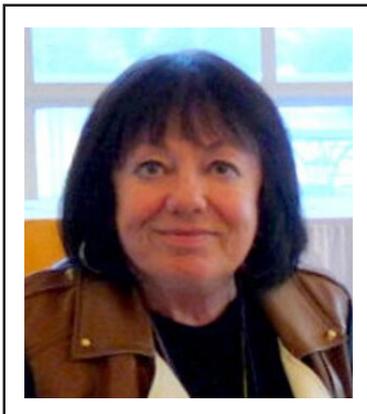




THE RETIRED TEACHERS OF ONTARIO
LES ENSEIGNANTES ET ENSEIGNANTS
RETRAITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

**THE ISLAND
CONNECTION
DISTRICT 47
VANCOUVER ISLAND**

SPRING 2016



Gloria Humphrey
District President

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RTO District 47 President's Report

Welcome to spring! I must say, we are exceedingly lucky to experience our winters, here. I know – it rains a lot, but when I see friends' and family's photos of snow and blizzards, and hear their stories of road closures and travel delays and difficulties getting driveways and roads cleared, the hardship of carrying an umbrella, is a rather small sacrifice.

We have now lived here in paradise for 18+ years, and I joined RTO shortly after we arrived. I am grateful for the opportunity to keep in touch with fellow teachers. If you know someone who has moved west, was in education and has not joined RTO, please invite them to come to a luncheon, meet us and give us a try. They don't have to commit, without sampling our District organization.

In October, Penny Stowell-Smith, Bill Huzar and I attended the Senate Meetings in Toronto. We had the opportunity to meet our new Executive Director, Jim Grieve. We were suitably impressed-he is bright, witty and informative. I hope we can have him out to speak to next year's (2017) Spring Meeting. His Senate presentation held the room in thrall.

I do hope that many of you will attend our Spring Gathering at the Cowichan Bay Golf Club, on May 4, 2016. If transportation is a problem for you, please indicate this on the spot provided on the registration form. We hope that many of you will attend! The food is quite good, and the camaraderie is excellent.

If you have ideas about how to make our social events more inviting, or how to attract more attendees, please contact any on the Executive. We would be very pleased to receive input that will enhance our RTO District 47.

Now, let us see if we can have a smashing beginning to spring 2016, and I would like to thank, in advance all who will participate in our Spring Gathering and helping make it a success.

**Gloria Humphrey
President
District 47**

Spring Gathering

Wed. May 4, 2016

Cowichan Golf and Country Club

Agenda: 10:00 Registration, Tea, Coffee, Muffins, Business Meeting
Speakers: Martin Higgs, Provincial President, RTO/ERO
Bruce Parisian, Executive Director, Victoria Native Friendship Centre
Richard Harrison, Health Benefits administrator, Johnson Inc.
12:15 Lunch Buffet

Cost: \$25 (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
2015-2017**

President:

Gloria Humphrey
(250-658-0725)

Past President:

Darrell Grande
(250-760-0201)

Vice-President:

Bill Huzar
(250-995-3154)

Secretary:

Jim Ross:
(250-756-4794)

Treasurer:

Rex Sharman
(250-294-6304)

Victoria Unit President:

Barbara Strachan
(250-383-3195)

Mid/Upper Island President's
Designate:

Doreen Hall

Mid/Upper Island Unit Representative:

Phil Little

Mid/Upper Island Unit Representative:

Penny-Stowell Smith

Victoria Unit Representative:

Brenda Morgan

Executive Member Emeritus:

Irene McDonald

**SPRING GATHERING
WED. MAY 4, 2016
10:00 a.m. COWICHAN
GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB**

**Special Guests: Martin Higgs, Provincial
President RTO/ERO,
Bruce Parisian, Executive Director,
Victoria Native Friendship Centre,
Richard Harrison, Health Benefits
administrator, Johnson Inc.**

12:15 Fabulous Buffet Menu

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

**Spring Gathering coupon
Please complete and return by April 28,
2016 to:**

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

Name(s): (print)

phone/email:

Number: ____ X \$25= _____

Cheques only payable to:

RTO District 47

***Deadline: Thurs. Apr. 28
I will attend if transportation can
be provided _____***

SENATE REPORT

On October 20-22, 2015, Gloria Humphrey, Penny Stowell-Smith, and Bill Huzar attended the Fall Senate.

