



From the President's Desk - October/November 2023

The Autumn is certainly with us now – the nights are getting longer and cooler, and the Fall storm season is in the air. Looking around my neighbourhood I can tell that Halloween is also on the way as front lawns and yards are decorated with all kinds of ghouls, ghosts, goblins, and gravestones. I am amazed at the fun people have dressing up their homes for this ancient festival of All Hallows Eve. This festival is also celebrated in places like Mexico as the Day of the Dead. Additionally, there are Christian feast days known as All Saints Day (aka All Hallows Day on November 1) and All Souls Day (November 2nd). The North American version of All Hallows Eve is now a community festival that lights up the coming dark nights, gives kids a chance to dress-up and walkabout within their community and allows us all to enjoy the sweet treats and candy traditional for this festival.

Membership in the BCGREA also makes you a member of a community. Our membership services are evolving – more is going online as we introduce a members portal on the website [BCGREA.ca](https://bcgre.ca). Members are encouraged to access this and make changes to their personal information. Address changes (both physical and email), updates for phone numbers and preferences can be done on the website. It really helps us to keep in touch with you.

Secondly, we have recently requested any members who joined twenty (20) or more years ago to let us know. We would like to recognize your extensive membership and support of the Association but unfortunately we do not have many membership start-dates recorded. So if you have been a member for a long time then please notify us through our [email address](#).

Lastly, another sure sign of Fall is the upcoming flu season – I can only encourage you to [get vaccinated](#) against influenza soon in preparation for winter. Vaccinations are now more generally available through local pharmacies. In addition Covid/flu shots are also available and the Provincial government is encouraging our age group to be vaccinated. Masks are again required in many health care facilities so if you are visiting a clinic, the hospital or a care facility please remember to be kind to those who work there.

Back to: Be Calm, Be Kind and Be Safe this winter.

Barbara Golder,

President, BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200

[Victoria \(Branch 1200\) – BC Government Retired Employees Association \(bcgre.ca\)](https://bcgre.ca)



Provincial Annual General Meeting - October 18, 2023

On October 18, 2023, delegates from across the Province representing 22 branches, came together in Tsawwassen to attend the BCGREA Annual General Meeting.

Elections for the Executive took place and the results are below:

- Brian Green, President, elected by acclamation
- George Bowden, 1st Vice President, elected by acclamation
- Patrick Harkness, 2nd Vice President and Editor of The Pen, elected by acclamation

The following positions are appointed by the President.

Johanna Morrow, Treasurer and Trustee, BC Public Service Pension Board of Trustees.

Kathy Torhjem, Secretary

Al Barclay, Membership Secretary

The keynote speaker was Tom Vincent, Chair and Stuart Morgan, Executive Director, BC Public Service Pension Board of Trustees.

Speakers included Mark Costales of Johnson Insurance and Michael Miller, Legal Counsel speaking on Risk Management and Court Filing of Constitution.

Additional details from the AGM, including outcomes of resolutions and motions, will be shared with delegates and published in The PEN.

Our Branch 1200 delegates at the AGM: L-R

George Bowden

Jane Rutherford

Barbara Golder

Laura Lam

Ed Forbes

Karin Heimlich

Sarf Ahmed (on Zoom)

Terry Prentice (on Zoom)



September 12, 2023 Horticulture Centre of the Pacific (HCP)

We were disappointed that the tour of the gardens of the Horticulture Centre had to be cancelled due to our guide unfortunately spraining his ankle! (Ouch!)

We hope to re-schedule this for the Spring, when more flowers will be in bloom and the weather should be good too!

In the meantime, HCP's Head Gardener **Linda Petite** offers some tips for your gardens.

My name is Linda Petite and I have been Head Gardener at the HCP since 2013.

I have always loved plants and worked at a garden center in Nova Scotia for 25 years before heading west.

I teach courses at the HCP and enjoy working with our dedicated volunteers and PHC students.

November Gardening Tasks:

- mulch to prevent erosion and compaction from winter rains, reduce weed growth and add a layer of protection from freezing temperatures
- winterize your irrigation system and drain and store garden hoses
- last chance to plant your garlic for next summer harvest
- make sure all frost tender plants are moved indoors
- still time to plant Spring bulbs like tulips and narcissus, the local nurseries likely have them on sale now!
- enjoy the remaining fall color before leaves drop

This is a photo of a Japanese maple in our Takata garden.



