



# Through The Ages



**Congratulations  
Herma Bailey  
100 years young!**

*Herma Celebrates a Century  
by Marina Lloyd  
is on page 8  
Herma's Photo: by Rose Knight*

## Generation to Generation

**On Being  
A Grandparent!**

**Share Your Experiences/Photos  
See page 23 for Details**

**Photo by Penny Hambly**



**Everyone's A Winner**

**Photo by Jim Mitchell**



## President's Report

By Linda Jones



This is my final President's Report as my term will end at our Annual General Meeting in early May. Much as I have enjoyed leading our organization, I am looking forward to devoting more time to the Political Action Committee, both locally and Provincially. The job of President is not one done alone. I received great support from our liaisons on the Provincial Executive, firstly Margaret Clarke and currently Norbert Boudreau who likes to deal with any question or concern at lightning speed. He must be keeping the Provincial staff on their toes. Also, the Members of our Board drive all of the business and organize all of the activities provided for you, the members. They work very hard on your behalf, but we are always on the lookout for new volunteers with fresh ideas. Just call or e-mail any Board member to ask what you could do to make District 15 better.

I would like to thank **Jan Murdoch** and **Phyllis Kingsley** who as First and Second Vice-Presidents have supported me whenever I called on them. They have been doing double duty this year with Jan currently also acting as Recruitment and Membership Secretary and as Chair of a revamped Tours Committee and Phyllis chairing the Awards Committee. I am also grateful for the amazing jobs done by each of the following Board members. Our Secretary, **Janet Carter-Wright** continues to keep excellent records as does our Treasurer, **Chub Baxter** with the invaluable assistance of **Daliah Brown**. **Judy Sloan** never tires of scanning the media for reports of activities in which our members have been involved so that she can archive the information. You can help her by sending her a report of someone you know who is a member. **Marina Lloyd** ably runs the Goodwill Committee, supported by several other members in each region. They bring cheer and companionship to our older members and those who are shut-ins. In the last two years, three of our members reached the 100-year milestone and Marina attended special celebrations in their honour to present them with certificates recording this considerable achievement. A special thank you for her stellar service goes out to committee member, **Gloria Simchuk**, who is unable to continue volunteering at this time. One of the most important aspects of any organization is our ability to communicate with our members. **George MacRae** and **Peter Gnish** do a superb job of this through our very informative and up to date website and our visually appealing and comprehensive newsletter. **Paul Durnan** has now stepped down as our Health representative after several years of ably helping members navigate our health plan, for which we thank him, but

(President's Report... continues on Page 4)

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(President's Report... continued from Page 3)

he is still currently organizing our regional breakfasts. **George MacRae** eagerly stepped into the position. So, if you have any questions about how the plan will affect you, George is your man. **David Wright** continues to offer us wonderful opportunities for theatre going, art gallery visits and walking or biking activities to name but a few. **Penny Hambly**, even under difficult circumstances, has guided

ed the Program Committee in organizing the entertainment at our general membership meetings as well as the meetings themselves. She is assisted by a small but dedicated group of volunteers who are always looking for new ideas or people with ideas who are ready to see them through to fruition. This applies also to other committees. If you can help organize activities for our members please contact me or the appropriate committee chair. We will have a position on our Board for a Member without Portfolio which allows that individual to see how our Board functions and prepares them to participate as a committee chair or Executive Member. Our Board only meets four times a year, leaving lots of time for your own favourite activities. If this opportunity piques your interest or you would like to run for a position on our Executive, now is the time to act. Please contact either **Cecile Leach** or me. Don't miss your chance to become an active member of District 15. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the personal advice and friendship offered to me by our Past President, **Cecile Leach**, which has helped me tremendously in my role.

This past winter has been very mild so far, enabling us to travel fairly easily to warmer climes. I hope it has been an easy one on all of you. This has been a very eventful year with many exciting excursions, socials and workshops. We continue to receive photographs

(President's Report... continues on Page 31)

### Table of Contents

Committee Reports	Pages
Archives	13
Awards	12
Book of Remembrance	7
Communications	23
New Members	34
Pension & Retirement	30
Political Advocacy	25
President's Report	3
Program	9
Recreation	16
Recruit/Member Services	31
Tours	15
<b>District 15 Events</b>	
Calendar of Events	22
Contact List	21
Marg Megelink	28
On Being a Grandparent	23
Relay for Life	19
Theatre	17
<b>Articles</b>	
Brain Fitness	32
Herma Celebrates	8
Our Place in the Sun	36
The Art of Happiness	24
The Inca Trail	39
We Get Letters	5

## We Get Letters, E-mails & Calls

By Peter Gnish



The Christmas season seems to always bring out the need for us to communicate with those with whom we have missed touching base. This year was no different. Thanks to all those who sent in cards, e-mails and letters - please keep them coming.

**Jack & Jean Anderson** - sent an e-mail saying “Thanks for the Christmas message on behalf of RTO. I haven’t been in touch for awhile, and it’s good to hear from you - a very well-written letter! We will be leaving for Florida next month - time to enjoy the warmer climes, sans snow....We will try to send some photos from there.”

**Beth deBoer** - wrote to say that she read with great interest Dave Wright’s article on Don Gregory in the last issue of the Halton Herald. She went on to explain “Don is my second cousin, (my Dad’s cousin). Don’s mother and my grandfather were siblings. And the missing soldier was a brother of my great-grandmother. My entire family was caught up in the news. Just thought you might like to know of the connection. Small world!”

**Brenda Dolling** - wrote to say “I’m still loving it here on the farm/ecovillage.. doing more education now. Have a happy, sustainable New Year and thanks for all you do for all of us retirees.”

**Octavia Dutzak** - sent an e-mail to say that she finds the Heritage Plane Museum fascinating. She spent 2 days there and still didn’t see or photograph it all. She also spent an “awesome” 15 days in Turkey in August. She wrote, “During the summer and fall I spent 16 weeks at Sheridan in a senior memoir writing course. It was a research project to see how this creative involvement might help seniors, so I guess we were guinea pigs. Don’t know the results yet.” She says she found it very interesting “getting back to writing/sharing and editing one another’s stories. At (the) beginning most felt they had nothing to write about and no talent. BUT do seniors have talent! I expect a few are now motivated to even try writing a book or two. We hope to stay in touch now and keep motivating one another.”

**Jim Heaslip** - “Just a brief note to let you know some of the retired music guys are back working in the industry again. My band, 12/4 Swing is currently doing *Splish Splash - The Bobby Darin Story* with Hamilton Media Personality

(We Get Letters... continues on Page 6)

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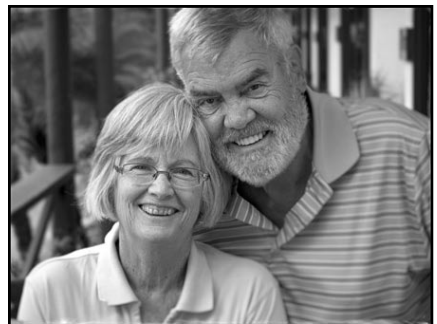
(We Get Letters... continue from Page 5)

Tony Sciara. We will be back playing in this area on June 25/12 at Stage West in Toronto. We are doing a matinee and evening show. It is now advertised on the Stage West web site. **Bob Devey** who formerly taught at John T. Tuck, **Jennie Peace** who taught music in Milton and Oakville and **Carl Hamilton** who was a long time elementary Principal are in my band as well as **Ralph Lefevre**, a retired Hamilton teacher. It is a great show with all the Bobby Darin hits from the '50's and '60's. It is not a tribute show but instead the story of the man and his music. Also, Jennie and I are initiating *A New Horizons Music Program* at the Music Centre in Burlington to teach instrumental Music to those 50+. More info will be forthcoming in the Burlington Recreation Guide Spring/Summer 2012 and Fall/Winter 2012.”

**Dorothy and John Horner** - sent a Christmas card in response to my Holiday letter. They appreciate us keeping in touch with people outside Halton and receiving all the news through our mailings.

**George Munro** - also sent a Christmas card in response to my Holiday letter. He wrote in part, “I felt the peace you speak about in your letter this past summer while playing golf with my son, John and grandson, Adam at Banff Springs Golf course - beautiful sunny day in June, those huge mountains around us topped with snow, so quiet. It was heavenly and I really felt peace in a magnificent part of the world.”

**Sue Rietschin** - sent a Christmas card with her yearly Christmas letter enclosed. Lots of news and lovely coloured pictures. After skiing in Quebec in February, in the Spring, Sue and her husband Jurg headed to Europe on a driving trip that took them to Switzerland, down the Dalmatian Coast to Dubrovnik, exploring many other coastal cities before going to Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia heading for Greece. Wow! In August, back home, they did a biking tour exploring the south west area of Ontario, “chasing the history of the 1812 War and the Underground Railroad.” Then in the fall they headed to New Zealand and Australia for an extended stay. Sue ended off by saying “We have such a full life – and we are thankful to be healthy enough to make the most of it.” You two certainly are doing that!



