

Seen and Heard



Volume 3, Issue 2

March 2016

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Superintendent's Corner

Spring has arrived.... officially at least, although March storms serve to remind us we live in Atlantic Canada! The advent of spring also reminds us the school year is speeding along.

In addition to a staffing update, information about the Parent Weekend, summer camps and the Braille Challenge, this issue features articles about and/or by students, illustrating their achievements.

The 2016-2017 school calendar will be of interest for long-range planning.

Please submit items for the next issue by June 1, 2016.



Staffing Update

Staff who are new to APSEA or changed location/position since the last newsletter in December are noted below:

- Janice Gavin—DHH Student/Family Counsellor (Nova Scotia)
- Michael McLaughlin—BVI Itinerant Teacher (Port Hawkesbury, NS)
- Gillian Mercer—Occupational Therapist (APSEA Centre)
- Kelly McKeage—BVI Itinerant Teacher (Halifax, NS)

Visually Impaired Nova Scotia Skier Aims for Winter Paralympics in 2022

By Hal Higgins, [CBC News](#)
Posted: Jan 25, 2016

A 16-year-old visually impaired ski racer from Granville Ferry, N.S., has set some high goals in the sport she loves, and the big one is to compete for Canada in the 2022 Winter Paralympic Games in Beijing.

"And sometimes I don't see the people around me, and I don't see any depth. That's why I have the guide to tell me where it gets steeper, or flatter, stuff like that, because I won't be able to see that when I get to that area."

Sutherland: "So Jonathan, you're skiing in front of Brenda. What are you doing?"

Jonathan MacDonald: "We've got a Scala Rider headset so we have microphone contact. So when we're coming over a pitch I'll announce 'pitch.' If we're going into combinations throughout the course, I'll tell her when we're coming on the combination and what direction to exit from. If there's some ice coming up, I might give her fair warning on that. Anywhere we might be able to increase speed, we try to call that out."

Sutherland: "So what's it meant for you since signing on as Brenda's coach and guide?"

Jonathan MacDonald: "It's been awesome. We've been all over the place. We spent August in Chile, we were in Banff back in April, Quebec for a few days, Panorama [B.C.] back in November, early December and we even made it to Winter Park, Colorado, just before Christmas. At the end of the week we're heading down to Lake Placid, New York, to Whiteface, so it's gonna be good."

'I will never drive a car, but I can go one hundred kilometres per hour on skis'

- Brenda MacDonald

Brenda MacDonald spent this past weekend sharpening her skills on the slopes of Ski Ben Eoin in Cape Breton. She spoke with CBC Radio's *Information Morning Cape Breton* host Steve Sutherland. Her guide and coach, Jonathan MacDonald, joined her for the interview.

Sutherland: "Brenda, I saw on your write-up online that you wrote: 'I am sixteen years old. I love skiing. I am visually impaired. I have a dog and a cat. I will never drive a car but I can go one hundred kilometres per hour on skis.' First of all, if you wouldn't mind describing what your level of impairment is: what do you see when you're skiing?"

Brenda Macdonald: "The best way I can describe my eyesight is if you close your left eye and squint through your right eye, that gives a rough idea how I can see. So when I'm on the hill, all I really see is the white snow around me and the trees on either side and Jonathan, my guide, which I follow, so I see the person in front of me."

Visually Impaired Nova Scotia Skier (continued)

Sutherland: "It's quite an investment on your part?"

Jonathan MacDonald: "It's a lot of time, but hopefully we can get her into the Paralympic Games for 2022. It's an attainable goal for sure."

Brenda Macdonald: "But the first goal I have is to try to get on the prospect team, then get on the national team."

Sutherland: "What's this going to involve from you to make to the Paralympic team?"

Brenda Macdonald: "Well, training hard, races, getting time on the snow — just working hard at it and trying to keep up as well with schoolwork here at Kings."

Sutherland: "Now I can detect a mild accent. You were born in Mexico?"

Brenda Macdonald: (Laughs) "Yes. My dad is originally from here, Nova Scotia, and my mom is from Mexico. I was born in Mexico."

Then my dad wanted to show me how a small town is, and what it feels like to live in Canada in a small town. And then I came here to Kings-Edgehill, and by being so close to (Ski) Martock and being able to ski every day, that's how I was introduced to skiing. And then I wanted to do it more and more, and I wanted to try racing and I tried it — and I was hooked on it."

Sutherland: "What is it, Jonathan, that appeals to you about this relationship that you've committed to?"

Jonathan MacDonald: "Brenda's really eager. If someone tells her she can't do it, she wants to prove them wrong, she gets up and does it and proves them wrong. From last year to this year, just racing together, same race, same course, same run, we've shaved off probably half a minute, 30 seconds, in total."



Nova Scotia Scores Double Gold in Michigan Goalball Tournament



THE CHRONICLE HERALD
Published Feb. 23, 2016 -
8:07am

Nova Scotia swept the 32nd Annual Midwest Regional Goalball Tournament in Warren, Michigan Feb. 20-21, with both the men's and women's teams bringing home gold medals.

For the men's team, this marks three consecutive gold medals at the tournament. Simon Richard, Oliver Pye, Peter Parsons,

Mason Smith and Yvon Clement defeated South Florida in the finals 4-3. They also defeated California 7-3 in the semi-finals. The team was coached by Linda MacRae Triff and Alcide Richard.

The women's team are celebrating their first ever goalball tournament gold medal. Stephanie Berry, Jennie Bovard, Tarah Sawler and Cassie Orgeles defeated Quebec 10-6 in the semi-finals and Turnstone (Indiana) in the finals 8-7.

The team was coached by Linda MacRae Triff and Cathy Sawler.

Next for each team is the Canadian National Championships in Quebec City beginning April 22, where the men will look to defend their national title.



