



# The Pen

Pensioned Employees Newsletter

[www.bcgrea.ca](http://www.bcgrea.ca)

Fall 2020

## President's report

### Good things are happening in the BCGREA

*By Ken Pendergast*

Wow, what a year this has been. It reminds me of the saying, "Fasten your seatbelts and grab your oxygen masks."

First we have "COVID-19 followed by another one of the wettest summers on record.

Apparently the people in parts of southern BC received some fairly warm weather, along with the smoke from fires, but those living in the central and northern part of the province only received a scant few days of dry and relatively cool weather.

Fortunately, the Fall is a little more seasonable as we prepare for what is reported as extensive snow during the winter. They say only fools and newcomers predict the weather anyway.

The good side of COVID is



**Ken Pendergast**

that people had the opportunity to spend much more valuable time with friends and family, either at home or the lake.

People spent time doing short trips. The recreational equipment sales apparently had a very good year, and most of their sales lots have little inventory left.

The Table Officers have

maintained communication more frequently during COVID with the aide of Video Conferencing.

Thanks to the latest technology, we have held monthly *Zoom* meetings, including a couple of practice or "test" meetings with most of the delegates from the branches, who normally attend the Directors' Meeting and the annual AGM, in preparation for the AGM.

Despite COVID, some good things are happening in the BCGREA.

We have some very talented and dedicated volunteers in our Association and collectively, as well as individually, they have continued to make progress on programs committed to from our last AGM.

*(Continued on page 3)*

# BCGREA Zooms to a new year

The BCGREA successfully held our first, and hopefully our last Virtual AGM on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

We are all hopeful that the current COVID-19 pandemic will be suitably under control within the next year, allowing us to resume to a more regular Directors Meeting and AGM format.

The AGM was attended by a total of 63 people, which included a total of six guests, giving a clear quorum for the event.

The financial review for the year was very well managed by our Provincial Treasurer, Johanna Morrow.

The 2021 Budget will be prepared for review and



**Brian Green**



**Carrie Mulcahy**

approval at the Spring Directors' Meeting.

Lawrence Johnson, past President and Finance Committee Chair, conducted a successful election of officers, President, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President for the 2021 year.

I'm pleased that all three incumbents agreed to stand for another year given the current COVID-19. Thank you Brian Green and Carrie Mulcahy.

I'm also pleased to announce that the appointed positions, Lawrence Johnson – Finance Chair and Board of Trustees representative, Johanna Morrow – Provincial Treasurer, Al Barclay – Provincial Membership Chair, and Kathy Torjhelm

– Provincial Secretary, will also remain as part of the Provincial Executive for 2021.

Your Provincial Executive has been working faithfully on behalf of the BCGREA despite this Pandemic, bringing many new and important attributes to our Association.

I would also like to recognize the other valuable volunteers who have been assisting in these endeavours, such as Allen Coccola and Charles La Vertu on the Affinity Partners Video and all the volunteers on the Recruitment & Retention committee.

I want to acknowledge the performance of our new Administrative Support Contractor Josie Byington as she continues to work with Al Barclay and the Branch Membership Chairs to pull together our much needed Central Membership Database.

Collectively, we have an excellent team of Directors within the BCGREA and the results are very positive.

We look forward to our Spring 2021 Directors' Meeting.

— **Ken Pendergast,**  
**President**

## BCGREA seeks volunteer For messaging service

Bill Myers, our Provincial Electronic Messaging volunteer responsible for the distribution of our newsletter *The Pen*, eblasts on behalf of some of our partners, and messages from the President, is continuing the use of our mail server CAMPAIGNER.

To have a successful mail server, we require all members who have subscribed to electronic messaging, to have correct email addresses.

Bill asks for assistance from all branches to verify correct emails for any which bounce when messages are sent to them.

Bill has been doing the electronic messaging for a number of years.

Bill is also an active traveller and would like to have some volunteer help to ensure both the succession of his position, as well as to ensure we can meet the contractual requirements of our members and partners in the distribution of *The Pen*, and eblasts, and messages from the President.

We would like to hear from any members who might have an interest in becoming involved with Bill

Myers as a volunteer for electronic messaging.

With our new mail service CAMPAIGNER the process takes minutes, where previously it involved hours and lots of coffee!

To learn more about the process involved in helping Bill, he can be reached at [bcgrea@gmail.com](mailto:bcgrea@gmail.com).

Petition seeks to end association that protects doctors accused of medical errors.

This link was submitted by a member, for information.

[https://  
petitions.ourcommons.ca/  
en/Petition/Details?  
Petition=e-2890](https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-2890)

## Good things

*(Continued from page 1)*

These innovations are being reported individually.

Unfortunately, we have also suffered the loss of a couple of our long-term members who have provided some of the “glue” responsible for building the BCGREA and helping to hold our Association together.

We have many such dedicated members but one of the “fathers” of our association is Ed Bodner.

