

NEWSLETTER

President's Message



Neil MacNeil

My first day of school was September, 1974. I arrived at Dwight Ross Junior High, Greenwood, NS. with all my earthly possessions in one large suitcase. I clearly had no idea what was in store for me. You see, I grew up in Glace Bay, Cape Breton where the only real norm was to treat all people well unless they crossed you and if they did... I won't go there! I was nervous and excited at the same time. Alex MacAskill, who was principal then, met me at the door with "How's she goin' Bye?". He issued a friendly handshake and displayed a friendly smile. "Good start," I thought, "another Caper!!" It was that day I found my home away from home, my learning centre, for years to come. There was genuine concern by every staff member for all who entered our doors, and that continued for the twenty-three years I taught there.

I learned a lot! School is about people, just like Glace Bay, revolving around their mood, their social interaction, their experiences, and their sense of trust. More importantly, school is about believing that the changes we undergo are ones which will benefit ourselves and those around us. As each day passes, we become better "understanders" of ourselves and others. We therefore learn to live successfully within our own parameters and limitations and, ultimately, within our society. During my next ten years I tried to foster and encourage the same philosophy as an administrator that I had learned as a teacher. Now I am one of you, and isn't retirement the same?

This message is not about equality because equality does not really exist. Just look around and you'll see what I mean. My message is

about difference, and difference does exist. It is real and it is found in every family, every school, and every community. I have learned as much from my students as from peers and supervisors. The real learning, though, only takes place if we take time to filter through, reflect upon, embrace or discard ideas and experiences which come our way. We have to be cognizant of our differences and value the learnings they offer. True personal growth only occurs when we realize everyone, including ourselves, has something of value to contribute.

The successful teachers were the ones who became an integral cog on a very large gear that helped the community, school and all areas in which they participated, thrive. You and I have that opportunity, especially now, to be a volunteer, an activist, or simply a supporter of the common good. This lifestyle can only bring fulfillment and success as we journey through our senior years. Please do not forget to chew the fat, smell the roses, and embrace a loved one. As we say in Cape Breton, "God Bless, and have a great day, Bye!!"

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“PICKLE” Ball????

In the fall Vicky was after me to try pickle ball. I had no idea what it was, but envisioned a very low-impact activity designed for infirm seniors, and was only mildly interested. However, Vicky is persuasive and has responded positively to things I have approached her on, so decided to give it a shot. In early January I went expecting to be disappointed - after all, what legitimate activity goes by the name of “pickle ball”? I was soooo wrong! Pickle ball could best be described as a kind of indoor tennis that is less intense than being on a tennis court. It was fun! I quickly learned, though, that I needed better sneakers if I was going to avoid falling and humiliating myself.

I have only been twice since Muriel and I took a holiday in Cuba, but now, with new sneakers, I look forward to every session. Seeing as pickle ball has been the subject of one of the comic strips in the Chronicle Herald recently, I have decided that it is better known than I imagined.

Who would have guessed that I would be recommending going to a gym?!?!

...Karl West

Pickle ball was developed in New England in 1965 by a couple of dads who, after a game of golf, came home to very disgruntled and very bored families. Under pressure to find something to do, they scoured their homes for sports equipment. Bits and pieces for various activities could be found, but not enough to actually play any specific sport, so they invented a game where they could use what they had. Pickle ball came to be.

Using an oversized ping pong racket, a whiffle ball, and a lowered badminton net, the game is played on an indoor, undersized tennis court with a special area called a “kitchen”. Keeping and remembering the score is an excellent brain exercise so this game really works on keeping all our “parts” fit.

Its name comes from a New England fishing term. The last boats of the fishing fleet to leave port, those which had had to scramble to find enough crew and gear, were called pickle boats.

Everyone is welcome to play pickle ball Thursday afternoons between 1 - 3 at the Greenwood Community Centre - the building next to the outdoor swimming pools and across the street from the Protestant chapel. No membership card is necessary, all equipment is provided, and it’s free. You don’t even need to bring a partner. There is always someone to play with. *Please let me know if pickle ball is played in the Bridgetown or Annapolis areas. They are trying to find an appropriate location to play in Lawrencetown.*

Cataract Surgery - Unexpected Costs

According to MSI, everything is covered when having cataract surgery - all doctor's appointments, the surgery, and the replacement lenses, the regular ones. Prescriptions are taken care of by our drug plan. One of our members found this to be **very untrue**. Here are a list of the extra costs he had to pay and was not reimbursed:

