



May 2022 E-Bulletin

From the President's Desk

The AGM Edition

Watching the horrific images coming from the war in Ukraine I feel both disheartened and deeply concerned. For me, this is a war about democracy, and the right of a sovereign people to choose their friends and allies. Regardless of our political leanings, this conflict has shown the importance of the democratic process as it has been expressed through the rule of law, the right to choose, the right to free speech, and the right to security as a nation. We have many people living in Canada from the Ukrainian Diaspora; some have been here for many generations but remain connected. As we watch from afar we can help, the BC government has set up a link for those wanting to do something in support of Ukraine, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/tourism-immigration/ukraine/welcome>.

In Canada, our highest aspirations are for peace, order, and good government. We are the lucky ones who can exercise all of the democratic rights afforded by our country. I know there are plenty of criticisms of our system, issues that cannot be agreed upon, etc. After all, nothing is perfect and we can always improve, but I live daily with a sense of gratitude that our lives are safe and secure. Democracy, as a system of government, requires participation to safeguard and maintain the institutions that keep Canada peaceful and orderly, so we all can live well. Our electoral system keeps us involved and gives us a chance to voice our concerns.

This applies also at the organizational level, even in the BCGREA, as our Association's mandate includes representation on the Public Service Pension board. We are celebrating 75 years of service but can only continue to be a vital organization if we have participation from our membership. Our AGM on May 10th is another chance to volunteer in our Branch and have your voice heard. Please join us!

Barbara Golder, Chair

BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200

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



AGM

This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on May 10, 2022 via Zoom. Elections for the Executive will proceed after the Speaker Presentation by Ocean Networks Canada.

You are cordially invited to the BCGREA Branch 1200 Election of Officers on **May 10, 2022 via Zoom**. The meeting room will be open at 1:00pm should you wish to join early, informally chat with our Executive before the Speaker Presentation at 1:30 pm.

Zoom meeting details will be emailed in early May.

We require 15 members to attend the Zoom meeting in order to have a quorum and election.

The Board is composed of:

Chair (President)

1st Vice President (Deputizing for President - Special projects)

Secretary (Recording and procedures)

Membership Director (Membership Committee)

Treasurer (Finance Committee)

Communications Director (Communications Committee)

Phone/Goodwill Director

House/Social Committee Director

Program Committee Director

Four (4) Directors-at-large to assist with Committee work.

All the executive and director positions are up for re-election and we welcome all volunteers. Job descriptions and mentoring are available to anyone who wants to join the team.

We look forward to seeing you on May 10 at our virtual AGM and getting to know you better as a Branch director!

Please e-mail victoriabranch@bcgre.ca for further information and for the Nomination form if you wish to Join Us!

BCGREA Province Wide Survey Results

The BCGREA is pleased to provide a summary of the survey of its membership conducted between December 6, 2021 to January 22, 2022.

Thank you for responding to the BCGREA province-wide membership survey. 2,858 out of 7,668 members responded; that's 37.3%. Member completion rate was high making the census within +/- 1.45 points and accurate 19 times out of 20. You've spoken and we've learned what members value and want from their association. In summary,

You Consider BCGREA's Most Important Services

- Representation on the Public Service Pension Plan Board of Trustees
- Newsletters
- Membership in advocacy associations

You Want BCGREA to Expand their Efforts to Include

- Advocating for pension and benefits
- Negotiating for member discounts
- Cooperating with related pension associations

You Would Like Your BCGREA Branch Offices to Provide

- Guest speakers on topics of interest
- Social connections (luncheons, goodwill)

Overwhelmingly, members request that provincial and branch office communications arrive quarterly via email.

Further survey results at the **Victoria branch** level can be found by clicking [here](#).

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—Programs



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2022 Speaker Presentation Series

May 10, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom

Our guest speaker for the month of May is Dwight Owens of Ocean Networks Canada (ONC).

ONC monitors the health of Canada's oceans on both West and East Coasts by continuously delivering data in real-time helping communities, government, and industry make informed decisions.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Orderly Affairs Presentation Follow-up

Do you find information and documents around medical health emergencies and end of life overwhelming? Having conversations about getting our affairs in order, advance care planning and funeral planning are difficult for many people. It is understood that when we use the phrase “*getting your affairs in order*”, we are referring to the end of life and to death. And nobody likes to talk about dying. The reality is that getting our affairs in order is about making it known how we want to live! Proactively having these discussions prior to death is a gift to ourselves as well as to those who may be acting on our behalf.

My name is Daralynn Wei and it was my pleasure to present at the April 12 BCGREA meeting.

For those who missed the presentation, the mandate of my business called [Orderly Affairs](#) is to help British Columbians get their affairs in order with 3 distinct services:

1. [Orderly Affairs Guide](#): *A structured approach to inform and guide completion of essential tasks related to getting your affairs in order in BC.*
2. [Advance Care Planning](#): *BC specific preparation for future health care decision-making.*
3. **Funeral planning**: *Funeral shopping service available in the Capital Regional District.*

Click on the links above to watch short videos on each of these services. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach me at Info@orderlyaffairs.ca or via the contact form on the website. And please encourage all your friends and family to learn about getting their affairs in order as early in life as possible – it is so important.

In response to Sarf's question regarding the website for certified Executors: check out [Canadian Institute of Certified Executive Advisors](#)

Please note: Daralynn Wei can also be reached at 250-658-4828.



Members Corner

NEWS

This is to advise you that a group of members from the Western Communities are proposing a new branch (**Branch 2700**) to serve members in that area and up-island to Duncan. If you live in the Western Communities and think that you would enjoy a local branch then please consider moving your membership to Branch 2700.

