

# PostScript

FALL 2022



THE MAGAZINE FOR RETIRED EDUCATORS

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# PostScript

FALL 2022



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"Fall in the Laurentians"

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If you really want to move forward, it actually isn't too bad an idea to start by looking back and reminding yourself about how you got where you are.

In this issue of our magazine *Patti Shales Lefkos* returns to the pages of PostScript with a thoughtful look at the small lessons of independence that help shaped her perception of herself, while still under the safe care of her parents. In a similar vein, *Deberah Shears* shares with us the gratitude a retiree and budding musician feels towards a music teacher of old. In a nostalgic swoon, *Paul Swennumson* takes us back to his school days and that never-ending fascination of students everywhere with a teacher's odd name.

Speaking of moving forward, *Garry Litke* and *Paul Demers* offer their thoughts on adjusting to retirement - good reading if this super-annuated life is still new to you. The good news: you have permission to be yourself, or, alternately, a new sort of self. They explain.

It takes a special touch to combine beautiful photos with a thoughtful rhyme, but Paul Desjardins has the knack, and his eye is on a goldfinch.

Our last issue pushed some borders of language (see our letters section for the fallout). But even with our daring to push boundaries, I certainly never thought we'd be printing an article about renting an old man. But we are, courtesy of *Lynda Grace Philippsen*, who once again takes us on a tour of Japanese culture with a deft pen and thoughtful mind.

Guess what all the articles I've mentioned have in common? They were all written by BCRTA members. Our June Writer's Workshop was a smash hit, and is available online now at [bcрта.ca/writers](http://bcрта.ca/writers) - check it out if you have an interest.

Want more? Sure, there's lots more. *Karen Cooper* introduces another drop-everything-and-read-this-crime-writer who is, shall we say, murderously funny. Two *long stay trips* are being sponsored by BCRTA in early 2023 - sign up while there are still spaces available. Learn more about the upcoming BCRTA Conference on September 30: members can stream it live. And there are a few other goodies enclosed herein. Have fun unwrapping them.

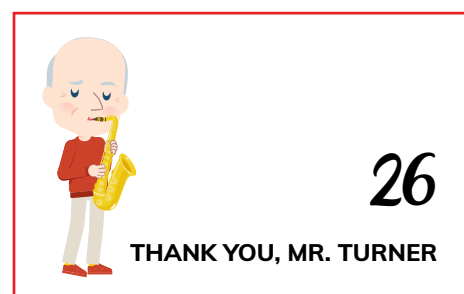
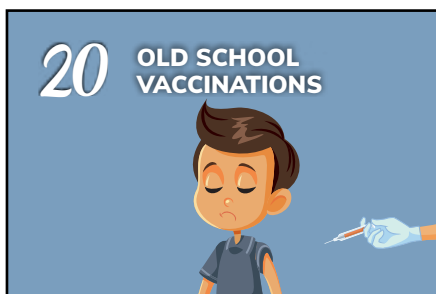
It's so good to have you back in our reading circle.

Yours truly,

*The Editor*  
[postsript@bcрта.ca](mailto:postsript@bcрта.ca)

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## **PROTECTING BC SENIORS: CHANGES ARE NEEDED TO MEET RECOMMENDATIONS**

I've been fortunate to have good health, so visits to the doctor have been minimal. However, the pandemic changed "visits" to "medical consults by phone." That is clearly not the way I have been accustomed to tending to my medical needs but as one zoom presenter said, "Get used to it." And then notice of an additional change arrived in the mail: my doctor was moving to Alberta. I went to a suggested website and signed on to the waiting list for the next available doctor. In the midst of these changes to my health care team, I knew I needed to be more proactive in terms of my personal health and that meant selecting annual vaccines that provide maximum protection.

With BC's population now free of pandemic restrictions, our increased gathering and travelling will likely result in much more flu this season. Prevalence of the flu dropped during the past couple of years as all the things we did to protect ourselves from COVID also protected us from the flu.

### **THE BEST PROTECTION FOR SENIORS**

As seniors, we know that our immune systems are not as robust as when we were younger. This puts us at a higher risk of complications resulting from flu because many of us have at least one chronic condition. That is why some vaccines have been designed specifically for us. In the case of flu

prevention, the key for seniors is to have a "High-Dose" version of the vaccine which has proven to be more effective for our age group.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has recommended the Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent flu vaccine for all individuals aged sixty-five and older. During the pandemic the federal government funded this specific flu vaccine for those in Long Term Care, assisted living facilities and First Nations communities. That's a good thing. But for seniors outside of these settings, it was very difficult to access that vaccine because, as it was unfunded, it was not widely available in pharmacies.

This year the BC provincial government has once again made the decision to provide the Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine to those in LTC, assisted living facilities and First Nations communities. But yet again, that is where it stops. For the remainder of the population the provincial government is offering a free publicly funded quadrivalent vaccine with an adjuvant. That sounds great, *but* that is *not* what has been recommended for seniors by NACI.

Manitoba recently made the decision to publicly fund the Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent flu vaccine for ALL individuals aged 65 and older. They are being proactive in guarding against a higher risk of flu complications for this vulnerable segment of population. They have joined the growing number of provinces in Canada that publicly fund the Fluzone high-dose vaccine for individuals aged sixty-five and older.

All seniors in BC deserve this too. We want to remain healthy. We need to speak up! You can send email to the Minister of Health, Adrian Dix, [HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca), and to BC's Public Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, [bonnie.henry@gov.bc.ca](mailto:bonnie.henry@gov.bc.ca), and your own MLA. Let them know that we want the Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine, that it should be publicly funded and that it needs to be widely available to all seniors. •

**GRACE WILSON** is President of the BCRTA

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# PostScript Letters

## Sharing is Caring

Mr. Anderson: thank you for your enjoyable edition of the summer edition. I share the magazine with neighbours. "Dancing in Small Spaces" was hard to read and stay dry-eyed. What a wonderful romance story. I went to school in a one-room school grades 1 through 8. I wish I would have had Ms. Adrian for a teacher. I am proud to lend this edition to others.

Ron Hamel

**Editor's Note:** Thanks for the affirmation, Ron. If any of our readers would like extra copies of PostScript to give to friends who are eligible to join BCRTA, we're happy to mail a complimentary copy to share. Contact the office with your request: [office@bcrt.ca](mailto:office@bcrt.ca).

## Writer's Workshop Kudos

Hello Tim and Karen,

Thank you so much for the great session you held Wednesday. It was generous of you to share your knowledge with us all. I particularly was interested in learning about how the editing stage of your magazine worked. I also thought that the analogy you gave describing how teachers are able to read a classroom as being equally important to reading the target audience of a publication was a great one. The resources you provided were excellent as well. It was interesting hearing from the writers of two great articles, and noting specific examples of effective writing in their pieces. All together, well done! Thank you.

