



# The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District Branch  
800

“Fall 2020” Newsletter  
aka “The Covid 19 Special Edition”  
aka “New Westminster & District Branch 70<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Edition”

Contact info:

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## “Its Just Allergies” by Andy McColl

I thought we could kick off our ‘Covid 19 Special’ newsletter with a brief malady themed tale. I dedicate it to all the allergy sufferers out there. I have rhinitis and year round spend the first 20 to 30 minutes of every morning dripping, snuffling and nose blowing until the antihistamines take effect. Fortunately, I don’t have the sneezing fits every day; these are generally six to a dozen per bout and feel like they register anywhere from 3.8 to 6.2 on the Richter scale.

Back in the mid-’eighties one of my daughters worked in a bank in New West. When I had banking to do, I used to go there and combine my banking with a wee visit. One day when I entered the bank there was only one other customer being served. My daughter said to the colleague next to her “Here comes my Dad”.

So, I’m walking towards these two smiling faces when, without any warning, what felt like a tablespoonful of nose drool shot out of my nose, down my front and onto the floor. Isn’t there is a quote by someone that you do not get second chances to make a first impression? Some life experiences are funnier in retrospect than they are at the time.

## **Important Notice: Virtual Branch Meetings**

**General membership meeting via Zoom at 1:00 pm Tuesday Sept 15, 2020. Link, agenda, and minutes on pages 7 to 9. Branch 800 AGM via Zoom at 1:00 pm on Tuesday October 20. Link, agenda, minutes on pages 9 to 11.**

## 2021 Membership Dues

**Membership dues of \$20 are payable each year by January 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reminder: Dues are in arrears after March 15<sup>th</sup>)** For members not on automatic deduction of dues on their February pension cheques, your cheque should be made payable to BCGREA and mailed to the Membership Secretary for the Branch: **Rita Pollock**, 302-1110 Howie Ave, Coquitlam, BC, V3J 1V1

## Branch 800 Hits 70

**This year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “New Westminster Branch” formed in 1950 as part of the *BC Retired Civil Servants Association*, before becoming the BC Government Retired Employees’ Association as we are today.**

In 1947, 50 retired civil servants held a meeting in Victoria for the purpose of forming the BC Retired Civil Servants Association. An initial goal of the association was to obtain a cost of living bonus for superannuates on the same basis as active civil servants.

Another important issue for superannuates was the desire for free hospitalization and medical care for pensioners between 60 and 70 and to make some provision for the chronically ill. When no headway was made with the Superannuation Branch, the committee charged with pursuing these goals went directly to the Provincial Cabinet. *It is pertinent to note that these pursuits occurred in the days before unions and collective bargaining, setting the stage for the establishment of future benefits.*

In 1949 the Vancouver Branch was formed and joined forces with the Victoria Branch to form a Planning Committee.

**The New Westminster Branch was formed in 1950.** The early 1950’s were good years for the Association. Relationships with key government officials were firmly established, the Association’s existence was legitimized by incorporation through the Societies Act and membership increased to 558. The Association succeeded in winning the first concession to improving the pension situation in 1953 with the supplementary bonus system.

During the 1950’s the Association began a strong relationship with the BC Government Employees’ Association and representation was gained on the newly instituted Superannuation Committee. Communication between all groups was sufficient to compel the government to legislate some very positive force to the existing Superannuation legislation.

Although much was accomplished during the ‘50’s, the pension increases were still lacking relative to the cost-of-living index. The Association devoted much of its time and resources to closing this gap.

A Superannuation Committee made representations to the Provincial Secretary who, in turn, referred the matter to the Superannuation Commission. This resulted in the Association coming away with a pension increase every two years, up to and including 1972.

**In 1956, the Association changed its name to BC Government Retired Employees' Association.** Primarily, this was to expand the services of the Association so that it could assist superannuates from government boards and commissions as well as regular civil servants. The Association even organized a committee for expanded services to facilitate this function. This committee was headed by Miss Lottie Bowron, who later became the Association's first woman President.

