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**Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités**

**The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers**

**OPTIONS**

**The Newsletter of ACER-CART**

**Winter 2018 Editor: Martin Higgs**

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

**Brian Kenny**

 **Identifying ACER-CART People**



Since I no longer have to dress professionally every day, I can often be mistaken for Boo Radley, from the novel, “To Kill a Mockingbird”. And sometimes, our granddaughters become incapacitated with laughter at my pathetic technological skills.

Truthfully, I am more comfortable with a Benedictine onion skin than I am with Facebook or Twitter and probably most children today navigate I pads as easily as we used to put together 2 soup cans with 40 feet of string and pretended we could make long distance calls.

Still, people in ACER-CART are not Neolithic fossils chipped out of an alpine glacier, nor are we a tribe of foragers eating pine beetles and swamp moss. A lot of us are older than some of Picasso’s paintings, but we are not Buster Keaton or Granny Clampett.

We are a dynamic, caring gestalt of 140,000 members whose 13 Associations across Canada are the pillars that ensure our identity. We aim to be dependable, striving to climb Mount Logan, not with speed, but deliberation.

For us, the word, “retired” is oxymoronic. With endless synergy, ACER-CART members maintain that culture of caring and strive to surpass, not others, but ourselves.

All 13 Associations try to grab the attention of provincial and federal governments, to encourage necessary and positive change for seniors, but that goes about as fast as a barge ride on a canal through Schleswig-Holstein.

Nevertheless, we are all about carpe diem. We open ourselves to the possibilities in front of us, because, not only do our members matter, but so do others, including our kids and our grandkids.

**ACER-CART REPORT - Eastern Region, Bill Berryman**

**RTO - NSTU**

On October 11,2017 Minister of Education Zach Churchill announced that the government of Nova Scotia was hiring Dr. Avis Glaze, a well-known educational consultant from Ontario, to provide an administrative review of the Nova Scotia educational system.

On December 29, 2017 Dr. Glaze presented “Raise The Bar – A Coherent and Responsive Education Administrative System for Nova Scotia” to the Minister of Education. Dr. Glaze attended a news conference on January 22, 2018 when she made the document public and answered questions on the 22 recommendations.

On the following day the Minister of Education, without showing the document to fellow caucus members and staff at the Department of Education, announced the government was accepting the Glaze report in its entirety and would be preparing legislation to affect changes in the Education Act in the spring session of the Legislative Assembly.

Of the 22 recommendations the following 5 brought outrage from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU):

1. Eliminate the 7 English School Boards and replace them with a 15 member Provincial Advisory Council appointed by the Minister of Education. The province wide French School Board would remain due to federal government Charter rights.

2. Remove principals and vice-principals from the NSTU and into a new professional organization. Seniority and pension benefits would not be impacted and there was an option for those administrators who might want to return to the classroom and NSTU.

3. Create a provincial College of Educators, an independent body to license, govern, discipline and regulate the teaching profession, helping to improve public confidence in the education system across the province.

4. Ensure teachers have the mobility and choice to work in any region in Nova Scotia by removing barriers in the 7 regional collective agreements while maintaining seniority rights.

5. Create an independent Student Progress Assessment Office to develop high-quality student assessments, reporting directly to the public on province-wide results and ensuring the assessments are aligned with the curriculum.

RTO was invited to work with NSTU on a campaign to have government reject the Glaze Report. Teachers were still smarting and upset from the previous school year disastrous rejection of three tentative agreements which led to a one day strike and the imposition of a four year collective agreement though Bill 75. A very impressive grassroots mobilization came into play very quickly with active and retired teachers attending rallies, meeting their MLA’s, writing letters and signing petitions. The NSTU provided written material for parents showing that the recommendations would not benefit their children in the classroom as these recommendations would destroy the collegial model of principal and teachers working collaboratively and cooperatively.

The action culminated in an illegal strike vote on February 20, 2018 when 82.5% of active teachers voted to strike and possibly face a $300 fine for each day on strike. On the following day the Premier offered to meet with the NSTU President and indicated he was prepared to make reasonable compromises before introducing legislation.

The following week the government introduced Bill 72 – The Education Reform Act. The Premier did in fact compromise by deciding not to go through with a College of Educators and Student Progress Assessment Office. The government eliminated the 7 English School Boards effective March 31, 2018 and made some changes to the position of school administrators in the NSTU.

The Act established the Public School Administrators Association of Nova Scotia in which school administrators will pay dues, instead of being part of the NSTU. The Association is not a bargaining unit, but can negotiate and enter into memorandum of understanding respecting terms and conditions of employment. Members will have access to all NSTU benefits (for which they will also continue to pay Union dues), but will no longer operate under a contract. The Act guarantees that school administrators will receive the same raises as teachers, but also allows the government to pay them more. The Act forbids members of the Association the right to unionize, take job action or file formal grievances. In two years Association members have the right to evaluate the model and seek alternatives if so wished.

