



The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District Branch 800
"Fall 2018" Newsletter

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A Thank You

Thank you to the executive of the Branch 800 for your service to the organization and the members of our Branch- Myrna Cresswell

As Past Chair of the New Westminster & District Branch, I wish to extend my thanks to the members of our 2017/2018 executive for your valuable service to the branch and our members. Thank you all for your support and services.

Bonnie Billington joined BCGREA in the spring of 2011 and has been appointed as an Honored member of our association. She served on the executive as a Director from 2011 to 2017. In 2017 she became 2nd Vice-Chair of the Branch responsible for Hospitality. She has worked continuously on hospitality committee, the membership recruitment and retention committee, and served as a phoner from 2011 to 2018. She also served as back up to our Phone Convenor and was Chair of the Branch recruitment and retention committee.

Verna Cadwallader joined BCGREA in 1999. She has served on the executive of the branch as a Director from 2016 until January of 2018 when she took a leave of absence. She served on the branch hospitality committee and as a phoner for the branch.

Navin Goburdhun joined BCGREA in 2006. He has served on the branch executive from 2008 to 2018 as 2nd Vice-Chair and this past year as 1st Vice-Chair. In these positions he has served as our Delegate to COSCO. For the last year he has also served as one of four bank signing authorities for the branch. In 2018, Navin was elected as a Director at Large at COSCO and serves as a member of their health committee. Navin also served as a phoner for the branch.

Sheila Halvorson joined BCGREA in 2010 and has been appointed an Honored member of the association. She has served on the branch executive as the Phone Convenor from 2011 to June 2018. She also daily reviews the obituaries in the newspapers and reports any noted deaths of members to our Membership Secretary and Goodwill Coordinator.

Gail Harmer joined BCGREA in 2007 and transferred to our branch in 2008. She has served as a Delegate to COSCO in the past. In September 2012 she stepped down from COSCO's board where she also served as housing chair. In 2017 she was elected as Secretary to our Branch and has served this last year on our board. Gail also served as a phoner for the branch.

Jean Ing joined BCGREA in 1985, is a Life member, and has been appointed as an Honored member of the association. She has served initially as Phone Convenor and later as Goodwill Coordinator. In these capacities she served on the board from 1994 to 2018. Jean has served for many years as a phoner for the branch, handles our door prize tickets and draws, sells BCGREA pins, takes attendance counts for branch meetings, and prepares a beautiful gift basket for our Christmas luncheon. She also helps coordinate Christmas cards/poinsettias deliveries with our Hospital/Home visitors.

Donna Main joined BCGREA in 2016 and was appointed as a Director of the branch in November 2017 and continued to June 2018. She was active at the board level and took responsibility for setting up our membership survey on line and in print for the newsletter and is collating the results of it.

Alfred Malcolm joined BCGREA in 2008. He has served on the executive board from January 2016 to June 2018 in the capacity of Treasurer and is one of four bank signing authorities for the branch.

Andy McColl joined BCGREA in 1999 and has been appointed an Honored member of our association. He has served continuously on the board as a Director since 2000. He served on the editorial board of our branch newsletter and later as the Editor. He also serves as ticket seller at branch meetings and functions and handles the Tom McKenna memorial collection. Andy also is a long time phoner for the branch.

Kathy Nelson joined BCGREA in 2004. She initially served as a Director on the executive for a couple of years. She was once again elected as a Director in June 2017 and has continued to the present time. She serves as our alternate delegate to COSCO. Kathy has been a long time phoner for the branch.

Rita Pollock joined BCGREA in 2006 and has been appointed an Honored member of the association. She started serving as a Director of the branch shortly after joining. She serves as branch Historian and Assistant Newsletter Editor. In January 2016 she was appointed as Membership Secretary and has served in this position since that time. She also serves as one of four bank signing authorities for the branch. Rita maintains our branch mail and email lists and emails newsletters and information approved by the chair/board for distribution to members. She also serves on the branch recruitment and retention committee and is a phoner for the branch.

Anna Tremere joined BCGREA in 2002 and has been appointed an Honored member of the association. She has served continuously on the branch executive from 2002 to 2018 as a Director and as co-Secretary for one year. She is a Home/Hospital visitor, assists with hospitality and is a long time phoner for the branch. She also provides back up to our Goodwill Coordinator during any lengthy period of absence.

Marleine Wagner joined BCGREA in 2004 and has served continuously on the branch executive as a Director from 2004 to 2018. She served as Hospital/Home visitor for the branch, assists with hospitality and is a long time phoner for the branch.

