



*Photo by Marilyn MacLennan*

## Revisiting, Re-experiencing, Reliving...Our Happy Places!

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**Gotta SING,  
Gotta DANCE!**

June 21, 2022 2pm & 7pm  
June 22, 2pm

For tickets call  
**905-681-6000**  
or online at [burlingtonpac.ca](http://burlingtonpac.ca)

**Burlington  
Footnotes**



Senior Performing Troupe Inc.

**THE BURLINGTON PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE**

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# President's Report

By Jerry Powidajko



Welcome back! We are hoping you had a great summer full of sunshine, health and happiness! Certainly, whether you are a new retiree or a seasoned veteran, the fall will bring new opportunities not available in the past few years!

I read a very interesting article titled "Life after Work: Who am I now?" in the Summer 2022 issue of *Renaissance*. For many of us our careers spanned 20, 30 and even 40 years as educators. After we retire there are times when we all feel like we are having an identity crisis, not really understanding our new purpose or goal in life! In a survey 51% of retirees saw this time in life as a new chapter. As the article points out "to live well in the new retirement, four interrelated pillars need to exist: health, finances, family, and purpose." Of these four "purpose" might have the most power - why do we start each and every day? **"Retirees with a strong sense of purpose are not only happier, they also live longer."** This observation really directs us to be actively involved with our families, not to be afraid to try new experiences and foods and to give back to our community and profession. These doors will always be there in your life but, unfortunately, only you can open them and walk through. Look for these doors.

We will be offering an in-person **Luncheon on October 26th at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club**, 5407 Regional Rd. 25, Milton, ON L9T 2X5. Our guest speaker will be Mark Zelinski. Upon completion of Art Fundamentals at Sheridan College, Mark Zelinski entered the Ontario College of Art in 1975 to study design, drawing, sculpture and water-colour painting. His interests quickly turned to photography and film and he graduated as the top student of the college in 1979, winning the Governor General's Medal and three scholarships for his work. As a result of his art training the elements of colour, composition, and light are Mark's forte. We look forward to Mark's photographic presentation "Heart of Turtle Island - The Niagara Escarpment." View his website - [www.markzelinski.com](http://www.markzelinski.com). Further information on how to register for the luncheon is available on pages 20-21 in this *Halton Herald*, as well as on our website.

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Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

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At our AGM this past spring the following slate of candidates was presented and acclaimed as the **2022 - 2023 Executive for the RTOERO District 15 Halton:**

- President - Jerry Powidajko
- Past President - Micki Clemens
- First Vice-President - Vacant
- Second Vice-President - Brad Fisher
- Secretary - Dianne Visschedyk
- Treasurer - Carol Pashkievich

We are very excited to work with this great group of volunteers and look forward to an exciting year!

As well we have a loyal group of volunteers running and chairing the following committees:

- Archives: Blaine Adams
- Community Grants and Scholarships: Penny Hambly
- Foundation Champion: Moira Plexman
- Communications:

- Halton Herald*: Peter Gnish
- H.Herald* (Co-ord.): M. Clemens (Temp)
- Rapport* E-Newsletter: Brad Fisher
- Facebook: Patricia Mateja
- Website: Carey Mollenhauer

- Goodwill: Toni Pizzigrilli
- Health: Bonnie Cummings
- Social Media: Patricia Mateja
- Member at Large: Susan Staviv
- Membership/Recruit: Marilyn MacLennan
- Political Advocacy: Claudia Stewart
- Program: Jerry Powidajko (Temp.)
- Social: Vacant

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As with all not-for-profit organizations we rely heavily on our volunteers to help support our district organization and to work on creating events, sharing information and being available to our members as needs arise. All our committees are always looking for new volunteers and this activity is certainly a positive way to give back and learn from others.

As well we do have some positions vacant that require chairs to oversee the committee work. So, realizing your skills are very transferable, why not consider volunteering with us? You are always welcome and, if you would like further information, please contact the committee chair directly or myself. To contact, please email [district15halton@gmail.com](mailto:district15halton@gmail.com) with the subject field containing the name/position of board member you wish to contact.

Our Board meeting dates for the 2022-23 year were finalized at the June 20th meeting:

Tuesday, Sept. 20

Wednesday, Oct. 26 - Luncheon

Thursday, Nov. 17

Tuesday, Jan. 24

Wednesday, Apr. 19

Thursday, May 18 - AGM

Tuesday, Jun. 20

As we are all aware by now, the provincial election was held in June but that doesn't stop the work of our **Political Advocacy Committee (PAC)**. Our committee, led by **Claudia Stewart**, is very active in keeping the focus on issues, especially those that affect seniors. Working with the national RTOERO group we continue to focus on questions affecting all seniors:

- the privatization of hospitals and LTC homes;
- the wage gaps and lack of benefits between health care workers in hospitals and staff in private care facilities;
- the urgency for recruitment and retention of staff at LTC facilities and in Home Care services;
- the overall need to strengthen the accountability in these facilities.

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Information will continue to be made available on our website and the national RTOERO website.

Also District 15 Halton has its own **Facebook** page as a way to stay in touch, share information and promote and celebrate events with all members. Thanks to the work of member **Patricia Mateja**, our **Social Media Manager**, we have a vibrant Facebook presence. Please visit our site at [www.facebook.com/RTOERODistrict15Halton](http://www.facebook.com/RTOERODistrict15Halton)

**Brad Fisher** continues to work tirelessly to co-ordinate our electronic newsletter, *Rapport*. This is a great collection of pictures, news and stories, focusing on District 15 - Halton, published multiple times a year. I know Brad would appreciate your submissions sent, for possible inclusion, to [Rapportd15@gmail.com](mailto:Rapportd15@gmail.com).

The *Halton Herald*, our newsletter, comes out three times a year in print and electronic form, thanks to the amazing work of **Peter Gnish**, Editor. Although we do send the *Halton Herald* by mail, members are invited to consider receiving their edition of the *Halton Herald* electronically. If you would like to save a few trees please send our Editor, **Peter Gnish**, an email stating that you no longer wish to receive a paper copy in snail mail but would like to enjoy the *Herald* digitally. Send your email to [District15Halton@gmail.com](mailto:District15Halton@gmail.com).

As always we encourage you to visit our website, (<https://district15.rto-ero.org>) for up-to-date information, a calendar of events and support documentation. Thank you to **Carey Mollenhauer**, our new Web Manager!

We look forward to seeing you at our **October Luncheon!**  
**Have a great year!**



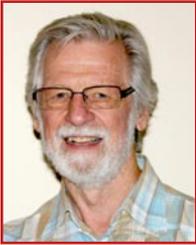
### Book of Remembrance We remember with fondness

Margot Brister	Gregory Dwyer	Anthony Galioto	Mary Gerrie
Carroll Goodwin	William Hubbard	Catherine Kavanagh	Diane Knox
Avril Kruger	Christopher Logan	Betty McMullan	Raymond Morrison
Elizabeth Ryan	June Thomson	Linda Townsend	Linda Walker
Madeline Wright			

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## We Get Letters, E-mails & Calls

By Peter Gnish



We received another excellent response from members who submitted comments to share with their friends and former colleagues. Thank you for taking the time and effort to do that. If you haven't brought us up-to-date with what is happening in your retired life why not do it now. E-mail me ([pgnish@gmail.com](mailto:pgnish@gmail.com)) by November 15th with as few or as many details as you like for posting in the January issue.

**Paul Davidson** wrote to say "This year I will be doing a week long fly-in fishing trip into northern Ontario in July, then spending a good month and a half in Atlantic Canada, primarily Newfoundland. We'll be travelling through New Brunswick and Nova Scotia on the way to traversing Nfld. in both directions. All by car. The latter has been on hold now for over 2 years and is still on the bucket list!"

