

ERT
ERO
DISTRICT 15



HALTON HERALD

Halton Celebrates...

Travel

Wellness

Fellowship

Commitment

Ecology

The Past and the Future

Welcome 2007!





Brenda Dolling at home in the Whole Village...Page 5



New Retirees at The Hell With The Bell Breakfast...Page 6



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Visit us on the Internet at www.halinet.on.ca/district15

President's Report

By Colton Roberts



From the Fall Provincial Senate

- Congratulations to **Lori Maloney**, a relative of one of our members who won one of the first provincial scholarships for young people taking a degree course leading to a career in teaching. Don't forget to apply.
- Blue Jay Day for RTO/ERO will be Aug. 19th, 2007 following a successful event this year. Why not support your

team and organization by attending?

- Premium rates for RTO/ERO health plan have had to be increased again this year as you undoubtedly know by now, as anticipated because of the down-loading of costs from the government and our aging population.
- The new RTO/ERO Provincial President is **Ron Poste**, a very experienced executive member.

Locally

- We were very pleased with the outcome of our first Wellness Day, "*Aging with Pizzazz*". Thanks to **Irene Chalupka** and her dedicated committee who worked tirelessly to provide a wonderful experience for you with over 110 members in attendance.
- Note the change in date for the AGM in May to Wed., the 9th due to a conflict of bookings with the Burlington Convention Centre. We hope that you will plan to attend. Your social committee is planning an entertaining experience for us.
- Several activities have already been organized by the hard-working Recreation Committee. Why not come out to the breakfast in each area? Check the calendar in this edition for the one nearest you. Your first one is free.

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Welcome New RTO/ERO District 15 Members!!!

We now have almost 2000 members. Below are the names of retired teachers who have become members since August, 2006. Give them a warm welcome and invite them to join you in one of our many activities.

Dorothy Anderson	Dorothy Blakey	Mary Campbell
Pauline Cowles	Cyril Cybulski	Bruce Davey
Susan Dobie	Anne D'Ortenzio	William Everett
Mary Ferguson	Donna Flynn	Karen Foucault
Donna Funnell	Catharine Gauley	Karen Gill
Margaret Haines	Brenda Harrison	Beverley Hennigar
Marie-Claude Higgins	Deborah Ilton	Felicia Jervis
Beverley Kokerus	Elizabeth Large	Paul Lightfoot
Anthony Lo Presti	Kaylynne Lowe	Susan McBay
Doreen McFeeters	John Monachello	Jean Moore
Carol Nie	Linda Richardson	Douglas Rowbottom
Karen Sherlock	Michael Sherlock	Olga Shewchun
Liz Smith	Jane Stephen	John Stephen
Lynn Tomasek	David Ward	June Wright
Lynda Wright	Dennis Yeo	

We Get Letters, Emails & Calls

By Peter Gnish



This summer was quite a dry one. This affected people in many ways including communicating with me. This column is empty for the first time as not one piece of personal news was received from anyone. Let's not let that happen again. Send me an update as to what is happening with you so we can keep your friends and former colleagues in the loop.

Contribute to the Herald!

The next Halton Herald will be distributed in April, 2007. Why not

- Share a line with our readers and let them know what you are up to.
- Be the first to write a Letter to the Editor.
- Write an article on any topic that may interest our retired colleagues.
- Share a funny story with our many readers.

Send your article or correspondence to the Interim Editor, Cecile Leach at cecile.leach@sympatico.ca or by mail to 4-3115 New St., Burlington, ON L7N 3T4 or call 905-634-8027. The deadline is February 15, 2007.

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Visit To Ecovillage

By Dave Wright

On Thursday, October 12, 2006 a group of 20 RTO/ERO District 15 members and some of their friends travelled north to Caledon to visit with Brenda Dolling at the Whole Village – an ecological village and sustainable farm. Brenda is a member and resident of **Whole Village** and says she is living her dream of reducing her ecological footprint.



The project she and ten other members' households have created consists of a 191 acre farm with wetlands, pond, meadows, rolling hills and a sugar bush. While waiting for a building permit, Whole Villagers planted over 8000 trees to create windbreaks, shelterbelts and wildlife corridors as well as creating vegetable and flower gardens. Solar showers and composting toilets were erected for members, friends and volunteers who spent time working on the farm on week-ends and summers.

