



The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District Branch 800

"Spring 2016" Newsletter

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Christmas Luncheon by Bonnie Billington

The Annual Christmas Luncheon for 2015 was held at the Best Western Coquitlam Inn on December 1st 2015 with 78 members attending. Thanks to all who volunteered to make this annual event a success.. Due to the generosity of our members, \$235 was collected for the Share Society Food Bank along with 275 lbs of non-perishable food items.

A Change of Venue for 2016

This Luncheon has been subsidized by Branch 800 for many years, but due to shrinking revenues from fewer members the cost overrun is no longer sustainable. At 2016 prices, the traditional "turkey dinner" luncheon is now out of reach for our budget and far above the \$25 ticket cost per member. After a thorough review by the Christmas Luncheon Committee and Branch 800 Executive, the option of a Deli Buffet Christmas Luncheon was brought forward to the Membership and approved at the February 16th General Meeting. We have secured an estimate from a local Deli Catering Company that will provide a very good luncheon at a reasonable cost that will be reflected in lower ticket prices this year. The plan is to host the event on December 6th in the River Room at the Centennial Community Centre where we hold our regular meetings. We will continue with the raffles, door prizes and food bank donations.

Essondale/Riverview Hospital Nursing Annuals

The Riverview Hospital Historical Society is endeavoring to complete their collection of Annuals. All years have been collected except 1952, 1965 and 1970.

If anyone would be willing to donate their Annual or allow us to make a copy it would be greatly appreciated.

Also, if anyone from the 1970 graduation class could let me know what letters are on their graduation pin. Anna. a_tremere@shaw.ca 604-928-3294

Milestones

Harry and Terry Vagg, married in 1958, are celebrating 58 years of "wedded bliss" (**Harry's** words) on August 2nd. In September the couple will be in Quebec City for a military reunion, then cruising on the Trent Canal. Congratulations to them both!

Welcome New Members

Welcome to the following new members who have joined Branch 800 since our last newsletter.
David (Kent) Anderson, Blair M. A. Browning, Lai Chee (Christine) Dias, Beatrice (Eileen) Hubert, Kenji Mizoguchi and Julie Arlene Smith.

Membership Dues

Membership dues 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 Avenue, Coquitlam, BC V3J 1V1

Members owing dues for 2016 and earlier years must pay soon or be removed from membership. If this happens, to be reinstated you must reapply with a new application and current dues. 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 Social Insurance Number is held in strictest confidence and is used to avoid confusion between members with similar names or first initials by us and by Pension Corporation.)

In Memoriam

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

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Audrey Lenore Perry | Norman Pealey | Barbara Ellen Anderson |
| Dr. David E. L. Temple | George Pitkethly (Dod) Burnett | |
| Barbara Noreen Colville | Frank Nelson Daniels | Elca Cynthia Patterson |
| William Arthur Haynes | Rolfe Charles G. Hubert | Christina Weston |
| Dan Merchoff | Simone Fraser | Joanne Kathleen Birnie |
| Harriet Warden | Dave Mackinnon | |

The Executive and Members of the BCGREA, New Westminster and District Branch 800 Express sincere condolences to these families and friends.

Branch Report from the Chair

Greetings to you all. Since our Fall Newsletter, the branch has continued with the planned workshops/speakers and social activities. In November, we had a COSCO workshop on Healthy Eating. In December, we held our Christmas lunch event in a private room at the Best Western in Coquitlam.



Margaret Rockcliffe, Honoured and Life member



Jean Ing, Goodwill Convenor



Sheila Halvorson, Phone Convenor and Rita Pollock, Membership Secretary



In January, we started our year with a speaker on “Executorship and Estate Planning.” The speaker was engaging and humorous and provided most of us with some new information. In February, our member Gail Harmer presented an informative and important COSCO workshop “Navigating the Health Care System”. In March we enjoyed a St. Patrick’s themed food event with opportunity for members to donate food and to socialize. Green hats, shirts, and sweaters, abounded with green jewellery, and leis. There were shamrock scarves, bow ties, etc. An array of delicious food was donated from sweet to savoury and included fruits, and vegetables; some of it green or decorated with shamrocks or leprechauns. There was lots of chatter and laughter.

Speakers are planned for April, and May. Our April speaker will be Nick Cheng who will provide information on change to Income tax laws. Our summer social will once again be held in June. Plans are underway for a further food event at our Annual General Meeting in October and additional workshops or speakers in September and November. On December 6, 2016 we are planning a ticketed Christmas buffet lunch at the Centennial Community Centre.

Our membership on March 15 was 814 which included some new members.