**Al Finlayson** sent a message from Muskoka. He said "Barb and I have been living up here full time for 13 years now and love it. We renovated her parents' cottage and live on a small lake between Bracebridge and Huntsville on a road with several other full-time neighbours as well as "cottagers." It's great to see what some of the old gang are doing. It brings back fond memories of colleagues at the schools where I taught, as well as my days at the Board Office. I still get together with friends I taught with at Georgetown and Drury. I mostly keep busy with historical research and writing and amazingly enough have had a few articles published. That, along with curling, golf and our new puppy are keeping me active. All the best."

**David Knight** sent an email to say "Thank you for all your efforts (along with many others) for the *Halton Herald*. It is always informative and the personal recollections of the members are always welcomed. Thank you again Peter, stay well."

**Jim Miller's** wife, Diane, sent the following message: "It is always a pleasure to receive the *Halton Herald* and see you manning your post. We enjoy reading it cover to cover. It has been a tough few years for us but we are getting along and staying active. We lost our beautiful

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daughter to cancer last year in June which was devastating. Jim had heart surgery at St. Mary's in Kitchener to fix two small partially blocked arteries, and I had an ascending aortic aneurysm repaired at the Peter Munk Heart Hospital in Toronto. The doctors replaced my aorta with fabric tubing; they also "installed" a new valve. We healed well. All this took place during the pandemic. PHEW!

Jim is now back to hosting a guitar club at Milton's Senior Centre on Thursday afternoons. The guitar players enjoy getting away from their other halves and their other halves enjoy having them get away!

My enjoyment comes from writing my memoirs and hosting "Writers Circle" for Milton Public Library, on Zoom since Covid took over. I also work as Mrs. Claus during the Christmas season. This past Christmas I read a story for each of the 24 Days of Christmas for children on YouTube, filmed by the Milton Public Library.

Check out a memoir I wrote about building our home  
... <https://miltonmemories.ca>.

Other of my memoirs are included in anthologies written for the Library, offered in hard copy and online... Maybe these anthologies will convince a few RTO members to write their own memoirs?

<https://www.mpl.on.ca/images/documents/lifescapes/2016OnceUponAMemory.pdf>

<https://www.mpl.on.ca/images/documents/lifescapes/2017Reflections.pdf>. Fondly, Diane Miller... Jim's wife."

**Colton Roberts** wrote to say "Thanks, Peter, to you and Cate for another outstanding job! It is good to see such great memories. It is so great to hear the stories of so many members! You do a fabulous job.

When I started to teach at Elizabeth Gardens in 1964, we were still in the Burlington Board of Education under the very capable Director of Education in the person of Jim Singleton. There were 28 elementary and 4 high schools. I remember the amalgamation of local boards to a county board as coming in 1969 because I went to Milton's Martin Street School as part of the newly formed Halton Board in Sept. 1970. I think the change to the Regional board in 1980 was more a change in name as far as the Halton board was concerned, although it made

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quite a difference in the structure of the municipal government. Lots of good memories of meeting many wonderful people and of working in wonderful environments will always be with me. Thanks, again for your fine work!

**Richard Szymczyk** sent this email: "I just received the *Herald* today. Thank you again for including my 'memories'. Also I enjoyed reading Jackie Poppe's musings. I believe we may have worked together on a committee or two. And I am delighted that **Jack Leadbeater** is still up and running. First met him practice teaching at Lakeshore in '60...was a great supporter and mentor...."

**Nancy Sorensen** wrote to say "Received *Halton Herald* today and what a great edition! Lots of terrific info. Loved the book lists!"

**William Trezise** sent this message: "Congratulations on your achievements with Cate on the *Halton Herald*. Well deserved! Hope you are keeping well. We moved here to Wasaga Beach after I retired in 1999. I enjoy emails and Facebook entries from former staff and students. It is amazing that some of my former students have reached retirement age and have grandchildren."

**Welcome New RTOERO District 15 Members!!!**

**Our membership is now over 2900 people. Below are the names of teachers, other education staff and surviving spouses who became members since April, 2022. Please welcome them and invite them to join you at one of our activities when we are permitted to gather once again.**

- |                           |                          |                             |                            |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Beverley Badgley</b>   | <b>Elizabeth Barnett</b> | <b>Cynthia Bate</b>         | <b>Christene Boulanger</b> |
| <b>Chris Counce</b>       | <b>Jacques Cloutier</b>  | <b>Louise Colussi</b>       | <b>Patrick Cudmore</b>     |
| <b>Lynda Danahy</b>       | <b>David deBelle</b>     | <b>Lynette Dwyer</b>        | <b>Karen Felske</b>        |
| <b>Loriann Ferguson</b>   | <b>Tim Flynn</b>         | <b>Lori Fyfle</b>           | <b>William Goodwin</b>     |
| <b>Dave Grace</b>         | <b>Richard Hamel</b>     | <b>Jacqueline Hart</b>      | <b>Gail Hubbard</b>        |
| <b>Derek Jones</b>        | <b>Stephen Kotulak</b>   | <b>Robert Kurtz</b>         | <b>George Leckie</b>       |
| <b>Heather Leger</b>      | <b>Laurie Letourneau</b> | <b>Jeannette Létourneau</b> |                            |
| <b>Diane Logan</b>        | <b>Susan Macaulay</b>    | <b>Suzanne Matthews</b>     | <b>Nancy McCamon</b>       |
| <b>Brenda Meninger</b>    | <b>Stuart Miller</b>     | <b>Karen Morrison</b>       | <b>Keith Murray</b>        |
| <b>Linda Phillips</b>     | <b>John Purcell</b>      | <b>Tessy Sagan</b>          | <b>John Stieva</b>         |
| <b>Catherine Thompson</b> | <b>Lynn Vallaroni</b>    | <b>Annie Venneri</b>        | <b>Lynnette Werner</b>     |

## A Word Polaroid from Wasaga Beach, 1964

By Jim Diell

Jean Anderson and I taught in the Wasaga Beach School in the early sixties. Her room has been made over into the town hall reception area and my room is now the Wasaga Beach town council meeting chambers.



Our second Inspector of Public Schools was P.M. Scott. He raced his Valiant out of Barrie bi-monthly and dropped in for an inspection. On his first visit he walked to the middle of my room, looked at each wall in turn and took a mental picture for his photographic memory and then introduced himself. On later visits he could and did comment on the changes or lack thereof to the bulletin board displays. He also liked to see the big blue five year registers. Earlier registers had been red, do you remember?

Monthly attendance reports, calculated to three decimals then rounded to two, were mailed on the last day of attendance to his Barrie office. They were not to be late! Apparently they were not to be early either. On one of his regular visits there was a suggestion that my reports were arriving in Barrie too soon to have been mailed on the prescribed last day of attendance. Perhaps there was a hint of doubt in his response to my reassurance that all was by the book.

A few weeks later Mr. Scott appeared on the last day of attendance and older retirees will recognize the significance of his arrival time of 1.15 p.m. Registers were requested and inspection revealed that they were not yet "closed". He initialled a blank report form and headed off for the

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next school, Oxbow Park, to the west. As soon as he was out of sight a phone call was made to Mrs. Koch at the Oxbow. Code..."The cat is on the mat." Perhaps there may have been some preparations made for the impending visit.

Later that afternoon, at recess, I closed my register and prepared most of the report. When dismissal time came I asked Jim Reeves to stay for a few minutes while I finished the paperwork and addressed the envelope. Jim cycled over to the Beach Post Office where his postmaster father, Frank Reeves, franked the stamp and put the envelope into the Barrie bag. Perhaps he held the courier for this important letter to ensure that it was on its way on time. Perhaps we had discussed this procedure a week earlier.