Finally the building permit was granted and the ecological house was begun in 2004. It is just being finished this fall. Features of the 15,000 sq. ft. house include radiant floor heating, super-insulation, geothermal, ground source heat pumps, natural daylighting with skylights, and earth friendly materials like bamboo, cork, strawboard and natural paints. Each member has a custom designed private suite while sharing 6500 square feet of common space. Members eat dinners 5 nights a week together and spend lots of time at meetings.



This co-operative community shares ecological and social justice values and makes decisions by consensus. Members share space, land, tools and other materials, and cars while living simply. Some individuals operate home-based businesses. Stewardship of the land is so important that **Whole Village** has put a conservation easement on the land with the Escarpment Biosphere ...

(EcoVillage...Continued on Page 6)

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...Conservancy and is slowly attempting to develop the farm as an ecosystem. Students come to learn and work with villagers while apprentices help in the gardens from May to October.

After a presentation and lunch, Brenda took us on a tour of the facilities. She enjoyed meeting old friends and colleagues and invited others to come to visit in the future. Check out the project at www.wholevillage.org. Many thanks, Brenda, for your hospitality.

The Hell With The Bell Breakfast - September 8, 2006

Always a wonderful event, this year's function at the Quality Inn in Bronte proved to be no different. There was a good turnout of new retirees, prospective RTO/ERO members and oldtimers who listened to the presentations by our President and Committee Chairs about the positive reasons for joining the organization. Do you recognize any familiar faces on these pages?



(The Hell With The Bell Breakfast...Continued on Page 7)

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Editorial Policy

The Halton Herald Newsletter is a non-partisan newsletter published by RTO/ERO Halton District 15 and is distributed to members and prospective members three times a year. Materials or letters from members, charitable or volunteer organizations that are 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.

Advertisements may be accepted at the discretion of the editor if accompanied by a pre-determined donation to RTO/ERO District 15 based on the size of the ad. Your cancelled cheque will be your receipt. Advertisements are to be submitted electronically. Publication of any advertisement in the Halton Herald or Website does not constitute endorsement of the product or service by RTO/ERO Halton District 15.

Communications Committee

Peter Gnish (Chair & Editor), Cecile Leach (Interim Editor), George MacRae (Website), Chub Baxter, Marie Campbell, Flo Gray, Eleanor McCulloch, Marilyn MacRae, Cate Roberts (Design) and Ray Smith. This issue of the Herald was printed and supported by **Astra Graphics, Burlington**

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Trip To Turkey: Sept. 24 - Oct. 7, 2006

By Marg Daniels



After a long flight via Air France with a stopover in Paris our group of twelve led by Irene Chalupka and Edna McMillan (who had spent two years teaching in Turkey) arrived in Istanbul. We met up with our knowledgeable and friendly guide, Ozan, who escorted us to our small, friendly European style hotel very close to Taksim Square in the heart of the city.

Istanbul is a bustling city with a population of 12,000,000 located in both Europe and Asia. The two sides are joined by three bridges with a tunnel to be completed in 2008.

Our first day included a visit to the beautiful Dolmabache Palace, built in 1856 and one of the newer structures we visited. The founder of modern Turkey, Ataturk lived there till his death in 1938 at 9:05 am at which time all the clocks in the palace stopped. Later we had a boat trip on the Bosphorus and the evening on our own to explore this fascinating city. We were there during Ramadan and were startled that first night by the explosive sound signaling sundown and the end of that day's fasting period. The people of Istanbul,



65% under age of 35, were very friendly and welcoming. Ozan stressed the fact that Turkey is the only Muslim country with a strict separation between church and state, and indeed we found it to be quite secular, especially on the European side.

Next day included visits to the Blue Mosque, The Topkapi Palace, the Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) Christian

Church and the Grand Bazaar. The following day we took a boat trip to one of the Princes' Islands and a "short walk up a 1500 metre hill 500 metres above sea level. No time to rest – the next day we were off to the Spice Market, the underground cisterns, and a shopping expedition to



the leather shop owned by Edna's friend. We finished the day with an unforgettable performance of the Whirling Dervishes in the Istanbul Train Station (one terminus of the Orient Express).