There is far too much information to cover in this report, but a full report will be available on the RTO provincial website.

Some important points are the following:

1. We were introduced to our new Executive Director, Jim Grieve, who entertained us with a very interesting speech. An article written by him can be found on Page 4 of the Winter publication of Renaissance.
2. A new Provincial Executive were elected.
They were as follows:

PRESIDENT - Martin Higgs District 36, Peterborough

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT - Martha Foster District 41, Elgin

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT- Dave Kendall District 20, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington

PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER - Judy Bowden District 7, Windsor-Essex

PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER – Rich Prophet District 3, Algoma

PAST PRESIDENT - June Szeman District 40, Brant

There were some major Senate decisions made, but many were carried over to the Spring Senate.

Those carried were:

- * approval of the 2016 operating budget in the amount of \$7.6 million
- * a motion was referred to the Service To Others Committee to increase the annual scholarship award from \$1,000 to \$2,000
- * The P.E. was asked to send a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urging the immediate return to the previous age of eligibility for Old Age Security
- * A report on the status of the RTO/ERO Foundation was given by the Chair, Valerie Mah
- * Our guest speaker was Dr. Paula Rochon, RTO/ERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine

There are further details about any of the above plus additional information available in the recent copy of Renaissance as well as the provincial website.

Submitted by **Penny Stowell-Smith** on behalf of Gloria Humphrey and Bill Huzar

Quotes to Ponder

1. "The most important thing in life is not to capitalize on our gains. Any fool can do that. The really important thing is to profit from your losses. That requires intelligence; and makes the difference between a man of sense and a fool."

William Bolitho

2. The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one." *Mark Twain*

Mid/Upper Island HAVA JAVA

Our meeting place is HAZ BEANS coffee shop at the corner of Rutherford and the Island Hwy., in Nanaimo. We meet on the last Monday of the month at 2:00 p.m. Please join us for your favourite brew and some friendly conversation.

RTO/ERO Retirement Resources:

Provincial Office produces over 62 Fact Sheets on a variety of social, health, legal, pension and financial issues. The fact sheets are available on the RTO/ERO website in 'Members' Centre' section. www.rto-ero.org or phone the Provincial office at 1-416-962-9463 or 1-800-361-9888. Organized by topics, the Fact Sheets may be viewed and/or printed in PDF format using the Adobe Reader.

Index of Topics:

- A. Financial**
- B. Government Benefits**
- C. Health**
- D. Insurance**
- E. Legal**
- F. Marital Matters**
- G. Surviving Spouse**
- H. Retirement Issues**

Worth Repeating

'Learning isn't a process of acquiring information but of acquiring understanding.'

'If your happiness depends on the things you own, it's a fragile sort of happiness!'

'A hug is a great gift: one size fits all.'

RTO/ERO

The Retired Teachers of Ontario is a provincial organization of retired teachers, administrators and others receiving pensions and allowances under the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board.

RTO/ERO is the best organizational friend a retired teacher can have. Formed in 1968, RTO/ERO is dedicated to the needs of Ontario's retired educators and is their official voice, promoting and protecting their interests, particularly in the area of pensions, health care and insurance.

RTO/ERO has maintained this unwavering commitment for over 30 years.

Upcoming Events

**Wed. Mar. 16, 2016, noon
Early St. Patrick's Day Lunch
Simon Holt Restaurant,
Nanaimo**

**Thurs. Apr. 21, 2016, 10:45
a.m.
Tour & Lunch at Deep Bay
Marine Station,
Deep Bay (Bowser)**

**Wed. May 4, 2016 10:00 a.m.
Spring Gathering
Cowichan Golf & Country
Club, Duncan**

Remember: All members are welcome to attend any event hosted by either unit of our District. Support the work of your social committees. Many events are subsidized.

Victoria Unit President's Report

Greetings from District 47 Victoria Unit:

It is early February as I compose this newsletter article for *The Western Connection*, and the days are still short and sunshine is in short supply, but the snowdrops are in bloom, and so are the early rhodos. We are so fortunate to reside in this land of ocean and mountains. I moved here in 2002, and for me it was a wise decision, resulting in a full life with interesting connections and experiences. At least twice a year, I take my "grandmother guilt trips" to Ontario to visit with my daughter, my son-in-law and my three treasured grandchildren, and many long-term friends. It is a satisfying life.