Before 10.00 a.m. the very next morning there was a phone call from the Barrie office to acknowledge receipt of the report. No further discussion of registers and reports took place in any further inspections.

In 1965 I was interviewed and hired for a job in September at Rolling Meadows here in Burlington. John Robbins did come to meet me at the cash register of the local LCBO in August. It wasn't until many years later that I learned that this meeting had been John's first visit to an LCBO store.

Rolling Meadows teachers will, perhaps fondly, remember the monthly staff room register meetings. Gerry Whyte and I would each have a smoke while the onerous register data was transferred to a school summary. One half of the registers were checked by John and the other one half by Gerry. Those registers could be admitted as evidence in a court case and they provided information that was used to support the provincial grant money to the school boards. Years later Bruce Lindley ushered me into a locked "vault" room in the basement of the J.W. Singleton Centre. One 40 watt bulb shone on the shelves of archived registers from every school that had been closed in Halton.

Forgot one detail. Register entries had to be in ink, not ball point, so we kept one Waterman and a bottle of Quink just for the monthlies.

## Teacher Librarians Celebrate Ukraine

By Pauline Weber

On March 27th a group of retired elementary teacher-librarians gathered around my dinner table in Burlington to celebrate the easing of Covid restrictions. Blue and yellow flowers signaled our respect and concern for Ukraine as we feasted on takeaway Ukrainian food from St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church's Terrace TakeAway, which is open twice weekly for on-line or walk-in orders. Their varenyky (perogies) sauteed with onions, cabbage rolls, sausages, cooked sauerkraut, beet relish and apple crepes were delicious. I added green beans to brighten the colour palette of the plates and wines from Georgia and Wayne Gretzky's vineyard (he has Belarus/Ukrainian/Polish roots) plus a Ukrainian brandy which enhanced the flavours of the food.

**Linda Rafuse, Mary Kebalo-Plata, Marg Bowra, Rita Maret, Susan Mickalow** (manager of library technical services) and **Lynette Weber** (my daughter whose last year of teaching was full-time teacher-librarian)



recalled some of the people they had worked with, remembered other teacher-librarian contemporaries, memorialized T-Ls who are no longer with us and told fascinating tales of what we had gone on to do after our school library careers - everything from being vice-principals and principals, working in international schools in China and Africa, becoming Deputy Chief Librarian at Milton, to working for an educational stream-

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ing video company (me - still!). We talked about what our grandchildren are up to and lamented the board's decision to replace elementary teacher-librarians with library technicians in 22-23. We once again proved during our get-together that teacher-librarians are among the most interesting people we have ever known!



## Dancing In Our Hearts

By Micki Clemens

Delighted theatregoers were thrilled to enjoy the Burlington Footnotes once again, after a two-year hiatus, as they took the stage by storm at the Burlington Performing Arts Centre on June 21 and 22 this year.



The *Gotta SING, Gotta DANCE!* production was packed with energetic and colourful dance numbers showcasing the tap and jazz dancing skills of this senior troupe. The dance numbers were enhanced by the imaginative and vivid costuming, spectacular lighting and glorious sound that accompanied these performances. In addition to the dancing there were short scenes performed by members in character with song accompaniment and there were individual singers who melted us with their respective tender or soaring notes.

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**Penny Hambly** (our RTOERO District 15 Awards Chair) has been a member of The Footnotes for thirteen years. She started taking classes in 2009 after seeing some shows post-retirement and thought it looked like fun! Initially she had to waive performing in the annual show because of travelling adventures. However she managed to do her first show in 2011. She commented "...while I may prefer jazz dancing, I still love all the dances and I love singing the songs from the musicals or other old favourites with The Golden Girls and Guys."

In 2019 Penny joined the Footnotes Board and became President. Since the members were not dancing during COVID, Penny felt it was necessary to keep the members interested and engaged. So she initiated a monthly newsletter called "Keeping In Touch With The Footnotes."

There are other RTOERO District 15 Halton members who participate in this talented troupe: **Mary Hopkins, Kate Lowe, Susan Pritchard and Judy Sloan.**

The Burlington Footnotes was founded over 20 years ago by Rosemarie Maurice. It started with a small group of dancers called *The Burlington Footnotes*. They performed two annual shows at Nelson High School followed by cabaret shows and then made a move to the Oakville Performing Arts Centre.

In 2006 Rosemarie changed it from a sole proprietorship to a non-profit incorporated company known as *Burlington Footnotes Senior Performing Troupe Inc.* It is run by the Board and Rosemarie and her company called JMC productions are hired to produce choreography and arrange costumes for the *Gotta SING, Gotta DANCE!* show. The group "promotes the ideals of aging gracefully through a healthy body and mind and empowerment through the performance arts." In 2012 the company was excited to move to the new Burlington Performing Arts Centre.

In 2019 the Footnotes were inducted into The Burlington Performing Arts Centre Hall of Fame.

## Social Media Report

By Patricia Mateja



RTOERO National actively promotes and supports the use of Social Media tools (newsletters, websites, and Facebook) as a way of fostering community within and among all districts. To support the Social Media Managers in each district RTOERO National offers the following: virtual quarterly workshops; a learning platform which managers may access when looking for videos or information; a source from which Social

Media managers may access seasonal brand headers for their Facebook page and photos which are safe to use; monthly ZOOM meetings; and shared informational articles that managers can then share on their district Facebook page.

With all this support and training the role of District 15 Halton's Social Media manager has not only evolved but the manager also has the responsibility of posting district news and local information and messages in a timely fashion.

Our District 15 Facebook page is often the first source our members view for information about presentations, senior issues (especially during the past election), social events such as the upcoming ones in the fall and Zoom District 15 Halton board meetings. Our Facebook page is also a safe place to share ideas and comments and make positive connections with other members. Check us out at [www.facebook.com/RTOERODistrict15Halton](http://www.facebook.com/RTOERODistrict15Halton).

### Contribute to the Herald!

The next *Halton Herald* will be distributed in January, 2023.

- Send a Letter to the Editor ([pgnish@gmail.com](mailto:pgnish@gmail.com)) on any topic that concerns you or tell us how you are doing and what you are up to.
- Write an article on any topic that may interest your retired colleagues. Please limit your article to a maximum of 750 words.
- Share a funny story with our many readers.
- Provide us with pictures to share with our members.

Send your article or correspondence to the Newsletter Coordinator, Micki Clemens by e-mail: [micki.clemens@sympatico.ca](mailto:micki.clemens@sympatico.ca).  
Deadline - November 15, 2022.

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## RTOERO District 15 Halton Academic Spirit Awards

By Marilyn MacLennan

Each year our District 15 Halton offers academic scholarships to students from the Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board who are graduating and going directly into post secondary education. The criteria for this award includes:

- Demonstration of good academic performance, but not necessarily considered “academically elite.”
- Demonstration of a strong work ethic, commitment to their studies and service to others.
- Evidence that the student has overcome obstacles to successfully graduate from secondary school.
- Special consideration may be given to students who have faced financial barriers.

We congratulate this year’s three recipients:

**Ebun Coker** from St. Ignatius of Loyola Secondary School

She is seen as a leader and champion for racial justice, equity and inclusion in the school and community. Seeing the need for more black representation in health care, she plans to eventually go into medicine.

**Yusra Hassan** from White Oaks Secondary School

She has a passion for computer technology and its practical application. She has shared her skills with younger students and has been an inspiring example of overcoming loss. She will be studying computer science at university.

