

# NEWSLETTER



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Neil MacNeil  
February 1, 2014

### Time to Explore

Saturday Morning



### *Walking Alone*

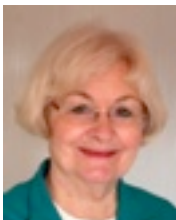
No one could prove I'd been there,  
Not important, as I really didn't care.  
Mind correction, state altering bliss,  
Escape, delight, woes, all gone amiss.

What does this existence really mean?  
Are we just a moment hoping to be seen?  
Are we travelling - dangerously - on an open road?  
Not sharing, nor caring, burdened by our load.

I hope we seek the strength  
to do what must be done!  
Sometimes travelling the lonely road,  
seeking out the sun.

...Neil MacNeil

Yes, our president writes poetry too, and this time with a message supplemented with photos taken during his walk to the falls near Nictaux. The falls were spectacular last month when we had the rainy thaw, and for Neil, it inspired him to write the poem encouraging us to make the most of our time while we are here. The retired teachers mentioned in this newsletter are certainly doing that, and I know that even more of you are as well.





*You can get very close to the kangaroos. This one was enjoying the golf course in Mount Beauty*



*Zip-lining in Costa Rica*

**STARTING RETIREMENT ..... Judi Wilson**

The first semester of being a “pensioner” has been fantastic. I am presently sitting under a palm tree in Costa Rica where I am spending a couple of weeks after enjoying a month in Australia. I returned there to a small town called Mount Beauty in Victoria and visited many old friends that we met 25 years ago while an exchange teacher. It was very hot for one of the weeks (44 degrees). I know that doesn’t get much sympathy, but as I told a few Aussies, over 40 is as bad as 20 below. You can’t do much but stay indoors. The travelling has been great and I look forward to coming home - ready to plan my next adventure.



Dear Fellow Retirees,

What thought have you given to being prepared for an emergency that either keeps you housebound or forces you to evacuate? Have you ever looked at **Your Emergency Preparedness Guide** published by Public Safety Canada? It contains many helpful hints on what to do to prepare and is available to download at [www.GetPrepared.ca](http://www.GetPrepared.ca) .

February is the time we often think of loved ones. Knowing that you have what it takes to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours will give you, and those you love, peace of mind. What a great gift!

David McCoubrey

*David is the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator in Annapolis County. After teaching for many years - all levels and most subjects - in Lower Sackville, Nictaux W., Lawrencetown Jr. High, and Bridgetown High School, he retired in 2003. In 1995, while a Middleton volunteer fireman, he was asked to be Emergency Manager for the town. This position was expanded to include all four municipalities in our county in 2005, and he was selected to be the Regional Manager. His responsibilities include training and preparing people to deal with a variety of emergencies. He is also part of a provincial team which create large-scale mock disasters so skills can be practiced. Ensuring that we know what to do in emergencies is a major part of his job and the Guide is well-worth downloading.*



*Kym is in the centre - green shawl - with Yvonne on her right*

## **Teaching on the Caribbean Island, Anguilla**

*Kym Hume*

Anquilla is a small island 16 miles long, 3 miles wide, just north of St. Maartan. There are approximately 2500 students in six elementary schools and one high school. My experience in Anguilla started last year with my partner, Yvonne Rafuse. We provided an intensive two week professional development and mentoring workshop for the four elementary special ed. units. This year we were invited to return to continue our work and include the middle level high school teacher. We offer our services for free and they pay for travel and meal expenses.

All of the Anguillan teachers welcomed us into their classrooms with warmth and appreciation. Their eagerness to adopt new ideas was clearly evident as we worked side by side focusing on improving the learning and behaviour of their students.

Workshops presented included enabling positive behavioural strategies, social behaviour mapping, organizing visual supports and implementing the STAR program for children with autism, differentiating instruction in a learning centre, and developing self-regulation strategies for all students with exceptionalities. Training was followed with hands-on demonstrations with the students in the classrooms.

There were challenges to our work. Not one school had a functioning photocopier and the likelihood of any being repaired soon is remote. Most teachers are printing out things at home at their own expense. Supplies in the classrooms are virtually non-existent. Paper, pencils, math manipulatives, educational games... are all desperately needed. When I return home, I plan to fill a box with things young boys would enjoy and send it down to a particular classroom!

I am hoping we will be invited back next year. It's a rewarding feeling to share our years of experience and knowledge in such a welcoming environment and believe we have really made a difference.