I trust you, too, are pleased with your decision to live here on Vancouver Island and with your membership in District 47. I encourage you to take advantage of your membership and participate in our events and activities. If you are interested in serving on the executive, please contact any member of the current executive to indicate your interest. Two members who have recently volunteered to take a role on the Unit executive are Anna Mary McIlwain, who is going to work with Brenda Morgan on the Phone Committee, and Ruth Beninger who is now the District 47 representative for the RTO/ERO Charitable Foundation.

We thank them for joining us and replacing two former executive members who served the organization faithfully for many years: Jacquie Maxwell who was a Phone Committee Co-ordinator and Ted Humphreys who served as treasurer and then more recently as a Director-at Large. They were recognized with a Certificate of Recognition at the Christmas Luncheon at The Beach House. We are grateful for their years of service with the Victoria Unit, and we hope to continue to see them at our events.

Precious and Sacred Daycare and the STO Grant:

One of our major efforts this year has been applying for the Service to Others grant which each RTO district may apply for each year on behalf of a worthy cause. Our District 47 applied on behalf of the new Precious and Sacred Daycare at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre. The \$4000 grant was awarded to our district and is being used to establish a library corner in the main room of the new building. There will be age-appropriate furniture and shelving and books purchased. The building of the daycare structure has been held up by a variety of issues, but it should open this spring. RTO members will be welcome to attend the official opening when the giving of a presentation cheque will be part of the ceremony. A plaque indicating the donation by the RTO will be placed appropriately in the library corner. The date and time of the official opening will be posted on the District 47 web site once it is known.

At the Christmas luncheon, news of the STO project was shared with the members present, and afterwards one of the members, in memory of her mother of the Lesley family from Toronto, donated a further \$3000 toward the new daycare which will eventually care for 70 children when fully operational. Other donations of \$150 were added to the total by other RTO members.

We are still looking for RTO volunteers willing to read to the children and to assist the staff in the Precious and Sacred Daycare. Some members have already started by reading to the children in the Little Paws Pre-school in the main VNFC main building. There is a lot of choice for books to read to the children. The VNFC Library, the only lending library in a friendship centre in Canada, has a collection of 3900 volumes, including many for children and youth, and approximately 70% of the whole collection has Aboriginal content, or is written by Aboriginal authors.

New Service to Members

One of the new services our Unit has instituted is to send birthday cards to our members who are over 80 years old. We hope that the members receiving the cards will be pleased to be remembered by their RTO colleagues.

Next AGM

There are details elsewhere in this newsletter about this year's Spring Gathering / AGM. We encourage you to attend at the Cowichan Golf Club, Wednesday, May 4th. This year Richard Harrison from Johnson Inc., our Health Benefits administrator, will speak to us about the program which we all appreciate, and answer our questions. We hope, as well, to have Bruce Parisian, the Executive Director of the Victoria Native Friendship Centre share his insights about the value of friendship centres to the urban Indigenous population. Mark May 4th on your calendars and register to attend when the date to pre-register comes along.

Your district and unit executive members would truly appreciate a good turnout of our members for the occasion. In the meantime, be well, and enjoy life on the left coast of our fair country.

Barbara Strachan
Victoria Unit President

RTO/ERO Group Benefits Program What's New as of January 1, 2016

1. The annual maximum for prescription drugs increased to \$3,200.
2. Best Doctors added. (see below)
3. The annual maximum for paramedical practitioners increased to \$1,200.
4. Acupuncture and foot care performed by a Registered Nurse are now reimbursed under the non-surgical services of the Paramedical Practitioner benefit.
5. The maximum for prescription eyewear increased to \$400 in any two consecutive calendar years. The additional lifetime maximum for new lenses required due to eye surgery also increased to \$400.
6. The maximum for contact lenses prescribed for severe corneal astigmatism, severe corneal scarring, keratoconus or aphakia, to correct vision to at least a 20/40 level (only when regular glasses cannot improve vision to that level), increased to a limit of \$400 per insured person in any two consecutive calendar years.
7. The reimbursement for eye exams increased to cover multiple eye exams up to a maximum of \$150 per person every two consecutive calendar years and each calendar year for eligible dependent children.
8. The maximum for the purchase or repair of hearing aids, excluding batteries, changed to \$1,100 per person in any five consecutive calendar years.