- eye measurements at the doctor's office \$100.00
- replacement lenses - paid at the hospital the day of the surgery . (He had the option of paying twice as much for higher quality lenses that had no guarantee of being better. He chose the cheaper @ \$100.00.) \$200.00
- kit containing Aristotle Onassis sun glasses and 2 vials of lubricant in case itchy eyes were a problem after surgery \$ 28.00
- two prescriptions, neither covered by Pharmacare (antibiotics) \$ 56.00

Travel was also involved. Although the surgery was done in Middleton, he had to travel to the Kentville hospital for three follow-up checkups. (Travel costs can be claimed for income tax purposes.)

Cataract surgery doesn't necessarily mean the end of wearing glasses. Most likely old ones will have to be replaced. This will involve an eye exam first, so you'll have to be careful that it's not within the two year period since your last one or it won't be covered by Blue Cross.

Words of advice - ask a lot of questions about costs before committing to the surgery, and if there are questions, call MSI. (Make sure you talk to a knowledgeable person. The one I talked to seemed unsure about the surgery and costs.) Secondly, watch your timing. This is difficult since it's usually the eye exam that starts you on your way to get the procedure, and unlike hip and knee replacements, there won't be a two year wait.

In Sympathy

Since our last newsletter, we have lost retired teachers and family members. These include:

- **Ray Giffen** former teacher and administrator at the Community College in Middleton
- **John Lee** retired Middleton High School teacher
- **Anne Parker**, wife of retired teacher, Doug Parker
- **Connie Pulley**, mother of Glen Pulley our RTO secretary
- **Aaron Boutilier**, son of Joan and Roger Boutilier

Our sincerest sympathy goes out to all their families.

Wine Tour?

The suggestion to do a wine tour of our own Annapolis County wineries was a very popular one. It's doable! The Trans County Transportation Society can provide the bus - easily accessible for anyone with mobility issues - at a reasonable cost if we get enough folk interested in taking the tour. Twenty people should keep the cost to around \$20 -25 depending on how long we take. (I'm thinking a full afternoon.) Besides the wineries, we may be able to include other interesting stops. Please let me know if you are interested before the end of May, and we'll start organizing. Your input will certainly be welcomed as well.

Coming Events

Festival & Conference

The Local Prosperity Conference is two events combined into one:

Thursday, April 9 - Up! Skilling Festival

This is open to the public and provides a chance to learn a range of “do-it-yourself” skills, crafts, and trades taught by experienced teachers.

Friday - Sunday, April 10 - 11 - Conference

The conference focuses on how individuals, businesses, and communities can design and implement a practical blueprint for a prosperous future and a healthy economy.

Locations

The Annapolis Royal Regional Academy and the Annapolis Basin Conference Centre

Information?

Contact: centreforlocalprosperity.ca

**If you would like to help with this event or attend its conference, contact the organizers right away at the above website. RTO member Christine Sloan will also provide information.*

GOING ONCE... GOING TWICE
 Auction & celebration of the Arts
 April 11, 6:30pm
 Enjoy Live Music
 Artisan Demonstrations
 Live & Silent Auctions & Raffles
 Celebrity Host
 Susan Kent of This Hour Has 22 Minutes
credible prizes have been donated for the raffles, silent & live auction!

\$13 Admission includes appetizers & a beverage
 BUY tickets at ARTSPLACE, 316 St. George Street, or online
www.artscac.ca 902-532-7069 VISA / MC
 April 11, at 6.30pm, Legion, Branch 21 in Annapolis Royal

ARTSPLACE Gallery
 316 St. George Street
 Annapolis Royal, NS

KROGER
 Scotiabank

Stay Tuned...

Eric Brown has passed this along. The Upper Clements Scrappers (UCS) are planning a fund raising event in April, date and time TBA. It's a very special fund raiser for a very special charity - the Margaret Salsman Cancer Care Patient Navigator Memorial Fund which provides financial assistance for people in the valley who are fighting cancer. While Margaret was receiving treatments for cancer, her husband realized what a struggle it was for many fellow patients dealing with the hidden costs of these treatments - travel, drugs, food, etc. When Margaret died, he decided to help patients in her memory by selling the glads in his garden. With volunteer assistance, over 8000 bulbs are planted each year and rarely are any flowers left when they go on sale. More importantly, all profit goes to cancer patients in need.