

Spring Banquet: May 21 at Mt Elgin Community Centre (Details inside)

Greetings From Our President:

Spring? Where are you?

As I write this commentary it is nowhere to be found; we are still trying to put away our Christmas decorations that are frozen into the lingering snow banks in our front yard. I am hoping by the time you read this message that the warmth and sunshine have returned along with a few spring blossoms and song birds.

The executive is very excited about our first and we hope annual *WELLNESS DAY* scheduled for May 1, 2014. I hope you have registered! We want to promote the many community based programs and services available to our members. Thank you to Linda Dilanni, Glen McDonald, Helen Reid, Catherine Elliott, Margaret McCurdy and Brenda Seaton the hard working organizing committee.

As our membership increases, our new retirees want to ensure their independence, mobility, strong bone health, positive mental health and overall vitality in our daily lives. Many of the workshops offered during this day will address these matters. We want to offer other initiatives regarding these topics, so please share your ideas with any executive member. We are looking for educational programming tailored for your wellbeing. A positive attitude towards physical and mental fitness will prevent deterioration and increase our longevity.

I am so proud of RTO/ERO's commitment to create a Chair in Geriatric Medicine. The Canadian population ages 65 and over will increase from 14% to more than 25% over the next 25 years. It is essential that we develop innovative technologies and interventions and integrated models of care to prevent disability and enhance quality of life in older adults and to support family caregivers. Please consider supporting this foundation when you are designating your charitable contributions.

I want to thank your hard working executive members on your behalf. It has been a very busy year and you will see evidence of their efforts throughout the newsletter. I particularly want to acknowledge the skills, commitment and dedication of Barry Tate in creating the newsletter over the last few years. It is an amazing resource and the production requires many hours of his time. Barry has advised that he will be resigning and we will miss his contributions. We welcome Helen Reid to this role and she will work with Perry Hughes, the other vital team member. The nominating committee is already at work so please consider joining the executive. Make sure your district is working for you!

Your President,

Heather Wilson-Boast

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Retirement Planning Workshop

This provincially subsidized workshop is a perennial favourite for educators contemplating retirement in the future (not just the immediate future).

Specialists from our RTO Provincial Office provide information on health plans, pension matters, and investment choices.

Please assist us in disseminating this advance information to those still teaching, or providing ancillary services to children.

October 15 is the designated date for 2014 at the **Mt. Elgin Community Hall**.

Recruitment! Recruitment!

The Bell Ringer Breakfast

We would like to invite any educational employees (secretaries, support workers, custodians, educators) retiring this year to our free Bell Ringer Breakfast on September 2. School Boards cannot provide us with a list, so if you know of anyone please contact us.

Thank you Sandra Stock and Brian Armstrong for promoting the benefits of becoming an RTO/ERO member by facilitating a workshop for CUPE 7575 education workers at CASS, and for setting up a display at the TVDSB Retirement Seminar in London. A great way to make new contacts and share information!

Retired Teachers of Ontario

District 37 (Oxford)

Spring Banquet

May 21, 2014

Where: Mount Elgin Community Centre

Time: Social 11:30 a.m.

Dinner: 12:00 noon

Cost: \$16.00

Special Guests: RTO member Jackie Halter and her accompanist Neil Whyte

Goodwill Callers: Please return your tabulations to Harry Lipsit by May 12. (519-424-9367 or hdlipsit@rogers.com)

The Same Good Food/The Same Good People/ The Same Good Times

RTO District 37 Wellness Day

May 1, 2014

Your Executive is most gratified at the membership's response to this initiative. Forty-five people had registered for the sessions by the time of the printing of this newsletter. Heather Wilson-Boast, Linda DiIanni, and Glen McDonald headed the executive committee. They were most grateful for the volunteer assistance from our membership. Catherine Elliott, Margaret McCurdy, Brenda Seaton, and Helen Reid responded to our appeal for help.

In Memoriam

We recognize the passing of these friends and colleagues, and gratefully acknowledge the contributions of lives well-lived.

Jean Shier
Bruce Marshall
Janet Phillips
John Walter
Gwendolyn Casey
Thelma Snyder

Loved long since though lost awhile.

News From Your Travel Committee

2014 has been a busy year for the RTO District 37 Travel Committee. We had a wonderful day trip to Toronto to see the classic production of Les Mis. In addition to the theatre, we had an opportunity for some shopping and a lovely lunch.

We travelled back to Woodstock using some of the "old" Lakeshore Road. This gave us the time to see many of the small towns that we knew years ago but had not seen for sometime.

April 25 – May 3 will see a sold out group of travellers heading to Holland to enjoy a river cruise and the wonderful Tulip festival at the Keukenhof Gardens.

The fall will see our sold out group travelling to the Three Kingdoms of Indochina: Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Experiencing these cultures will provide us with many memories.