To transfer to Branch 2700, please send a Contact Form from the BCGREA web page (<https://bcgrega.ca/contact>) detailing which branch you are transferring from. Fill in the form and in the message area type "**please transfer me to Branch 2700**", then submit.

Central Support will change your branch number in the Central Data Base to Branch 2700. You will get an email acknowledgment, which will advise you that the transfer won't be finalized until the branch is created. When that happens, you will be issued your new branch membership card.

The current timeline is that Branch 2700 will start operations in the fall of this year. For questions and further information, please contact Al Coccola at acoccola@shaw.ca or call 250-361-5909.

BCGREA members can belong to any branch of their choosing in the Province. Branch 1200 members living in the Western Communities are very welcome to remain in the Victoria Branch if they choose to do so.



The 3 Musketeers at 55+ Lifestyle Show

BCGREA Presidents John MacLucas (Peninsula and Gulf Island) and Barbara Golder (Victoria), and the Provincial Chair of the Recruitment and Retention Committee Al Coccola, worked the BCGREA table at the recent 55+ Lifestyle Show held in Victoria on April 12th, 2022. It was a chance to meet with real people and invite them to join us (if they were in receipt of a Public Service Pension) and give more information on the services offered by the BCGREA both locally and provincially.



Automatic Dues Deduction Policy—No

Looking forward to 2023 and modernizing branch dues collection, the Victoria Branch has amended our policy regarding manual cheques. The Branch has decided to implement the automatic dues deduction (DCO) as required for all members beginning in 2023.

This is common practice in many other branches and assists the executive greatly in streamlining notifications, manual logging, and cheque processing.

It's very simple to convert over to the "*once a year in February*" automatic deduction from your pension payment. There is no need for banking information - we just need your 8 digit Pension Person ID (PID) number which can be found on any correspondence you receive from the Pension Corporation.

You can email this to our branch contacts:

victoriabranch@bcgre.ca

membership.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Note that this policy is applicable to those members in receipt of a Public Service Pension and does not apply to Associate Members.

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!

Stay on the Road Workshop

Cosco (Council of Seniors' Organizations of BC) and Insurance Corporation of BC are presenting together a workshop particularly for those drivers nearing 80 to learn more about driver assessment.

The workshop is May 2, 2022 via Zoom.

Click [here](#) for more details.



Butchart Gardens Admission Subsidy

Marcus, CC BY-SA 1.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/1.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Just in time for Mother's and Father's Day outings!

We are once again offering a \$15 subsidy to those members only in good standing that would like to visit Butchart Gardens from May 1, 2022 thru June 30, 2022.

Please submit your receipt with your name and address to victoriabranch@bcgre.ca with "**Butchart Subsidy 2022**" in the subject line by July 31, 2022. Please note if you would like a cheque or an Electronic Funds Transfer-(EFT). Or mail to: BCGREA Victoria Branch, PO BOX 9017 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC V8W 9L6.

Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse Admission Subsidy

Take advantage of this opportunity to visit Canada's best preserved west coast artillery fort and first lighthouse!

Enjoy the outdoors in the Western Communities while visiting Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historical Sites. We are offering up to a \$10.00 subsidy towards a day or year admission for those members only in good standing who would like to visit from June 1 - September 5, 2022.

Please submit your receipt with your name and address to victoriabranch@bcgre.ca with "**Fort Rodd Hill Subsidy**" in the subject line by September 30, 2022. Please note if you would like a cheque or an Electronic Funds Transfer-(EFT). Or mail to: BCGREA Victoria Branch, PO BOX 9017 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC V8W 9L6.

Government House Tours Admission Subsidy

Come see the lovely gardens of Government House on **June 14, 2022** and help support the work of the Garden Society! Also, the Tea Room will be open (May 24 - Sept 2 Tues to Thurs) from 10 am - 4 pm, if anyone wants to treat themselves.

The Gardens are free to enjoy but Friends of Government House Gardens Society offers guided tours (45-90 minutes long) at a cost of \$10 per person for those looking for a more in-depth visit. These walking tours visit most of the 20+ gardens on the estate providing information about the landscape, trees, unique plants, history, and how the gardens are cared for by 200+ volunteers.

The Victoria Branch will be paying the **\$10 cost for members who are in good standing**. There is no need for members to pay upfront as we will arrange payment based on how many registrations we receive. **Guests of members however must pay Government House directly when they arrive.**

There will be a limit of 40 attendees including guests. Each member can bring 1-2 guests maximum.

The organized tour will start at 1:30pm on June 14, 2022 but please meet at 1:15pm at the front of the building to help us organize the groups.

Pre-registration is required so please tell us the names of each person in your group broken out by members and guests.

The deadline for pre-registration is: **May 31, 2022.**

Please email with "**Government House Tour subsidy**" in the subject line to victoriabranch@bcgre.ca your attendance confirmation and include:

Full Names of BCGREA members in your group

Full Names of guests in your group

This will allow Government House to arrange volunteers for the tours.

Parking is limited so please consider carpooling.

If for any reason you are unable to attend, please email us at: victoriabranch@bcgre.ca so that we don't pay for your spot.

Thank You!

Discount Available to BCGREA members through the ESM App

Endless Savings and More (ESM) provides discounts to members of large organizations such as BCGEU and BCGREA.

Download the app (from Apple or Google store) to your mobile device, and then input the organization code "BCGREA".

How It Works

- Install the ESM App on your smartphone to view hundreds of available savings
- View merchant savings conveniently organized by "Category"
- Tap on a merchant to view offers & tap on an offer for redemption

You typically show the offer on your smartphone at payment in physical locations or enter a code for online purchases.

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: victoriabrand@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: victoriabrand@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: victoriabrand@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!