



HALTON HERALD

District 15

September 2011

EXPLORE

New Commitments

New Places

New Experiences

Bora Bora with Laura Bird and Leo McAdam

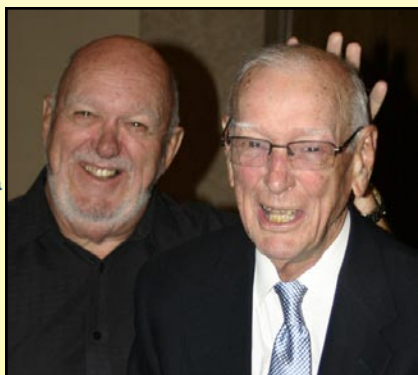
Exploring Retirement Activities

Laura Bird and Leo McAdam
visit French Polynesia
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Nordic Pole Walking
...see page 8

Jim Morrison
and
Don Gentleman
at
AGM '11



"Portrait of a Gentleman"
...see page 24



Touring Boston
...see page 34



The Bus to Stratford
...see page 17



District Executive 2011-12 inducted at AGM...see page 7

Treas.	2nd VP	1stVP	Past Pres.	Pres.	Sec.	Member
Chub Baxter	Phyllis Kingsley	Janice Murdoch	Cecil Leach	Linda Jones	Janet Carter-Wright	Jim Baker

President's Report

By Linda Jones



Warmer temperatures are just becoming the norm as I write this report, but when you read this, summer will be coming to an end. I trust you all had a restful time and were able to enjoy all the benefits that come with being out in the great outdoors. There have been some changes on the District Board of Directors. I have taken on the Presidency for one more year, as I felt I was just getting to know the ropes when the year ended. This means that our Vice-Presidents,

Jan Murdoch and **Phyllis Kingsley** and our Past President, **Cecile Leach** are stalled in their positions for one more year. I would like to thank them for their indulgence and patience. Other changes: **Jan Murdoch** will also take on the role of Recruitment & Membership Chair for this year and **Penny Hambly** is the new Program Chair. **Hilary Barber** will become our new Member Without Portfolio. Welcome Hilary to our Board of Directors.

Mary Lyons has left the Board after several years of service. She is moving on to other challenges, but will still be helping us out with some projects that she has been involved with and giving us the benefit of her advice. Thank you very much Mary for your years of stellar service.

This summer **Cecile Leach** served on the Provincial RTO/ERO Nomination Committee and will do so again in 2012. I will be taking on membership on the Provincial RTO/ERO Political Advocacy Committee for a three-year term. I am looking forward to an extra challenge.

At the Spring Senate, which I attended with **Jan Murdoch**, **Phyllis Kingsley** and **Daliah Brown**, a change was made to the amount of the fees which will be returned to the districts. In 2011, 30% of membership fees were returned to the districts for us to use to run the various programs that serve



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members. Costs at the Provincial office have increased and a motion was passed to reduce the fees returned by 3% over the next 4 years. So District 15 will be making spending decisions even more carefully. You are going to hear a lot more about the Provincial RTO/ERO Charitable Foundation in the next few months. It was established at a recent Senate and only awaits its charitable number. This

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necessary to allow RTO/ERO to give charity to its own members, but it will also allow us to endow a Chair of Gerontology at the University of Toronto. Gordon Cressy, the Executive Director of the Foundation will be at our Fall meeting to give you more information about it.

For those of you who attended the AGM, I'm sure you will agree that we were treated to an inspiring, as well as a very humorous, presentation by **Gord Paynter**. Be sure to check out the photo article on the AGM in this issue.

To keep up to date with future activities for members, even during the summer, you can access our website www.rtohalton.org. It has breaking news and events past, present and future. If you wish to receive our monthly e-letter to keep you current, please ensure that our webmaster, **George MacRae**, has your e-mail address. Our telephone call system will also remind you of upcoming events for which you need to register. These activities are planned with your interests and needs in mind, so please let us know if you have any ideas for future events.

RTO/ERO District 15

We strive to live up to our motto!

Here for you now...

...Here for your future!

You can help by getting involved.

We Get Letters, E-mails & Calls

By Peter Gnish



Those letters, e-mails and cards keep coming but not as often when the weather gets warmer. Over the past 4 months I heard from a few people who kept in touch. You can get a glimpse of their thoughts by reading the items below. Why not share with your colleagues and friends in District 15 by sending me something about what you are up to. We would all love to hear.

Irma Coulson wrote to say that she had intended to attend the RTO spring luncheon but circumstances intervened and was unable to be there. She said "If I had been, I would have told you how much I appreciated the letter you wrote me some time ago. It is good to hear from people who were active in education when I was. I remember fondly the friendships that were developed over those years and I am proud to have been a part of an intelligent group of teachers - elementary and secondary, dedicated to serving the needs of the students we taught. In June, I will celebrate my 90th birthday and on June 4th we are having an open house at Lowville United Church - corner of Britannia Road and Guelph Line from 1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. and I would be happy to visit with you or any of those who might remember me. My sincerest good wishes for your continued success." Thanks Irma for all the kind words and for keeping in touch.

Butch Rogers sent me an e-mail that I want to share with you. He said "Long time no see. I trust that you are well and are enjoying life. I sort of keep up to date via the Halton Herald. I am well and busy doing a lot of things. One of the groups I volunteer with is the Self-Esteem Network of Hamilton. We are a not-for profit organization and provide a series of courses, workshops and presentations on improving one's Self-Esteem. We have a Board of Directors and the Board meets monthly. We also have several volunteer facilitators who assist us in our workshops and courses. Our website is www.selfesteemnetwork.org. You can go there and learn more about the organization. What I would like you to do, if possible, is to put something in the Halton Herald for us. We need more volunteers and I feel that there are many retired teachers who may just be interested in joining. We are looking for help in a variety of ways: facilitators at our courses and/or workshops; fund raising; computer assistance (powerpoint, web site design). We have a process in place for volunteers. If there is anyone who is interested have them contact me at butchrogers@sympatico.ca. I will then get back to them and start the process going. I enjoy the Halton Herald and you, who are in charge, are doing a terrific job." Editor's note: anyone interested in helping Butch should contact him by e-mail, see above.

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

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

Nancy Sorensen wrote to say that she had a call from Jean Hamilton, who is 90 years old and lives in a home on Kerr Street in Oakville. She was a teacher at Gladys Speers where Nancy had met some years ago. Jean told Nancy that she had read her article in the Halton Herald and said just had to call. Nancy said that they had a wonderful chat and that she was “Very excited and so glad that I responded to your SOS for info for the publication.”

This is just another example of how we try to keep connected through District 15 RTO/ERO and how people appreciate hearing from you. So make it a point to send me something about yourself that will trigger someone else to respond.

