

# RETIREMENTS THAT WORK



Enise Olding

Carol Baird-Krul

info@drassociates.ca

Carol and Enise are the creators of a series of pre-retirement and post-retirement planning workshops: *Transition to Retirement: The Uncharted Course*®, *Recently Retired: Charting a New Course*® and *Ideas ... Enhanced and Advanced*®, and authors of *Transition to Retirement: The Uncharted Course*. Previous articles on retirement may be viewed in back issues at [www.CanadianTeacherMagazine.com](http://www.CanadianTeacherMagazine.com).

by Enise Olding and Carol Baird-Krul

In the last three articles featuring educators who have taken on the challenges of different careers, businesses or ventures after retirement, we have learned about their reasons for and choices of post retirement pursuits, the preparations they made, and their hopes and fears. In this issue, Roger, Judy, Gordon, Jean, Brent, Geraldine, Barbara, Tony, Bala and Carol will share their thoughts about how the skills they gained as educators helped or hindered them in their new venture and also their advice for you as you contemplate what you might do in retirement.

## On reflection, how did your skills as an educator help or hinder you?

- Being a teacher helped in meeting and conversing with people, especially other retired educators who come to stay at the B & B.
- As with other professions, the requisite skills of being a “good” teacher are transferable to any and every field: the ability to listen, to problem solve, to think creatively, to empathize with others, to organize and prioritize, and the ability to learn and to change personal behaviour based on experience, being just a few. I have always felt that the opportunity to learn these skills was the best “benefit package” of the teaching profession. However, there is and always will be a stereotype that accompanies teachers wherever they go and however old they become. This can be a hindrance. At the outset of any design problem, I make the point to the client that I am “not the teacher,” that what the client believes to be the solution to a problem is going to be true and that my role is only to assist with the elements and principles of design, rounding out their solution with the help of my professional training—design and otherwise.
- Obviously, as I chose to continue work as an educator, although in a slightly different capacity, my experiences as an educator were invaluable. However, it was the dealing with the worries and concern of people and the reaction to change that were the most useful lessons learned for working in another culture.
- I believe that the skills I had developed as an educator and senior administrator have influenced what I have been able to do for and with mental health groups. One learns to organize and lead groups and to facilitate what they do.
- My “people skills” were developed throughout my career and that has been an asset. I also have, as I think many educators do, a strong work ethic and that helps in any area of endeavour.
- I am lucky that I chose a profession that suited me perfectly and I have been able to just slide right into a happy retirement enjoying a variety of activities.
- My teaching background definitely assisted me once I completed my primary training of the Tai Chi Set. I was able to consider how students learn and have been able to tailor my teaching methods to maximize my students’ learning experiences. It has also shaped how I teach, e.g., the order of technical steps, the amount (or number) of steps to teach at any one time, the timing of reviews, the assessment of the progress of the individual students and the classes as a whole as well as how I respond to their difficulties and questions. These are only some of the ways in which my background has helped me.
- Positively, in all three pursuits I’ve chosen to do in retirement. However, little in my educational background prepared me for the rigors and challenges of the entrepreneurial ventures I chose.

- The skills that I developed during my career in education have helped me tremendously in my retirement endeavour as a speaker and writer.
- They helped one hundred per cent. Being a teacher indicates that you care for people and you thrive on sharing knowledge. So those aspects transferred easily to my business, particularly as I really enjoy working with elderly people who cannot manage all their garden work any more. During my horticultural work in a public space I also enjoy the social aspect of discussing my work with those with whom I come in contact. Dealing with people as a professional teacher also taught me how to listen to people’s needs and to clearly articulate what services I can offer. Even my teaching of math at the elementary school level gave me enough of a grounding to run a small business! Also, having spent my adult working life looking at the clock has helped me to manage my time.

## What comments, tips or advice do you have for still employed educators who might be considering what they want to do when they retire?

- Go for it, whatever it is! Running a B & B helps us both physically and mentally (financially too) to keep active, plus we meet such interesting people from around the world.
- Don’t be embarrassed. Be proud of your life’s contributions and your skills. Embrace any idea that you have. Remember that there is no substitute for heartfelt curiosity, regardless of age.
- Volunteering or teaching in any country can be a challenging, rewarding and fun thing to do. You have to be prepared for a variety of things, but in third world countries, poverty, bad roads, dust, hawkers, malaria and other diseases are pretty constant, as is a lack of heating or air conditioning. BUT the opportunities to learn and experience another culture first hand and to travel to some of the world’s most exciting sites far outweigh the negatives. When considering such a venture it is important to understand, especially in third world countries, that although the agency or organization you work for may value change, the people you work with may be suspicious of you and your motives. Respect for what exists and the skills people possess are essential if your time in a foreign culture is to be successful. In third world countries, government agents and colleagues may give lip service to change but for motives quite different than you may suspect. There may be financial gains for taking part in change activities or sitting for in-service sessions. For people with marginal incomes, these financial inducements are far more important than any learning that may or may not take place.

In most third world countries, and even those with English as the official language, English is really a second language, so communicating abstract ideas is a challenging and uncertain task at the best of times. Regardless of the country, an important fact to remember is that information is filtered through a quite different set of cultural values and experiences than you have and this can make effective communication a monumental task.

