



The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District

Branch 800

“Fall 2025” Newsletter

Contact info:

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Editor: **Andy McColl**



Welcome New Members

*Catherine Caines, Shannon Campbell, Doreen Eby,
Lily & Frank Lowe, Satendra Kumar, Mary Lou Mah,
Roderick Manson, Brian & Sylvia May, H. Marie Palladino,
Bruce Okabe, Eleri Parry, Susan & Richard Price,
Margaret Tenhoeve, Rosanne Rothenberg,
Sergiy & Olga Vazyansky*

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Annual membership dues increase effective Jan. 1, 2026

Primary \$25, Couple \$40

***Cash pay members will receive an invoice in December 2025 from
BCGREA Administrative Support.**

BC Government Retired Employees' Association (BCGREA)

PO Box 26067 West Kelowna RPO,

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bcgrea@telus.net

CHAIR REPORT

Branch Meetings – at the təməsew'tx^w Aquatic and Community Centre, in New Westminster:

In review:

April 15, 2025: Round Table Discussion with input from members on future speaker topics e.g. Seniors Advocate, Healthy Ageing topics offered by the United Way, Organizing Digital Files, Members sharing skills e.g. Gardening, Beekeeping

May 20, 2025: CHAIR YOGA session with **Deepa Mukherji**, Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher with the City of Burnaby and New Westminister.



Yoga Instructor



June 17, 2025: Branch 800 Annual General Meeting.

Our thanks to **Kathy Nelson** for conducting the Election of Officers.

Elected by Acclamation, effective August 1st:

Chairperson: Bonnie Billington

1st Vice Chair: Mike Strath

Treasurer: Alex Dennison

Goodwill Convener: Jean Ing

Telephone Convener: Marilyn Melville

Directors: Dennis Ishikawa

Andy McColl

Anna Tremere

Marleine Wagner

Positions Vacant:

2nd Vice-Chair, Secretary, Membership Chair and two Directors.

PICNIC in QUEEN'S PARK Sept 9, 2025

Branch 800 hosted this special event, inviting BCGREA members and their guests, welcoming a number from **Golden Ears Branch 2400**. A bag lunch was provided free for all BCGREA

members. Special guest **Wilf Brodrick** (BCGREA 1st VP) spoke to the relationship between Branches and Provincial BCGREA under the parameters of the B C Societies Act. A total of 70 people enjoyed the food, social atmosphere and live music performed by ***Sunshine Rhythms*** Steel Pan Band.



Barbara Armstrong, Ron Morley & Golden Ears Branch members





October 21, 2025: Speaker Topic: ***Organizing Digital Photos*** was well received by members, presented By Liam Pozzolo & Kelena Lee. Links to digital screenshot hanouts on PC, Apple & Android devices are available on request:
bcgrea800@gmail.com

What's next....

November 18, 2025 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. in Room 2A/B at the tēmāsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre, 65 6th Ave East, New Westminster:

Speaker topic: *Recognizing, Preventing and Responding to Fraud* presented by the New Westminster Police Department. Q & A session followed by refreshments and a brief meeting after the presentation.



CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Tues. Dec 2, 2025, 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Royal Canadian Legion (Ballroom)
2675 Shaughnessy St, Port Coquitlam

Menu: Variety of hot and cold appetizer platters
Christmas theme sweets

Tickets: Branch members **FREE** Non-members \$20

RSVP by November 21st email: bcgrea800@gmail.com
Attention to Bonnie Billington, Chair

or

Call Ann Pratt 604-464-5580

In 2026

January 20, 2026 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Speaker topic *Overview of the Public Service Pension Plan* presented by **Stuart Morgan, Executive Director, PSPP Board of Trustees.** Meeting Room 2A/B at the tāmasewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre 65 6th Ave East, New Westminster.

February 17, 2026 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Speaker Janice Bobic on the topic of *Beekeeping* in Meeting room 2A/B as above. Refreshments and a brief business meeting to follow.

Please Note: there is no Branch meeting scheduled for March 2026 at the Aquatic and Community Centre due at the to limited meeting room space during Spring Break.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thirty-one Branch 800 members achieved 'Life Membership Status' in 2025, in recognition of twenty consecutive years as a member of BCGREA. Special certificates were issued by the Branch Chair and mailed to each member along with a life member card and a letter of appreciation from BCGREA President Brian Green.

If anyone is aware of members residing in Assisted or Long-Term Care facilities, please notify Branch 800 Director Anna Tremere (604-936-3382). As valued members of our branch it is important that we maintain contact, so they and their families do not feel forgotten.

In Memoriam

We regret to announce the passing of the following members:

**Raymond Albert, Victoria Briggs, Hilda Connell, Rosemary Cooper
Allan Cruickshank, Gale Dodsworth, William Dow, Marcella Fincaryk
Jean (Dianne) Friend, Dayal (Din) Gupta, Sheila Halvorson, Margaret Hill
Dianne Jackson, Marina Krewenchuk, Margaret Leladhar Singh
Harold Lanki, Harold Minshull, Ian Murdoch, Joseph Sherba
Joan Simonsen, Sheamus Slevin, D. (Sheila) Thompson
Marian Tompkins, Margaret Walsh, Joseph Witiuk**

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

Letter from the Ministry

by Andy McColl

When you think about it, deriving amusement from another person's misfortune is a rather unattractive aspect of human nature. But then there's a "but..."

In previous little tales I've told of a time I had stopped for some refreshment on Loch Lomondside while the A82 was being widened and straightened. I had a view of the parking lot and saw a works van pull in and about half a dozen workmen pile out. With the back doors open they made a ramp with a 2 by 10-inch board. One of the workers manhandled a motorcycle out from among the parked vehicles and sat astride it, obviously going to ride it into the van. I took my eyes off him for a moment and when I looked again the bike was on its side, the would-be rider was writhing on the ground clutching his right ankle and his workmates were helpless with laughter.

Another such incident happened when one of my colleagues in Paisley, Scotland, bought himself a motorcycle, a shiny black helmet, black raingear and gauntlets. When taking his road test, the examiner told him to drive round the block and when he returned, he was to perform an emergency stop when he saw the examiner raised his clipboard. When Duncan returned, the examiner was lying in the street being tended by some bystanders, and a black clad motorcyclist was explaining to a police officer "Ah seen him waving at me and then he stepped right oot in front o' me!"

Twenty some years ago I was walking down the main street in my hometown. Three men were standing together, two of whom were chuckling about something and the third had an unhappy look on his face.

Two of them I knew. Mr. Cameron was one of the town's butchers, he'd been a couple of years behind me in school. The unhappy one was named McPhee, he was closer in age to my sister, who was 8 years older than me, and had the nickname "Nifty", (My hometown was fond of giving people nicknames.)

I was introduced to the third man, Mr. McMillan, who was a member on the Community Council. The other two urged Nifty to show me his letter.

The letter was from the Ministry that paid Nifty his old age pension. It had come to their attention that Mr. McPhee had died the previous January. His pension had been stopped, and they wanted Mr. McPhee, "or your agent" to repay the pension paid to him since January. (This would've been in March).

As I handed Nifty back his letter, I said to him "Should you no' be lying down?" (A posture often assumed by the dead).

Most are familiar with the terms "looking daggers" and "if looks could kill". My mother had a word she used to describe an extremely scathing look of disapproval, "a sinker".

Nifty never said a word, he just gave me a sinker. Comment enough.