Pansy Wong joined BCGREA in 2002 and has been appointed an Honored member of the association. She served on the branch executive from 2006 to 2018 in the capacity of Secretary for 10 years, half of the Treasurer's job for one year, and has sold the tickets for our Christmas lunch for several years. Pansy also is a long time phoner for the branch.

Using Public Transit to get to Branch 800 Meetings

For those taking the SkyTrain coming from Burnaby/Lougheed/Tricities area via the Millennium Line, transfer to the Expo line, get off at the BRAID Street SkyTrain station, make your way to Bay 6, take Bus 155 which drops you off right in front of the Centennial Community Centre at WB E6 Ave @ Glenbrook stop. It takes 11-12 minutes, leaves BRAID on the :08 and :38. **Returning** back to BRAID Station – catch Bus 155 at 3:17pm on the south side of the street across from where you were dropped off.

For those coming by SkyTrain from the Vancouver area take the Expo line and get off at COLUMBIA Station, go out to 4th Street, cross over and catch Bus C4 at stop NB 4 FS. It drops you off right across from Centennial Community Centre at stop EB E6 Ave FS @ Glenbrook, leaving COLUMBIA on the :10 and :40. **Returning** back to COLUMBIA Station – catch Bus C4 at 3:10pm on the North side of the street right across from where you were dropped off.

Welcome New Members

Welcome to the following new members who have joined Branch 800 since our last newsletter:

Daniel Antoine Fortin, Valerie Irene Fortin, Kenneth Anthony Haaf, Marilyn Elizabeth Haaf, Dhanalutchmee (Queenie) Nainaar, Loganathan Nainaar, Debbie Anne McNeil, Rob Lee Simmonds, Catherine Janice Wilson and Sylvia Marguerite Zandberg.

National Pharmacare: Have Your Say

As outlined on the BC Health Coalition's webpage "*Have your say on national pharmacare*", the Federal Government has set up an Advisory Council seeking input from all Canadians on the long-awaited issue of a national drug plan. This is an opportunity to provide input on the kind of plan we want and who should be covered. On this webpage there is a link to the online consultation questionnaire, as well as a guide from the Canadian Health Coalition for filling it out. The deadline for submission is September 28, 2018.

<https://www.bchealthcoalition.ca/have-your-say>

Membership Dues Notice

Membership dues of \$20 are payable each year by January 2. Cheques should be made payable to BCGREA and mailed to the Membership Secretary for the branch: **Rita Pollock**, 302-1110 Howie Ave, Coquitlam, BC, V3J 1V1.

Those owing for 2019 or earlier years must pay by Jan 2, 2019 or be removed from membership. If this happens, to be reinstated you must reapply with a new application and current dues of \$20.

Please consider having your dues deducted automatically from your pension cheque each February. Not only will this relieve you of wondering if you have paid your dues each year but will provide the association with reliable funding. If you opt for automatic deduction, please provide the Membership Secretary with your social insurance number. Thank you.

(Your SIN is held in strictest confidence and is used by the Pension Corporation and the Association to avoid confusion between members with similar names or first initials).

In Memoriam

We regret to announce the passing of the following members since the last newsletter:

T George Anderson	Steve Biro	June Jan Bitzkal	Jan Clemson
John Cornish	Grace Bullion Dawson	Liesel Dawn Hayman	John Ingimundson
Margaret R Jones	Arthur Elliott Lawrence	Reginald William Lowry	
Judy Ann Pinkerton	Ann A Thomson		

The Executive and members of the BCGREA, New Westminster & District Branch 800 express sincere condolences to these families and their friends.

Branch 800 Facebook Page

Branch 800 has a Facebook page, where we can share information about up and coming events and announcements. This is a great way to reconnect with those that are members and no longer can make it to our meetings. If you would like to join, please Facebook messenger **Donna Dunedin Main** or **Rita Pollock** and we will add you to the page. This page has a high security setting and you cannot search for it. You must be invited to the page.

Volunteer Tutoring Opportunity

Branch 800 Members have been invited to participate in a Literacy program in the Public School system through the **One to One Literacy Society**. This non-profit agency pairs caring patient adults with struggling young readers in a number of schools in the Vancouver area including Burnaby, New Westminster and Coquitlam. If you are proficient in English and/or French and have 2-3 hours once weekly during school hours to work one-on-one with a student please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 604-255-5559 or check out the website at www.one-to-one.ca Screening, training and ongoing support is provided.

Report from the Past Chair and Chair

Greetings to you all. We hope that you all had a safe and enjoyable summer. Since our spring newsletter we have continued with both social and educational activities at the branch.