In the morning we flew to Ankara and visited the Anatolian Museum of Civilization and the Mausoleum of Ataturk. We then boarded a bus for a four hour trip to Cappadocia – with unbelievable landscapes. The Star Wars movies were filmed there. The next morning four of us were up before dawn to take a hot air balloon ride over this incredible terrain – another unforgettable experience. The afternoon included the obligatory visit to the Turkish carpet factory and the jewellery factory where most of our group made a "few" purchases. We spent the evening at a local restaurant in a cave-like building watching a local folk dance show – and dancing ourselves!!

Our next day's adventures included a tour of an amazing underground city, built to hide from enemies, with the deepest parts 800 metres below the surface and the caravan palace where caravans were given free lodgings while traveling. The day ended with a return bus ride to Ankara and a flight to Izmir on the Aegean Sea. We took a long walk along the harbour and stopped for a drink and to enjoy the incredible ambience.



(Trip to Turkey... continued on Page 10)

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In the morning we were off to the fabled Ephesus, but not before a stop at the pottery factory. Ephesus was incredible and we took a group picture in front of the oft-photographed library. Our guide Ozan filled us with history of this city –parts of which date back to 3000 BC. Then a quick visit to the home of the Virgin Mary – apparently she lived there after the death of Christ. After another long bus ride to Pammukalae, the famed “Cotton Castle”, our day ended at a hotel that had a great swimming pool filled with healing minerals. Next morning, after a stop at Heropolis, we arrived at the white calcium rocks with warm spring waters flowing over them. Several of us had a long swim in the thermal baths.

Then it was onto the bus again to return to the airport in Izmir for our return flight to Istanbul and our homey Germir Palace Hotel. It was great to reconnect with our friendly staff at the hotel and the man who sold the water and the guy at the street fruit stand. He was so glad to see us that he threw in some free figs and dates with our daily banana purchase. We had our goodbye dinner with Ozan at a local seafood restaurant and spent our last free day in Istanbul. The next day was a highlight of our trip. The head of Edna’s school invited us to his home on the Asian side for “drinks” with him and his wife. It was wonderful to visit a Turkish home and to have a huge Turkish meal with these wonderful warm and hospitable people.

Bright and early the next morning we left Istanbul. Half of our group stayed over in Paris for a few days - the rest of us returned home. Thanks to Edna and Irene it was an incredible whirlwind trip with unforgettable experiences.

Nominating Committee

Your Nominating Committee is looking for members who are willing to serve on the RTO District 15 Board of Directors. One of the positions that will be available is the Second Vice President. Other positions may become available during the year.

If you are interested in serving on the board or wish to nominate a member for a specific position on the Board please contact Irene Chalupka, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee @ 905-637-0887.

Nominations will close May 09, 2007 at our Annual General Meeting.

4 Great Trips for 2007

Contact Judy or Al Wilson

905-529-5825 or jualtravel@cogeco.ca

*(Award winning agents for K. Walsh Travel Services Inc.
1240 Bay St. Suite 700, Toronto, ON M5R 2A7, TICO Reg. 440099)*

**If you are interested in any of the trips outlined below,
we would be please to email you the full itinerary and
an application form.**

1. Join Judy & Al Wilson & Collette Vacation's
Spectacular South Africa Culture and Nature in Harmony
including a Victoria Falls extension.

Only **\$6,699** based on double or **\$8409** single.

Compare at \$10,000 plus elsewhere.

Departure Date: Feb. 6, 2007 18 DAYS

2. Collette Vacation's Tropical Costa Rica.

Only **\$2999** based on double. 13 DAYS

Departure Date: March 17, 2007

3. Join Judy or Al Wilson Greece Revisited - Greek Island
Cruise, Tour and Stay.

Only **\$3599** based on double.

Departure Date: May 12, 2007 15 DAYS

4. Join Judy & Al Wilson on this special
Freestyle Alaska Cruise on the new Norwegian Pearl
plus a pre-cruise Package in Seattle.

