



# Victoria Branch Newsletter

**B.C. Government Retired Employees Association**

Editor: Carol Cullimore

November 2017

## BCGREA DIRECTORS' MEETING

It is my honour, on behalf of Branch Chair Sarjit Manhas, to provide you with the Chair's Report from the Annual General Meeting.

The meeting opened with the traditional and respectful two minutes of silence for deceased members.

Guest speakers were Jared Fu, Accounts Manager and Soraya Vincent, Client Services Supervisor; Green Shield Canada and Lisa Hansen and Marc Costales, Johnson Inc.

Prior to the meeting members were requested to send in questions concerning coverage provided by Green Shield which were then forwarded on to them and formed the basis of their presentation. Topics covered included: plan has not changed; reasonable and customary amounts; diabetic test strips; hormone replacement therapy compound drugs; travel coverage and options for spousal coverage on plan.

Johnson Inc. announced that two new products will be available in the new year: a partnership with Express Scripts Canada to enhance processing group benefits and Enhance Members Online Journey - ability to use mobile devices.

Nanaimo Branch 600 submitted a resolution regarding Post Retirement Group Benefits: "Therefore be it resolved that the BCGREA urge both the Government of British Columbia and the British Columbia Government and Service Employees Union as Plan Partners to work together to design Post Retirement Group Benefits that meet the needs of plan members including sustainable funding." The Resolution passed

and the Provincial office will be forwarding the appropriate letter.

Election of Officers:

President - Ken Pendergast, acclamation

1st Vice President - Art Kaehn, acclamation

2nd Vice President - Carrie Mlcahy, acclamation

Barbara West

Secretary and Acting Chair, Victoria Branch



The evening before the AGM, Table Officers met to discuss a number of items relevant to proceedings the next day.

Earlier this year (April) Directors held a meeting to discuss decreasing membership. During my presidency, a report entitled "Recruitment and Retention" was prepared by a Committee led by Reiner Augustin, Membership Secretary of the Shuswap/Columbia (Salmon Arm) Branch. It has been revived and since April a sub-committee, with broad representation had their first meeting the evening before the AGM.



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An update was given to the Table Officers and the Table Officers look forward to hearing about further deliberations and positive steps which will be shared with all branches of our Association. In fact, updates will be posted on our website at <http://www.bcgrea.ca>.

We all received confirmation and looked forward to hearing from the Green Shield representative. In this regard, I received 50+ questions from Branch members by email. Several were eliminated because of misunderstanding on part of pensioner; care provider not fully cognizant of process to follow up claims; and pensioner not making direct contact with GS by phone or not emailing their query directly (on GS website, click on "Contact Us"). I received no questions in meetings. I have decided to do what the rep did. Questions were "grouped" and responses given. I will ask our Branch Email Director to send them out.

During deliberations at the AGM, our President asked me to speak about Bill C-27 *An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985*. This is a Bill which was Tabled in the House of Commons in October last year. It's a very complicated Bill which was formerly Tabled by the Conservative Government and later (when it received tremendous opposition) dropped. There has been a total lack of consultation with Canadians and other agencies across Canada. In March of this year, the Federal Government, due to the hue and cry, froze the Bill in its Second Reading. It's still on the Table as pending legislation. For your information, the following is the Motion -

**"M/S by Sarjit Manhas/Lawrence Johnson THAT the BCGREA write to the Federal Minister of Finance with copies to the Prime Minister and BCGEU and BC Minister Responsible for the Public Service Pension Plan strongly opposing the passage of Bill C-27 since we are a "defined" pension plan and we have not been clearly informed how this Bill will impact us. CARRIED"**

I also had the honour of drafting the letter for our President.

Sarjit Manhas

Immediate Past President and Chair, Victoria Branch 1200

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## BCGREA TREASURER'S REPORT

Report to September 2017 -

Bank chequing account \$11,469

Term Deposits \$18,128

Total \$29,597

**Income** \$110 from Bank Interest, Refreshment Donations, Dues, Luncheons

**Expenses** \$6,045 from Camosun Bursary Funding, Office and Newsletter Postage, meeting room rentals and catering.

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## EMAIL REPORT

New retirees most always have an email address, continually adding to our email list, which is now 1,157, near 60% of Victoria BCGREA members. However, this total rarely increases due to several existing addresses "bouncing" after each email distribution, presumably due to folks changing their email address for various reasons.

If you do change your email address, please don't forget the BCGREA so you don't miss out on important information. Just a quick email to [bcgrea.victoria@gmail.com](mailto:bcgrea.victoria@gmail.com), or any of our Directors, is all that is required.

Sharon Stewart

Email Director

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## TELEPHONE REPORT

The members of the phone committee contact over 100 members each month to provide general information on monthly meetings, guest speakers and special luncheons. It is a nice way to keep in touch with members who either don't use email, or would simply prefer personal contact. We currently have 12 member/volunteers who make approximately 10 calls each month, depending on the availability of the other callers. If you know of a member who is not receiving calls but would like to, or if you would like to volunteer to make a few calls each month, please feel free to contact me at [anneks@shaw.ca](mailto:anneks@shaw.ca).

Anne Scott

Director, Telephone Committee

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## LUNCHEONS

The summer luncheon was held on June 13, 2017 at the Lucky Village Chinese & Japanese Restaurant on Aldersmith Place. Thank you to our members and guests who supported this June social. The buffet lunch fee was \$20, with the Branch paying the taxes and tip. Thanks to the donations of those who attended, we sent a cheque for \$91.90 to the Dandelion Society charity.