On March 1, 2018 NSTU President Liette Doucet announced that changes proposed in Bill 72 had done enough to avert job action. She indicated that while school administrators would keep their affiliation with the NSTU, the collegial model would now be damaged and lead to conflict in the schools. She also stated that teachers were genuinely fearful of the chaos that would ensue due to the elimination of the 7 English School Boards.

On Thursday March 8, 2018, one day before the beginning of March Break the Liberal majority passed Bill 72 with a vote of 25-21.

My prediction is that there will be a shortage of school administrators next year and non-educators will be hired as “managers” of the schools. As well, I predict an interest in forming Charter Schools in selected parts of the province beginning in 2020 due to the Education Reform Act.

**RTANL**

Doreen Noseworthy reported that her association is very concerned over the privatization of health care, contrary to the provisions of the Canada Health Act. Her members feel that without some accountability or transparency that money from the Health Accord could end in private businesses. She also indicated meetings are planned with government with the hope there will be increased funding for home care and nursing home care in the upcoming budget. She indicated that she will be attending the Canadian Labour Congress town hall meeting on the National Pharmacare Plan on March 20, 2018.

**PEIRTA**

Members continue to lobby their Members of Parliament on a National Pharmacare Plan and are becoming very frustrated in the lack of negotiations between the Pharmacists Association and the P.E.I. government on extending the 30 maximum allotment per prescription to 90 days.

**NBSRT**

An Ad-Hoc Committee on Membership has developed an extensive report on how to get more members involved in the organization. One of the recommendations is universal suffrage for all contested positions on the Executive. The Scholarship Committee is recommending two $2,500 scholarships at the provincial level to deserving graduates from New Brunswick secondary schools. Members are gearing up for a September Provincial election and are starting to questions how the $75 million Healthy Seniors Pilot will be allocated.

**SERFNB**

Members are becoming concerned about the purchase of community based nursing homes by the private sector and the potential increase in costs and a concern in the francophone region about the lack of bilingual ambulance paramedics.

**QPARSE**

Members continued to be concerned about the privatization of health care in Quebec, without interference by the provincial government. They want a National Pharmacare Plan and are hopeful the federal government will implement such a plan as soon as possible.

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**ACER-CART Report - ONTARIO -** Martin Higgs

RTO/ERO has now been registered as a corporation under the Canada Not For Profit Corporations Act. The current Provincial Executive is now the Board of Directors with the Chair and Vice-Chair as its officers. The Spring Senate in May will be the first Annual Meeting of the new corporation when Senators will elect nine people as Directors. They will also elect from among themselves, four representatives to the Nominations Committee. These people, along with three Directors will determine qualifications required for future Directors and also nominate people to become members and Chairs of RTO/ERO Advisory Committees.

Our Provincial Executive / Board of Directors continue to work on our transition to the new form of governance. While there will be almost no impact felt by individual members, our District Constitutions will have to undergo some modifications. Also future Senates will be different with hopefully more opportunity for Senators and Observers to participate in discussions and give advice on various issues. One such issue to be discussed at our May Senate will be to open up discussion on the RTO/ERO brand.

One of the difficulties RTO/ERO was facing was the teacher affiliates attempting to restrict us from advertising our Retirement Planning Workshops in schools. Our President (now Chair) and Executive Director have had a number of meetings and obtained the support of the Ontario Directors of Education and the Catholic Trustees organization to distribute our information. Recent Retirement Planning Workshops have been tremendously successful and we look forward to even better attendance at upcoming RPW’s next fall.

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**ACER-CART Western Region -** Gerry Tiede

**RTAM**

Worked on a joint submission with MTS in response to the provincial government’s pension benefits review recommendations.

1. Continuing contact meetings with politicians—Education minister-Ian Wishart in Feb. ,  Liberal leader Doug Lamont on March 22, NDP leader Wab Kinew on March 20.
2. Continuing the planning of a “Meet and Greet” at the Legislature on April 10.
3. Continuing working toward having a retired teacher appointed to the TRAF Board.
4. Monitoring the government’s decision as to the dispersal of the restricted surplus and the status of our COLA as Bill 45 comes to an end.
5. Continuing lobbying to have RTAM legislated as the official voice for retired teachers.
6. Monitoring the status of Bill C-27, as well as budget developments federally and provincially.
7. Preparing for our AGM in May.
8. Solidifying our relationship with MTS. Our March Board of Directors meeting will be held at McMaster House in March at the invitation of the Manitoba Teacher’s Society.
9. Attempting to keep information to our members current through KIT and the website.