**Hargun Saini** from Milton District High School

She is a highly motivated student who volunteered in the school and community. In spite of family health issues, she was able to stay focussed on academics in order to reach her goal of attending the University of Waterloo in Health Science. Understanding the importance of good dental care, she hopes to become a dentist.



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# A Mentorship Opportunity!

By George Chisholm

I taught in the tech area, mostly at Oakville Trafalgar High School, for 30+ years until retiring about 14 years ago. In 2003 I was involved in starting a **FIRST** Robotics Team. I stayed on as a volunteer with the team there until 2015 when I was part of a group that started **FIRST** Robotics Team 1360, Orbit Robotics. You may have heard of **FIRST** as its profile has been growing in Canada. **FIRST** (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) was invented by entrepreneur Dean Kamen ([www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org)). Dean invented the Segway and Slingshot water filtration system. The goal is to develop an interest in STEM (Science, Technology Engineering, Mathematics) in youth through the design and fabrication of 120-pound robots to be used in co-operative competition. Robots, though, are only the bait to get kids in the door. The team operates as a small business with sub-teams including Design, Build, Controls, Programming, Business, Outreach and Media. **FIRST** has copyrighted the term “Co-opertition”.

An experienced group of mentors started our team in Oakville seven years ago because we recognized that most high school students do not attend a school where there is a team. There are six teams in Oakville including two at private schools and another 5 or 6 elsewhere in Halton. We're the only community team between Toronto and Hamilton and are not associated with any school or school board. We are now a registered charity. The team has done well over the past six years. We now have about 45 members (about 35% girls) from 15 high schools in Oakville and Mississauga. During COVID we purposely kept our numbers down. We also have a **FIRST** Tech Challenge Team for kids from Grade 7 to 12 and two **FIRST** LEGO teams for Grades 4 to 8. During COVID we were able to 3D print close to 2000 face shields which we donated to front line workers. With the exception of one young woman, all of our alumni have gone on to further education in STEM. That exception is in Commerce at Queen's on a Chancellor's Scholarship. Last year three of our alumni were accepted into the Mechatronics Engineering program at Waterloo with another four starting in Computer Science there. Two of our alumni are studying Biomedical Engineering

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at Mac, both on scholarships. We've been to the World Championships in Detroit twice (it was cancelled for the past two years). Our group of about 16 mentors includes engineers, parents, a CNC programmer and machinist and a retired business executive.

Our sponsors include Pratt & Whitney, TC Energy, Desjardins Insurance, Ford US, Siemens US and Zebra Technologies and have recently included Woodbridge and Niscon. Our annual budget is between \$50,000 and \$60,000.

Mentorship is an area that RTOERO might be able to help us out with. We need more mentors, particularly in the design and manufacturing area. Who better than retired teachers with time on their hands.

Obviously I'm passionate about **FIRST** and its effect on youth and could go on at length. If you are interested in helping us out or becoming involved I'd appreciate hearing from you. You can contact me as follows:

George Chisholm, Mentor, **FIRST** Robotics Team 1360, Orbit Robotics, Oakville

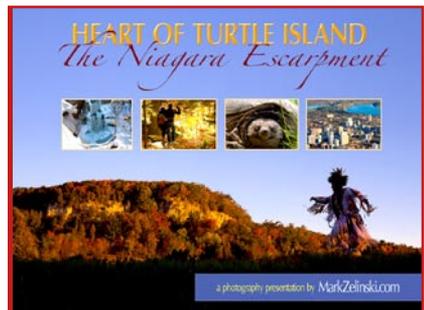
Telephone: 289-838-6428

www.1360.ca

## GRAB A TABLE! RTOERO LUNCHEONS ARE BACK!

The Program Committee for District 15 Halton is both delighted and excited to welcome you back to our IN-PERSON events this fall!

Our kick-off LUNCHEON and GUEST SPEAKER'S PRESENTATION will be held at the gorgeous Rattlesnake Golf Club just off Hwy. 25, north of Oakville, and south of Milton on October 26.



Your well-being is important to us! In order to ensure your comfort, our SEATING ARRANGEMENTS will be planned for only SIX at a table

(Luncheons...continues on Page 19)

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(Luncheons...continued from Page 18)

rather than 8 or 10. MASKS are not required, but the choice is at your discretion. There will be SANITIZING STATIONS for members to use in the registration and banquet areas.

*Risk: Attendees understand and agree that there is an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 in any public place where people are present. RTOERO District 15 is working closely with the Rattlesnake Golf Club staff to ensure all necessary and reasonable precautions are being met to reduce chances of exposure. We do ask that you avoid attending this event if you are presenting any symptoms.*

We have a delicious fall MEAL planned for you to enjoy as you re-engage with your fellow RTOERO members and your guests. Vegetarian and gluten free choices are available as well.

### **MENU**

Sherry and Onion Puree with Gruyere Crostini and Sage Oil  
Fresh Breads and Whipped Butter  
Braised Ontario Beef Short Ribs  
Parmesan Whipped Potatoes and Heirloom Carrots  
Horseradish Gremolata  
Cinnamon Bun Cheesecake

And the ENTERTAINMENT will dazzle!  
HEART OF TURTLE ISLAND – THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT  
A photography presentation by Mark Zelinski  
[www.markzelinski.com](http://www.markzelinski.com)

Mark Zelinski trained as an artist and a designer and his diverse career as a professional photographer has taken him across 80 countries. His clients range from The National Film Board of Canada to Panasonic. He is a publisher, writer, painter, filmmaker, Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society, member of The Explorer's Club and winner of the Canadian Governor General's Medal. His internationally acclaimed photography books include forewords by HRH Prince Philip, the Honourable Lincoln Alexander and Justin Trudeau.

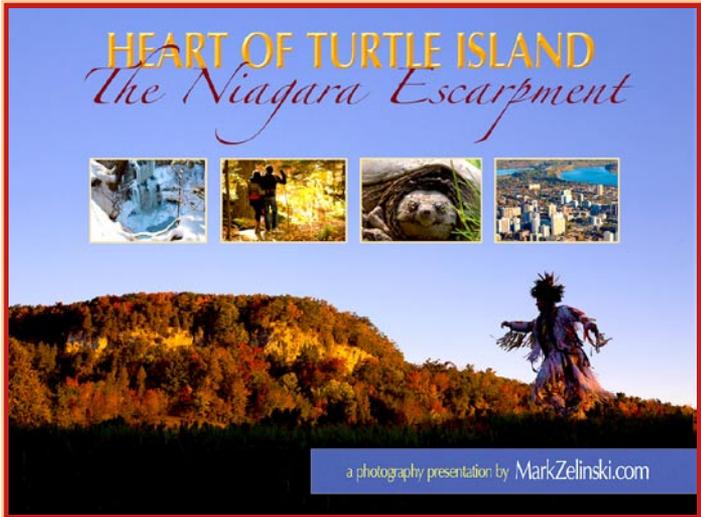
COME and JOIN US AS WE EMERGE FROM OUR TWO-YEAR ABSENCE!  
CALL YOUR FRIENDS and MAKE A DAY OF IT!  
WE TRULY MISSED YOU ALL AND HOPE TO WELCOME YOU BACK!  
(District 15 is subsidizing the cost of the luncheon meals.)

***TIMING AND REGISTRATION DETAILS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES!***

Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

## WELCOME BACK! WE MISSED YOU!!! PLEASE JOIN US

**Wednesday, October 26, 2022**  
**Rattlesnake Golf Club**  
**5407 Regional Rd. #25**  
**Oakville, Ontario, L9T 2X5**



Mark Zelinski's visual presentation of the "Heart Of Turtle Island: The Niagara Escarpment" brings exquisite focus to the environmental treasures of the Niagara Escarpment UNESCO World Biosphere and to the diverse native and modern communities that thrive along its rugged path. Mark is an artist, designer, filmmaker and professional photographer who has published many internationally acclaimed photography books which he will have available to sell for 40% discount.