(We Get Letters... continues on Page 7)

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(We Get Letters... continued from Page 6)

**Helen Van Sickle** - sent a Christmas card with a letter inside from Harriston, Ontario, where she now lives in a nursing home. She says "This has been a pretty good year for me other than having to have my appendix out." Unfortunately, her eyesight is getting worse. However she enjoys the residence and participates "in pretty well every activity." Nice to hear from you Helen – keep in touch.

**Margaret and Bill Wilson** - began her letter with a title **Never Say Good-bye... a 14 year-old boy from England became her voice!** She went on to tell the story: "The January issue of the Halton Herald recounted the highlights in the remarkable life of Irma Coulson. And my husband is the '14 year-old boy' whom she mentioned. With his twin, he was evacuated to Canada early at the beginning of WW2. His brother stayed with relatives in Toronto and Bill went to live with the Winns on their farm in Campbellville. This is when he came under the tutelage of Irma. The twins returned to England and Bill went on to serve in the British Fleet Air Arm, on the aircraft carrier H.M.S. Ocean (still part of the British navy) stationed at Malta. After his service he returned to Canada and we met and married in Hamilton. I taught in Burlington at Wellington Square, Tuck, Lockhart and Glenview. We moved to the National Capital Region and on retirement returned to Hamilton. We renewed our friendship with **Sheila Anderson**, whom I met at Wellington Square and **Edna McMillan** when the three of us were at Glenview. Two years ago while attending a conference for retired fire chiefs in Stratford, we met again, after 40 years, Nancy Kraemar, who had taught with me at Lockhart and Glenview. After more than twenty years in the Ottawa area, I am still in touch with staff from the English and French Immersion schools where I was principal. It comes now, some 70 years after the Christmas Concert, that the 'circle closes' and connections are renewed. One should never say good-bye!



**George Worrton** - was kind enough to send a Christmas Ecard.

## Book of Remembrance

*We remember with fondness*

Mary Harvey  
Bernard Murphy

John MacLennan  
Donald Otto  
Florence Vuckson

Florence Meares  
Vera Robinson



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## Herma Celebrates A Century

By Marina Lloyd

On January 22 over two hundred friends and family members gathered at Burlington Seniors' Centre to honour Herma Bailey who would officially turn 100 on January 30. A line of guests snaked its way through the room stopping (and stooping) to have a moment to congratulate this tiny lady who was able to greet most by name. Shown the picture of one of her Grade One classes at Glenwood School, she even remembered her former student's name!



Here she sits with two of her cousins at the reception.

Scenes from Herma's life flashed across a large screen. Family members had set up displays of photos and congratulatory certificates from officials. Following a few speeches, Herma graciously thanked everyone for coming and expressed her sincere gratitude to her family who had put so much effort into the planning of the day. That Sunday at the Centre launched a week of festivities which included a luncheon reception at Wellington Square United Church and a visit from Mayor Rick Goldring at Herma's home, Christopher Terrace.

The story of Herma's early years on a Saskatchewan prairie homestead may be found in the January 2011 issue of the Halton Herald.



## Program Committee

By Penny Hambly



On February 23rd we had our Winter Meeting and lunch at the beautiful Teatro Conference Centre in Milton. Many of our members enjoyed a wonderful meal and were then entertained by the well known singer and Tribute Artist Barry Moyle. He delighted our audience with his impersonations of Elvis and Neil Diamond. His songs had us singing and dancing to the music. (Pictures of our happy members are on the following page).



You will not want to miss our AGM and Lunch on Tuesday, May 8th, at the Burlington Convention Centre. It starts with a business meeting during which the new Executive will be installed. A delicious lunch will be served after which we will have more great entertainment. The theme of the show is "It's Magic- Interactive Audience Fun" featuring the well known Rick Rossini the Magical Motivator and YOU the audience as stars. From the Boardrooms of New York to the stage at the Hummingbird (Sony Centre) in Toronto, Rick Rossini has written, produced and performed for a myriad of live presentations, corporate and educational productions, television, film and video programs and theatrical productions. All have been designed to inspire, excite, entertain, educate and motivate. He has worked with such notables as Jim Carrey, Kurt Browning, Michael Burgess and Eugene Levy to name a few. He has floated a person in mid air surrounded by over 20,000 onlookers, made motorcycles, cars and tigers appear "out of the air." There will not be any tigers but you will have some special fun.

You will not want to miss this show which will be amazing, exciting and funny. It promises to be a wonderful afternoon. Get your Registration in ASAP. See the flyer included in this mailing.

The Program Committee wants your input! Please take the time to fill out the enclosed Questionnaire and return it with your AGM Registration or by itself if you are not attending. We want your feedback so that we can plan programs which are of interest to our members.

(Winter Meeting Pictures... continues on Page 10 & 11)

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*Let's Live It Over Again!*





*Friends...*



*And More Friends!*



## Awards Committee

By Phyllis Kingsley



In keeping with the motto of RTO/ERO - "Service to Others"- many of our District 15 members spend countless hours volunteering in their local churches, hospitals, schools, service clubs and other community groups. Others are active provincially to ensure that retired educators benefit from comprehensive and affordable health plans, a social network, travel programs and political advocacy. Still others devote time to volunteering on international projects aimed at improving the quality of life for less fortunate people around the world. District 15 would once again like to recognize those members who have made a significant and/or long term contribution to the work of RTO/ERO locally and/or provincially by presenting them with Distinguished Service Awards. These awards will be presented at the Annual General Meeting on May 8, 2012.

The Awards Committee is seeking nominations for these awards. A nomination form is included with this issue of the Herald and will also be available for download on the District 15 website. It outlines criteria for nominations. Please fill in the form and mail or e-mail it as directed on the form. The deadline for nominations is April 20, 2012.

RTO/ERO provides funds to Districts for educational and/or community initiatives at the local, provincial or international level that support the concept of "Service to Others" in the form of a Service To Others (STO) grant. We are pleased to announce that we have submitted an application for a Provincial Project STO grant on behalf of a local agency, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton, to support a new program that they are offering this year. We will hear if this grant has been approved by the end of April and will share the result with the membership at the AGM in May.

**IF YOU ARE MOVING or  
IF YOUR ADDRESS INFORMATION IS INCORRECT**

Contact **Dianne Vezeau** at the Provincial RTO/ERO office

In Writing: 18 Spadina Road, Toronto, ON M5R 2S7

By Phone: 1-800-361-9888 Ext. 223 or 1-416-962-9463 Ext 223

or by e-mail at [dvezeau@rto-ero.org](mailto:dvezeau@rto-ero.org)

or Contact **Jan Murdoch** by telephone 289-956-0163

or by e-mail at [janmurdoch@cogeco.ca](mailto:janmurdoch@cogeco.ca)

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## Archives Committee

By Judy Sloan



I am happy to report that I have quite a few newspaper clippings to add to our scrapbook. First, best wishes to **Herma Bailey** who recently turned 100 years young! Herma rented space at the Burlington Seniors' Centre to celebrate her birthday on January 22nd making all her own arrangements for this event. She knew exactly what she wanted. The staff and volunteers at the centre were astounded at the vigor of this remarkable lady. They learned that she had begun her teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse in Saskatchewan and moved to Burlington in the late 1930s where she taught at Fisher's Corners School and later at Glenwood School. Herma invited former students along with her friends to attend her party. Instead of gifts she said donations to the food bank would be welcome. Of course, her gathering was a huge success. Congratulations and a very happy birthday Herma from all the members of Halton District 15.

The Independent and Free Press featured a photo and article on December 8, 2011 concerning member **Jean Somerville** who is a local historian and author. Jean was at the Limehouse Community Hall signing copies of her newly-released book, "*In His Words,*" a biography of her great-great grandfather John Newton. John was a prominent businessman in the 1800s as well as being the first post-master in Limehouse in 1857. His diaries and journals between 1836 and 1878, all preserved at the University of Western Ontario, were the main source of her book. It is also a fascinating glimpse of life in rural Halton and the daily happenings in and around Limehouse during that period of time. The photo shows Jean signing a copy of the book for **Mary Smith** another of our members. By the way, this is Jean's second published book. Her first book was entitled "*The Bands Played On*" a history of her Frank family and how they travelled around the county playing at various events where people would gather to sing and dance. Jean informed me in a letter that she is now working on another book, a biography of her father Andy Frank who was a former Halton County Sheriff. Jean has proven herself to be a very talented and accomplished historian and author and we wish her all the best in her future endeavours. Happy writing Jean!

In December, the Burlington Post featured two separate photos showing our members helping to make Christmas a happy season for many people in our community. The first photo showed member **Rose Dafeo** surrounded by bunches of poinsettias. Rose was one of the Acclaim Health volunteers who helped to provide a merry Christmas for seniors in the Friendly Visiting, Special Steps

(Archives ... continues on Page 14)

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(Archives ... continued from Page 13)

and Hospice programs. This year more than 230 plants were delivered thanks to donations made by the Royal Bank and the Burlington Lions Club. The second photo showed members **Carol Leppan** and **Nancy Nicholls** surrounded by food this time. When the Burlington Seniors' Centre held its annual Christmas dinner earlier in December, those attending were encouraged to bring a donation to Partnership West Food Bank. Two days later, representatives of the centre including these two ladies turned over 430 pounds of food. A great big thank you goes out to Rose, Carol and Nancy for brightening the Christmas season for others.