Future newsletters will let you know about the upcoming activities of the Travel Committee.

Thanks for your support of RTO District 37's travel activities.

Doug Puddicombe
Travel Chair

Message to all Goodwill Callers

I would like to thank all goodwill callers for their ongoing dedication and service to the membership of District 37. Yours is a very important job because your phone call and cards are sometimes the only contact that some of our members have with RTO/ERO. You are our "ambassador" of sorts. I would also like to welcome Sharron Skevington as our newest Goodwill Caller. It is and will continue to be a challenge to stay abreast of changes to membership information and I appreciate your cooperation and assistance in making those changes when required.

The goodwill callers appreciation lunch has been in the same format for several years now. It has been suggested to me that perhaps an earlier time of the year, such as the 3rd week in October rather than early November would be more appropriate. Some of the callers go south in November and consistently miss the lunch and also an October date would allow you to have an updated list for calling for the October 28th Fall banquet. I would like to hear any feedback you have with respect to our goodwill callers appreciation lunch. Please email me at djianni@execulink.com or phone me at (519) 425-1059. With thanks,

Linda Di Ianni
Goodwill Committee Chair



Goodwill Callers, November 2013

RTO Goodwill Representatives and Meeting Callers

<u>Embro</u>	Evelyn Chute	echute@xplornet.com	519-475-4784
<u>Innerkip</u>	Patricia Gillespie	pmgillespie@execulink.com	519-469-3332
<u>Norwich</u>	Shirley Miller	donzosm@execulink.com	519-863-5890
<u>Oterville</u>	Harry Lipsit	hdlipsit@rogers.com	519-424-9367
<u>Princeton</u>	Marie Leuszler		519-458-4217
<u>Tavistock</u>	Joyce Hill	jmhill@execulink.com	519-462-2812
<u>Thamesford</u>	Ellen Wallace	elle.wall@sympatico.ca	519-285-2843
<u>Woodstock</u>	Janice Beecraft	jjbeecraft@rogers.com	519-536-9002
	Elaine Berst	johnberst@bell.net	519-539-4200
	Sharron Skevington	sskevington@xplornet.ca	519-462-2862
	Herb Cooney	cooneyhj@sympatico.ca	519-539-9330
	Shirley Drew	sdrew@rogers.com	519-539-9734
	Ruth Ann Gregory	gregory@execulink.com	519-462-2875
	Lois Goodall	lvkgoodall@rogers.com	519-539-2786
	Barb Hyden		519-537-8312
	Pat Lester	plester@execulink.com	519-539-9196
	Bernice Marsland	bermarsl@execulink.com	519-462-1065
	Margaret McCurdy		519-539-2770
	Nancy O'Grady	nancycogradey@gmail.com	519-537-8308
	Maria Schebesch		519-537-2704
	Brenda Seaton		519-485-6936
	Barry Tate	bartate@rogers.com	519-539-7682
	Jean Thornton	bthorn@execulink.com	519-537-5166
<u>Ingersoll</u>	Catherine Elliott	elliottcatherine@gmail.com	519-485-0541
	Linda Gordon	linda_gordon@hotmail.com	519-485-3638
	Joanne Perry		519-485-4954
	Linda Ridley	lgridley@primus.ca	519-485-3571
<u>Tillsonburg</u>	Mae Feeney (Goodwill Rep)	mpfny@sympatico.ca	519-842-8161 (A-Dan)
	Laura Rex	drrex@kwic.com	519-842-2291 (Dar-Hil)
	Mary Ann Gradish	maryann.gradish@gmail.com	519-842-4051 (Hillis-Mars)
	Rose Musch		519-688-5952 (Mas-Rock)
	Judy Fulop	judy@fulop.com	519-688-7307 (Roe-Zil)

R. T. O. ANNUAL FUN GOLF TOURNAMENT

***PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A NINE HOLE TOURNAMENT!!!!

Wednesday, June 25, 2014
(Rain date – Wednesday, July 9, 2014)

(Tee off times begin at 11:30 am)

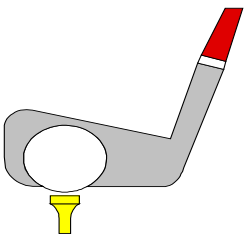
Woodstock Meadows, 745364 Oxford Road 17
519-537-2283

Tournament Rules: (Scramble format) Rules to be given out at registration desk prior to tee off time.

