

# DCRA News

Spring, 2008, Issue 11

DURHAM COLLEGE RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

## Mission Statement

The Durham College Retirees' Association is an organization whose function is to provide members with companionship, pertinent information, opportunities for service, and response to their concerns.



## President's Message

Jim Anderson

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Spring has arrived with all its excitement and the Retirees' Association starts another year of activities. The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary homecoming weekend May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> was a success for the alumni and retirees who attended. Many alumni returned with their spouses and young families, lots of strollers. Some had children attending the College right now. I met one alumni who has retired! Student number 6 showed up and he and Herb Kirkconnell had quite a time reminiscing. Leather jackets from 68 and 69 still fit and were in good shape.

Thanks to the retirees who acted as greeters and guides, the committee appreciated your support.

The Extended Health Benefit Report will be emailed the week of May20th. Printed copies will be available at the June 10 Annual General Meeting. If neither of these methods is suitable for you, please contact the Association and a printed copy will be mailed.

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Upcoming Events	1	Jasper Holliday (Randi's husband)	Bev Balenko	
New Members	1	Beverly Helmer (Dave's wife)	Doreen Gainforth	
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## THE AUTHOR, JOHN GREEN

John Green was born and raised in a small Saskatchewan farming community where he went to school and worked as a part-time news and feature writer for a local radio station.

At 18 he left Saskatchewan to attend Ryerson University where he studied broadcasting and journalism. He returned to western Canada in 1967 to begin work as a writer with both CBC and CTV affiliate stations in Saskatoon, Edmonton and Winnipeg.

In 1971 he became Executive Producer for Educational Television at Red River Community College, Department of Colleges and University Affairs in Winnipeg. In 1974 he received his certificate in adult education from Red River College and Central Michigan University. Shortly after, his first children's book, *There Are Trolls* was published and a first screen play, *The Bargain* was produced by Global Television.

In 1976, he moved with his family to Oshawa to begin his second career as an English teacher on the faculty of Journalism and Public Relations at Durham College. About this time he returned to summer studies in Media Law at the University of Western Ontario.

In 1984, John's second children's book, *There's a Dragon in My Closet* was published and became a Canadian best seller. In 1989 and 1990, two more children's books came out, *Alice and the Birthday Giant* and *Junk-Pile Jennifer*, both of which received Canadian Children's Book Centre Gold Seal Awards. *Alice and the Birthday Giant* has since been re-released in a new Flight Two Reader edition published by Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

In 1991, his first junior novel, *The House That Max Built* appeared followed by a second novel, *The Curse of Jonathan Matthew*, a ghost story set in rural England.

Mr. Green retired from Durham College in 1999 and has since published children's material in a variety of magazines and newspapers. He lives in Oshawa where he has just completed *The Eight Lost Notes*, a Children's Fantasy for Orchestra and Narrator. The work will see its premiere with the Oshawa Durham Symphony Orchestra. A second story, *Harry's Hippo*, also for narrator and orchestra, is currently in production in France. He has also written a number of stage scripts. His latest, *You Can't Dance to Mozart*, a romantic comedy, premiered at Class-Act Dinner Theatre in Whitby during October, 2007. A new play, *Is There Anybody Out There?* is due for completion early in 2008.

## THE EIGHT LOST NOTES

**Book by John F. Green**  
**Music by Laurent Melin**

On May 21 at the Oshawa GM Centre, maestro Marco Parisotto and the Oshawa Durham Symphony will perform the world premiere of a new children's fantasy for narrator and orchestra by John Green.

*The Eight Lost Notes*, a book set to music two years ago by French composer Laurent Melin, is the story of Niklas, a boy whose father buys him a new piano in the hope that his son will one day be able to play the music of the great masters. While practicing his scales Niklas stumbling fingers seem unable to land on the right notes. In frustration, he plays the notes over and over until...eight of the notes simply disappear! Fearing he has broken his father's wonderful new gift, Niklas runs away from home. He soon meets Gustav, a great conductor, just returned with his orchestra from a world tour. Thus begins a great adventure, an incredible journey that takes Niklas and Maestro Gustav through the midnight streets and alleyways of Vienna, ending at an old music factory, in search of the eight lost notes.

Green's text is a story of patience, giving and the love of music narrated by the writer to composer Melin's wonderful score—a mix of familiar themes and new music all intended to introduce children to the joy of listening to a live symphony orchestra.

There will be two performances of *The Eight Lost Notes*: one at 9:30 a.m. and the other following at 11:30 a.m. Tickets are available on line at [www.odso.ca](http://www.odso.ca).

## VACATION STORIES FROM OUR MEMBERS

### Merle Amodeo

I attended a two week poetry workshop in El Noviciado, Chile in January and then spent February in Penang, Malaysia visiting my brother and sister-in-law. My picture was taken in January in Chile while I was reading a poem to the group.

ciao,  
Merle Amodeo



### Audrey Durling

We travel in our motorhome in the summer when we can. This past summer we made three trips.