On a sad note, member **John MacLennan** collapsed and passed away on December 3, 2011 at the age of 73 after returning home from his tri-weekly bike ride up Sydenham Hill. John was born and raised in Hamilton and graduated from McMaster University in physical education. An all-star athlete in his own right, his football career was thwarted by a serious injury in high school. This injury never dampened his enthusiasm for sports and John went on to coach basketball and football at Burlington High School and later at Nelson High School. With his wife Sandra's encouragement, John bought a three-acre farm in Flamborough which later grew into an organic farm with 300 chickens a year, pigs, a few beef cattle and horses for Sandra's equestrian interests. It was also a place where his handicapped son Benjie and his daughter Sara had the freedom to play. Many of John's students helped out at the farm and became known as "Mac's mini-farm hands." John was involved with the creation of the Wetlands Trail in Waterdown. He also became involved in the Ontario government-led stewardship council which focused on overdevelopment of land, as well as the Halton Conservation Authority. Because of his son's developmental needs, he became actively involved in the Hamilton Association for Community Living. John was the recipient of several awards. In 1993, he received the Pete Beech Award for educators who have a positive influence on students' lives. In 2000 he was inducted into McMaster University's Athletic Hall of Fame. In 2010 he was the recipient of an award celebrating significant people in the community who have made contributions to athletics and leadership. John will always be remembered as an athlete, an exceptional teacher and coach, a farmer, a community activist, an environmentalist and an avid cyclist. Most of all he will be remembered as a man who, as his wife stated, "lived life to the fullest". John remains an inspiration to all of us.

That's all for now but please keep those newspaper photos and articles coming. My address is 1446 Brenner Court, Burlington On. L7P 2Z2. You may also contact me by e-mail at [judym Sloan@yahoo.ca](mailto:judym Sloan@yahoo.ca) or by phone at 905-336-5538.

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## Tours Committee

By Jan Murdoch



We are busy planning future excursions. To have a successful and affordable group trip we need to have between 20 and 40 people who show an interest. I have some enthusiastic travellers who have joined the tours committee: **Colton Roberts, Susan Hoicka, Connie Goman and Leonard Rosmarin**. All have travelled on at least one of our Halton excursions and now help me seek other interesting destinations.

To help reduce the cost of our Washington trip we have moved the date to June 18-22. The biggest obstacle was getting affordable air fare. I have 10 people ready to go but we need a few more to make the trip affordable for us all. In the fall of 2012 we are looking at two possible trips: one to San Antonio, the culinary capital of Texas; the other to the Grand Canyon, Monument Valley and the Painted Desert. On all of our trips we include group time and personal time. If you read the article on Brain Fitness you will be happy to know that travel is included in the Mental Stimulation pillar, especially travel to new locations in North America with stimulating company.

If you have an interest in any of these destinations call me at 289-956-0163 or e-mail me at [janmurdoch@cogeco.ca](mailto:janmurdoch@cogeco.ca).

### Contribute to the Herald!

The next *Halton Herald* will be distributed in September, 2012.

- **Share a line** with our readers and let them know what you are up to.
- **Send a Letter to the Editor** on any topic that concerns you.
- **Write an article** on any topic that may interest your retired colleagues. Please try to limit your article to a maximum of 1000 words. The full version of longer articles will be published on the District website.
- **Share a funny story** with our many readers.
- **Provide us with pictures** to share with our members.

Send your article or correspondence to the Editor, Peter Gnish by e-mail: [pgnish@cogeco.ca](mailto:pgnish@cogeco.ca), by mail to 153 Fairleigh Ave. S. Hamilton L8M 2K4 or telephone: 905-547-1628. Deadline - July 15, 2012.

## Recreation Committee

By Dave Wright



Our first outing this year was to the Burlington Art Centre to see **Ulla Lenzen Butt's** exhibition of watercolour paintings. The featured exhibition at the centre was a survey of Gino Lorcini's sculptures. Our guide gave us lots to think about as she described the artist's creations in metal and acrylics. We watched wood carvers and observed a watercolour class in action - people pursuing a passion as Ulla has done. While walking through the art class, I met two retired teachers whom I knew. The Art Centre is a great place to visit to see exceptional art, to buy a quality gift or to become involved in an art or craft. Ulla's show was exceptional. Her achievements were highlighted in the January Halton Herald. You can view her art on her website [www.ullalenzenbutt.com](http://www.ullalenzenbutt.com).



The first event for April is the visit to The Royal Botanical Gardens chocolate exhibition. The RBG has posted complete details of what visitors can experience at <http://rbg/chocolate>. The theatre events this month are "*Schoolhouse*" with the Burl-Oak Theatre Group and a Norm Foster play "*Maggie's Getting Married*" with The Aldershot Players. After we see "*Pirates of Penzance*" at Stratford there are two musical events in June. They feature a number of our talented colleagues. The Burlington Footnotes are presenting "*Gotta Sing Gotta Dance*" at the new Burlington Performing Arts Centre. District 15 members in the cast for this show are **Marg Daniels, Carroll Goodwin, Penny Hambly, Kate Lowe and Judy Sloan**. This has always been a good show and in the new venue it will be well worth seeing.

(Recreation... continues on Page 17)

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(Recreation... continued from Page 16)

A Burlington band, 12/4 Swing, is presenting *Splish Splash-The Bobby Darin Story* at Stage West on June 25th. The show is a biography told in music and Bobby's hits are integrated with photos and videos in live stage action. The story teller is Tony Sciara and the musical director is **Jim Heaslip** who is a Nelson High School retiree. His 13 piece band includes four retirees: **Jenny Peace, Carl Hamilton, Bob Devey** and **Ralph Lefevre**. Three back up singers complete the group. It will be a great show to see and the buffet lunch is always a treat.

Check the calendar and website for details and be sure to join us. We always promise good company. A meal is included with most of the events so you have a chance to meet and chat.

## Theatre Report

By **Dave Wright** and **Janet Carter-Wright**

In the January issue of the Halton Herald, **Micki Clemens**, the president of the Burl-Oak Theatre Group promoted the play *Schoolhouse* that sixteen members will be seeing later this month. As we have done in the past, we will drop into O'Finn's Irish Temper for food and refreshments before we go to the theatre. It makes for a fun evening. Micki is promoting local theatre and that is something that your Recreation Committee has pushed. The Burl-Oak Theatre Group has Micki Clemens as its president, **Jane Coryell** as set designer and Jim Clemens as a producer.

*Over the River and Through the Woods*, the second play in the Burl-Oak Theatre Group's 35th anniversary series, was the play we went to in January. It is the story of an Italian-American family living in New Jersey. Grandson Nick, visits his grandparents Aida, Frank, Emma and Nunzio every Sunday for dinner at Frank and Aida's house. The high decibel banter (probably the noisiest people you have ever heard) produces lots of laughs. Nunzio tells us the family values



are the three F's; Faith, Family and Food. Little is said about faith but much  
(Theatre... continues on Page 18)

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(Theatre... continued from Page 17)

is said about food. Whenever anyone comes into the house Aida heads for the kitchen and out comes the food. The actress portrays to perfection the role of Aida, the Italian matriarch who loves to cook and eat as well.

The family becomes involved when Nick gets to tell his grandparents, through all the noise, that he intends to accept a promotion and move to Seattle. Jobs at one another cease and all efforts now are directed at how to get Nick to change his mind. Nick's parents have moved to Florida and his sister to California so he is their family. Each of them left their families in Italy to seek a better life. Now they are experiencing what their parents did and want to keep Nick. None of the schemes persuade him to stay. As the years pass, one by one the grandparents pass away. With only Aida left, on one of his visits, Nick asks her to move to Seattle to be with him and his family. She says that the house that Frank built is her home and that is where she will stay.

There are lots of laughs in this play but also the sadness of seeing one generation letting another go. The casting of the characters couldn't have been better and the performance was very well received by the audience. This is great local theatre and well worth attending.

In December, 25 members enjoyed *"Poodle Skirts to Platform Shoes"* at Theatre Aquarius. This musical was an upbeat, sparkling and quick-paced non-stop celebration of song and dance from the heady years of our young adulthood. It was an evening honouring the times and tempos, the sensations, the stars, and

the greatest revolution in popular music ever! They moved from Elvis to the rocking and rolling of the fifties, to the Mersey beat of the 60's and the stayin' alive disco of the 70's. The set recalled the former Odeon magnificence and an array of startlingly accurate costumes. Two revolving sets right and left framed a wide set of perfectly kitschy risers. This formed a stage within a stage for Music Director Bob Foster's perfect band. The band carried us easily through a whole range of styles and changes

(Theatre... continues on Page 19)



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(Theatre... continued from Page 18)

of tastes in pop artistic growth and development. Almost 50 icons of music from the three decades were featured throughout the evening. They were portrayed by nine actors, five men and four women. A couple of MC's held the fabric together with the best of sweet humour.

Our group sang along and **Dave Wright** participated with a sweet young thing during one song. The evening ended with a Christmas song and falling artificial snow. This was a diversion from the regular seasonal fare and a most enjoyable one. We came out singing to songs of our youth with a spring in our step.