Cruise only from **\$1295**

Cruise, Air, Package from **\$2295**

Departure Date: Aug. 10, 2007 10 DAYS

WE WILL NOT BE UNDERSOLD!

Calendar of Events – January to June 2007

- Jan 25 Breakfast at The Golden Griddle Burlington - 9:00 a.m.
Contact Paul Durnan 905-631-8939.
- Feb 22 Breakfast at the Golden Griddle Oakville – 9:00 a.m.
Contact Paul Durnan 905-631-8939.
- Mar 29 Breakfast at The Fifth Wheel Milton – 9:00 a.m.
Contact Paul Durnan 905-631-8939.
- Apr 18 Visit to EcoHouse and Environmental Demonstrations
22 Veevers Dr. Hamiton. For more information visit
www.greenventure.ca. Contact Dave Wright by April 1.
- Apr 26 Breakfast at The Golden Griddle Burlington – 9:00 a.m.
Contact Paul Durnan 905-631-8939.
- May 31 5th Annual Golf Tournament
See the ad on Page 13 of this issue of the Halcyon.
- May 24 Breakfast at The Golden Griddle Oakville – 9:00 a.m.
Contact Paul Durnan 905-631-8939.
- May TBA Musical Comedy - Walton Street United Church
Details to be announced. Contact Flo Gray 905-639-4850.
- June 6 Grand River Lunch Cruise
Caledonia – 11:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.
Tickets: \$36.00 (tax included).
Contact Dave Wright by April 1.
- June TBA Bicycle Tour Toronto Islands - Details to be announced
Contact Gym or Doris Grant at 905-632-2299 or
by email at gdgrant@cogeco.ca.

To contact Dave Wright, Chair Recreation Committee

Telephone: 905-639-5093 or

E-mail: wandave@sympatico.ca



**District 15 RTO/ERO
Fifth Annual Best Ball Golf Tournament
2007**



Date: Thursday, May 31st
Place: Hidden Lake Golf Course
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Cost: For 18 Holes plus Lunch: \$65.00

The GOLF Committee has reserved 40 Tee Times for this event.
Cheques must be received by Friday, April 30th.

Make Cheques payable to the "RTO/ERO District 15 " and mail to:
Bill Caldwell,
1227 Nathaniel Crescent,
Burlington, Ontario, L7S 2A6
For further information contact Bill Caldwell (905-633-9506) or
by email at wscaldwell@sympatico.ca

----- Tear Off -----

Registration Form

FIFTH ANNUAL RTO/ERO DISTRICT 15 BEST BALL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please reserve me a Power Cart. The extra charge for the
Power Cart will be paid on the day of the tournament.

Amount Enclosed: \$65.00

Cheque made payable to: "RTO/ERO DISTRICT 15"

Please note any names of the group in which you would like to play.

_____, _____, _____

Pension Committee

By Jim Baker



Teacher Scholarships

These scholarships are intended to encourage and provide financial assistance to applicants who are pursuing full or part-time careers in teaching from an accredited teacher training facility. Ten scholarships are awarded annually each having a value of \$1000.

Eligibility

- (i) A resident Canadian Citizen or a landed immigrant.
- (ii) A child, grand-child, niece, nephew, grandniece, grandnephew, son-in-law, daughter-in-law or step-child of an RTO/ERO member.

Application

Eligible students must complete and forward all pages of the application form by the close of business on July 16, 2007, contact Provincial RTO/ERO for an application.

Pension Fund Deficit

Because of the Spring Triennial review, the valuation places the deficit at \$6.5 billion, not the \$32 billion previously estimated. The deficit has been substantially reduced because of the estimated increase of 1/2 % on investments over the next three years and an increase in both active teacher and government contributions.

Pension Splitting for Seniors

Commencing 2007, pensioners over 65 are able to split income with their spouse. Couples will be able to transfer some of the highly taxed income of higher earners to the lower earning spouse, smoothing the household income and lowering the tax bite. Similarly, income derived from R.R.I.F's will be eligible for splitting with a spouse.



