



From the President's Desk - Sept/Oct 2024

It is almost September already – where did the time go? Another hot summer in Victoria is drawing to a close and the stories of forest fires have filled local (and national) news. The loss of Jasper is heart wrenching and the town-site is consigned to ashes and history like Slave Lake, Lytton, Fort Mac, and Paradise California. Western Canada seems to have become a tinderbox in the summer, as climate change takes its toll on the west coast. It feels like a depressing picture – especially for our children and grandchildren. While governments are imposing restrictions and taxes to minimize or even reduce carbon emissions and restore natural habitats there is a lot of work going on at the grass roots levels. These are efforts of ordinary people to stem the tide of climate change and reverse some of the negative effects of human activity on nature. We invite to our September meeting Guy Dauncey – a longstanding environmentalist whose optimism and proactive approach to the climate crisis is both practical and inspiring.

We have a busy fall schedule that includes our Branch 1200 AGM in October where we elect volunteer officers to run the branch and liaise with the Provincial Branch. At that time I will be retiring as Chair of the Board after five years (and seven years on the board). It has been a privilege to serve as both a board member and Chair of the Victoria Branch through some challenging times. My Board has been an incredible team and responded to the challenges that the world has thrown at us.

In February 2019 the Branch almost closed because of a lack of volunteer board members. The intervention of the Provincial Table officers and a show of support by members, during which I agreed to be chair, prevented closure. Between 2020 and late 2022 the board dealt with the Covid pandemic by meeting online (through Zoom) and offering online meetings and activities. We took the opportunity during that time to survey members and tabulate the results to get a better idea of what members want from the branch. This survey was very informative, and it was used by the Provincial Association to survey all members across the province. Covid and the survey directed us to the development of our amazing e-bulletin which has kept the Board in touch with the membership. During the last couple of years, the board has made great strides in returning to normal programming with two excellent Christmas (2022,2023) and summer luncheons, and a variety of speakers and outings. In 2020 our former meeting place – the BCGEU building on Douglas St was no longer available, so we had to check out other venues. The BCGEU building is still not available to us. Hence, we have moved our meeting venue several times and will be moving to the Monterey Centre in Oak Bay this fall.

The Board has continued to provide advocacy services, even to the Pension Board level through our Provincial representatives. Meetings have become a mixture of in-person and on-line events attracting different presentations.

There have also been other changes that affected our membership including the creation of a Western Communities Branch (2700) in 2022 when members living in the Western Communities were invited to join a Langford based branch. Secondly there was a significant expansion of Victoria membership after the Provincial Association membership drive in 2023 when Branch 1200 gained almost 800 new members.

(President's Message continued)

We now have a larger pool of members who, I hope, will step up to fill positions that will be vacant in October. We really do need new volunteers to keep the branch going. The current Branch board have been working for a long time to bring you exceptional programming and supportive services. Without this volunteer force our branch will not be able to offer members any kind of activities, put out the newsletter or provide advocacy for members. We are burning out and hoping that other members of the Branch will step up, volunteer and enjoy the 'esprit de corps' of the Branch team.

Your Branch needs You!!

We also have our Provincial AGM on October 16 in Twaswassen. The meeting will elect three Table Officers and approve budgets, pass resolutions, make changes to bylaws and the Constitution etc. This year is the first year that the number of voting delegates from Victoria will be reduced from six to two – the Chair of the Branch and one other member of the branch (the same as every other branch in the province regardless of membership). The Provincial Executive have also invited any member to join the meeting on Zoom. I would encourage you to attend the Provincial AGM via Zoom to see the inner workings of your organization.

Stay engaged!

Barbara Golder, President

BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200

Branch 1200 Annual General Meeting



Our Annual Branch General Meeting will occur on:

Tuesday, October 8th, at 1:30 pm

**Monterey Recreation Centre,
1442 Monterey Avenue, Victoria**

Doors open at 1:00 pm.

This will also be a hybrid zoom meeting.

At this meeting we will elect our new Executive and Board of Directors for 2024-2025:

President

Vice President

Treasurer

Membership Director

Secretary

Communications Director

House/Social Director

Directors at Large (4) which consist of:
Program Director

Goodwill/Telephone Director

2 other Directors at Large

Including the President and the Director of Communications, the following Board members are **not** running for re-election:

George Bowden, Vice President

Jane Rutherford, Membership Director

Marilyn Spencer, House and Social Director

Terry Prentice, Director at Large

We wish to thank all of our outgoing Board members for their tireless work over the years in service to our members.

For those who are staying on for another term-

Ed Forbes—our incumbent Treasurer

Karin Heimlich—our incumbent secretary

Gerry Buydens—our incumbent Programs Director

Sonja Ruffell—our incumbent Goodwill/Telephone Director

Sarf Ahmed—our incumbent Director at Large

Our boundless gratitude and thank you for your commitment to another year of service!

Now, it's a **critical time** for the Victoria Branch because without a full Executive, there will be **NO** Branch and therefore we will be forced to close.