Ed is being recognized with a much deserved separate article. (See page 4)

Most of our Affinity Partners have been forced to take significant measures during COVID and continue to remain as partners of the BCGREA.

Most significantly impacted are our Travel companies, Collette Travel and Trip Merchant, given the standstill of international airline travel and cruise ships.

Who amongst us would have envisioned “Virtual Travel” opportunities, but that is precisely what these innovative partners have been promoting.

We continue to look forward to the end of COVID, or at the very least, the ability to control it along with all the other pandemics we must endure.

We are hopeful that conditions will allow us to resume a more normal lifestyle where we can hold our Spring Directors Meeting as usual.

Until then, “Stay Safe.”



Fred Bennett, Mary Foster, Ed Bodner, John Cone and Wayne Dermody

*Edward Bodner August 19, 1930 - June 4, 2020*

## ***From BCGEA to BCGEU to BCGREA***

*By Terry Burgess*

Ed's journey in northern B.C. began in 1969 when the B.C. Government Employees Association had its convention in Prince George.

A group was present from the Lower Mainland, including Ed Bodner. That convention changed the shape of the association forever as it voted to become the B.C. Government Employees Union.

Its new president was Norm Richards. Soon after General Secretary Ed O'Connor resigned and John Fryer was hired.

By 1971 organizing staff were hired-- Ed Bodner, Wayne

Dermody and Jack Adams. They began to establish a union presence wherever there were government employees.

Ed went to Prince George where we had meetings with delegates from over the north and Ed established an office.

Negotiations in those days were "Cap in Hand" and they were not being successful.

The Prince George Yard went on strike. After a week we were back at the bargaining table. A provincial election saw a change in government.

By 1973 the union was in

full negotiations for a master agreement and 12 component agreements.

Ed's job was to travel around the north updating members on the status of each agreement and then as each was settled, hold ratification votes.

Once all agreements were settled Ed had to understand and interpret each one as both union members and management struggled to interpret clauses.

Ed did such a great job teaching both that very few grievances went past the local level.

Ed found that he had a little

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## Ed Bodner

*(Continued from page 4)*

spare time so he went into local politics and became an alderman.

He was also president of the local Labor Council. Shirley was kept busy with her job and raising Joe, Stephanie, and Link.

As well as me, there were two others Ed supported through the Union ranks: Dianne Wood, the union treasurer for years and the present president of FORUM, and Lawrence Johnson, component chairperson and past president of BCGREA.

In the latter part of the 1980s Ed moved to Vancouver Island and retired in Courtenay where Shirley lives today.

But Ed could not stay still and by 1991 he was president of the BCGREA with Rudy Lawrence as first vice-president, followed by Bryn Otten.

The association had been branching out to various regions of the province and Ed accelerated that move.

He established branches in Williams Lake, Terrace, Dawson Creek, Prince George and several more.

This led to greater participation by local retirees.



On a provincial level in 1992 we had 5,724 members in 16 branches and by 1998 we had 9,500 members in 20 branches.

Shirley, Stephanie, Joe and Link can be assured that we will remember what a great mentor and Leader Ed was!!

REST IN PEACE MY FRIEND YOU HAD A LIFE WELL LIVED

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One of the first things I did when I retired was join the BCGREA. Shortly thereafter I found myself in the Chair position of the Campbell River Branch.

Ed Bodner was then Chair of the Courtenay Branch. This was during our class action suit. Ed came up to Campbell River for some of our meetings, and was a great help.

Ed also assisted me in the

interviews I did with the local press.

Just another example of Ed's great willingness to help others of us benefit from his knowledge and skills.

I will be forever grateful for his assistance to me as a new member and Chair of the Campbell River Branch. --

***Carrie Mulcahy***

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. . . I am told that Ed felt that servicing the members while in the worksites was important and he traveled to many parts of the province to do just that.

Ed knew the value of maintaining strong communications and negotiations with the government of BC and Canada.

On behalf of the BCGEU, I want to extend our sincere condolences to Ed's family and friends for their loss. Rest in Power. — ***President Stephanie Smith***

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It should be a long one as I have known Ed since 1971 when I was elected to be the Local 101 President of the Prince George Regional Corrections Branch. Ed contacted me and suggested that it might be a good idea if the two of us got

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Protocol for dealing with dues deducted in error

On several occasions, BCGREA members were contacted to confirm and/or update their information.

In some instances, it was discovered that a member had lost his or her spouse some time previously.

If the surviving spouse is the original person receiving the pension from the Public Service Pension Plan and is enrolled in automatic Dues Check Off (DCO), there is the possibility that the Pension Corporation has continued to deduct annual dues for both individuals.

Under DCO, the Pension Corporation doesn't necessarily receive notification that the non-pension-receiving spouse has died.

The BCGREA does not have a routine way of tracking this unless the surviving member notifies the local branch.

