



## THE ISLAND CONNECTION

### DISTRICT 47 VANCOUVER ISLAND

**SPRING 2019**

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All members are welcome to attend Executive Meetings. Come and see what these hard-working people do on your behalf. Maybe you'll join them.

All members and their guests are welcome at our social events

#### **Editor's Notes**

Welcome to this issue of District 47's newsletter.

We have upcoming events like the Spring Gathering. I don't want to scare you away, but this year we seek out a new Executive. Thank the people who have volunteered their time, energy and expertise on your behalf. You can find them listed on page 3.

Bill Huzar has done yeoman work as our District President and will continue to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for RTO/ERO in Toronto.

Alas, the time has come, for me to relinquish my 'pen' after 16 years of working on first, The Western Connection and now, The Island Connection. Time for new challenges as I enter the next chapter of my life. Good luck and see you down the road.

#### **Upcoming Events**

1. Last Monday (monthly), HAVA JAVA, 2 p.m. Haz-Beans, Nanaimo
2. Mon. Mar. 4, MUIU Executive Meeting, 10 a.m. ABC Restaurant, Nanaimo
3. Thurs. Mar. 4, District Executive Meeting, 10 a.m. Cowichan Golf Club, Duncan
4. Wed. May 1, Spring Gathering (AGM, Election of new executive & appointment of new responsibilities), 10 a.m. Cowichan Golf Club, Duncan
5. Wed. July 17, Victoria Unit Executive Meeting, 10:30 a.m. Royal Colwood Golf Club
6. Wed. Sept. 4, Victoria Unit THWTB & AGM, 11:00 a.m. (location to be determined as of press time)

**Spring Gathering**  
**Wed. May 1, 2019**  
**Cowichan Golf and Country Club**

**Agenda:** 10:00 Registration, Tea, Coffee, Muffins  
10:30 Business Meeting: Committee Reports, District Constitution,  
Election of Officers 2019-2021  
11:45 Guest Speaker(s)  
12:30 Lunch

**Cost:** \$25/person (partly subsidized by your District)

If you require transportation to the Spring Gathering check the bottom of the form on page 3 or contact one of the executive members listed.



**DIRECTIONS:**

**From the South** Take Trans-Canada Hwy 1 north toward Duncan (Golf Club is about 5 Km south of Duncan). Turn Right onto Bench Rd. (traffic lights). Turn Left onto Golfers Dr., which will lead you into the Golf Club.

**From the North** Take Trans-Canada Hwy 1 south from Duncan (Golf Club is about 5 Km south of Duncan). Turn Left onto Bench Rd. (traffic lights). Turn Left onto Golfers Dr., which will lead you into the Golf Club.

**Sometimes circumstances dictate that we have to change our plans. If this happens, and to ensure that you receive a refund, please notify Rex Sharman PH: 250-294-6304, email: sharman9@gmail.com at least 3 days before this event.**

## DISTRICT EXECUTIVE 2017-2019

President:  
Bill Huzar (250-995-3154)

Past President:  
Gloria Humphrey

Vice-President:  
Debbie Walker (250-729-0604)

Secretary:  
June Farmer (250-756-0660)

Treasurer:  
Rex Sharman (250-294-6304)

Victoria Unit President:  
Ron Hall (250-538-0046)

Mid/Upper Island Unit President:  
Penny Stowell-Smith (250-760-0095)

Mid/Upper Island Unit Representative:  
Phil Little (250-245-7245)

Victoria Unit Representative:  
Barbara Strachan (250-383-3195)

Members at Large:  
Victoria Unit-Ruth Beninger  
Mid/Upper Island Unit-Jim Ross

Executive Member Emeritus:  
Irene McDonald  
**(Presently in hospital. Our thoughts and prayers are with her at this difficult time).**

### RTO/ERO

Retired Teachers of Ontario/Les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario is a bilingual trusted voice on healthy, active living in the retirement journey for the broader education community – including early years, school boards, post-secondary and private schools. RTO/ERO promotes a wide range of world-class programs, social networks and assistance throughout retirement. RTO/ERO's 78,000 members, who range in age from 46 to 109, reside across Canada. The organization has 46 districts in Ontario and 2 in British Columbia. RTO/ERO has the largest voluntary group insurance plan, owned and directed by members, for the education sector in Canada – with 100,000 participants.

## SPRING GATHERING

**WED. MAY 1, 2019**  
**10:00 A.M. COWICHAN GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB**  
Duncan, B.C.

**12:30** Lunch

Cost: \$25 to members and guests  
(partially subsidized by District)

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CLIP AND RETURN COUPON BELOW

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**Spring Gathering coupon**  
**Please complete and return by**  
**Apr. 23 to:**

Rex Sharman  
516 Harbinger Ave.  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8V 4J1  
Phone: 250-294-6304

Name(s): (print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/email contact:

\_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_ X \$25= \_\_\_\_\_  
Cheques only payable to:  
**RTO District 47**

**I will attend if transportation can be provided** \_\_\_\_

## PENNY'S THOUGHTS

Well here we are in early 2019. I would like to wish all of District 47's members a very Happy New Year.

