



# The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District

Branch 800

“Fall 2019” Newsletter

Contact info:

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## Welcome New Members

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

**Marion Jane Beasley**  
**Lorraine Marie Dametto**  
**Dino Lupetin**  
**John Anthony Oakley**  
**Kah Ngo Wong**

**Beverly Jean Carter**  
**Alix Elisabeth Going**  
**Douglas Stephen Matiation**  
**David John Veller**

**Gordon Brian Carter**  
**Biserka Biba Lupetin**  
**Delores Mercer**  
**Sheila Marsha Veller**

**Wan Sang Wong**

**\* Correction: Spring 2019 edition of the Quill. the notice on Shingles Vaccine - “As of October 2018 Green Shield covers.....” should be “As of *November*”**



## REMEMBERING WENDELL RATCLIFFE

Branch 800 has lost a treasured member and steadfast supporter of the BCGREA. Wendell passed away on May 26<sup>th</sup> at St. Vincent's Brock Fahrni Pavilion at the age of 94. He joined the Branch in 1990, achieving Honored status and Life Membership while volunteering in many capacities over the years. As an executive member including First Vice Chair *for over a decade*, Wendell's knowledge of *protocol and* parliamentary procedure was substantial. *He* represented the Branch as a delegate to the Provincial BCGREA *for many years filling in for our Branch Chair* who sat as an Officer at the Provincial body. *In his capacity as First Vice Chair*, he arranged our guest speakers for almost all our meetings. He is also fondly remembered for organizing *tours* at the

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Gardens *followed by pre-ordered lunch* in Vancouver's Chinatown.

## Elder Abuse and Neglect

The topic of Elder Abuse is coming to the forefront increasingly as community agencies are addressing the mistreatment of older adults with a series of workshops throughout the lower mainland. There is a wealth of information available via the links below on the definition of abuse, warning signs and how to respond accordingly when you think "It's not right".

**Verna Cadwallader** and **Bonnie Billington** attended a conference in Richmond on May 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> "**Reducing Elder Abuse in BC: Together in Action**" presented by British Columbia's **Council to Reduce Elder Abuse (CREA)**. A few 'takeaway' points from this conference: -

Elder abuse dialogue comes up in every culture. We all have a responsibility to reduce elder abuse and neglect. Addressing social isolation by cultivating relationships and promoting connections to community resources for seniors will go a long way in achieving this goal.

On June 21<sup>st</sup> the **Burnaby Seniors Resource Society** hosted an educational event at the Bonsor Community Centre in Burnaby: "**Elder Abuse – What we need to know**"

### ***Question: How do I approach a senior who I believe is being abused?***

First of all, if the person has verbalized, he or she is being abused – believe it! If that person is unable to seek assistance on their own and there is immediate danger of physical harm, **call 911** and do not risk your own safety. Otherwise try to begin a conversation; listen carefully to find out what is going on and how you may help, keeping in mind the person's right to self determination. As many seniors are very reluctant to acknowledge abuse, the line of communication needs to be kept open and support available. That is when the resources listed below such as the '**SAIL**' **Information line** is very helpful. Knowledgeable volunteers provide guidance and links to other agencies. Under the Adult Guardianship Act, Health Authorities have a legal mandate to investigate abuse and neglect. The Public Guardian may need to be involved if financial abuse is suspected or if the person is unable to comprehend financial matters and there is imminent risk to his or her assets.

### **Resources:**

**Seniors First BC** offers a **Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL): 604-437-1940** in **Metro Vancouver: 8am -8pm daily (except holidays) and toll free 1-866-437-1940.**  
Learn more at [www.SeniorsFirstBC.ca](http://www.SeniorsFirstBC.ca)

**Public Guardian and Trustee (Assessment and Investigative Services Line): local 604-660-4507. Toll free 1-877-511-4111 Email: [AIS-HCD @ trustee.bc.ca](mailto:AIS-HCD@trustee.bc.ca)**  
**Website: [www.trustee.ca](http://www.trustee.ca) Assessment and Investigation Services for links to all designated agencies.**

**BC Association of Community Response Networks website: [www.bccrns.ca](http://www.bccrns.ca)**

**BC Caregivers Support Line 1-877-520-3267**

**'ROADS TO SAFETY Legal Information for Older Women in BC'** a comprehensive handbook for victims of abuse. Available at [www.westcoastleaf.org](http://www.westcoastleaf.org) Select the title then click on **Roads to Safety**

## Report from the Chair

First of all, I would like to thank the Branch 800 Executive for their support and contributions to the Branch throughout my first year as Chair. The Board thanks **Gail Harmer** as she steps down after two years as Secretary. We welcome **Dennis Ishikawa** as a new Director on the Board, and he has volunteered to be one of our delegates to COSCO (Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations) along with **Navin Goburdhun** and **Myrna Cresswell**. We thank **Donna Main** for stepping into the Executive position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair.