For years, the Association had pressed the government for free medical coverage and, in 1957, with the passing of the Public Service Medical Plan Act, 50% medical coverage was given to all retired employees and their wives or widows.

After 1957, all presentations given to government were by a Provincial Executive. Delegates from the three branches- Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster were sent to the Annual Meeting, at which a President, Vice President, Treasurer and 4 Directors were elected. In addition, a Superannuation Committee consisting of three persons, one from each Branch, was elected. It was this Committee which met with the government on all matters pertaining to the welfare of retired employees.

In 1960 the Association gained representation on the Medical Services Board. In 1965 the Provincial Secretary appointed an Association member to the Government Employee Medical Services Directorate. But, in 1968, before any substantial changes to benefits were made, the Government Employee Medical Services Directorate was taken over by the BC Medical Services Plan and the Association lost its representation.

The History of the BC Government Retired Employees Association is chronicled in full on the Provincial BCGREA website authored by **Ed Bodner**; former BCGEU member and former president of the BCGREA.

### **Welcome New Members**

Welcome to the following new members who have joined Branch 800 since our last newsletter:  
**Oi Shan Rebecca Chan, Wang Tat Chan, Debbie Jean Hawboldt, Michael Eberhard Jobke, Gural Kayimzade, Roger Gaetan Lemaire, Eric Yuk Shun Liu, John Frank Rieberger, Brenda Lynn Story Louise Margaret Swan, Alan John Walker and Dawn Lorna Walker**

## Chair Report – Fall 2020

I hope you have remained safe and well during this new reality of Covid-19. Needless to say, life as we know it has been altered greatly. **As for the Branch, all meetings at the Centennial Community Centre have been officially cancelled for the rest of this year, including the Christmas Luncheon.** Until this is over, please join our virtual meetings.

Meanwhile we have been conducting business at hand. Life member Certificates were sent by the Chair and Branch Membership Secretary in July to 30 members for 2020 plus one from 2019.

The finance review committee held a backyard meeting on July 8 with **Val Davies (Chair)**, **Ross Tremere**, **Loralee Wilkin**, Branch Treasurer **Alfred Malcolm** and Branch Chair **Bonnie Billington**. Thank you to this committee and to Alfred who has diligently kept our financial records in good order by balancing the books again this year!

Our delegates have been attending virtual meetings with affiliated agencies such as the Council of Senior Citizens Organizations (COSCO) during the pandemic. There is much in the forefront about the abysmal conditions in many senior's care facilities. For updates and COSCO recommendations, see *COSCO Highlights* posted on the website: <http://www.coscobc.org>

I would like to thank Branch 800 telephone committee volunteers for keeping in touch with our members after the last general membership meeting in February. Contact will resume in September to "check in" and pass along any pertinent information from the Branch.

In future I look forward to a time when we can safely resume our meetings in person and celebrate **the BCGREA New Westminster & District Branch 800 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

### 2020 Life Membership List

Congratulations go to the following members who attained Life Member status in 2020, plus one who was inadvertently omitted from the 2019 list.

**Vivian Bates; Gerald Joseph Bourque; Andrew John Drever; Norman Blair Eyford; Sharon Louise Eyford (2019); Dorothy Victoria Garbe; Geraldine Evelyn Glover; Terrence Frederick (Terry) Gosney; Valerie Eleanor Gosney; Dora Joan Gusola; Grace Coral Henry; Maria Louise Innes; Dianne Carolyn Jackson; Pauline Lucy Jose; Ruth Joyce; Mohinder Singh Kang; William Frederick (Rick) Leipert; Joan Edith Ludlow; Harvey Saul Lyman; Helen Margaret Moore; Margaret Elizabeth (Beth) Murphy; Celio Armando Pacheco-Gasquez; Marie Louise Parsons; Heather Ruth Maureen Podrow; Joan Ellen Sandra Rogers; David Victor Ryshak; Gurdev Singh Sahota; Mary Theresa Snelling; Lynn Patricia Tomko; Endre Lajos Toth and Maureen Margaret Watts.**

### **Announcements from the Chair:**

Courtesy of the Provincial BCGREA Executive we have a tech specialist on board for our first virtual meetings. **Jim Naguib** will conduct our general meeting on September 15, 2020 as well as the AGM on October 20. Members without electronic devices can call in.

