



# PEIRTA Newsletter

Prince Edward Island Retired Teachers' Association

Published with the generous support of



VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1

WINTER 2023

## From the President

Welcome to 2023! On behalf of the PEI Retired Teachers' Association Executive, I wish to extend greetings to PEIRTA members and their families and hope for a new normal in the coming years.

As I start my term as president, I am thankful to have Past President Wayne Denman serving on the executive as my mentor. I look forward to continuing the work of the executive with the many experienced members, as well as the new members who bring their talents and expertise to the table. Our experienced returning members and committee chairs include Wayne Denman, Lise Morin, Marg Stewart, Cynthia MacDonald, Kimball Blanchard, Michel Plamondon,

Bill Oehlke, and Dorothy Farish. Welcome to Greg McNevin in his new role as secretary, and new members, Anne Marie Muise, Peggy McNevin, Darlene Arsenault, and Judy Hughes. Our thanks go out to retiring members Ruth Sudsbury, Cynthia MacDonald, and Greg McNevin. The PEIRTA is a strong voice for seniors. Your executive works closely with the executive of the provincial, territorial, and federal retired teachers groups to ensure our voices are being heard.

The PEIRTA AGM was held on November 3 at Red Shores in Charlottetown. Highlights included Wayne's report on the work accomplished by the executive during the year. Kimball Blanchard and Dale Weldon gave an update on insurance issues. Michel Plamondon had good news on our pension fund. We are getting a 3.74% increase in our pension in January 2023. Wayne gave an update on the RTA golf tournament held in September. \$1000 was raised for the Esther Finkle Walk for Kids. Guest speaker for the meeting

See President, 3



Phyllis Horne taught grades one to nine in PEI for 38 years, as a classroom teacher and resource teacher. After completing her Master of Education in Leadership and Learning in 2001, she served as either principal or vice-principal until 2010, excluding the two years she served as President of the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation from 2007- 2009. Outside the classroom, she served on various committees at the Department of Education and the PEI Teachers' Federation. After retirement, Phyllis was appointed to the Health PEI Board, where she served from 2013–2018, with five years as chair. Then from 2020-22 she served on the Council of the College of Registered Nurses in PEI. She joined the PEIRTA Executive in 2018.

Visit our website at  
[www.peirta.com](http://www.peirta.com)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page 2—To/From the Editor; Executive

Page 3— Executive pic; Affirmations

Page 4— A Blast from the Past

Page 5—Award Winners

Page 6—What Can We Do for You?

NEXUS.

Page 7—PEITF Corner

Page 8—Advocacy Matters

## From the Editor

On page 5 you will meet four young women who have been recognized for outstanding achievement by the Faculty of Education at UPEI or by the PEIRTA Scholarship Review Committee. As I learned about them, I couldn't help thinking about where they will be as beginning teachers compared to where I and many of my contemporaries were when we began.

When I was finishing my last year at St. Dunstan's University in 1968, I applied for one teaching position, had one interview (in the parlour at Marion Hall, wearing my best lime green and white houndstooth shirtwaist dress), and got the job. I was 20 years old, had a B.A. and a two-year teacher training program, had decent marks but knew nothing much about anything, and was not highly motivated to learn. I did (I think) one week of "practice teaching" at Souris

convent, and I was good to go!

One of our award-winning teacher candidates, Emma, has a degree in mechanical engineering and has worked in the field. She already has a good deal of experience as a substitute teacher.

Sophie through years of involvement with 4-H has emceed national conferences, has been a guest speaker at conventions and program launches, and has been a 4-H Youth Service Leader.

Jenna-Marie is an accomplished singer-songwriter who has already released two successful singles. She is bilingual, has been writing songs since she was 11, is a drummer with the College of Piping, and was nominated as 'New Artist of the Year' for the 2022 Music PEI Awards.

Sarah has years of experience teaching/working with youth—six years as

sailing instructor and as a volunteer with after-school programs while she was at university.

These young professionals will likely have to compete for jobs. Once hired, with their training, which will be much more extensive than ours, and experience, they should be better than we were—if, of course, they have the necessary work ethic and a passion for the work!