Linda and Vince Weeks sent an e-mail to say, “Again this year we are exploring another part of the Bahamas on our sailboat. Linda and I are in the Abacos and enjoying retirement away from the snow.” Here we see them all decked out as they attend the Commodore’s Ball of the Royal Marsh Harbour Yacht Club. How much more relaxed can we get?



Welcome New RTO/ERO District 15 Members!!!

District 15 membership is now more than 2225. Below are the names of retired teachers and other education staff who became members between March and July, 2011. Please welcome and invite them to join you at one of our many activities.

Diane Armand	Christine Briggs	Gordon Brown
Marilyn Burlein	Robert Burnett	Helen Conlon
Thomas Dunn	Roger Gardner	Walter Hewitson
Judy Keast	Kathleen Kennedy	David Laidlaw
Lorraine Manganaro	Elaine Neumann	Corrie O'Driscoll
Isabelle Peacock-Snider	Donald Pirrie	Mary Jane Pirrie
David Quinlan	Judith Rose	Joyce Smalley
Bonnie Smith	Kathryn Stevenson	Marlene Thomas
Dorothy Vandermolten	Elizabeth Vrooman	Nancy Whitnell
	Jane Wightman	

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Annual General Meeting



A good crowd was in attendance at the Burlington Convention Centre on May 10th and thoroughly enjoyed the hilarious presentation by comedian **Gordon Paynter**. Below are some of the members who were there and shared an excellent lunch. Why not plan to attend the fall session. See the enclosed flyer for details. Also, the RTO/ERO District 15 executive for 2011-2012 was installed at the meeting (see the picture on Page 2).

"I love a challenge!"

Leave 'em Laughing



"Believe in yourself, then go for it!"

- Gord Paynter, Blind Comic



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Nordic Pole Walking

By Jan Murdoch



I was so pleased to have such a large group of people join me at Tansley Woods in May to learn about Nordixx Pole Walking. After learning about all the physical benefits of doing this activity from Dr Klaus Schwanbeck, the president of Nordixx Canada, we joined several instructors to learn first hand the techniques behind good pole walking. In our small groups we ventured off through the parking lot, poles in hand, pressing more confidently into the ground and standing taller. Some were able to maintain a quick pace while others concentrated on pole placement.

I recently became aware of the fitness apostle Jack Lalanne who inspired billions to live active lives. Jack once said “The only way you can hurt your body is not to use it, inactivity is the killer and it’s never too late.” He preached the benefits of regular exercise and exemplified his theories with many feats of endurance. At age 65 Jack swam the length of the Golden Gate bridge underwater, handcuffed and shackled towing a 1,000 lb. boat. And at 65 he towed 65 boats in a lake near Tokyo, Japan handcuffed and shackled plus the boats were filled with 6500 lbs. of Louisiana Pacific wood pulp. Jack died at the age of 96 but he was active right to the end.



Another person who champions the benefits of exercise throughout our years is Harvey Brooker. He once said “We all grow older but it is truly up to us as individuals if we choose to get old! If we want our later life years to be fulfilling we need to eat properly, watch our weight, exercise and keep our mind active.” Those who have continued to walk with their poles on a regular basis will definitely be experiencing the benefits of the program. Many of us continue to meet at Tansley Woods Wednesday mornings, to encourage each other and offer suggestions for stretching techniques following our 1 hour stroll. A few of us are going to venture to Europe in early April, 2012 and combine Nordixx Pole walking with a River Cruise on the Mosel and Rhine. Others are exploring scenic areas near water ways or in quaint villages. If you have found locations for walking send me an e-mail

Nordic Pole Walking... continues on Page 9)

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and I will share them with the rest of the group who have taken up this rewarding activity. Do you need poles? Contact me by e-mail at janmurdoch@cogeco.ca or by phone at 289-956-0163. I will assist you with acquiring them.



“The only way you can hurt your body is not to use it ...



...inactivity is the killer and it's never too late.”

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Relay For Life!

Submitted By **Linda Jones, Team Captain**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Relay for Life team, **Janet Carter-Wright, Dave Wright, Gail Reeves, Dianne and Don Mathies, Jan and Ernest Murdoch and Linda and Ron Jones** for all their efforts that made this year's Relay a success. Our team raised \$2775.00.



this wonderful event.

The luminaries were beautiful. Dawn was just gorgeous. Dave is so enthusiastic that he is already talking of participating again next year. The hard work of all teams meant that approximately \$375,000 was raised! A round of applause to everyone! All in all, a great night.

We weren't sure that we would make it through the night but we walked more than we thought we would or needed to. Good company and conversation kept most of us awake at other times. The rain held off after sprinkling the opening ceremonies. The Burlington Top Hat Marching Band led off the Survivor lap, while members of 128 teams cheered us on. It was truly great to be a part of



More Puns And Such!

What Do You Get When You Cross a Snowman With a Vampire?
Frostbite.

Why Don't Blind People Like To Sky Dive?
Because It Scares The Dog.

Why Did Pilgrims' Pants Always Fall Down?
Because They Wore Their Belt Buckle On Their Hat.

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Wine & Cheese



This yearly event for prospective new members of District 15 was held on April 19th at the Quality Inn in Bronte. If you recognize any of them please encourage them to join our organisation. We look forward to seeing them at some of our events in the near future.



SERENITY

Just before the funeral services, the undertaker came up to the very elderly widow and asked, "How old was your husband?" "98," she replied, "Two years older than me." "So you're 96," the undertaker commented. She responded, "Hardly worth going home, is it?"

Reporter interviewing a 104-year-old woman: "And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?" the reporter asked. She simply replied, "No peer pressure."

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Favourite Photo Contest!



Do you have a photo you are really proud of? It could be a winner. Why not share it with our membership and possibly have it printed in the next Halton Herald. To do so you must enter this contest. You will also have a chance to win some cash. The rules are simple;

1. All subjects are acceptable - people, scenery, action shots, hobbies etc.
2. The photo can be either colour or black and white
3. Enter as many photos as you like
4. Send the photo(s) either electronically or by Canada Post
5. By mail send your photo(s) to Peter Gnish, 153 Fairleigh Ave. S. Hamilton, ON L8M 2K4. All hard copies will be returned.
6. By computer, send your photo(s) to me as an attachment to an e-mail message. Send it to pgnish@cogeco.ca.
7. Include:
 - a. Your name, telephone number and e-mail address.
 - b. A description of the photo and how it relates to your life.
 - c. Any information about how you took the photo: camera used, settings, other adjustments made.
8. Entries will be judged by the Communication Committee.
9. Three prizes will be given: 1st - \$50; 2nd - \$25; 3rd - \$15.
10. The prize winning photos and a selection of others will be used in a photo display in future issues of the Halton Herald.
11. The contest deadline is November 15, 2011.