**Branch 800 Annual General Meeting via Zoom:** The agenda will be limited to essential business including election of officers. Currently all present executive members are willing to run again. The position of Branch 800 Secretary remains vacant and we need this support! Please send any nominations as well as any questions for the AGM to past chair Myrna Cresswell; [myrna818@gmail.com](mailto:myrna818@gmail.com) by October 6, 2020. Nominations will also be accepted at the meeting.

**Hearing Life Canada is hosting a "Healthy Hearing" webinar for our Branch on Wednesday September 23, 2020.** Further information and the link will be announced closer to the date. For any questions contact **Cheryl Anderson** by email @ [cead@hearinglife.ca](mailto:cead@hearinglife.ca)

The COSCO Conference for 2020 scheduled for October 4 & 5 2020 has been postponed to October 2021.

**Provincial AGM: Wednesday October 21 at 11:00 am. This will be a virtual "Zoom" meeting attended by Branch 800 Chair and three delegates: Myrna Cresswell (Past Chair); Navin Goburdhun (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair) Donna Main (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair) and alternate delegate Rita Pollock (Membership Secretary).** Three provincial executives will be voted in for 2020/2021: President, First vice President, and Second Vice President. Contact Branch 800 Chair Bonnie Billington for a copy of the nomination form. Any nominations are to be sent by midnight Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> to **Lawrence Johnson** email: [lawrence0846@gmail.com](mailto:lawrence0846@gmail.com)

Provincial BCGREA is creating a centralized database that allows for enhanced communication and secure transfer of updated membership lists to the branches. **Josie Byington** has been hired to take over Central Support duties for this project. Plans are also in place for a major redesign the Provincial website. Meanwhile watch for an upcoming BCGREA sponsors "infomercial" video on the Provincial website.

**Disabilities Alliance Association of BC "Transition" Newsletter** will be available online during the pandemic. For the summer2020 edition:  
<http://disabilityalliance.bc.org/transsumm20-webtransumm20-web>

### **In Memoriam: Edward Stephen Bodner August 19,1930 – June 4,2020**

Ed passed away in Courtenay BC at the age of 89. He was known as a true "pillar" of the BCGREA, having served as past president of the organization and more recently as past chair of Branch 200. He wrote a comprehensive history of the BCGREA that is available on the Provincial BCGREA website. He is remembered as lighthearted and jovial by our members who knew him as an ambulance driver at Riverview Hospital. He was serious about his work and Union matters, especially in securing fair wages and benefits for workers in the 1970's that are still in effect today. Look for a special tribute to Ed in the upcoming Fall edition of the *Pen* Newsletter.

## In Memoriam

We regret to announce the passing of the following members since the last newsletter:

**Naseer Ahmad Chaudhry**

**Lucia (Lucy) Holmgren**

**Ralph Raymond Jones**

**Margaret Ethel Rockliffe**

**Mary Theresa Snelling**

**Rose P. Cochlan**

**Elwyn Findlay (Allan) Howard**

**Jane Frances Lee**

**Claudia Olive Rose Savage**

**Alice Hancock**

**Howard**

**Jane Frances Lee**

**Claudia Olive Rose Savage**

**Harry Walter Vagg**

**Joan Marie Hanson**

**Archie (Kenneth) Jones**

**Rosa Agnes Lemarchand**

**Peggy Smith**

The Executive and members of the BCGREA, New Westminster & District Branch 800 express sincere condolences to these families and their friends.

## BCGREA Canvas Bag & Stylus Pen



With approval from the membership in January 2020, Branch 800 Executive placed an order for 100 canvas tote bags and pens from a local printing company. The purpose aside from advertising the BCGREA: for presentation to our guest speakers, to each of the Executive for their meetings and to use as a door prize for special events such as the Branch AGM. They are for sale to members at slightly below cost at \$20 for the bag and pen or \$2.00 for the pen only. The contact person for sales is Branch 800 Director **Kathy Nelson** at 604-942-5770.