It is important for members to realize that they should contact the BCGREA to request that their spouse be removed from the membership list and no further dues should be removed.

The Provincial Executive discussed this issue and passed

this motion: If a member has had dues deducted for her/his deceased spouse, (s)he will be eligible for a refund of up to two years' dues deducted in error.

Upon request for a refund, the Branch will repay the dues to the individual and the Provincial Treasurer will forward the provincial

portion of the refund to the Branch.

Although contacting the BCGREA when a spouse dies is probably not at the top of a priority list, it is important to let us know so that we do not continue to take dues in error. We may also be able to offer support through the difficult times.

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### Ed Bodner

*(Continued from page 5)*

together and discussed where we go from here, but I will

keep it short. We had a great meeting and two years later it was suggested to me by Ed that I might want to consider applying for a Staff Rep position with the newly named BCGEU.

Ed stuck by me in all the time I knew him and he was one of those friends that you knew had your back and would never betray you, no matter what. He was "principled."

Rest In Peace Ed and while resting make sure you say Hi to some of your close Buddies from days past who are resting with you and they are, to name just a few, Don Burns, Wayne

Dermody, John Hurren, Ed Honchurak and Tom McKay, etc. — **Patrick Dickson**

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In memory of Ed Bodner, I am one of the nurses who will be ever grateful for his diligence on promoting conversion of the two years student training to pensionable service." -- **Bonnie Billington, Branch 800**

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Ed was President of the BCGREA. He also represented BCGREA as a Trustee on the Public Service Pension Plan. -- **Diane Wood**

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In 1980 Public Service Pension Plan members gained a 'voice' in pension affairs with the formation of the Public Service Pension Plan Consultative Committee.

This committee underwent a

*(Continued on page 7)*

# We want to connect with you

If you have not taken the opportunity to view our website version of *The Pen*, you can do so at [www.bcgrea.ca](http://www.bcgrea.ca) click on newsletters, scroll down on the left-hand side of the page where present and previous issues are archived.

If you would like to change from receiving a copy of *The Pen* through Canada Post to receiving our electronic version, this is the process:

- Your Branch Membership Chair may send Bill Myers [bcgreapen@gmail.com](mailto:bcgreapen@gmail.com) an email with your name and email address. Bill will send you a direct link for sign up. The system is a self signup, double opt-in process to satisfy Canada's anti-spam legislation.
- If you (or your Branch Membership Chair on your behalf) ask to sign up, Bill Myers will send you the following email:
- The BCGREA recently received a request that you wish to receive electronic message notifications. You may sign up for these notifications at:

<http://bcgrea.ca/> click on the “subscribe now” button/image in the right sidebar—or directly at

<https://secure.campaigner.com/CSB/Public/Forum.aspx?fid=1736195>

As well as supplying some basic information, you will be asked to select the mailing list(s) to which you wish to subscribe.

## Mailing Lists

### 1. Member Services & Newsletter

Selecting this mailing list, you will receive notification that the latest issue of *The Pen* is available online. Also, you may receive messages from our President (Member Services).

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## Ed Bodner

*(Continued from page 6)*

number of changes over the next 20 years, first as an ‘Advisory Committee’ in the mid eighties, then as an ‘Advisory Board’ in the mid nineties, before Joint Trusteeship was gained in 2001.

I was the government nurses representative during the committee years. Ed Bodner came on the committee in the mid eighties.

One of the nurses’ goals was

*(Continued on page 8)*

### 2. Partner Eblasts

Selecting this mailing list, you will receive commercial electronic messages from our Partners.

Our Partners don't send you the messages. They send the BCGREA the content; which is then sent by us.

Your email is never shared with our Partners, unless you contact them directly.

### Double Opt-in Signup Process

Once you click the subscribe button your subscription is pending. There is a process that occurs, called double opt-in, that you need to complete in order to activate your subscription.

We send a plain text email to the email address you provided on the signup form. This email, referred to as the confirmation email, asks you to click a link (included in the email) to confirm your subscription request.

If you require assistance, please ask Bill Myers [bcgreapen@gmail.com](mailto:bcgreapen@gmail.com).

N. B. Please notify Bill Myers of a change in email address.

Carrie Mulcahy  
2nd Vice President  
Editor-in-Chief, *The Pen*

## Central Support — Database Updates In Progress

We reported in the Spring edition of *The Pen* that Josie was starting to update the Central Membership Database (CMD) to improve our ability to communicate with our membership.

This work continued over the summer and we have collated the email addresses from the various sources and were able to send out the notice of the impending survey about Group Benefits to over 70% of our members in late October.

We want to gather as many email addresses for our members as possible in our effort to improve communication.

Josie Byington, two assistants (Michele and Christine) and various Branch Membership representatives are collecting and confirming addresses for entry into the CMD.

It would be very helpful if you contact our Central Support at [BCGREA@telus.net](mailto:BCGREA@telus.net) to confirm the email address that we have on file for you so we are able to reach as many members as possible through fast and efficient electronic communication.