**Cost:**

**\$35.00 for RTO District 15 members/spouses**

**\$45.00 for guests/non-members**

**Registration: 11:00 am -12:00 noon**

**Opening Remarks: 12:15 pm**

**Lunch: 12:30 pm. Keynote Speaker: 1:30 pm**

**Cash Bar will be available from 11:00 am.**

Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

**RTOERO District 15 Halton  
FALL LUNCHEON  
Wednesday, October 26, 2022**

Registration Form: (Please Print)

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel.#: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian meal \_\_\_\_\_ Food/Gluten allergy \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian meal \_\_\_\_\_ Food/Gluten allergy \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a cheque payable to:  
RTOERO District 15

in the amount of :.....

Please forward by mail by **October 12, 2022**

to

Patricia Mateja  
2129 Kawartha Cres.  
Mississauga, ON, L5H 3P8

## RTOERO District 15 Halton Contact List

*NOTE: Recently, the RTOERO has advised all their Districts of the need to protect the personal security of our Executive and Board members and our District members in our publications. You may contact us in TWO ways.*

*1. To contact any of the Board members listed below, please use the following email address: [district15halton@gmail.com](mailto:district15halton@gmail.com). Please indicate in your message, the individual Board member or members to whom you would like the message to be directed.*

*2. Go directly to our Contact Page on our RTOERO website, <https://district15.rto-ero.org>, and submit your inquiry. Any contact information included in the committee reports found within this publication appears with the approval of the individual author.*

### Executive 2022 – 2023

Past President: Micki Clemens  
1st Vice President: Vacant  
Secretary: Dianne Visschedyk

President: Jerry Powidajko  
2nd Vice President: Brad Fisher  
Treasurer: Carol Pashkievich

### Committees

#### Archives

Blaine Adams

#### Community Grants & Scholarships

Penny Hambly

#### Book of Remembrance

Toni Pizzingrilli

#### Communications

Webmaster

Carey Mollenhauer

Social Media Manager

Patricia Mateja

*Rapport* Coordinator

Brad Fisher

*Halton Herald* Coordinator

Micki Clemens (Temp.)

*Halton Herald* Editor: Peter Gnish

Design: Cate Roberts

Proofreaders: Micki Clemens, George MacRae, Marilyn MacRae,

Eleanor McCulloch, Jordan Palmer, Ray Smith

#### Foundation Champion

Moira Plexman

#### Goodwill

Toni Pizzingrilli

West Convenors

Marina Lloyd and Liz Takalec

East Convenor

Dianne Visschedyk

North Convenor

Susan Spencer

Out-of-Region Convenor

Catherine Fadyshen

#### Health Benefits

Bonnie Cummings

Committee Member:

Colton Roberts

#### Membership/Recruitment

Marilyn MacLennan

#### Member at Large

Susan Stavin

#### Political Advocacy

Claudia Stewart

#### Program

Jerry Powidajko (Temp.)

Committee Members: Micki Clemens, Penny Hambly, Toni Pizzingrilli,

Colton Roberts, Susan Stavin

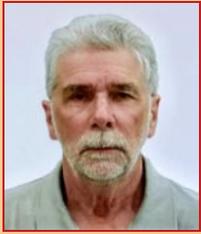
#### Social

Vacant

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# Archives Report

By Blaine Adams



Our main goal for the District 15 archives has been to digitize the minutes and reports found in the various boxes and binders left by previous presidents. These papers have also been put in folders by date and now rest in the filing cabinets in

the District 15 storage locker. Understandably there will be many copies of the same document and so the sorting involves going through all of the materials to see there are copies of documents that have not yet been digitized. Included in this are some handwritten documents from the past.



Some of the recent minutes have been digitized but are all in one document. This makes for a file that can be 50 pages and includes budgets, AGM minutes and other items as well as board minutes. Adobe allows me to extract portions of the PDF documents and place them in appropriate files and folders. Several of the folders around the turn of the last century are empty and I hope to find some of these materials when I go through the next set of boxes.



Another goal for the archives is to sort out the materials from the various committees and place them in appropriate committee folders. This will allow committee members to have access to what has been done in the past. This is especially important when a new person takes over. Eventually this will involve extracting committee reports from past board minutes and moving them to their folders. I am also coming across individual committee reports and so I have devoted a drawer in the storage

(Archives...continues on Page 24)

(Archives...continued from Page 23)

unit to folders for each committee. I am now coming across correspondence so I have created a folder for that and will decide later how this should be organized.

I am hoping to have the digitizing complete by the end of the year.

If anyone has any RTOERO District 15 materials or artifacts stored at home, please contact me at [district15halton@gmail.com](mailto:district15halton@gmail.com).

Use ARCHIVES in the Subject Line.

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## Political Advocacy Committee

By Claudia Stewart



As you have seen in my earlier reports I am very concerned about numerous issues related to our health-care system in Ontario. As the Political Advocacy Chair for D15 I have been investigating these issues and learning how other organizations like the Advancement of Women in Halton have undertaken to create position papers on health care and other topics like

long-term care.

***Our Ontario healthcare system is in crisis.*** Here is one example.

Bill suffered a stroke in April. There was a Covid outbreak on the stroke rehab floor so he was sent home with family support. He insisted that the family should return to their own homes and subsequently, on his own, his decline began.

It took three weeks for family to get an appointment to organize physio appointments. The physiotherapist was exceptionally helpful and extended his care twice. The last day of physiotherapy was also the day Bill suffered chest pain and was quickly re-admitted to hospital. His decline there seemed to accelerate. He struggled to use his walker to get to the bathroom and eventually became bedridden. A friend tried to use his influence to get a bed in hospice for Bill but that was unsuccessful because he didn't meet the "criteria" for hospice. Isn't a diagnosis of palliative care enough?

(Political Advocacy...continues on Page 25)

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(Political Advocacy...continued from Page 24)

Doctors agree that home support for palliative care is scarce and inconsistent at best, yet the hospital ruled that the family needed to take Bill home because they needed the bed in the cardiac unit. Bill's decline continued and medication for pain was administered increasingly frequently. Unfortunately, Bill passed away.

We ask our health care workers to struggle on to meet the needs of really sick seniors, yet there are so many flaws making themselves felt in an overburdened system. Nobody to turn to and no answers, even if you do find someone to listen! How do we turn this around for others?

**ACTION:** It would be helpful if some of our members could share their own experiences, either positive or negative. As Political Advocacy Chair I would work with other interested individuals in District 15 to gather these stories and compile strong evidence to prove to our community and government leaders that changes are needed immediately. **With this collection of your stories we could create a Q and A session to engage with a few individuals in the medical profession and representatives from the media. Please contact me: district15halton@gmail.com.**

**ACTION:** Also I invite concerned D15 members to join our Political Advocacy Committee in order to bring these issues forward to support RTOERO in its work to influence agencies and politicians that can effect the changes we need. The many health issues are too diverse and too important for only one person within a district to try and take action. We need your help! **Who is willing and who cares deeply enough to step forward and join our PAC committee to try and take collective action? Please contact me: district15halton@gmail.com.**

RTOERO District 15 Halton recognizes that health care issues are a perfect storm for seniors.

In the fall D15 will be holding either a Zoom event or an in-person event to focus on this subject. We will attempt to find a speaker, a health care professional, that will review the situation, provide timely information and provide some strategies we might employ as individuals, and as groups, to help address and work to resolve this issue.