**Canvas Bag 13" high x 19" wide x 7" deep with 12 inch drop handles.**

# September 15, 2020 1:00 pm Branch Meeting Via Zoom

## **Branch 800 General Meeting via Zoom on Tuesday September 15, 2020 at 1:00 pm**

is a brief meeting to discuss budget and announce delegates to the Provincial AGM.

Agenda: see below.

Minutes of last general membership meeting on February 18, 2020 follow the agenda.

### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74691034411?pwd=TFBOYlZKUS9uajhZYnB5c3FJYUphdz09>

Meeting ID: 746 9103 4411

Passcode: 172722

### **Phone-In: 778-907-2071**

\*6 - Toggle mute/unmute

\*9 - Raise hand

If you cannot create a Zoom account, or wish to attend without a webcam,

<https://us04web.zoom.us/jc/join/74691034411?pwd=TFBOYlZKUS9uajhZYnB5c3FJYUphdz09>

## **BRANCH 800 GENERAL MEETING AGENDA 1:00 pm September 15, 2020**

**Welcome** and call to order at 1:00 pm    **Moderator:** Jim Naguib    **Minutes:**

1. Welcome New Members / Guests    Bonnie Billington (Chair)
2. Adoption of Agenda: M\_\_\_\_\_ S\_\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_\_
3. Minutes of February 18<sup>th</sup> 2020 attached M\_\_\_\_\_ S\_\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_\_
4. Reports:
  - a. Chair
  - b. Treasurer Alfred Malcolm: August 2020 financial report
  - c. Membership Secretary
  - d. Any other Reports
5. Unfinished Business: Any?
6. New Business:
  - a. Proposed Budget for 2020 /21: Alfred Malcolm
  - b. Delegates for Provincial AGM Virtual meeting on October 20,2020
  - c. Any other new business
7. Adjournment:

## **BRANCH 800 GENERAL MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 18, 2020**

**1:00 pm: Speaker: Ray Fournier, *Topic – Computer Maintenance*. BCGREA Canvas bag and pen with logo given to Ray in appreciation of his talk on this topic.**

**1:45 – 2:00 Refreshment Break**

1. Call to Order: 2:02 pm Acting Secretary: Bonnie
2. Welcome new member - Kent Anderson attended speaker presentation.
3. Attendance - **39**
4. Adoption of Agenda M) Myrna Cresswell S) Christine Demchuk; Carried
5. Minutes of January 19, 2020. Motion to adopt as amended with correction to Treasurer's report date (should be Nov & Dec 2019) - Myrna. S) Dennis Ishikawa. Carried
6. **Correspondence:**
  - a) Jan 23 - email from BC Health Coalition Coordinator Terrie Hendrickson requesting annual membership dues and donation.

### **7. Reports:**

Chair: Bonnie Billington

- Executive meeting on Feb 4 cancelled due to the weather.
- BC Health Coalition annual dues (\$50) sent January 27, 2020 with a letter outlining Provincial BCGREA guidelines on membership dues expenditures.
- BCGREA canvas bags & pens order (one hundred of each) picked up from ABC Printing in Port Coquitlam.

## **MINUTE of SILENCE**

### **McKenna Collection (Andy McColl) \$38.20**

- a) 1<sup>st</sup> VC: Navin Goburdhun – COSCO: Branch 800 McKenna donation gratefully received by COSCO. A large donation of \$25 K received for the Conference in October. AGM held on Friday Feb.14 with Guest speaker Shane Simpson from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. New President Sheila Pither. Navin Goburdhun from Branch 800 re elected at one of four Members at Large. Seventeen Pharmaceutical companies lobbying against Federal Government's implementation of Universal Pharmacare.
- b) 2<sup>nd</sup> VC: Donna Main – away.
- c) Past Chair: Myrna Cresswell: no report
- d) Treasurer Alfred Malcolm: January 2020 financial report  
M) Val Davies S) Bill Speers; Carried
- e) Membership: Rita Pollock: One member deceased since last report. Current membership number - 667.
- f) Phone Convener: Sheila Halvorson – absent



