



DUSTOFF

Durham District 28

Durham Unit Retired Teachers of Ontario for Fellowship

Issue 2: 2011

Spring

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New Mailing Address

RTO/ERO District 28-Durham
c/o ETFO-Durham
603 Palace Street,
Whitby, ON L1N 6S5



Birding Adventure!

Don Farquharson, Past President

On Tuesday, May 3, while many were licking their election wounds, and others were feeling flush with excitement about the results, a brave and hardy few withstood the rain, cold, and wind to go for District 28th's first annual Birding Adventure at Lynde Shores Conservation Area. Even with the late spring and the poor weather, we all had a great time. As well as the common birds, we saw a number of excellent ones, such as Fox Sparrows and Mute Swans, and had Chickadees and Downy Woodpeckers literally eating out of our hands! While on our walk, we saw a herd of approximately 30 White Tailed Deer, and a number of them walked right by us as we were on the viewing platform! One of the best bonuses was that the parking meter was broken!

During the hike and while we were warming up at Tim Horton's afterwards, great friendships sprang up, and a number of us would like to do a few more similar Nature Hikes/Birding trips. If you would like to participate and receive notification of date and location prior to the next DUSTOFF... please forward your email address.

Next time we will try to make sure the weather is more cooperative!

Don Farquharson: 905.985.9635 or
don.farquharson@sympatico.ca
Re: D28 Nature Trips



President's Message



Karen Rynard

What is your “elevator story” about the Retired Teachers of Ontario?

Recently, at the District Presidents' Workshop I was introduced to the concept of telling my elevator story. An elevator story is the conversation or story you would share with another person starting when you enter an elevator on the first floor and travelling to the tenth floor. When the elevator doors open you finish the conversation on a positive note with the other person and invite the individual to give you a call if they would like more information. This exercise made me think and realize we often share with others the benefits of joining the Retired Teachers of Ontario, but we need to strive to be clearer and more articulate when discussing the reasons and benefits of being a RTO/ERO member.

Informing individuals about retirement is just one of the many roles of the Retired Teachers of Ontario. At the recent Retirement Planning Workshop, one hundred and forty-six individuals, who are contemplating retirement, heard about the facts and figures about retirement, so they can make an informed decision about retiring. Two of our executive members, namely Jim Craigen and Don Farquharson did a wonderful job, planning and organizing this event.

Our district provides many opportunities for social interactions, thanks to our energetic executive and members who plan these events. Those activities include dinners, excursions

and tours, and theatre productions. There are free events such as coffee hours, a wine and cheese, and new this year, a bird watching nature hike. We hope to finalize plans for a *To Hell with the Bell* event to be held on the first day of school in September.

We have a local executive who keep people informed by three newsletters a year. Emails are sent about main issues discussed at executive meetings. We strive to keep an updated District 28 website. Of course, there are the Provincial Retired Teachers of Ontario communications, such as the Renaissance magazine and information on the RTO/ERO website, which are invaluable. There are even opportunities for those interested in being part of the District 28 executive. New ideas are welcome.

We care about your well being in retirement. We are advocates for seniors in retirement whether the cause is pension advocacy or home care. We give back to the community in the form of *service to others* projects. There is also the Group Health and Insurance Plans which RTO/ERO offers, which are of interest to many.

Am I on the tenth floor yet? I encourage all of you to write or at least think about a short elevator story about the Retired Teachers of Ontario and why it is important to be a member of this organization. After all you never know who you might meet in an elevator! **■**



You can print individual newsletter pages at our website. Choose the link to DUSTOFF. Find the page you want. In the **Print Range** section click **Current Page** and then **OK**.



Strengths of RTO/ERO Health Plans

General

- You can enrol at any age, so long as you've had continuous group insurance coverage.
- RTO/ERO is a group insurance plan.
- Each plan is optional – you pick the coverages to suit your insurance needs.
- The rates are the same for all ages, no matter which plan you choose.

Extended Health Care Plan

- Brand or generic drugs are covered – it's your choice.
- We're committed to your health. The educational benefit covers up to \$200 per person/year for health-related physician-authorized education programs.
- Diabetic supplies are included in the RTO/ERO drug maximum, so you can use up to \$2,500 for diabetic supplies.
- Hearing aids are covered up to \$1,000 per person/three years.
- Incontinence supplies are covered up to \$400 per person/year.
- Orthotics and orthopaedic shoes are covered to a maximum of \$500 per person/two years.
- You can utilize all of the paramedical practitioners without a physician's authorization.
- Prescription eyeglasses, contact lenses, and laser eye surgery are covered to a maximum of \$300 per person/two calendar years.

Extended Health Care Plan

-Travel Benefit

- The travel coverage only has a limited medical stability clause, which applies to cancer, heart and lung conditions, or any condition for which you have been hospitalized in the 90 days prior to departure.
- A change in medication does not affect your coverage.
- RTO/ERO includes grandchildren in the return of dependent children benefit.
- The vehicle return benefit is \$2,000.

Supplemental Travel Plan

– for trips beyond 62 days

- The plan is also a group insurance plan, owned by RTO/ERO.
- The coverage and limitations are the same as those under the Extended Health Care Plan.

Semi-Private Hospital Plan

- The home care benefit is \$75 per day to a maximum of 30 days post-hospitalization and a maximum of 3 days following day surgery.