**BCRTA**

* The issue of some kind of **pre-retirement membership option** to introduce people to RT organizations. Has anyone done this?
* The issue of membership of non-public system educators
* Alberta experience with EdVantage. Is this a viable alternative to individual Members’ Advantage (Affinity) Programs?
* Provision for members to opt out of mailings from Advantage Partners.
* Transition to an Executive Director staff position.
* Updating our expense policies.
* Updating our investment strategies.
* Continued development of our insurance programs.
* Actuarial valuation of our pension plans expected to show a significant surplus. Effect on pensioners?

**Saskatchewan RTA**

The following activities and initiatives have taken place since our last report in November, 2017:

* A new three-year agreement has been reached with our extended health benefits and dental benefits provider. There are challenges, which we understand are also being felt by other plans, in particular regarding the price of pharmaceuticals, increased use of certain classes of drugs such as heart medications, and the usage of paramedicals.
* Our annual budget is finalized and in preparation for presentation to the STS AGM in May.
* A membership campaign is underway to attract new members to the STS and to its benefit plans. As membership in both is voluntary, and the growth of the membership is important to the STS, this is an important ongoing issue.
* Preparations are underway for the STS Annual General Meeting which will be held May 8 to 10, 2018 in Saskatoon.
* Other factors affecting STS Benefit Plans:
	+ Government dropping coverage for several programs including hearing aid services, CPAP machines and equipment, etc.
	+ Beginning in June 2017 the Provincial government had imposed the 6% PST to insurance premiums and health benefit premiums. This amounted to huge costs to our plans, first, in gearing up in personnel, communications and computer programming for the collection and handling of this tax, and secondly, in the cost to members and to the plan.
	+ After the election of Premier Moe, the government has reversed the imposition of this tax back to its inception in June, 2017.
	+ So now, the entire process, after the government clarifies timelines and procedures, must be reversed and that process will again cause addition financial hardship to the STS.

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**Pension Committee Report – March 2018** Gerry Tiede, Committee Chair

BCRTA members have received many communications on Bill C-27 and we have had significant numbers of contacts with MPs although we have not reached our goal of 25 contacts for each MP. We have also met with the Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC, at their request, but they have failed to contribute anything of substance to the efforts so far.

JoAnn Lauber has spoken with Herb John of the National Pensioners Federation whose contribution seemed to be limited to the inclusion of their logo onto our communications.

JoAnn also spoke to Seniors Voice during a conference call that ACER-CART participated in. They had heard of advocacy action occurring in B.C. around C- 27 by the Retired Teachers. Sayward Montague, Advocacy Director of the National Association of Federal Retirees, reported that they had sent 30,000 emails to MPs. Everyone agreed that the issues inherent in Bill C-27 would not be disappearing, though they appear at a standstill because of Morneau ‘s current difficulties.

BCRTA’s Board is meeting this week and by the time of our phone call I expect to report to you that we will be undertaking the development of an on-line petition against Bill C-27. If that happens, we will share that action with ACER-CART affiliates as well as Seniors’ Voice.

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**Political Advocacy Committee Report –** Bill Berryman

At the conclusion of the ACER-CART Annual General Meeting in Ottawa on June 2-3, 2017 President Brian Kenny proposed four priorities for the organization in 2017 – 2018. One of the priorities was “to develop strategies and produce resources for retired teachers and seniors supporting a one Canadian purchaser national pharmaceutical formulary”.

**Background**

Canada is the only developed country in the world with a universal health care program that doesn’t include a universal prescription drug plan. We have the second highest prescription drug costs in the world next to the United States. Canada has widely varying prescription drug coverage and uneven access to prescription drugs, and often Canadians pay different rates for the same medication, depending on where they live. The idea of a nationally funded prescription drug program was recommended as the second half of a universal health care program in the Royal Commission on Healthcare report in 1964.

Canada is not benefiting from the current system, but pharmaceutical and private insurance companies are. Pharmaceutical companies can charge higher prices for commonly used drugs because they are selling to so many buyers. Private insurance companies benefit by charging employers, unions and employees to administer private drug insurance plans.

In a study entitled Pharmacare 2020: The Future of Drug Coverage In Canada it was revealed that New Zealand’s national drug program allows it to bring prices down by bargaining with drug companies for the entire country. An example of cost savings is the brand name anti-cholesterol drug Lipitor. For a year’s supply in New Zealand the cost would be $15 versus a minimum $811 in Canada. A year’s supply of the generic version of Lipitor would cost $140 in Canada, more than nine times greater than the New Zealand price tag.

The only place where prescriptions are covered for all Canadians is in a hospital. Every provincial and territorial government provides different coverage for its citizens. Most subsidize the cost of medications for vulnerable Canadians, such as those over 65 years old and recipients of social assistance and disability benefits. Many also provide catastrophic coverage, but only for those facing the most astronomical prescription costs.