- g) Newsletter: Andy McColl. Reminder that the electronic copy of the Spring Newsletter is due to be sent to our members on email. \* Chair to follow up.
- h) Hospitality: Bonnie Billington.
  - i) Christmas Lunch Dec 1, 2020 – River Room secured on Jan 27 with rent increase in effect at the cost of \$405.72 for the required 4 hours. \* *Note: In 2019 rental cost for same was \$76.99.* Date reserved with Sugar Mountain Catering. Food service costs will rise by \$2 per plate over last year. Due to rising costs, \*Chair advises ticket price increase will be necessary and will be determined by the Board pending upcoming proposed budget.
  - ii) Spring Social March 17 - St. Patrick's Day theme – Suggestion: potluck appetizers / finger foods accepted by members.
- i) Goodwill: Jean Ing's report given at the end of the meeting.
- j) Director Anna Tremere. No recent facility visits. Anna brought forward a member's complaint about Greenshield with his request to elicit feedback from other members at today's meeting i.e. Does anyone else have concerns about Greenshield? None voiced at this time.

## **8. Unfinished Business**

- b) Canvas bags & pens sample circulated. A few members voiced interest in purchasing the pen (separate from the bag). Purchase prices to be determined at an upcoming Executive Meeting.

## **9) New Business:**

- a) Branch Finance Review Committee: Val Davies has volunteered to Chair again this year and Loree Wilkin will stand on this committee again as well. We are short one member. Volunteers are encouraged to contact Val or any Executive member.

- b) COSCO Delegates. Based on our membership numbers we are entitled to 3 voting delegates. Meetings are usually the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month at 10 am at the Hastings Community Centre across from the PNE. Current members are Navin Goburdhun, Myrna Cresswell and Dennis Ishikawa. Branch members are invited to put their names forward.

## **10. Goodwill Report:** Jean Ing

## **11. Adjournment** at 2:45 pm moved by Myrna Cresswell

BRANCH 800 AGM 1:00 PM OCTOBER 20,  
2020 VIA ZOOM

**This is the formal announcement of a virtual "Zoom" AGM on Tuesday October 20, 2020 at 1:00 pm:**

Agenda SEE Below

Minutes of June 18, 2019 AGM follow the agenda

## Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74691034411?pwd=TFBOYIZKUS9uajhZYnB5c3FJYUphdz09>

Meeting ID: 746 9103 4411

Passcode: 172722

## Phone-In: 778-907-2071

\*6 – Toggle mute/unmute

\*9 – Raise hand

If you cannot create a Zoom account, or wish to attend without a webcam,

<https://us04web.zoom.us/jc/join/74691034411?pwd=TFBOYIZKUS9uajhZYnB5c3FJYUphdz09>

## **BRANCH 800 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OCTOBER 20, 2020 at 1:00 pm – AGENDA**

**Welcome** and call to order at 1:00 pm **Moderator: Jim Naguib**

Minutes: Myrna Cresswell

Quorum: Only members may vote. 26 required for business and elections

1. Welcome New Members/Guests: Bonnie Billington (Chair)
2. Adoption of Agenda: M\_\_\_\_\_ S\_\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_\_
3. Minutes AGM of June 18, 2019 attached M\_\_\_\_\_ S\_\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_\_
4. Any questions or discussion:
5. Election of Officers: Myrna Cresswell

### **Candidates for Election:**

**Chairperson: Bonnie Billington**  
**First Vice Chair: Navin Goburdhun**  
**Second Vice Chair: Donna Main**  
**Secretary:**  
**Treasurer: Alfred Malcolm**  
**Goodwill: Jean Ing**  
**Telephone Convener: Sheila Halvorson**

**Directors: Six to be elected**  
**Verna Cadwallader**  
**Dennis Ishikawa**  
**Andy McColl**  
**Marilyn Melville**  
**Kathy Nelson**  
**Anna Tremere**

6. Introduction of Executive for 2020/2021 effective October 20, 2020

7. Adjournment at \_\_\_\_\_ Moved by \_\_\_\_\_

**BCGREA BRANCH 800 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES JUNE 18, 2019**  
**Centennial Community Centre – 6<sup>th</sup> & Cumberland, New Westminster BC**

1. **Call to Order** at 1:10 pm Chair: Bonnie Billington Secretary: Gail Harmer

2. **Quorum:** *Only members may vote. 27 required for business and elections.*  
43 members were present when the meeting called to order and for the election.