Dental Plan

- RTO/ERO's fee guide is current.
- Basic and Preventive expenses are covered under RTO/ERO at 85%.
- Endodontic and Periodontic expenses are eligible to a maximum of \$850 per person/year.
- The major restorative benefit has two separate maximums, each of \$700 per person/year. The first is for crowns, posts, onlays and inlays; and, the second is for fixed bridges and partial dentures.

Note: This document is intended to highlight the key strengths of the RTO/ERO Health Plans. It does not provide or summarize all of the coverages or benefits. For complete details, refer to the RTO/ERO Health Plans brochure, or go to www.rto-ero.org.

Courtesy of Johnson Inc., February 2011

Health Plans Comparison

An *updated* Comparison Chart is available from RTO/ERO Johnson Insurance. This chart provides a comparison of the group RTO/ERO Health Plans to the individual insurance plans offered by the Ontario Teacher's Plan (OTIP). To receive a copy of the 4 page chart contact Johnson Inc. at 1.877.406.9007 or view it online at www.rto-ero.org. **D**



Feedback:

RTO/ERO Recruitment Workshop

Linda Taberner & Kathryn Brown

Did you know?

- There are 2000 RTO/ERO Provincial members over 90 years of age.
- There are 83 RTO/ERO Provincial members over 100 years of age.

BUT...Over the past decade, there has been a decrease in retirees joining RTO/ERO.

How do people learn about RTO and consequently join?

- 47% hear through retired colleagues (that's why we need you).
- 26% hear through attending an RTO Retirement Planning Workshop.
- 11% learn through OTPP.
- 9% learn through their Affiliates.

How Can You Help?

- Have you told your retired / retiring teacher friends about RTO?
- Have you told retired / retiring colleagues who worked in other roles in the school (e.g., educational assistants, secretaries, custodians) that they can join RTO as Associate members who can enjoy the same privileges (except for

serving on the Provincial Executive)?

- Have you told them your reasons for joining RTO/ERO? Was it for the chance to socialize at our two annual Luncheons, the Wine & Cheese in the October, the To Hell With the Bell Luncheon (this September), or the well organized outings to theatres, art shows, wine tours, etc. Perhaps, it was the excellent travel insurance, the good health benefits, or our beneficial Retirement Planning Workshop that enticed you to join?
- Did you invite another retiree to our June luncheon?

Why?

- Having more retired school staff, including non-educators, join the RTO health plan will help in the long run to keep plan costs down and also benefits those new members whose other health options cost more.
- The more members we have, the more services we can afford to offer.



Let's see how many new members we can have join RTO/ERO District 28- Durham before our fall activities.

Lakeside P.S. Turns

25!



Open House

Saturday, September 24, 2011
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Take this wonderful opportunity to re-connect with former friends, staff, and families in the Lakeside community. Help celebrate 25 years with the Durham District School Board!

Inquiries: Linda Westendorp
lindawestendorp24@hotmail.com



Address: 4 Parkes Drive, Ajax



Recruitment Contest

Karen Rynard, President



Each year, RTO/ERO holds a recruitment competition for the Districts with the highest number increase and highest percentage increase in membership. District 28-Region of Durham had the largest percentage increase in 2010 at 8.7%. Our District also placed 5th with 181 new members in the number standings.

In recognition of this first place standing in percentage increase, our District will be presented with a cheque of \$200 at the May Senate to be forwarded to a charity of our choice. The executive are happy to announce that the cheque of \$200 will be presented to *Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre* in Oshawa at 86 Colborne St. West in the near future. As their

website states, "*Hearth Place is a support centre where cancer patients and their families can come and share their experiences, find resources and discover new ways to care for themselves and each other.*" (www.hearthplace.org)

Of course, we would like to thank all our new members in 2010 who made the percentage increase possible. Maybe it was RTO members sharing and encouraging you to join or a retirement planning workshop, which helped you decide, the Retired Teachers of Ontario is an organization you wish to be part of.

Let's continue to spread the word and encourage others to join too. **D**



Email Addresses

Kathryn Brown, Membership Networking

We would like to have your email address.

Why? To inform members of sudden developments such as "death of a member with information on visitation," or "changes to health policy coverage". This service is meant to serve you better without being intrusive.

Please send your **name** and **email address** to:
brownka@rogers.com
Re: RTO District 28

Be sure to add Kathryn's email address to your "address book" so that RTO mail is not treated as spam.



Anytime you make changes to your email address please contact Kathryn to update your information.
Thanks

All addresses are kept in strict confidence.



Project Funding by RTO District 28

Applications for 2011 funding of project requests from local District 28-Durham are due on or by **September 1st**. Maximum amount for the request is \$500. Although all requests will be considered by the Gifting Committee, not all requests may be granted. The application process and application form can be accessed on the RTO/ERO District 28-Durham website at www.rtod28.ca or in the Fall 2010 issue of DUSTOFF.

Forward requests to Reg Gutsole at rmgutsole@sympatico.ca.

Note: The two projects funded in 2010 are **CAFE** and **Gate 3:16 Outreach Centre**. Articles about them are in the Fall DUSTOFF on pages 20 and 21. **D**

Sending “Nicer” Email:

• protecting yourself and friends

Tom Jakabfy, Member-at-Large

How many times do you receive email passed on from friends, that was passed on from their friends, that was passed on....? You get it now - email that has been passed around, almost forever. Often these emails display many names and email addresses from previous recipients. I once received an email with over 100 addresses!