*PEIRTA Executive does not necessarily agree with opinions expressed in material authored by those other than official representatives of the PEIRTA, and information about opportunities offered by others is for information only—no endorsement is implied.*

*Next issue June, 2023. Submit material to margstewart@pei.eastlink.ca.*

*If you wish to read this newsletter online instead of receiving a hard copy, send me an email and I will let you know when each issue should appear on our site and on the PEITF site.*

*Letters to the editor should be a maximum of 200 words, must include a one-line bio, and may be edited for length.*

## PEIRTA Executive and Officers 2020-2022

**President:** Phyllis Horne (902-853-2872)

Phyllishorne1@hotmail.com

**Vice-President:** Lise Morin (902-672-2896)

lise\_morin@hotmail.com

**Past President:** Wayne Denman (902-436-6260)

werdenman48@gmail.com

**Secretary:** Greg MacNevin (902-687-3056)

gregorymacnevin@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Dorothy Farish (902-432-9692)

dfarish1@eastlink.ca

### Representatives by County

Prince (English): Anne Marie Muise (902-853-3838)

ammuisse@eastlink.ca

Queens (English): Judy Hughes (902-367-7122)

jahughes.2020@gmail.com

Kings (English): Peggy MacNevin (902-687-3056)

peggymacnevin@hotmail.com

**Francophone Rep:** Darlene Arsenault (902-854-3449)

keppoch@eastlink.ca

**Membership Chair:** Cynthia MacDonald (902-566-4680)

Cynthia.macdonald38@gmail.com

**Group Insurance Rep:** Kimball Blanchard (902-892-3765)

kimballb@eastlink.ca

**Pension Representative:** Michel Plamondon (902-368-2224)

michelplamondon@hotmail.com

**PEIRTA Webmaster:** Bill Oehlke (902-838-3455)

oehlke@islandtelecom.com

**Newsletter Editor:** Marg Stewart (902-894-8612)

margstewart@pei.eastlink.ca

## President (cont'd from 1)

Tracey Gairns-Brioux. She had an interesting presentation on fitness and self care.

The following guests attended our meeting and brought greetings:

- PEITF- Patrick MacFadyen (Deputy General Secretary)
- PSB- Norbert Carpenter (Director)
- City- Philip Brown (Mayor)
- Department of Education- Bethany MacLeod (Deputy Minister).

In the afternoon, Cynthia MacDonald led a memorial service for deceased members. A moment of silence was held. Wayne reported from the nomination committee. With no new nominations, he declared nominees elected, and they were sworn in. Seniors' issues will continue to be a priority.

I participated in a Zoom meeting for the East Coast Retired Teachers' Organizations in December. Some of the topics included:

- Aging in place,
- Writing letters to elected officials,
- Improving care in seniors' homes,
- Increasing the number of members in retired teachers' organizations, and
- Pharmacare.

Feel free to contact me or any of the executive if you have any concerns or need information. Our contact information is on page 2 of this newsletter, on our website at [peirta.com](http://peirta.com), and also at [peitf.com](http://peitf.com).



Front row, from left: Dorothy Farish, Treasurer; Phyllis Horne, President; Anne Marie Muise, Prince Rep; Judy Hughes, Queens rep.  
Back row, from left: Lise Morin., Vice-President; Peggy MacNevin, Kings rep; Greg MacNevin, Secretary; Wayne Denman, Past President.

## Things You Really Should Know

From *CSA News*, the Canadian Snowbird Association magazine.

- Hot water freezes faster than cold water.
- It is estimated that approximately half the human body is bacteria.
- Hawaii is moving closer to Alaska by about 7.5 cm a year.
- Octopuses have three hearts, nine brains, and blue blood.
- People once ate arsenic to improve their skin.
- Armadillo shells are bullet-proof.
- Japan has one vending machine for every 40 people.

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

*Margaret Mead*

At the end of her excellent presentation to the 2022 AGM, Tracey Gairns-Brioux left us with the following affirmations. A member asked me to publish them, so here they are.

*“In this moment, I am free of worry.”*

*“Today I embrace uncertainty, I grow beyond my discomfort and I break free of my limitations.*

*I am a match for my mountains.*

*I am stronger than I ever knew.”*

## A Blast from the Past

*Editor ~ The following article was published in the Guardian before many of our younger members were born. While the clipping shows no date, Danny MacDonald was president of PEITF 1946-1948, so the article would have appeared before that—when Mr. MacDonald was president of the Souris area local.*

*Mr. MacDonald was the father of Peggy Mac Nevin, the recently elected Kings representative on the PEIRTA executive. He taught me in Souris High School in the early 1960s.*

## Useful Knowledge Stressed to Teachers at Souris

“If only what we use becomes a part of us, why do we teach in school so many facts we’ll never use? Or, if a few may use them why inflict them on every other pupil?”