We need a national pharmacare program that covers all Canadians! One in five Canadians pay out of pocket for their medications, either because they don’t have a prescription drug plan or because they have a plan that doesn’t cover the full cost of medications they need. It is estimated that one in ten Canadians do not fill prescriptions because they can’t afford them.

Canada needs to combine the purchasing power of all governments (federal, provincial, territorial) under one Canadian purchaser in support of a national pharmaceutical formulary. The Pharmacare 2020 study indicated that the combined purchasing power of a national pharmacare program would save from $4 billion to $11 billion a year in prescriptions. Further by using evidence and information systems to guide drug coverage and prescribing there would be a savings of $5 billion a year by reducing the problems of drug overuse, underuse and misuse.

**The Next Step**

In 2015 Angus Reid polled Canadians on this issue and an overwhelming majority of 91 percent said they believe our public health care system should include a universal prescription drug plan. Several national health care commissions have recommended the same, along with the Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Federation of Nurses Union, Canadian Doctors for Medicare, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Canadian Health Coalition, Council of Canadians and the Canadian Labour Congress.

What is now necessary is the political will of all governments to provide a one Canadian purchaser national pharmaceutical formulary. At the Council of Federation meetings over the past three years all provincial and territorial governments have stated categorically that they are in favour of a national pharmacare program. At the present time the federal government covers the costs of prescription drugs for members of the Armed Forces, the RCMP, Veterans and Indigenous peoples – approximately fifty percent of the total costs of prescription drugs in Canada. Why is the federal government resisting the implementation of a national pharmacare program?

It is now our responsibility to lobby Members of Parliament and inform them of the tremendous cost savings of such a plan and complete the unfinished business of our national medicare system. We need the Trudeau government to commit to the implementation of a national publicly administered universal prescription drug plan for every Canadian in every province and territory.

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# **Seniors Voice/Voix des Aîné - JoAnne Lauber**

# This coalition is a collaboration of ACER-CART with the National Pensioners’ Federation (NPF), the National Association of Federal Retirees (NAFR), the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC), [Coalition citoyenne pour mieux vivre et vieillir](https://ftq.qc.ca/syndicats-affilies/coalition-citoyenne-pour-mieux-vivre-et-vieillir-c2v2il-faut-voir-a-ce-que-les-gens-vivent-mieux-et-vivent-bien-surtout/)/ [Citizen Coalition for Better Living and Aging](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=search&rurl=translate.google.ca&sl=fr&sp=nmt4&u=http://scfp.qc.ca/121269-2/&xid=17259,15700002,15700022,15700105,15700124,15700149,15700168,15700173,15700186,15700201&usg=ALkJrhiUOigScv_-KP94enIJSlmOiVNK8Q) (C2V2), as well as the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE). And with the understanding that all of the affiliates or branches of these associations are also a part of it!

A main objective of this coalition is to have October 1, the International Day of Older Persons, recognized officially (declared formally) across Canada in all provinces, cities and communities. It was felt that many events had been held in 2017 but that news of them has not reached our websites.

Groups of seniors in Canada who set up events marking the International day of Older Persons in 2017 are urged to post their photos and brief comments onto one of the Coalition’s two Websites: <https://seniorsvoice.org> or [voixdesaines.org](http://voixdesaines.org/). Or send them to Deb Duffy: DDuffy@nupge.ca for posting.

It was noted that many groups other than those involved with Seniors Voice strive to recognize the October 1 Day, these groups including International Longevity Centre of Canada and a Tai Chi group. The Steering Committee is eager to embrace groups that have goals in common and ask seniors groups across Canada to identify them.

NAFR and RTO/ERO have begun thinking about planning for October 1, 2019 in the context of the federal election that month. They want to develop a platform for seniors with a simple message. They thought that it would be used with candidates. Everyone liked the idea and wanted to see it work. JoAnn noted that in 2015 ACER-CART had done a booklet that was used to question candidates. It had worked well.

NAFR and RTO/ERO are planning joint action in the Ontario election with a focus on health care. They were open to the participation of other groups and would share messaging. This would not be a Seniors Vote undertaking as we are focused on the federal level. There could be a link to web site that might be established for this campaign.

It was agreed that along with the efforts around October 1, we would stay with our 4 founding policy areas: Health, Pensions, Housing and Inequality. Later in the discussion it was decided to add a very specific demand for a Minister for Seniors. ( Note: The Conservatives had Alice Wong as Minister of State for Seniors. The Liberals have set up no such position; instead, the Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development attends to matters dealing with seniors.)

Bill C-27: discussion ensued, with everyone in agreement that the establishment of target benefit plans is still on the horizon federally, the only question being “when”. Seniors Voice is on board for supporting any further action related to Bill C-27.