As the saying goes, "Because you are worth it!"

Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

# Foundation Report

By Moira Plexman



On the 10th anniversary of the Foundation a new strategic plan was developed to guide the work of the Foundation to 2025.

## ***Vision***

*We envision a society in which all seniors live with dignity and respect.*

## ***Mission***

*We invest in programs, research, and training to support healthy, active aging for all Canadians. Our activities aim to improve seniors' health care, end social isolation, and combat ageism.*

Each October the Foundation makes **Social Isolation Awareness** its focus. Again, during this year, District 15 members were encouraged to support the **Engage to End Social Isolation Campaign**. Funds raised support the various initiatives of the Foundation.

## **Initiatives of Note**

**The Chime in Program** is a computer based moderated weekly Zoom program. It was developed to support RTO members during COVID and to reduce isolation. It offers seniors the opportunity to engage in open discussion and social connection with one another by participating in break-out sessions. Participants might decide to focus on a particular topic each week or simply chat with folks who share similar interests and hobbies.

The program, which began in the fall of 2021, has been successful and plans are being made by the Foundation Board to expand it.

The **Women's Age Lab** was developed by Dr. Paula Rochon and her research team to address the unique needs of older women. It has 4 areas of focus:

- Addressing gendered ageism
- Re-imagining aging in place and congregate settings
- Optimizing therapies
- Promoting social connectedness

For more information please visit [www.womensagelab.ca](http://www.womensagelab.ca)

(Political Advocacy...continues on Page 27)

Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

(Political Advocacy...continued from Page 26)

**The Mental Health of Seniors** – A new program is being developed at the University of Alberta to address mentally healthy living after social distancing during the pandemic.

### **The Foundation is on Facebook**

Check out various programs and seminars offered to RTOERO members on Facebook.

### **Foundation Webinars**

Regularly the Foundation offers interesting and useful webinars geared to you. You can access information on up-coming webinars by following the **RTOERO Foundation on Facebook** or logging into our RTOERO District 15 Halton website and clicking on the link that will take you to the national RTOERO website for Foundation updates.

Programs have been made possible as a result of the donations made by RTOERO members. Your donation can make a significant difference in the quality of life experienced by seniors. Your donations help seniors who will benefit from the research and the various support programs being developed. Some day that senior receiving support might be you! In addition, a special way to honour a departed colleague, friend or loved one is to donate to the Foundation in his/her name.

Each spring our Halton District 15 donates to the Foundation to honour all deceased members as part of our In Memoriam tribute.

### **CHANGE IN CONTACT INFORMATION**

- If you are moving OR
- If your mailing address has been changed or is incorrect OR
- If your e-mail or phone number has changed or is incorrect

You need to let RTOERO know in one of the following ways:

- E-mail RTOERO national Membership Services at [membership@rtoero.ca](mailto:membership@rtoero.ca)
- Phone RTOERO national 1-800-361-9888. Receive a call in a day or so.
- Contact Marilyn MacLennan (District 15) with the change using the District 15 e-mail address [District15halton@gmail.com](mailto:District15halton@gmail.com) - use "Change" in the subject line. You will need your RTOERO membership number when contacting the RTOERO office.

Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

## Goodwill Committee Report

By Toni Pizzingrilli



Happy September and greetings from the Goodwill Committee! The glorious days of summer are winding down. We hope that you have had a safe, healthy and wonderful summer and have been able to delight in the activities that bring you the most joy.

The Goodwill Committee Convenors have remained steadfast in their mission to connect with our District 15 senior members aged 80 years and better. They have diligently and faithfully sent out hundreds of cards to acknowledge and celebrate birthdays, milestone birthdays and holidays.

As much as we would like all of our correspondence to be celebratory in nature, unfortunately, that is not always the case. Also, over the course of the year, we have sent out get well/thinking of you cards and sympathy cards to the loved ones of deceased members. According to our records, sadly, seventy-seven members have passed away from May 2021 to June 2022.

It is always our hope when we correspond with our members, whether it be in good times or sad times, that it will bring them joy knowing that we are thinking of them and that we care about their well being.

Of course our outreach efforts are only as successful as the accurate and timely information that we have at our disposal. So please, if you know of someone who needs a friendly “Hey, how are you doing?” call or a “Thinking of you” card, please contact a Goodwill Convenor at [district15halton@gmail.com](mailto:district15halton@gmail.com). We would be more than happy to assist in any way that we can.

We are also always grateful to welcome anyone who wishes to join the Goodwill Committee and assist with carrying out our **Mission of Caring, Compassion and Celebration**. You would be welcomed with warmth and open arms!

# Awards/Community Grants & Scholarship Report

By Penny Hambly



## Distinguished Service Award - Renamed

This year our Distinguished Service Award has been re-named ***The Jim Baker Distinguished Service Award***. District 15 Halton determined that Jim's long life of service in education and to RTOERO, both locally and nationally, should be remembered and celebrated. The Board also made a donation to the RTOERO Foundation in Jim's memory. Jim Baker's legacy will live on through this award.

This award is given to RTOERO District 15 members who deserve recognition for their significant and/or long-term contribution to the work of RTOERO District 15 Halton. The member must reflect, in spirit and action, the impeccable qualities of leadership and strong personal attributes that characterized Jim Baker's life. The recipient of this award for 2022 was Carol Pashkievich. Congratulations Carol!

## RTOERO National Scholarships

RTOERO national offers 20 scholarships of \$3000.00 each to students who are relatives of a RTO member (child, grandchild, niece, etc.). Students who are enrolled in a post-secondary university, college or other institution in their final year/semester of a program are eligible. This year there were 157 applications and only 20 were chosen.

### We congratulate District 15 Halton winners:

- **Conor MacLean Mariotti (recommended by Josephine MacLean) who is completing his Bachelor of Education in Concurrent Education: Intermediate/Senior**
- **Olivia Ivankovic (recommended by Carmine Agro-Debenedictis) who is completing a Bachelor of Health Sciences.**

**Johnson Insurance** offers \$1000.00 scholarships for relatives who are in their first year of a post-secondary program. The deadline has passed for this year. Check their website under ***Johnson Insurance Scholarships*** in the spring of 2023.

(Awards...continues on Page 30)

(Awards...continued from Page 29)

### **District 15 Halton Academic Spirit Award**

Our District 15 Board offers a \$1000 scholarship to a graduating student who has overcome a challenging situation in order to succeed. We provide one scholarship to the Halton Catholic District School Board and two to the Halton District School Board. Read more about this year's recipients on Page 16 of tis newsletter.

### **Community Grants (Formerly Project Service to Others Grants)**

If you have a project for 2023 that might qualify for the RTOERO Community Grant of up to \$4000.00 then please go to the RTOERO website to see the criteria for submitting an application. You will need to contact me, **Penny Hambly**, to discuss your project in order to review your objectives and purpose and to see if the project qualifies.

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## **Membership Report**

**By Marilyn MacLennan**



As of July 1, 2022, District 15 Halton now has almost 3000 retired members five of whom are over 100 years of age. We also have 140 active working members. In addition to updating member information I have been working to obtain accurate emails and addresses from some members. Those with Cogeco email addresses are advised to add the District 15 and the RTOERO events email addresses to their

contacts because bulk emails may not be delivered successfully. The two email addresses are:  
district15halton@gmail.com and rto\_events@rtoero.ca.

Retirement planning workshops will continue to be offered virtually by the National office.

We are planning to host the new retired members from 2020-2022 at our "**Beyond the Bell**" **Welcome Breakfast** for the first time since 2019. This event, of course, will be offered if public health directives allow such gatherings. Stay tuned!