## JOIN THE ADVENTURE

Submitted by Linda Jones



Last year a team of nine members from District 15 raised \$2775 for cancer research at the **Canadian Cancer Society Relay For Life**. This year's event is on June 8th at Bronte Creek Provincial Park. It is more than just a fundraiser. It is an opportunity to get together

with family, friends and colleagues to enjoy an evening of companionship and fun while doing a good deed. This year help us **Celebrate** the lives of people who have battled cancer. Cancer survivors join together at Relay For Life to walk the Survivors' Victory Lap - the first lap of the event. Their strength and courage give hope to others.

**Join** team 'RTO/ERO District 15.' **Register** online at [www.relay.cancer.ca](http://www.relay.cancer.ca) and start fundraising. **Remember** loved ones lost to the disease. At Relay For Life, luminaries are lit during a moving ceremony at dusk. Their light pays tribute to loved ones and provides inspiration to participants all night long.

Bring your poles if you are a pole walker. **Lend** us a tent if you have a very large one. **Fight back** by Relaying because we have been touched by cancer and desperately want to put an end to this terrible disease. It's an opportunity for you to make a personal contribution and take action. **Donate** to a team member or to the team personally or online.

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**Catch Some Magic and Enjoy Live Theatre!**  
**At the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts!**  
**Tickets: 905-815-2021 or [www.oakvillecentre.ca](http://www.oakvillecentre.ca)**

**OCTOBER 4-7 and 10-13, 2012 - *ROPE'S END*** by Douglas Bowie

**THE STORY:** When we meet Tobias Boone, a 45 year old former film critic, he is at the end of his rope – literally. He retrieves an old shoe box filled with Boy Scout memorabilia, including instructions on how to tie ropes. In the box he discovers something far more valuable; a long treasured photograph of a girl he loved when he was only 13. They had agreed to meet again 31 years later – and that's the very next day! Love prevails and he woos her, wins her, and takes her off to Italy! Or does he? Of course not – he's just imagined it. The reality is more sobering; but the actual reunion gives Toby a purpose and a real life connection! This bittersweet comedy has depth and high entertainment value.

**JANUARY 10-13 and 16-19, 2013 - *HIDE AND SEEK*** by Lezley Havard

**THE STORY:** Richard and Jennifer Crawford have moved from the city to an old farmhouse, which they are trying to restore before the baby arrives. He still commutes each day, while she stays in the country supervising the shambling handyman and cook who work for them. At first it is mostly the slow pace of restoration which nags at them, but a general sense of unease begins to build as the old house seems to be resisting their intrusion. But it is the silent little girl whom Jennifer claims she has seen swinging in the backyard who brings on the chilling climax of the play – in which the real and the supernatural clash with disturbing and breath-stopping results. A fast-paced thriller that puts the audience at ease, and then races quickly to the startling ending.

**APRIL 25-28 and MAY 1-4, 2013 - *THE KITCHEN WITCHES*** by C. Smith

**THE STORY:** *The Kitchen Witches* is all about Dolly Biddle and Isobel Lomax, whose individual cable cooking shows, "Baking with Babcha" and "Busy with Izzy" have both been cancelled by the network. But during the final broadcast of Dolly's show, Izzy shows up with a spite on. The sparks fly between the two women and the producers love it! Presto: a new cooking show, "The Kitchen Witches" is born! By the time "The Kitchen Witches" hits the air, the food takes a backseat to the snarling on stage. The show becomes a ratings smash hit as Dolly and Isobel top both Martha Stewart and Jerry Springer! An audience favourite with lots of hilarity.

A CALL FOR DIRECTORS. WE NEED EXPERIENCED DIRECTORS FOR EACH OF THE ABOVE 3 SHOWS! WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! PLAYS PERFORMED AT THE OAKVILLE CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS.

Contact Micki Clemens, [president@botg.ca](mailto:president@botg.ca) for an appointment.

*(This is an ad)*

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## RTO/ERO District 15 Contact List

### Executive 2011 – 2012

Past President	Cecile Leach	905-634-8027
President	Linda Jones	905-336-5785
1st Vice President	Janice Murdoch	289-956-0163
2nd Vice President	Phyllis Kingsley	905-845-6911
Secretary	Janet Carter-Wright	905-336-5328
Treasurer	Chub Baxter	905-643-3732
Assistant:	Daliah Brown	905-825-8470
Member-at-Large	Jim Baker	905-639-1292

### Committees

Archives	Judy Sloan	905-336-5538
Awards	Phyllis Kingsley	905-845-6911
Book of Remembrance	Marina Lloyd	905-637-6030

Communications Chair	Peter Gnish	905-547-1628
Website	George MacRae	905-315-8581
Newsletter	Peter Gnish	905-547-1628

Assistants: Chub Baxter, Octavia Dutzak, Cecile Leach, Eleanor McCulloch, Marilyn MacRae, Cate Roberts (Design), Ray Smith and Dave Trueman.

Goodwill Chair	Marina Lloyd	905-637-6030
West Convenor	TBA	905-637-7340
East Convenor	Warren McBurney	905-845-8219
North Convenor	Marg Megelink	905-877-7135
Out-of-Region Convenor	Peter Gnish	905-547-1628

Health Services	George MacRae	905-315-8581
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Membership/Recruitment Chair	Jan Murdoch	289-956-0163
Committee Member:	Judy Sloan	905-336-5538

Pension	Jim Baker	905-639-1292
Political Advocacy	Linda Jones (Interim)	905-336-5785
Program	Penny Hambly	905-639-6193
Recreation	David Wright	905-639-5093
Tours	Jan Murdoch	289-956-0163

Member Without Portfolio	Hilary Barber	905-637-7067
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## Calendar of Events - April to October, 2012

- Apr. 12 RBG Chocolate Exhibit. 10:00 a.m. Cost \$5.50. Lunch can be arranged. Contact D. Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca by Mar. 31.
- Apr. 20 Oakville Theatre for the Performing Arts: **Schoolhouse**, written by Canadian author, Leanna Brodie. 8:00 p.m. Cost \$27.00. Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca
- Apr. 26 Breakfast at El Spero Restaurant, Hopedale Mall, Oakville. 9:00 a.m. Contact Paul Durnan at 905-630-2285.
- Apr. 27 Dinner Theatre. Aldershot Players, West Plains United Church, Burlington. A Norm Foster play: **Maggie's Getting Married**, 6:30 p.m. Cost \$35.00. Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5095 or wandave@sympatico.ca.
- May 8 Annual General Meeting at the Burlington Convention Centre, 1120 Burloak Drive. 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Cost \$25.00 for lunch and entertainment by Rick Rossini, the Magical Motivator. See the registration form enclosed in this mailing,
- May 31 Stratford Musical Matinee: **Pirates of Penzance**, Avon Theatre. 2:00 p.m. Cost \$99.00. Contact D. Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca.
- June 19 Burlington Performing Arts Theatre: **Gotta Sing Gotta Dance** with the Burlington Footnotes. 7:00 p.m. Cost \$23.00 Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca.
- June 25 Stage West Dinner Theatre, Dixie Rd. and Matheson Blvd., Mississauga. **The Bobby Darin Story**. 2 p.m. Cost \$ 60.00. Lunch at 11:00 a.m. Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca.
- Sept 15 North Metro Sweet Adelines Show. Global Kingdom Ministries, Markham Rd. & Hwy 401. 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Cost \$ 30.00 up to May 31 & \$35 to Sept 1. Contact Mary Lyons at 905-336-744 or mlyons3@cogeco.ca.
- Oct. 3 Shaw Festival, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Musical: **Ragtime**. 2:00 p.m. Matinee. Cost \$57.00. Contact Janet Carter-Wright at 905-336-5328 or jcwright@xplorenet.com. Cheques made out to Retired Teachers of Ontario, District 15 must be received by Janet at 4491 Appleby Line, Burlington L7M 0P3 by August 17.

## Communications Committee

By Peter Gnish



As you can see from the number of people who submitted pictures to the Photo Contest and those who sent cards, e-mails and letters (see my column that begins on Page 8), we are getting an excellent response from the membership to calls for submissions to the newsletter. Thanks to all those who contribute – we love to see your pictures and read your articles. Below you will find the

latest way that we are attempting to entice you to become involved in making a submission. Read the details, start putting the piece together, and earn yourself a Tim Hortons coffee and donut or two.