Book of Remembrance

(For the period Aug 1, 2006 to Nov. 30, 2006)

We remember with fondness

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Ross Ferguson | Peter Guerriero | Frederick Large |
| Louise McKenzie | Irene McNaught | Eleanor Richardson |
| George Stirtan | Marie J. Suthers | Jane Ward |
| G. S. Whyte | | |

You are Invited to the **RTO/ERO DISTRICT 15**
WINTER GENERAL MEETING & LUNCHEON
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2007

Milton Sports Arena
 Derry Road, Milton
 (Just west of Highway #25)

Theme

“More on Digital Photography!”

PROGRAM

- 10:30 a.m. Registration
- 11:15 - 12:00 Workshop 1: “Making Every Picture Your Best” - (editing, cropping, rotating...)
- 12:15 - 1:00 Lunch
- 1:15 - 2:00 Workshop 2: “What Next?” - (printing, storing, filing digital photos...)
- 2:00 p.m. Wrap-up and Door Prizes

If you are planning to attend please register using the form below so we can order enough food. Mail the completed form with your cheque by Monday February 5, 2007 to:

Chub Baxter 14 Cope Lane Stoney Creek, ON L8E 5C1

.....Cut Here.....

REGISTRATION FORM

Winter General Meeting & Luncheon - February 14, 2007

I/We want to attend the meeting on February 14, 2007.
 The cost is \$10.00 per person.

Person 1: _____

Person 2: _____

I/We require a ride to this event.

Please phone me at _____

I have enclosed a cheque for \$ _____

Please make cheque payable to RTO/ERO District 15

Contact: Chub Baxter: 905-643-3732

Health Services Committee

By Paul Durnan



There are two issues that members enrolled in the RTO/ERO Health Insurance Plan should be aware of:

1. Extended Health Care Plan Out-of-Province/Canada Benefit

Effective January 1, 2006 the following would be **EXCLUDED** from coverage:

- Any cancer, heart or lung condition for which, in the 90 days prior to your date of departure (or date of booking for the purpose of Trip Cancellation):
 - (a) You were awaiting the outcome of medical tests (except routine monitoring), the results of which show any irregularities or abnormalities;
 - (b) Except routine monitoring, you require future investigation, consultation with any physician, treatment or surgery recommended by your physician or planned before your trip;
 - (c) You required hospitalization; or
- Any condition for which you have been advised by a physician not to travel.

2. For Men - PSA Prostate Test

You should be aware that this test is part of the Health Insurance Plan and reimbursement is 80% of the charge that you have to pay.

If you have any questions related to the Health Insurance Plan please give me a call at 905-631-8939.



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Retirement & Member Services Committee

By Bill Caldwell



To all retired colleagues, best wishes for a Happy & Healthy 2007. By the time you receive this edition of Halcyon, we will be in the midst of planning the activities for new retirees. The Annual **Wine & Cheese Reception** will be held on April 12, 2007 at the Hampton Restaurant in the Quality Hotel, 745 Bronte Rd, just south of the Queen Elizabeth Highway from 4.00 - 6.00

p.m. If you know of former colleagues planning retirement please alert them to watch for the information about this function which will be forwarded to all schools in early March.

To help us think toward Spring, I direct your attention to our **Annual Golf Tournament** to be held in May.. Complete information is found elsewhere in this booklet. These tournaments have been “fun days” in a scramble format. Sign up before the deadline date, as spaces are limited

Please notify me of any change in information re- address, phone etc. Thanks to the many who have as it guarantees uninterrupted delivery of your District 15 newsletters.

A COUPLE OF SENIOR MOMENTS

1. An older couple were lying in bed one night. The husband was falling asleep but the wife was in a romantic mood and wanted to talk. She said, “You used to hold my hand when we were courting. “Wearily he reached across, held her hand for a second and tried to get back to sleep. A few moments later she said, “Then you used to kiss me. “Mildly irritated, he reached across, gave her a peck on the cheek and settled down to sleep. Thirty seconds later she said, “Then you used to bite my neck” Angrily, he threw back the bed clothes and got out of bed. “Where are you going?”, she asked. “To get my teeth!”

2. An elderly Floridian called 911 on her cell phone to report that her car has been broken into. She is hysterical as she explains her situation to the dispatcher: “They’ve stolen the stereo, the steering wheel, the brake pedal and even the accelerator!” she cried. The dispatcher said, “Stay calm. An officer is on the way.” A few minutes later, the officer radios in. “Disregard.”, He says. “She got in the back-seat by mistake.”