## Health Benefits Committee Report

By Bonnie Cummings



This past year RTOERO members experienced many changes. As many restrictions have been lifted, we have begun to learn to live with the on-going threat of Covid and more of our members have returned to travelling. For those travelling, always remember to take your health card with you. All the information you need in case of an emergency is on that card.



In late April, members should have received an important email from RTOERO announcing a new enhancement to our Health Plan. Below is an excerpt from that email.

*Effective May 1, the travel plan will provide coverage to the insured for trip cancellation, interruption, or delay due to COVID-19. This includes coverage for additional expenses if a member must quarantine at a destination or is refused boarding due to a positive COVID-19 test. For more information and detailed questions and answers, go to [rtoero.ca/prepared](http://rtoero.ca/prepared).*

This is exciting news for those who like to travel but have been worried about possible additional expenses or issues due to Covid-19.

In the past fall, we also saw the successful launch of our new claims portal, making submitting claims even easier.

A workshop for district health reps was offered by RTOERO. Dr. Greg Wells, Health and Performance Expert, Physiologist and bestselling author (*The Ripple Effect*, etc.) spoke to us. It was a very informative presentation with many health tips reported in detail in the November *Rapport*. We also listened to two other speakers: Camille Gagnon, PharmD - Assistant Director, Canadian Dep Jennie Herbin - Community Engagement Officer, both from the Canadian De-prescribing Network. They spoke about the importance of knowing why you are taking each prescribed medication and to ensure you go over all your medications with your doctor or pharmacist, at least once per year. [www.deprescribingnetwork.ca](http://www.deprescribingnetwork.ca) has many tools and articles addressing this issue and can give you the questions for your doctor or pharmacist that you need to ask about your medications.

(Health Benefits...continues on Page 32)

Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

(Health Benefits...continued from Page 31)

Starting in January 2022, “Best Doctors” was rebranded and named “Medical Experts”. It still provides the same great services such as; Expert Medical Opinion, Find a Doctor, Care Finder, Personal Health Navigator, and Teladoc Medical Record eSummary. For more information you can call them from 8 am - 8 pm, Monday - Friday at 1-877-419-2378 or reach them by email at [customer.ca@bestdoctors.com](mailto:customer.ca@bestdoctors.com) or check out their website at [www.bestdoctors.com/canada/RTOERO](http://www.bestdoctors.com/canada/RTOERO).

Express Scripts Canada Pharmacy service was also launched this past year for our members belonging to the extended health care benefits program. It is a Canadian on-line pharmacy for maintenance medications. These are medications taken regularly for chronic long term conditions like diabetes and blood pressure. Through Express Scripts Canada Pharmacy you can:

- Refill prescriptions and have them delivered to your home for free.
- Access a Canadian licensed pharmacist by phone 24/7.
- Potentially save with higher reimbursement rates and lower dispensing fees.

This website contains more information on this new service, including how to register - <https://rtoero.ca/express-scripts-canada-pharmacy/>.

In February, Districts 13 & 15 had a joint Webinar entitled, “Know your Health Plan”. Stephen Wong, Director of Benefits, presented this Webinar. 100+ members from various regions attended this informative presentation and many common questions were thoroughly discussed.

Remember that you don't have to wait for a presentation to get your questions answered. Feel free to contact RTOERO anytime with your general questions by emailing [insurance@rtoero.ca](mailto:insurance@rtoero.ca) or [membership@rtoero.ca](mailto:membership@rtoero.ca) or calling 1-800-361-9888 or 416-962-9463. For more specific questions contact Johnson Insurance at 1-877-406-9007 or you can also chat directly with someone on line at [rto-ero.johnson.ca](http://rto-ero.johnson.ca) or email [healthbenefits@johnson.ca](mailto:healthbenefits@johnson.ca).

We were reminded that we are affiliated with many other organizations: Sunlife is our underwriter; Johnson administrates our plan; our two consultants, Global Excel – looks after travel claims; and Medical Experts offers independent medical advice; Venngo Member Perks provides

(Health Benefits...continues on Page 33)

(Health Benefits...continued from Page 32)

member discounts; Express Scripts handles prescription delivery, and Hearing Life offers discounts on their services. RTOERO is fully owned, managed, and operated by RTOERO.

Member input is very important. Plan suggestions come from our members and are looked at for feasibility in the fall. Our premiums are set to cover costs, not make a profit. Premiums are used exclusively to provide the most comprehensive and affordable benefits for our members. With the long-term stability of our plans in mind, rates are reviewed annually based on member usage of plans for the previous year. Looking at our 2021 usage of the plan, there was no rate increase for 2022.

Some changes to our plan were implemented in January 2022. These are best reviewed on the RTOERO website, as it has the most current up to date insurance booklet. A new hard copy is only printed every 3 years and the next one is due out in 2023.

The Health Representatives will be meeting in person on October 11 and 12, 2022. I am so looking forward to meeting everyone for the first time as meetings and events start to return to a new normal as we are all learning to live with Covid.

It's been an exciting year! But I look forward to the coming year as RTOERO continues to adapt and change to better serve our members. Stay safe and for those who are planning to travel, HAPPY TRAVELS! I wish you all health and happiness for the coming year.  
Bonnie Cummings - D15 Health Representative (bonniecummings.rtoero@gmail.com).

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## Program Committee Report

By Jerry Powidajko



During the past year we shared many excellent Zoom presentations with District 15 members. During 2022-2023 we intend to schedule some in-person events for you but we will also continue to offer virtual events and presentations on timely topics of interest. If you have suggestions for speakers, please contact me at [district15halton@gmail.com](mailto:district15halton@gmail.com) .

(Program...continues on Page 34)

Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

(Program...continued from Page 33)

## Summary of District 15 Program Events During the Past Year

### 1. September 28 - "Gardening From a Hammock" - Dan Cooper

In this second presentation Dan showed us how to create our own low-maintenance gardens and still find time to relax in the hammock. Inspired by his book, *Gardening from a Hammock*, it featured plant suggestions, gardening tips, plant combinations for low-maintenance gardening, and much more.

### 2. September 29 - "The Good Life" - Renee Thomas-Hill, Sessional Lecturer, Elder in Residence, Indigenous Counsellor, McMaster U.

This Zoom talk was in commemoration of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. Renee gave us a chance to experience, through her own background, the treatment of the Indigenous peoples by the colonizers of this land.

### 3. October 26 - Adam Shoalts – "Beyond the Trees"

This Zoom presentation dealt with his journey alone across Canada's Arctic. For further information about his exploits and books, please follow the link - <https://adamshoalts.com> .

### 4. November 24 - Ted McIntyre – "Time to Appreciate Ontario Wine"

While there were no free samples, there was plenty of free information on Ontario wines in this Zoom presentation and he shared a list of great Ontario wines for under \$20!

### 5. January 26 - Ian Elliott - A Different Drummer Books

Ian, owner of A Different Drummer Books, shared some interesting books and authors for the coming year for both adults and children. Check out Ian's website: <https://www.differentdrummerbooks.ca>.