### On Being a Grandparent: Sharing Your Experiences and Photos

Many of us, who are fortunate enough to have grandchildren, count our involvement with them as one of the blessings of getting older. The photos on Page 2 show the joy of being a youngster - not a care in the world. I wonder if when **Jim Mitchell** and **Penny Hambly** took these pictures they, as grandparents, shared in that joy. Somehow, I think they did! And it's certainly a feeling that keeps us young. Grandchildren can generate in us the full range of emotions: joy, sadness, excitement, apprehension, and many more. Share an anecdote or a story about your involvement and experience with your grandchild. Include a photo if you can. You can earn a \$10 gift certificate to Tim Horton's by making a submission - good enough for a hot chocolate and a cookie for those little ones! The details:

1. Write an article or an anecdote of no more than 1000 words on any aspect of your involvement with your grandchild that others would find enjoyable. Include a photo if you can.
2. Or, sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. So submit a photo and include a brief description of how it relates to your life as a grandparent.
3. Submitted photos can be either in colour or black and white.
4. Send the entries
  - By Canada Post to Peter Gnish, 153 Fairleigh Ave. S. Hamilton, ON L8M 2K4 (All hard copies will be returned) **OR better still,**
  - By computer, as an attachment to an e-mail message to [pgnish@cogeco.ca](mailto:pgnish@cogeco.ca).
5. Entry deadline is July 15, 2012.
6. With Grandkids, everyone's a winner. Each participant will receive a \$10 gift certificate to Tim Hortons.

If you have questions please contact me at 905-547-1628 or [pgnish@cogeco.ca](mailto:pgnish@cogeco.ca).

## The Art of Happiness!

Most people want to be happy. How can you improve your overall level of joy? Research over the past 50 years seems to indicate that our outlook and life choices account for 40% of our happiness. Not surprisingly, it's our relationships, work and participation in our communities that have the most impact, while only 10% is believed to come from external circumstances such as rainy days or traffic jams.



### *How can we improve our levels of happiness in day-to-day life?*

- Evaluate your thought patterns: Do you worry compulsively, self-criticize or dwell on the past? Try to avoid negativity in your thoughts and actions. Work hard to be positive and forward-looking in all you do.
- Get busy and stay focused: Dancing, exercising, volunteering, smiling, laughing and hugging loved ones have shown to increase happiness. Focus on the task at hand to boost your level of joy.
- Eat chocolate: The neuroactive alkaloids in chocolate have been shown to enhance contentment as they tend to produce a kind of euphoria in the brain.
- Be nice: Performing random acts of kindness increases short-term feelings of happiness. But the most powerful way to increase long-term contentment is to understand your talents and to share parts of yourself with others.
- Consider the rewards: Studies suggest that happy people have better relationships and bounce back more easily from bad experiences. They also produce up to 50% more antibodies, have lower stress hormones and are generally healthier.

### **It's Spring. Time to Bring Out the Golf Jokes!!!**

A young man and a priest are playing together. At a short par-3 the priest asks, "What are you going to use on this hole, my son?"

The young man says, "An 8-iron, Father. How about you?" The priest says, "I'm going to hit a soft seven and pray."

The young man hits his 8-iron and puts the ball on the green. The priest tops his 7-iron and dribbles the ball out a few yards.

The young man says, "I don't know about you, Father, but in my church, when we pray, we keep our head down."



## Political Advocacy Committee

By Linda Jones



As the President of District 15, I was also Chair of the Political Advocacy Committee. Now, I would love to hear from those of you who are politically aware and have a particular interest in our health care system, our education system or other policy matters affecting seniors and who might be able to assist in this area.

Of course the big news of the day is the Drummond report and how our Provincial Government may handle it. It is a massive document. In this issue I will only deal with those recommendations that deal with health care as they might have the greatest impact on our membership. Thanks to the Ontario Health Coalition I received the latest information on Saturday, February 25th.

### **DRUMMOND'S RECOMMENDATIONS** (with some added comments).

- Cap health funding at 2.5% annual growth through to 2017-18. This is 1% or \$500 million per year lower than government fiscal projections. It would mean that approximately \$4 billion would have to be carved out of health spending increases over the next three years.
- Cut hospital services and privatize them, "Divert all patients not requiring acute care from hospitals," to other places provided by private for-profit or non-profit entities. This, despite his mandate which expressly prohibited recommendations for health care privatization.
- Put a moratorium on building long-term care homes. Nowhere in the report is there any assessment of unmet need. There are 24,000 waiting for long term care and 12,000 waiting to transfer out of a bed not of their choosing.
- Give more power to regional health authorities, including budget powers and powers over a wider range of providers. Drummond recommends reconstituting the LHINs with more powers and higher CEO salaries and establishing Advisory Panels for each LHIN hired from the executives of hospitals, long-term care, community care, and physicians (without regard to their for-profit or public status). Drummond seems to have no concept of conflict-of-interest among the for-profit providers in particular.
- Possibly merge or somehow tightly integrate CCACs and LHINs.
- Restructure Family Health Teams.
- Reduce the number of health care providers by amalgamating more hospitals, creating one entity to represent long term care homes (for-profit and non-profit/public), amalgamating and closing health service agencies.

(Political Advocacy... continues on Page 26)

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(Political Advocacy... continued from Page 25)

- Bring in private-sector managers to contain costs for complex patients.
- Centralize leadership of chronic disease management, for mental health, heart and stroke and renal disease, based on the Cancer Care Ontario model.
- More nurse practitioners and physicians assistants, training more nurses and using the health care team to their full scope of practice.
- Change funding arrangements. He recommends a health based allocation model which is global funding, but also fee-for-service hospital funding which is about centralizing care into fewer places and is the opposite of global funding, incentive systems and also funding that follows patients. These are all different proposals. Also, Drummond proposes the LHINs integrate physicians into a rostered system with a blend of salary/capitation (population based) and fee-for-service funding. He repeatedly recommends moving more physicians into family health teams and different funding arrangements.
- Move decisions about what is covered under OHIP out of OMA-provincial government negotiations. Have the Health Quality Council, with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) guide treatment decisions and OHIP coverage. Make the test more stringent to limit whether or not a treatment practice or drug is adopted.
- Move to fee-for-service funding for more hospital procedures and force hospitals to compete. Move services out of local hospitals into those that provide volumes for lower prices. Bring in competitive bidding for specialist services.
- Redefine the role of smaller hospitals with large ALC populations. He recommends more amalgamations, moving a vast array of services and beds out to private providers. Implement David Walker's recommendations for addressing ALC including measures to provide a continuum of care.
- Consider fully uploading public health (the remaining 25% paid for by municipalities) to provincial funding.
- Have doctors address diet and exercise before making prescriptions. Promote healthy lifestyles.
- Change the Ontario Drug Benefit Program to limit payments for drugs for wealthier seniors, increase co-payments, and extend it to lower income people of all ages.
- Pursue common drug pricing across Canada to reduce the cost of drugs, including comparisons between drugs, expansion of generic drugs, making sure the Canada-European Free Trade Agreement (CETA) does not undermine attempts to expand generic substitution.

(Political Advocacy... continues on Page 27)

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(Political Advocacy... continued from Page 26)

- Centralize all back-office functions. Bring in electronic health records.
- Expand the scope of medicare to cover pharmaceuticals, long term care and aspects of mental health care. There is no money for this given Drummond's proposed cut to spending targets.
- Establish a Commission to guide health reform and consult on the 20-year health plan.

### **IMPORTANT FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Much of the report aims to create a crisis in spending, even a flagrant disregard for the facts, in order to make the case for cuts. Drummond reports falsely that health spending is growing as a share of the provincial budget. This claim is untrue. In fact, health care has been shrinking as a share of the provincial budget.

- The actual figures from Government of Ontario Annual Budgets show that health care has declined from 47% of the provincial spending on all programs in 2002 to 42% in 2011. (See Ontario Ministry of Finance, Ontario Budgets from 2002 – 2011).
- Ontario now ranks 8th of 10 provinces in all government spending (including payments on the debt).
- Ontario also ranks 8th of 10 provinces in health care spending.
- The measure of sustainability is spending as a proportion of our economic output or provincial GDP. We are significantly below the average for Canadian provinces.
- Drummond projects pessimistic figures for economic growth and productivity that are less than Ministry of Finance projections.
- There is no costing of his proposals.

#### **Editorial Policy**

The Halton Herald is a non-partisan newsletter published by RTO/ERO Halton District 15 and is distributed to members and prospective members 3 times a year. Material from members, charitable or volunteer organizations submitted for inclusion in the newsletter or website, in full or in part, must be approved by the editor or website manager. We reserve the right to edit all submissions and advertisements.

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## A Conversation With Margaretha (Marg) Megelink

By Marina Lloyd - Chair of Goodwill Committee



In 2009, **Marg Megelink** accepted the position of North Area Co-ordinator for our Goodwill Committee. **Iona Lobb** had been supporting senior seniors in the North for many years and she (and we!) were delighted when her friend Marg agreed to replace her. It wasn't as if Marg had lots of time on her hands that year. She was a member of the Lydia Snow Branch of the RWTO, was working with the Red Cross Emergency Response

Team teaching courses in Disaster Assistance, was serving on boards and committees in Georgetown and was an active member of St. John's United Church. What motivates such a busy woman to take on even more responsibilities? Perhaps you'll understand once you've heard her story.

Marg was born in 1930 in Hengelo OV in the Eastern Netherlands, the second of four children. Hengelo was an important railway junction and a centre of wartime industry activities and thus the target for frequent bombing raids in World War II. The heart of the city was bombed out in October 1944. Her father was snatched by the Germans and forced to dig foxholes. Wagons heaped with weapons, their covers ironically strewn with lilacs, lum-



bered through the streets. Schools were closed. Any organization for young people that refused to become an arm of Hitler Youth, was disbanded. Three words sum up her memories of those years - Cold, Darkness and Hunger. In April 1945, the Canadian Army brought liberation to Hengelo and earned Marg's eternal gratitude. Those childhood experiences determined her future passions in many ways.