First to Winnipeg to visit our daughter after stopping off in Oshawa to visit with our son.

After coming back home to Nova Scotia, we embarked on a trip to Newfoundland. We enjoyed it over there, the locals are fine people and treat you great. The highlight of the trip to the rock was a visit with Cala and Jim in Placentia.

After coming back from Newfoundland we made a trip to Ontario and had a nice visit with Cala, Alice and Merle whom I worked with at Durham.

Audrey Durling



## Durham College—40th Anniversary



The painting, created by Ron Backwell, was a collage representing the evolution of the campus.

## RETIREE SUMMONED TO PARLIAMENT HILL

Retired Director of Facilities Management, Brian Beatson, appeared as a Witness before the House of Commons Committee regarding Bill S-215 on April 8th. Bill S-215, 'An Act to Preserve Heritage Lighthouses', passed 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading in The House of Commons on March 11<sup>th</sup> and was referred to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Committee for further study.

The Committee was seeking input from various community associations and non-profit groups from across Canada with a passion for lighthouses. Brian was there as an executive member of the Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association, a small but enthusiastic non-profit group, that takes care of the Cove Island lightstation. With satellites, GPS systems and new technologies, lighthouses have become relics of a bygone era and are no longer essential to marine navigation, so the government is divesting itself of these financial liabilities.

Meeting with Larry Miller, MP  
Sponsor of Bill S-215



*"Being present at the meeting with Government and Opposition MP's from various Ministries was an excellent opportunity to see the legislative process at work and after statements by each Witness, the floor was opened for questions from Committee members,"* said Brian. *"Things are proceeding quickly now; already they have conducted a clause by clause review and sent the Bill back to The House for 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading. If all goes well, the Bill can become law by the end of June,"* he added.



Celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this Fall, Cove Island lighthouse, one of Canada's hidden iconic jewels, was the first of six Imperial light towers built in the late 1850's by John Brown, a renowned Scottish builder. Cove Island is located about 8km offshore from Tobermory, itself nestled at the very top of the Bruce Peninsula. Unfortunately this beautiful lighthouse is not visible from the mainland and is difficult to get to as there are no scheduled boat tours. The lighthouse is visible from the Chi-Cheemaun ferry that makes the crossing from Tobermory to South Baymouth on Manitoulin Island eight times each day from June to September.

The other Imperial light towers, also built by John Brown, are located at Point Clarke, Chantry Island, Nottawasaga, Christian Island and Griffith Island; a smaller lighthouse of the same design sits underneath the Burlington Skyway bridge. An association of the Bruce County lighthouse groups is planning "The Year of the Light" and special events will be held throughout the summers of 2008 and 2009 to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary for each lighthouse as their big birthdays come due.

Brian has been involved for many years in the Tobermory area and was the first President of The Friends of Fathom Five Park (now Fathom Five National Marine Park). He muses that he made a deal with the Queen since the co-signer to the Agreement he signed with the Provincial Government back in 1984, was "The Queen in Right of Ontario" – an interesting piece of trivia. Visitors in Tobermory today can walk around the harbour and view some of the shipwrecks from the boardwalk, rest at several seating patios or take a short hike on a bricked trail through the bush to the Big Tub lighthouse. All of this work was completed by volunteers from "The Friends" using materials provided by the township, a win-win partnership for all.

For about twelve years Brian was also a volunteer at the Diver Registration Centre in Fathom Five Park, providing safety information to scuba divers, general information to tourists and visitors and was often seen in the Park patrol boat or as a volunteer tender in the hyperbaric chamber, used for diving emergencies, at the medical centre. Diving was his first association with the crystal clear waters of Georgian Bay, and he became

a certified diver in 1975; a Divemaster in 1976 and an Instructor in 1977. He then taught scuba diving as an adult continuing education program at Seneca College for 15 years. In addition he was a volunteer for 25 years with the Ontario Underwater Council and Underwater Canada, the largest consumer dive show in North America and was the first recipient of the Rolex Award for Volunteer Excellence in 1987.

When he is not working as a conference planning consultant or volunteering for Durham Community Foundation's "Hole in Won" golf fundraising event, or anytime he is not playing his bagpipes with Durham College or Uxbridge Legion pipe bands, he will most likely be found on Cove Island painting, making plumbing or electrical repairs, fixing the water pump or an engine or cutting grass. *"When something needs repaired, you start to think and act like the lightkeepers did; unless you have the right tools or materials, you quickly learn to find creative solutions to every problem; after all you can't just drive to Canadian Tire to buy what you need."*

He likes nothing better than playing his bagpipes for the occasional tour boat that pauses off shore or climbing the 105 steps to the top of the tower at the end of a busy day to play them as the ferry goes by or as the sun sinks slowly over Lake Huron. There is a pure magic to the hauntingly beautiful sound as it echoes off the nearby islands or mingles with the forlorn call of an occasional loon offshore.