On March 20, we enjoyed our spring Potluck- thanks to our members and hospitality committee for contributions and making it a success. April 17, the branch meeting was chaired by **Navin Goburdhun**, 1st VC, where **Agnes Jackman**, Executive and Health Committee member of **COSCO** spoke on Universal Health Care. May 13, **Mark Costales** from **Johnson Insurance** brought us up to date on changes to their Extended Health for members and improvements to travel insurance coverage. On June 19, we held our Annual General Meeting with elections followed by our summer social – thanks to **Anna Tremere**, **Verna Cadwallader**, **Bonnie Billington**, **Chris Demchuk**, **Harry Demchuk**, **Magda Moricz**, **Roberta Calderwood**, **Marilyn Melville**, and **Barb Crozier** for preparation of our food and service.



Spring Potluck



Summer Social

Special thank you goes to **Pansy Wong** and **Marleine Wagner** who stepped down from the executive after many years of service with executive and to our branch.

Congratulations to our new branch executive who were declared elected by acclamation:

Chair- Bonnie Billington
1st VC - Navin Goburdhun
2nd VC- Vacant
Treasurer- Alfred Malcolm
Secretary -Gail Harmer
Membership Secretary- Rita Pollock
Phone Convener- Sheila Halvorson
Goodwill Co-ordinator – Jean Ing

6 Directors:
Verna Cadwallader
Andy McColl
Donna Main
Marilyn Melville
Kathy Nelson
Anna Tremere

Bonnie Billington modestly states that she had big shoes to fill stepping up as Chair of the Branch. The Past Chair states this is wrong, but you may judge for your self:



Same size shoes and feet!

Branch membership is currently 738. Our Treasurer, **Alfred Malcolm**, completed his year end balanced report for our Provincial body. The Treasurer's records and year end report were reviewed by the Finance and Review Committee, chaired by **Valerie Davies**, and members **Loralee Wilkin**, and **Dennis Ishikawa** who found them to be in good order and in sound financial compliance. Reports have been sent to BCGREA Provincial Treasurer. Thank you, our Treasurer and Committee, for your service.

The Executive met in early July to do some planning for the coming year. Our meeting/events this fall are:

- September 18 - Members meeting with speaker Adam Hall, a Prevention Specialist from BC Responsible and Problem Gambling Program. Adam has previously been a speaker at the branch and was most entertaining – there was lots of interaction and laughter and we look forward to more.
- October 16 -Oktoberfest (food event)
- November 20 – speaker to be determined
- December 4 – Christmas luncheon – admission by ticket only. Tickets are \$15.00 and will be sold by **Pansy Wong** (604 525-4922) between September 18 to November 20 while quantities last.

Thank you again and kudos to all our volunteers: Branch Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs and members, food and beverage volunteers and our diligent phoners.

Passing the Torch

After four years as Branch Chair, **Myrna Cresswell** is stepping down. Branch 800 has flourished under her exemplary leadership despite a gradual decline in membership. Since the main responsibility of this position is to supervise all affairs of the Branch, this job is not an easy one! Myrna has taken on all these duties with steadfast commitment. Branch finances are sound. Our General Meetings have been reorganized to facilitate more interaction among members and the business agenda streamlined. She has been diligent in record keeping that enables a smoother transition as the "torch" is passed on to the new Chair. We all say a big **Thank You** to Myrna but not farewell as she will remain on the Executive as Past Chair.

Congratulations to the following members who became Life Members in 2018 following 20 years of paid membership. Thank you for your service and achievement.

Allan Stewart Beck, John Edward (Ed) Bradbeer, Marilyn Bradbeer, Victoria A. (Vicky) Briggs,
 Marilyn Phair Broich, Elsa A. Caisip, Elaine Ruth Cameron, Gilbert Hermann Clever,
 Maureen Elizabeth Clouston, Verna Cadwallader, Joan Marguerite Clarke, David E. Cooke,
 Clayton Arthur Copping, Steve Degovics, James Docherty, Shirley Drayton, Diane E. Edwards,
 Joan (Sandra) Fairhurst, Patricia June Fingarson, Madelene A. Gill, Barbara (Gaile) Hameluck,
 Edward F. Hameluck, Constance Winifred Herrington, Brian Hollingshead,
 Elwyn Findlay (Allan) Howard, Maria Imola, John Morrison Ireland, June Valerie Ireland,
 Lorraine M. Irwin, Shirley Jewitt, Peter William Kane, Elaine Blanche Kelley, Peter Kolodiazny,
 James H. (Jim) Lawrence, Kenneth Man, Janeane Manker, Sharon Margaret Mark,
 Walter Joseph Mark, Russell (Russ) Harold Martin, Andrew McColl, Walter Fritz Miklas,
 Frances Mary Milikic, Robert Milligan, Ella Helen-Marie Neill, Leslie Edwin Neill,
 Mavis Gwendolyn Nembhard, James Jaswant S. (Jim) Pannu, Sarah Robinson,
 Alma Ruskis-Rusko, Suzanne Stewart, John (Ross) Townsend,
 Ranson (Randy) William Vandermark, Elizabeth M. Willig, Elizabeth Jean (Betty) Wynne.