These questions were asked the teachers of Eastern Kings in the course of a speech delivered on Thursday by the Convention President, Mr. Daniel MacDonald, St. Peter’s.

The fall convention of local teachers, an annual two-day event, concluded Friday in Souris. Approximately fifty-five members of the profession attended.

Mr. Macdonald who is principal of the St. Charles High School used the queries to introduce the theme of his address, “What we don’t use, we lose.”

Developing his subject, Mr. Mac-

Donald told the assembled teachers: “We are aware that unused muscles fail to develop; that unused houses deteriorate; that unused soil produces weeds; that unused ideas are soon forgotten. On the other hand though we learned to count when very young, we can still do so. That is because we continue to count through the years. What we use becomes a habit. What we don’t use, we lose. Why waste precious hours, therefore, learning something we’ll never use?”

Mr. MacDonald said that he did not believe it was wise to teach children only what they might use when they became adults, declaring that this theory was based on the incorrect assumption that “the brain is a cold storage tank from which we may draw, when needed, the facts stored years ago.”

“We learn for the future by learning for the present, and then using that knowledge in the future,” the group president asserted.

### TEACHING OBJECTIVES

Among human accomplishments that should be developed thoroughly by means of our school system, Mr. MacDonald included the following: correct, pleasing speech; the habit of reading; a good knowledge of nutrition; the ability to ‘get along’ with other people; a knowledge of and interest in the proper use of the soil; the ability to budget time; punctuality.

Mr. MacDonald criticized strong-

ly those teachers who he said “commit professional suicide by misinterpretation and misuse of the curriculum.” The president to the ‘teachers’ local also condemned certain school boards for what he termed “facing the past.”

### PARENTS SCOLDED

“Parents,” the convention speaker declared, “who criticize the politics, religion, social characteristics, or social and financial standing of their neighbors are building prejudice and intolerance in their children. Can’t we allow the lights of the good life into our cloudy minds? It will add to our own happiness and immeasurably help the next generation.”

“We need a committee of laymen to act with professionals in all phases of welfare. We need an education that leads us out of our isolation complex. When farmers have this and not until then, the children may want to stay on the farm if it can be made productive.”

“The school as a community centre must develop to keep pace with material improvement,” the speaker concluded.

*“Learn as if you will live forever, live like you will die tomorrow.”*  
*Mahatma Gandhi*



Jenna-Marie Gallant, winner of the PEIRTA Graduation Prize at UPEI.

Jenna-Marie is from Rustico, PEI, and is a Bluefield High grad.

“Growing up, it has been a dream to become a teacher...I am so thankful to wake up each morning knowing I get to work with young students and help them strive for success throughout their educational journey”



Emma Bowers, winner of PEIRTA Entrance Award, UPEI.

Emma is from Kingston, PEI, and is a Bluefield High grad.

“I worked for a year as a mechanical engineer, but very quickly realized that it was not fulfilling my passions, and I knew that teaching would be the profession for me.”



Sophie Mac Donald, winner of PEIRTA Entrance Award, UPEI.

Sophie is from Bridgetown, PEI, and is a Montague High grad.

“..., as the Grand River East 4-H Club’s Overall Leader, I hope that I can be as impactful for future members as the program and leaders were for me. I hope to take this a step further into my future career as a teacher, to encourage youth to push themselves and to embrace any opportunity that comes their way.”

## Membership Cards

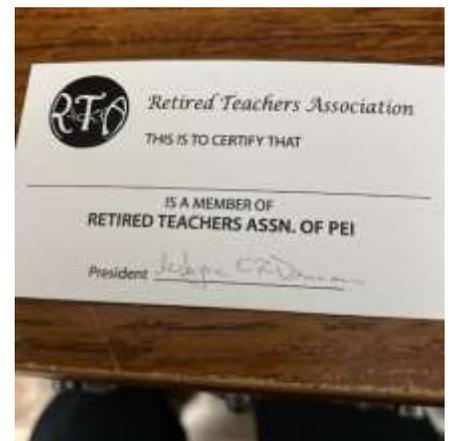
If any member has not received a membership card, please contact the membership chair, Cynthia MacDonald (contact information on page 2) and one will be mailed out to you. You never know when you might use it.



Sarah Bethune is awarded the first PEIRTA Bachelor of Education/ Master of Education \$2000 Entrance Scholarship. A Colonel Gray graduate, she is currently enrolled in a BEd Secondary Level Program at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. Wayne Denman and Cynthia MacDonald made the presentation.