## 2019/2020 Executive Board



Left to right: Rita Pollock (Membership Chairperson), Alfred Malcolm (Treasurer), Navin Goburdhun (First VC), Verna Cadwallader (Director) Andy McColl (Director), Jean Ing (Goodwill Convener), Donna Main (Second VC) – behind Donna is Anna Tremere (Director), Bonnie Billington (Chair), Kathy Nelson (Director), Dennis Ishikawa (Director) and Sheila Halvorson (Phone Convener). Absent from the photo: Marilyn Melville (Director) and Myrna Cresswell (Past Chair).

**HELP WANTED: The position of Branch 800 Secretary is vacant.** The main duties of this position are to record minutes at both the Board and General Meetings and conduct correspondence as directed by the Board. Please consider volunteering as this is not an onerous job. Meanwhile we thank **Cheryl Hewitt** who has offered to help out with minutes at the General Meetings when she is available.

In April, **Shawn Marsolais** inspired us with her resilience and resourcefulness, speaking on *Living with Vision Loss*. In May, **Salima Jamal from the Public Guardian & Trustee's office** did an excellent presentation on *Personal Planning and Resources*.

Following the election of officers at the AGM on June 18th, Branch 800 hosted our annual "Summer Social" with special refreshments prepared by volunteers organized by **Chris Demchuk**. Thanks to **Myrna Cresswell** and all others who helped with purchasing, preparing and serving. We sent a letter of appreciation to **Real Canadian Superstore on King George Highway in Surrey** for **generously donating two \$50 gift cards** that were given as extra door prizes. We were happy to receive a door prize donation from **Carol Erickson** as well - a bottle of nice wine!

Thanks to some excellent speakers and special events, the attendance at Branch meetings has remained steady. In spite of inclement weather at the February General Meeting, our members turned out to enjoy the **Burnaby Scottish Country Dancers** and many got up to join in.



Donna Main



Burnaby dancer with Terry Fitzgerald

Our Branch was involved in the recently released **BCGREA recruitment video** thanks to the participation of **Myrna Cresswell** (Past Chair) and **Donna Main** (Director). This video will become part of the PSPP pre-retirement seminar agenda and is available to members on the **Provincial website** at [www.bcgrea.ca](http://www.bcgrea.ca) Please review the video and pass it on to others who could be potential members. In order to send onward, a link is available at: <https://vimeo.com/346614899>

**Myrna Cresswell, Alfred Malcolm** and **I** attended the Provincial Director's Meeting and scheduled workshops and in Kelowna on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. We are happy to report that Branch 1500 (Kelowna/Vernon) has been restarted and Branch 1200 in Victoria that was on the verge of folding, now has new board members thanks to the assistance of the Provincial Executive. Engaging new volunteers into executive positions remains the biggest challenge we face as an organization and we thank all those who step forward. Further details on the Provincial Director's Meeting and future plans are available via *The Pen- Spring 2019* on the Provincial website under *News*.

Branch 800 executive members continue to attend Public Service pre-retirement seminars in order to connect with future members by handing out BCGREA pamphlets and branch information. Our "Benefits of Membership" handout has been updated in July.

Thank You to the **Finance Review Committee: Val Davies (Chair), Dennis Ishikawa and Lorelee Wilkin** for their diligent review of our financial records in July. Branch 800 finances remain sound and well managed thanks to the efforts of the Executive and in particular our Treasurer **Alfred Malcolm** for balancing the books!

Once again, Branch 800 members are invited to participate in a literacy program in the Public-School system through the **ONE TO ONE Literacy Society, a non profit organization that assists emerging young readers in the Public School system**. These elementary students are paired with qualified volunteers in the Vancouver area including Burnaby, New Westminster and Coquitlam. If you have 2-3 hours to spare once a week during school hours, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at **604-255-5559**. Find out more information and access the application form at <http://www.one-to-one.ca> Free screening and training sessions for new volunteers will be held in September and October.