The Saturday Excursions

Back in the 'fifties the bus service between my hometown and Glasgow (operated by MacBraynes, predecessor of today's Caledonian/MacBraynes) ran twice a day, departing at 9am and 3pm. The trip took about 3 hours and 20 minutes, including two 10 minute stops at Inveraray and Arrochar, arriving in the centre of Glasgow about 12:20. To return the same day one had to catch the bus departing Glasgow at 3pm. This gave you less than 3 hours to conduct your business. About once a month, on a Thursday, for the convenience of people requiring longer to conduct their affairs, MacBraynes laid on a "special bus" which departed at the usual time but did not depart Glasgow until 6 or 7 in the evening.

In the winter months, football (soccer) season, various local groups would solicit support and organize a "special bus" on a Saturday. Buses were available from MacBraynes, West Coast Motors or the town's Stag Garage. The bus would depart Lochgilphead around 9am and be scheduled to leave Glasgow for the return trip at 9pm. Staff from the mental hospital, the "A&B", would generally organize a couple of these excursions during the season. The passengers were predominantly A&B staff but non hospital personnel were not turned away. A full bus meant the cost per head was reduced. Economics 101.

The bus would be parked for the day in Robertson Street, just off Argyll Street, and seldom commenced the return trip at the scheduled time. The passengers would generally be somewhat the worse for wear after several hours in one or more pubs. The Robertson Street rendezvous point was very handy to a pub called the Gordon Arms; which was a convenient location to pass the evening until departure time. I guess that is an example of what is called "serendipity".

In the early days, before my time, it was quite common to have a "sing-song" on the road home. One or other of the more musically gifted would pack along an accordion and improvise a musical program for the passengers to sing along to. Hughie, one of the A&B staff nurses provided the music for a number of those outings until one sad evening when his accordion tumbled out of the bus. Smoking was still allowed on buses (as well as pretty much everywhere else) in those days, and to help disperse the fag, the bus would be driven along with the door and some rear windows on the opposite side of the bus opened to set up a cross breeze. Hughie had laid down his accordion while he took a refreshment break, and the vibration from the engine caused the instrument to "creep", unnoticed, towards the steps to the door.

Generally, there would come a point in the evening's "entertainment" when some drunken oaf would turn pale and mumble "Ah'm gonna be sick!" I've done it myself.

This would be the cue for all elbows, feet, shoulders, etc., to be whipped clear of the aisle, and helping hands would assist (propel might be a better word) the invalid down to the front of the bus and the driver would pull over to allow the stricken passenger to get to the side of the road.

Passengers with window seats on that side of the bus would have a grandstand view of what came next. The invalid would relieve himself of whatever he'd had for his "tea" (the evening meal, "dinner" in Scotland was at midday) fish and chips, pie and chips, or that staple of the mid twentieth century Scottish restaurant industry, the "sausage, egg and chips".

Mind you, this was a decade or two before immigration and vacations abroad induced the Scots to add variety to their diet with such exotic items as pizza and chips, lasagna and chips and curry and chips.

There was one episode where a bus driver was trying to make up time after a delayed departure. It was decided rather than stop the bus, Eddie, a burly individual, would sit on the bus steps and lean forward at the appropriate times, with an equally burly fellow passenger gripping the back of his collar to prevent him falling out. The pair established a rhythm which worked well for a mile or two. Then the other passengers noticed a titanic struggle taking place on the steps, with Eddie forcing his way up into the bus. Gripping the handrail, with all eyes on him, Eddie stared wildly up the bus and hollered something that sounded like "Ah'vloshmafuffinteef!" (**English translation:** "I have just lost my complete set of dentures!")

On the couple of excursions, I made, we used a bus from the local garage. MacBraynes was refusing to hire out a bus to any party from the A&B; some beef about the amount of clean up their bus always needed before it could go back into regular service.

In case anyone is concerned, the time I became unwell I was at no time in any danger of falling out of a moving bus. We were still parked in Robertson Street waiting for the stragglers to show up. All the driver had to do was move the bus a few yards along the kerb and people could board the bus without messing up their shoes.

After this little tale of good companions, happy hours spent in pubs, and early onset acid reflux, it may look like I was a dissolute young drunkard in my younger days. However, hindsight is 20/20, and I can see now that I was engaging in serious research, gathering the material I am now using for these little tales.