3. **New Members/Guests:** A special welcome was extended to **Dorothy Kristjanson** our 100 year old, long time member and reliable phoner for many years for #800 Branch.

4. **Adoption of Agenda:** "to adopt as circulated" ...Donna Main/Bill Speers **.M/S/C**

5. **Minutes AGM of June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018:** "as circulated" ...Bill Speers /Dennis Ishikawa. **M/S/C**  
Minute of Silence  
McKenna Collection: Andy McColl

6: **Announcements:** a) ***Fact sheet on 'frauds and scams'*** produced by Canada Elder Law will be made available to all interested members signing request form at the head table. **B) 2018/19 Executive Officers' reports** available at each table for attending members' perusal. **C) Report from COSCO Delegates Meeting** June 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 by **Myrna Cresswell:** copies available at the head table. **D) Wendell Ratcliffe In memoriam – Thoughts and Memories** sheet circulated.

7. **Election of 2019/20 Officers** – Election was conducted by Past Chair, Myrna Cresswell and thus, the Chair of Branch #800's 'Nominating Committee'.

*Elected by affirmation, the full slate as recommended.*

Chair: Bonnie Billington

First Vice Chair: Navin Goburdhun

Second Vice Chair: Donna Main

Secretary: vacant

Treasurer: Alfred Malcolm

Membership Secretary: Rita Pollock

Goodwill Convener: Jean Ing

Phone Convener: Sheila Halvorson

Directors: Verna Cadwallader, Dennis Ishikawa, Andy McColl, Marilyn Melville, Kathy Nelson, and Anna Tremere

8. **Introduction of Executive for 2019/2020** effective August 1<sup>st</sup> 2019

9. **Goodwill Report**...Jean Ing.

10. **Adjournment:** 1:38 pm. Moved by Myrna Cresswell

## A tribute to Jean Ing Branch 800 Goodwill Convener



Jean turns 91 this year! She became a member of Branch 800 following retirement in 1984 after a long career as a Dietitian. Her post secondary education began with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Home Economics at McGill University. Following post graduate studies at the University of Washington, Jean became a member of the American Dietetic Association and subsequently the Canadian Dietetic Association. She began her career in 1954 at Woodlands, opening dietary services and working with Dr. McGeer in developing a special diet for residents with the metabolic disorder Phenylketonuria. From there she was stationed at Essondale in 1959, in charge of dietary services in Westlawn and Centre Lawn. Jean was instrumental in promoting internship in food and nutrition for UBC students. In the early 1960's she worked with the Vancouver Status of Women Council to secure paid fulltime employment for female dietary aides in the dining rooms. Jean spent the last ten years of her career in charge of dietary services at Riverside on "the Farm," later known the Forensic Psychiatric Institute.

After joining Branch 800 Jean eventually took on the role of Telephone Convener after persistent "persuasion" by former member Shirley Kenyon. She recalls there were 1250 members at the time and her organizational skills soon came into play by setting up the volunteer phone 'buddy system' in the early 1990's that is still in place today.

Jean has been an honoured life member of the BCGREA for many years, continuously volunteering her time and boundless energy to the Branch. As Goodwill Convener Jean is responsible for sending cards to members for special events, to those who are ill, in hospital and to member's families in bereavement. In addition to numerous other tasks, she continues to serve as a phoner, attends all executive meetings and manages door prizes for each membership meeting and special event. Each year for the Christmas Luncheon she creates a gift basket that everyone hopes to win. Jean winds up all branch meetings on a lighthearted note with humorous anecdotes and jokes. What a gem!