



The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District

Branch 800

“Spring 2024” Newsletter

Contact info:

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604-761-5768

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2024 Cash Pay Membership Dues

Membership dues of \$20 are payable each year by January 2nd (Dues are in arrears after March 15th) For members not on automatic deduction from their February pension, your cheque should be made payable to: **BCGREA Branch 800**

P.O. Box 57314

Coquitlam B.C. V3K 0C9

Following the BCGREA 75th Anniversary Membership promotion in 2022/23, Branch 800 welcomes the following new members:

Jane & Stephen Allen, Michelle Collins,

Robert Costello & Gabriella Moro, Peter Furminger,

Patricia Gilchrest, Carson & Michelle Lew, Linda Mayert,

Roy Natsuhara, Janice Stephens

Are you willing to help?

We need volunteers to assist with hospitality, special events and phoning.

Contact Bonnie Billington (Chair) at 604-761-5768 or chair.branch800@bcgrea.ca

Branch 800 AGM 2024 Meeting Notice

Branch 800's AGM is scheduled for Tuesday June 18, 2024 at 100 p.m.

Date and Location to be confirmed.

Call for Nominations

Under the Branch 800 regulations, elections are held at the AGM **in June of each year** to fill the Executive board positions as follows:

Chairperson

1st Vice Chairperson

2nd Vice Chairperson

Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Chairperson

Telephone Convener

Goodwill Convener

Six Directors

The BCGREA regulations state: "Nominees must be nominated by a member in good standing and will provide written consent to stand for office and may submit background information along with their names."

It is important that we have both some continuity of service on the board *and* new people joining the branch executive to provide new ideas and energy to our organization. A number of branches have closed because new people have not volunteered to serve on the executive.

Anyone interested in possibly serving on the board, please contact Bonnie Billington at bcgre800@gmail.com or call Myrna Cresswell - 604-209-0492.

CHAIR REPORT

Branch meetings are still being held at the Royal Canadian Legion 1025 Austin Ave in Coquitlam until further notice. Members will be notified when we have secured meeting space in the new təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre in New Westminster as anticipated in June.

Provincial BCGREA AGM October 18,2023 at the Coast Tsawwassen Inn attended by Branch Chair Bonnie Billington, Myrna Cresswell, Donna Main, Marilyn Melville and Kathy Nelson. Observers: Dennis Ishikawa and Mike Strath.

A few highlights:

- Motion carried to change the BCGREA fiscal year from July 1 – June 30 to Jan 1 – Dec 31.
- Motion carried for one time or occasional contributions to charities delivering services as defined by the Seniors Advocate Act.

- Discussion on Branch delegate representation / voting at Provincial BCGREA meetings went to a committee. Update: After one meeting no consensus was reached so the issue was put to an online poll to members with email, ending January 25, 2024. Overall there was a very low response rate from the 22 branches. The majority of members who did vote, chose option #1; the 'chair plus one delegate' model (including our branch) regardless of branch membership numbers. This proposal will be brought forward for consideration at the Delegates Meeting on April 23, 2024. Approval will allow the 2024 Provincial AGM to operate under that formula.

October 24, 2023: **In-person workshop on Advance Care Planning** was an excellent presentation by the team from the Fraser Health Authority, covering the 5 steps of ACP; the related legal forms and the importance of sharing one's personal values now in making health care decisions for the future. Fraser Health puts out a very helpful workbook for initial ACP thoughts titled ***My Voice in Action - A workbook for Advance Care Planning EASY READ Version*** along with the more in depth ***My Voice Advance Care Planning Guide***. Both are available in pdf format on the Fraser Health ACP website www.fraserhealth.ca/acp

October 31, 2023: **BC Health Coalition's LTC Funding Accountability Campaign**
It was good to see other Branch 800 members attending this virtual event, followed up by a postcard campaign to Provincial Health Minister Dix. According to the speaker (former) BC Senior's Advocate Isobel Mackenzie, some progress has been made since the initiative to improve LTC began in terms of increased funding for improved staffing levels, training and working conditions in these facilities. However much more needs to be done to ensure public funds are used appropriately in for-profit facilities to maximize direct resident care.



Branch 800 Christmas Lunch

Dec 5, 2023



Marleine Wagner, Mike Strath, Ann Pratt, Alfred Malcolm

The Christmas Luncheon was held at the Royal Canadian Legion in Port Coquitlam 51 branch members and their guests attending. A traditional turkey dinner was served buffet style. **A big THANK YOU to all the member volunteers. Special thanks to Ann Pratt for managing the luncheon ticket sales and to Jean Ing for putting together the gift basket. The winning ticket was drawn by (guest) Milda Maxwell.**

January 26, 2023: Branch 800 Financial Review for July 1 - Dec 31, 2023 was held in keeping with the Provincial BCGREA requirements. Attending: **Ross Tremere, Alfred Malcolm** (Treasurer), **Bonnie Billington** (Branch Chair) and new committee member **Al Pirani**. Our finances remain sound and the books were found in good order. Thank you to **Loralee Wilkin** who has stepped down from the committee.