This is particularly important if you or your spouse did not receive an email notification about the Group Benefits

survey on October 22, 2020.

The General or Blanket distribution list will only be used for items that the Table Officers determine to be of interest or importance for communication to the membership.

We will be setting up separate lists so that members may opt in or out of distribution of information such as offers from our Affinity Partners and electronic notification of *The Pen*.

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### Ed Bodner

*continued from page 7*

recognition as pensionable service for psychiatric nurses

two years spent at the Essondale Nurse Training School.

Originally, those undergoing training were government employees and enrolled in the pension plan. By the end of the 50s although nothing had changed in their work experience and training, the students were no longer covered by the pension plan.

Whenever the rules concerning plan membership altered, the issue of the Essondale grads student time would be raised. There were many rejections.

*(Continued on page 22)*

We try not to overwhelm people with too much information, but we also want to ensure members are informed of changes or opportunities that may be of interest to them.

While you are contacting Central Support, please think about signing up for automatic Dues Check Off (DCO) if you are not already signed up for it. DCO is an easy and effective way for our Association to collect your annual dues as they are deducted from your February pension cheque.

You do not need to divulge any banking information and the only requirement is for you to provide your Personal ID number (the 8-digit number at the top of any correspondence from the PSPP).

Please phone **250-751-8814** or email this information to Central Support [bcgre@telus.net](mailto:bcgre@telus.net) and Josie will take care of it. It will save time and money for all involved and is a safe way to minimize exposure during the pandemic.

It also reduces the workload of the volunteer Branch executive by eliminating the need to remind members to send in their annual payments.



**MEMBERS  
TALK  
ABOUT  
LIFE  
DURING  
COVID**

My thanks to members who sent reports of your lives during Covid--19.

It has most certainly significantly impacted how we are living; brought restrictions with which we otherwise wouldn't have had to contend.

It opened new doors (perhaps old ones we had closed) and expanded the vision of our lives, both before and during Covid.

Thank you for sharing your present lives, and please enjoy this issue of The Pen.

— *Carrie Mulcahy*  
*Editor-in-Chief, The Pen*

**Scrapbooking**

What I've been doing during Covid is compiling a scrapbook from my father-in-law's diary on the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in the Aleutians.

— *Dennis Harry Jamieson*

**Major home projects  
replace lengthy cruise**

*By Tim Roark*

The Covid mess really changed our plans for most of 2020.

First we had a great extended cruise organized through Princess with a flight to Sydney, Australia where we would have visited friends for several days.

Then we were to cruise through the South Pacific for five weeks with the ship ending up in Vancouver where we would disembark and get a ride home.

With this major change in plans we decided to do a whole host of projects that we had wanted to do but never had time.

So over the next four plus months we power washed and then painted the exterior of most of our house – ground floor and basement alcove.

We hired a painter to do the second storey work so us old-timers didn't need to climb up 20-foot ladders and walk on sloping roofs.

Next my wife and I rebuilt the pergola over our back deck which is 16' by 32'. All the timbers were removed, power washed and any showing rot were replaced.

All were then given a primer coat, reinstalled and then completed with two finishing coats of paint. Metal covers were formed and installed on all key connecting points.

Knowing that summer would bring warm weather I installed a large blower fan and filter system for the house which would allow us to flood the house with cool filtered air in the morning and thus keep the house cool virtually all day long.

We called and hired a guide on Vancouver Island and went fishing and had a lovely holiday keeping Covid safe the whole time and wearing our masks as needed and using 70-per-cent rubbing alcohol just to be sure we were safe if we contacted something or someone with the virus. A great short vacation and no Covid problems.

It was now time to enhance the garden with bags of new soil plus enhancers and many new blooming plants over the next few weeks.

Good weather meant getting the boat ready for a few days floating around the Salt Chuck.

Sprinkle visits with Covid free friends and relatives while keeping safe distances and with generous use of 70-per-cent rubbing alcohol. Add good

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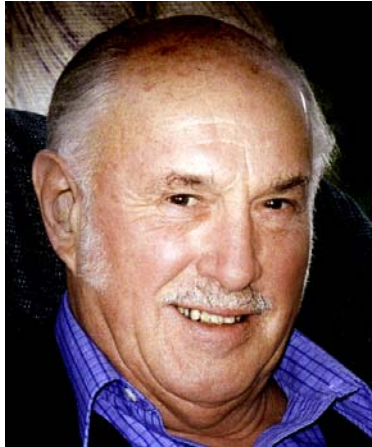
## NOVEL VIRUS INSPIRES NOVELIST

By Michael Hanson

When social activity is restricted and you spend all your time at home, you should consider how best to maintain your mental and physical fitness.

It is all well and good to slow down and smell the roses, which reminds us to garden — and there is walking — but there should also be something to challenge the mind.