*If you would like to help the students and teachers on Anguilla, please contact Kym. Her email address is:*

[kym.hume@ns.sympatico](mailto:kym.hume@ns.sympatico)



**Bill Wagstaff**

Member-at-Large - Valley

## **MEET OUR MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

Bill Wagstaff is our Member at Large representing the three RTO branches in the valley - Annapolis, Kings and Hants West. He started his teaching career in the UK at both university and senior high school levels. Subjects taught included economics, statistics, and history. In 1970 he moved to Canada landing in the valley teaching history and statistics at West Kings High School in Auburn. Before retiring in 1995, he also obtained his Masters Degree in English at Mount St. Vincent University. As a former semi-pro soccer player, he was able to share his skills as a coach for many years. His experience with the RTO includes being the president of the Kings Branch. During his tenure he chaired the very successful provincial Annual General Meeting held in Kentville a few years ago. He is now in his second year as our Member at Large and is also serving on the Assessment Committee, the committee that reviews the organization and all policies of the RTO recommending changes where and when necessary. He has enjoyed the opportunity to serve his fellow retired teachers in our area and will be submitting his name for re-election this spring. *(You will be notified if others put their names forward.)*





*John, Maureen, Marian, David*

### **Retired Teachers As Organists**

Among the ranks of retired teachers in Annapolis County, four have been providing valuable leadership as organists in local churches. Maureen MacLean, longest serving, is organist at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, Bridgetown John Montgomerie at William Black United Church, Bridgetown, Marian Ward at Inglewood United Baptist church, and David Skidmore at Kingston United Church. These four have been instrumental in the success of the Annapolis Valley Centre RCCO (Royal Canadian College of Organists). Its goal is to foster appreciation for the pipe organ as well as sponsor scholarships. Maureen is the past president, David is the president, Marian acts as secretary, and John does public relations.

The Organ Scholarship Fund oversees scholarships for talented young musicians who wish to acquire organ skills. Chantel Peng was the 2013 winner. The success of this program was highlighted when the 2006 winner, Shawn Potter, went on to win the Godfrey Hewett prize of \$5000 at Orgelfest held in Ottawa, August 2013.

To raise funds for this scholarship fund, the Centre sponsors two concerts each year. In the fall, "Phantom of the Pipes" allows members to perform in a relaxed fashion at Kingston United Church. In the spring, "Sacred, Secular, and Silly", the members and local musicians present a varied repertoire. This year's concert will be held at the **Bridgetown Baptist Church on Friday, April 4, 7:30 p.m.** A freewill offering will be taken. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy good music and support a great cause.

### **GEOCACHING - "Treasure" Hunting**

*Ten reasons why you might like to take up geocaching:*

1. It gets you outdoors for some exercise.
2. It gives you a chance to see places and sights you would not go to otherwise.
3. You can spend just an hour or a whole day geocaching.
4. The difficulty level ranges from very easy, ones that just take a few minutes, to ones that take several hours.
5. You can go geocaching in all seasons.
6. You can walk, snowshoe, bike, run, or paddle to various geocaches, so you can exercise at the same time.
7. You can geocache by yourself, with your partner, friend(s), or with your grandkids. Kids love this activity!
8. With 2.3 million active geocaches world-wide, you can geocache on a trip or vacation anywhere in the world. (I have geocached in the backwoods of Kejimikujik National Park and in the centre of Boston.)
9. It is relatively inexpensive to get started. A good hand-held GPS unit costs around \$200 or you can download an app for your smart phone.
10. The learning curve is short. A couple of hours with an experienced geocacher and you are set to go.



*If Geocaching sounds like something you'd like to try, Murray would be happy to work with a group to get you started. A time in spring would be best - AFTER the winter storms. Murray can be contacted at his email address:*

**[freeman\\_ug@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:freeman_ug@ns.sympatico.ca)**



### ***The Real Olympics***

While watching the Olympics AND dealing with our excessively wintry weather conditions here in the valley, it seems to me that the events held in Sochi are not relevant to the real challenges of winter. For example - moguls. Now come on, can they compare to the trek to the bird feeder over mountainous snow banks and through man eating drifts while being strafed by hungry starlings? And that icy chute luge and bobsledders use.... Heck, trying to maneuver the car into the driveway (or out) between the narrow gap left by high snow banks - complements of ploughs and snow blowers - without scraping off the sides of the car requires a great deal of skill. You may admire the biathlon skiers, you know the ones who cross county ski and then have to accurately shoot at targets. Have they ever driven on HWY 101 behind a semi in slushy conditions, or had one pass them in the on-coming lane and been able to maintain visibility as well as stay in the right lane? (High speed wipers never seem capable of keeping the windshield clear at these times.) Perhaps my biggest question arises from the uniforms of the curling teams. T-shirts in an arena!!! Now, I don't know about you, but my greatest challenge is finding enough appropriate layers of clothing to deal with winter weather, and then, the toughest part, getting them on and having enough energy and time left to go out and do what must be done. (Don't even get me started on the boots that have NOT sufficiently dried!) Overcoming these "real" olympic events deserves a few gold medals, don't you think? .....Vicky



Sherry Caldwell & Heather McCormick, RTO members, are in Year 4 of volunteering as Board Directors for the Annapolis Region Community Arts Council. Board Members work from 5 to 40 hours per week and are responsible for carrying out major projects.