The Cove Island lightstation, which is a fully functional aid to navigation, is one of the few remaining complete lightstations in North America. The massive fog horn is one of a handful of class 'CC' diaphones known to exist and it is operated by two large diesel engines, air compressors and a pair of massive air storage tanks that alternately fill and discharge.

Even in the densest fog, the sound carried for miles across the waters of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, warning mariners of the many submerged reefs with its distinctive two-tone 'grunt' sound. The lightstation is also home to a modern weather station which transmits data via satellite to Environment Canada meteorologists. *"Our eventual plan is to refurbish the fog alarm system and make it operational once more as a working part of the entire lightstation so that visitors can experience and will be able to appreciate part of Canada's marine heritage,"* said Brian.

Overall the Association's plan is to restore all aspects of the lightstation to their original operational condition and to create a living museum where visitors can see and experience first hand the life of the lightkeepers and their families who worked in the harsh environment of the Canadian wilderness. There were no roads of any kind on the peninsula when the lightstation was being built and the only means of transportation was by boat from Owen Sound, Midland or Kincardine.

*"Ultimately we envisage developing eco-tourism holidays where guests could spend a few days, a weekend or a week living on the island exploring its unique flora and fauna; the island is home to a number of rare snakes including the Massasauga rattlesnake. To experience the island is to experience the weather which is highly changeable. Conditions can change at the slightest whim of Mother Nature, going from a flat mirror calm surface to raging winds and 3 metre seas in a mere 20 minutes."* "I have been there and experienced that on several occasions." Brian added. In addition, guests would be able to take on the duties of the lightkeeper and his assistant and help maintain the buildings and property in first class condition.

If you do manage to land on Cove Island or see it from the ferry, you will quickly realize why such lighthouses must be protected. There is a sense of wonder and reverence as we learn about our lighthouses. They laid the foundation of our country, and encourage us to want to share these experiences with our families and ensure that future generations can also benefit from them.

Lighthouses symbolize our national identity and characterize the way we see ourselves and how others see us as a nation. Through our efforts, we demonstrate to the world a thoughtful, caring attitude toward the national treasures so richly bestowed upon Canadians. The inspiration and knowledge we derive from these special heritage places more than justify our efforts to protect and commemorate them.

The motto of the Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association is: **'Preserving the Legacy and the Lore for Future Generations'**. That goal is not attainable without the help of volunteers who are always needed and very much appreciated. Any skill set can be put to good use to benefit the lighthouse and our group activities. No matter your skills or talents - or even limitations of your time, there is always something important that

YOU can help with when it comes to lighthouse preservation. All it takes for you to make a real and lasting difference is your willingness to step forward and say, "I want to help!" Whether your interest or talents are in lighthouse restoration, teaching others about our lighthouse heritage, fundraising to keep the lights shining or sharing the message of lighthouse preservation out and about in the community, there is no shortage of ways for you to help our lights and meet new friends who share your passion.

*"Retirement is about doing what you want when you want and keeping busy doing what you love to do. Think young; be young; stay young. People ask me, "How are you today?" and I reply, "Not bad for a young man! ... and that's how I feel."* says Brian. Good words to take to heart.

For more information about the lighthouse or the Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association, please check our website at [www.coveisland.ca](http://www.coveisland.ca) (another activity that Brian does in his spare time) or contact the [lightkeeper@coveisland.ca](mailto:lightkeeper@coveisland.ca)

## Extended Health Insurance Comparison

In the fall of 2007 the Retirees' Association was asked by a member to compare the benefits and costs of extended health insurance for the **Retirees 65 and over** as provided by Sun Life and OHIP plus the Ontario Drug Benefit Plans. A committee chaired by Donna Crawford with members Brenda Jackson and Michelle Nichols was formed to analyze the data.

In order to provide a comparison with another source of insurance, the plan offered by the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) was included.

The Committee collected and tabulated 12 pages of health and dental expenses and the manner in which each plan covered them.

Sun Life offers 3 levels of coverage 1, 2 and 3. Plan 1 is the most inclusive and was used for comparison with the other two. Plan 1 requires a separate dental plan while Plan 2 includes dental and both are included in the dental analysis.

In addition to Sun Life and RTO, many other insurance companies offer extended health insurance. In general these plans are similar to Sun Life and RTO.

A copy of the report will be available at the Annual General Meeting, June 10<sup>th</sup>. If unable to attend and you would like a copy, please call Donna Crawford 905 720-2212 or email [donnalea.c@rogers.com](mailto:donnalea.c@rogers.com). Please include your mailing address.

The Durham College Retirees' Association makes no recommendation on the course of action taken by any person in regard to health care insurance. It is imperative that each Retiree check out his/her personal needs before deciding which plan to choose.

Please contact the appropriate source/company for up-to-date rates and coverage details.