



**BCGREA Newsletter**  
**Cowichan Valley Branch 2600**

**Nov/2025**

**Dear Cowichan Branch 2600 Members:**

We had our first meeting at the Cowichan Community Centre on September 17. Twenty seven members attended. Guest speaker, Chris Jancowski, Duncan Fire Chief, spoke to us on fire safety and risk mitigation, in and around our homes. Great presentation that provided lots of practical information. This included a discussion that **Fire Smart B.C.** can be contacted to do an at home assessment which might provide some compensation for mitigating fire risk.

Some members raised the issue of benefit payments not keeping up with inflation; coverage for some services and equipment, medical and dental is minimal. The BC Pension Corporation manages five different plans including "The Public Service Pension Plan". Our understanding of the BC Pension Corporation is that it covers the costs of benefits and only contracts the administration of the medical and dental plans with Green Shield and Pacific Blue Cross.

There are some disparities between the five plans. Cowichan Branch has taken on the initiative to look at these disparities, as well as trying to address the inadequacies of coverage. We are an executive of 6 and need volunteers to help address these important coverage issues. If you are willing to help, please email [membership.branch2600@bcgre.ca](mailto:membership.branch2600@bcgre.ca)

At our September meeting we briefly discussed survey results, a copy of which you all received. One of the topics identified was about benefits of membership in BCGREA, such as access to a number of affinity partners that provide services and products to members at discounted rates. There is a list of member benefits on the BCGREA website, [bcgre.ca](http://bcgre.ca).

**Johnson Insurance** is now **Belairdirect**. They provide preferred rates to members and offer home, travel(Medoc), medical and life insurance. **Representatives from Belaire will be attending our Christmas luncheon on December 5/25 to give a presentation.**

**Specsavers** offers glasses/contacts and optometrists to members. The local Duncan business is located in the **Duncan Village Mall**. (Near London Drugs).

**Hearing Life**, formally Nexgen is on Trunk Rd, Duncan. They offer free hearing assessments and have a broad range of products. They offer a 10% discount on hearing aids to you and family members. (My personal experience; I have had excellent service/care from Craig Carmen and his administrative assistant, Trish).





**Endless Savings** is an app that can be downloaded to your phone, tablet or computer. It is available in both Apple and Google Apps (for androids). It identifies a number of stores and services where we can receive discounts. One example is for **Mark's Workwear World**, where members receive a 10% discount on most items. Between November 2 and November 8, 2025, you'll receive 25% off regular priced items. Worth looking at.

**Trip Merchants** has exclusive travel offers for members.

**Manulife** offers affordable life insurance if you are between the ages of 50 and 85.

**Park in Fly** also offers significant parking discounts if you're flying out of Vancouver. There are other cities also.

### **A Field Trip - Late February/March 2026**

One of our members, **Dave Rife** has offered to volunteer his time and host a tour of the Vancouver Island Trout Hatchery. Dave is a former employee of the trout hatchery and is willing to take us on a field trip to the facility, late February or March 2026. Thanks Dave for coming forward and volunteering your time!

We're looking forward to more in-person presentations from guest speakers in our upcoming meetings. We also want to provide information in the newsletter on some of the topics identified in the survey.

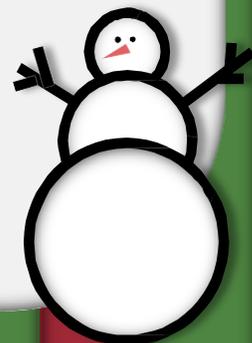
One of those topics was **Elder College**. Mid Island Elder College offers courses in Duncan to mature adults at the Vancouver Island Regional Library, Cowichan Branch. Four courses this fall were offered. There is an excellent article in the September 3, 2025 edition of the Cowichan Valley Citizen, titled "Elder College offering 4 courses in Duncan this fall". It can be found on the web. Course and contact information for Elder College is found at <https://eldercollege.org>

"Learning never exhausts the mind"

### **Twenty Years Of Membership!**

We have 49 members in Cowichan eligible for 20 year pins. Although I have access to a list and will review it, please forewarn me if you're "twenty years in" and attending a meeting. We would very much like to present you with your pin!

It's possible that not all members are receiving emails and updates from BCGREA. There are a number of Cowichan Branch members who have made email address changes and have not updated that information with us. Please check with your friends and colleagues who you believe to be members to see if they're receiving the latest updates





and information. They can update their contact information through the membership email below. If you know of past employees who are not members encourage them to join. The first year is free.

We want to acknowledge **Malcolm Crockett**, one of our Cowichan Directors; congratulations on the publishing of your first book - **No Backup - A Set-up and More**. There will be a write/up on Malcolm in one of our upcoming "Pens".

Those of us who volunteered to start a Cowichan Branch extend many thanks to Al Cocolla. Al has mentored us from the beginning and has been unwavering in his support. Al is Chair of Western Communities, Branch 2700. He has played a very active role with BCGREA. Thanks Al!

I also want to extend our thanks to Jodine Ducs, Central Support, BCGREA. Jodine answers the many questions, faithfully trains (the impossible, old dogs new tricks) and works her magic with surveys, invitations and newsletters! Thanks Jodine!!

Regards and we look forward to seeing you at the Christmas luncheon.

Yours truly,

*Doug Ramsfield*

Doug Ramsfield

[membership.branch2600@bcgre.ca](mailto:membership.branch2600@bcgre.ca)

and the Cowichan Branch Executive Team:

Susan Powell, Rod Bergen, Sandy Ballard,

Helen Fowler, and Malcom Crockett

*Malcolm Crockett*

*Rod Bergen*

*Helen Fowler*

*Sandy Ballard*

*Sue Powell*