Receiving and resending this type of email is dangerous, and unnecessary. If we only take a few precautions, this can be avoided.

When you want to safely resend or pass-on cleaner looking email there are things you can do that maybe you hadn't thought about.

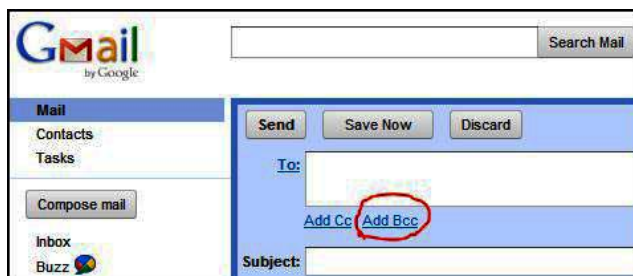
When you are in an email and hit the FORWARD button, you will see the original email. You can now EDIT the email by taking out or by adding personal comments. Many people don't bother, but it makes for a cleaner looking email and maybe makes it look more “original”, especially if you also reword the Subject information.

One thing to clean-up is the area with the names of previous recipients. Just highlight the names and email addresses and then *delete*. You DO NOT HAVE TO pass on this information when

you FORWARD the email to others. In fact, to protect their privacy, you shouldn't pass it on.

Next, when you ADD recipients to your email use **Bcc:** instead of TO: unless you are only sending on to a single person. If you are FORWARDING to a group PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE use Bcc:. Bcc is Blind Carbon Copy which refers to sending a message to multiple recipients in such a way that it conceals the fact that there may be additional addressees from the complete list of recipients. This concept originally applied to paper correspondence and now also applies to email.

Having said this about Bcc:, you may be saying to yourself, “How do I access Bcc:? I don't see it in my email program.” If you are using Microsoft's Outlook Express, the cheap and free cousin of Microsoft's Outlook for your email, then it isn't your eyes; they don't display Bcc: by default in the original set up.... but it is available. Other email programs like Thunderbird or Eudora use Bcc: by default along with To: and



Cc: (Carbon copy- for secondary recipients or other interested parties.)


If you are using Outlook Express, here is an easy way to “fix” it so you can use Bcc:. Start with “create mail”. Before you send it, select VIEW at the top. Click on “ALL HEADERS” and when you look at your message, Bcc: will be there as an OPTION under To: and Cc:. Now you can use it to send out “clean” messages to all of your friends... they will NOT show the recipient the email addresses of any of the other recipients, only yours.

Why would you want to use Bcc:? Some people are offended when they see a message like “recipients list suppressed” or similar words in their email. Well, at least one person I know was offended. But don't be offended. Your sender is protecting the names and email addresses of his/her address book and NOT ADDING more names to your address book.

The more names in someone's address book, the more likely they are to end up being sent to the “wrong” people. Let me explain.

If your computer gets infected by a virus, worm or Trojan then these may exploit the names/addresses in your email address book and any available ►

Sending Nicer Email..con't

 information such as phone numbers. Because of this infection a fictitious message may now be sent out to these people. It may be a message that asks for money for a friend stranded in Africa or some other form of phishing*. The names and email addresses could also be used for some other unsavoury things. So, help protect yourself and your friends, use Bcc:. It is not a "cure-all" but it helps.

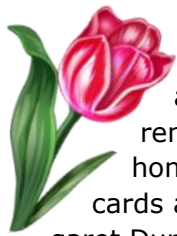
Now, the next time you receive an email with many names attached, you will know that this person didn't use Bcc:...but should have.

NOTE: Microsoft Windows XP uses the Microsoft default email program Outlook Express as a mail client. My Microsoft Windows 7 (starter) had no email program. Mozilla's Thunderbird is a good choice for an email program if you are looking for one that is reliable and safe. It has Bcc: by default and Thunderbird is FREE!

***Phishing** is a way of attempting to acquire sensitive information such as user-names, passwords and credit card details by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.

From Wikipedia
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phishing> **D**

Looking for "Senior" Seniors



The members of the Goodwill Committee are looking for any District 28 members, currently in retirement or nursing homes who are not receiving the cards and plants distributed by Margaret Durkin.

Please forward names of these members to Margaret or one of the members of the Goodwill committee. **D**

RTO District 28

Goodwill Committee Contacts

Know a District 28 member who needs a cheery message through a card or visit. If so, please contact a member of the committee.

Goodwill Chair

- Janet Beaton...905.728.5578
janet.beaton@sympatico.ca

Pickering

- Jean Jackson...905.420.6410
jeanej@rogers.com

Oshawa

- Marion Bryant...905.723.6645
marionbryant@sympatico.ca

Whitby

- Gale Robinson...905.668.9259
grobins9259@sympatico.ca

Ajax

- Wilma Brown...905.686.3709
wilma.brown@sympatico.ca

Clarington (Bowmanville Area)

- Eva Sagur905.263.8464
evasagur73@hotmail.com

Cannington

- Mary Lee Tully...705.432.2415
mltully@sympatico.ca

Greenbank

- Carol Phoenix.....905.985.3421

Goodwill Member-at-Large

- Heather Britton ...905.728.0196
heather.britton034@sympatico.ca

Those 90 Years & Over

- Margaret Durkin...905.723.5376
mdurkin@rogers.com

With emails use the subject *RTO-Goodwill*.



**Help us give support
to our fellow retired
colleagues.
Please contact us.**

Spring 2011

"To Hell with the Bell" Luncheon

Jean Jackson & Marie Koster

Tuesday, September 6 at 11:45 a.m.