### 6. February 17 - Terry O'Reilly - "My Biggest Mistake"

Terry is an award winning radio broadcaster, author and award winning writer at Canada's top advertising agencies. He discussed his latest book, *My Biggest Mistake*, about people who made catastrophic career decisions which ended up being the best thing that ever happened to them. Check out Terry's website: <https://terryoreilly.ca/books/my-best-mistake-epic-fails-and-silver-linings/>

### 7. March 31 - Kevin Donovan - Toronto Star Investigative Reporter

Kevin had many engaging stories and also spoke about the Barry and

(Program...continues on Page 35)

Visit us on the Internet at [district15.rto-ero.org](http://district15.rto-ero.org)

(Program...continued from Page 34)

Honey Sherman murders. Check out Kevin's website:  
[https://www.thestar.com/authors.kevin\\_donovan.html](https://www.thestar.com/authors.kevin_donovan.html)

## **B. RTOERO PROGRAM EVENTS FOR MEMBERS**

RTOERO is committed to building and fostering a fair and inclusive organization that values diversity, equality, and encourages respect for dignity, beliefs and ideas. In an on-going effort to increase our leadership capacity at RTOERO, all district executives and committee members were invited to attend two webinars on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

1. October 1 - DEI and anti-racism: "The Road Less Travelled - Our Collective Commitment ... Our Shared Responsibility" – Dr. Avis Glaze.

2. November 1 - DEI & anti-racism: "The Road Less Travelled - An Indigenous Perspective" - Candy Palmater, (who passed away in December) was an international Indigenous speaker, actor and comedian.

And also

3. January 25 - RTOERO - VIBRANT VOICES WEBINAR with David Suzuki who inspired over 1,300 webinar attendees in the Vibrant Voices advocacy session on, "Creating a Lasting Legacy through Environmental Stewardship."

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## **In Search of Shangri-La**

**By Nancy Sorensen**

*Lost Horizon*, by James Hilton, published in 1933, was the world's first paperback. The book spawned a movie plus the word "Shangri-La", a supposedly fictional destination, now a label for luxury hotels, resorts, spas, even restaurants.

In the story, Shangri-La was a perfect place shielded within the Himalayan mountain range and guarded by a special peak named "Karakal" which sparkled in the sunlight, glowed in the moonlight, a beacon for the people below. Despite the altitude, Shangri-La enjoyed a "temperature inversion" in which the sun's warmth was trapped in the valley providing a moderate temperate climate. Everyone was Happy! All wants were satisfied and a magnificent lamasery/monastery clung to a hillside attending to the spiritual needs of the populace. A sanctuary. A utopia!

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(Shangri-La...continued from Page 35)

Would you ever want to leave? Books have been written about Shangri-La by the venturesome who have attempted to find it. Where is it? Does it really exist? Was Shangri-La modelled after an actual place or a total figment of the imagination?

After a teaching stint in Nanjing, China, I flew to Lijiang, a World Heritage site in Yunnan province which abuts the Himalayas. A town called Zhongdian had been dubbed “Shangri-La” as a tourism incentive. Having read *Lost Horizon* several times and used it for novel study with my Chinese students, I had to check it out. My Chinese travel



agent arranged for a driver to take me to Zhongdian. It was a long drive increasing dramatically in altitude while decreasing in temperature. The thinning air made for laboured breathing. Scenery became bleak. Our “pit stop” for food and water exposed us to biting winds that chilled us to the bone and forced a return to the car to eat with some degree of comfort. We continued to climb. With a town well in the distance my driver stopped by the side of the road, opened the passenger door, waved his arms toward the town and exclaimed, “Shangri-La”!

It was warm! A meadow with wild flowers and grazing animals spread out in front of us. Mountains ringed the area. I was so excited! Later, I collapsed onto my hotel bed with a raging, altitude induced headache. Although I improved during my acclimatization, I definitely had to pace myself.



Behold, there was a monastery built into a hillside. In Zhongdian, markets were populated by smiling faces, a ‘happiness’ atmosphere. Had I found it? Balmy temperatures, a monastery? But, no Karakal mountain guarded the valley. The monastery, although richly ap-

(Shangri-La...continues on Page 37)

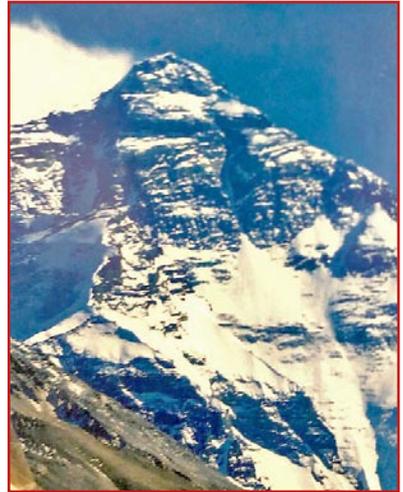
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(Shangri-La...continued from Page 36)



pointed, lacked the sheer grandeur I expected. In spite of its nickname, Zhongdian was not Shangri-La. I was told that there were hosts of valleys dotted all over this area of Yunnan and Sichuan province to the north, if I cared to explore them.

Several years later I returned to Asia with Nepal and Mount Everest base camp in my itinerary. Nepal's Annapurna was a breathtaking Karakal candidate but offered no valley or grand lamasery. For my entry to Lhasa, Tibet at over 14,000 feet, I was altitude prepared this time with specific altitude medications so it was not problematic. There it was, the stunning Potala Palace perched on a Hillside – a glorious structure worthy of Shangri-La! However, the Potala is in Lhasa city with no temperature inversion and without Karakal standing sentinel over a green valley.



Travelling to Mount Everest base camp introduced me to more hillside monasteries and valleys but the four necessary components (fertile valley, a lamasery of superb proportions, a towering Karakal, warmth at high altitude) evaded me. Mount Everest does not disappoint. It dominates the surrounding peaks as close to heaven as you can get. Viewing Everest is a spiritual experience. I had found the special valley, the spectacular lamasery, two Karakal possibilities, yet, I hadn't found Shangri-La. Neither had all the venturesome explorers who had read *Lost Horizon* and pondered its existence. Did James Hilton fashion this place using some actual facts? Nobody really knows.

Why do the curious, the adventurous search for this Eden-on-earth? Perhaps the allure, the enticement is in its mystery and elusiveness. The true magic of Shangri-La may be in the journey itself, the quest to find it.

(More photos of Shangri-La...continues on the back page)

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## My Happy Place

By Marilyn MacLennan

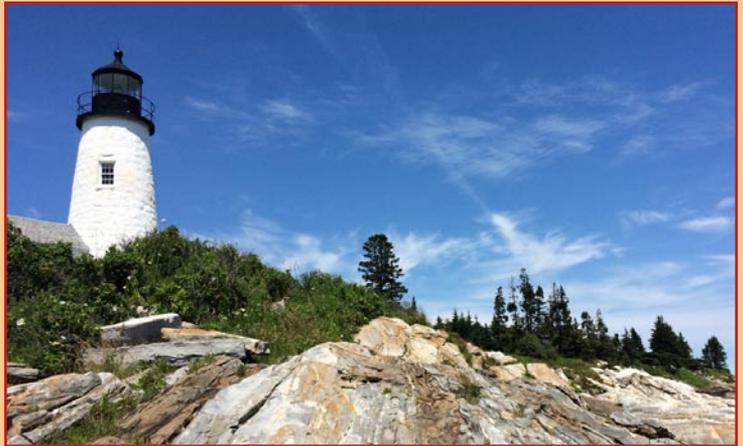
This is the tenth year I have gone to Maine in July with friends. It should have been the twelfth year but COVID got in the way. We rent a house on Bailey Island in the Harpswell region near Brunswick. On one side of the house we overlook the ocean with views of lobster boats pulling traps, breaking waves, ebbing and flowing tides. On the other side we see Mackerel Cove filled with lobster boats and sailboats and experience stunning sunsets. This year the Supermoon was spectacular as it came up over the ocean. Magical. There is lots to do but my favourite activity is sitting on the porch with a cup of coffee (or wine), watching the waves and talking with good friends. Great to be back.



(Happy Place photos on the next Page )

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# *My Happy Place*





# In Search of ...Shangri-La

*Photos by Nancy Sorensen*



*Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet*

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