



From the President's Desk

Here we are in the beautiful month of May and April showers (sometimes of snow and sleet) have hopefully left us in peace. Apparently this spring has been one of the coldest but driest on record. Global climate change is definitely affecting us, but as Carolyn Herriot (the master gardener who presented in February) observed; spring 2022 was also long and cold but everything in the garden caught up by June. So I live in anticipation of warmer days.

May is also election month for Victoria Branch 1200, and I would encourage you to attend our Zoom meeting on May 9 to enjoy our presentation by Ron Greene of Capital Iron and elect the new board. Current board members willing to stand for election for another year have completed nomination papers, but everyone is welcome to volunteer for the board and give your input to the BCGREA. Nomination papers are available on the website.

On April 24 - 26 the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) was held in Tsawwassen, it was called by the Provincial level to address the status of BCGREA under the Societies Act. Six delegates from the Victoria Branch board attended to determine whether we are a 'member funded' society or not. There are implications for the Association both organizationally (Constitution and bylaws) and financially. The results of the EGM will be in the next addition of the PEN.

The new Head of State - King Charles III (it still feels weird to say that) will be crowned in London UK on May 6. While the monarchy may not be a big part of lives there are a few notable changes around town like the Queens Printer on Superior St has a new plaque announcing the Kings Printer, and the court lawyers who for 70 years were a QC (Queens Counsel) are now KC (Kings Counsel). I am sure you will notice many other title changes as time passes.

Change seems to be the only constant in our world. As we age, change seems more difficult to accept and absorb, but we must embrace it as the world moves relentlessly forward.

Stay engaged!

Barbara Golder, President

BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200

AGM

The Branch Annual General Meeting via **zoom** only is rapidly approaching on May 9, 2023.

Our Board consists of:

President

Vice-President

Treasurer

Membership Chair

Secretary

Communications Chair

Programs Director

House/Social Director

Outreach/Goodwill Director

Directors at Large

All of these positions are vital to running a successful branch for our members.

All the positions are up for re-election this year so if you wish to consider participating in maintaining a strong and vibrant branch please consider submitting your nomination papers to victoriabranch@bcgre.ca

The nomination form is here:

https://bcgre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/BCGREA_Branch_1200_Nomination_Form_Version-2023.doc

Thanks to our new volunteers who signed up to assist our Directors while at the Welcome New Members Tea!

We are thrilled to welcome:

Penny Limer, Communications
Howard Kushner, Programs
Marita Kuehn, House/Social
Christine Thate, House/Social
Heather Akehurst, Telephone/Goodwill
Neela Streifel, Telephone/Goodwill
and special thanks to Linda Foubister who assisted us at our volunteer table.

Speaker Presentations Follow-up



March 14, 2023: Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

Sarah Bennett, Outreach Officer, walked us through the benefits and credits that could be available to us.

Here are some important links:

Medical Expenses:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/rc4065/medical-expenses.html>

Disability Tax Credit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/segments/tax-credits-deductions-persons-disabilities/disability-tax-credit.html>

For those who are self-employed or managing a small business:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/programs/about-canada-revenue-agency-cra/compliance/liaison-officer-initiative-loi.html>



April 11, 2023: Trip Merchant

Trip Merchant provides **BCGREA members** with a variety of travel options with exclusive travel savings and additional member benefits, including their Loyalty Program.

At this meeting Ryan Mikucki walked us through various group trip opportunities available such as: Belize, Costa Rica, Vietnam & Cambodia, Southern Africa, Egypt, Antarctica, Morocco, Portugal, Iceland and more!

Visit your BCGREA/Trip Merchant travel site today at <https://bcgre.tripmerchant.ca/> (Password for Access: **BCGREATM18**) and sign up for the **BCGREA/Trip Merchant travel e-newsletter**.

To contact Trip Merchant directly you can email them at info@tripmerchant.com or call 1-800-481-9739 ext. 0.

April 11, 2023 Welcome New Members Tea



We had 67 attendees at our Welcome New Members Tea at Trafalgar Pro Patria Legion.

After an introduction by our Chair, Barbara Golder who introduced our Board of Directors, she gave the floor to Brian Green, President of the BCGREA.

He talked about our latest membership drive nicknamed “moonshot” where a brochure explaining the benefits of joining the BCGREA was sent to retirees all in receipt of a membership pension, ultimately resulting in an increase of 3600 new members within six months. Victoria gained 800+!

He mentioned the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), where delegates will vote on becoming a member funded society under the Societies Act.

More information about the EGM and resolutions can be found here:

<https://bcgre.ca/bcgre-extraordinary-general-meeting-notice/>

Brian will also follow-up with a report after the EGM takes place.

At the provincial level, he noted the following:

- 1) A new database to manage information flow is being developed, this will help with our DCO (Dues Check off), and will assist our one part time contracted resource and volunteers.
- 2) Ensuring our pensions continue to be well-funded.
- 3) To meet with other retired employee associations, e.g. Teachers and Municipal retirees
- 4) Continue to solidify communications infrastructure around the province
- 5) Increase involvement with affinity partners like Johnson and Trip Merchant.

Thanks to all our new members and Welcome to the Victoria Branch!

2023 Speaker Presentations



May 9, 2023 - Capital Iron, Zoom meeting, 1:30 pm.

This month we will have Guest Speaker Ron Greene via **zoom** to give us the history of Capital Iron.

He will do his presentation after we conduct our Annual General Meeting so please stay and enjoy the discussion!

Zoom meeting details will be sent out in advance of the meeting.