Location: Imperial Buffet Restaurant,
163 Harwood Ave. North, Ajax

*Come out and join with
new retirees and your
fellow members of RTO
District 28.*

Cost: Courtesy of District 28

- **Gratis** to those who retire in 2011
-includes buffet, soft drink, tea, or coffee with
refills, taxes, & service fee.
- **Five dollar subsidy** to our members.



Everyone is responsible for the payment of alcoholic beverages.

Note for Members:

At this time the cost before the subsidy will be \$11.99 or \$8.99 for seniors 65+ (plus applicable taxes and 10% service fee). Soft drinks/ coffee/tea are \$2.50 plus taxes. Members will be given the subsidy and their own bill.

Deadline: August 23

Contact Marie or Jean to confirm your attendance:

- ♦ Marie Koster- 416.491.6100
mariekoster@hotmail.com Subject: RTO To Hell with the Bell.
- ♦ Jean Jackson- 905.420.6410
jeanej@rogers.com Subject: RTO To Hell with the Bell.

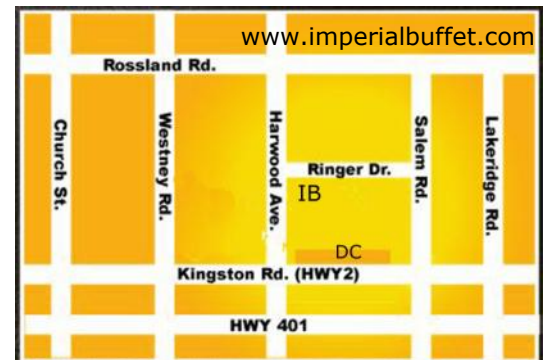


Please indicate if you are a new retiree.



**Durham
District 28**

IB - Imperial Buffet
DC - RioCan Durham Centre



Contact Information for RTO

Have you Moved?

If you change your address please contact **Di-
anne Vezeau**, Membership at RTO/ERO.

Since Provincial Office provides the address
information to our printer and our district has
to pay additional postage on each undeliver-
able newsletter, we appreciate your assis-
tance.

At the RTO/ERO website there is an online
form that you may fill out.

www.rto-ero.org/

Inform RTO/ERO

Mail: 18 Spadina Rd,
Suite 300
Toronto, ON M5R 2S7

Phone: 416.962.9463 Ext. 223

Toll free: 1.800.361.9888 Ext. 223

Email: dvezeau@rto-ero.org



*Our thanks go out to those District 28
members who thoughtfully remember to
update their information.*



New Members

In Memoriam

We are pleased that you have joined RTO/ERO District 28. We value your membership and look forward to a long association with you. We invite you to participate in the activities of RTO/ERO, an organization that offers numerous benefits to its members.

We remember and honour the lives of our departed colleagues. Our sympathies go out to their families and friends.

- Brian Barker
- Janice Brooking
- Lynn Burnett
- Brian Clow
- Brock R Colby
- Herb Ebisuzaki ~
- Leona L Graham °
- Christina Griffiths
- Sherillyn Halton
- Wayne Hingston
- Doreen Isherwood
- °Agnes J James
- Denise Jeffrey
- Ann Kahn

- Richard Kelland
- Carolyn Knowles
- Alex Lawrence
- Dorothy Mattingley
- Barbara Maziarczyk
- Sandra J MacDonald °
- Brenda Meadows
- Hugh Meyer
- Mary Montpetit
- Edward Morrison
- Elaine M Neundorf °
- Carol Ann Racette °
- Duncan Vipond
- Geoffrey Welch
- Isla Whillans

- Sidney E Bradbury
- Douglass R Brown
- F L Carver
- Alice D. Catherwood °
- Margaret Crowder
- Joyce M Currie
- Vera E Emerson
- Mary T Ford
- Lorne J Graham
- Ron Gugula
- E Kelvin James
- Audrey Keys
- Colleen Lush
- Yvonne M Puckrin
- Marion P Rattray °
- Doris M Snoddon
- Edith A Stevenson
- Grace Trull
- Donald M Warne

° Associate Member
~ Transferred In



Welcome!

Membership

Full Members:	1554
Associates:	<u>139</u>
Total:	1693

Like a bird singing in the rain, let grateful memories survive in time of sorrow.



For-Get-Me-Not

Information current according to names received from RTO by April 30 .

Bursary Fund Report

John Howard, Bursary Chair

Thank you to all of the RTO District 28 members who responded and donated this year to the **Bursary Endowment Fund** at Durham College. We have had 28 District 28 members donate this year with donated funds approaching \$1,810.00!!!! This year the Ontario Provincial Government has matched those funds dollar-for-dollar.

On March 29th, I attended the **Durham College Donor Appreciation Night**. Don Lovisa, the president of Durham College, greeted all of the donors and student recipients. He emphasized how important the bursary programs are in supporting students reaching their educational goals and re-entering our community as successful contributing members of society.

I was able to chat with many of the recipients including one of our RTO District 28 bursary recipients. I found the students to be bright, engaged and proud of their educational achievements. They demonstrated a genuine appreciation for the financial support. These students are truly looking forward to their futures with energy and enthusiasm.



Rachel Henderson, John Howard, Heather Anderson



**Durham
District 28**



RTO/ERO District 28 **Bursary Program**

Please print in **block letters**.