If you have any questions please contact me at 905-547-1628 or e-mail me at pgnish@cogeco.ca.

Archives Committee

By Judy Sloan



I'm pleased to report that I have added more items to our scrapbook in the past few months. The SignPost page in the Burlington Post featured photos of two of our members and their spouses while away on holiday. **Helen Smith** and her husband **Brian** were shown in front of the memorial in honour of the Viking Leif Eriksson during their visit to Reykjavik Iceland. **Bob Sweet** and his wife posed for a photo in front of the statue of Kamehameha I in the town of Hawi, Kamehameha's birthplace on the big island of Hawaii. Bob and his wife were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. I can tell by their beaming faces that both couples were having a great vacation!

Speaking of Hawaii, in April a group of our RTO/ERO members, including myself, attended a fabulous comedy *Nurse Jane Goes To Hawaii* presented by the Bur-Oak Theatre Group at the Oakville Centre For The Performing Arts. The play was directed by our talented member **Micki Clemens**. Her equally talented husband **Jim** was both the stage manager and part of the set construction team. As a seasoned member of BOTG Micki has directed many of their plays as well as having worked on set décor for others. This is Jim's 14th year with BOTG and he is currently their treasurer. He has been stage manager for many of their previous plays and has also been a producer of BOTG's shows. Thanks to Micki and Jim for their contribution to our very entertaining evening. Thanks also to our District 15 program chair **Dave Wright** who was responsible as always for another wonderful RTO/ERO evening at the theatre.

On a sad note I am adding to the scrapbook the obituary of our member **John Boich** who passed away on March 15, 2011 at the age of 77 after a two month battle with pancreatic cancer. John is survived by his beloved wife **Arlene Miller**. Since his death there have been very many articles written about John in the Burlington Post which are too numerous to describe here so I will try to touch on the highlights only. After a stint as an Ottawa Rough Rider in the CFL from 1954-1957 John graduated from McMaster and U of T in 1967 and then began a long and dedicated career in education. After a decade spent as a teacher and principal at both the elementary and secondary levels, he served as Superintendent in Peel, Halton and Grey county. He also worked with educational systems in the Eastern Caribbean States, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Uganda, the UK and West Germany. He was appointed Governor of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education from 1988-1990. After retirement his tireless work included the Burlington

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Inclusivity Advisory Committee, the Rambo Creek Ratepayers Association and co-chair of the Mayor's Citizen's Advisory Committee which produced the Shape Burlington report. He continued to dedicate his time to a long list of other community organizations. Politically John was president of the Burlington Provincial Liberal Association for six years. After his death the Burlington Post issued condolences expressed by Ted McMeeken MPP and Premier Dalton McGinty who between them stated that as an intelligent and compassionate community-builder John has left an indelible mark on his community. In May John was officially named Burlington's Citizen of the Year. This award recognizes an individual who makes an exemplary contribution to the city of Burlington. As well, the legacy of John will live on in the name of Burlington's newest school. The Halton District School Board has named the new Orchard elementary school the John William Boich Public School. Walter Mulkewich a former mayor of Burlington summed up his attributes fittingly when he stated that John was a person who has demonstrated the art of citizenship at its best.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our Archives' scrapbook these past few years and please keep those newspaper photos and articles coming! My address is 1446 Brenner Court, Burlington On. L7P 2Z2. You may also contact me by email at judymsloan@yahoo.ca or by phone at 905-336-5538.

Feeling Depressed?

Here are 10 ways to cope with depression!

1. Talk to a therapist
2. Express yourself in writing
3. Boost your self-image
4. Stick to a schedule
5. Stay involved
6. Depend on others
7. Sleep well
8. Enjoy the emotional benefits of exercise
9. Make the food and mood connection
10. Say NO to liquor

This list comes from a good online source called Everyday Health. You can get more details on the above list by visiting

www.everydayhealth.com/depression-photos/ways-to-cope-with-depression.aspx#/slide-1

Health Services Committee

By Paul Durnan



The Health Care Representatives Conference was held in Toronto recently and some interesting discussions occurred among the very knowledgeable retired teachers in attendance. Dr. Ian Blumer, a diabetes MD specialist, was the Sunday night speaker. In his talk he made a clear relationship between obesity and Type 2 diabetes which I found disturbing. He said that if Mr. Obama can set aside 40 minutes a day out of his busy schedule for exercise you can too. He has written several books and has a web-site (www.ourdiabetes.com) that you can view if you are interested in finding out more on the topic.

Osteoporosis Canada recommends that everyone over 65 years of age get a Bone Mineral Density Test. And, all those 50 years of age and older should talk to a doctor about a risk assessment for fracture. The 90 day exclusion for heart disease, lung disease and cancer when travelling came up again at the conference as it relates to the Extended Health Travel Insurance. If you have any questions or comments, please call me at 905-630-2285.

Political Advocacy Committee

By Linda Jones



As you are aware, a Provincial Election is set for October 6th. We will try to provide you with material that might be useful to you in making your ballot choice on election day.

Renaissance magazine, our Provincial publication will have an election insert, which will include issues important to RTO/ERO, as well as its non-partisan status, Provincial Election positions and an encouragement to all to get out and vote. Look for this when your copy arrives. In addition this information should be posted on the Provincial website www.ero-rto.org by mid-July. Locally, any information which comes from the Provincial Committee relevant to the election will be posted to our own website, the address of which is at the bottom of this page. We hope to publish the names of candidates in our local Halton ridings there and the results of a candidate questionnaire. Keep logging in to see what is new!

In addition, our Provincial Committee is studying the potential impact of CETA, a Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement with the European Union, on our pensions, health, education and the privatization of water. I will keep you up to date on their findings.

Visit us on the Internet at www.rtohalton.org

Recreation Committee

By Dave Wright



We have had a really good theatre season. It started off with the visit to Famous People Players in February. You read all about that in the April issue of the Herald. We went from there to The Drury Lane Music Hall. The show had a different theme than in past years and was a fun evening of music and jokes. One skit was the male members of the company portraying Southerners sitting on a deck having a few beers and talking about the merits and shortcomings of their decks. The audience was in stitches and I could well imagine the ladies behind the curtains listening to that dialogue and killing themselves with laughter every night of the show. Tickets for next year's show go on sale the end of November.