February 20, 2024: In-person Speaker: FRAUDS & SCAMS. This topic was very well presented by the Coquitlam RCMP, with 42 members and their guests in attendance. Copies of the RCMP **SENIORS' GUIDEBOOK TO SAFETY AND SECURITY** were distributed, covering a wide variety of scams with easy to follow tips on fraud prevention. An electronic version in PDF is available via internet search on the title. Thank you **to Anna Tremere** for organizing this event.

Coming up in 2024

March 19th at 1:00p.m. Branch General Meeting at the Coquitlam Legion.

April 16th at 1:00p.m: Branch Meeting **Speaker topic: Emergency Preparedness** at the Coquitlam Legion presented by the Coquitlam Fire Prevention Officer & Community Educator. **RSVP required by Tuesday April 9th.**
Contact Anna Tremere: 604-936-3382 or Bonnie Billington: bcgrea800@gmail.com

April 23rd Provincial BCGREA Director's Meeting (Hybrid) to be conducted electronically with Table Officers and Branch Chairs in attendance.

May 21st at 1:00 p.m. Branch 800 General meeting at the Coquitlam Legion

The 55+ BC Games will be held in Salmon Arm from September 10 -14 in 2024. This annual multi-sport event is hosted by a different community each year in the Province of BC as the largest sporting event for the 55+ population, with over 3000 participants annually. Here's an opportunity to try a new activity **or participate as a volunteer** in one of the 12 'zones' throughout the province. There is everything from track & field events & pickleball to low impact activities e.g. horseshoes, darts and card games such as cribbage. To visit the main website, search: <https://55plusbcgaames.org>

Registration is from March 1st – June 30, 2024.

For a list of events and link to registration coordinators in your zone:



Zone 3 - Fraser Valley /Tri-Cities area residents:

zone3info@55plusbcgames.org

Zone 4 - Burnaby and New Westminster residents:

zone4info@55plusbcgames.org

BCGREA Athletics is a concept to encourage members to attend events outside the usual branch activities. The BCGREA

Recruitment and Retention Committee would like to hear from anyone interested in attending any of the group activities or to participate as a volunteer in the 55+ BC Games. Contact chair.branch800@bcgre.ca

Announcements

ATTENTION: CASH PAY MEMBERS:

Members with DUES IN ARREARS after March 15, 2023 will be notified that the branch will follow the Provincial BCGREA Regulations Part 3; 9 (a) as follows:

“Members, whose dues are in arrears on the 30th of September in any year, shall forfeit their good standing and privileges in the Association will be suspended. (b) If on the 31st day of December in the same year the dues shall remain unpaid, their names shall be removed from the membership roll and they shall be advised in writing of such action. They may be reinstated with no lapse in membership, if all arrears and current dues are paid within one month of such notice. Any greater delay shall require a new member application.”

Except for our Associate members receiving a Municipal Pension and members who do not receive a public service pension, we strongly encourage those who remain on cash pay to convert to automatic DCO for the following reasons:

- Collecting and safely depositing dues cheques is an onerous task for our executive volunteers who must ensure the confidentiality of your personal chequing information.
- Membership lists would be automatically kept up to date, saving BCGREA Administrative Support time and resources.
- You would qualify for the **one-year free membership dues** offer from the BCGREA.

We thank the members who have already switched to automatic dues checkoff!

The Provincial Government's Seniors Distress Line:

“Provides a free and confidential telephone support service for seniors, their caregivers or anyone concerned about a senior. Calls are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by highly trained, non-judgemental and caring volunteers. Those who may benefit from this service

include seniors who are feeling alone, facing difficult life situations, wanting help working through a problem, or looking for information on community resources.”

Call 604-872-1234

<https://helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca/resource/seniors-distress-line>

Branch 800 Telephone Convener Marilyn Melville welcomes two new phoners – **Rosemary Farrell** and **Jeannie Beattie** to the list of volunteers. We thank all those who have been keeping our members informed about branch activities or simply calling to keep in touch.

We encourage members with electronic devices to join the Branch 800 Facebook Page. This is a great way to share announcements, access up and coming events and connect with other members. This page has a high security setting, and you must be invited in. To join, please make your request to **Donna Dunedin Main** via email @ donnaemain@gmail.com and place 'Branch 800 FB Page' in the subject line. Note: In your message, please include a screenshot of your profile picture and lower your security setting so you can be located on Facebook.

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.

Thank You BCGEU!

Services provided by the BCGEU print room staff are invaluable and we appreciate their ongoing assistance with our copying needs and newsletter mailout.

In Memoriam

We regret to announce the passing of the following members:

**Riola Crawford, Peter Dasnieres, Doreen Mary Greig,
Helen Jones, Midori Katayama, William Liepert
Thelma Murphy, Celio Pacheco-Gasquez, Sandra K. Plum
Merle Shaw, Norma Barbara Smith**

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