Name _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Cheque enclosed for: \$ _____

- Payable to: **DURHAM COLLEGE**
- Note: **RTO D28 Bursary**

I do not wish to be publicly thanked.

Please mail coupon and cheque to:

**Bursary Chair,
RTO/ERO District 28-Durham
c/o ETFO-Durham
603 Palace Street,
Whitby, ON L1N 6S5**

Your support ensures the legacy of the **RTO District 28 Award**. It ensures that, annually, two deserving Durham College students get started with education and training towards a brighter future and economic/life success.

Thank you!!!! Your support is most appreciated.

D

Let's Do Coffee Again

Kathy Brown, First Vice President

Durham
District 28



On April 27, members had a chance to meet other RTO retirees while enjoying a free coffee and treat courtesy of our local District 28. The feedback from those who attended was positive and we kept hearing the suggestion of doing it again.

SO...mark **Wed., June 22, 10:00–11:00 a.m.** on your calendar and plan to join us at any one of the following **Tim Hortons** locations.

- **Oshawa** – 1361 Harmony Road, N. (in Harmony-Taunton plaza on north side of Taunton)
- **Port Perry** – 15930 Old Simcoe Road (north end of Port Perry; corner of Old Simcoe Rd. and Reach St.)
- **Uxbridge** – 325 Toronto Street S.
- **Whitby** – 1601 Champlain Ave., (east side of Thickson Road)
- **Ajax** – 245 Salem Road, S. (east side; just south of the 401)



Wed., June 22

Community Centres for 55⁺

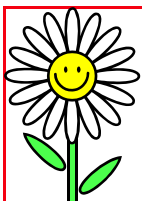
*A Centre is
. . . a community
facility that pro-
vides a diversity
of activities and
services in
response to the
needs of the local
older adult
population.*

In Ontario there is a central voice for older adult centres and it is the OACAO (Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario).

Opportunities offered at these centres may be badminton, darts, euchre, yoga, aerobics, aqua fit, computers, nutritional information, educational courses, foot care, bus trips, book club, and special events. Contact the centre in your community to find out what activities they offer.

To locate a centre in your area refer to the list at this website:
http://www.oacao.org/Membership_by_Community_PUBLIC.htm

If you would like to volunteer at an Older Adult Centre, simply contact the centre in your community. They are always looking for new volunteers. Give them a call today.



The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight because by then, your body and your fat are really good friends. ~Unknown

Some people, no matter how old they get, never lose their beauty - they merely move it from their faces into their hearts. ~Martin Buxbaum



A Fabulous Day On the Great Barrier Reef

John Logue

Today, a day in November, I am to scuba dive on the Great Barrier Reef, a 2600-kilometre coral reef off the northeast coast of Australia. Even though I happily signed up for the free scuba lesson and dive four days earlier, I admit I am a bit nervous. I even talked my wife into taking the plunge too.

We are aboard the *SeaStar*, a catamaran holding 25 passengers and, in an hour, will reach Michaelmas Cay, a small sand island inhabited by birds -- terns, noddies and shearwaters. Since the cay is a protected, fenced habitat for birds, we may only stand on the white sandy shore. Susan and I put on our snorkel gear over Lycra stinger suits, which protect us from poisonous box jellyfish and, more importantly, the tropical sun.

The sea and sky are deep blue; the coral reef a brownish green. We snorkel near white-striped orange Nemo fish (clownfish), anemones, giant clams, a ray shark, and bright

yellow butterflyfish. Even a curious little reef shark comes to investigate. It's like being in a Technicolour movie in 3D or Disney's *Finding Nemo*. Susan even manages to overcome the problem of water in her mask, which plagued her on a previous occasion.

The young crew is very safety-conscious, and Susan decides not to scuba dive because of possible complications arising from her diabetes medication. A young man is not allowed to dive because he has not been free of diabetic complications for five full years. The two instructors are both PADI-certified (Professional Association of Diving Instructors).

On the *SeaStar* I don the scuba gear – tank, weight belt, breathing apparatus, face mask and snorkel – with much help from the female assistant, who must have thought I was as clueless as they come. Sitting on a bench, wearing all the equipment, I find I need most of my strength to keep from falling backward onto

the deck. Good heavens! Did Lloyd Bridges, on *Sea Hunt*, have to endure all of this every week?

I am ready to gently lower myself by ladder into the water. The assistant, however, tells me to jump right into the Coral Sea, securely holding the face mask



John and Susan Logue

and the mouthpiece. She's kidding, isn't she? Do I feel her giving me a gentle shove?

As I survey the undersea world, I see blue-yellow angelfish and a rope extending from the stern of the boat to the ocean floor. How far down does it plunge? Two other novices on the rope and the instructor are there too. We have to demonstrate our scuba skills taught to us on the trip out to the reef. With index and second fingers on nose, blow out to avoid the buildup of pressure in the ears, but remember to breathe too.

As we descend the ear pressure increases alarmingly. When will it stop? Pinch nose, breathe out, and pressure is ▶



Can a 61-year-old without scuba experience actually dive down to come face-to-face with reef creatures?

reduced a bit. The instructor is giving me the okay signal, or is it the go-to-the-surface signal? I recall the lesson: index finger and thumb in a circle means “okay” or “Are you okay?” But how do you say “sort of”? He’s signaling to clear my mask. Blowing out my nose doesn’t work, for there’s now more water in my mask. Look UP and blow out the nose: that’s much better.