The Council has been supporting and promoting the arts throughout NS for 32 years. It hosts 80 events each year and has 6000 people either visiting the art galleries at ARTs PLACE in Annapolis Royal or attending their community events. The Board strives to provide strong, accessible and diverse programming in the arts. In 2013 they fundraised \$9000 to construct a wheelchair ramp making ARTs Place accessible for everyone, and have just finished a \$52 000 upgrade and renovation of the upstairs community space.

On **Friday, April 5th**, ARCAC holds its annual **"Going Once, Going Twice"** fundraising auction with Cathy Jones as Celebrity Host. Please save the date and travel to Annapolis Royal to share in a lively, fun-filled evening - all for a great cause!

**CATHY JONES OF "22 MINUTES"**  
 to host ARCAC's Auction  
**"GOING ONCE..GOING TWICE:  
 CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS"**  
 SATURDAY APRIL 5, 6:30pm  
**At the Legion**  
 Annapolis Royal  
 Community Partner  
 Scotiabank Annapolis Royal  
**Tickets on sale Feb 25**  
 \$13 each includes a drink & appetizers

You can buy tickets at [www.arcac.ca](http://www.arcac.ca)  
 OR Call 902-532-7069 (VISA/MC/Discover)  
**Limited Tickets Available**



## Coming Soon - April 16

Paul Sarty, Johnson Insurance, will be coming on April 16 to address the topic of Travel and MEDOC insurance. It will be at 2:00 p.m. in the AV Room at the Lawencetown Elementary School where there is lots of comfortable seating. Wives, husbands, and friends of RTO members will be welcome. Paul is an expert in his field and will explain the responsibilities of travellers preparing for out of province or out of country trips and what must be done if they are stranded, injured, or become ill while away. Those of us who are over 65 must be very careful that we are appropriately covered by insurance, but Paul will explain all that. It will be a very informative presentation!

A reminder will go out to you all in early April.

## Seniors Fitness?

Belinda Sarty of **Bee and Be Fitness** in Bridgetown is interested in providing fitness programs for seniors at her gym - 26 Bay Rd. (Trojan Centre). Please contact her if you'd like to participate. Fees are monthly - no year long contract. She can be reached at:

588-3232 824-0004 (cell)  
BeeandBfitness@gmail.com

## Provincial Annual General Meeting

May 28 & 29 Halifax

### Why you should attend:

1. This year, a president and a vice president will be elected by those who attend the meeting.
2. The meeting is only held in the morning of the 29th and it is followed by a free lunch.
3. You will have an opportunity to meet the RTO executive, those folks who are looking after your concerns, and it gives you an opportunity to express your opinions and ask questions.

### More good stuff:

1. Accommodations - The RTO gets a discount at the Delta Halifax. If you share the room, it's even cheaper! Parking and breakfast is free.
2. A free bus will take you from the hotel to the golf club where the banquet is held. The dinner is delicious, well-prepared, and only \$25. No problem about having a designated driver or finding your way back to the hotel because the bus will return you there.
3. The RTO has a hospitality room at the hotel for when you return.

### Best of All:

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. Besides, a day in Halifax can always be put to good use.

*More information will be given in the next provincial newsletter.*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**Saturday, March 15** - Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) Community Supper, St. Luke's Church, Annapolis Royal, 5 - 7 p.m. \$8 for a three course, home cooked meal. (WOW!) Local vendors will have displays. Call 532-7533 for more information/tickets.

**Friday, April 4** - "Sacred, Secular, and Silly" concert, Bridgetown Baptist Church, 7:30 p.m. Freewill offering

**Saturday, April 5** - "Going Once, Going Twice" ARCAC' annual auction, Annapolis Royal Legion, \$13 (See ad, pg. 5)

**Wednesday, April 16** - RTO presentation on travel insurance with Paul Sarty, Lawrencetown School, AV room, 2:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, Thursday, May 28th & 29th**, RTO Annual General Meeting - Halifax