I noticed that the session was recorded. Will you be providing a link to that for further reflection? And, yes, further sessions would be great if you're interested in providing them.

Kind regards,

Trish Postma

**Editor's Note:** Yes! The writer's workshop was recorded and can be viewed at <https://bcrt.ca/writers>

Thank you, Tim. I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop, too - and want to pick up on all the ideas that were discussed - this information is helpful!

Mae Pagdin

Thank you so much for the online materials!

Bruce Young

## School Inspectors - Do You Remember?

Congratulations on the wonderful Summer issue of Postscript. I can't recall reading an issue with so many excellent articles. My favourite was "Dancing in Small Spaces" but there were so many other inspiring stories as well.

Now I have a favour to ask. I am starting to do some research for an article about school inspectors that I hope to send to BC History magazine. I've found some great material in the book "Floating School and Frozen Inkwel" by Joan Adams and Becky Thomas, but I hope that Postscript readers who remember the days when inspectors came to call might send me anecdotes about these visits. Submissions by former inspectors are welcome too. The period I plan to cover is from 1856 to 1958, so I won't be writing about the period after 1958, when inspectors were called superintendents and their duties changed.

I vaguely recall a few visits from school inspectors when I attended elementary school in the 1950s, but by the time I became a teacher myself the title inspector was no more. Of course, my fumbling efforts during my first year were observed by others from time to time: a department head, a principal, a director of instruction, etc.

My e-mail address is [verngiesbrecht@telus.net](mailto:verngiesbrecht@telus.net).

Vern Giesbrecht

## Secondary Harms of the Pandemic

I really appreciated the piece on antibiotics of Summer 2022. I wish you would find someone to write about the increase of antibiotics due to the use of the doctor virtual appointments. My personal experience has been the worse for it. During Covid I got sick 3 times. Each time I was declared Covid negative and each times my family doctor refused to see me in person and he substituted in person appointments by virtual appointments. Each time with no physical exam he gave me antibiotics.

What he thought was an infection was the signs of my upcoming stroke. Now my life is upside down and depressing. Someone has to look and bring to light this aspect of the measures taken to combat Covid versus all the collateral damages that have been dumped on Canadians. Was it worthwhile to sacrifice so many COVID negative Canadians.

Richard Fr chet te

Write us at [postscript@bcrt.ca](mailto:postscript@bcrt.ca)





*Barbara Allisen's book closet.*

## **Closeted Passions**

Dear PostScript,

The ability to read truly is a gift. I want to respond to the question posed in a P.S. to Elaine Thompson's article, "The Million Dollar Gift." The question was:

*Do you use an e-reader? How does it compare to a "real" book?*

I am a closet book-aholic, not because no one knows, rather the closet is full of books.

Print books are more than a visual experience. Besides the feel and the smell, the variety of fonts and type-size gives clues as to the age and setting. While the story is the main feature, print-book details add layers to discover. These are not part of the package for e-books and oh, how I miss them.

A Kindle e-reader sat on the closet shelf until the spring of 2020. Then, along with so much else, libraries closed! At first, I re-read favourites and some of the ones in the TBR (to be read) pile. As wave followed wave, I grabbed the e-reader much as one does a life jacket and dived into the ocean of books.

Libraries have reopened but has my e-reader been tucked away on a closet shelf? Not at all. Currently, I'll confess, the Kindle waits by the bed, the phone has an audio book on the Libby app, and there's a print book on my chair in the living room. Plus, the TBR stack has grown because I now have more options. But - only the "real" books do I read in the tub.

Barbara Allisen

## **Maybe It's Not So Comical**

Concerning p. 40 of Summer 2022 PostScript magazine, "Bayla's Travels". I am so disappointed with having this article's comic containing rude language being printed in my teachers' quarterly magazine. What ever are you thinking? You call yourself a teacher? Shame on you!

LT, aged 93

# PostScript Letters

## PostScript Panegyrics

The stories and photos in PostScript Magazine have been exceptionally good in the past few editions! Congrats to all the hard-working team at BCRTA.

Katherine M. Lawrence  
Vancouver

Dear Grace and editors

I always read your magazine before all else. This issue was just super. Every article caught my eye – loved it all. Especially “Million Dollar Gift”. I used to walk 12 blocks to the Great Falls Library to check out books.

My reading disappeared when raising my 7 children.

At present I am confined to my house with a lung problem so am back to my daily reading – but no “e-reader”.

I hope you convey this letter to Elaine Thompson. I pulled out an older book from my bookcase and I hope she will read “The Cat’s Table” by Michael Ondaatje.

Gretchen Mostardi  
North Vancouver

To the editorial team

Thank you for making the PostScript an informative and interesting magazine. I look forward to receiving it each season and read it from cover to cover. The covers, too, are always wonderful. Keep up the excellent work.

Lois Marleau  
Kitimat

Thank you so much for the awesome magazine you publish. Have a great day!

Wendy Clark

Dear PostScript Editors

Thank you again for a most engaging edition of PostScript, with its array of interesting and informative articles. I’m thankful for the authors who allow us to peek into their lives. I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the Writer’s Workshop. Thank you for hosting it. It has provided insight and motivation for my writing and perhaps a future submission of an article.

Uta Van Ziffle  
Vernon

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# INTERGENERATIONAL CELEBRATION: B.C.'s HERITAGE FAIRS PROGRAMME

BY STEVE BAILEY

Did you know that you are probably a valuable resource?

One opportunity for you to explore this potential is the activities of B.C. Heritage Fairs. The B.C. Heritage Fairs Society is a volunteer-run organization which oversees local heritage fairs. Their work culminated this year in 10 Regional Fairs and a Virtual Provincial Fair. The major focus of Heritage Fairs is “to help develop passionate young historians into engaged citizens.”

Guided by their teachers and often supported by mentors (yes, you probably qualify), students choose a topic, conduct research, develop a thesis, and present their work in the form of an exhibit.

For example, retired Canadian pilot Judy Cameron became an inspiration for eleven-year-old Rahel Kramm of Vernon.



**BC  
HERITAGE  
FAIRS**



*Joban Panag and his Komagata Maru Heritage Fair project.*



*Rahel Kramm at Vernon Heritage Fair with her project on Canadian pilot, Judy Cameron.*

*Photos courtesy of BC Heritage Fairs and Google Photos.*

Joban Panag, another Vernon student, decided to focus his research on the Komagata Maru incident and enlisted the work of local researcher Gilda Koenig, who was proud to have played a part in Joban's research process: “A lot of students go online to find out about their subjects, but there are a lot of local resources for them.” Those resources included Gilda Koenig herself. Koenig said she “was impressed with the young student's ingenuity and research”.

The theme for this year's Provincial Heritage Fair was "People of British Columbia". North Delta grade six student Ryan Joseph received top honours at the Fair for his project about the life and work of his uncle, well-known Squamish Nation artist Xwalacktun (Rick Harry).