October 2023 Speaker Presentation



Joe Mabel, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

October 10, 2023 - John Adams 1:30 pm via Zoom

John Adams, Victoria's well known historian and author has just published his latest book "**Chinese Victoria: A Long and Difficult Journey**".

His presentation included the stories of Chinese men and one woman who played a significant role in Chinatown's past and continue to have a meaningful influence today.

Harvey Lowe - Who became a World Yo-Yo champion.

Kang You Wei - Who was on the lam as a result of trying to introduce reforms in China but later came to live in Victoria and founded the Chinese Empire Reform Association in 1899.

Dr. Victoria Chung - Born in Victoria, she became the first person of Chinese descent to graduate in Medicine in Canada. She trained at the University of Toronto.

David Lai - A Geography Professor at UVIC who began his research of Chinatown in 1971 and was instrumental in getting the Chinese Gate built and revitalizing Chinatown.

John also touched on various sites in and around Chinatown including the Chinese Methodist Church, the gambling dens, the produce company owned by the Quan family, other establishments that are a fond part of people's memories but are no longer with us such as Foo Hong Restaurant, Ming's Restaurant, etc.

In answer to a question whether the Chinese temple on Government is open to the public, he confirmed yes it is.

To reach John if you have any history or stories you would like to share his contact is here:

[Contact Us - Discover the Past Walking Tours | Ghostly Walks & History Tours in Victoria](#)

The presentation will be available on our [website](#).

Volunteers Thank You Lunch, August 22, 2023

In recognition of the many hours contributed over the past year, we gathered to thank our precious volunteers over lunch at the Fireside Grill. A very grateful thanks to Marilyn Spencer for organizing this event and Linda Foubister for taking our photos!

They say that many hands makes light work, and this is no exception for the Victoria Branch.

Thanks to all of you for your continued support and enthusiasm!

House and Social Committee Volunteers:

Marilyn Spencer (Chair)
Marita Kuehn
Susanne Krieger

Phone Committee Volunteers:

Sonja Ruffell (Chair)
Heather Akehurst
Beth Jasper
Jean Kucy
Neela Streifel

Finance Committee Volunteers:

Ed Forbes (Chair)
Sarf Ahmed
George Bowden
Terry Prentice
Vijay Vyas
Barbara Golder (Ex Officio member)

Year End Financial Reviewers:

Anne Jolicoeur
Vijay Vyas

And of course, the [Branch 1200 Board members](#) who work tirelessly on behalf of the branch members as well as with the Association on various committees to keep our branch strong and healthy.

There's always room for any of you who wish to contribute your skills, or assist our branch in some way.

Please contact us at our email below for more information!



Linda Foubister,
Branch Photographer

November 21 Speakers Presentation

Our **in person** Speakers Presentation for **Tuesday, November 21** will feature two Victoria members/writers discussing their published work.

Our **Guests Presenters** for this event are:

Linda Eversole

Linda Eversole, the author of two books: **Stella: Unrepentant Madam** and **Victoria Unbuttoned: A Red - Light History of BC's Capital City**.

In her books Linda Eversole explores Victoria's complicated history of prostitution by focusing on the women who made a living from the world's oldest profession.

The author will discuss her research with accompanying maps and historical photos and will explain how she garnered the support she had from the descendants of some of her subjects.

Linda Foubister

Linda Foubister will tell the mythic tales that make Victoria unique, based on her book *The Key to Mythic Victoria*.

From the distant past when Hayls the Transformer changed the landscape, through the more recent past when modern Argonauts searched for the new El Dorado, to the present day, the myths and symbols of Victoria, BC, bring its hidden layers to life in the imaginations of the people.

Other Event Details:

Location: Trafalgar/Pro Patria Legion

411 Gorge Road East, Victoria BC

Time: 2:00 pm—4:00 pm, doors open 1:30 pm

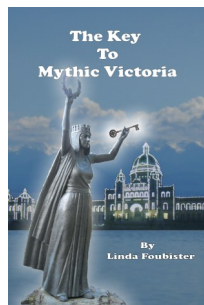
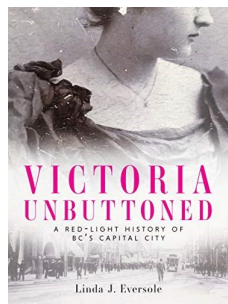
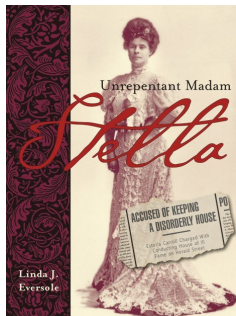
In order for Marilyn Spencer to plan this event please RSVP no later than November 7th so that we can advise the venue the number of attendees expected. Thank You!