Now the instructor is gesturing to me to demonstrate the last skill, the big one. Uh-oh! I have to take out my mouthpiece, toss it to one side, then retrieve it and start breathing again, all without swallowing water and drowning. Why did I sign up for this? Was I crazy? Or did I want to brag to my brother I’d scuba dived on the Great Barrier Reef?

Stay calm. Take a breath, toss the breathing piece to my right side, touch thigh, bum and make a half circle with right arm. Place mouthpiece back in mouth after purging it of water by using the button on top. Phew! That was easy. And I didn’t drown. No worries.

Then, we three novices and the instructor kneel in the sand and survey the luminous seascape at the bottom of the Coral Sea. We then move on to observe other creatures – small, fluorescent green-blue parrot fish and damselfish, giant clams and intricate coral formations. The fish are colourful; the coral not so much. As I enjoy the beauty of the

coral reef and its creatures, I recall what the marine biologist on board told us: as the water temperature rises above 32C the reef bleaches and starts to die. Climate change shows no mercy.

The pressure in my ears, though, is so intense it feels as if my head will launch itself into the water like a balloon full of air that is suddenly released. But I AM demonstrating the skill of blowing through my nose. Will we soon return to the cat? Thumbs up from the instructor: head to the surface. My ears are singing “Hallelujah”! Right under the boat I notice a pancake-like fish the size of a kitchen table on its side staring at me. Despite his arresting size he seems harmless. He’s probably used to tourists and is looking for food. Next, with Herculean effort I manage to haul myself onto the deck despite carrying an extra 30 pounds. Susan tells me she snapped pictures of me after I first jumped in: proof that a 61-year-old actually scuba dived on the Great Barrier Reef.

Strangely, I am not only famished but also shivering. All this exercise stokes an appetite. Susan, the other passengers and I enjoy a tasty lunch on board of chicken, prawns, salads and rolls. And in 30 minutes I’ve warmed up.

In the afternoon Susan and I snorkel again, this time on



Hastings Reef, which is 30 minutes farther, on the outer edge of the Great Barrier Reef and later view the reef through a glass-bottom boat. In reality the boat’s shadow makes seeing difficult; so we look over the side. I may scuba dive again in deeper water if I wish, but I decide once is enough.

Heading back to Cairns, we are tired but content. It was a day of sun, sea, sand, coral, and sky. Both of us snorkelled and my first scuba dive, despite my worries, turned out fine in the end. Though it did have its slightly scary moments, our day on the Great Barrier Reef turned out to be absolutely fabulous. I even received a PADI certificate of recognition for my very first scuba dive. ■

The Sea Star



Photos courtesy of John Logue

District 28 Travel Events 2011

Maret Sadem-Thompson, Travel Chair

Elvis

A great time was had by all 26 participants on April 5th as we trekked to Port Hope's Capitol Theatre for an enjoyable outing. We had plenty of time for shopping, lunch and touring downtown Port Hope. The production, sung by 5 talented performers, included many of our favourite Elvis songs.



- District 28 members at the Capital Theatre, Port Hope
- Lynn, Linda, Shirley, Maret before the Elvis production

Photos courtesy of Maret Sadem-Thompson



Trip Changes



The **Evening Art Tour** scheduled for Tuesday, June 28th will run in the daytime on Tuesday, June 28th (departing from the DDSB parking lot at 9 a.m. and returning about 2:30 p.m., instead of 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.)

The \$15 **More Gorgeous Gardens Evening Tour** on Wednesday, July 27th, is changed to a daytime tour (on the same date) from 9 a.m. until about 2:30 p.m. We will stop for tea at your own expense in Brooklin. The cost of the English Tea (not including your tip) will be

\$11.30. The trip was originally scheduled to run from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Participants wanting to buy plants or gardening gifts should bring cash or cheques.

CANCELLATION:

The **Tribute to Merle Haggard**, scheduled for Sept 18th has been **cancelled** as the theatre changed its policy for collection of ticket fees. Other theatres allow a deposit for group tickets sales instead of demanding the whole ticket cost up front at time of booking.

District 28 Travel Events 2011

Maret Sadem-Thompson, Travel Chair

How to Participate on the Trips

Complete the appropriate order form and mail with cheque to Maret Sadem-Thompson to reserve your seat at these fun filled productions. In the past, these ticket reservations have been snapped up quickly. Note the deadline dates and date cheques accordingly. To avoid disappointment mail in your orders promptly and e-mail Maret your intention to attend the function. Coupons are in the Winter DUSTOFF which is available on our website, www.rtod28.ca .

For queries, please contact Maret Sadem-Thompson at 905-666-9268 or email her anytime at maret_sadem@hotmail.com .

Evening Art Tour - Durham West (N.B. now a day tour- see page 14 for times)



If you enjoy talking with local artists, looking at paintings, sculptures, pottery and other works of art then this evening is for you. Following on the success of last year's tours, we will leave from the DDSB parking lot (most northern end) at 6:00 p.m. This \$15 tour concludes at the gallery Cultural Expressions at about 9 p.m. on **Tuesday, June 28th**. Book early for space on this outing.

Deadline to order tickets is Monday, May 30, 2011.

Although this deadline has passed contact Maret as there may be available tickets .

