



March/April 2022 E-Bulletin

From the President's Desk

The Anniversary Edition

We are coming up to the second anniversary of the declaration of the Covid 19 pandemic, by the Federal Government of Canada and the World Health Organization in mid March 2020. While no-one is celebrating this, we can reflect on the impact on our daily lives: lockdowns, washing grocery bags, masks, vaccinations, restrictions on our social and familial interactions, mandates and most recently, protests. It has been a tough couple of years full of lessons, losses and unknowns as we listened to the daily case counts, hospitalizations and deaths. Recent announcements have indicated there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Another, very different, anniversary in 2022 is the Platinum Jubilee celebrating the 70th year since Queen Elizabeth came to the throne after her father died on February 6 1952. Her face is as familiar to us as our own mothers, as we have seen the Queen's portrait every day of our lives on money, stamps, ferries, in buildings, and in the news. This remarkable woman has remained dignified and stoic throughout the last 70 years of major social and political change in our world. At almost 96 years old she remains a symbol of stability and continuity as Head of State and Head of the Commonwealth.

2022 is also the 75th Anniversary of the BCGREA, which was founded by a small group of Provincial government retirees in January 1947. The BC Retired Civil Servants Association was established to advocate for better and fairer pensions and healthcare services for superannuates. This was a courageous and progressive move when pensions were few and far between. The Federal universal Old Age Pension was not enacted until 1951, (and it is still means tested) and the Canada Pension Plan scheme was not established until 1966. The association changed its name to the BCGREA in 1956 and has continued to advocate for better pensions and benefits throughout its history.

There are many different types of anniversaries; they are our way of commemorating and/or celebrating events, people, organizations, and ourselves. We all need anniversaries to enrich our lives and mark the passage of time.

Barbara Golder, Chair

BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200

<https://bcgre.ca/branches/victoria-branch-1200/>

Covid 19 Information

Questions regarding vaccination?

Island Health booking number is:

1-833-838-2323 (Provincial Call Centre)

Information on Covid booster vaccination can be found at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/booster>



Dear Members,

Seventy-five years ago this year, 50 retired civil servants formed the B.C. Retired Civil Servants Association. Nine years later the association was renamed the B.C. Government Retired Employees Association (BCGREA) to include retirees from government boards and commissions.

It's interesting to note the similarities they faced are ongoing concerns in our organization today. It also shows the determination to improve the welfare of our retirees. This remains the BCGREA purpose.

To celebrate our diamond jubilee, we want to share your branch history in the 2022 Spring and Fall editions of *The Pen*. Do you have a story about your branch? Its creation, struggles, past and/or present executive, or a poignant moment.

Email your story (**up to 500 words**) as an attachment in a Word document or typed in your email message to: thepen@bcgre.ca.

Pictures are encouraged, but please provide high-quality scans of non-digital photographs and/or high resolution digital photographs in .jpeg or .jpg formats. Be sure to tell us *who* is in the photo, *when* and *where* it was taken (approximately), along with *what* happened to mark the occasion.

We look forward to receiving your submissions.

Many thanks,

Victoria Branch Communications Committee

Branch Activities

Branch Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is being planned for May 10, 2022. It will be directly after the Speaker Presentation.

All Executive and Director positions are up for re-election. If you have an interest in volunteering to help our branch grow more members, learn new things and work with a great, dynamic team, here's your chance!

Please e-mail victoriabranch@bcqrea.ca for further information.

Programs

Unfortunately, the Branch is unable to return to the BCGEU building for general membership meetings at the moment. In the meantime, we will continue to have our Speaker presentations **via Zoom** until further notice. You are welcome to drop into the meeting room anytime after 1:00pm to test your zoom settings or chat informally with members of our Executive.

This is your Zoom invitation for the **March 8 Speaker Presentation at 1:30 pm.**

(Zoom details have been emailed.)

This is your Zoom invitation for the **April 12 Speaker Presentation at 1:30 pm.**

(Zoom details have been emailed).

For Zoom tips see **next page.**

2022 Speaker Presentation Series

Spring is in the air, flowers are in bloom, and our minds turn to---Tax season!

March 8 - Canada Revenue Agency

Our guest speaker for the month of March is the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The speaker (unknown name at this time) will be presenting via Zoom.

April 12 - Orderly Affairs



For the month of April we have engaged [Orderly Affairs](#), a company whose services include Advance Care planning, Orderly Affairs Guide, and Funeral planning. Daralynn Wei, our guest speaker will be presenting via Zoom.