Of interest was the show *Nurse Jane goes to Hawaii* at the Oakville Theatre directed by **Micki Clemens** and stage design by **Jane Coryell**. Both are retired Halton educators. **Judy Sloan's** Archives Report has more to say about them and the play. Before the show we went to O'Finn's Irish Temper for supper. Since it was a Friday night the appetizers were two for one and the place was filled with young people. We agreed to do it again so it will be repeated in January. Even if you don't want to see the show come with us and have a fun evening at O'Finn's.

The Aldershot Players spring production was Norm Foster's *Bedtime Stories*. The play was highly entertaining and true to his writing, the group did an excellent job of portraying the characters. This coming season features two Norm Foster plays. And the meal is always good so these plays are well worth attending. The highlight of our theatre season was *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Stratford. The critics have raved about the show. If there were things we thought were weak we all agreed it was a spectacular production. See the pictures on the next page of all the happy faces on the bus trip to Stratford.

Have a good look at our calendar and join us for events this coming year. The dates for getting tickets is important if you want good seats. **Janet Carter-Wright** will still have tickets to see *My Fair Lady* at The Shaw. The date for getting tickets is Sept. 16. Of particular interest to me is *Hairspray* in November. The musical director is **Jenny Peace**. A retired Halton music teacher, a former colleague and a good friend, Jenny has always directed good shows. I invite you to join Janet at The Shaw and me at *Hairspray*. We have a reputation for bringing good company with us.

(Recreation... continues on Page 17)

(Recreation... continued from Page 16)

Our breakfasts are still the last Thursday of the month and the first one in each location is on us. Bring a spouse or a friend. Give **Paul Durnan** a call a few days before so he has numbers to make a reservation.

More Recreation!

A Bus Trip to Stratford to see.....



Visit us on the Internet at www.rtohalton.org

Awards Committee

By Phyllis Kingsley



At our Annual General Meeting in May, we were very pleased to honour two of our members with the District's **Distinguished Service Award** for their long-standing and significant contributions to our organisation.

Peter Gnish was recognized for, among many other things, his work in keeping us all connected. Peter is primarily responsible for the Halton Herald from start to finish, and does an excellent job of keeping in touch with retired Halton educators who have moved away through his out-of-region letters. Peter was nominated for the award by **Jim Baker**. **George Mac-**

Rae was nominated by **Dave Wright** for his excellent work on the District 15 website. George designs and maintains our website, which I am sure you would agree is one of the best in the province. He is also responsible for sending us regular email updates. Both Peter and George are long standing members of the District 15 Board. In addition, these gentlemen are excellent photog-



George Macrae and Peter at the AGM'11

rappers and are responsible for many of the lovely pictures of our events in the Halton Herald and on the website. Congratulations to Peter and George for a well deserved honour! It is not too early to start thinking about possible candidates for next year's awards. There will be a call for nominations in the New Year and we are hoping to be inundated with applications!

Also, it is not too early to start thinking about the 2012 District 15 RTO/ERO Project-Service to Others grant. This provincial program provides up to \$4000 to each District for initiatives that support the concept of "Service to Others." The intent is to raise the profile of RTO/ERO by facilitating District and member participation in local, provincial or international educational/community projects, thus demonstrating to active teachers and the public that retired teachers care about their communities and are willing to help others who need assistance. More information on the grant, the 2012 application form, sample applications and a list of previously approved projects can be found on the provincial website: www.ero-rto.org/project-service-to-others. Applications for the grant have to be submitted through the District by December 2011 in order to meet all deadlines.

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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, Carrie Mayeur, Eleanor McCulloch, Marilyn MacRae, Cate Roberts (Design), Ray Smith & Dave Trueman.

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

Health Services	Paul Durnan	905-630-2285
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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
Recreation	David Wright	905-639-5093
Program	Penny Hambly	905-639-6193
Member Without Portfolio	Hilary Barber	905-637-7067

Calendar of Events - Sept. 2011 to Dec. 2011

- Sept. 8 *To Hell With The Bell* breakfast - for newly retired staff.
- Sept. 13 10:00 a.m. Wine Tour of Niagara-on-the-Lake by bike or car. Enjoy early fall in Niagara and visit local wineries. Contact Dave Wright at 905-6398-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca by Sept. 5.
- Oct. 11 Retirement Planning Workshop
- Oct. 20 2:00 p.m. *My Fair Lady*, Shaw Festival, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Contact Janet Carter-Wright: 905-336-5328 or jcwright@xplornet.com by Sept. 16. Ticket cost - \$47.00.
- Oct. 21 6:30 p.m. Dinner Theatre, Aldershot Players. A Norm Foster play *Long Weekend* at West Plains United Church, Burlington. Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca by Sept. 5. - \$35.00.
- Nov. 2 Fall Meeting at Deerfield Golf Club in Oakville with *Cruisin'*. See the enclosed flyer for more details and to register.
- Oct. 27 9:00 a.m. Breakfast at El Spero Restaurant, Hopedale Mall, Oakville. Contact Paul Durnan at 905-630-2285.
- Nov. 24 8:00 p.m. Drury Lane Musical. *Nunsense 11 The Second Coming*. 2269 New St. Burlington. Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca by Sept. 1. Ticket cost - \$25.00.
- Nov. 24 9:00 a.m. Breakfast at Supreme Restaurant, Appleby Village, Burl. Contact Paul Durnan at 905-630-2285.
- Nov. 27 2:00 p.m. Clarkson Musical Theatre, "*Hairspray*." Meadowvale Theatre, Montevideo Dr., Mississauga at Erin Mills Parkway and Britannia Rd. Director: **Jenny Peace** (retired Halton music teacher). Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca by Sept. 10, \$25.00.
- Dec. 15 7:00 p.m. Theatre Aquarius Christmas Musical, *Poodle Skirts to Platform Shoes*. King William St., Hamilton. Contact Janet Carter-Wright by Nov. 1 at 905-336-5328 or jcwright@xplornet.com. Cheques to be made out to District 15 RTO/ERO and mailed to Janet at 4491 Appleby Line, Burlington. L7M 0P3 by Nov. 1. Cost - \$49.00.

Calendar of Events - Jan. 2012 to May. 2012

- Jan. 13 8:00 p.m. Oakville Theatre for the Performing Arts. *Over the River and Through the Woods*. Navy Street, Oakville. Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca by Nov. 1. Cost - \$25.00.
- Feb. 23 8:00 p.m. Drury Lane Music Hall, 2269 New Street, Burlington. Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca by Nov. 29. Ticket cost - \$25.00.
- Feb. 23 Winter Meeting at the Teatro Conference Centre in Milton with Barry Moyle, a Neil Diamond/Elvis impersonator singer as entertainment.
- May 8 Annual General Meeting at the Burlington Convention Centre with Rick Rossini the Magical Motivator as entertainment.
- May TBA Stratford Musical Matinee, *Pirates of Penzance*. Cost-TBA. Contact Dave Wright at 905-639-5093 or wandave@sympatico.ca by Dec. 1.