Daytime Art Tour - Durham West



On **Tuesday, July 12th** we will begin our local artist tour at the home of Catherine and Gordon Reidt where you will delight in Catherine's day lilies and Gordon's sculptures. We will visit the homes/studios of four artists including painters, potters, and jewellery makers. Hop on the Durhamway van at the far back (north) parking lot of the DDSB at 9 a.m. and complete your \$15 tour by 2 p.m.

Deadline to order tickets is Friday, June 10, 2011.

Although this deadline has passed contact Maret as there may be available tickets .

More Gorgeous Gardens Evening Tour (N.B. now a day tour- see page 14 for times)



By **Wednesday, July 27th**, Durham's gardens will be at their peak of perfection. Join Faye Collins, of the Brooklin Horticultural Society, as we take in the perfume of some exceptional evening gardens. The Durhamway van leaves from the far back (north) lot of the DDSB at 6 p.m. returning at about 9:30 p.m. We will tour three gardens and finish with an evening snack at our last stop all for \$20.

Deadline to order tickets is Monday, June 27, 2011.

Come Fly Away and enjoy the music of Frank Sinatra



Only 23 tickets have been booked for the **Wednesday, August 17th** date with the music of old blue eyes at the Four Seasons Centre in Toronto. Hop on the Durhamway van at the Oshawa Centre (farmers market area) at 10:45 a.m. or at the Canadian Tire lot on Brock Rd at 11:00. Then enjoy lunch on your own in Toronto prior to this musical which starts at 2 p.m. Bus heads back to Durham following conclusion of the performance at about 4:30 p.m. Reduce your carbon footprint. Join us for bus and the show for \$62.

Deadline to order tickets is Friday, July 15, 2011.

Daytrip to Fenelon Falls



The magic of Fenelon Falls awaits us on **Tuesday, August 30th**. Soapstone carver, Peter Martin will join us on the ride to Fenelon Falls as we learn about Kawartha's local artists and artisans. In addition to talking to painters, wood carvers, potters, jewellery makers and sculptors you will have time to walkabout this town, have lunch and complete your tour at a local gallery. \$20 covers the cost of the Durhamway van for this enjoyable outing which will go rain or shine. The bus departs from the Oshawa Centre (farmer's market area) at 9 a.m. and returns at about 2:30 p.m.

Deadline to order tickets is Friday, July 29, 2011.

District 28 Travel Events 2011

My Fair Lady at the Shaw Festival - Wed., Sept. 28th



"The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she is treated." The timeless story of a flower seller from the gutter who becomes a *Fair Lady* comes to the Shaw Festival. Celebrate the glorious music, words and joy of this classic with our innovative and fresh production. Hear the unforgettable songs, "I Could Have Danced All Night", "The Rain in Spain" & "On the Street Where You Live". On **Wed. Sept. 28th**, the Duke family leaves the Oshawa Centre (farmers' market area) at 9:30 a.m. and the Brock Rd. Canadian Centre at 9:45 a.m. Your price of \$100 includes the bus, box lunch (menu selection will be forwarded to participants) and show. A brief stop will be made on the way home for a light supper (at your own expense).

Sold Out

Deadline to order tickets is Friday, August 12, 2011.

Jesus Christ Superstar & St. Jacobs Market - Tues., October 25th



The zeal with which Christ's followers are hailing him as the Son of God has become the source of dismay to his disciple Judas Iscariot. Fearing that this tide of religious fervour will provoke brutal repression by the occupying Romans, Judas must make his fateful choice between faith and betrayal. This rock opera with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Tim Rice will be the final travel outing for RTO District 28 for the 2011 season. Join us at the Oshawa Centre (farmers' market parking area) on **Tues., Oct. 25th** at 7:30 a.m. or at the far back northern most spots of the DDSB lot at 7:45 a.m. as we trek first to St. Jacob's market in the Waterloo area where you will have time for shopping and lunch on your own. Show in Stratford starts at 2 p.m. Only 25 tickets have been reserved for this wonderful production. \$120 is your cost for the bus, market, and show. We will stop briefly for dinner/snack on the way home. Expect to be back in Durham by about 8:30 p.m.

Deadline to order tickets is Friday, September 16, 2011.



Re: Waiver (see below)

Note: Please print your name and that of your spouse/guest/friend (if applicable) on the trip coupon. You must then sign the coupon to indicate that you have read, and understood, the waiver.

Each name that appears on the coupon with yours must also sign that they have read and understood this waiver. Your coupon and registration for the activity is **not** complete without the necessary signature(s).

Acknowledgement, Waiver and Release

The participant in (the "Event") acknowledges and agrees that RTO/ERO, including District 28, will not be responsible for any loss, injury or damage of any nature, including death, howsoever arising in connection with this trip/excursion/event. Participants in the Event are therefore hereby advised to carry their own insurance in connection therewith.

By signing below and in consideration of the participant's attendance at the Event, the participant hereby releases and forever discharges RTO/ERO, District 24, and their respective directors, officers, members, agents, employees and volunteers (collectively, the "Releasees") from any and all actions, causes

of action, claims, and demands (collectively, the "Claims") from any loss, injury or damage of any nature, including death which has arisen or may arise from the participant's attendance at the Event, unless such loss, injury or damage has arisen as a result of the sole negligence of one or more of the Releasees.

Any claims arising out of the participant's attendance at the event will be governed by the laws of Ontario, Canada, and the participant consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts in Ontario, Canada in any such action.