(Marg Megelink... continues on Page 29)

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(Marg Megelink... continued from Page 28)

An uncle was living in a concentration camp and letters from the Red Cross kept the family informed of his health - hence her admiration for that organization. As she can never repay the Canadian Army for their efforts in her home country, her community involvements are a way of "paying it forward."

She, her husband and two daughters, came to Canada in 1957, coming first to the Ottawa area where a son was born. In 1969 they moved to Georgetown. Her teaching career began and ended at Harrison PS. She found her greatest satisfaction, dare I say joy, when working with children with exceptionalities. Along with her Special Education Specialist's certificate, she has a diploma from York University qualifying her to teach exceptional children. Her degree from the same university is in Geography and Geology, two subjects of great interest. Teaching assignments included a language class and resource cluster classes. She retired from teaching in 1995.

Marg's pride in the accomplishments of her family is evident. The eldest daughter has two sons and lives in Melbourne, Australia. Her second daughter, who also has two sons, lives in Montreal and her son who is a chief engineer in the aviation industry, lives in Georgetown. Between spending time with family and friends and carrying out her tasks in the community (including keeping in touch with retired teachers for the Goodwill Committee), how can Marg find time for hobbies? But she does. She knits; she paints; she loves books, particularly those written by Canadian authors. She enjoys outdoor activities; she gardens and - she writes. She had a friend, a Canadian war hero, who told her about his experience in Belgium "clearing the Gap." It was so important to her friend, that in honour of fallen comrades, the details of that battle were recorded. His story, written by Marg, now resides in the Canadian War Museum. Her friend died on November 11, 2011 at the age of 98.

The fact that Marg has been on her own for over 29 years, coupled with her childhood wartime experiences, has developed within her, a spirit of courage, independence and a determination to do all she can to give support to others. I know the members of RTO/ERO District 15 are grateful to you, Marg, for all that you do for older retired teachers in the North Area. We are also grateful to you for telling your story. To relive those childhood memories can't have been easy for you. We wish you good health and much happiness for many years to come.

Wij wensen u een goede gezondheid en geluk voor vele jaren.

## Pension and Retirement Concerns Committee

By Jim Baker



Teachers' pensions are negotiated between the Ontario Teachers Federation and the Ontario Government. Contributions are shared on a 50/50 basis. RTO/ERO has representation on the Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF) Pension Committee but strictly in an advisory capacity. The Ontario Teachers Pension Plan administers the plan on behalf of the two parties. The plan has approximately \$107.5 billion in assets and gained \$13.3 billion in the last year. Unfortunately, it has an actuarial deficit of \$17.5 billion which ultimately must be resolved. With this deficit and the present economic conditions, there is little expectation of improved pension benefits. It is essential that we hold on to what we have. The Drummond financial report suggests that government pensions be scrutinized as one of its many recommendations to bring the government's ballooning deficit under control.

The Teachers Pension Plan keeps us informed on the status and changes in our pensions, as necessary, by mail. It is thus quite understandable that the Provincial RTO/ERO Pension Committee concentrate both its time and effort on retirement concerns. It has produced in excess of 60 fact sheets such as financial, government benefits, health, insurance, legal, marital, survivor and retirement issues. All are available on the RTO/ERO website in the "Members Centre" section at [www.rto-ero.org](http://www.rto-ero.org) or by phoning the Provincial office at 1-800-361-9888. Over the last year, the Provincial Pension and Retirement Concerns Committee developed a resource document in "Caregiving." There are three sections: 1) summary of diseases normally associated with aging; 2) home care and possible resources; 3) institutional care.

Halton Region has available a Halton Seniors Directory produced by the Region Elder Services Advisory Committee. It is available at Halton city halls, libraries and at Community Care Access Centres (CCAC). It deals with all the services and facilities available in Halton. I would highly recommend it to our members.

### Did You Know?

**Vitamin D deficiency in seniors increases the chance of fractures, muscle loss and bone pain. Ask your physician about taking vitamin D for a host of health benefits. (Source: [www.direct-ms.org](http://www.direct-ms.org))**

(President's Report... continued from Page 4)

from Canadians in Support of Afghan Women, who were given a Project Service to Others grant through the efforts of District 15 and the Provincial Office, showing how the library in a school for girls in Afghanistan is being embraced by the whole community.

In addition we participated in the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay for Life. A team of nine raised \$2775 and thoroughly enjoyed the adventure. We intend to repeat our participation this year, hopefully with a full team of 15 and increase our donation. We hope one of our members will be able to lend us a large tent. You will hear more about this through our website and at our AGM so be prepared to join our enthusiastic group and do a good deed for yourselves and your community. I look forward to my continuing involvement with RTO/ERO District 15 as your Past President.

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## Recruitment & Member Services Committee

By Jan Murdoch



Our membership numbers are increasing and approaching 2300 in total - that's a great thing! The most important tool that we have for recruitment is YOU. If you become aware of a colleague, friend or family member who is approaching retirement, encourage them to join our organization.

Please submit any changes in your address, e- mail, phone, or name to me and I will see that the RTO/ERO files are updated. Contact me at 289-956-0163 or [janmurdoch@cogeco.ca](mailto:janmurdoch@cogeco.ca).

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## Brain Fitness, A Paradigm Shift

Submitted By Jan Murdoch

As a doctorate candidate at OISE in 2000, I was involved with some research work involving ageing and the brain. Recently, I became interested in learning about any new developments. To my surprise it appears that theories have radically changed over the last few years with the availability of new neuroimaging methods. “Structural imaging provides information about the shape and column of the brain through computed axial tomography (CAT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans. Functional imaging such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and positron emission tomography (PET) scans, show the brain regions that are active when one performs a specific task.” The results have caused a paradigm shift in understanding the human brain. “New research at the Salk Institute, the Karolinska Institute, Columbia University, Baycrest Institute and elsewhere has given a renewed, positive view of the human brain and its potential for change and development throughout life.”

“The human brain is now considered to be a highly dynamic and constantly reorganizing system capable of being shaped and reshaped across our entire lifespan. The key words in the new approach to the brain are neuroplasticity and neurogenesis. Neuroplasticity refers to the life long capacity of the brain to change and rewire itself in response to the stimulation of learning and experience. Neurogenesis is the ability to create new neurons and connections between neurons throughout a life time. This new paradigm contrasts with traditional ideas of the human brain being a fixed and essentially limited system that degrades with age. As we age, the rate of change in the brain or neuroplasticity, declines but does not come to a halt. New neurons can appear in certain parts of the brain up until the day we die.”

“Learning is the physical process of changing our brains and it is possible at all ages.” Thus learning is critical at all ages to maintain good brain function. We are all familiar with the phrase, *Use it or Lose it!* Brain fitness is our brain’s ability to create additional connections between neurons and even to promote new neurons. Brain fitness has become the new focus. In the research from many institutions, but particularly from Alvaro Fernandez, co-founder and CEO of SharpBrains, four components or pillars to Brain Fitness have been identified, each is equally as important as the other. In his book *The Sharp Brain Guide to Brain Fitness*, Fernandez and his co-author Dr Elkhonon Goldberg identify the key pillars as **Nutrition** or a balanced diet, **Emotional or Stress Management**,

(Brain Fitness ... continues on Page 33)

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(Brain Fitness ... continued from Page 32)

**Exercise** (aerobics) and finally **Mental Stimulation**. Meeting lifestyle objectives in these four areas will effect a brain's health.

Fernandez further clarifies that "Specific lifestyles and actions can, no matter our age, improve the health and level of functioning of our brains. Such improvements can happen thanks to neuroplasticity that is, when the rate of creation and survival of neurons in certain parts of the brain is increased, or when the rate of creation and survival of synapses (the connections between neurons) speeds up, or when a neurochemical environment is nurtured in our brains to support information processing." He concludes that this places our brain health largely under our own control. The key is that there is no generic solution. But there are factors that influence brain health as was mentioned earlier. Examining each pillar separately one gets further clarity on what the research now recommends.

With **Nutrition**, there are a couple of factors to be aware of Fernandez explains. "The brain consumes a considerable amount of glucose, a dysfunction is a core of diabetes and a decrease in ability to use glucose efficiently is one of the earliest signs of dementia."... "The brain is also a fatty organ. Fats are present in the neurons' membrane to keep them flexible. Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids molecules" to be specific. Omega 3 are found in cold-water fish (mackerel, herring, salmon, and tuna), kiwi and walnuts. Based on findings you need the following: fatty fish, vegetables, salads, non-starchy fruits (berries) that are high in free radical fighting compounds and nuts.

When examining the second pillar Fernandez explains "Prolonged exposure to high levels of stress can damage the brain."... "**Stress** limits mental flexibility and ones ability to see alternative solutions. As such, it can prevent us from adapting to and succeeding in, new circumstances." He concludes that the best defenses against chronic stress are physical exercise, relaxation which can include meditation, self empowerment and cultivating social networks.