*Ryan Joseph and his Uncle Rick.*

As Ryan said in a comment on the Delta School District website, "I wanted to do an Indigenous project to learn more about my own culture and to share it with my class. I love Coast Salish art and knowing that my Uncle Rick has made such impressive works was an inspiration to me".

At regional fairs, students are selected to attend the Provincial Fair that takes place in Victoria every second year, and in another B.C. city in between. The provincial events are non-competitive showcases that celebrate student accomplishment. At the last Victoria event, students stayed in dorms at the University of Victoria and attended field trips, tours, and workshops sponsored by a number of organizations such as the Bateman Foundation, B.C. Legislature, Royal B.C. Museum, and Fort Rodd Hill.

The students' projects were showcased at the Royal B.C. Museum, where members of the public and local government officials were invited to visit the students and their work.

During COVID times, the Provincial Fair became virtual. You can view the proceedings at the Heritage Fair Alumni site:

[bcheritagefairsalumni.wordpress.com](http://bcheritagefairsalumni.wordpress.com).

*The major focus of Heritage Fairs is to help develop passionate young historians into engaged citizens...*



*Students from around BC participate.*



In its quest to inspire BCRTA members to “tell their stories of excellence” and share their expertise, the BCRTA Excellence in Public Education Committee is exploring a closer relationship with B.C. Heritage Fairs as another means of intergenerational celebration.

B.C. Heritage Fairs is excited about the volunteer involvement of BCRTA members, pointing out that opportunities exist at the school, regional, and provincial levels. At the school level, BCRTA members can get involved in supporting individual students and their teachers with projects. At the Regional Fair level there is an opportunity to join planning and organizational committees.

Adjudicating fairs at the school, district, and regional levels, membership on the volunteer board, and helping with fundraising and outreach or with developing materials that can be used province-wide are other great ways to be involved.

Information on the work of B.C. Heritage Fairs can be found by googling “BC Heritage Fairs” and “BC Heritage Fairs Alumni”.

**STEVE BAILEY** is a director of BCRTA and BC’s representative on the Canadian national body of retired educators, ACER-CART. He is also Chair of the BCRTA Excellence in Public Education Committee and president of the Sunshine Coast Branch of the BCRTA.



## MOVING INTO RETIREMENT:

# A Different View



It was, perhaps, appropriate that the reminder of my teacher certificate renewal from the Ministry of Education ended up in my “spam” folder. I had retired in June 2021 after 32 years of teaching, and had given some thought to retaining my certification and becoming a Teacher Teaching on Call (TTOC). Some teachers had found that they missed the interactions with students and colleagues after they retired, and the money, many of them told me, was good.

But that phase of my life was in the past, I decided. I had been a teacher and I enjoyed it most of my career, but I knew when I left that I was done. With my pension and savings, I didn’t need the money, and the thought of taking work from young teachers rankled a little bit. But it was the fact that I didn’t miss the classroom at all that seemed to astound some of my retired colleagues.

Teachers are givers and helpers and often speak of their profession as a vocation. That’s admirable, and I’m sure that many of the best teachers feel that “calling,” but many of us saw teaching only as a job. It was a challenging job, of course, and a gratifying one, and one that was all-consuming for 10 months of the year. I tried throughout my career to do the best I could for my students and often went “above and beyond,” but I never felt that teaching completely defined me, so leaving wasn’t difficult. And staying away is even easier.

Why does this matter? Because I think that as a profession, we tend to lionize the people who make teaching the centre of their being and identity, and we demonize those who are able to compartmentalize their teaching world from the rest of their lives. The best teachers, we believe, spend their weekends and summers planning lessons, organizing activities, and preparing

their classrooms while those who show up to school 15 minutes before class begins and leave 30 minutes after the day is done are somehow slackers.

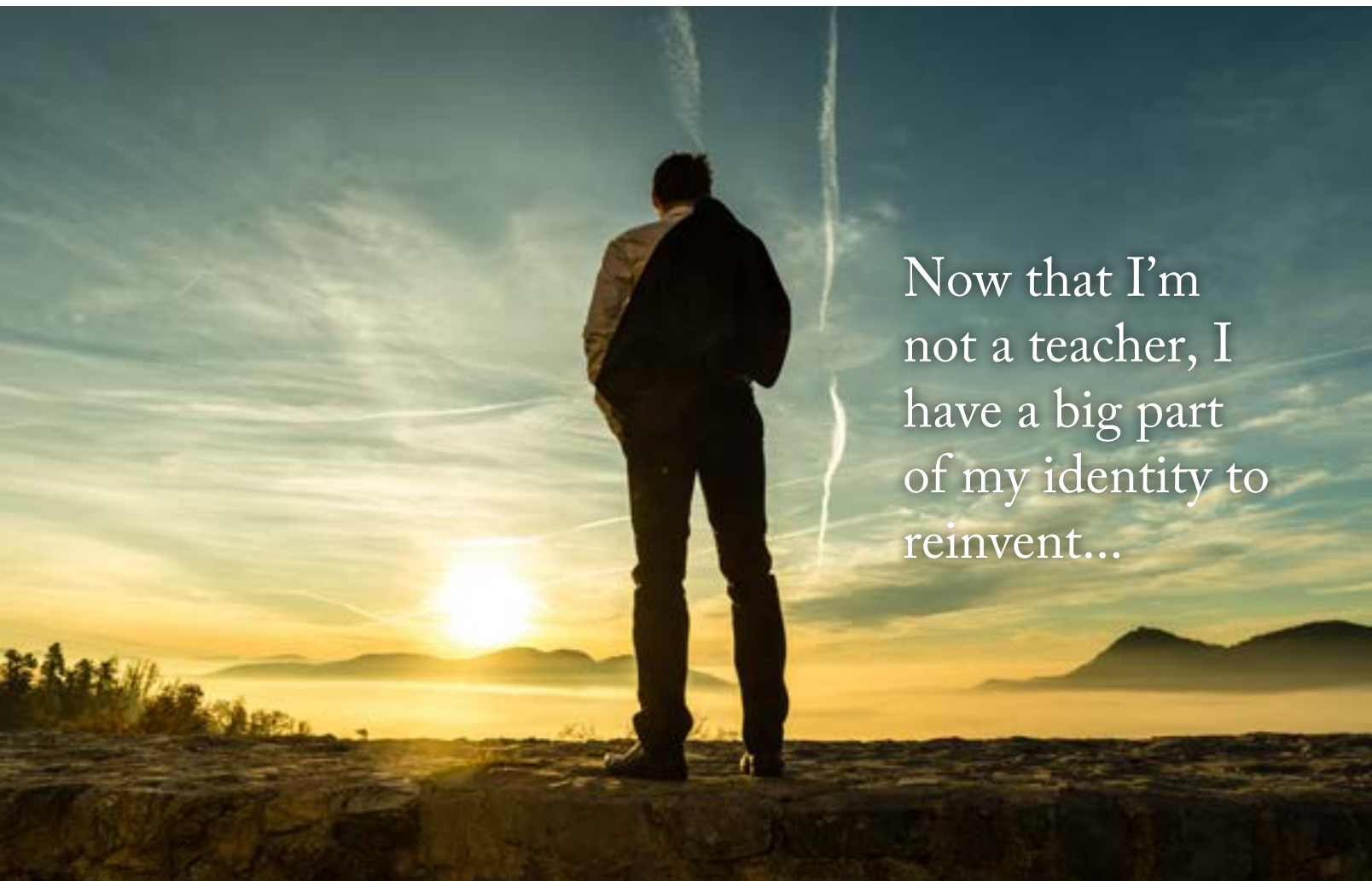
We've all heard the comments in staffrooms and at staff meetings: Ms. Smith is praised for taking her soccer team to a weekend tournament, or an administrator pleads for everyone to give a little more "for the kids." Those teachers who draw boundaries between their work lives and their personal time are not "team players." Nowadays, we blame it on a "millennial mindset." Those young people "just aren't as willing to give all that we gave," we say.

