



The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District

Branch 800

“Spring 2025” Newsletter

Contact info:

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Editor: **Andy McColl**



Welcome New Members

2025

*Christina Chan, George Lawrie, June Lawrie,
Angela Louie, Wanita Mitchell, Robert Stewart,
Linda Stewart, Norman Wong, So Fun Cheng*

Branch 800 AGM 2025 Meeting Notice

**Branch 800's AGM is planned for Tuesday June 17, 2025 - 1:00 p.m.
at the t̄m̄əsewt̄x̄w Aquatic and Community Centre, 65 6th Ave East in New
Westminster.**

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

**Anyone interested in possibly serving on the board, please call Myrna Cresswell:
604-209-0492 or contact Bonnie Billington at chair.branch800@gmail.com**

Christmas Lunch - Dec. 3, 2024



*Royal Canadian Legion Ballroom
Port Coquitlam*



Photos taken by Toby Ing-Leonard (guest)



CHAIR REPORT

Branch Activities

October 22, 2024: Branch Meeting speaker topic “Showing Clutter the Door” presented by **Heather Knittel**, Professional Organizer / Move Manager from Good Riddance Professional Organizing in Burnaby; featuring the psychological aspects of clutter and practical tips on decluttering.

November 19, 2024 Branch Meeting speaker topic: “Medical Assistance in Dying” presented by **Alex Muir** from Dying with Dignity Canada, featuring educational and legal aspects of MAID. For an extensive list of British Columbia resources:
<https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/education-resources/british-columbia-support-directory/>

December 3, 2024 Branch 800 Christmas Lunch – 40 members and their guests enjoyed a buffet style turkey dinner. We made some adjustments to the menu this year, which everyone enjoyed. **THANK YOU to all the volunteers** who helped organize and set up. **Ross & Anna Tremere** delivered poinsettias to members in care facilities and the donated non-perishable food items to a local charity. Thanks to **Ann Pratt** for managing the lunch tickets and to **Jean Ing** for putting together the gift basket. The winning ticket was drawn by **Brenda Dennison**. **Ross Tremere** was the lucky cash draw winner. Letters of thanks were sent to the generous community donors who provided gift cards for our door prize table: *McBride Safeway in New Westminster, Real Canadian Superstore and Ricky’s Country Restaurant in Coquitlam.*

January 15, 2025: Branch 800 Financial Review for January 1 - Dec 31, 2024 was held in keeping with Provincial BCGREA requirements. Attending: **Ross Tremere, Al Pirani, Alex Dennison** (Treasurer), and **Bonnie Billington** (Branch Chair). Our finances remain sound and the books were found in good order.

January 21, 2025: Branch Meeting speaker topic: “When it’s Time for Care” presented by **Ethan Martin and Heather Martin** from Comfort Keepers Home Care Services. Resources: <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/seniors>
<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/advance-care-planning>

February 18, 2025: Branch Meeting speaker topic: “Benefits & Credits for Senior’s 65+” presented by **Arsi Ahmed**, Outreach Officer from the Canada Revenue Agency. For information presented by the speaker on tax-related benefits, credits, deductions and support, go to: canada.ca/benefits-credits-pd or call **1-800-387-1193** to ask about benefits. CRA General Tax Enquiries: **1-800-959-8281**

**Beware of scammers pretending to be the CRA. To learn what to expect if the CRA contacts you, go to canada.ca/taxes-fraud-prevention .*

March 11, 2025: Branch Meeting 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre: 65 Sixth Ave. East in New Westminster. **Speaker topic: “The Executor Workshop”** to be presented by **Linda Mizuguchi** from the Canadian Pre-Planning Council.

Upcoming Branch Meetings April 15th, May 20, June 17 (AGM) 2025 tentatively scheduled at the təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre in New Westminster *to be confirmed and posted on the Branch website: www.bcgrea.ca/branches/new-westminster-district-branch-800/* .