Reports from Sarah’s employers and teachers emphasized her solid work ethic and ability to be flexible, and described her as kind and compassionate with an interest in the well being of others.

“It is so appreciated and I’m so thankful to have the teachers in PEI that I did—they definitely inspired me!”



## What Can We Do for You? ~ by Kimball Blanchard

The PEI Retired Teachers' Association dates back to 1975 when a group of retirees decided that retired teachers should have a voice and should provide fellow members with opportunities for some social activities. Then, almost 15 years ago, some members felt that if the RTA was going to be an effective voice for retirees it was necessary to strengthen the organization through incorporation and by establishing a stable financial base for the newly incorporated body.

The RTA has an active executive that meets monthly, has a representative on the Pension Committee of the Federation, and has a representative on the PEITF Group Insurance Trustees. Both of these bodies deal with issues of considerable importance to RTA members. As well, the organization has made presentations to various Government officials on issues of concern to retirees.

With the organization well established and on a stable financial footing, it may be time to look at ways to extend more benefits to retirees across the province. For the past five years, under the leadership of Wayne Denman and his committee, a golf tournament for RTA members has been held at Eagles Glenn in Cavendish. Plans were discussed this year for an RTA Curling bonspiel in March in Cornwall. The RTA executive approved the plan in principle, but because of COVID the bonspiel has tentatively been rescheduled to

November of this year.

What other areas could be developed? Perhaps a social afternoon of bridge for members; promotion of community theatre; sponsorship of local performers at various venues; scheduled coffee clubs at various sites. Any of these is possible. Some could involve direct costs to the organizers, which could be covered by the RTA with the approval of the Provincial Executive. The Executive could establish a budget item specifically for such events. For example, registration costs for the golf tournament could be subsidized to encourage more members to participate. The cost to book a venue for a lecture or a local entertainer could be covered.

Our members were active and innovative in the classroom; as RTA members, there is no reason why this same energy cannot be directed to make our organization one that extends benefits to our members throughout the province.

If you agree and/or have some ideas along these lines, please contact a member of the executive and have your say.

### **NEXUS Program Update**

*From Canadian Snowbird Association at [www.snowbirds.org/news-releases/](http://www.snowbirds.org/news-releases/)*

As the vast majority of Canadian NEXUS offices remain closed due to an ongoing dispute over legal protections, earlier this week Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a joint statement on the NEXUS program.

In an effort to address the backlog of NEXUS applications, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Canada Border Services Agency have increased the number of interview appointments available to applicants by extending hours of service at enrollment centres in the United States and expanding locations where interviews are conducted on the land border.

In December, the CBSA reopened two NEXUS and FAST enrolment centres at Lansdowne, Ontario (Thousand Islands Bridge) and Fort Erie, Ontario (Peace Bridge).

In addition, a new enrollment option for air travellers is expected to be available by the spring that will include CBSA interviews near certain Canadian airports. Applicants would then conduct a similar interview with a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer at U.S. Customs preclearance before boarding a flight to the United States.

The CSA will provide members with further details on the new enrollment option once information is released by CBSA and CBP.

*NEXUS is a "trusted traveller program" designed to speed up border crossings into Canada and the US for pre-approved travellers.*

*A NEXUS card is valid for five years. There is a \$50 (US) non-refundable application processing fee.*

*FAST (Free and Secure Trade) is a similar program designed to facilitate commercial travel.*

*For more information consult the Canada Border Services Agency on the Gov. ca website.*



Aldene Smallman

We have now entered the depths of February, and though the cold is setting in, the increase of sunlight each day shows the promise of spring. The dark days in December were made more noticeable when accompanied by a lack of snow, but now we dream of brighter days ahead.

School communities in December were so happy to return to the events of the season that had not occurred throughout the pandemic. So many educators have expressed how wonderful it is to have these events happen again! These events require a great amount of work and organization for teachers and administrators. Families attended many holiday concerts, which gave them a glimpse of what educators do to support students in their educational journey beyond the classroom experience. Many students enjoyed Christmas dinners prepared for them at schools this year, and holiday floats were even created by some schools for community parades. Many school staffs supported families during this challenging holiday season to spread cheer as families continually cope with rising inflation and financial hardships. These are more examples of school staffs going above and beyond!

Educators continue to volunteer in an effort to support students and provide opportunities for personal growth and engagement. The school

sporting events throughout our province since September have been many! Coaches and volunteers have dedicated many hours, providing further evidence of the care and compassion within our school environments. For these reasons and many more, the work of educators is crucial. Students and their families appreciate the time and efforts put forth and witness daily the service and dedication of educators in this province.