### What's ahead?

- ❖ **September 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 - Branch meeting** - A representative from our provincial partner *Hearing Life Canada* will provide lunch and an educational presentation "Lunch and Learn."
- ❖ **October 15<sup>th</sup> Branch meeting - Fall Social food event**
- ❖ **November 19<sup>th</sup> Branch meeting - Speaker Shianne Bains; Topic: Falls Prevention**
- ❖ **December 3<sup>rd</sup> - This year our Annual Christmas Luncheon will be a hot turkey dinner buffet** presented by *Sugar Mountain Catering* in New Westminster. **Tickets - \$25** for sale beginning at the Sept 17<sup>th</sup> Branch Meeting and while quantities last. We have a limit of 64 seats at the meeting room in the Centennial Community Center. No tickets available at the door. **Contact Jean Ing: 604-524-6770.**

### 2019 Life Members

Congratulations to the following members who achieved Life Member status this year:

**Camilo Pengeo Apelo-Cruz, Franca Guerrin Babuin, Janet Barnes, Dorothy M. Brisco, Carol Ann Colins, Roberta Carol Drinovz, Bea Fraser, Robert H. Fraser, Thomas (Tom) B. Hardy, Alfred Douglas Jenkins, William Roy Jones, Robert Woodford Kelley, Marina Krewenchuk, Marie Lavie Ca Labourdette, James Frank (Jim) Law, Frances Ewe Lowe, Karen Rebecca Munro, Elven Garnet Sims, Ronald Alexander Smyth, D. Sheila Thompson, D. Bruce Webster.**

### 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.

### Milestones

Congratulations to **Harry & Christine Demchuk** who celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 27.

And, on a personal note, Editor **Andy McColl** got acquainted with his most recent great-grandchildren, Zoe, now aged 4, and Elijah, born in February, and Thomas who was born during this year's visit to Scotland.

### **The Chief by Andy McColl**

I grew up in the grounds of the Argyll & Bute Mental Hospital in rural Scotland. The job title of the 'man in charge' was Physician Superintendent, but to the hospital staff, and their families, the incumbent was generally referred to as 'the Chief'.

The institution was located about a mile uphill from the town and, with its associated staff housing, was practically a separate community. The town had grown since the hospital was built, but in the 'forties the hospital families still referred to the children of the town as 'the village kids'. The townspeople referred to the hospital kids as 'the asylum kids', and our parents referred to us as 'the cottage kids'.

I walked that mile both ways at dinner time (noon till 1pm). I was a picky eater, and for my first couple of years schooling my parents got repeated reports that I was only picking at the meals served in the school canteen. When I was seven, my parents gave me an ultimatum, if I didn't eat the school meals, I would have to walk the mile home and back during the school dinner hour! I leaped at the chance!

At the age of 10, I and my cronies' accumulated knowledge of labour relations could have been written on the back of a postage stamp, but we knew that people could 'get the sack' (i.e. 'fired'); and also the adage that 'tied houses have slippery doorsteps'. (A 'tied house' was a house that came with one's job, as with the staff who lived on the hospital grounds; and dismissal meant you had to vacate your home.)

The unspoken 'golden rule' for us cottage kids was 'don't p\*\*\* off anyone with the power to sack our parents'. We therefor did our best to stay beneath the Chief's radar. The Chief, from '47 or '48 to '53, was a tall, lean serious looking fellow, a Dr R-----.

As kids we had a different idea of fun than our parents. Much of what we viewed as fun was termed 'mischief' by the adults. We knew our own parents had a sense of humour, but, at the age of ten, figured being an adult was a serious business, and most adults had any sense of fun squeezed out of them. It stood to reason that the higher up in the hierarchy, eg 'the Chief', the more likely we were to find someone who's sense of fun had evaporated long ago.

When we encountered an adult on our way to have 'fun', we would lower our voices, stop speaking altogether, apart from a meek 'hello Mr. So and So' as we sidled by, and once passed, resumed speaking at normal volume, confident that the adult didn't suspect a thing. (Smarter than your average brick?)

There were periodic edicts, relayed to us by our parents, that we were not to play in certain locations; one particular area being the hospital farm. Fat chance! My family had lived in apartments in the farm buildings from 1944 to 1949 and this was me being denied my birthright.

I had personal experience of the kind of unfortunate incidents that can occur on a farm. When we were nine, I and another 'cottage kid' explored the back side of the piggery. We had never visited that part before as the farm's dungheap was located there. There was a narrow space between the dungheap and



the piggery wall. And that year conditions were dry enough that we could avoid the muck. We found a 'loose box', a penned enclosure with a roof. Looking in over the dutch door we found about 10 or 12 small pigs. They were about a foot tall and stood staring at us with their little pig eyes. (It is a scientific fact that pigs can communicate telepathically and exert mind control over nine year old boys.)