We welcome all members to join us at our meetings. The meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, except July, August and December at the River Room in the Centennial Community Centre, 65 E. 6th Avenue New Westminster (adjacent to the Canada Games Pool at E. 6th Avenue and Cumberland). The meetings start at 1:00 pm sharp

Resolutions to Branch 800 Annual General Meeting

Take notice that the Annual General Meeting of the New Westminster and District Branch #800 of BCGREA will be held on October 18, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. in the River Room at the Centennial Community Centre at E. 6 Avenue and Cumberland Street in New Westminster BC.

Resolutions to amend the Branch Regulations recommended by the Branch Executive, as set out below; will be considered at the meeting.

1. Article V: MEETINGS, 2), states, in part,

“2) The annual General Meeting of the Branch shall be held in October at which time the Executive shall be elected to take office the following January.”

Motion to amend, effective January 1, 2017, by Striking “October” and substituting “June” and striking “the following January” and substituting “August 1”.

If passed the new regulation, effective January 1, 2017 would state:

“2) The annual General Meeting of the Branch shall be held in June at which time the Executive shall be elected to take office the following August 1.”

RATIONALE: BCGREA fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30 each year. A change in the Annual General meeting to June would coincide with the fiscal year and allow the branch Treasurer to account only for the transactions performed in one fiscal year. There would also then be a transition to the new executive for a new fiscal year. Under the existing regulation, the change in executive occurs in the middle of a fiscal year. July and August are typically non branch meeting months. The month of July would provide time for the Treasurer to prepare the fiscal year end report to Provincial BCGREA and have the Branch records audited/reviewed by the Finance Audit/Review Committee before sending both reports of the Treasurer and the Finance Review Committee to the Provincial BCGREA Treasurer. There also would be time for the records to move or transition from the outgoing executive to the incoming executive to prepare for the new fiscal year.

2. If the above motion 1. passes, the consequential motion to amend will be considered below:

Article IV: Officers and Duties, 1) Officers, states in part,

“The Executive shall be elected annually at the October meeting and assume office during the following calendar year starting January 1st.”

Motion to amend: effective January 1, 2017, by striking “October” and “during the following calendar year starting January 1st.” and substituting “June” and “in the same calendar year starting August 1st.”

If passed, the regulation **effective January 1, 2017** would read:

“The Executive shall be elected annually at the June meeting and assume office in the same calendar year starting August 1st.”

3. Article VI, FINANCE,4)

Motion to amend item:

“4) Signing Officers shall be any two of the following:

(a) Treasurer, (b) Chairperson, (c) 1st Vice Chairperson “

By adding:

“(d) Membership Secretary”.

If amended, the new regulation, effective October 18th, 2016, would then read:

“4) Signing Officers shall be any two of the following:

(a) Treasurer, (b) Chairperson, (c) 1st Vice Chairperson, (d) Membership Secretary”

RATIONALE: Travel distances between executive, illness and vacation absences, all contribute to difficulties of timely bill payment. The additional signing authority would provide greater flexibility in dealing with finances of the branch. The Branch Membership Secretary receives membership dues from the members, issues receipts for cash payments and deposits the cash and cheques in the bank.

4. Resolution on Life Membership

The board recommends that it be resolved that:

“Life Membership in the BCGREA is recognized by New Westminster & District Branch, by presenting a Certificate of Life Membership to a Member at a Regular Monthly meeting, or failing that, by mailing it to them.”

RATIONALE: On payment of dues for a period of 20 years, life membership is awarded to dues paying members. Effective January 1, 2010, life members continue to pay membership dues under approved motion of the Provincial body.

Currently the branch has recognized Life membership with presentation of a pin and a certificate. Life membership pins are purchased from the Provincial body at the cost of \$3.00 a pin. Occasionally the pin and certificate are presented in person but in the vast majority of cases they are mailed to members.

The question of the value of a life membership pin to a member has been raised and is now presented to the membership to decide whether the pins should continue to be purchased and mailed to members. If the motion passes, pins will no longer be purchased and presented to members on attaining life membership. Life membership will be recognized by presenting or mailing a certificate of life membership.

Chair Report from the March 23, 2016 BCGREA Provincial Director’s Meeting

The Provincial Director’s meeting was called to order by the new President, **Ken Pendergast**.



Ken presented a bouquet of flowers and a plaque of appreciation to the Past President **Sarjit Manhas** who completed 5 years in the chair at the October 2015 AGM.

Speakers at the meeting included:

1. **Isobel Mackenzie, Office of the Seniors' Advocate** who reported demographic information that shows that we are not the grey Tsunami that is being reported to be requiring services. In fact, 93% of seniors in our province live independently and 2/3 of seniors over 85 live on their own and on their own dime. She spoke about many seniors who are not aware of premium assistance for MSP or possible entitlement for SAFER (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters). She reported that BC is also lagging behind in provision of Physical and Recreational therapy in residential care, and spoke about the family caregivers being in distress because of need for support services.

