*

Email: MHApatientnavigator@ihis.org (link sends e-mail)

Tel: (902) 218-3289

About 211

Call 211 or search the <https://pe.211.ca> website to connect with social, government, and non-urgent health services quickly and easily. 211 is an information and referral service available to support all Islanders. Whether you are a permanent resident, a visitor, or a service provider, 211 will help you with community and social services across PEI. 211 is available 24/7 for service by phone, text, or email; free and confidential; and available in more than 100 languages.

211 PEI is a joint partnership initiative between the Government of Prince Edward Island and the United Way of PEI. Both share the role of funders, and the United Way provides operational leadership with 211 being an initiative within its basket of strategic activities.

Check the website: <https://.211.ca>
Email: help@pe.211.ca (link sends e-mail)

Call 211

Group Insurance Update

~by Dale Weldon,
Johnson Inc.

You asked and we listened. We understand that some members have expressed concerns about the Johnson telephone system and walk-in service. We are pleased to inform you that there have been several high-level conversations between the PEITF and senior management at Johnsons, and they have put an action plan in place to deal with our concerns.

First, Johnson has agreed to implement new local and toll-free phone numbers that will be exclusive for PEITF members. As well, they are revamping the options once you call, so that there will be fewer choices and the descriptions will be clearer.

Please note that for any calls concerning prescription drugs or out-of-province travel insurance claims, you will be transferred to Medavie Blue Cross once you make that choice. Any calls for extended health care or dental will be transferred to Johnson Inc.

Since there will be new telephone numbers, there will be an adjustment period, and it will take a little longer to implement.

From a walk-in service perspective, the newly hired receptionist is receiving more intense training, and an experienced staff person will provide side-by-side support. Some of the in-office team will be spending less time on the phones which will improve the capacity for personal service in the office.

Another exciting service en-

hancement is the introduction of internet banking for making premium payments. This mostly applies to active members on leave, but in case you need to make premium payments other than through pension deduction, you will not have to visit the office to do so.

If you have any questions, call Kimball Blanchard for clarification or further information. (Contact info on p. 2)

Goodlife Fitness

The PEIRTA is checking to see whether there is interest in a corporate membership for GoodLife Fitness in Charlottetown.

-30% discount applicable to all available GoodLife memberships

-\$0 enrollment fee —a saving of \$49.99+tax

-Once the PEIRTA member joins, they can extend the same offer to up to 2 family members

-Memberships offer flexible terms—annual commitment is not necessary.

There must be at least 10 members of the PEIRTA interested in order to move forward. To get your name on the list, please call Karina at PEITF (902-569-4157).



Sweep! Sweep! Whoa! Oops! Sorry!

On March 12 we held our first retired teachers' curling bonspiel at Cornwall Curling Club.

We had twelve teams registered—all with at least two retired teachers. Then a couple of days before the bonspiel, just when I was about to leave for the club for a regular game, I learned that one team had to withdraw for health reasons—and we were scrambling. We needed one more team or we would have to cancel. With the wonderful support of some of our Cornwall curling friends, I had a replacement team that morning before I went on the ice. There were no retired teachers on this team, but just over half of registered curlers were retired teachers (all but three RTA members), so we felt that the situation warranted some flexibility and that we had met our basic requirements.

It is perhaps fitting that the team who bailed us out would go on to win the bonspiel (tied with another team, but won first place with a coin toss).



First place, l to r: Busher Stuckey, Janette Fraser, Yvonne Barbour, Paul Arsenault

We had a great day—wonderful food (provided by 9Haven Catering), good friends, respectable curling, and lots of fun. An email from Art O'Malley sent to Kimball and me that evening sort of said it all:

*A big thank-you to you two,
as well as Eugene and all the
people who made today
happen.*

*It was a great day all round,
and for me a bonus to
reconnect after many years
with my up-west friends.*

*Most appreciative of all the
efforts made by all involved.*



Second, by virtue of a coin toss:
Lester Callbeck, Dora McKinley, Bern-
nie Field, Ken Harrot

As advertised, we charged non-RTA members a small entry fee. We also sold 50/50 tickets. With these two sources of income, we were able to come in well under our proposed budget, so the investment for the RTA was less than anticipated—which made Dorothy, our treasurer, very happy! We think it was money well spent.



Shirley Stevenson, a retired teacher from Ontario, won \$85 in the 50/50 draw. Team

Barwise (Sherril and Ann, Leah and Muncy Harris) won the trivia contest (all questions were PEIRTA, PEITF, or curling related). Sorry, no picture.

The planning committee—Kimball Blanchard, Eugene Murphy, and myself—would like to thank the RTA executive for approving this venture, and especially Cynthia MacDonald, who baked biscuits, brought greetings from the RTA, and helped with the trivia contest. Also, thanks to Travis, our club manager; Barb Duncan, our caterer; Bernie Field, who looked after our snack table; and all the Cornwall curlers who joined us and made the bonspiel possible.