Not many weeks before, as newborns, they would have looked so cute lying attached to their mothers teats like a row of little pink piano keys. We were not daft enough to try petting them with the sow present. But here there were no sows, and these eyes were just imploring us to come and pet them. We undid the bolt and I had no sooner put one foot over the threshold than with one synchronized lunge the b\*gg\*rs jumped us.

The hospital's 'farm squad', the patients who had work assignments on the farm, would congregate at the farm's cart sheds at the start of the day. The horses would be harnessed to the carts and the workers would wrap sackcloth gaiters around their lower pantlegs to protect from mud, and at the end of the day the process would be reversed.

From the back side of the piggery out to the front of the cart sheds we had to run an 'S' curve and were in the lead as we came into view of the farm squad finishing their day. Peter, one of the patients, had heard our running feet and was coming to see what was up. "Whit are yez runnin' fur?" It is 70 years ago but I can still see his gaze going past us, his mouth dropping open and his eyebrows going halfway up his forehead. We didn't stop to answer him, he'd already figured it out and we needed our breath for running.

We learned later that it took the farm squad an hour to round up all the pigs and they were late going in for their evening meal.

One of the farm's attractions was the delivery of bales of bedding straw in the spring. There were always several fields of oats harvested each year. The straw was used as bedding for the cattle, pigs and the horses. In the spring, a load or two of bales would be brought in to ensure the bedding didn't run out before the next year's harvest was in. These bales were rectangular, a bit over 3 feet long, almost 2 feet wide and about a foot and a half deep. They were generally stacked in one of the cart sheds. Back then, in the course of an afternoon, three 10 year olds could convert that solid stack of bales into a warren of tunnels with at least one compartment where two 10 year olds could sit upright.

In 1950, the bales were dropped off not at the cart shed, but at the hayshed which was about 300 yards away from the farm. We quickly found that instead of a neat stack of bales on the cartshed's level floor, the bales had been dropped off in an untidy pile and were too unstable for building tunnels. We played instead in the hay. The hayshed was a large structure of steel beams with corrugated iron walls and a curved roof. The walls formed the back and one side, the front and other side was left open. The shed was fitted with a grapnel on a pulley. When the horse drawn rick lifters (like flat decked carts) were backed into place, two 'bites' with the grapnel and pulley would pack the entire hayrick in the back of the hayshed. A notable feature of the hayshed was its acoustics. The curved roof created substantial echoes which were focused out the open side of the shed. About 40 feet from the open side was a small wooded area. These trees bounced the original echoes back to the hayshed, and so on. Our voices were echoing out over the nearby hill when we spotted the Chief, his dog at his heels and his shotgun under his arm, coming in off the hill from a morning's shooting. This prompted an abrupt silence.

We watched to see if he would go on past, or if he would turn in at the gate. Naturally, he turned in; so, we quickly buried ourselves under layers of hay. The Chief and his dog, some kind of terrier, climbed up in the hay looking for us. If he spotted any quivering patches, he never let on. After a couple of minutes of this inspection, master and dog returned to the ground. A minute or so later, Iain, my chief partner in crime at that age, sat up, "Its alright boys, he's gone". Then we heard from the hayshed's open side "Come down out of there this minute or I'll put a bullet through you!" We could tell by the looks on each others' faces that we had heard correctly!

This was an era when if you misbehaved out of the home, you got punished at home. I remember thinking I wasn't going to be able to talk my way out of this one. ("The bullet must've been passing, and I accidentally stepped in front of it?" Funny how at that age the truth was always the last resort. "The Chief threatened to shoot us!" wasn't going to go over any better). Then he fired his shotgun. He got full benefit out of the acoustics. (Which I think was the whole point of the exercise). The echoes were still rattling and roaring around the hayshed when we got down to ground level and were pressing ourselves against the corrugations on the outside of the side wall. We heard him climbing back up into the hay. I was closest to the open end (not that I was bravest, just the slowest) when the dog stuck its head round the corner, looked at us and went away again. We had seen a couple of *Lassie* movies by that time, so we knew the beast had gone to fetch its master. We ran as if our lives depended on it (as far as we knew, they did!). I remember that field had been planted in potatoes that year. Tough running.

Safe behind a wall at the foot of the field we watched him loitering there for 15 or 20 minutes, then we went home for our dinners. Don't know how long Dr R----- stayed there.