The third pillar is the one that I found most enlightening, **Exercise**. Fernandez identifies Dr. Kramer and Dr Calcombe, who completed a meta-analysis that clearly showed that physical fitness training increases cognitive performance. They said "aerobic exercise, at least 30-60 minutes per day, 3 times a week has been shown to have a positive impact." Although walking has shown to have a positive effect, adding nordic poles turns the activity into an aerobic exercise significantly improving the outcome. Fernandez concluded that "the brain uses most of the oxygen in your body. Increasing the oxygen with a cardiovascular activity has

(Brain Fitness ... continues on Page 34)

(Brain Fitness ... continued from Page 33)

been shown to halt and even reverse brain atrophy that starts in a person's forties, especially in the regions responsible for memory and higher cognition."

Finally Fernandez elaborated on the fourth aspect, **Mental Stimulation**. "Research has shown that frequent participation in mentally stimulating activities reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease, possibly by increasing brain reserve. Good brain exercise requires variety, challenge and novelty. Varied, novel and challenging exercise will necessarily induce learning. Learning is critical. When one learns a new fact or new way of accomplishing a task, neurons and synapses-connection in the brain change. This is neuroplasticity. The changes associated with learning may help increase brain reserve. Learning and change requires getting out of your comfort zone. Often the fear of failing is a key obstacle to learning.

Staff at the Baycrest Institute in Toronto have been very responsive to the many questions that I had following my reading of Alvaro Fernandez's book. They confirmed that some studies had been done involving Nordic Pole use and its impact on Brain Fitness. One small study focused on a group who had Parkinson's; they are now proceeding with a larger clinical study because of the positive results. If this topic is of interest, I would encourage you to go to the following websites to see the latest findings. You can also sign up for their regular newsletters.

<http://www.sharpbrains.com/newsletter/>

<http://www.baycrest.org/publications-18.php>

Happy researching.

## Welcome New RTO/ERO District 15 Members!!!

District 15 membership is now almost 2300. Below are the names of retired teachers and other education staff who became members between December, 2011 and March, 2012. Please welcome and invite them to join you at one of our many activities.

Arlene Apramian

Nancy Davidson

Patricia Fudurich

Bruce Gilchrist

Susan Hayden

Dale McLean

Mary Pedverse

Virginia Saddlemyre

Anne St Jean

Joanne Badame

Jacqueline Drury

Janet Gambrell

John Hansen

Gabriela Mackay

Catherine McMenemy

Michael Robinet

Richard Schultz

Louise Whyman

Daniel Campbell

Thomas Fauteux

Vita Giacalone

Graham Haworth

Sandra MacLennan

Anne Milford

Linda Rostern

Kelly Shaw

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7 Night Mediterranean Europe from \$519. (Save 37%)  
Sailing Oct 21, 2012 aboard Navigator of the Seas  
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### **Eastern Caribbean Cruise from Miami, Florida**

Sailing Dec 08, 2012 aboard Celebrity Reflection  
7 Night Eastern Caribbean from \$739. (Save 29%)  
Bonus\*\*\*\$75 USD Onboard Credit

### **Roundtrip Alaska Cruise from Vancouver, BC**

Sailing Sep 16, 2012 aboard Celebrity Century  
9 Night Roundtrip Alaska from \$1,079 (Save 43%)  
Bonus\*\*\*\$75 USD Onboard Credit

Unless otherwise stated, all prices are per person and are based on double occupancy for stated stateroom category. Subject to availability at the time of booking for selected departure dates. Airfare, transfers, and government fees are additional unless otherwise specified. Rates are subject to change without notice. Restrictions and blackout periods may apply.



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2001*

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### **Chuck Rattray** Cruise & Vacation Specialist

*Retired from HCDSB in  
2002*

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## Our "Place in the Sun"

By Linda and Vince Weeks



When Vince and I began our retirement lives at the turn of the last century, we had just finished building a sailboat and had plans to circumnavigate the world! But then reality set in. No way was I prepared to man the helm for hours on end at night, while Vince slept, without having a clue about sailing in adverse conditions or how to fend off piracy should we eventually find ourselves off the Somali coast. Plan B: Cruise the Carribean. But this still required some night sailing, waiting for "weather," and frequent anchoring in less than ideal locations. (Anyone who has ever left the "sheltered" environs of a tropical beach resort and ventured into the unsavory

third world neighbourhoods of Jamaica, Haiti, and most of the other Caribbean islands knows what I'm talking about here). Despite our misgivings, we still wanted to sail - but safely, in small doses. For us, real pleasure was NOT to be found in the "journey" but in the actual destination, safely anchored in calm pristine waters with a white sand beach and within dinghying distance of good restaurants and lively bars peopled with interesting characters from all over the world. We are happy to report that we found all of this and more in the Abaco Islands of the Bahamas. We are into our 4th season cruising the Bahamas and have now just about "seen it all." This year however, instead of trying to experience even more of the over 700 islands that make up this tropical paradise just off the coast of Florida, we chose to return to a place we have grown to love, Boat Harbour, located on the western shore of Great Abaco Island.

Our "Place in the Sun" has it all at an affordable price. We have a slip at the Boat Harbour Marina, which is part of the 4 star Resort Complex of the Abaco Beach Resort. As members of the Royal Marsh Harbour Yacht Club, we enjoy reduced rates for our boat slip, currently \$700 per month for our 36' sailboat! (Yes, you read that right, per MONTH!). This entitles us to the

(Our Place in the Sun.. continues on Page 37)

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(Our Place in the Sun.. continued from Page 36)

use of all the resort amenities; weight room, heated free form pool, swim-up bar, sugar sand beach with lounge chairs under thatched palapas, classy indoor restaurant, funky beach bar/snack shack, gift shop, large immaculate showering and toileting facilities complete with granite counters and fresh flowers, fresh beach towels provided daily, laundering facilities, lounge with book exchange, concierge. And, each slip has its own electricity, water, wi-fi, cable TV, and light posts. You would be hard pressed to find comparable facilities in a southern clime, on the water, ANYWHERE for that price! We are 10 minutes away by taxi to the airport (although fellow RMHYC members are glad to give you a “lift” anywhere in cars that many jointly own) and within walking distance to several excellent restaurants, boutiques, medical and dental clinics and a grocery store that rivals Fortinos. Since most of us have bicycles here, we don’t actually “walk” anywhere.

This morning I counted 70 fellow RMHYC boats securely anchored in their slips here at “Boat Harbour.” Their owners hail from every state and province in North America and their backgrounds represent almost every profession you can think of. Despite our differences however, we are united in the common goal of wanting to have a good time and share what we have in both expertise and friendship with ALL of the other members of the club. There are no cliques. We have

a walking group, water aerobics, bocci ball, pickle ball, yoga, mah-jong, bridge, dominoes, rummy cube, craft classes (jewellery, baskets, clay, water colours, etc.), a book club and nightly “happy hours” with drinks and hors d’oeuvres. Once a month there is



a formal themed dinner dance with open bar when we all “dress up” and boogie to the sounds of the “golden oldies.”

As much as we love actually being at Boat Harbour surrounded by good friends and lots of things to do, the best part of being here is when we sail away for day

(Our Place in the Sun.. continues on Page 38)

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(Our Place in the Sun.. continued from Page 37)

trips to any one of the fascinating islands that are only a few hours away by boat. There are deserted beaches littered with shells, endless isolated sandbars exposed at low tide, pristine snorkelling reefs, a colony of white UEL descendants on “Man ‘O War” Cay, who still practice sail making and boat building as their forefathers have for centuries before, artist colonies on Elbow Cay and Little Harbour, colourful black UEL descendants on Guana Cay, cultural activities galore in quaint “Hopetown” and hundreds of American and Canadian “expats” who enjoy second homes everywhere in the Abacos.

The temperature in the Abacos is in the comfortable high 70’s range for most of the winter season with sunshine and breeze most days. We can be back home any day of the week within 4 hours of leaving here should an emergency arise. Both Westjet and Air Canada fly to Nassau on inexpensive regular schedules and from there it is only a quick 30 minute flight on Bahamasair to Boat Harbour. The downside? You can ONLY have this wonderful exotic cheap experience if you have a boat! Accommodations anywhere in the Bahamas is prohibitively expensive and you don’t get any “value” for your money. Accommodations on your boat however is virtually free. Eating out is expensive. But on a boat you cook dinner in your own galley, just as you would at home, eating out only occasionally as a special treat. Without a boat you are “trapped” in one place, alone and without friends because tourists here are virtually non-existent. On a boat, the world of the Bahamas is your oyster and fellow cruisers/RMHYC members are EVERYWHERE. We love it here. And if you have a boat that can “make it” across the gulfstream you should definitely check this place out.



**Hibiscus Inner Beauty**

## OOPS! We Goofed

This beautiful photo of the interior of a hibiscus flower that appeared on Page 43 of the January issue of the Halton Herald was incorrectly attributed to the wrong person. **Marlene Horne** was the actual photographer. We apologise to her for the error.