June 20, 2023 - Summer Luncheon

The Executive are hosting our Summer Luncheon on **June 20, 2023, 12:00 pm.**

Please **RSVP to Marilyn Spencer before June 8, 2023** to victoriabranch@bcgre.ca so that we can confirm the numbers with the venue. Seating is limited to 100 people.

Location: Trafalgar Pro Patria Legion Hall

411 Gorge Road East, Victoria, B.C.

Cost is \$25.00 for members/associates in good standing, and guests are \$40.00 each. (Taxes & Tip are included). E-transfers and cheques are preferred. Please make cheques payable to: **BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200 and Marilyn will be in touch regarding payment and ticket(s).**

The buffet menu is:

Rolls
Tossed Green Salad
Creamed Potatoes
Steamed Vegetables
Roast Beef
Vegetable Lasagna

Assorted dessert squares
Coffee and Tea

Parking is limited so please consider carpooling or bus to the event!

A big thanks to Marilyn Spencer and her team for managing this event for our members!

Members Corner



No more cheques to write!

2023 and modernizing branch dues collection is a high priority, 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.**

Digital Literacy Training Classes

Unfortunately due to low demand we have decided to cancel our Digital Literacy Training classes.

However, you can check out this site that will give you some very useful information on a range of items:

<https://www.seniorsguidetocomputers.com/default.asp>



Planning to travel within BC this Spring?

Check out these rates from Accent Inns/Hotel Zed.

<https://www.accentinns.com/content/uploads/2023/03/1.-GOLD-May-1-June-22-2023-Accent-Inns-Hotel-Zed.pdf>





2023 Monthly Gift Card Winners

A complete list of winners for gift cards drawn during our General/Executive Meetings is now on our website. Congratulations to our winners!

<https://bcgre.ca/2023-monthly-gift-card-winners/>

Ask Your Board



Question:

In these days of high inflation, do you have any tips on ways to save money?

Shop your pantry and freezer first to see what's in stock so you don't overbuy and only buy what you need.

There's a reason for the season:

Buy heaters in July and air conditioners in November. Check out Facebook Marketplace both to buy and sell items. It definitely saves something from going to the landfill and you can save money on gently used goods. Be safe and meet in a public place if possible.

Use the website: <https://www.flipp.com/> as a way to compare prices across favourite stores and a great way to look at multiple flyers for your location.

Buy store brands rather than name brands. They are usually much cheaper. But do check the ingredients for food items.

Buy non perishable regular grocery items like cleaning materials when on sale. They usually are periodically!!

Member's Profile:

Do you have a hobby you have newly discovered, travel tips, or something of interest that you would like to share with fellow members?

Please email us at : victoria-branch@bcgre.ca along with your past involvement with the BC Government/Public Sector.

We would love to hear from you!

Online shopping tip– Checkout the 'Honey' extension (add-on) to your browser which will look up available coupon codes for you and apply them to your shopping cart. It is not necessary to create an account.

Install the ESM app on your smartphone with the organization code 'BCGREA', there are savings within multiple categories such as travel, shopping, home & garden, etc.

For younger members of the family, check out: FinLit101, an online free course that teaches the basics of financial literacy, offered by the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education.

<https://finlit101.ca/en>

Ask Your Board does not provide financial or legal expert advice but will point you to some resources you can try. If you have a question for AYB, please email us at our branch email.



Understanding Your Pension

If you have questions regarding when your next pension payment is due, or want to track the history of your previous pension amounts, and/or change your beneficiary, you can register for [My Account](#) with the BC Pension Corporation, where you can view payment history for each month, payment dates for 2023, etc. It is very safe and secure and gives you information you need to manage your pension.

<https://myaccount.pensionsbc.ca/web/my-account/sign-in>



Branch Members Contact Update

Keeping track of all our members is no easy task!

So, if you are one of the members that has recently changed carriers or obtained a brand new email, please help us by checking in with your new or updated email address - drop us a line to:

victoriabranch@bcgre.ca

Mailing Address and Phone number updates are welcome too and can be emailed above or sent to our mailing address. See How to Reach Us at the end of this newsletter.

We also encourage those who aren't receiving an email edition of the e-bulletin, to consider using an email address (yours, or even a family member) as this will be the most fastest way to be in contact with us.

Please don't unsubscribe. You will cut off all communications with the BCGREA. Instead, modify your preferences to the types of messaging you'd like to receive.

Good Will Notice

If you know of any member who is hospitalized, sick, or injured please contact Sonja Ruffell at:

victoriabranch@bcgre.ca with the information.

Support for Family Caregivers

Family Caregivers of BC is a registered Canadian charity that provides support and valuable resources to family caregivers. It also hosts support groups for the Greater Victoria area.

For information and further resources, go to their website:

<https://www.familycaregiversbc.ca/family-caregiver-support-groups>

In order to keep the branch strong and growing, please remember to share our website,

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

and tell your retired friends and family who receive a Public Service pension of the benefits of joining the BCGREA.

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

How to Reach Us

President: Barbara Golder

Email: chair.branch1200@bcgre.ca

1st Vice-Chair: Sarfaraz (Sarf) Ahmed

Email: vicechair.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Treasurer: Ed Forbes

Email: treasurer.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Secretary: Karin Heimlich

Email: secretary.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Membership Chair: Jane Rutherford

Email: membership.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Communications Chair: Laura Lam

Email: victoriabranch@bcgre.ca

Directors At Large:

**Gerry Buydens, Terry Prentice, Sonja Ruffell,
Marilyn Spencer, George Bowden**

**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

Contact Phone: 250-751-8814

Mailing Address:

**BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200, PO Box 9017,
STN PROV GOVT, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9L6**

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

Take care and see you next time!

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