We look forward to seeing you there!




Zoom Question Answered: How do I blur my background in Zoom?

There are two ways. For the second option, try it out [here](#).

How to enable blur background before a meeting

1. Sign in to the **Zoom desktop client**.
2. Click your profile picture, then click  **Settings**.
3. Select **Backgrounds & Filters** .
Note: If you do not have the **Virtual Background** tab and you have enabled it on the web portal, sign out of the Zoom desktop client and sign in again.
4. Click the **Blur** option.
Your background will become blurred behind you, obscuring your surroundings.

How to enable blur background during a meeting

1. Join a Zoom Meeting or a Webinar as a panelist.
2. In the bottom-left corner of the video window, click the up arrow  button next to the **Start Video**  / **Stop Video**  button.
3. Click **Blur My Background**.
Note: This option requires version **5.9.3** or higher. Please refer to the section above to control the blur background feature when using older versions.

Help the Victoria Branch as a Cosco Liaison Volunteer

Cosco (Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC) whose focus is to protect the welfare of seniors in British Columbia meets with BCGREA branch representatives twice yearly to discuss common issues of concern.

In your role as a volunteer, you can make a difference by representing our branch in issues that are important to our membership.

The Cosco Liaison Volunteer is required to attend the [Cosco Conference](#) once a year and attend meetings as necessary. All travel expenses will be reimbursed.

In return, a report will be provided to the membership after attendance of the above.

Further information on Cosco can be found [here](#).

Please email your interest in volunteering in this important role to: victoriabranch@bcgre.ca

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)



Tax season will be upon us soon, but in the meantime, CRA has provided some information regarding benefits and credits that you may be eligible for.

Check out this [link](#) to find out more if you are 65+.

Information for those persons with disabilities and their caregivers can be found [here](#).

CRA will be offering live webinars in **March**.

Presentation on Benefits and Credits for adults 65 years and older on Thurs Mar 10, 2022 from 1:30-2:30pm PST.

Doing your taxes has its benefits! Benefits, credits and deductions you could be eligible for are the Disability Tax Credit, GST/HST credit, medical expenses, Canada caregiver credit and pension income splitting. Other government departments also use your tax information to calculate your payments, such as the guaranteed income supplement. If you do your taxes after the filing deadline, your payments could be delayed. During the webinar we will be able to answer your questions live.

CRA Post-Secondary Students & Financial Literacy Presentation on Wed Mar 2, 2022 from 1:30-2:30pm PST.

For those of you who have younger taxpayers in your family! Taking care of your tax and benefit affairs can pay off! You could get a tax refund, and benefit and credit payments. Some of the benefits and credits to which you may be eligible for are the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax Credit, the Disability tax credit, the Canada child benefit, and the Child disability benefit.

Scam awareness – Be scam smart Presentation on Wed Mar 16, 2022 from 1:30-2:15pm PST.

Help protect yourself and others against fraud – Taxpayers should be vigilant when they receive, either by telephone, mail, text message or email, a fraudulent communication that claims to be from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requesting personal information such as a social insurance number, credit card number, bank account number, or passport number. Learn to recognize common types of scams and to identify legitimate communications from the CRA.

For more detailed information check [here](#).

Digital Services for Individuals Presentation on Thurs Mar 17, 2022 from 1:30-2:15pm PST.

The CRA has a wide number and range of electronic and digital services available for individuals including My Account, Represent a Client and mobile apps. Join our webinar to learn about some of our most popular services such as changing your address or phone number, submitting documents electronically, and changing your return.

Register for the above or explore further dates and times by clicking [here](#).

Please note that the times displayed on CRA's website are in Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Do you enjoy filing taxes and want to help others? CRA is looking for volunteers interested in helping file tax returns at a virtual tax clinic for 2022.

More information can be found [here](#).



MEMBERS CORNER

2022 Monthly Gift Card Winners

A complete list of winners for gift cards drawn during our monthly Executive Meeting is now on our [website](#).

Congratulations to our winners!