## Hiking The Inca Trail

By Steve Austin

“See that tree about 300 yards ahead? Do you think we can make it before we have to stop again?” We stand on the trail gasping for breath as we rest every 10-15 minutes. The thin air at 10,000 feet really slows down sea-level people. We’d just flown from Toronto to Miami then boarded an overnight flight to Lima, Peru, then on to Cusco. “Just walk slowly from the plane because we’re 11,500’ above sea level,” they told us before busing us to the homey Leonard’s 12-room Lodging. Already we could feel the altitude. “You’ll need to go to bed for a couple of hours to acclimatize yourselves before hiking on the Inca Trail.”



Steve Austin is on the left holding the flag and Morris Harvey, BCHS is centre back

Over the next days we tour the local area - the ceremonial site of Saqsayhuaman now used especially for the Inti Raymi Festival in June to celebrate the winter solstice/new year. We visited the colorful PISAQ markets for local fruits and authentic hand-made clothes and hats. Next day the Trail! Too late! No tickets for the tourist train to the head of the Trail. So the sixteen of us have to ride the local train with chickens, dogs, and produce piled high. We don't dare eat the

(Inca Trail... continues on Page 40)

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(Inca Trail.. continued from Page 39)

fruit or drink the coffee from unwashed cups. The toilets are just too much for us! At MILE-88 (altitude: 7000') we meet our hike leaders - two English speaking guides, two cooks and fourteen porters plus two 12 year-olds who actually carry the silverware. These strong, short and stocky men carry everything needed for a total of 38 people for five days, including all the tables, folding chairs, two-person tents with sleeping bags - AND all the food. We carry only our water, trail food, cameras and a few clothes.



We start walking southward on a wide level trail past a few scattered houses and trees then turn south. Hey! This is easy! Village children and women happily wave at our limited Spanish "Buenos dias." So far so good. But we're in for some big surprises. Quickly the trail starts to climb 2000' towards our first overnight. We start to feel the altitude - puffing and gasping in the thinning air. Houses and farms disappear as we climb past Wayllobamba. Ahead the 19,400' La Veronica mountain makes darkness fall quickly in the steep valley.

The porters and cooks had arrived before us and had set up a large dining tent full of folding chairs and tables. A full dinner is already prepared for hungry hikers ready for bed. Amazing to be eating a full course dinner cooked in the middle of

(Inca Trail... continues on Page 41)

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(Inca Trail.. continued from Page 40)

the Andes at 9000'. That's 2000' higher than last night. Each tent has two sleeping bags but we've brought our own liners.

Next morning breakfast is at 8 a.m. It's cold when we crawl out of our tents. Jackie from Hamilton has had a very bad and sleepless night. We realize that she's just too sick to face the greater difficulties which lie ahead. We have to make arrangements to get her back to Cusco. In our days together we've bonding as Canadians so it's sad to see her leave on horse-back, being taken down the way we've just hiked. When she gets back to Cusco the local doctor and the drug store give her some antibiotics but my wife doubles the dosage.

We're climbing steadily towards the first pass; the books say about 7 miles and at least 5-6 hours. But OH! Those hours! 4800' higher to 13,800'! Walk three or four hundred yards! Stop! Get our breath! Walk another section. We're breathless again. The porters, carrying all of the tents, food, and dishes packed after we left. Now they're passing us. They've got their own style of singing and jogging. But each of us has to set his or her pace. No hurry! Doing the hike and succeeding is the goal. I'm what is called the "sweeper" at the end of the group.

After five hours, we can see the Dead Woman Pass just ahead. Considering our aching legs and gasping lungs we feel the name is quite appropriate. A place for a real rest - we hope. Then a surprise! The cooks have already arrived; the lunch is laid out on big plastic sheets. Eating whatever they've prepared, we can only marvel that we're here high in the Andes having an excellent lunch. In a couple of hours these same cooks prepare and serve a special dinner.

Not too much time to rest because it's still down 2000' to the overnight tenting. 'Down' is as difficult as 'up' but for different reasons. Even in good hiking boots our feet are being jammed toward the fronts. We've also learned that we can't walk and look at the scenery at the same time. The trail is still steep and rocky with large boulders. We must stop, rest, then take our pictures, snack, then keep hiking downhill watching each step. Even a minor fall so far from civilization can be catastrophic. We come across a young man from another group who's in great pain from tripping and falling while running down the trail. It's a good lesson for everyone. He'll have to be taken out by porters because the rocky, uneven trail is too steep for horses.

At night our porters lie on the ground under some sort of make-shift blanket. We only see rows of bare feet sticking out in the freezing cold. Next morning another

(Inca Trail... continues on Page 42)

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(Inca Trail.. continued from Page 41)

cooked breakfast then we're back on the trail. We stop to see incredible Andean views south across the valley at the ancient Runkuraqay ruins also known as The Egg Hut (altitude:13,116') - an outpost on the Inca Trail from Machu Pichu. We want to rest longer but our guides remind us that tents and another dinner lie ahead. Now we have to hike carefully over and around large boulders and down hundreds of steps cut into rock by the original Incas. Just past the second pass (altitude:13,125') lie the Sayacmarca ruins. At one time about 200 people lived in this remote outpost. It was a small fortress guarding a solar observation point and a residence laced with streams and man-made canals feeding into ceremonial baths. We travel into a subtropical forest paradise fed by underground streams. We're passing through wild and rugged scenery, green forests filled with colorful alpine orchids, hummingbirds and butterflies. We hike through a tunnel cut through the rock and along a path right against the sheer rock face.

From the ruins of Phuyupatamarca (pe-you-patta-marca: literally 'town above the clouds'), it's down an endless series of steps cut into the rock. We have spectacular views of snowy mountains soaring over 18,000'. Because many medicinal plants grow here, some historians feel this may have been an Inca 'hospital'; the series of pools may have been the last stop to purify 'souls' entering the sacred city of Machu Pichu. We pass through the 'Gate of the Sun' so named because on Dec. 21, the longest day in the southern hemisphere, the sun shines right through the right-hand window of the temple. We see the river far far below. Tomorrow we reach Machu Pichu itself. Next day five of us tackle the hand-over-hand scramble to the top of Huayna Pichu - the younger Machu Pichu (elevation:9000'). We have even more amazing views of the ruins 1200' below and the Urubamba Valley.

Sitting in the ruins the next day we know we have travelled the same 'royal highway' as the Incas when they entered their capital. Our first views are magical. We can only sit in awe high above the ruins (altitude:7880'). We marvel at walkways and paths between ancient buildings. Breathtaking views. We've hiked about 27 miles; we climbed from 7000' to nearly 14,000' over three high Andean passes. And we're all well! We have reached the sacred and remote Machu Pichu. We realize why this is classed as one of the world's greatest hikes. We're thousands of miles south of our homes in Canada. Now we have this magical place to ourselves before the tourist hordes arrive. Beautiful ! Mystical ! Truly, truly amazing!

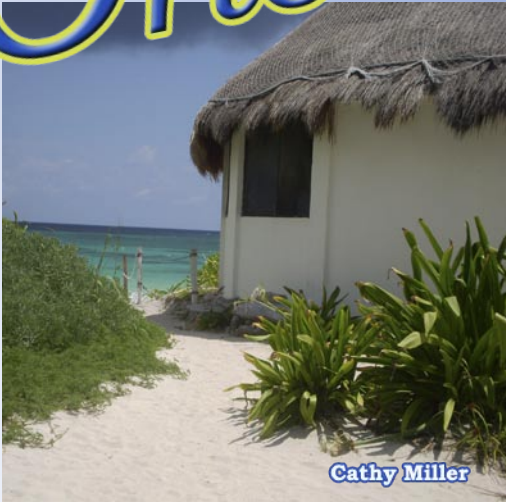
(Inca Trail Pictures... on the next Page.)

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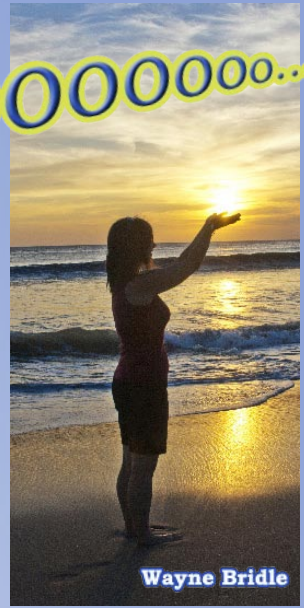
# *On Top Of The World Trekking in Peru to Machu Pichu*



# Ohooooo.....



Cathy Miller



Wayne Bridle

## The Sky's the Limit

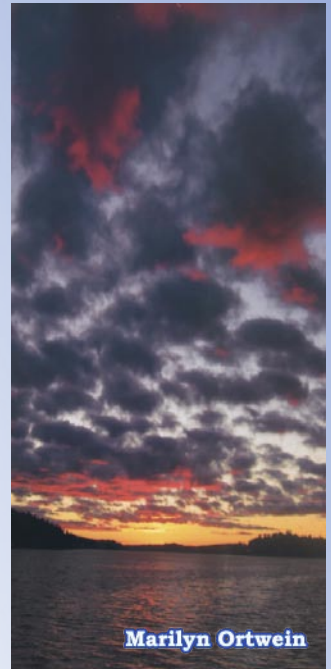
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Cathy Miller



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