This attitude continues into retirement. Colleagues are surprised, and even dismayed, that I want to put my teaching career behind me, that I don't care if I never cross the threshold of a classroom again, that I don't

want to continue thinking of myself as a teacher. I have nothing but admiration for those who do. I think that people who make that kind of lifelong commitment can offer the kind of long-term perspective that sometimes gets lost in education. But I also admire those who don't, those people who walk out of their classrooms and close the book on that chapter of their lives. They too offer a valuable perspective and, dare I say it, some valuable lessons.

Now that I'm not a teacher, I have a big part of my identity to reinvent. I'm still working that part out and I think I'll be continuing to do that for the rest of my life. That choice is the right one for me. I'll keep my eyes open and look through my inbox for new opportunities. The things that go to spam will stay where they are. •

**PAUL DEMERS** is a writer, a BCRTA member and recent retiree who has just moved to Powell River.



Now that I'm  
not a teacher, I  
have a big part  
of my identity to  
reinvent...



# RETIRE AND REWIRE

*LIFE AFTER TEACHING*

BY GARRY LITKE





Moving into retirement was stressful. It was a life-altering change, and change is often difficult. After thirty-three years, my daily encounter with enthusiastic students and hard-working colleagues disappeared. Along with certain aspects of my identity.

With no exam at the end of the term, my wife and family did not listen to me as attentively as my students once had. Was I on the path to becoming irrelevant, invisible, and diminished?

Now what? I searched for options.

I admired many of my BCTF colleagues who had expanded their experience into broader areas, becoming school trustees, mayors, Members of the BC Legislature and Members of Parliament. I'd helped negotiate our legally established teachers' contract, and incensed by its destruction, I decided to participate in government as well.

Nine years on Penticton City Council, including a final term as Mayor, was a great challenge for me. Just what I needed. There was more to learn about budgets, sewer systems and corporate structure than I thought possible. The Office opened my world to real experiences and interesting people of every political stripe that I may not otherwise have encountered. I gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for those whose life history had led them to perspectives quite different from mine. Some wanted lower taxes while others wanted better services. Some wanted unfettered development

I gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for those whose life history had led them to perspectives quite different from mine.



*Garry participates in Penticton Gran Fondo cycling event.*  
Photo with permission of Penticton Herald

while others wanted to preserve the character of the city. Some wanted more by-laws while others wanted to eliminate red tape. My job was to chart a course of action that balanced everyone's interests.

We need an events center for hockey and concerts, they said. And a performing arts theater. A correctional facility built in our city will boost the economy. Privatize city jobs to save money while the pool is being renovated. The firefighters' contract has expired. We need a new hospital. Someone is suing the City. And so on. Many of these issues kept me up at night, but most were resolved to my satisfaction. No prison. No privatization. Satisfied firefighters within the city budget. A new events center, a state-of-the-art pool, and a fantastic new hospital.

Many retired teachers cultivate a talent they didn't have time to develop while working full time.

I had to re-wire my brain to succeed in a forum where, unlike a controlled classroom, anything could happen. And did. I chaired turbulent meetings where angry people vented their displeasure. I wrestled with fellow councillors in an effort to get the votes needed to support a positive direction. And I celebrated with the community when our efforts yielded a desirable result. (Yes. That does actually happen!)

Not everyone wants to engage in politics however. It is only one of many options available to retiring teachers looking to maintain their vitality and interest in life. Many retired teachers cultivate a talent they didn't have time to develop while working full time. I know an artist who displays



*As Mayor, Garry Litke borrowed a wheelchair and moved around the city to see accessibility issues firsthand. Photo with permission of Penticton Western News*

her paintings at a local gallery, a woodworker who turns out fine furniture, and a photographer who produces award-winning photos.

Retired teachers work as tour operators, sailboat captains, musicians, and small business owners.

There are those who use their teaching skills to become lay preachers, addiction counsellors and community volunteers. Helping people, just as they always have.

Retirement from politics meant it was time for another re-wire. Travelling, spending more time with my wife and family, and competing in a hundred-sixty kilometer cycling event became new priorities. And I wanted to develop my writing skills, logical for a retired English teacher.

A short story I wrote won first prize at an International Writers Conference. Another award winner has been published in a writers' anthology. My novel, *We Fought the Fenians*, is under review by publishers and I have more stories and novel ideas on the way.

Teachers have a rainbow of skills and talents which do not evaporate upon retirement. Since our performance stage is gone, we may experience a loss of self-esteem, relevance and good health. It is important to keep going, to find a new venue, and to shift our attitude from "I have to do this" to "I get to do this." Those who bridge the gap successfully channel their curiosity into new neural pathways, and re-wire for opportunities to learn and grow. With retirement we can choose our own terms to continue living life to the fullest. It's worth the effort.

Like Clint Eastwood said, "When I get up in the morning, I don't let the old man in". And yes, I do "feel lucky". •

**GARRY LITKE** was the 2019 PostScript Excellence Award winner for best Travel Article. He will chair BCRTA's upcoming 2022 AGM for the second time. When he isn't traveling, he spends his time in Penticton and Mexico.

# OLD SCHOOL Vaccinations

BY RALPH MARTIN

Early in my teaching career, public health nurses regularly came to the school to inoculate children against various diseases. Usually they would set up shop in a hallway and we would take a break from our lessons and herd the children through the process. On this particular morning, I was informed that the public health nurses had arrived at the school and today was the day for “shots”.

The nurses--we'll call them Nurse Smith and Nurse Jones--came into our classroom just before recess and I introduced them. They were dressed in their starched uniforms and had a perfectly clean and totally competent look about them. Their faces were full of smiles for the students and Nurse Smith explained that the shot would only take a few seconds. She assured the kids that this was extremely important for their health because they were being protected from some really terrible diseases. Some of the children nodded to show their acceptance

but the majority were not at ease. The nurses went back to the hallway for a few minutes to set up and I provided the students with some worksheets while we waited.