Effective January 1, 2016, RTO/ERO will be enhancing the Extended Health Care plan by adding Best Doctors. Best Doctors is an organization that provides a suite of services which enables you to draw on the knowledge of the best medical minds in the world to help you get the right diagnosis, the right treatment and the right care. There is no cost to you to use the program and participation is strictly confidential. This benefit is available to all EHC participants and their dependents. For more information, or to connect with **Best Doctors**, call **1-877-419-2378** or visit **www.bestdoctorscanada.com**.

Health Matters: Travelling out-of-province, within Canada

Most people are aware of the need for travel insurance to cover emergency medical expenses when travelling outside of Canada. However, many are not aware of the importance of travel insurance when travelling outside their province or territory but within Canada.

Provincial Government Health Insurance Plans provide some out-of-province coverage through provincial reciprocal agreements. Typically, this covers medically necessary eligible physician and hospital services only. Because the coverage is limited, all provincial governments recommend that their residents obtain private travel insurance.

Most provinces cover medically necessary physician services performed outside of your province of residence, within Canada. Usually the doctor bills your plan directly; however, they may require that you pay up front. In this case, it would be your responsibility to seek reimbursement from your provincial plan.

For more on this topic refer to your Renaissance Magazine, Winter 2015 edition, page 42.

We Get Letters, E-mails & Calls

By Jim Ross

Normally I never receive feedback about this Newsletter. I figure no one reads it or it's too boring or people just can't be bothered. So imagine my surprise when I received correspondence from William Emigh in response to our last issue (Summer 2015). He wrote:

"What a pleasure to find a poem in your Summer 2015 issue.

David Fraser's subtle images are full of music and nostalgia, especially for those of us lucky enough to have had an Auntie Mame.

I presume to send you some poems never published as far as I know, though I have published poems in various magazines.

'The Confidence of Swallows' is a true sad memory.

'The Irony of a Gas Shortage in Port Harcourt' is a memory of my days in the polluted Niger Delta.

The other poems explain themselves; maybe you will find some pleasure in them.

Of course I taught English and History in Ontario, but also I taught in Colleges and Teacher Training Institutes for several years in each of Nigeria, Uganda and Somoa"

You can read one of William Emigh's poems on page 9 of this newsletter.

Members in Our Community

Joan Etheridge and Gerry Yellowlees participated in the Parkinson's SuperWalk in October. The Parksville group raised \$9,300 and British Columbia as a whole raised \$364,700. Many members of RTO supported this fundraiser as participants or donors.

Our members are active in their respective communities. Please drop us a line letting us know of events worth supporting.

Send your information to wjross2001@shaw.ca.

Moments that Matter

Life is a long road filled with not only major milestones (weddings, graduations), but also day-to-day moments that sometimes are just as unforgettable.

What has been the most memorable moment of your life? Tell us about it.

Share your 'moment' by sending it to Jim Ross email: wjross2001@shaw.ca

We promise to read them all and with your permission, to share some with the readers of this newsletter.

Remember big or small, they all matter.

The Irony of a Gas Shortage in Port Harcourt, Nigeria's Oil Town

Beneath this town
straight down
deep
in huge viscous pools
powerful potentials lurk
lingering in oily juices
squeezed by time
from countless cold crustaceans
- aeons dead.

What irony
that such crude muck should be
both power and purpose
holding me
in this frenzied file of cars
crawling to a gas pump
in Port Harcourt
which mars
the Niger Delta.

I grip my wheel
(and think of Ixion) –
shoulders tense
salt sweat on pale and alien face,
caught here because,
millennia past
a zillion sliding shells
stopped,
stank,
and left a gritty essence
now so valued when refined
that just to get it
sweeps away our inclinations to be kind.

This hellish noon
Filthy fumes throb out behind me
while I move as slow as those damned clams
that manless age ago.

My God –
is that mask mine
staring from the mirror?

Something's very wrong
- a dreadful fault
- including me:
I can't accuse –
just suffer today's fears
and guiltily change gears.

Then –
blessed irrelevance –
a whiff of woodsmoke –
a flip of mind –
I'm back where I was born
just for an instant,
then here again
to find I mourn
that this hot humid
reeking town
can never know
the cool
and cleansing freshness

of a quiet fall of snow.