In my case, I have found that



sharing memories with my dear lady from our nearly 65 years of marriage has been a wonderful exercise for mind, soul and heart.

We have both enjoyed this mental exercise, something that never seemed to occur to us during our busy lives before the lockdown.

As well, we both enjoy trying new recipes, which is also a useful challenge to use up ingredients that we have in stock.

As for myself, I continue to enjoy writing short stories and novels, which means creating characters and situations inspired by those memories and a life filled with professional and personal experiences.

## COVID misses Denman

By Lorraine Holt

The life I am living now is on Denman Island and luckily COVID hasn't struck here yet. We do watch ourselves here as well as on Vancouver Island.

We are only allowed four people at a time in the general store but everyone stands patiently waiting for people to walk out of the store so someone in the line up can then walk in. Everything works out well and nobody is cranky about it.

In Courtenay I also deliver newspapers one day a week now instead of two. No problem there either. It's early in the morning and very few people are up and about. Just a few going for a walk and they keep their distance but remain friendly with a nice hello or Good Morning.

We are finally allowed to go to our favourite restaurant in Courtenay also. But we also keep our distance and only so many are allowed at once. Everyone is happy to see each other and we all take it seriously and wait patiently.

We are doing just fine, thank you.

## Home projects

*(Continued from page 9)*

suppers at home plus movies on the TV many evenings plus regular phone calls and emails to family and friends when you are not too beat from working.

Between projects add in day trips to see the Beautiful B.C scenery in Hope, Harrison, Merritt, Lillooet and Cash Creek and the summer went like a flash.

We got lots of exercise, saved money not hiring others to do everything for us, kept in touch and had lots of fun in the process.

Not something we want to do every year but a great way to keep happy, healthy and busy during this Covid mess.

# Music Soothes The way

*From the Port McNeill Gate Way Theatre Facebook page: OK ... Lets start this off with our own Karen Schwalm on classical guitar..... still probably our best musician in town, nobody can really do what she does, interpreting new and old songs and sight-reading to boot... almost live from the back deck of the A Frame Church and bookstore....*

**By Karen Schwalm**

I was finally settling into retirement when these different times changed life greatly for me.



I had to give up participating in community events four days a week and could no longer share music with others at the open mic at our local theatre when social distancing happened.

Then one of the organizers of the open mic asked if he could record me playing my

guitar outside to include in a 'virtual' open mic for the Gate House Theatre Facebook page.

I thought, 'why not give it a try,' as during this pandemic playing my music has been a wonderful distraction and joy.

## Random act of kindness eases isolation



**By Carol Tymchuk**

While I haven't been creative in developing new ventures, I wish to share the following:

A new neighbour, a stranger to me, delivers flowers from her garden to my backdoor step weekly! This random act of kindness is appreciated, heart warming and helpful in dealing with the social isolation the pandemic brings.

It also serves as a reminder to pay it forward.

Cheers.



# Hobby helps seniors centre

My name is Arnold Amonson. I am a retired Forest Technician.

I am 87 years old and have had a hobby of wood working for most of my life. So, what would I do during the endemic – “wood work.”



I have a workshop in the back yard that is only a box trailer but it serves as a good workshop when the weather is good enough to have the doors open.

I made a few small projects such as some frames for my daughter’s alcohol ink art.

Then we decided that some of the plywood doors on the Senior Centre pantry should really be replaced.

My wife and I measured them up and I went work.

At first, we were only going to build drawer fronts on the bottom section which are all rollout shelves for pots and pans.

When these were finished and looked so much better, we decided the rest of the old cupboard doors looked more like they should be replaced.

I went to work building doors for the second level. When these were all done



and painted, we decided to do the top section.

The doors are panel doors with frames made on a shaper and the panels are one-quarter inch plywood.

Woodwork all by myself and painting by my wife and me.

## Life during COVID is home

*By Carol ChongPing*

First of all I wish to thank my dear lord for bringing me safely throughout this difficult time of this virus. My family are all well and surviving that is very important to me.

I do not go out very often mainly to see my family or doctor and dentist appointment. I use the handiDART mainly. I use the 211 deli every service for my groceries. I read my library books online now it is easy to borrow, read, then return them back. I meet friends now but won't go where it has large crowds. I use mask and gloves when going into any store or shoppers.

My church has its services through Zoom so you see who is there re online. If these meetings go on I hope it will be through Zoom or some other mode. Thank you



# Happy Trails

*By Earl Warnock*

Although the streets of Creston are not crowded under most circumstances we were still encouraged to take our walks out in a more natural environment.

In the earlier days (before the mosquitos arrived) the wetlands were enjoyable just for the scenery with the waterfowl, turtles and cow calf elk pairs a great bonus.

We cannot express our appreciation enough to the Creston Trails Society and the organizations who help fund the construction of the Ka Pa Pa trail.

It is incredible to be able to walk through the huge cedars and gain some appreciation for what existed in the Creston area forests in years gone by.