The Christmas buffet lunch is on Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at noon at the Visita 18 Restaurant in the Chateau Victoria Hotel, 740 Burdett Avenue (off Douglas Street). Seating will be available starting at 11:30 p.m.

### **No early birds please!**

This is a really fun festive event where you can enjoy an outstanding buffet meal and celebrate the holiday season with members and their guests. You could even take home one of our many Xmas draw prizes! We will take up a collection for our charity at the luncheon.

For free parking you must get a parking pass at the hotel front desk and put it on your car dashboard. There are a limited number of lunch tickets available for pre-purchase only on a first come first serve basis. No tickets will be held. This is a very popular event with limited seating, so get your tickets early to avoid disappointment. Tickets are still \$20 per person and can be purchased at the General Meeting on November 14 (after the guest speaker). The Branch will pay the extra \$2/person restaurant lunch fee, plus again also pay the taxes and tip. This is a total lunch savings of about \$6.40 extra per person paid by our Victoria Branch!

Tickets may also be requested by mail. Send a cheque payable to "BCGREA Victoria Branch" for the number of tickets required, plus include a stamped/self-addressed return envelope to: Vicki White, 11 - 118 Aldersmith Place, Victoria, BC V9A 7M9. The deadline for pre-purchasing luncheon tickets and the deadline for receiving payments for tickets is Friday, December 1, unless all tickets are sold out before that date.

I would love to see several more members join us at our monthly general meetings. There's always something new and interesting that I learn from our knowledgeable guest speakers. Coffee/tea and desserts always follow with gluten free and low sugar items included. If you know any new retired members I'm sure they would appreciate a welcoming invite to our events.

Thank you - Vicki White  
Director Social Committee



## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Renewal time is rapidly approaching! Those of you not on direct deduction from your pension cheque should mark your calendar and send in a cheque before January 1 to avoid getting a "nag notice" from me. Also those non-direct deduction members that haven't sent in a cheque for 2017 remember that if you haven't paid by the end of the year I have to remove you from the membership.

NOTE: Cheques must be payable to "BCGREA - Victoria Branch". The letter abbreviation only is not acceptable at the cheque clearing house.

Questions and Answers:

1. **How do I report a change of address?** If your address, telephone number and/or email contact address has changed, please ensure that you forward the changes to my attention at 250-744-4275 or [kccruickshank@gmail.com](mailto:kccruickshank@gmail.com). It is also very important for you to notify the Pension Corporation of any changes.
2. **Can I arrange to have my dues paid other than by writing a cheque each year?** You may want to consider having your dues deducted annually from your February pension cheque. Please contact me at 250-744-4275 or [kccruickshank@gmail.com](mailto:kccruickshank@gmail.com) to arrange to make the conversion starting in the year 2018. Changes must be made before December 31, 2017.
3. **How can I change from getting a paper copy of The PEN to getting it electronically?** Send an email to the Membership Director at [kccruickshank@gmail.com](mailto:kccruickshank@gmail.com) to request the change. Making the change now may not be enough time for the next edition.

Ken Cruickshank - Membership Chair



## UPCOMING MEETINGS with GUEST SPEAKERS and EVENTS

Location and time of regular meetings is 2 p.m. at the BCGEU Hall, 2994 Douglas Street. These meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month except June, July, August and December.

**Nov. 14** - Karen Martin, CRA, scams and identity theft - to be confirmed

**Dec. 12** - Christmas Luncheon, Vista 18.

BCGREA Victoria Branch  
Legislative Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

## Serving the Public Service Retiree

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### **British Columbia Government Retired Employees Association Branch Executive 2017-2018**

<b>Chair:</b>	Sarjit Manhas	250-384-9278	<a href="mailto:sarjit@telus.net">sarjit@telus.net</a>
<b>1st Vice Chair</b>	Ken Cruickshank	250-744-4275	<a href="mailto:kccruickshank@gmail.com">kccruickshank@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Barb West	250-478-5935	<a href="mailto:barbarawest@shaw.ca">barbarawest@shaw.ca</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Dawn Jones	250-920-7681	<a href="mailto:dawnj11@outlook.com">dawnj11@outlook.com</a>
<b>Past Chair</b>	Terry Prentice	250-383-2026	<a href="mailto:taprentice@shaw.ca">taprentice@shaw.ca</a>

#### **DIRECTORS**

##### **Membership & Data Base**

Ken Cruickshank -----250-744-4275 [kccruickshank@gmail.com](mailto:kccruickshank@gmail.com)

##### **Program Committee**

Michael Holbrook -----250-384-5997 [mjholbrook@telus.net](mailto:mjholbrook@telus.net)

##### **House Committee**

Suzanne Iverson -----250-592-5991 [sliverson@telus.net](mailto:sliverson@telus.net)

##### **Email Committee**

Sharon Stewart -----250-208-9012 [sharonstew@gmail.com](mailto:sharonstew@gmail.com)

##### **Phone Committee**

Anne Scott -----250-590-3280 [anneks@shaw.ca](mailto:anneks@shaw.ca)

##### **Social Coordinator**

Vicki White -----250-361-0024 [vltwhite@shaw.ca](mailto:vltwhite@shaw.ca)

##### **Newsletter**

Carol Cullimore -----250-477-4230 [grandmagreen@telus.net](mailto:grandmagreen@telus.net)

##### **Goodwill**

Barbara Golder -----778-265-0563 [barbaragolder@shaw.ca](mailto:barbaragolder@shaw.ca)

Meetings are held at 2:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month, (except June, July, August and December) at the BCGEU Hall, 2994 Douglas Street. Branch lunches and/or other events are held in June and December.

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB**  
[www.bcgrea.com](http://www.bcgrea.com)

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