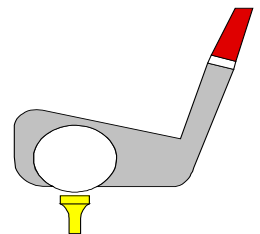
Fee: \$30.00 per person (includes 9 holes of golf, prizes for all, goodie bag)

Registration Deadline: June 17, 2014

- All registrants will be contacted prior to the tournament to verify attendance and to give teams and tee off times (by phone or email)
- Putting contest to be held upon completing your nine holes, with the final putt-off held just prior to assembling at the clubhouse.
- Food can be ordered from the menu at the golf club.
- Please forward registration form (below) to :



Yvonne Farquhar
26 Sydenham St.
Woodstock, ON, N4S 7B2
519-539-5206
teala@execulink.com



Please make cheques payable to Yvonne Farquhar

GOLF REGISTRATION FORM

Name #1 _____ Tel# _____ E-mail _____

Name#2 _____ Tel# _____ E-mail _____

Please check appropriate lines:

Golfing Ability: Excellent___ Good ___ Fair ___ Beginner ___

Will need a power cart _____ (cart is golfer's responsibility to rent at pro shop)

Will share a power cart with anyone ___ or (name) _____

*****NOTE: You may sign up as a single, a twosome or a foursome**

News From Your Executive

At our March executive meeting we received a letter of resignation from 1st Vice-President Marlene Turkington. As a result, Linda DiIanni was nominated as 1st Vice President and Bill Ebel as 2nd Vice. Congratulations Linda and Bill, and thank you for your willingness to assume these roles.

We would also like to thank Marlene for her work on the executive over the past few years. We have appreciated her attendance at District and Provincial meetings, as well as her contributions to our long-range planning discussions.

Best wishes Marlene in your future endeavours with your business and family.

EXECUTIVE DISTRICT 37 OXFORD RTO/ERO

Ed Weiss.....	519 539-3087	Past President, Nominating
Heather Wilson Boast	519 485-1542	President
Linda Di Ianni	519 425-1059	1st VP, Goodwill
Bill Ebel	519 537-6143	2nd VP
Sandra Stock	519 462-2643	Secretary, Recruitment
Janice Buchner.....	519 866-3754	Treasurer
Karen Seguin	519 539-4460	Service to Others
Bill Carrothers	519 537-8629	Recruitment, Audit
Yvonne Farquhar	519 539-5206	Social
Glen McDonald.....	519 539-2403	Membership, Audit
Doug Puddicombe	519 539-3260	Travel
Barry Tate.....	519 539-7682	Newsletter
Perry Hughes	519 539-1047	Newsletter
Bill Ebel	519 537-6143	Website, Nominating
Theresa DeSerres.....	519 539-9934	RTO/ERO
Brian Armstrong.....	519 539-3964	Pensions
David Minielly.....	519 539-4677	Constitution
Mary Anne Silverthorn	519 421-3241	Public Relations, Political Advocacy
Bill Miller.....	519 290-1203	Health/Benefits
Harry Lipsit.....	519 424-9367	Social, Nominating

RTO/ERO TORONTO 1-800-361-9888

OTPP TORONTO 1-800-668-0105

Change of Address / Change of Name

We are unable to respond to requests to facilitate these changes at the local level. Please contact Diane Vezeau at the Provincial RTO office. (1-800-361-9888)

The Trans-Siberian Railroad

Our readers will have followed the adventurous travels of the Minielly brothers (the bros) in previous newsletters. We are indebted to Bro Dave (Bro #2) for this account of the final leg of the journey from Moscow to Beijing. David was a teacher and administrator in Oxford County schools. He has been an RTO member, serving on our local executive and provincial committees. We have appreciated the travel vignettes that he has provided for us.

The four Minielly brothers (John, David, Hugh, and Bruce) travelled for fifteen days last April and May around the world taking in Moscow, Siberian Russia, Mongolia and China. Parts One and Two in the two past issues of the Bell Ringer dealt with Moscow, and the first leg of the journey from Moscow to Irkutsk on Lake Baikal. This final segment will take us from Irkutsk to Beijing.

We boarded our train in Irkutsk at noon for the thirty-three hour trip to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Our car and toilet facilities

were much nicer than our first leg, but we had no dining car. Aboard with us were a group of travellers from England, and another group from The Netherlands. Our Provenista (or car boss) was much stricter than we were used to, and never came close to showing a smile. The scenery begins to change from forests to barren desert-like terrain. Getting through Russian customs took almost seven hours, with rather severe looking KGB types taking away our passports to analyze in a gray concrete building nearby. Mongolian customs took only thirty minutes, and off we rumbled and rattled to Ulaabaatar, the capital of Mongolia.

Mongolia has a population of three million people where horses outnumber people thirteen to one, and there is an estimated forty-four million livestock. Mongolia has a newly elected open government, and the country's vast mineral resources are being tapped by many foreign companies, particularly from China and Canada.