Visit us on the Internet at www.halinet.on.ca/district15

Social Committee

By Lore Mehta



Many events are being planned for next year. In particular, plans are well under way for our **Winter Meeting** on February 14th, 2007, when we will be presenting more workshops on Digital Photography. Last year's highly successful event on the same topic prompted the Social Committee to host another session because of the number of requests for further information.

This year's event will once again take place at the Milton Sports Arena and will include a hot lunch. If you are planning to attend, **PLEASE** do register as we need to know how much food to order. The registration form with more detailed information can be found on page 15 of this newsletter.

Two events, The **Wine & Cheese** in April and the **To Hell with the Bell Breakfast** in September, which are aimed solely at our new retirees, will both take place at Hampton's, at the Quality Inn on Bronte Road. More information will be sent to those concerned.

Please note that the date for the **Spring General Meeting** has been changed to Wednesday, May 9th. Once again, it will be held at the Burlington Convention Centre on Burloak. Look for the registration form and agenda in the Spring edition of our newsletter.

Definitions - obtained from the Washington Post:

Coffee (n.), the person upon whom one coughs.

Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.

Balderdash (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.

Negligent (adj.), describes a condition in which you absent-mindedly answer the door in your nightgown.

Sarcasm (n.), the gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.

Hipatitis (n.), terminal coolness.

An older gentleman goes to the post office to buy stamps for his Christmas cards.

He says to the clerk, "May I have 50 Christmas stamps, please?"

The clerk says, "What denomination?"

The man says, "God help us! Has it come to this? Give me 6 Catholic, 12 Presbyterian, 10 United and 22 Anglican."

Archives Committee

By Judy Sloan



Since our last edition of the Halton Herald I have been very happy to add the following four newspaper clippings to our growing scrapbook.

Our Retired Women Teachers of Ontario have certainly been busy. **June Durrant** and **Jo MacLean**, who is president of the Lydia Snow Branch of RWTO, have presented Halton Hills Public Library with a copy of "Chalk, Challenge and Change". This 400-page book was produced by RWTO and is a collection of stories aimed at capturing the heritage of classrooms across the province from 1920 through 1979. Many of the stories were taken from members such as June who are over 90 years of age. Sounds like a great read!

Also, the Burlington Branch of RWTO donated a "Circle of Fun" play structure to the Discovery Centre located in the children's section at the Burlington Central Library. On hand to make the presentation were **Ruth Ferguson**, past president, **Carol Martin**, past provincial president and **Mary Lyons**, president Burlington Branch. I'm sure that the children are very appreciative.

Congratulations go out to **Geraldine Barnes**, who recently joined other past presidents at the Acton Legion to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Literacy North Halton. Geraldine is one of the co-founders of LNH and we are proud to call her a member of our organization as well.

Kudos to **Bill Everett** a new member of RTO! Bill is a well known actor
(Archives Committee... continued on Page 20)

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(Archives Committee... continued from Page 19)

who recently appeared at The Loft in Burlington in the Drury Lane's production of the award-winning musical "A Little Night Music". I have seen Bill perform before and I am always in awe of his wonderful singing voice.

Speaking of performances, be sure to circle Saturday, February 10, 2007 on your calendar. That is when our famous Burlington Footnotes Senior Performing Troupe Inc. will be presenting "Making Spirits Bright, An Intergenerational Celebration of Talent" at the Dofasco Centre For The Arts (formerly Theatre Aquarius) in Hamilton. Members of our RTO/ERO District who are in the production include **Marg Daniels** our Political Chair, **Mary Hopkins**, **Joan Wilson** and **me**. Showtime is at 7:30 pm and tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for children 12 years and under as well as \$17.50 for groups of 20+. Call the Box Office at 905-522-7529 or 1-800-465-7529 for a very enjoyable evening of entertainment!

That's all for now and please continue to keep those newspaper clippings coming to 1446 Brenner Crt., Burlington On. L7P 2Z2 or contact me at either judymsloan@yahoo.ca or 905-336-5538.