Please email to our **victoria branch email address**— by clicking below:

[Subject: Nov 21 Writers' Presentation](#)

Member Name:

Guest Name:



Members Corner

We are looking for your **Favourite** travel memory for our December 2023 newsletter!

Is there a special memory of your travels during a summer or winter holiday, either in your youth, or at a more advanced age?

Please help share your favourite recollection with our readers.

It doesn't have to be long, just a paragraph or two will do!

Email your story to the Victoria branch [email address](#).

Thank You!



Long Standing Members

If you have been a member of the **BCGREA for 20 years or more**, please tell us so that we can honour your achievement with a Life Member pin at one of our events!

Please email your name, and **month** (if known) and **year you joined** to:

victoriabranch@bcgre.ca

Subject: Life Member Pin

Thank You!

Christmas Luncheon, December 12, 2023

We know you've been waiting all year for this!

The Board is pleased to announce that the Christmas luncheon is now booked for us:

Date and Time:

Tuesday, December 12, 2023,

12:00 noon - 2:30 pm (Doors open 11:30 am)

Location: Vista 18 Restaurant @ Chateau Victoria Hotel, 740 Burdett Avenue

The luncheon will be a buffet and includes coffee/tea/pop. Also door prizes will be drawn!

We are limited to 67 attendees (including guests).

The Branch will be subsidizing only members in good standing so members only have to pay \$25.00 (all taxes and tips included).

Non-members pay \$45.00 (all taxes and tips included).

Payment can be made by cash, electronic funds transfer (EFT) - please list reason for payment in the message box, or cheque payable to **BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200** at our **November 21st in person meeting** at the Trafalgar/Pro Patria Legion, 411 Gorge Road East, after 1:30pm.

Marilyn Spencer will be issuing tickets upon receipt of payment. Remember, the tickets are also your door prize number!

To assist Marilyn in confirming numbers of attendees, please **RSVP** your attendance no later than **Monday, November 27, 2023** as follows:

Member's Name:

Guest's Name:

Please email (click below) to our Victoria branch email address:

Subject: Christmas Luncheon Attendance

Any cancellations due to health or other unavoidable circumstances are requested as soon as possible but before December 9, 2023 to allow us to offer the space to other members due to limited seating.



LUNCH BUFFET

Organic Winter Greens
roasted organic pumpkin, house vinaigrette

Roasted Vegetable + Chickpea Salad
curry dressing

Beet Salad
goat cheese, arugula, sweet basil dressing

Daily Soup Creation

One Carved Meat
(choice of turkey, pork loin, ham or roast beef)

Fresh Roasted Winter Vegetables

Choice of: Steamed & Buttered Potatoes or Coconut Basmati Rice

Vegetarian Pasta of the Day

Assorted Deli Sandwiches
artisan breads + wraps

Assorted Cakes, Tarts + Petit Fours

Coffee, Tea and Pop

Chateau Victoria Hotel and Suites | Vista 18 | 18th floor, 740 Burdett Avenue Victoria BC V8W 1B2



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:

- 1) updating your email address by logging into the new Members Portal.

[Member Portal Access \(findjoo.com\)](#)

The first time you access the portal, you can use any password up to six characters. You can also change your password at any time later.

- 2) For those who prefer to send us an e-mail:

drop us a line to:

victoriabranch@bcgre.ca, Attn: Membership Director

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

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.

Thank You!

Share the Fun!

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: George Bowden

Email: vicechair.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Treasurer: Ed Forbes

Email: treasurer.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Secretary: Karin Heimlich

Email: secretary.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Membership Director: Jane Rutherford

Email: membership.branch1200@bcgre.ca

Social/House Director: Marilyn Spencer

Communications Director: Laura Lam

Gerry Buydens: Program Director

Sonja Ruffell: Goodwill/Telephone Director

Terry Prentice: Director at Large

Sarf Ahmed: Director at Large

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 Please leave a
message on the voicemail.

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!