A few months later, during the school summer holidays, Iain and I had another run in with him. Dr R--- had the use of a large house with its own grounds. And garden. That garden was the only place I knew of that had gooseberry bushes. And was the source of the only fresh gooseberries I have ever tasted. (Most local gardens were owned by people who hated kids – they had crab apple trees. Hard sour little objects that loosened your teeth and gave you a tummy ache). After sampling the gooseberries, we went to check a greenhouse built against the side of the house. The rear driveway was crushed rock and you can't walk on that stuff without making noise, believe me. Dr R----- came racing out of the house, so, what else? we ran. Once in the trees I tripped on a pile of prunings and grass clippings and was pounced on. When Iain saw I was caught he came back to face the music with me. What were we doing there? We were just having a look round. Where did we live? I didn't want my father to get the sack for my misdeeds, so I said we lived in the village. What were our names? I gave the name of a boy a year ahead of us in school. Iain took his cue from that and named another town boy. We then got a stern lecture about the grounds being private property and to do our future exploring in the 'village'.

Then he let us go. We'd pulled the wool over his eyes again.

A week or two later, when school started up after the holidays, came the moment I'd been dreading. During the stress of the interrogation it had slipped my mind that on my walks home from school for my dinner, at least two days out of five I would meet him driving home for *his* dinner.

The first day I encountered him I told myself my ten year old's version of 'Oh s\*\*\*\*'. When he drove past me, he gave me a wave, straight-faced. And thereafter when we met on that stretch of road, we would exchange waves.



My father wasn't the only hospital employee in the family. My mother, trained as a seamstress/dressmaker, was the hospital's sewing room supervisor. Part of the daily routine of both the male and female divisions was each ward and patient work area would be visited by a doctor and a member of the nursing administration - 'the Visit'.

That time in the garden was the only time we ever exchanged words, but when I took sick with rheumatic fever in February of '53, a few months before Dr R----- moved on from the A & B, whenever he was on 'the Visit' he would make a point of asking my mother after my health. But for several weeks in the spring of 1950 he had three kids convinced we'd had a close brush with death!

### **In Memoriam**

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

Pauline Annette Andrews	Glen Gabriel Berkey	Stanley Balfour Clarke
Herbin Allene Collens	Joyce Mary Hall	Maureen Emily Gwendolyn Findlay
Sylvia Foncette	Douglas Frederick Metzler	Joseph Clarence Morneau
Anita D. Page	Wendell Marvin (Del) Ratcliffe	Margret J. Ross
William Walter Smith	Christina M. Spanner	Victor L. Wilson

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

### **Membership Dues Notice**

**Membership dues of \$20 are payable each year by January 1,** unless your dues are already deducted every year by automatic renewal. Cheques should be made payable to BCGREA and mailed to the Membership

Secretary:

**Rita Pollock**, 302-1110 Howie Ave, Coquitlam BC V3J 1V1

Those owing for 2019 or earlier must pay by Jan 1, 2020 or be removed from membership. \*we have withheld removing people from membership this year only if they bring themselves up to date by January 1, 2020.

# **2019 Contact Information upon the death of a BC Public Services Pensioner, their spouse or their beneficiary.**

## **A) Death of a Pensioner**

British Columbia Public Services Pension Services (PSPP) – Victoria.

Toll free in Canada and US: Retired members number: 1-866-876-6777 or General number: 1-800-665-3554

Information to have on hand if you have it when making call:

- Pensioner's full name and "Person ID" (this is an eight digit number found on the top of all past correspondence received from PSPP)
- Social Insurance Number (SIN) of pensioner
- Date of Birth of pensioner
- Date of Death of pensioner
- 

## **B) Death of Pensioner's Spouse or Beneficiary**

PSPP must be notified upon the death of a pensioner's spouse or beneficiary to change the beneficiary, otherwise any remaining benefits will be paid to the pensioner's estate. Benefit coverage may also have to be adjusted.

## **C) Death Certificate**

A copy of the death certificate is also required in both cases.

## **D) PSPP website: - [www.pspp.pensionsbc.ca](http://www.pspp.pensionsbc.ca)**

Click on "**Your Pension**" – scroll down and click on "**Death & Death Benefits**".

## **INFORMATION OF OTHER CONTACTS TO BE CONSIDERED**

**1) OLD AGE SECURITY & CANADA PENSION PLAN:** 1-800-277-9914

[www.servicescanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicescanada.gc.ca)

**2) MSP AND PHARMACARE:** Lower Mainland 604 683-7151;

toll free in BC 1 800-663-7100 [www2.gov.bc.ca](http://www2.gov.bc.ca)

**3) GREEN SHIELD CANADA:** 1-888-711-1119 [www.greenshield.ca](http://www.greenshield.ca) and/or other extended health benefits and dental coverage provider that you may have.

**IMPORTANT DOCUMENT- RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

**April 2, 2019**