



# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Fall 2023

## Busy Is As Busy Does

Retired school teacher, principal, university adjunct, avid skier, world traveler, Broadway show and opera lover, theater architecture and history fan, website developer, tennis player, guitar plucker, philanthropist . . .

And, since about 5 years ago, blood donor!

Who is this Renaissance man, why does he stay so busy, and what motivates his adventures?

Ronald Szabo, of Bethlehem, has had an active and interesting life. Ron spent his career in education. He served in many capacities, and another good experience.

Right from the start, even his student teaching was unusual, with the supervising teacher going out on sick leave! He, and a fellow student teacher, co-taught under the supervision of the Superintendent of Schools. Ron finished college and taught for 4 years in Long Branch, New Jersey.

Having landed in the Lehigh Valley while pursuing his master's degree at Lehigh University, Ron used his elementary and industrial arts degrees to substitute teach while attending graduate school at night.

His first teaching job in this area was at Clearview Elementary in the Bethlehem Area School District. And

the rest, as they say, is history. He has held various positions, including 6th grade teacher, 2nd and 3rd grade teacher, 4th and 5th grade teacher for gifted students, director of summer school at Liberty High School, and interim principal.

To put some numbers around his stellar career, Ron as a teacher for 9 years, a curriculum specialist for 10 years, and a principal for 11. You can't keep a good man down, and so even after he retired, he accepted an opportunity to teach at Moravian University. Ron then spent another decade as an adjunct lecturer sharing how to integrate art and technology in elementary school.

He says he's retired now, but he'd still entertain a request to work a few hours a day, if the opportunity was right.

"After you retire, you need a reason to get up and get going," Ron reflected.

## The Convenience Factor

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It's not like Ron needs more to do. He stays incredibly busy, and everything he does has an interesting reason why he started the activity.

The impetus for becoming a blood donor, started with his brother's need for a kidney transplant. A little apprehensive at first, with "irrational Dracula thoughts" about how blood is drawn, Ron relaxed after his first blood donation, and today he can be found, giving whole blood about every 6 weeks. "It didn't hurt, and Miller makes it convenient to reschedule and pre-screen on the computer."

Ron schedules his blood donations around all the other activities that make up his days.

Tennis and skiing are activities that consume some of his time seasonally. He started skiing when he moved to Pennsylvania and has skied all over the country as well as Europe. His role as curriculum specialist necessitated that he worked all summer, giving him an opportunity to take interesting vacations in the winter. He is particularly fond of Europe, having visited friends there, just being a tourist, and going alpine skiing.

Ron also has a love of all things theater, which began when he was an undergrad at Montclair State University since New York was so close to the Montclair, NJ, campus. Today, he tries to go into the city at least 3 times a month.

That interest in Broadway theater

led him in directions he hadn't anticipated. Initially, his goal was to see a show in each of the 41 Broadway theatres, many of which are more than 100 years old. That led him to create an interactive website about each theater and discover exciting details about theatre history, architecture, and the people who built and performed in them throughout the past century.

"In doing this research, I noticed a trend: one of the most prolific theater builders in New York was Oscar Hammerstein I. I found out that several of Hammerstein's theaters were used by various Minsky Brothers for burlesque shows. The most famous of the Minsky theaters was on 42nd Street. That theater, now called the New Victory, is still in existence, and is now a theater dedicated exclusively for children's performances."

Ron is also an avid supporter of the community. He supports Miller-Keystone Blood Center through blood donations and organizations he feels are a good fit for him from a philanthropic standpoint. In addition to area food banks and church appeals, financial support (he's even kicking round volunteering). He looks for organizations he feels are a good fit for him from a philanthropic standpoint. In addition to area food

banks and church appeals, two favorites for Ron are: Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and the Theater Development Fund. Broadway Cares helps those throughout the performing arts community in need of all types of assistance and provides grants for food banks and other supportive endeavors. Recently, Ron participated as a volunteer for its Red Bucket appeal, which raised millions to help people receive lifesaving medications, health care, counseling, and nutritious meals.

The Theater Development Fund provides New York City School students with an opportunity to learn more about the theater through its various in-school mentoring programs. These programs culminate in an actual Broadway performance. Specialized performances are also provided for special needs students with auditory, and visual challenges, as well as autism.

Ron has no intention of slowing down. According to Ron, there are advantages to being single. He does have a lot of flexibility in his schedule, and he claims he will continue to pursue adventure after adventure and support the things he's passionate about for as long as he can.