Announcements:

BCGREA Membership Survey to all branches in early March 2025. An online questionnaire will be sent to members with email. **For those without email wishing to participate, please contact Bonnie Billington at 604-761-5768 before March 20th.** You can complete the survey questions by phone and a copy of your responses will be sent to the Membership Survey Committee.

Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations of BC (COSCO) AGM was held Feb 14th. Five Delegates have been appointed by Provincial BCGREA to represent the Association: **Wilf Brodrick, Patrick Harkness, Dennis Ishikawa, Edna Park and Jean Sickman.** Individual branch delegate representation to COSCO is pending. For a complete list of COSCO’s current executive, campaigns and events, check out the main website www.coscobc.org. Notice is posted for the upcoming conference Oct. 3-5,2025 at the Sheraton Hotel in Richmond. Theme: ‘Human Rights and Ageing’.

April 30, 2025: Provincial BCGREA AGM will be held at the Coast Tsawwassen Inn for in-person and virtual attendees. Registration info will be forthcoming. **Branch 800 Voting Delegates are Bonnie Billington, (Chair) & Michael Strath (1st Vice Chair).**

SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday Sept. 9, 2025 - Branch 800 Picnic in Queen’s Park!

The 55+ BC Games (BC’s largest sporting event for the 55+ population) will be held in **Nanaimo from September 9 -13 in 2025.** 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://55plusbcqgames.org> Registration opens March 1st 2025.

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

For more information, contact chair.branch800@bcgrea.ca

Contact Numbers: Please – A Special Plea!

Having been involved with Branch 800 Volunteer telephoning for over 20 years, I've had many talks with many members. I can also tell you that I get quite concerned about their well being when no contact is made. Recently several 'no contacts' have ended sadly and unhappily. These members were all living on their own.

I urge all members to provide another contact number to Branch 800 – especially if you reside alone! My 'no contacts' continued to have working telephones (with no answers) which only contributed to more concern and confusion. This provision of a 2nd contact number has been requested before. It's a common sense thing – so do your part! Please provide one to your volunteer phoner so we don't have to worry so much about you! Thanks!

Jean Ing, Goodwill Convener / Volunteer phoner.

About the Canadian Dental Plan if you cancelled your PSPP dental coverage before Dec. 11 2023

Excerpt copied from the PSPP information sheet "Get ready: New information on your T4A:"

Important: Members who waived dental coverage before December 11, 2023

If you decide to participate in the CDCP because you waived or cancelled dental coverage through the plan before December 11, 2023, the CRA may require documentation each year to prove your eligibility.

Regardless of when you retired and whether you waived or cancelled dental coverage, the plan will report to the CRA that you were provided access to dental coverage at retirement.

Where to find documentation

Sign into My Account. Documents like your annual statements, transaction statements and pension payment history indicate whether you have dental coverage through your pension plan provider. You can save, download and print these documents directly from My Account.

Learn more about the CDCP

*You can review the eligibility criteria at canada.ca/en/services/benefits/dental/dental-care-plan or call Service Canada at **1-833-537-4342***

2025 Cash Pay Membership Dues

Final reminder

Annual dues of \$20 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

Thank you to everyone who renewed for this year!

Cash Pay Membership Dues (cont'd):

Provincial BCGREA Regulations Part 3; 9 (a) state the following: "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."

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 to our branch 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:

**Edward J. Blakey, Gertrude J. Cairns, Carol Ann Collins,
Roberta C. Drinovz, Lolita B. Dumbrique, Arnold C. Emes,
Bruno R. Falk, Robert H. Fraser, Patricia Gilchrist,
Arnthor A. Gislason, David J. Harlow, Beatrice (Eileen) Hubert,
George A. Hufnagel, Mansukh Jobanputra, Ronald H. Johnson,
Gural Kayimzade, Henry Lawrence Koehler, Harvey S. Lyman,
Eunice A. McCallum, Louise Moore, Peter Popovich,
Daniel H. Scott, Elizabeth (Betty) Wynne, Mary Ziglin**

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