We arrive in Ulaanbaatar at 7:00 a.m. and catch the attention of Monk, a Mongolian tour guide who is meeting our Dutch passengers. Monk (who speaks excellent English) volunteers to look after us when he has the Dutch group settled in. Once done that, he tells us that he can get us to a ger village for a day and night with meals, transportation, and English guide included. It was to cost us only 800,000 tugits (around \$400). He walks us to a bank machine where we withdraw the needed cash. We give him the money; he hails our driver over; we

drive to a restaurant for breakfast and meet our fellow Dutch travellers. After a modest bite to eat, Monk insists on paying because he knows the owner and can get a better deal. He will add this to our bill for later payment.

Our trip to the ger camp took about two hours with



Resting in the Forbidden City



Resting Inside our Ger

one stop at a variety store for supplies. We also stopped at a pile of stones, walking around it three times, tossing a stone upon it each round. It was, of course, a Shaman holy place, and no good Mongolian would pass by without performing this ritual. The pile was about eight feet high and about twenty feet in diameter.

We arrived at the camp about noon, checked into our ger and awaited the call for lunch. The camp has about twenty gers, but only two are occupied. The high season is several weeks off. Gers (or Yurts as they are called in Russia) are a large part of Mongolian life. They are wooden platforms with framed sides covered in thick felt. There a canvas covered roof with an opening for a chimney pipe. Ours had four comfortable beds, a table with chairs, a small pot belly stove, and a wash basin with cold running water. Toilet facilities were a short walk up the hill. Our meals were served in a much larger ger, just fifty steps from our own ger. The topography of the area was desert-like with some growing grass and large outcropping of rock formations.

After lunch, we were able to hire some horses and a guide for a ride in and around some of the rocky hills. The scenery was quite fascinating, and we managed to ride up to an ancient monastery before heading home. With our sore rear ends, we sashayed off to supper and were treated to a typical Mongolian meal, very tasty and lots of it.



Mealtime in Dining Ger

Our friend Monk met us around 8:00 p.m. and led us through an exercise in archery. Archery in this country is the national sport according to Monk. Around 9:00 p.m. in our ger Monk asks us to settle our account. He wants an extra \$250 US !! Our breakfast in Ulaan was \$24 per person: our guide was \$ 100 and our Ulaan hotel for the following night was \$ 58. An argument ensued, and Monk reminded us that he had picked



Horseback Riding in Central Mongolia

up and **continued** to hold our onward train tickets to Beijing. Then things got a little ugly, but in the end we scrambled together \$200, and Monk accepted. The brothers now have a new expression when we have been misled or cheated: “We have been Monked!” While in bed that night we were quietly visited three times by one of the camp girls who stoked the fire to ensure we were warm. What service!

After a good night’s sleep and a hearty breakfast we headed back to Ulaanbaatar, and were dropped off at our hotel where our train tickets were presented to us. A bus ride got us the square at the city centre which was dominated by a large statue of Chinnggis Khaan. He is known world- wide as a leader and warrior of the Great Mongol Nation in the early thirteenth century. We visited the Museum of History, then up to the top of the largest building in the country, the Blue Sky. Here we had a few drinks and enjoyed a great view of the city. In the evening we took in a special performance of contortionists and throat singers at a small venue near the city centre.

The next morning we leave our hotel at 6:00 a.m. and taxi to the train station for our final thirty-one hour leg to Beijing. Again we see the changing

landscape from the rocky barrens to the Gobi desert, to the lush rice paddies of central China. The border crossing between Mongolia and China was of special interest because it was here that the train wheels had to be changed. The track gauge of China is slightly different to that of Russia and Mongolia. However, they have the switch down to a fairly exact process. Nine cars at a time are raised in a large covered yard. The old wheels are removed and the new ones installed. The process takes less than two hours; the new engine is hooked up, and the train is on its way.

Not so fast! Unfortunately the wheel change process coincided with customs in both Mongolia and China. This meant that nobody could get off the train for seven hours during which time the washrooms were locked. No flushing onto the tracks when the train is stopped! Fortunately for us, we were able to salvage a large pop bottle, cut off the top and ration out per person allotments. When the train pulled into the first station the stampede to the rest rooms was quite amazing.

Our two nights in Beijing at the Peking hotel were very relaxing compared to the clicky, crack, bang of railway travel. Since all of us had been to Beijing previously, we redid Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and, of course, the Great Wall. An observation

made on our cross Asia voyage was that the further east we travelled, the more we saw people smiling.

Our flight back to Toronto arrived just two hours after our departure from Beijing, but our watches had to be forwarded twelve hours. It took a good two weeks to adjust fully to Eastern Standard Time. The brothers are now looking around the globe for our next trek. Perhaps the northwest passage? The Stans or the Pampas in Argentina? I will keep you posted. Hopefully we will not be Monked again.



Three Brothers on the Great Wall