APSEA'S SUMMER CAMPS ARE FAST APPROACHING!

SAVE THE DATES

APSEA WILL BE HOSTING TWO SUMMER CAMPS THIS SUMMER

JULY 3-8, 2016 - CAMP SEE-YA AT BRIGADOON VILLAGE a camp for students who are blind or visually impaired. Registration is now **OPEN**. APSEA will be holding a Leadership in Training program again this year (June 24-26, 2016) for students aged 16-17. Go to the APSEA Website (www.apsea.ca) and click on the Camp See-Ya Logo to register. Deadline for registrations is April 1.



JULY 31 - AUGUST 5, 2016 - APSEA/ELKS DEAF CAMP a camp for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Registration is now **OPEN**. APSEA will be holding a Leadership in Training program again this year (July 29-30, 2016) for students aged 16-18. Go to the APSEA Website (www.apsea.ca) and click on the Deaf Camp Logo to register. Deadline for registrations is April 1.

Courage Canada

- Nick Gentleman (BVI Student, grade 8)

Courage Canada is a program to encourage visually impaired kids to learn how to skate and be able to play blind hockey. The program also includes introducing other blind sports like Goal Ball, beep baseball and the main sport Blind Hockey.

Courage Canada goes all across the country from St. John's, Newfoundland to Vancouver, British Columbia. At each of their stops, they run programs which include a tour of the arena they're in, lunch (usually pizza with drinks), fantastic hockey players from around the area to come skate with, a learn-to-skate program and a full 5-on-5 blind hockey game!

I've been taking part in Courage Canada programs for four years. Courage Canada is an exciting program for the visually impaired. November 2015 was their last visit to Halifax. We met at the Scotia Bank Centre and some of the members of the Dalhousie men & women's hockey teams came out to play hockey with us.

During the summer, they also have a camp out in Burnaby, British Columbia for 6 days. I have attended the camp both years it ran – 2014 & 2015 – and plan to go again this summer.

The camp is at the Fortius Training Centre in Burnaby. There, you get your own room for 5 nights. You can do dry land training in the gym or weight room. Next to the building, there is an 8-pad with 6 hockey rinks, 1 soccer field and 1 figure skating rink. Upstairs there is a bar where parents and friends can watch their children skate and play hockey. On the last night of the camp, there is a blind hockey game between the Courage Canada Camp and the Vancouver Eclipse. After the game you go have a party up in the bar and have a good time. You also will eat healthy like a pro hockey player. Your daily meals will consist of fruits, vegetables and meats.

Courage Canada was founded by a very successful man named Mark DeMontis. Mark and the Courage Canada staff are good guys and are great with kids. When I get to my adult years, I plan to be a part of this organization because everyone deserves a chance to play hockey.

September 2016, will be the launch of Courage Hockey - <http://couragehockey.com/>. Courage Hockey's goal 'is to create and share content inspiring others to overcome their fears and take on new challenges.' *"Because it is time to see the game, a different way!" ~Mark DeMontis*



Braille Challenge

- Sheila Jamieson, Supervisor
Residential, Summer and Weekend Programs

APSEA hosted the Fourth Braille Challenge, a program of the Braille Institute of America, on February 12 and 13, 2016. The contest was attended by five students at the APSEA Centre and three students by remote access. There was also a preschool component which included four students and their parents. There also was a session for the parents on Braille Literacy.

The theme of the Challenge this year was “Harry Potter”, with program activities adapted from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The team of APSEA staff, teachers, and volunteers, organized and created activities from the Opening Ceremony to Closing Banquet and Awards making the Braille Challenge a “ton of fun”. There was Braille Bingo, an audio Scavenger Hunt, and the sorting hat assigned rooms via the cupcakes the participants received. The participants enjoyed baking and creating potions like quick sand. The “White Owl” delivered letters and packages like “Liquid Luck” to the students. The staff were dressed in costumes, thus adding to the excitement.

Students participating in the timed contest were tested on Proof Reading and Reading Comprehension with specific levels for Spelling, Speed and Accuracy, and Chart and Graph Reading. There were five contest groups: Apprentice (grades 1-2), Freshman (grades 3-4), Sophomore (grades 5-6), Junior Varsity (grades 7-9), and Varsity (grades 10-12).

Many thanks to the students, volunteers, staff and parents who participated in this event. We felt honored to be part of the Braille Challenge. Thanks also to the Braille Press and Seedlings for the donation of prizes.



Harry Potter theme cake.



The “white owl” and cupcakes.

APSEA Calendar for 2016-2017

Monday **5 September 2016**

Tuesday **6 September 2016**

Labour Day

Organization Day for Teachers

Monday **10 October 2016**

Tuesday **25 October to Thursday 27 October 2016**

Friday **28 October 2016**

Thanksgiving Day

APSEA Annual Inservice

NSTU Provincial Inservice

Friday **11 November 2016**

Remembrance Day

Wednesday **21 December 2016**

Tuesday **3 January 2017**

Last Working Day before Christmas

First Working Day after Christmas

Monday **20 February 2017**

Holiday – NS & PEI

Monday **6 March to Friday 10 March 2017**

Monday **13 March to Friday 17 March 2017**

Monday **20 March to Friday 24 March 2017**

March Break – NB

March Break – NS

March Break – PEI

Thursday **13 April 2017**

Monday **24 April 2017**

NL - Last Day of School (Spring Break)

NL - School Reopens

Friday **14 April 2017**

Monday **17 April 2017**

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Monday **22 May 2017**

Victoria Day

Friday **30 June 2017**

Last Day of Classes



Reminder:

Inspiring Minds

**2016 Annual APSEA Parent Workshop
Saturday, May 28, 2016**

**Submit articles to
apsea@apsea.ca**



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