Although the trees here may not be quite as large the magnificence compares to the few remaining old growth areas on Vancouver Island and the Sitka forests of Haida Gwaii.

If a hiker was to move at a good pace it probably would



not take much longer than about a half-hour to walk the Ka Pa Pa trail.

However we take about two hours as we rarely went more than 100 metres

without stopping to soak in the magnificence.

Not much help for the cardiovascular system but a great mental health break.



# COVID has its benefits

*By Shirley McBride*

The old L'il Abner cartoon (anybody remember that) contained the saying "It's an ill wind that doesn't blow somebody some good". It certainly applied to COVID.

Suddenly, the neighbourhood had less noise as traffic virtually disappeared from the roads. The back yard was more peaceful, and more birds arrived.

The sky was cleaner, the air fresher, and fewer jets spewed their trails in the sky above. Being in the garden was more peaceful.

The bread machine came out, for the first time in years, and the scent of fresh bread and buns filled the house.

The vegetable garden was given its usual dose of compost and nutrition and an expanded array of vegetables found their way from windowsill to hardening off table and into the garden beds.

We developed a new realization of the importance of food security and of preserving the limited fertile land in BC.

People have so easily taken for granted the routine of



**All are beds raised to waist height so that one could even garden sitting down or in a wheelchair when the time comes. The beds are spaced apart with pavers in between with enough room for a wheelchair between — should the need arise. Some beds are covered with mesh to keep out carrot rust fly and cabbage butterflies, and birds away from strawberry bed and blueberry patch.**

daily living became our heroes ...the local pharmacy who delivered medications and other necessities, the people in the grocery store, the department store who put orders together and shipped them, and the people who delivered them.

These are the ones that society undervalues, and who are not paid what they are worth. Nobody missed the corporate executives who draw down millions.

We were filled with admiration for the ingenuity of companies who switched their production to make

medically necessary equipment and supplies.

Outside of necessities, shopping became irrelevant. Sorting drawers and closets showed how few garments actually get worn and how much "stuff" accumulates.

In short, COVID has caused a re-think of the importance of self-sufficiency, a deeper appreciation of the natural world, a greater realization of what a consumer-driven society we have become, and a deep gratitude for the people we tend to take for granted.

# COVID LEADS TO CHALLENGES

*By John and Anne Marriott*

How Covid – 19 affected our lives during this time of isolation.

In the middle of March, we were told by our Government to stay home and away from others. At our age in our late seventies and early eighties we were more at risk of catching this bug.

We did what was necessary to stay healthy and not spread it. Thankfully we had each other, but for someone on his own it would be tougher.

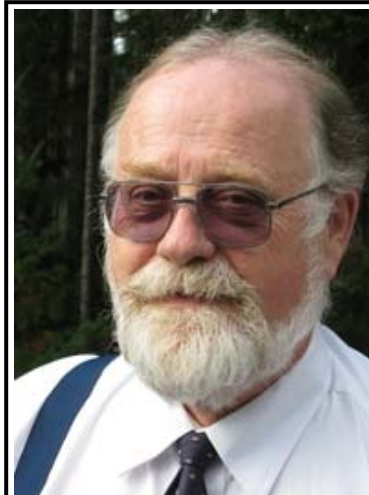
The isolation and staying at home was very easy to do for us until it started to affect things of everyday life, such as the graduation of our first granddaughter, our grandson's birthday, not being able to say good bye to a loved one who passed on, not being able to help each other when one of us went to the hospital for treatments.

Our son had to go through Chemo treatment for three months in Vancouver alone, with no assistance from his family or support, which was hard.

Doctor visits were non-existent, just phone consultations or by private appointments only.

Grocery shopping was a bit of a challenge, but we managed with having two shopping lists in order to spend less time in the store as my wife did one section and I did the other section of the store.

Once we arrived home, we developed an assembly line to



*By Bill Engleson*

I had to think seriously about how COVID has changed my life. Not to be facetious, but my indoor pickleball game has been eradicated.

Since March the Board of Directors of the Hornby and Denman Community Health Care Society has met via Zoom almost weekly to keep abreast of the struggles of our staff and services.

Zoom is clearly a new means by which we try to stay connected. Poorly, I think. This year Denman's Readers & Writers Festival went viral. The authors who were to have attended from elsewhere have all contributed a video—Libby Davies, Mark Jaccard and a wealth of others. Eight local authors including myself also contributed videos.

unpack and wipe everything down before putting them away.

Our vehicle license expired during this time, again a challenge to renew; thankfully I was able to renew online but for anyone without computer skills, it would be a challenge.

Our Granddaughter's graduation ceremony was different, but I must admit the teachers were very inventive to obtain satisfaction for this very memorable moment in her life that did include family.

All in all, we managed to stay safe with the sacrifices and did not suffer a great deal. I believe we are the lucky ones.