So, we urge you to consider becoming a Board member, become a volunteer- learn a new skill, as your efforts will be greatly appreciated and valued!

For more information on the above please email us at:

victoriabranch@bcgre.ca Subject: Board Member Interest.

Nominations for Board members will also be taken at the AGM in October.

Interested in volunteering and want to know what's involved? See the next page to find out!

Roles and Functions of the Victoria Branch
Board of Directors



What does it take for the Victoria Branch to successfully operate?

You of course! Our volunteers who help out in every way imaginable, whether on the Board or part of a committee! The **bolded** positions are in particular need of filling for October!

But we welcome any persons who are interested in volunteering in any capacity. Many hands make light work!

President/Chair– The Branch Leader who shares with the Provincial Office branch concerns and participates in various committees to represent the Victoria Branch.

Vice President– Assistant to the President/Chair who takes over when the President is away, and is also involved in various committees.

Treasurer - Is responsible for maintaining the financial order and integrity of our Branch and works with his team to perform the Year End Review.

Membership Director - Our friendly point of contact on general membership queries, and works with the Board on other issues when required.

Secretary-Who keeps our minutes in good working order, and is responsible for record keeping for historical purposes.

Communications Director– That e-bulletin that makes its way to your inbox comes from the work of this position. Do you have an attention to detail, enjoy working with graphics, are comfortable with Microsoft Word (though we actually use MS Publisher). Like to learn new things using different systems? And enjoy writing? This role also works with the Branch photographer as part of the Communications Committee. We also welcome your stories for the e-bulletin/newsletters.

House/Social Director– Do you enjoy our social luncheons and get togethers? You and your team will participate in planning and organizing these fun events, whether it be booking the venue, selecting door prizes, discussing the menu with the venue, etc.

Directors at Large: These positions are more general in nature but whose portfolio will often align with the interest of the Board Member.

Program Director– Selecting the Guest Speaker takes a team approach that involves choosing a topic, and working with the Social Director with coordination of the venue.

Goodwill/Telephone Director-Condolences are sent from this Director and she works with a team of phone coordinators to notify and inform members who don't have a computer of upcoming events.

Other Directors at Large (2 Positions) - often found on the Finance Committee, Bylaws Committee and other areas of general interest.

Come write to us at victoriabranch@bcgre.ca if you are interested in joining the Branch as a volunteer or Board of Director.

Upcoming Speaker Presentations

September 2024

Guy Dauncey

Autumn marks the beginning of a new school year, the arrival of beautiful foliage, and the harvesting of crops.



However, this season also reminds us of the increasingly urgent challenges posed by our changing climate—devastating wildfires, extreme temperatures, and catastrophic floods.

To help us navigate these complex issues, we are thrilled to announce that our Guest Speaker this month will be the renowned author, activist, and organizer Guy Dauncey.

His topic will be: **What kind of climate action do we need here on the west coast?**

Guy Dauncey works to develop a positive vision of a sustainable future, and to translate it into action.

He co-founded the Victoria Carshare Co-op, (now MODO) in 1996; the BC Sustainable Energy Association in 2002; the non-profit Prevent Cancer Now in 2006; and the West Coast Climate Action Network in 2021. He is the author or co-author of ten books. His newest book- *The Economics of Kindness* will be published in 2025. He is also an Honorary Member of the Planning Institute of BC, and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts (UK).

Our September meeting will be held at a **different location**:

Date: Tuesday, September 10, 2024.

Time: 1:30 pm, doors open at 1:00 pm.

Place: Monterey Recreation Centre, 1442 Monterey Avenue, Victoria, B.C.

Please **RSVP to victoriabranch@bcgre.ca** , **Subject Line: Sept 10 Meeting, by September 3rd** as we are limited to 50 attendees.

*Parking is located in the upper lot in front of the Centre on Monterey Avenue and in the small lot across from the centre. You can may also use the underground parking on Hampshire Road.

Please come and join us at our new venue this Fall!



October 2024



Joan Wallace Driving School

We welcome back Joan Wallace to give us a brush up on our driving skills featuring a very comprehensive slide presentation.

Our October in-person/hybrid zoom presentation will be held:

Date: Tuesday, October 8, 2024.

Time: 1:30 pm, doors open at 1:00 pm.

Place: Monterey Recreation Centre, 1442 Monterey Avenue, Victoria, B.C.

Please **RSVP to victoriabranch@bcgre.ca**, **Subject Line: Oct 8 AGM, by October 1st** as we are limited to 50 attendees.

There will be refreshments served.

Please come and attend this not to be missed session which will follow our Branch Annual General Meeting and Elections!

Zoom meeting details will be sent out in October.

For those who cannot attend this meeting, Joan Wallace Driving School hosts a free seminar once a month see below:

[Free Training Opportunities - Joan Wallace Driving School](#)

Events for 2024

May 2024

Horticulture Centre of the Pacific (HCP)

After last year's garden tour was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, we were able to arrange for a small group to see the gardens on Thursday, May 30!

