



The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District

Branch 800

“Fall 2026” Newsletter

Contact info:

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Editor: **Angela Louie**



Welcome New Members

**Lynda Bennett-Retei, Brenda Crivari, Mary Anne Donaldson,
Fiona Findlater, Darrel Jobin, Junette Jobin, Hans Penner,
Charlene Penner, Gabor Retei**

Resolution to officially change New Westminster & District Branch Fiscal Year as set out below for presentation at the November 17, 2026 Branch meeting.

Whereas BCGREA Constitution & Bylaws state:

Branches

9. “Each Branch shall end its financial year on the same date as adopted in the Association bylaws and submit a copy of its examined financial statements to the Association Treasurer within two months of that date.”

And whereas:

The BCGREA fiscal year is the calendar year.

And whereas:

In order for the New Westminster & District Branch to come into compliance with BCGREA Bylaws

Be it resolved that:

The 2026 fiscal year end shall be changed from June to December 2026

And further be it resolved that:

Commencing in 2027, the fiscal year for the Branch shall be January 1st to December 31st

CHAIR REPORT

Branch Meetings – at the təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre
65 6th Ave East, in New Westminster

In review:

April 21, 2026: Speaker topic: 'Container Gardening in Sun or Shade' presented by Andrea Maudsley.

BCGREA Annual General Meeting in Tsawwassen

April 23, 2026: Representatives from each branch (including branch 800 chair **Bonnie Billington** plus one delegate **Dennis Ishikawa**) gathered at the Coast Tsawwassen Inn for the election of Provincial BCGREA Table Officers and the voting on resolutions.

- BCGREA Officer Reports to the AGM are available on the BCGREA website www.bcgrea.ca/news/. **Wilf Brodrick** was elected as BCGREA President and **Merrilee Ashworth** as 1st Vice-President.
- The resolution to investigate a potential new 'Pre-Retirement Member Category' was approved. The Recruitment & Retention Committee is tasked with gathering information to present to the membership for approval and voting by branch delegates at a future meeting.
- Keynote speaker at the AGM: **Connie Jorsvik** - founder of Patient Pathways Healthcare Navigation, Planning + Education, provided an excellent presentation on Navigating the Healthcare System. Links to her subsequently recorded 3-part webinar is available on the BCGREA website under 'General News' www.bcgrea.ca/news/

May 19, 2026: Branch 800 Speaker topic: The 'Canadian Dental Care Plan' (CDCP) presented by Walker Pautz from Service Canada Community Outreach and Liason Service (COLS): Contact info: Call Centre: 1-833-537-4342 <https://canada.ca/dental>



BCGREA Honored Member Certificates were presented to:
Marleine Wagner Marlilyn Melville by Branch 800 Chair
in recognition of their long-standing active participation in BCGREA activities

Branch 800 Annual General Meeting

June 16, 2026: 32 members attended. Our thanks to **Rosemary Farrell** for conducting the Election of Officers.

Elected by acclamation effective August 1, 2026:

Chairperson: **Bonnie Billington**

Treasurer: **Alex Dennison**

Directors: **Dennis Ishikawa**

Andy McColl

Anna Tremere

Marleine Wagner

1st Vice Chair: **Michael Strath**

Goodwill Convener: **Jean Ing**

Telephone Convener: **Marilyn Melville**

Positions Vacant: Secretary, 2nd Vice Chair, Membership Secretary, Two Directors

Spring Social

- Following the AGM on June 16th, everyone enjoyed a variety of deli style food, hosted by the branch.
- Door prize draws - \$25 cash x 2 winners: Christine Demchuk and Marleine Wagner. Seven additional door prize items (BCGREA branded merchandise) drawn by the members.
- Thank You to volunteers: Joanne Burrows, Adriana Esposito, Karen Marshall, Cecile Wood and executive members present.

August 26, 2026 – Executive Planning Meeting – Motion to change Branch 800 AGM from June to November.

September 17, 2026 Branch meeting: 26 members attended an in-person presentation by Youla Thomas from 'Heart to Home Meals', an independent franchise providing frozen meals with free delivery services vancouver@hearttohomemeals.ca

What's ahead....

October 20, 2026 Branch meeting: 1:00 -3:00 p.m. **Speaker: Leanore Sali, Coordinator; New Westminster Community Response Network** will present an overview of their programs and workshops on preventing, identifying and responding to adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect. info@bccrns.ca

November 17, 2026 Branch Meeting: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Speaker to be confirmed.

Meeting Agenda - under new business will include:

- **Resolution:** to change Branch 800 Fiscal Year end from June to December
- **Proposed Budget for 2027** (for presentation by the Treasurer).



CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2026

Tues. Dec 8, 2026, 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion (Ballroom)
2675 Shaughnessy St, Port Coquitlam

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

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

Door Prizes and Gift exchange

Brief meeting agenda with announcements & financial report to follow

RSVP by November 27, 2026 email: bcgreas800@gmail.com

Attention to Bonnie Billington, Chair or call Anna Tremere 604-936-3382

In 2027:

at the təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre 65 6th Ave East, in New Westminster

January 19th: Branch meeting - Speaker to be confirmed

February 16th: Branch meeting – **Speaker topic: Update on the PSPP presented by Stuart Morgan, Executive Director; Pension Board / Secretariat of Public Service Pension Board of Trustees**

March 15th: Branch meeting at the Royal Canadian Legion: 1025 Ridgeway, Coquitlam BC
Speaker: Tanya Lyn Werk, (Financial Consultant). Topic to be confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Needed: Branch member involvement: Contact Branch Chair bcgreas800@gmail.com

Anyone interested in receiving occasional updates from Disability Association BC (DABC). <https://disabilityalliancebc.org/>

If anyone is aware of members residing in Assisted or Long-Term Care facilities, please notify Branch 800 Director Anna Tremere bcgreas800@gmail.com. As valued members of our branch it is important that we maintain contact, so they and their families do not feel forgotten.

BCGREA Annual membership Dues \$25; Spousal members \$15

*Cash pay members will receive an invoice in December 2026 from BCGREA
Administrative Support

BC Government Retired Employees' Association (BCGREA)

PO Box 26067 West Kelowna RPO,

West Kelowna, BC V4T 2G3

bcgreas@telus.net

Andy McColl is passing the torch to Branch 800 member Angela Louie as the new editor of the Steller's Quill Newsletter.

Along with his tasks as editor over many years, Andy has provided numerous stories about his mischievous antics growing up in Scotland as a "latchkey kid" on the grounds of the local mental hospital where both parents worked. He joined the hospital staff at age 17 and later qualified as a Registered Mental Nurse in 1961, before being recruited by Selkirk Mental Hospital in Manitoba. Andy recalls it only took 3 Manitoban winters before spending the next 30 years of his career as a nurse at Riverview Hospital. Good choice! During that time Andy became acquainted with Ed Bodner on the Public Service Pension Advisory Board, and Ed signed him up as a BCGREA member after retirement in 1999. He was swiftly elected as a Branch 800 Director and a few years later, appointed as co-editor of the branch newsletter with Karen Munro.

In the early days before email, there were over 800 paper newsletters to prepare for mailing, requiring get togethers for proofreading copies typed up by volunteers, inserting dues reminders and executive cards before labeling. Submissions were handwritten and Andy began typing the newsletter himself. Around 2010 the branch hosted a contest to name the newsletter. Our past chair Bill Speers aptly won it with 'The Steller's Quill.' To date, there are just under 200 members on the list for a copy via "snail mail."

Among the humorous stories Andy shared from his past, many involved staff members who were unwitting recipients of the pranks by fellow instigators. These antics helped to keep their spirits up, especially on the night shift. Evidently these little stories were originally meant to fill up blank space in the newsletter, but he admits, some took up space themselves, almost to the point of becoming another 'McColl's Magazine'.

Andy remains on the Branch executive as a director, with a good memory for branch historical details and as always, can be counted on to attend meetings, in charge of branch donations. If that's not enough to keep him busy, Andy's large family includes six great grandchildren in Scotland and four in BC.

As Andy steps away as editor with a big THANK YOU, we welcome Angela Louie aboard!



'BCGREA Life Membership' in 2026

In recognition of twenty consecutive years as a member of BCGREA, special certificates were issued by the Branch Chair to each of the following members along with a life member card:

David Anderson, Andrea Bott, Gerald Gerhardt, Lynne Gerhardt, Gail Harmer, Sharon Hirsch, Bert Jansson, Damon Lee, Grace Pascoe, Karen Putrus, George Richard, Fredreck Tsui, Gerrit Vanstaalduinen, Sharmaine VanStaalduinen and Dianne Wenham.

Branch Member Donations

Branch 800 members currently contribute to two non-profit organizations in the lower mainland that provide services and support for seniors:

- **COSCO's Health & Wellness Institute Society** receives donations from our members in memory of former member Tom McKenna, who was instrumental in the formation of COSCO and our branch's continued involvement in support of their activities. After his passing, the branch voted to have a memorial collection in his name, subsequently known as the McKenna Collection at our meetings. The Seniors Health and Wellness Institute periodically provides 47 free workshops on various educational topics that are available to our members in person or by zoom.
- **Union Gospel Mission New Westminster Resource Centre** provides a variety of services including meals, group programs on site and mobile services to people in need.

In Memoriam

We regret to announce the passing of the following members:

**Althea L. Bebington, Andrew L. Donovan, Joan S. Fairhurst,
Terrence (Terry) M. Fitzgerald, Irene Gillis,
Edward F. Hameluck, Pauline L. Jose, Albert (Josep) Knapp,
Marie L.C. Labourdette, Robert G. Matthews,
Sarah H. Smyth, Garth B. Sparkes, Margaret L. Styan**

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

Thank You BCGEU!

Services provided by the BCGEU print room staff are invaluable to our branch. We appreciate their ongoing assistance with our newsletter printing and mailout.