I must admit for us it was ok to do this, but for someone active like we once were, not so nice. The young families cannot enjoy social time at beaches. The homeless are struggling as well as families with no income. The seniors in home care had a rough time not being able to visit loved ones.

We are thankful for the service people who helped all of us through this time especially the nurses, paramedics, police and firefighters to keep us safe.

We must not forget the news people and our Government who kept us informed and supplied help where it was needed.

A wonderful job done by all--our hats are off to them. Thank you!

# The Zoom solution

*By Susan Jones*

During the past few months, life changed substantially.

We were asked to stay home more and isolate from others, including family and friends.

Our activities involving other people were put on hold. Our walk/run group stopped meeting on Thursday mornings.

No more car club meetings and Sunday drives to visit interesting places.

We didn't meet with a small group to cycle around Victoria and have coffee and lunch.

The book club couldn't meet in April.

My Genealogy group cancelled the monthly meeting and the Learning Centre closed.

We didn't go in and do our usual volunteer afternoon on Mondays.

No Wednesday morning bird watching. How long was this all going to last?? Some of us imagined it would only last a couple of months so not really a big deal.

But then there were signs of a it lasting longer!

A solution began to be discussed in the media. Something called Zoom! What is this we all thought!

I decided to explore further and opened the website and opened an account. I practised between my computer and my partner's computer. It seemed like an interesting solution.



Next thing I know, the car club sent around emails about giving it a try for the Executive.

Our book club tried it in April and with just four or five people on the Zoom call.

It was a great way to connect, especially with two members stuck in Mexico and another who had just moved to Alberta.

The genealogy group experimented with it and had great success, to such an extent that its use expanded.

We held AGMs for the car club and the genealogy club with lots of participation. Members began to learn how to share their screen and take turns hosting portions of the meeting.

There seemed no end to ways to use this new tool.

I started taking yoga classes on Zoom. I found it very enjoyable as now I could keep working away around the house until just before the Zoom class and then within minutes I had logged on and was doing yoga.

No driving or looking for parking. No worries about traffic. The same applies to the other clubs. Less driving and more time for other things.

This was definitely something that can help us weather this gap in getting together.

I know we will resume in person meetings and activities in time. Already we are back cycling with our small group and we try and keep the proper distance.

Same with our walk/run group. We meet in the open apart from each other and walk in small groups of friends. And the other groups will resume in time.

But for now, life is back to feeling connected.



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## The Pen



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## Good food, not so deprived

By Mary Hannah

I was asked to let you know if there was anything different I am doing during the Covid-19 isolation. I live in Saanichton and am able to walk with my dogs every day, so it is a great relief to have lots of exercise in the fresh air; social distancing on the sidewalks. Another change is that my friends and I are discussing what we are eating for dinner and exchanging some mouth-watering recipes.

We usually go to lunch together, but that has been out of the question. Recently, with the innovation of some restaurants, I have been to several for takeout, so I am able to vary my diet and not have to cook all the time. Good food always makes one feel not so deprived. I have also bought more organic foods and buy locally as the food is much fresher. Carry on everyone, and look after each other.

# REMEMBRANCE OF WAYNE DERMODY

*By Wilf Brodrick*

Husband. Father. Worker. Union Staff Representative. Seniors' Advocate. Mentor. Colleague. Friend. All of these words describe Wayne Dermody.

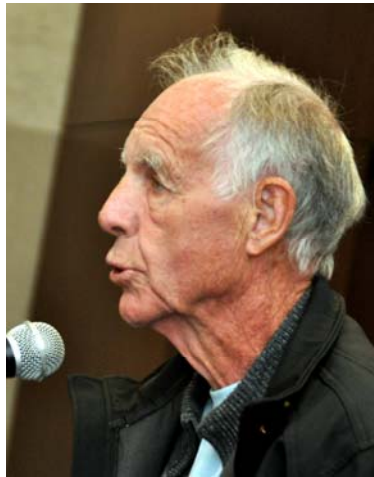
Wayne was born December 11, 1934, in Antler, Saskatchewan. Following a childhood on the prairies his family moved to BC, living in Agassiz and Vancouver before settling in Cloverdale, where Wayne lived for many years.

Wayne married his first wife Diana in 1959. They travelled and lived in New Zealand, Australia and England before returning to Cloverdale.

Their home in Cloverdale was a well-known landmark because of the beautiful sunflowers that Wayne grew in the garden every summer.

Following Diana's passing, Wayne married Carol Armstrong, whom he had known for many years through their activities with the BCGEU.

Wayne was working at the Highways Department in Cloverdale when he became an active member of the BC Government Employees' Association (BCGEA), the predecessor to the BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU).



John Fryer, former General Secretary of the BCGEU remembers Wayne as “a committed and good-natured guy who knew exactly which side he was on.

“We first met in early 1969 when he and his pal Ed Bodner were two of the people urging me to put my hat in the ring to become General Secretary of the then BCGEA.