Thanks so much to our Program Director, Gerry Buydens for organizing this well received event for our members.



Life Member Presentation

At our Summer Luncheon, our Membership Director, Jane Rutherford recognized two of our long term members, who have been members of the BCGREA for over 20 years!

Congratulations Frank Csordas (who received his certificate earlier) and Mel Smith for reaching this wonderful milestone!



June 2024 Summer Luncheon

A good time was had by all at the June Summer Luncheon at the Vista 18 Restaurant@Chateau Victoria Hotel.

George Bowden our Vice chair who is filling in for Barbara Golder our Branch Chair while she is on holidays, kicked off the festivities by thanking all of our amazing volunteers who keep the branch running in so many varied roles and ways.

A special thanks to Marita Kuehn and Susanne Krieger for planning and organizing our social events, and everything that is involved in bringing them to fruition.

Thanks to Vijay Vyas on our Financial Team, an Accountant who has done the financial review of the branch for the past two years and keeps things smoothly running!

A big thanks to Linda Foubister our Branch Photographer whose winning image “Trial Island” won the Branch photo contest in 2021 and graces our website.

Our Telephone Committee:

Heather Akehurst, Beth Jasper, Jean Kacy, and Neela Streifel for keeping in touch with our members with special announcements and branch news.

Thanks to the Board for their year round enthusiastic support!



Ho Ho Ho!

SAVE THE DATE!!!

The Executive have booked Vista 18 Restaurant for our very popular Christmas Luncheon.

Date: Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Time: 12:00 pm, Doors open at 11:30 am

The Menu is still to be determined but tickets (\$35 members, \$55 non-members) can be purchased at the September and October meetings. Cash and cheque please. Other payment arrangements will be coordinated with the Social Director.

Members Corner

More News from HCP

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 in 2025!

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

victoriabranch@bcgre.ca

Subject: Life Member Pin

Also, if you have a story to share of your time with the BC Government or Broader Public Sector and your retirement life, we would love to hear from you!

Please contact Victoria Branch News, at the email above.

2024 Monthly Draw Winners



Our winners at our June Luncheon were:

Kathleen Hadley	Karin Heimlich
Debbie Watkiss	Joe Carr
Laura Lam	Morag Masterton
Fran Dunne	Carol Hillyer
Maureen Lundquist	Mary Slanina
Frank Csordas	Micheal Sampson
Wayne Morrison	Sharon Sampson
John Pearson	David Wetton
Veronical Stockwell	Kimberley Whitehead

Congratulations to you all!

The Empress Fig

The Gardens at HCP has been part of the horticulture community, a tourist destination, a local favourite, and a centre of plant education since 1979.

It's fair to say over the past 45 years we have created our own history. The wonderful thing though is that plants can carry their own storied past.

We have Japanese Maples in the Takata Garden that are over 100 years old and one of the biggest collections of Bonsai in North America. We even have a way for you to take home some plant history for yourself!

Planted next to our library, is a beautiful piece of Victoria history.

In 1914 a *Ficus carica*, or common fig, was planted at the Empress Hotel in Victoria. In 1981 this tree was designated a 'heritage plant' as it had become the largest fig tree in Canada and had an impressive fruit crop. In 1986 the 'Empress Fig' was dug up and moved to the Gardens at HCP to make way for the construction of the Victoria Convention Centre. While the transplant was successful, the tree did begin to decline. Cuttings were taken and one has grown into a magnificent specimen next to our Library.

The Gardens at HCP has now been successfully propagating from the second-generation Empress Fig for several years. Annually, cuttings are taken in the spring and summer, given 3 to 6 weeks to root

and then are potted. Most cuttings are successful as long as they don't dry out. Each plant comes with a copy of the original heritage certificate, all you need is a well drained site with full-sun and sufficient water during the growing season.



Come join us for our Fall Plant Sale on Sept 21 from 9am-4pm! (For HCP Members/volunteers, come on Sept 20).

[Horticulture Centre of the Pacific \(hcp.ca\)](http://www.hcp.ca)

Linda Petite, Head Gardener

Horticulture Centre of the Pacific

Message from the Editor

Dearest Gentle Reader,

Oh Dear...! Wrong salutation– this is **not** that kind of newsletter (for you ‘Bridgerton’ fans).

I just want to say that I will be stepping down from my role as Editor of the Victoria Branch News in the Fall. It has been truly a privilege and a pleasure to be your source for comings and goings of our branch.

It is my fervent desire that there are others in the branch membership that will come out and contribute by volunteering, having fun and learning new skills in any of the roles as Directors or volunteers.

Life is a journey and it all begins with one step! Thank you so much for the memories!

Cheers, Laura Lam, Communications Director



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 \(findjoo.com\)](https://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

Program Director : Gerry Buydens

Goodwill/Telephone Director: Sonja Ruffell

Director at Large: Terry Prentice

Director at Large: Sarf Ahmed

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 if you don't reach Jodine.

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!