Third place winners were John Dunsford, Joanne Durant, Tom O'Rourke, and Ron Matters.

All winners received gas cards.

We'll see what happens next year.

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

June has arrived and with that comes the end of the 2023/24 school year. An end to a school year that for me was like no other that I have experienced in my career. Until this year the main focus for my job was students, staff, and the school community. As President, my focus has narrowed slightly, and as spokesperson for the PEITF the majority of my time is spent highlighting the great things teachers are doing in our schools and working to improve the conditions that they teach in. It has been busy.

Recently you may have noticed an uptick in the PEITF presence in the media. We have been making an effort to highlight a couple of issues.

First, a looming teacher shortage that will soon be upon us if steps are not taken to ward it off. In all provinces and territories there are teacher shortages in French Immersion, French first language, guidance, music, and high school science. Of bigger concern may be the number of teachers who are considering leaving the profession and the fact that fewer young people are applying for education programs at our universities. Teacher recruitment and re-

tion strategies will be critical moving forward.

The second issue of major concern is working conditions. This issue directly relates to why teachers are considering leaving the profession. Increases in inappropriate classroom behavior and violent incidents, lack of respect for what teachers do, and class composition issues make it difficult for teachers to do their work. Throughout the upcoming bargaining process we are planning to make these concerns the main focus of our talks.

In a previous newsletter I talked about our Course Correction Campaign. The first phase throughout the year was meant to highlight the issues mentioned above, and now we move into the second phase of the campaign with an emphasis on highlighting the incredible things that our teachers are doing in Island schools. We do not want to forget

that teachers are doing an exceptional job under trying conditions. The campaign has raised awareness of our issues and has successfully gotten people talking about the teaching profession.

Although teachers have many concerns in today's classrooms, you are well aware that there have always been issues facing teachers as society continuously evolves and changes. Teachers have been working on the front lines for change for many, many years. We have overcome challenges in the past and I fully expect we will find solutions for today's issues as well. "Change is the end result of all true learning" (Leo Buscaglia).

I look forward to updating you on these and other issues in the Fall newsletter but in the meantime, we have a beautiful Island summer coming up to enjoy. A time for fresh

Look no further for exclusive group savings



Prince Edward Island Teachers Federation (PEITF) members can receive exclusive home and car insurance savings and enhanced coverages.

belairdirect.
car and home insurance

Certain conditions, eligibility requirements, limitations and exclusions apply to all offers. Visit belairdirect.com for more details. Offers 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.

ACER-CART

The following letter was sent to Prime Minister Trudeau, Deputy Pm Freeland, party leaders, and federal ministers Mark Holland (Health) and Seamus O' Reagan (Labour and Seniors) from Bill Berryman, president of ACER-CART

Re: The Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) Access Rules and the implications for low-income retirees

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau: Canadian retirees are grateful for this expansion of the Canadian Dental Care Plan; however, our members and other retirees are struggling with the current access rules that are causing unfortunate confusion and consequences for those with the lowest incomes. I write this letter on behalf of the 88,234 members of ACER-CART (L'Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités, The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers) regarding this recent implementation of a national dental program.

While most retired educators have access to dental plans, some retired teachers with very small pensions have declined coverage because their low retirement income makes enrolment in the dental plans unaffordable.

Under the current rules, two people with identical financial circumstances may be treated unequally. One person with access to a dental plan may be denied coverage while another person without access to a dental plan will be accepted, without apparent reason.

Moreover, individuals who opted out of a dental plan before Dec. 11,

2023, may be eligible while equally needy individuals that didn't know about this arbitrarily and retroactively imposed date are not eligible.

We would ask that the access rules be reviewed. A more appropriate, transparent, and defensible criteria for enrolment would be an acceptance into the dental plan based only on income and wealth. Canadians have always supported programs that subsidize low-income individuals. The current criteria do not do that fairly. Please reconsider this aspect of the rules and make the changes necessary to meet the needs of those it was designed to serve.

Yours sincerely
Bill Berryman
President ACER-CART

Charlottetown Rural High Class of 1974 50th Anniversary

There will be a 50th Anniversary



Reunion event for 1974 CRHS graduates on June 8 at 6 p.m. at the Haviland Club, 2 Haviland Street, Charlottetown. Please send your email address to crhs1974reunion@gmail.com or join the Face Book page "Charlottetown Rural Class of 1974 Reunion" if you are interested in attending. We also ask that you spread the word to fellow graduates and teachers so they can be added to the list and kept up to date on this milestone event. No registration fee for teachers. Hope you can come!

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.