We were all sad to hear of the passing of a dear friend and colleague, Val Alcock-Carter. Val had a long career as an educator before moving to Vancouver Island to retire. Val remained very active during retirement. She was Provincial President of the Retired Teachers of Ontario. She also volunteered in many local charities. Her expertise will be greatly missed.

Our Unit has small numbers at this time, but we always have a good time when together reminiscing and being thankful that we are no longer in the classroom due to the many changes imposed by government and school boards.

As I sit writing this, it is yet another 'lovely sunny day', one of many that we have enjoyed this winter.



Our Social convener, Bonnie McGlynn, has resigned, effective January 1<sup>st</sup>. I would like to thank Bonnie on behalf of all of us for her work in this position. We enjoyed many Social events during the past 2 years that she organized so capably. My husband, David Stowell-Smith, has agreed to step into this vacancy. Please find Social get togethers over the next few months in this newsletter.

We also were in need of a Vice-President who will follow me into the President's role. Gerry Yellowlees has agreed to step into the position. Gerry is a long-time member, and we look forward to his leadership over the next few years.

The role of Unit Health Rep is also vacant at this time. Please contact me if you are interested.

Jim Ross has held the position of newsletter editor for 16 years. It really is time for someone to step into that role and give Jim a well-earned break. Please contact Jim if you feel you could take on this job. He has and continues to publish an interesting and informative newsletter twice a year.

As always, our District is only successful if our members participate and attend gatherings planned on your behalf.

I look forward to seeing everyone at one of our social events.  
May 2019 be kind to all of us.

**Penny Stowell-Smith**  
**President of Mid/Upper Island Unit, District 47**

## **RTO Victoria Unit    President's Report    Winter 2019**

Our AGM and "To Hell With The Bell "event was held on 5 September 2018 at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. Members were provided with a tasty buffet luncheon, followed by an engaging talk by Vice-President Ken Lee on "Understanding the Human Brain ". The topic was pertinent to the members in the audience, as many seniors are concerned about how aging can affect our mental activities and social lives.

In late October, Bill Huzar, Ron Hall and Debbie Walker attended RTO Senate meetings in Toronto where a wide range of topics were presented and discussed over the course of three days. One major focus was what is being done and might be possible to do to enhance the quality of lives for our retired teachers, so they can enjoy longer and more healthy years after teaching. Vital issues such as avoiding loneliness and social isolation were among the many points raised, as both can be devastating for seniors in particular. Other topics included the new governance model and how it applies to each district, how to encourage and recognize volunteers, the unique aspects of our RTO health plan, retirement planning workshops, Bill C27, and ways to grow membership in our organization.

On November 7 we held our executive meeting at the Royal Colwood Golf Club and following it we mailed Christmas cards out to all our members.

Our annual Christmas Social was once again held at The Beach House on the ocean on Wednesday 5 December, where the membership shared a delicious buffet lunch and enjoyed a few hours of social engagement in a pleasant festive atmosphere.

We got back to business with our first executive meeting at the end of January on the 30th, again at the Royal Colwood Golf Club, mapping out plans for 2019. As this will be an election year for our unit, we will be looking for other members to step forward to fill positions on the executive come September at the AGM as some vacancies will open up and need to be taken on by others. If you are open to considering running for a position, please let one of our executives know, as your help would be most welcome.

We wish all our members a happy and healthy 2019!

**Ron Hall, Victoria Unit President**

## **District Website**

Check out our District 47 website at **District 47.rto-ero.org**.  
Thanks to Bill Huzar for maintaining our website.

## **PENSION AND RETIREMENT CONCERNS**

The PRC Workshop, held in October 2018, focussed on Social Isolation. Keynote speaker, Dr. Raza Mirza, highlighted that good relationships are important to good health in seniors. Several community groups, including Ottawa's Seniors' Centre Without Walls, Toronto's Sunshine for Seniors, Prince Edward County's Community Care for Seniors and Hamilton's Social Isolation Impact Plan, spoke about their programs to prevent or break down social isolation of seniors.

The Workshop also featured speakers from OTPP and CUPE. OTPP reported that the current FSCO regulation of pensions in Ontario is to be replaced by FSRA (Financial Services Regulatory Authority) which will have authority to make binding rules without the need to go back to legislators to make these rules. Plan sustainability challenges were highlighted: whereas in 1970 there were 10 active teachers to 1 retired teacher, in 2017 there were 1.3 active teachers to 1 retired teacher.