.....
Printed Name of Participant

.....
Signature

~ Provincial Executive, January 2010

Wine and Cheese Invitation

To: *Retired Durham Teachers & Educational Workers*

From: *RTO District 28 - Durham*



A Wine & Cheese reception is being held on **Wednesday, October 12 from 4:00 - 6:00.**

Location: **Trillium Trails,**
53 Snow Ridge Court, Oshawa
(west side of Simcoe St., just north of Raglan Road)

The purpose of this event is to provide new retirees with a warm welcome to District 28 and to give current RTO members an opportunity to re-meet friends and acquaintances in a relaxing setting.

COST: Free (Paid for by RTO District 28)

To register forward name, address, and phone number to **Susan Stokes.**

@ susstokes@gmail.com RE: Wine & Cheese

PLEASE PASS THE WORD

Members: If you know of a retired teacher or educational worker who is not a member of RTO please tell them about the Wine & Cheese, and inform Susan via email so that she can send them an invitation.



It is important that those planning to attend register their name with Susan by **Wed., Oct. 5** via email.

Retirement Planning Workshop

Jim Craigen and Don Farquharson

This year our Retirement Planning Workshop on April 20th was bigger and better than ever! We had a record 146 eager participants soaking up as much information about their impending retirement as possible! Participants came from Durham College, secondary and elementary schools in Catholic and Public Boards from all over Durham Region. We do think this means the Baby Boomers will be retiring in droves in the next few years.

Topics presented were Pension Issues; Financial Planning for Retirement; Health Care Issues; and General Lifestyle Changes. As RTO is expanding our membership, we had presentations on pension implications about OPSEU and OMERS as well as OTPP. It provided a great variety and diversity of questions and discussion. The common theme of extended health care gave all a lot to think about as they make their retirement decisions and plans.

Many thanks to RTO Provincial Staff for their presentations, and all the executive who gave of their time and expertise to help run this exciting annual event!



Speakers: Tony Sawinski, Gary Fick, Lisa Raponi, David Brawley, and Karen Rynard

Photos courtesy of Jean Jackson

RTO District 28-Durham Sponsored Curling Event

Wayne Ellis, Event Organizer

The annual RTO- District 28 **Fun Bonspiel** was held at the Whitby Curling Club on Saturday, February 19. A total of 48 curlers participated and everyone had a terrific day.

This popular social event started with morning coffee, muffins and sweet rolls, and was then followed by game one. After a delicious four course luncheon, and a brief time for further socializing, game two began. The games were filled with great curling as each of the 12 teams played for the generous prizes. At the end of the Fun Bonspiel, every curler was presented with a coveted gift card.

This year's event "sold out" before the registration deadline. It is no wonder because the curlers enjoyed terrific food, great competition, and super comradery, regardless of the outcome of the two games played.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of the participants and the district's executive for supporting the 2011 Fun Bonspiel. Together you made it another great RTO- District 28 sponsored sporting event!




Photos courtesy of Carol Hinch

Going Green!

In response to a number of requests from members the executive are looking at ways to *go green* with our publications. If you would rather receive DUSTOFF in an electronic format, send an email to Marvin Belfour.

mbelfour2007@rogers.com
(Subject: DUSTOFF)

In the message please indicate that you wish to receive the newsletter electronically and include your name, phone number, and email address.

 We *cannot* send you the "Renaissance" electronically. However, for our future reference, if there are two RTO members in your home, and you receive duplicates of this magazine, please send an email to let us know that as well. **D**



An archeologist is the best husband any woman can have: the older she gets, the more interested he is in her. ~Agatha Christie

Like a lot of fellows around here, I have a furniture problem. My chest has fallen into my drawers.

~Billy Casper, about golf's Senior Tour

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*Best wishes
for a safe &
enjoyable
summer!*

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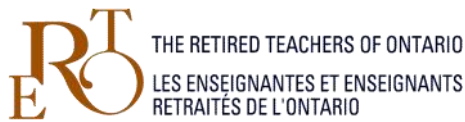


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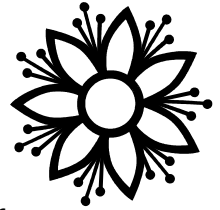


The Retired Teachers of Ontario/ Les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario (RTO/ERO) is a bilingual and voluntary organization. It offers numerous benefits to members.

These include: pension protection; health care coverage; a Long Term Care Plan; advocacy on social, political and economic issues; group travel programs; community involvement; and regular communication from both Provincial and District levels.

RTO/ERO provides a strong and active voice for a membership of 60,000 members. Members range in age from 51 to 100 plus and include 4,000 associate members.

Reminders for 2011



- ♦ **June:** 22- Coffee Social at Tim Hortons
28- Daytime Art Tour- Durham West
- ♦ **July:** 12- Daytime Art Tour- Durham West
27- More Gorgeous Gardens, Day Tour
- ♦ **Aug.:** 17- Music of Frank Sinatra, Four Seasons Centre
30- Fenelon Falls Trip
- ♦ **Sept.:** 6- To Hell with the Bell
28- My Fair Lady, Shaw Festival
- ♦ **Oct.:** 12- Wine & Cheese, Trillium Trails
25- Jesus Christ Superstar & St. Jacob's Market
- ♦ **Nov.:** 1- Fall Luncheon Meeting

Upcoming Executive Meetings:

August 23

September 20

October 18

November 1 Annual Meeting Luncheon



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Durham District 28

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Content of this publication may or may not reflect the position of RTO/ERO or District 28.

RTO/ERO District 28-Durham

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