District 15 Wellness Conference

By Lore Mehta

... and all that Pizzazz! The place to be last November 2nd was at the Oakville Conference Centre for our "Aging with Pizzazz" Wellness Day. The informative workshops, the variety of displays, the loot bags, the many door prizes, the excellent meal, all in a well-appointed setting, made for a most enjoyable day. The many positive comments made by those attending were greatly appreciated by the Wellness Committee who had worked extremely hard to make the day a resounding success.



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Bob and Cindy Williams in Africa

By Bob Williams

October is springtime in South Africa, the end of the dry season and a wonderful time to visit South Africa. Bob, Cindy and a group of friends enjoyed a trip of a lifetime for 3 weeks in November. Here is Bob's report.



We flew from Toronto to London, where we stayed overnight then traveled the 12 hours to Johannesburg the next night to catch an immediate connection for a flight to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. We spent two nights at Victoria Falls at the Safari Lodge, walked to the Falls, a must see, and became acclimatized to the southern part of the African continent including the natural presence of elephants, water buffalo, warthogs, baboons and a variety of bucks. The sunset on the Zambezi River was a special treat

After Victoria Falls we spent a day in the Johannesburg area, with an excellent guide on a minibus; visited the excellent Apartheid Museum – a must see for South Africans and foreigners alike, very educational and powerful; had a quick tour of beautiful Pretoria and several hours at Lesedi, a cultural experience built to authentic standards by five native tribes. This included experiencing and learning about their histories, cultures, languages, idiosyncrasies and foods.

Next morning we were picked up by our cook, Doug, for the week-long safari in Kruger National Park and we met our guide Neil Heron at one of the southern gates. Kruger is a real gem – the animal life roams in traditional patterns, close to the rivers and watering holes in what is lovingly referred to as “the bush”. Neil is a bit like a South African David Suzuki – a passionate conservationist with intimate knowledge of flora, fauna, animal and bird life, as well as the southern skies, South African history and “eco-tourism”.

Our days were long and our week was full. We stayed at two camps for three nights each in Kruger. Doug cooked delicious meals and we spent long evenings listening to Neil and chatting about our experiences. We saw all manner of wild-life as the pictures show.

Following Kruger we flew to Durban and spent 3 days on the “Midlands Meander” at a gracious country inn (Hartford House). This experience provided a lovely contrast to the Kruger experience. South Africa is a country

(Bob and Cindy Williams in Africa Continued)

of huge contrasts – mountains and plains, modern and ancient, rich and poor and poignantly black and white. It is difficult for thoughtful people not to ask quite fundamental questions about the meaning of life when there, and not to get caught up in the rawness of the problems, the beauty of their geography, the richness of their resources and the obvious diversity...



From Durban we traveled to Port Elizabeth on the south coast on the Indian Ocean and spent 4 days wandering by rental car westerly to Capetown on what is known as the “Garden Route”. Breathtaking views, wonderful food and lovely people were the highlights.

We spent the last 4 days of our trip in the Capetown area, enjoying the charm of this spectacular city that vies with Sydney and Vancouver for the title of most beautiful. We visited the Cape of Good Hope, Table Mountain and the famous harbour. We also took a most interesting half-day trip to Robben Island.



The last day we attended the graduation ceremony of the first class of black women who run pre-schools in the black communities (there are 6,000 of



(Bob and Cindy Williams in Africa...Continued on Page 24)

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these pre-schools in South Africa). These women typically have little education. The parents need pre-schools as both usually are employed. Our friends, Chris and Ann Bangham had spent 6 months in South Africa about 3 years ago, and had established a program with the Institute for Early Childhood Education and the Rotary Club in Somerset West to train a group of pre-school teachers in early childhood education. Chris and Ann conceived of the project, and raised all the funds for it through



Rotary in Canada. The graduation was a moving and beautiful event – one of which any school in Canada would have been proud. Through Chris and Ann’s good work another class of teachers will graduate in 2 years.

History, Anthropology, Spectacular Beauty, Education, Wonderful Food and Wine and Beautiful People everywhere was our experience of South Africa – truly a trip of a lifetime – and one we would heartily recommend to fellow retirees.



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