The nurses told us they were ready, leading to a great hubbub among the students as they began to wonder and worry about how painful the needles might be. In those days, classroom desks were usually arranged in rows and the children were quite used to doing things by rows. So row-by-row they lined up and shuffled into the hall. I hovered around directing traffic and reassuring the really panicky kids.

The process was pretty quick, actually. Nurse Smith took the child's name and made sure their upper arm was exposed. Nurse Jones swabbed the site and injected the vaccine. Then the student was released to go back to the worksheets at their desks.

As Darrell's brain pictured the needle being stabbed into his own arm, all kinds of alarms must have gone off...





Their faces were full of smiles for the students and Nurse Smith explained that the shot would only take a few seconds...

Things were going well until Darrell was about sixth from the nurses. He was looking frantically around and seemed pretty agitated. Darrell was that one child in the class who got lost on a field trip, ate five hotdogs at the school picnic and vomited, got hit in the face by a softball, and had a black eye for photo day. I suppose Darrell survived childhood. I never heard anything to the contrary, but it was likely a pretty rough road for the little guy.

I slipped along the line to Darrell and tried to calm him. I told him we had a great day to look forward to and that we had a pretty nifty science lesson coming up in the afternoon. Darrell was quite keen on science. Often he would excitedly tell me about his science investigations at home. We chatted about his work with the tadpoles he had gathered from a roadside ditch. Meanwhile the line moved a little closer to the inoculation table. Darrell seemed OK so I moved to check in with a worried looking Jenny M.

Darrell was third or fourth from the table when he peered over the shorter Mike Finlay and watched the actual process. When Darrell stepped up close behind Mike to peer over, the kids behind him squeezed up closely. Darrell was sardined between Mike in front and Jeffrey behind.

That's when things began to go wrong. Helplessly, I watched the whole dreadful thing unfold. You know those setups where a row of dominoes topples over and

releases a ball which rolls and triggers a weight which tips a balance and so on. Darrell's chain reaction began.

As Darrell's brain pictured the needle being stabbed into his own arm, all kinds of alarms must've gone off. So his brain shut the system down. This is commonly known as fainting. When Darrell began to faint he leaned on Jeffrey who pushed from behind so Darrell collapsed forward. The forces of physics took over and Darrell's teeth tried to embed themselves in Mike's skull. But only for an instant, because Mike reacted with a cry of alarm and a jolt away from the pain. Mike's scalp reacted with a frightening spread of bright red blood. By this time Darrell was well on his way to the floor when Cathy, who had seen a Dracula movie, took in the horrible scene. The blood on Mike's head and on Darrell's teeth could only mean one thing—Darrell was a vampire!

Cathy screamed "Vampire!" and she fainted.

Kids scattered like rats, the faster ones clambering onto and over their slower classmates. Another of the girls fainted. Kids trying to escape crashed and tumbled like bowling pins.

With kids down everywhere, the nurses moved into triage mode. They got the wounded cared for and settled. It turned out that no limbs were broken. Mike was taken off to the doctor get his head stitched up and a tetanus shot. Darrell the vampire, was ok, albeit a little rattled. To their credit, the nurses even managed to get him inoculated. •

**RALPH MARTIN** previously wrote of his long and improbably complicated road to validation as a teacher in his Fall 2019 PostScript article "Graduation Day".

Grade V

Miss Van



BY PAUL D. SWENNUMSON

*Sticks and Stones  
Might Break your Bones  
But Names... Names...  
Names... Could Elevate you*

Did you spend your recesses chanting a more-traditional variation of these lines, while skipping, or riding your bicycle around the schoolyard when you just had to shout and blow off steam before you trooped back inside Room 11? Did you and your chums recite it when you jumped rope with a bloodied knee or a bruised elbow, thinking about your injured pride?

Grade V at Robertson Elementary had brought us Miss Van. Miss Van was not Dutch; she was Belgian. As if we knew anything about Belgium (or Bangladesh or Blackpool or Bayreuth for all of that) because we, the boys at least, were a clueless lot of enthusiastic wannabe athletes. Besides, we Five-ers were all looking forward to Grade VI

down the way. Grade VI meant Mr. Baker, Robertson Elementary's Principal, who would be our first male teacher. And Grade VI meant graduation from Elementary School.

Enter...Miss Van. Miss Van was new to Robertson, so we listened carefully--at least for a while--and watched her every move to see how she measured up. She seemed tall, and proper, and serious, and well-educated, and she taught us lots, turning us all into fine scholars.

On day one of that year; she went to the chalkboard and wrote her full surname. "Vanvolkenburg". Then she wrote "Miss Van" and said clearly, "You can call me Miss Van."

Thereafter, we all shouted, “Hi, Miss Van!” and “Morning, Miss Van!” as she rode her bicycle into the schoolyard and parked it beside the school’s large woodshed. Some of our more forward and thoughtful schoolmates--girls always--advanced with, “Miss Van, can we carry any books or packages for you? What lessons have you for us today, Miss Van?”

Lunchtime: the gobbling down of sandwiches--peanut butter and marmalade, cheese, and pickles, tuna--then out we ran. Marbles, softball, skipping rope, arguments. There was a Robertson tradition: every autumn, the huge maple trees on the southern edge of the schoolyard sent down thousands of very large, just-turned-brown leaves. The boys gathered fistfuls of these large leaves and chased the girls. We ran. The girls squealed. Some easily outran some of the boys. The boys attempted to tag the girls with their Maple-Bouquets. Noisy chaos and running.

Eventually, springtime came, and the meetings began. Small groups of us--sometimes even boys and girls together!--began quietly collecting on the far side of the backstop or out back just beyond the woodshed. We were in deep discussion, Grade V strategizing.

“You know that her real name isn’t ‘Miss Van?’”

“Yes, I know, it’s ‘Van Voke ... something.’”

“I remember from her first day ... ‘Vanvolkenburg’ ... she’s Dutch.”

“Yes, from Belgium, I think.”

“That’s right!”

“Anyone remember how to spell it? Irene? Vicky?”

So we began whispering, muttering, practising: “Vanvolkenburg”. Then one early summer afternoon in Room 11 one of our bravest and brightest girls raised a hand, “Miss Vanvolkenburg, did you go to university before you became a teacher?”

Miss Van looked wide-eyed at her young questioner, the first to speak aloud her teacher’s

name in full, correctly. Miss Van froze, blinked twice, and reset her jaw. Did she begin to blush? A second hand was in the air, another girl’s voice: “Miss Vanvolkenburg, how many years did you study at university to become a good teacher?”

Yes, Miss Van was blushing.

Our Miss Van, we had observed, was not given to obvious demonstrations of emotion. That meant we all watched her even more carefully for pleasure, humour, concern, and any sign that a special lesson was needed. We had learned long ago that our teacher smiled infrequently.