William Emigh First in 1974 –
 Reworked, Victoria,
April 29, 2003

About the Poet

Bill Emigh was raised in Tottenham, Ontario. He graduated from University College, University of Toronto. He taught in Dufferin County and York Region, and for several years in each of Nigeria, Uganda and Western Somoa. He is a RTO/ERO member who lives in Victoria where he enjoys gardening, and writing poems and stories. 'The Irony of a Gas Shortage in Port Harcourt, Nigeria's Oil Town' is published with his permission.

Missing Your Newsletter???

Occasionally District 47 members don't receive this newsletter. These members may have moved without notifying RTO in Toronto. If you hear of any members who are not receiving this newsletter, ask them to contact RTO (1-800-361-9888) to make sure their contact information is correct and current. **Due to privacy rules we cannot change member's addresses at the local level.**

Some Reasons to Volunteer with RTO/ERO

- 1. Find a purpose**
- 2. Connect with members of your District organization**
- 3. Feel Involved**
- 4. Meet new people**
- 5. Use your skills in a productive way**
- 6. Make new friends**
- 7. Have input into activities and organization**
- 8. Have fun with colleagues**
- 9. Find out more about your RTO**
- 10. Make a difference**

Volunteers are needed to support the programs and activities we offer with RTO/ERO which range from becoming an Executive member to serving on one of our committees. If you would like to join our wonderful group of volunteers please contact one of the Executive Members listed in this newsletter.

If you are interested in becoming the newsletter editor, contact Jim Ross: email wjross2001@shaw.ca or phone: 250-756-4794 for more details. Here's your opportunity.

Join your Mid/Upper Island RTO friends for an early St. Patrick's Day lunch.

Where: Simon Holt
6582 Applecross Road, Nanaimo
(behind Costco)

When: March 16, 2016, at noon

Website: www.simonholt.ca

Simon Holt phone: 250-933-3338

If you're attending, phone or email Bonnie McGlynn by March 13.

Phone: 250-751-0235 / Email: bonnseam@shaw.ca

Mid/Upper Island RTO trip to Deep Bay Marine Station in April

Living on Vancouver Island, we have the wondrous beauty of the ocean and its creatures surrounding us. Learn more about these aquatic marvels and ocean, by joining our group. A visit to Deep Bay Marine Station, under the direction of Vancouver Island University staff, is informative and enjoyable.

Location: Deep Bay Marine Station
Vancouver Island University
370 Crome Pt. Rd.,
Deep Bay (Bowser), B.C.

When: **Thursday, April 21, 2016 at 10:45 a.m.**

Itinerary: Guided tour of one hour, and time at the aquarium/touch tanks, followed by gourmet sandwich lunch.

Cost: **\$20 per person.** (Thank-you to our unit for subsidizing this activity.)

Website: Check for travel directions/background information at www.viu.ca/deepbay. If you need transportation check off the box and provide your contact information.

If you're attending, send your cheque to Unit President, Jim Ross by **April 11**. Please note that if we have less than 10 participants, the activity will be cancelled.

+++++

Detach, and send cheque to Jim Ross: to be received **by April 11**.

Name(s) _____

will attend the Deep Bay Marine Station Activity on April 21.

_____ (no. of people) x \$20.00 p.p. = _____

Cheque payable to: **RTO District 47, Mid/Upper Island Unit** is enclosed.
Would like to attend but will need transportation. Contact me at:

Jim Ross
5812 Ralston Dr.
Nanaimo, B.C.
V9T 6C5

District Website

Check out our District 47 Website at [District 47.rto-ero.org](http://District47.rto-ero.org).
Thanks to Bill Huzar for maintaining our website.

This Publication is distributed to all members of RTO/ERO District 47 British Columbia.

Editor: Jim Ross

Articles of interest are most welcome. Insertion of articles will be at the discretion of the Editor and/or District Executive.

Submission Standards: Electronic TXT file preferred, (or Word DOC file)
emailed to the editor at **wjross2001@shaw.ca**

Typed or hand-printed submissions are accepted. Send snail mail to:

W. J. Ross, 5812 Ralston Dr., Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6C5

Moving?

Update your mailing and email address with the membership department at membership@rto-ero.org or by calling 1-800-361-9888.