Communications Committee

By Peter Gnish



We like to encourage members to submit material for publication in the Halton Herald. In the past, we have used contests to do this. One of the most successful ones was a Photo Contest which is being resurrected in this issue. See page 12 for the details and send me the photos which are your favourites. Not only can you get some recognition but you might also win the Favourite Photo Contest!

Advertising and Promotion Policy

It is the policy of RTO/ERO Halton District 15 that all advertising and promotion to or by its members must have prior approval by the District Board of Directors. Publication of any advertisement by an outside group in the Halton Herald or other District 15 printed material, on the District 15 website or at any District function or event does not constitute endorsement of the product or service by RTO/ERO Halton District 15 and must have Board of Directors prior approval. In this context "Advertising and Promotion" includes signage, verbal presentations, handouts, distributed material and display table material.

Program Committee

By Penny Hambly



This is my first report as the new chair of the Program Committee. I thank **Jan Murdoch** and her committee for all their hard work and the great programs that they have organized in the past. I also thank **Marilyn MacRae** who will no longer be on the committee due to other commitments. Members of the Program committee for 2011 are: **Phyllis Kingsley, Jan Murdoch, Ruth Ramanuskas, Gail Reeves, Roberte Rivard, and Colton Roberts**. We have been busy planning the events for the year which we hope you will enjoy.

Our Fall Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 2, 2011 at the Deerfield Golf Club in Oakville. After lunch we will be entertained by an “a cappella” group called *Cruisin’*. See Jan Murdoch’s article on *Cruisin’* and the registration flyer that is included in this mailing. We heard this group at a Senate Conference and it are a lot of fun.

For our Winter Meeting we will be returning to the beautiful Teatro Conference Centre in Milton on Thursday, February 23, 2012. It promises to be a fun event as Barry Moyle a Neil Diamond/Elvis impersonator singer will have you singing. Look for the registration flyer in the January Herald mailing.

Our Spring Annual General Meeting will be on Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at the Burlington Convention Centre. The theme will be “*It’s Magic Interactive Audience Fun*” featuring Rick Rossini the Magical Motivator and the audience as stars. It will be amazing, exciting and funny - so mark the date in your calendar now, because you will not want to miss it.

Finally, **Nordic Pole Walking** is still taking place every Wednesday at 9 a.m. Contact **Jan Murdoch** for more information. Hope to see all of you at the meetings. It is a great way to keep updated on District 15 events as well as to socialize with friends.

**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 Telephone: 1-800-361-9888 Ext. 223 or 1-416-962-9463 Ext 223
or by e-mail at dvezeau@rto-ero.org
or **Contact Jan Murdoch** by telephone 289-956-0163
or by e-mail at janmurdoch@cogeco.ca

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Pension and Retirement Concerns Committee

By Jim Baker



Recent articles from the Teachers Pension Plan endorsed by OTF and the Ontario Government stress the dilemma facing our pension plan. Most pension plans are facing the same problems. Our plan has a \$17.2 billion shortfall that must be resolved.

Reasons for the Pension Difficulties

1. Pension payments now considerably exceed annual contributions. There are now more retirees than active teachers. The life expectancy of the 295,000 teachers, both active and retired, has increased probably affected by the earlier retirement age of approximately 59.
2. Most countries, including Canada, are still grappling with an economic downturn. Much of our plan is dealing with a low interest rate of approximately 1%. Although our fund grew by 13% in 2010, it is still insufficient to offset our substantial funding deficit.

Steps Being Taken to Deal With the Deficit

1. Inflation protection
 - a. If you retired before 2010 you will continue to receive 100% inflation protection each year.
 - b. If you retired after 2009 you will receive 60% of the annual cost of living increase on the portion of your pension credit earned after 2009. Increases for the portion of your pension credit earned before 2010 will continue to match 100% of the annual change in the cost of living.
- 2 Active teachers will face a 1.1% salary reduction phased in over 3 years by 2014. This is the equivalent of \$880 a year on a salary of \$80,000. Earlier increases in payroll reductions will be permanent. Contributions on additional income will rise to 13.1% compared with a top contribution rate of 8.9% in 2005.



RWTO Burlington Branch

Retired Women Teachers of Ontario
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Membership Information

Mary McCully (Membership Convenor)

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Portrait of a Gentleman

By Marina Lloyd - Chair of Goodwill Committee



One a sunny June day, I left **Don Gentleman's** home, my arms laden with four books filled with fifty-eight years of memories from his boyhood to retirement from the Halton District School Board. Each book is titled *In My Mind's Eye* and the preface to Book One includes the following quote from the Roman poet Martial... "It is to live twice, when we can enjoy the recollections of our former life."

Not only is Don's memory for people, places and events prodigious, but he also is able to recall sounds, smells, tastes and colours, a gift he attributes to his father, who, as they walked together, would draw his son's attention to the beauty of his surroundings. Don was born in 1923 in the village of Melbourne, west of London, where his father ran a general store and post office. Many of his depictions of village and rural life in the 30's will resonate with readers of a certain age - party lines which provided gossip for the neighbours, Sunday night radio programs such as *Fibber McGee and Molly*, oyster suppers, garden parties, threshers going from farm to farm (and being well fed by the farmers' wives), barn raisings and Fall Fairs.



And the fires! Five fires in seven years - his father's store falling victim to the 1933 blaze. Details of events in the world outside the village are sprinkled throughout - the death of a king, the abdication of a king, the coronation of his brother, the explosion of the dirigible Hindenburg, and the ominous news from Europe as Hitler invades Austria and Chamberlain returns talking of appeasement. War with Germany was declared in September 1939, the year that Don entered Grade 13. His memoir continues to be dotted with news of the fall of France, fighting in the desert, on the Russian front and in the Pacific.

In September of 1942, Don registered in a Science course at Western University. All male students were assigned to the Officer Training Corps. They wore army uniforms to class three days a week and reported for training from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. In his third year, Don switched to the University Naval Training Divi-

(Don Gentleman... continues on Page 25)

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(Don Gentleman... continued from Page 24)

sion and spent three weeks training at HMCS Cornwallis in Nova Scotia. He found himself increasingly fascinated with the Geology lectures and labs, so in his third year, he applied to the Government of Canada Geological survey for summer employment and was assigned to Flin Flon and Lake Wekusko in Northern Manitoba. He spent the following summer in Goldfields on Lake Athabaska in Saskatchewan. The summer of 1947 found him in the Sudbury area working for INCO searching for nickel ore with a magnetometer. He seriously considered spending his life examining rocks as a geologist, but the prospect of introducing young people to the beauty of the Sciences was irresistible and so he entered OCE in the Science Specialist course. On Labour Day, 1948, he stepped off the Greyhound bus in Campbellford. Not only did he meet his first students the next day, he was introduced to "the girl in the green dress," another new staff member named Doreen. Little did he know then, that he was meeting the love of his life, the woman who has been his partner for sixty-one years.