“We worked side by side in those early days to build the BCGEU. Thoroughly decent and totally reliable, Wayne was always a ‘straight ahead’ guy. Unflappable and always willing to help, I have nothing but good memories of him over the years.”

Wayne enjoyed a long career as a Staff Representative with the BCGEU, starting with the Operational Services Component,

representing highways workers.

Terry Burgess, of the BCGREA Prince George Branch, got to know Wayne while they were both in Victoria negotiating collective agreements between the BCGEU and the Provincial Government.

Terry and Wayne often worked together throughout their years at the Union and the BCGREA.

Terry remembers that, like many others who worked with Wayne over the years, he never met Wayne's wife or children. When it came to his family, Wayne was a very private guy.

Pat Dickson, Chairperson of the BCGREA Golden Ears Branch, also first became acquainted with Wayne when they both worked as Staff Representatives for the BCGEU.

Pat remembers that Wayne would always tell you what was on his mind, but he was never mean-spirited about it and always maintained a sense of humour.

Wayne always seemed to be able to talk to people in a way that could get them to see things from a different perspective.

*(Continued on page 20)*



## Wayne Dermody

*(Continued from page 19)*

My first real contact with Wayne was when I relocated to the Lower Mainland in 1986 and he was the staff representative assigned to the Fraser Valley Area Office. Wayne was always a tireless advocate for workers and retirees in BC. He encouraged me and others to get involved in the Union, and following retirement, in the BCGREA.

Memories of his friendly smile and positive outlook never fail to improve my day.

After his retirement from the BCGEU, Wayne became an active and vocal advocate for seniors through the BCGREA. Wayne was passionate in his advocacy for decent pensions for all retirees. Representing the BCGREA, Wayne was an active member of the executive of the Council of

Senior Citizens of BC (COSCO BC), a position he held for many years. Wayne only stepped down from those activities at the end of 2019 due to health issues.

In addition to his activities with the BCGREA, Wayne was also very active in the Cloverdale Legion, including serving as a Sergeant-at-Arms. Until last November, he never missed a season of selling Remembrance Day poppies. He also played baseball into his 80s.

Wayne passed away from leukemia on May 12, 2020, at his home in Langley, BC, surrounded by his family.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, a mere six weeks later, Wayne's wife Carol Armstrong also passed away. After years of friendship, in 2018 Wayne and Carol travelled to New Zealand and were married at Christ Church. Carol, like Wayne, was a tremendous supporter of the BCGREA.

Her ability to recruit people to active membership in the BCGREA was legendary. Carol also joined Wayne selling poppies, and was active in both provincial and federal elections.

Both Wayne and Carol brightened the lives of all who knew them.

They will be missed by their many friends, relatives and colleagues.

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### Importance of Physical Distancing

As part of the initiative to stop the spread of COVID-19, health officials are asking everyone to practice physical distancing. Staying away from others is the only way to keep people from getting the disease.

No community is immune. COVID-19 can spread by people who have minimal symptoms, and while someone who seems healthy, could spread it to parents, grandparents or other people in our community.

As we encourage British

C Columbians to stay home, we are also encouraging people to practice physical distancing in residential homes and communities as much as possible.

If you must be out and about, please follow these simple tips to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Keep a physical distance of about two metres between yourself and others
- Avoid handshakes (wave instead)
- Go to the grocery store only once a week or less
- Use public transportation at off-peak times
- Send one household member on errands to reduce the number of potential exposures
- Do not have visitors

Wear a mask if you are sick with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing).

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### Guidebooks and Resources

You can order guidebooks and resources, including the Healthy Eating for Seniors Guide, the Move for Life DVD and posters on reducing sodium and sugary drinks.

## Ed Bodner

(Continued from page 8)

In '93 or '94 the student time was on the agenda for a meeting I was unable to attend. The issue was being turned down, but Ed, who had himself trained at Essondale, got the issue tabled for a subsequent meeting in case I could bring any further information that could confirm an employment link.

This 'kept the show on the road' until one of our members provided us with documentation showing his employee number while a student had remained unchanged throughout his entire career with the province. For which many psychiatric nurse graduates from Essondale owe 'thanks' to a former colleague. – **Andrew McColl**

**From the Steller's Quill, New Westminster and District 800 newsletter**

In Memoriam: Edward Stephen Bodner August 19,1930 – June 4,2020

Ed passed away in Courtenay BC at the age of 89. He was known as a true "pillar" of the BCGREA, having served as past president of the organization and more recently as past chair of Branch 200.

He wrote a comprehensive history of the BCGREA that

is available on the Provincial BCGREA website.

He is remembered as lighthearted and jovial by our members who knew him as an ambulance driver at Riverview Hospital.

He was serious about his work and Union matters, especially in securing fair wages and benefits for workers in the 1970s that are still in effect today.

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## AGM was held on Zoom



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