But smile she did when the occasion called for it. Now she pursed her lips ever so slightly. It was the beginning of a smile; this was beginning to be a genuine occasion. A third voice, “Are we going to get more arithmetic homework today, Miss Vanvolkenburg? My father wants me to improve my skills. He said, ‘Your teacher can help you’.” Three times the classroom had heard the long and difficult name spoken openly.

Was there a suggestion of tears her eyes? Happy tears of appreciation. Miss Vanvolkenburg had been taken by surprise, and she was pleased.

We, of course, were proud of ourselves: We’d planned it, practised it, and pulled it off splendidly. We were elevated. And so was our teacher, raised up by the urchins she’d been attempting to guide, inspire, correct, and teach for close to a year now.

Miss Vanvolkenburg felt, I’m quite sure, some sense of accomplishment. Thanks to her calling, her dedication, and her hard work. And...thanks to us.

*No Sticks No Stones  
No Straps No Groans  
No Broken Bones  
No Sorry Moans  
Just a Gang of Kids  
And their Teacher*

**PAUL D. SWENNUMSON** is a BCRTA member who retired from SD 57. He lives in Prince George.

# A FUN day

BY ALICE THOMAS

About 35 years ago, once my girls were both in school, I decided to do some substitute teaching. I was called to teach a grade three class in the centre of Kelowna. I decided I would begin with a math lesson confirming the value of “zero”.

I began by telling them how last evening while I was washing the supper dishes, I heard a knock at my back door. I opened the door and standing on the porch was a small person, MR ZERO, who, after confirming that I was teaching at a school he knew of, wanted to make sure that I would confirm how important zeros are in the world of numbers. I assured him that was my goal. So I was going to begin this lesson by sharing the visit of the little man, MR ZERO, and how I had agreed to prove how important ZERO was.

In a firm voice, a small dark-haired boy, said “THAT IS BULLSHIT!” After a startled pause, I laughed, then the whole class joined in the laughter, and the lesson began.

I put 1 on the blackboard and added a 0 ... 10. Then I added another 0 ... 100, and another 0 ... 1000. The lesson continued. We even discovered how kind MR ZERO was to hold spaces, i.e. \$1.03 to show 3 cents not 30 cents.

By the way, I did have a friendly individual chat with the little disbeliever a bit later.

That was a fun day. •

**ALICE THOMAS** is a BCRTA member who now lives in Langley.





# BCRTA 2022

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE & AGM

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## Sept 30 is Conference Day



**KEYNOTE: 5 PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR AGING IN PLACE TRANSITIONS**

**Sue Lantz**  
Managing Director, Collaborative Aging

Sue Lantz, BA, MPA is the Managing Director of Collaborative Aging, a firm dedicated to expanding and improving the design of models and resources for healthy aging in place. She was a founding member of the Ryerson University Institute on Ageing. Sue offers a fresh approach to help people discover how they can proactively shape their own health and housing options, while ensuring more balanced arrangements for caregivers.



**KEYNOTE: EVERYONE HAS A STORY**

**Noel Bentley**  
Speaker and Coach

As a speaker, emcee and humourist, Noel challenges and entertains audiences with his unique perspectives, ability to connect ideas and offbeat humour. As a speaking and storytelling coach, he helps participants to uncover and share their stories. Noel is the Host and Program Manager for TEDxSurrey.

### PLUS

- DAY OF TRUTH & RECONCILIATION
- MEMBERSHIP AWARDS
- ACER-CART UPDATES
- GOLDEN STAR AWARDS
- WHAT'S NEW IN INSURANCE
- MEMBER PRIZE DRAWS
- POSTSCRIPT AWARD FINALISTS





# THANK YOU, MR. TURNER

BY DEBERAH SHEARS

“Thank you, Mr. Turner!”

These are the words routinely spoken to me by my husband as we are driving home from the latest community band practice or band concert. “Mr. Turner” refers to Kerry Turner, a band teacher in Burnaby, B.C., who taught my husband Ross how to play the saxophone when he was a high school student. Forty years later and now retired, Ross has bought both a tenor sax and a baritone sax and joined the band I now conduct, the Many Bays Community Band. At first Ross remembered only

how to play some scales; he had forgotten how to read music. A few lessons later and he was willing to join the band and do his best.

There are two directions I want to take this little story. First of all, we should all be reminded how important it is to thank those people in our lives who gave us very special gifts. In Ross’s case, it was the gift of learning how to play an instrument and then of making music with others. Now he has the skills to *do it again* and he is having a ball! Thank you, Mr. Turner!

Secondly, I want to encourage all of you who once played an instrument to dust off that instrument--likely in a case in your closet--and play it again. Maybe you need to buy a new one. You may need a lesson or three but that is totally do-able. Your retirement would be greatly enhanced; you would meet new people, have some wonderful experiences, and it would be so good for your brain!

Our Many Bays Community Band had to take a long break because of COVID and we are taking



*Left: Monte Anderson, Deberah Shears and Donnie Clark. Right: Combined community bands rehearsing in Boswell Hall.*

very cautious measures to play together again. We have been practising widely-spaced in large outdoor and indoor spaces. This summer we got together with another community band from Creston, B.C., to form a combined band for free concerts in both our communities. We had one joint rehearsal in Boswell, halfway between our two communities. We called our concert “With a Little Help From My Friends” and ended the concerts with that old Beatles tune, arranged by our friend and guest trumpet player, Donnie Clark. All together we had 35 musicians, full instrumentation, and the

programme included 15 band charts. As both concerts were outside, our audience brought their own chairs and sun hats. The weather cooperated and audience and musicians had a grand time! Here’s to performing and listening to live music once again!!

P.S. If you have a child to read to, look for a book by Patricia Polacca called *Thank you, Mr. Falker* (published by Philomel Books), a most endearing story with a similar theme. It is available in libraries, and for sale online. •

**DEBERAH SHEARS** is a BCRTA member who conducts the Many Bays Community Band.



*Left: Ross Shears in the middle, flanked by Helene McGall (on L) and Deberah Shears. Right: Free outdoor band concert in Crawford Bay, B.C. on July 1st, 2022.*



# DESERT ENCOUNTER

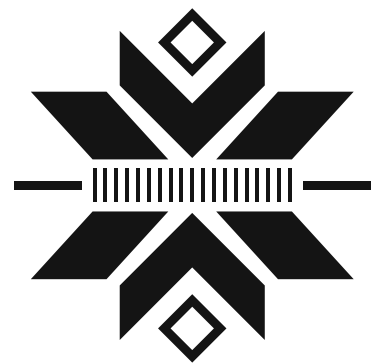
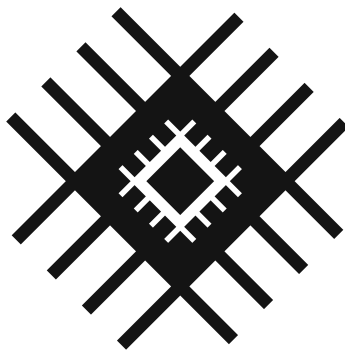
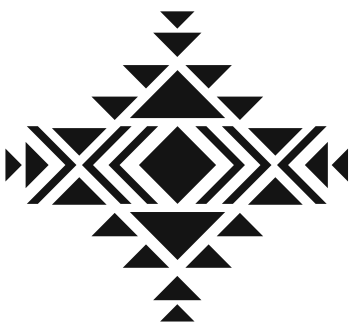
BY RUTH STEWART

Pulling the camping trailer through the red sandy desert in the late 60's, our aim had been to reach Canyon de Chelly before we looked for the campsite. Hot and thirsty, we had driven along the rutted, empty road spotting neither wildlife nor herd animals all day. Vast areas of cactus, sagebrush, and tumbleweed stretched on.