In September of 1954, Don joined the staff of Burlington - Nelson District High School (eventually to be known as Central H.S.) and the third edition of *In My Mind's Eye* describes in great detail the next fifteen years at that school. Mr. J.M. Bates was his principal - there were 865 students and 31 staff members. As well as teaching Physics, Chemistry and Science, Don coached football, worked with the Cadet Corps and chaired the salary committee. He had a heart for all his students but, remembering with regret his own poor study habits, he took a particular interest in those who were experiencing difficulty and was determined to help them reach their potential.

When the school went on a six-day cycle, time tabling for the now over 1000 students was done on sheets of plywood with nails on which were hung coloured tags. Events in the outside world were still being faithfully recorded. When Mr. Bates retired in 1963 after 35 years of principalship, Emerson Lavender was appointed to take his place. Don remembers that November day when Emerson announced the death of President Kennedy to the students by reading the passage from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar which begins, "This was the noblest Roman of them all." Four years later, Don would be occupying the principal's office. His successful implementation of a credit system, the first composite school in Ontario to do so, is a source of pride. The fourth book of his memoirs details his work as an Assistant and Area Superintendent with the Halton Board from 1969 until he retired in 1981. He was first assigned to the West Education Area with responsibility for supervision and evaluations, capital budgets, enrolment

(Don Gentleman... continues on Page 26)

(Don Gentleman... continued from Page 25)

projections, staffing, meeting with consultants and construction of new schools. Once he was even called from his office to herd cattle that had escaped from an overturned truck. He later moved to the North Education Area which had its own unique challenges, particularly the distances between schools and the need to decide when to close schools because of inclement weather. In recognition of his considerable contributions to education in Burlington, he was honoured to receive a Centennial medal.

Throughout his career, Doreen was a source of strength, providing a home that was a haven at the end of each exhausting day. For ten years following retirement from the Board, he served the public in a different fashion, selling clothing in the menswear department of Scriveners. Nowadays he is afforded the luxury of time - time to revel in the accomplishments of his three daughters and two grandchildren; time to indulge in his hobbies - photography, stamp collecting, writing, listening to music and tending his perennial garden. When I mentioned Don's name to former colleagues, I heard words such as "a fine man"; "a dedicated teacher"; "an able administrator"; but the response most often heard, spoke of how the name described the man, for he is both a gentleman and a gentle man.

As the Roman poet wrote, recollecting the past allows a person to live twice. Don has been privileged to have remembered so much from his past and to have so faithfully recorded his observations in the books. This is a gift to anyone who, like myself, has the good fortune to read them. We look forward to reading an account of his post-retirement years in the fifth edition of *In My Mind's Eye!*

Contribute to the Herald!

The next *Halton Herald* will be distributed in January, 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, by mail to 153 Fairleigh Ave. S. Hamilton L8M 2K4 or telephone: 905-547-1628. Deadline - November 15, 2011.

Recruitment & Member Services Committee

By Jan Murdoch



We look forward to welcoming all retirees to our annual **To Hell With the Bell** breakfast at the Burlington Holiday Inn on Thursday, September 8, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. Consider this your invitation! I have been retired for 10 years and have never been able to attend. If, like me, you have managed to miss it in past years, please consider joining us at this traditional start to the school year. Our school year now focuses on learning everything we never had time for in our former life! Some call this our **Third Age of learning**. Call me or e-mail me if you are able to attend: 289-956-0163 or janmurdoch@cogeco.ca.

As the new Membership and Recruitment Chair I would like to welcome all those new to this perfect life status situation. **Hilary Barber** and **Mary Lyons** will be assisting me in the role to ensure that all our members records are up to date. If any of you have personal information that has changed please contact me and we will ensure that your address, phone number or e-mail addresses are current. It is important that we have your accurate contact information so that you can continue to receive information and newsletters from the District and from the Provincial Office.

As you think about or move into retirement, remember that you have been productive all your life and you won't want to stop the juices flowing later in life. You may need to take a short rest, but then to enjoy your life you will need to keep busy and you will want to make your future as successful as your past. In retirement you can give your life more balance; you'll be able to soar with the Eagles because you can simply choose to avoid all the turkeys. You can live a long, healthy and fulfilling life by doing exactly everything that you love to do. I recently heard a piece of prose about dreaming the big dream, on a Harvey Brooker CD. "*Dream no small dreams, for they have no ability to move mountains.*" (Gota)

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Life is Duty - Perform it

Life is a Mystery - Unfold it

Life is an Opportunity - Take it

Life is a Promise - Fulfill it

(Recruitment ... continues on Page 28)

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(Recruitment ... continued from Page 27)

Life is Love - Enjoy it
Life is a Spirit - Realize it
Life is a Puzzle - Solve it

Life is Beauty - Praise it
Life is a Struggle - Fight it
Life is a Goal - Achieve it

Together we raise our glasses and give a toast to your Life. We wish ourselves and those near us a long, healthy life! We drink to you! I look forward to seeing you at the **Fall Meeting** on Nov. 2, 2011 at Deerfield Golf Course, in Oakville.

If you know of anyone in the educational field who is thinking of retiring in the next 5 years, or someone who is currently retired and continues to belong to their company's insurance plan but is about to turn 65 years young, tell them about our upcoming **Retirement Planning Workshop** on Oct 11, 2011.

Third Age Learning Comes to Halton

By George MacRae



Many RTO/ERO members are familiar with Third Age Learning Programs. A very successful one operates in Guelph and another in Kitchener. Third Age Learning provides learning opportunities for those over 55 years of age in the community. The inaugural Burlington series will consist of 8 weekly Thursday morning lectures from January 19 to March 8, 2012. When the project is fully implemented there will be a fall and winter series consisting of a total of 32 lectures on topics suggested by the membership.

Because we see the value of this program for our members, District 15 is providing some financial support to help Third Age Learning start up their program. If you are interested in learning about Third Age Learning Burlington, visit its website at www.3alb.org or follow the link on the District 15 website.