One of my most pleasurable duties in this position is having an opportunity to present teacher of the month awards each month. The Federation partners with the radio station Hot 105.5 to recognize educators. There are so many educators who deserve recognition for their hard work and commitment to this profession. When this recognition comes from the students themselves, it is even more of an honour for

educators. There is so much joy in these classrooms when students have an opportunity to celebrate their teachers and administrators. I continue to be in awe when I visit schools and witness the challenges within classrooms while educators endeavour to reach their students in so many creative and intuitive ways! The classroom is evolving! As I get closer to retirement, I am amazed at how things have changed throughout my career. However, what is still so empowering and integral is the teacher who engages



**Retirees**

**GIVE YOUR INSURANCE PREMIUMS A WHOLE NEW LOOK.**

Johnson Insurance has worked closely with the PEITF to provide access to helpful services and products that take care of your home and car insurance needs. Plus, you'll have access to:

up to **\$800.00** in savings when you bundle home & car insurance\*

YOUR GROUP CODE FOR DISCOUNTS : 65

Call Johnson today at **1.855.616.6708**

Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation

**JOHNSON INSURANCE**  
HOME-CAR

Johnson Insurance is a trademark of Johnson Inc. ("Johnson" or "JI"), a licensed insurance intermediary. Home and car policies underwritten exclusively, and claims handled, by Unifund Assurance Company ("UAC"). Described coverage and benefits applicable only to policies underwritten by UAC in NL/NS/NB/PEI. JI and UAC share common ownership. Eligibility requirements, limitations, exclusions, additional costs and/or restrictions may apply and/or vary based on province/territory. \*As of March 1, 2021, \$800 combined savings available on home and car insurance if the following discounts are applicable: conviction free, multi-line (home and auto), multi-vehicle, long term, member (home and auto), select in NL, NS, PEI, and winter tire in NB, NL, NS. Dollar savings may vary otherwise.

in thousands of interactions daily in an effort to connect with students and make impactful impressions on their daily lives!

This fall proved very busy for the Federation in preparation for arbitration. The Federation participated in arbitration procedures in November as negotiations ended without a contract. Mid-January saw teachers awarded a contract by the arbitrator with an increase of 9.25 over three years which runs through the 2023-2024 school year. The previous a greement expired in July 2021.

We remain concerned with substitute shortages as we battle sickness and infection rates within school populations. These absences tend to increase in the winter months, and we continue to monitor this situation.

We appreciate your efforts as retirees and continued support with this and other issues. We hope the longer days are met with warmer weather and opportunities to enjoy our beautiful province or take in some of the Canada Games.

Take care.

### Address Changes

If your address changes, or if you know anyone who has had a change of address and/or is not receiving this newsletter, please have him or her notify our membership chair (contact info on page 2). Your mailing address must include a civic address and/or PO Box number, and a postal code.

## Advocacy has an impact...

*If you want to have an impact, start and then don't stop advocating. Sign a petition or send an email. Better yet, mail a letter—handwritten is best—place a phone call or set up a meeting. Blind copy your own MLA, the premier, the opposition critic. Remember, you do not have to be in possession of every fact or offer a detailed solution—that is the government's job. What you need to do is, politely and professionally, tell your story and share your concern as a voter and citizen."*

Taken from "Advocacy has an impact, though it may be unseen," *ATA News*: May 19, 2020 Volume 54, Number 13.



Which are you?

## PEITF Travel Insurance

Our out-of-province travel insurance plan has a 90-day medical stability clause. This means that if you have a pre-existing medical condition, it must be considered medically stable for 90 days prior to your departure date if you are to be covered in the event of a medical emergency related to this condition while you are travelling.

A pre-existing condition is considered stable if the member, in the 90 days before the departure date, has not:

1. Been treated or evaluated for new symptoms or related conditions;
2. Had symptoms that increased in frequency or severity, or examination findings indicate the condition has worsened;
3. Been prescribed a new treatment or change in treatment for the condition.
4. Been admitted to a hospital for the condition; or
5. Been awaiting new treatments or tests regarding the medical condition (does not include routine tests).

Number 3 generally does not include reductions in medication due to improvement in a condition, or regular changes in medication as part of an established treatment plan—but each case must be reviewed individually. A change shortly before departure, e.g., with a subsequent reaction, might present problems. So if you have any doubt, call Medavie Blue Cross at 1-800-667-4511, Travel Department, for clarification if you are planning to travel outside PEI.