55 + Lifestyle Show

Date: April 12, 2022, 9am - 3pm

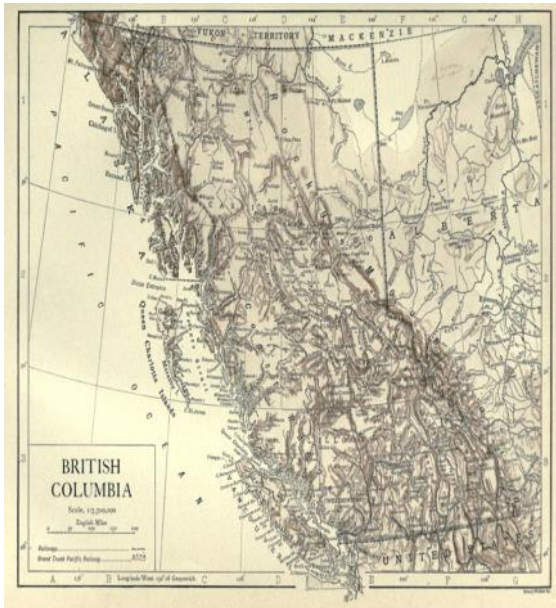
Place: Pearkes Area, 3900 Tillicum Road, Victoria, BC.

Come visit the BCGREA table set up at this show or volunteer to pass out information regarding the Association.

Please contact Al Coccoła for further information if you wish to help.

His email id is acoccoła@shaw.ca or phone: **250-361-5909**

For further information on this popular event: <https://55pluslifestyle.com/victoria>



Knowledge Network Presents: British Columbia: An Untold History

In case you missed it, explore the history of British Columbia as told through the stories of Indigenous, Chinese, Japanese, Punjabi, Black, and European peoples.

This can also be live-streamed to your devices by joining Knowledge Network [here](#).



Chinese History of Immigration in Victoria

February's presentation featured John Adams, Victoria's foremost historian who gave us a fascinating look at the roots of Chinese immigration in Victoria.

If you have any stories of your family's heritage or local history you wish to share with John Adams, contact him at:

<https://discoverthepast.com/contact-us/>

Silver Threads Society

In a follow-up to Tracy Ryan's interesting presentation to us at the last General Meeting in November, she also has a volunteer opportunity below:

Currently, we are looking for 2-3 volunteers who would be able to provide one on one support for those who are new to technology. We are expecting that many will be gifted phones or tablets over the holidays and this is very entry-level help to assist with basic functions like email, photos, and Facebook. A moderate level of computer skills and lots of patience is all one would need. If anyone is interested please contact Anne Nelson at 250-382-3151.

For more information on Silver Threads Programs in your area, visit their [website](#) where you can also sign up for their monthly newsletter.

Tours from Old Cemeteries Society

For those looking to explore Victoria's cemetery heritage, the Old Cemeteries Society provides walking tours for members of the public for a small fee.

See their [website](#) for upcoming tours and further information.

Gluu Technology Society

Want to learn how to use your new mobile device and/or become more confident online so that you can connect with your family and friends?

Gluu Technology Society provides **FREE** digital skills training for older Canadian adults.

See their [website](#) for more details on how to register for their many courses or for further information.



If you know of any member who is hospitalized, sick, ill, or injured, please contact Sonja Ruffell, our Goodwill Coordinator at: victoriabranch@bcgre.ca with the information.

Also, we want to know if you have moved, updated your email address or phone number.

You can let us know below:

<https://bcgre.ca/contact/> or: victoriabranch@bcgre.ca



If you have enjoyed our e-mails, presentations and newsletters, tell your fellow retirees the benefits of joining the BCGREA and share our [website](#).

How to Reach Us

Board of Directors Contact Information

President: Barbara Golder

Email: chair.branch1200@bcgre.ca

1st Vice-Chair: Sarfaraz (Sarf) Ahmed

Email: vicechair.branch1200@bcgre.ca

2nd Vice-Chair: Brian Green

Email: vicechair.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Secretary: Karin Heimlich

Email: secretary.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Treasurer: Tammy Welch

Email: treasurer.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Membership Chair: Valeska Campbell

Email: membership.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Directors:

Gerry Buydens, Laura Lam, Terry Prentice, Sonja Ruffell, Marilyn Spencer,
Kathy Weisgarber, Vicki White

To message our team directly please visit our Contact Information on our website:

<https://bcgre.ca/branches/victoria-branch-1200/>

Our general Branch email is: victoriabranch@bcgre.ca

Or to report e-mail/address/telephone changes:

<https://bcgre.ca/contact/>

BCGREA Victoria Branch's Mailing address is:

PO Box 9017, STN PROV GOVT, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9L6

Take care and see you next time!