Book of Remembrance

We remember with fondness



John Boich

Margaret Coghill

Katharine Patrick

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Ronald Simmons

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Aldershot School Celebrates 50 years

By Leanne Taylor



Aldershot School reaches a milestone this fall when staff and students along with alumni and former staff celebrate the 50th anniversary of its opening. The high school opened in 1961 in time for the first influx of baby boomers reaching adolescence. Just as the children of that era have experienced many changes, so too has the school. Over the years, there have been several additions and modifications that have enabled the school to become one of the top schools in Ontario. In 2008, it was ranked as 12th in Ontario by the Fraser Institute in terms of Literacy and Math Scores. Not bad for the school with the smallest secondary enrolment in Halton!

Aldershot H.S. opened as a 9-13 school, drawing students from the Aldershot area who had previously attended Waterdown S.S. Additions saw the building of technical shops, a gymnasium and cafeteria and a new office wing. By 1973 there were over 1200 students. Changing demographics and the elimination of OAC threatened the school with closure at the end of the '90's. To prevent this, grades 7 and 8 were added, creating a school with two panels. New science labs were installed, the machine shop was converted to two music rooms, and other interior changes were made to accommodate the new format. Adjustments take time, but over the years, Aldershot School has become a cohesive entity, continuing to do well in provincial testing, achieving gold standard in the music program and offering extensive opportunities for team sports. The fondness former students hold for Aldershot can be seen in the number of alumni who come back to teach – at one point in recent years, the Leadership Team had four former students holding headships.

In 2001, a fortieth anniversary celebration was held, raising a considerable sum which has been used for scholarships for graduating students over the last ten years. The 50th Celebration has a similar goal. A staff reception with a light meal will be held from 4-6 p.m. for staff – previous and present – before the official opening at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, October 7. Everyone is welcome to attend. Check out the Celebration Website at: www.aldershot50th.com.

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Sailing Apr 14, 2012 aboard Norwegian Epic

Transatlantic Repositioning Cruise from Lisbon to Santos, Brazil
14 Night Transatlantic Repositioning from CA\$787
Sailing Nov 23, 2012 aboard Vision of the Seas

Transatlantic Repositioning Cruise from New Orleans to Barcelona
13 Night Transatlantic Repositioning from CA\$687
Sailing Apr 15, 2012 aboard Norwegian Spirit

Panama Canal Repositioning Cruise from Vancouver to Fort Lauderdale
17 Night Panama Canal Repositioning from CA\$1,792
Sailing Sep 26, 2012 aboard Island Princess

Unless otherwise stated, all prices are per person and are based on double occupancy for an "interior" stateroom. 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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Carol
TODD-SKUCE
Rising to the Challenge



It has been 10 years since leaving the Halton Board. The energy of a classroom of students, the camaraderie of colleagues and the joy of making a difference in kids' lives still makes me smile. Last December, students from Lord Elgin High School invited me to speak to their reunion about the early years of Elgin from a teacher's perspective. It was a memory rush; a highlight of my year.

Being a Realtor has similar rewards: the opportunity to meet and get to know people of different backgrounds or the challenge of finding the 'perfect house' for a client. The happiness felt when they make it their home is shared.

Working with teachers has been particularly rewarding for me. I get to help them buy or sell their home and to work with the type of people I have enjoyed for many years. I really like teachers!! They are capable, rational, and interested in almost everything. Since we share a common background it is easy to feel comfortable and build a relationship.

If you have a Real Estate question, please contact me - even if you have no intention of buying or selling. I look forward to being your Realtor, before you need one. You can contact me at 905-338-3737 (office); 905-483-7350 (cell); Carol@Todd-Skuce.ca.



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Travel Group Report: Our Boston Visit and More to Come!

By Jan Murdoch

Whales, whales everywhere! Everywhere that is, except in the waters near Boston. If they were there, they were down in the deep and not on the surface of the water, so we eventually gave up and headed back to shore to receive free coupons to venture out again, at some point in the future.

Boston is a wonderful city that is full of history. Walking the "Freedom Trail" with a guide dressed in period costume helped us appreciate the pivotal events that took place there so many years ago. We also learned the true stories about Paul Revere, Samuel Adams and John Hancock and the liberties writers took back then when recounting events. Even the "Boston Massacre" was embellished. The transportation by water taxi to many of our events offered a unique experience and reinforced the importance of this mode of travel throughout Boston's history. Our Duck Boat tour although short, gave us an interesting view of both Boston and Cambridge. Then it was off to the "Barking Crab" for fresh lobsters and crabs. Nut crackers in hand and juices spewing everywhere it was a fun feast followed by Boston cream pie. Who knew that Boston cream pie is actually a cake!



On Thursday, many of us rode the ferry over to Provincetown for a day's adventure. Included was a ride through the protected dunes along the shores of the Coast and then some time for personal exploring. Provincetown has many artisan shops along its narrow streets, with unique items for sale and no tax. Friday found many of us riding the bus touring the cities of Boston and Cambridge, while others explored the Quincy Market, Harvard or the Aquarium before heading to the airport.

For some us the adventure continued with a seven day cruise to Bermuda. We were in luck as the weather was great and the seas were calm. It was a party ship that included a pub crawl. I think that was due to the many wedding parties on board. While in Bermuda we toured the entire island in a private taxi cab. The

(Travel Group... continues on Page 35)

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(Travel Group... continued from Page 34)

beach sand is truly pink and the golf courses were in great shape despite the lack of rain. The best way to visit Bermuda is definitely on a ship as it is more cost effective. Near St George we stopped to visit the Crystal Caves and had lunch - \$50 later we were on our way. The most expensive salad and white wine spritzer that I have ever enjoyed.

Our next trip is just around the corner, September 15th to San Francisco. We are travelling with a slightly larger group this time and because of the distance we're taking a few more days. The third in our series of city visits, this one has us flying out of the Buffalo airport and includes a guided city tour, a visit to Alcatraz, and a tour of Wineries in the Napa Valley. Although we have some planned events, as things are more affordable when going as a group, there is still time for personal exploring and visits to local areas of interest. We try to offer time for both. San Francisco also offers great theatres and musical venues which can be explored as an added option. Although we are currently full at 40 people, if this trip interests you contact janmurdoch@cogeco.ca or 905-691-8407 (cell) to get on the wait list, sometimes for a number of reasons spots open up.

In the Spring of 2012 we are planning a trip to Washington and then we are off to New York, New Orleans, Charleston, Quebec city, Montreal, and ????. If you are interested in getting more information on any of our future trips send me an e-mail at janmurdoch@cogeco.ca.

(Travel Group Pictures... continues on Page 40)

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.

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. They 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. This issue of the Herald was printed and supported by **Astra Graphics**.