We were curious about the few well-spaced round wooden igloo-like structures melding into the terrain, dotting the distance. Peering through the heat haze, we made out a solitary Navajo horseman some distance from the road. We slowed and I wound down the window as we pulled alongside. The rider had the sinuous body of a rancher, his face rugged. Regarding us indifferently from beneath his wide brimmed hat, his air of reserve unnerved me. To break the feeling of invading his territory, I asked him what he herded. "Sheep," he replied.

Since there was still no sign of the canyon, I asked if we were nearing our destination. He nodded upward and forward implying that it wasn't far. Caught up in the moment, I asked him if he would mind if I took a photo of him and he shrugged almost imperceptibly. Extricating myself from the car, the searing heat of the sand rose up my legs. The sun on my face felt as if it was grit as he stared without expression into the camera. With a growing feeling that I had imposed upon him, I thanked him. We drove on for some time.

Still no signage, but when a trail appeared on the side of the road, we parked and walked. We scouted around seeking any other track to the pueblo ruins. Eventually we chose to descend that steep footpath just wide enough for two people. As we rounded a bend in the track, we were met by a woman toiling upwards. Her long, skirt reached nearly to the ground and was gathered at the waist





below a loose-fitting long-sleeved shirt. Her long hair was gathered up with a scarf at the nape. She bent double, leaning forwards to counterbalance an enormous bundle of thin, dry branches that spread like an enveloping porcupine behind her. We moved to single file while she maintained her pace upwards, eyes down. We passed each other in silence.

Descending further down the track, we spotted tall narrow buildings high up to our left, across the other side of the deep canyon. The stone and brick apartments sheltered inside the shadow of the cavernous cliff face. The guidebook indicated that these tall structures in the canyon were recognised as one of the longest continually inhabited landscapes in North America. They had been built between 350 and 1300 AD.

Far below this cliff face flowed a river with lush green vegetation growing along the banks: what a difference from the land on the plateau above. Lured by the sparkling blue water and the opportunity to cross over to the other bank and explore the buildings, we trekked downwards.

The air at the fast-flowing riverbank was refreshingly cool. The river was much wider than it had appeared from above. After a brief paddle, but disappointed that we could find no way of crossing, we began the return climb back out of the canyon. It was then that we fully realised how steep the pathway was and what reserves of energy and resolve it must have taken to gather a large load of sticks and haul it to the top.

The elders were  
reintroducing their youth  
to their heritage crafts.

We poked our heads into a hut we'd ignored before our descent. Two female elders sat shaded inside. There was a typewritten note in English beside a small handmade model which described the wooden structures we had seen. They were the homes of the indigenous people and were called "hogans". Another note explained that the elders were reintroducing their youth to their heritage crafts. The few small Navaho blankets displayed had been woven using either wool or cotton. I experienced an epiphany.

With a shock, I realised how little support the Navajo had in their struggle to preserve their way of life, their customs, and their artistic heritage. The women silently accepted cash for three samplers of their students' intricate work.

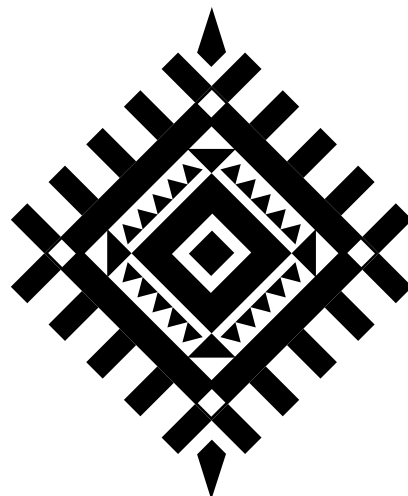
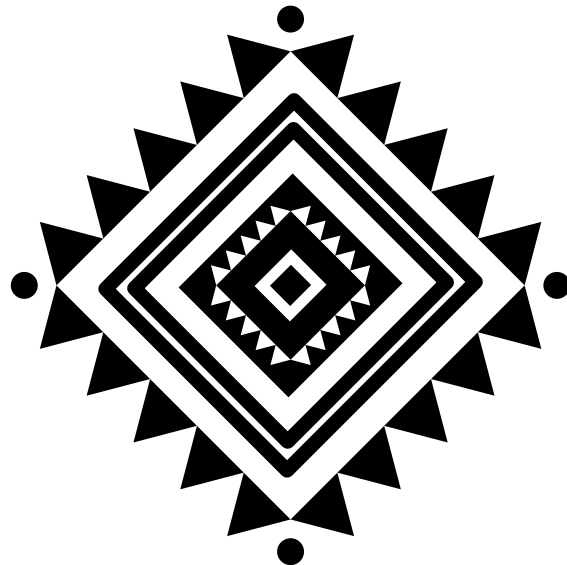
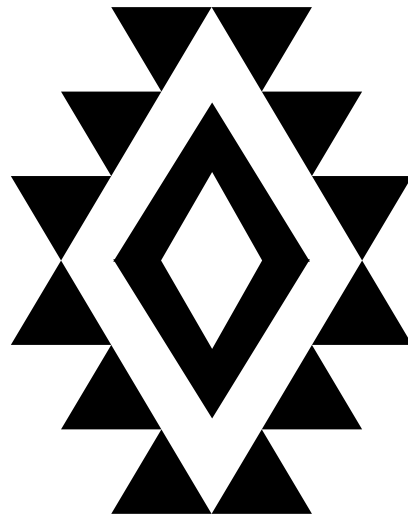
I felt ashamed. No wonder the people here had behaved the way they did towards me, a young, brash white woman with her focus on their physical appearance and her request for a photo, as if they, not she, were the exotic interloper in this landscape. Suddenly aware of how I had behaved and very embarrassed, I looked at the artifacts in my hand. The purchase was a small thing for me, but I felt that it was the least I could do to acknowledge their lives and their artistry.