Her findings and recommendations are too numerous to report here. Members can access her very informative report "Monitoring Seniors Services 2015" on line at her website: <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca>. Alternatively, a copy may be requested by calling her office at: Toll-free: 1-877-952-3181 or in Victoria: 250-952-3181.

The BC Seniors' Guide is also available on line in PDF format at the Office of the Seniors' Advocate website or at www.gov.bc.ca/seniorsguide. It is expected to be available in Chinese, French, and Punjabi later this spring. Printed copies of the English guide can be obtained by calling the above phone numbers.

2. **Tom Martell of Martell Insurance Services** spoke of the availability of Guaranteed Life Insurance for ages 50 to 85 through Manulife (endorsed by BCGREA). Brochures will be available at our Branch meetings or can be obtained by calling Martell Insurance Services in Victoria at 250-391-9933 or toll free 1- 877- 228-1501.

3. **Lisa Hansen, Johnson Inc.** spoke about a potential flexible benefit program with programs for dental care, extended health care and travel insurance. Premium information was not available but the possibility will be reviewed by Branch directors at our next meeting.

MSP Premiums. A motion was passed by the Directors' to ask the Provincial Government to handle MSP coverage and premiums in the income tax system rather than by payment of premiums on the basis of the current flat rate system for people with income over \$30,000 annually as it is not equitable and we are the only province in Canada that pays for health care in this manner. In other words, we have added our voices to those growing numbers who have been signing petitions and those in the BC Health Coalition who have called for the abolition of premiums in B.C. for quite some time now.

Gerry Gosling, Abbotsford Branch, reported that the branch is considering what action to take leading to possible dissolution of the branch because of the lack of members willing to stand as executive. Correspondence will be going to members later this year.

A proposed resolution will be brought to the October Provincial AGM for amendment to Dues section of the Provincial Policy and Procedure which would allow a new cash pay applicant going on to dues check off with deduction of dues from the February pension cheque to be forgiven dues deduction in the initial year as an incentive to encourage members to have dues taken off their pension cheques. This resolution will be reviewed by the branch directors and members before the October Provincial AGM.

All Officers provided written reports, including Lawrence Johnson, our member Trustee with the Pension Corporation. The Provincial AGM will be held October 19, 2016.

Cattle Drive

Up until the nineteen sixties my hometown had a regular livestock auction market. Jimmy, one of our Charge Nurses in the local mental hospital, had a little sideline going, helping out at the sales when it coincided with one of his days off. He'd move animals back and forth between the pens and the auction ring and was well known to the farmers in the district. On this occasion a farmer from about 4 or 5 miles from town arranged for Jimmy to bring three cows in to the market place on the day prior to the sale. This meant a round trip of 9 or 10 miles on foot.

Jimmy talked John, one of the student nurses, into accompanying him. On their way past Cairnbaan the pair stopped in at the Cairnbaan Hotel for some liquid refreshment. When they resumed their journey they bought a half bottle of scotch to help them on their way. This is what the Scots call a "cairry oot" (carry out, to you Canadians). They reached the farm, picked up the cows and started them on the road back to town. All they had to do was swig on their bottle and walk behind the cows to keep them moving.

When they turned in at the "T" junction to take the "back way" into town, the cairry oot had done its worst. Jimmy's legs gave out and he slumped down at the roadside. John was a husky young fellow and his legs were still in working order. His mind was still functioning too; after a fashion! In those days this junction was out on the edge of town. The county's public works yard was on the northeast corner and the southeast corner was a wooded area bordered with a drystone dyke. (This is a wall constructed of different sized stones without the use of mortar.) John figured the town gossips would have a field day if Jimmy was to be seen dead drunk at the roadside.

John manhandled Jimmy over a fallen section of dyke and into the wood where he crawled into a small depression and passed out.

John was concerned that a passing truck driver or the passengers on the school bus would still see Jimmy so he covered him with small branches and fallen leaves. (Editor's note: I am not making this stuff up!) John took the cows on into the auction grounds, shut them in a pen then returned to the spot where Jimmy lay concealed. His problem now was how to get his drinking buddy safely home.

John arrived out by the County Yard just as one of the work lorries (what the Brits call trucks) was returning for the end of the day. Trucks were smaller in those days, and there were no such things as crew cabs. One passenger could fit in the cab with the driver, and the rest of the crew sat in the "hap". This was a canvas canopy stretched over a wooden frame in the truck bed immediately behind the cab and furnished with a bench extending the width of the hap. In a matter of minutes the work crew had piled out of the truck, exhumed Jimmy from his "hidey-hole" and stowed him in the back of the truck; along with their tools and the granite chips they used for road repairs.

A short time later Jimmy's neighbours were entertained by the sight of a county lorry pulling up in front of his house; and the work gang carrying his senseless form into the house where they helped his mortified wife put him to bed.

The gossips had a field day.