There are many organizations that offer volunteer opportunities. Some offer training, medical services, malaria prophylactics, travel and accommodation along with a small monthly stipend to cover expenses. These usually require a level of expertise, experience and a longer term commitment. Some expect you to pay all expenses including travel and accommodation. The demands of

these organizations are usually minimal, but they can be costly. In between, there are organizations within countries that offer a local wage and possibly accommodation, but other expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer. If you decide that working overseas in a third world country is what you want, then do the research, take time to look at the alternatives and then decide what will work best for you. Most responsible organizations will put you in contact with former volunteers who can give good insights into the organization and the area where you plan to go.

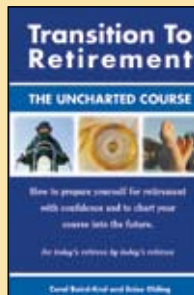
If it is employment you are interested in, then there are also reputable companies and agents to help you find a job; but as with the volunteer agencies, find out what is offered and research carefully before deciding. The computer can be your best friend as you search for opportunities to work or volunteer in either a third world country or elsewhere.

- My advice to those planning retirement is to think about it before retiring and decide where your interests are. For me, it was important to be busy and involved in activities where I believed I could make a contribution; many retirees are happy to travel and play golf, etc., but that was not for me! Perhaps the best advice is to “know yourself,” know what YOU need to be happy and have a sense of self-worth!
- Don't work too long! No matter how much you enjoy your job, there is another world out there waiting to be tapped into. There are a great many opportunities available and it is nice to be able to choose while you are still able. Make room for your successors and get out there and have some fun!
- Go for it, whatever it is you want—if you loved your career, you will definitely love retirement! There are so many happy people out there, find a few and you will have a wonderful retirement.
- There are a multitude of areas where individuals with a teaching background can find an outlet that provides a service to the community while simultaneously filling a niche in one's own soul. Be sure to research the business/activity thoroughly, investigate the commitment your participation may ultimately require. Talk to others who have done what you are considering. Allow yourself the time to try things out and then make sure you allow yourself the leeway of choosing not to pursue things if it is not for you.
- Explore your own strengths and skills before you retire, and gain any professional experience or training while you still have teaching income. If planning to pursue something entrepreneurial, take a bookkeeping course and learn about business plans. When the business goes through a dry spell or difficult economic times, remember that you have a wonderful pension to keep you safe, but do be prepared for entrepreneurial “non-profit”—it happens, and I am going to get rich by writing a book on it!

- Plan ahead and make sure that it really is what you want to do it, but do try to get involved in a couple of other activities to keep things interesting and in perspective. Above all, keep physically active so that you have the energy to do what you want.
- If you like to be busy and creative, realize that retirement is a great opportunity to adapt your skills and interests to create a totally new direction in your life. Don't have 500 business cards made—start small, if you're good, the word will get around!

In this article our respondents have shared their thoughts about how the skills they'd developed as classroom or resource teachers and administrators helped them be successful in their chosen post retirement pursuits. Added to that they have provided suggestions and tips that may help you make your retirement, whenever it happens, work for you. 🍁

### TRANSITION TO RETIREMENT THE UNCHARTED COURSE



One day you are at work, the next day you are retired.

What can you expect to experience—joy, relief, freedom, boredom, loss of identity, a lack of structure?

This book will help you recognize the markers on your life's chart and plot a course for smooth sailing into retirement.

**Carol Baird-Krull  
Enise Olding**

**\$12.95**  
**1-894948-05-X**

**Pacific Edge Publishing Ltd.**  
1-800-668-8806  
www.PacificEdgePublishing.com

### BUSINESS FOR SALE

We have been in the educational publishing business for over thirty years and are ready to literally sail off into the sunset. We have the boat and are now looking for more time to go cruising and grow vegetables.

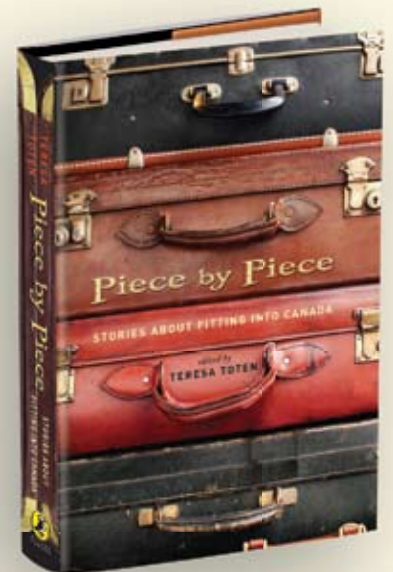
This unique business opportunity would suit educators who are ready to retire from teaching and are looking for a new challenge. Good communication and computer skills are needed and experience in the education system would be an asset.

The business can be operated anywhere in Canada and tailored to provide a part-time or full-time income depending on your needs and energy level.

For more information contact:  
**busopp@shaw.ca**



### LET TERESA TOTEN TAKE YOUR CLASS ON FOURTEEN EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEYS



Download a FREE teacher's guide at [puffinbooks.ca](http://puffinbooks.ca) for *Piece by Piece*, an extraordinary anthology of stories by some of Canada's finest writers, edited by Teresa Toten, author of *Me and the Blondes*.

#### Contributors include

Svetlana Chmakova, Rachna Gilmore  
Linda Granfield, Rachel Manley  
Mahtab Narsimhan, Dimitri Nasrallah  
Marina Nemat, Richard Poplak  
Rui Umezawa, Eva Wiseman

[puffinbooks.ca](http://puffinbooks.ca)