The speaker from CUPE identified "Shared Risk" Target Benefit Plans as a threat to Defined Pension Plans. In 2012 New Brunswick passed legislation which allowed employers to change from Defined Pension Plans to "Shared Risk" Target Benefit Plans even for current retirees. Other jurisdictions monitor these changes. Federal Bill C27, which allows such changes to federally-regulated employers, is still on the books and can be brought back at any time.

**submitted by Debbie Walker, Pension and Retirement Concerns Representative**

## **Survey on Overcrowding in Hospitals: You Can Help**

June, Farmer, District Secretary, is asking members to help a family member by completing a survey on 'Overcrowding in Hospitals'.

You are invited to complete a survey on Hospital Overcrowding. Some of you should receive an email invite that you can click on.

If you don't do email or receive an invitation there is a link below that will allow you to access the survey (all you have to do is copy and paste it into your web browser). If you have questions about the survey contact June Farmer 250-756-0660 or junefarmer31@gmail.com.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScFguOrd2fnPJHIO5iqUauVbEUMWejw285K6gKr4uPGZaMA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScFguOrd2fnPJHIO5iqUauVbEUMWejw285K6gKr4uPGZaMA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

## **Basic Definition of "Social Isolation and Loneliness"**

'Social isolation and loneliness' is a complex topic. Loneliness is often experienced as more of an anxious or sad feeling. However, you don't necessarily have to be alone in order to experience it. Sometimes you can feel lonely even when surrounded by other people.

Being 'alone' could be good or bad; it doesn't necessarily mean you are lonely. We might all want to be alone at least some of the time; for example, when you feel tired and feel you need a nap. Another example is that some people may prefer living alone versus living with others and are perfectly content with that choice.

For more articles on this topic and others that relate to seniors a good website is **[www.techenhancedlife.com](http://www.techenhancedlife.com)**.

Depuis 1968



Since 1968

STO/ERO

SUPERANNUATED  
TEACHERS  
OF ONTARIO  
LES ENSEIGNANTS  
RETRAITÉS DE  
L'ONTARIO

Fall, 1988

## **The first 50 Years was not always RTO/ERO. Where to Next?**

In 2018, RTO/ERO celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. But we have not always been RTO/ERO. In 1966, a committee was established by OTF (Ontario Teachers' Federation) to organize the superannuated teachers of Ontario. With a budget set by OTF they met for the first time on October 18, 1966 and 10 more times as they moved to unite all retired teachers to form **STO/ERO**. The first Senate was held with people on March 14, 1968 in the board room of the Ontario Public School Men Teachers' Federation (OPSMTF) on 1260 Bay Street, Toronto. The first constitution came into full effect on October 31, 1968. The first President was Arthur McAdam (OPSMTF). In the beginning we started with 9,176 members. On the 40th Anniversary of STO/ERO in 2008, the organization's new name RTO/ERO, new logo and new colours were adopted.

The name change is not the only change that has taken place.

In the past two years, we have moved from a Presidential system to a corporate model, electing a nine-person Board of Directors (one of whom is me) to manage the organization by setting policy and overseeing senior staff.

We have changed the membership status of former associate members to full membership and expanded our membership criteria to include members of the education community beyond that of teachers. Indeed, we now offer membership to education community members outside Ontario and membership to those still actively employed in the education community. We are no longer retired, nor teachers, nor limited to Ontario. Now with more than 77,000 members, the name no longer represents the organization.

Over the last two years, Debbie Walker, Ron Hall, Ken Lee and I, as Senate delegates, have gone through exercises examining the definition of who RTO/ERO is – from jelly bean colours and flavours, to reviewing corporations which have gone through name changes. The Board of Directors have done this by engaging a firm who guide organizations in examining who they were, who they are, and who they want to be. We know who we want to be as defined in the Strategic Plan adopted by Senate:

- To be the trusted voice for the broader education community
- To improve the lives of members and seniors
- To broaden the membership base.

As we go through this exercise in growth, I assure you that the first consideration is for the protection of the long-term membership. I ask you to follow the process and support the elected District members to the Annual Meeting of RTO/ERO in May 2019 when the next vision of the organization will be debated.

Serving District 47.

**Sincerely, Bill Huzar, President.**

This publication is distributed to members of RTO/ERO District 47, British Columbia.

Editor: Jim Ross [wjross2001@shaw.ca](mailto:wjross2001@shaw.ca)

Articles of interest are most welcome. You might send a letter to the editor on any topic that concerns you. Or you might write an article on any topic that may interest your retired colleagues. Or you could share a funny story or photos with our members.

Send your submissions to the editor by email: [wjross2001@shaw.ca](mailto:wjross2001@shaw.ca) or by mail to: J. Ross, 5812 Ralston Dr., Nanaimo, BC, V9T6C5.

Insertion of articles will be at the discretion of the Editor and/or District Executive.

## **MOVING?**

Be sure to update your contact information with the membership department at [membership@rto-ero.org](mailto:membership@rto-ero.org) or by calling 1-800-361-9888 Ext. 223