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Cruising and Touring French Polynesia

By Laura Bird and Leo McAdam

Beautiful, stunning, magnificent, spectacular - Tahiti is truly picture-postcard perfect and definitely worth the 13 hours of air travel. Papeete is a friendly, bustling town with a wonderful market filled with Polynesian products - colourful clothing, arts, crafts, and jewellery with an emphasis on black pearls. Vendors readily give prices in both U.S. Dollars and French Polynesian francs. No pushy hucksters here or on any other island. The Papenoo Valley in the heart of Tahiti teems with graceful waterfalls and lush tropical forests. A brief heavy rainfall increased the waterfalls ten-



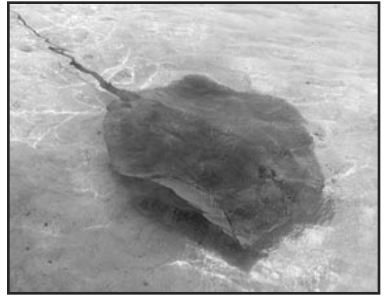
fold. An unexpected surprise. The deluge brought down trees blocking our return route but clearing the road with the locals was fun. For history buffs, there are monuments for Captains Cook and Bligh both of whom were important visitors to Tahiti. There is also the Gauguin Museum and of course, "Mutiny On The Bounty" was immortalized here.

The Society Islands around Tahiti are only a short ferry boat ride from each other and we enjoyed the leisurely and scenic pace of the 10 day cruise. At each port island, there were many opportunities to drive through the lush tropical landscape or visit ancient ruins of Tiki gods. After strolling around each island town, we often took short outrigger rides to offshore smaller islands, called motus, to visit a pearl farm, swim or snorkel in the warm, calm jewel-like lagoons. As for snorkeling, we had "done" the Great Barrier Reef and thought that we would be disappointed here but each island is inside a coral reef so underwater activities were fabulous at every stop. It was not uncommon to be up close and personal with the stingrays and black fin sharks.

(French Polynesia... continues on Page 37)

(French Polynesia... continued from Page 36)

Huahine, known as the garden island, has a slow-paced life in stark contrast to the hustle and bustle of Papeete. It is small enough to walk from one side to the other and enjoy the long white beaches. Opportunities to visit vanilla plantations are available on this island and others. Rangiroa has built a reputation on diving and snorkeling excursions along with fishing and pearl production. Its enormous lagoon could contain the whole island of Tahiti.



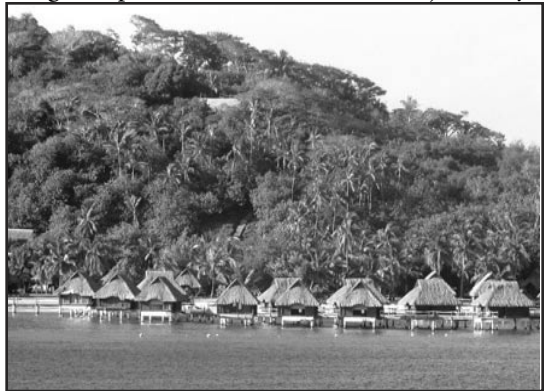
With any snorkeling excursion, in French Polynesia, it is a good idea to take your own gear since what is provided is not sanitized between users.



To the Polynesians, Raiatea is considered the most sacred of all the Society Islands - home of their god of war and fertility with legends of human sacrifice. This was an important island for tribal meetings and ceremonies. In the same lagoon lies the little island of Tahaa where we visited a small family owned pearl farm. Learning about the colours, texture and grades of pearls

is a must if you intend to purchase Tahitian pearls. Many of the outdoor vendors on each island have inexpensive, low grade pearls while the farms and jewellery stores sell the high end products. Back on board the ship, we were treated to dances by the children of Raiatea while being informed about local folklore.

While Bora Bora is the most renowned, it is also over-rated and overpriced. So, many of the resorts have closed down. Empty thatched cottages on stilts line the coast. We were told that \$500



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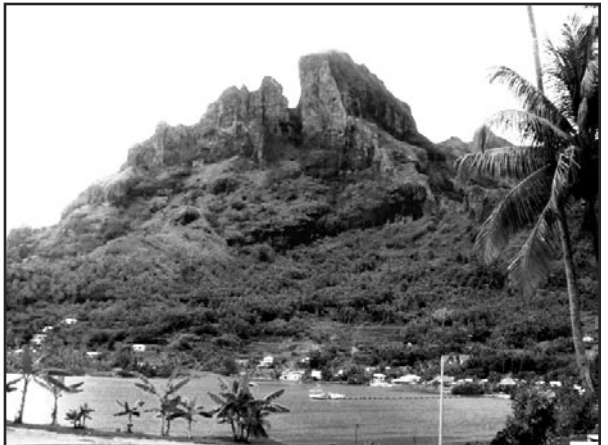
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a night was not uncommon for a stay. However, there are some interesting opportunities here. A well-known drinking hole is “Bloody Mary’s” with its sand floors (check your flip flops at the door) and wooden billboards listing the hundreds of famous people who have stopped by for the signature drink (John Denver, Carlos Delgado, Cameron Diaz, Meg Ryan, Rich Little to name a few) - a favourite stop of Leo’s.



I enjoyed learning the art of pareo dyeing and the various methods of tying them. Best of all was the helmet dive. Ten feet down on the sand with our oxygen helmets, we were swarmed by many colourful fish. I could have done without the nip from the stingray, though! Crabs are the bane of flower gardens here. Throw an hibiscus near a crab hole and watch the little creatures emerge and drag the flower back into their hidey hole for a munch.

Moorea, with Tahiti, from the air, appears to be a beautiful green butterfly floating on a tranquil blue sea. It is an uncrowded tropical island of dramatically jagged mountains, lush forests, turquoise lagoons and white sand beaches. Among the cruisers, it was the island of choice for a week-long stay. It is no wonder that the Bali Hai parts of “South Pacific” were filmed here. Because there are so many places to see in the world, we have always said we would only visit a place once, but this Jewel in the ocean is definitely a piece of heaven we would consider touring again.



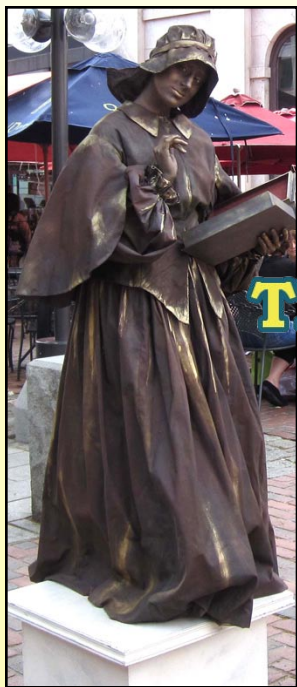
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The Good



On The Freedom Trail



In
The
Stocks

The Bad



On Provincetown Dunes



Whale Watching

and The Beautiful