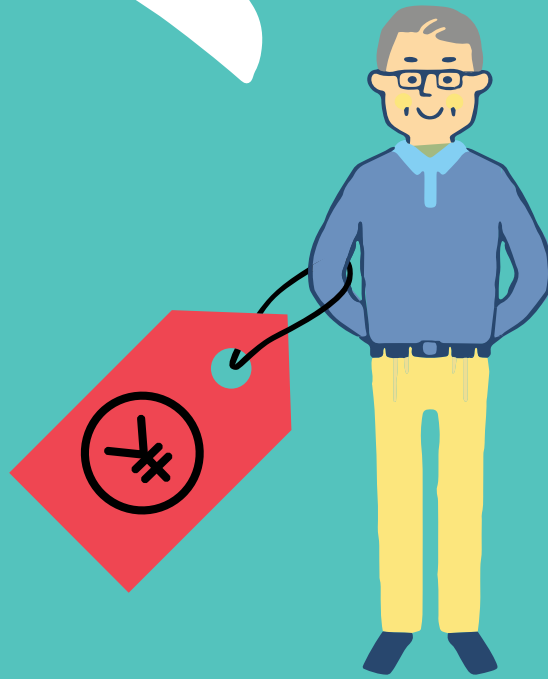
From these encounters I resolved to continue to learn more about the lifestyle and rights of indigenous people everywhere, including those on the Pacific West Coast of Canada.

**RUTH STEWART** taught in London, England, Vancouver and Langley. She enjoys writing, theatre, sculpting, walking, and gardening.

*Diyogí are textiles produced by Navajo people of the Four Corners area of the United States. Navajo textiles are highly regarded and have been sought after as trade items for over 150 years. Commercial production of handwoven blankets and rugs has been an important element of the Navajo economy. As one expert expresses it, "Classic Navajo serapes at their finest equal the delicacy and sophistication of any pre-mechanical loom-woven textile in the world." (wikipedia)*

*For more info see Wikipedia entry on "Navajo weaving"*





# I RENTED an OLD MAN

BY LYNDA GRACE PHILIPPSEN



Why would I rent an old man? With my penchant for slamming ageism, it hardly fits. So why?

Simple. Because I'm curious. Because I can. Because I can't do that at home. So, why not?

Among the many possibilities from traditional to *outré* offered in Tokyo, a human-rental culture flourishes. However, I don't mean to engage a tour guide to augment experiences in ways that translation via recordings or QR codes can't match. Nor do I mean to indulge pleasures of the flesh. Those aren't unique to Japan and can be found anywhere.

Though I can't say the same for Victoria, Tokyo has a reputation as a city in which women can walk alone safely after dark, which also means I am not uncomfortable wandering the streets or dining solo. That said, having already attended the opera and a top-tier choral concert in Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall (ranked among the top ten for acoustics world-wide), I'd like to enjoy a club music experience. Something alternative such as the wild performance from *Off/ String*, a Japanese trio in collaboration with German improvisational artists I stumbled onto at the Tokyo Goethe-Institute. However, since I don't speak or read Japanese, I have no idea where to find the subterranean venues behind obscured doorways or what I might be getting into before paying a cover charge.

Fortunately, *Ossan Rental* (variously translated as "old man", "uncle", or "middle-aged man") is one of a number of businesses throughout Japan with staff and cast members who assist clients with almost anything. If I needed to do so, I could engage someone to act as a parent, a plus one for a wedding or even a whole family. All without the obligations and aggravations of real relations.

Japanese society often shames those who fail to comply with cultural norms. If I were a single parent or if my spouse were overweight or unattractive, I could rent someone to act as a spouse for school events in order to protect my child from being bullied. Were my parents pressuring me to marry against my wishes, I could rent a fiancé. Someone could deliver a grovelling apology in my stead or even mercilessly berate a subordinate. For about fifteen dollars an hour I might ask someone to do a few heavy chores or listen to my woes. Outside the limits of the company's "no touching" policy, the possibilities—I immediately think meet the teacher night or parent interviews—are endless.

Since *Ossan Rental* has been featured on the national broadcast network NHK as well as in mainstream print



*Mr. Fuji sunset. (All photos by the author.)*

media in Japan and abroad, I'm not troubled over any risk. Based on the information I provide, the company forwards several profiles for my consideration. Then with the office acting as the intermediary to protect the privacy of both staff and client, I choose a promising candidate, discuss the particulars, and work out an itinerary.

Shimokitazawa is a Tokyo neighbourhood renowned for its eclectic mix of coffee culture, art on shutters, vintage thrift shops, and a vibrant music scene. Nagi-san is a local resident and musician, knows the area, and agrees to meet me outside the turnstiles of Shimokitazawa Station's East Exit.

Nagi-san is lithe and fit. At 49, he looks closer to 40 than 50. I know that Japanese women are viewed as "stale Christmas cake" after age 25; nevertheless I ask him how on earth he merits an *ossan* distinction. He looks at me for a moment and to my surprise quotes Proverbs 16:31. "White hair is a crown of glory and is seen most among the godly." Then he points to a few threads in his. I laugh and tell him he is a long way from godliness based on that standard and that I hardly qualify despite my silvery locks.

At ease after the joking around, we leave the station and meander through the surrounding district under the late afternoon sun. Though it isn't part of the schedule we'd discussed, we check out the old Suzunari Theatre, Shinganji Temple, and Kitazawa Hachiman-jinja Shrine because, well, they are there, and we have time. Then, since the sun is sinking, Nagi-san suggests that we hop a train to Setagaya-Daita, one stop west, where we can catch a sunset view of Mount Fuji. A splendid idea.

Now well into Tokyo's famous "blue hour" we're hungry and ready to sit down for a bit. Learning that I like handmade *soba* (buckwheat noodles), Nagi-san leads the way back to a Shimokitazawa mom-and-pop style restaurant where we enjoy hearty, delicious portions with duck—their specialty—in the broth.

The room is steamy and close. It feels as if we are visiting the rustic home of very elderly grandparents, which is exactly what the proprietors are. Like kin who are delighted to see you and love to dote on you, they pamper us with more than we have ordered and shower us with questions. However, throughout the meal I can't help but feel that at their age we should be taking care of them.

We delay our departure as we're in no rush to wander back out into the night. Once we do, however, we don't have much luck finding music which appeals. Some days later (early in March 2020 just before Canadians abroad are ordered to return) I will read that Tokyo music venues and DJ bars have been linked to the contraction of COVID-19. Perhaps we dodged a bullet there.

Stumped for ideas, we stand in the roadway and consider our options. I notice an Italian wine bar across the street which looks inviting and suggest we discuss Plan B there. We grab a seat at the counter, order snacks, and continue to share stories over Prosecco. The owner-chef who is working the salad station graciously offers us a complimentary bowl of very expensive strawberries.

Having recently returned to Japan after more than a decade abroad, Nagi-san says finding work has been a challenge. He explains that firms don't want to hire "old people" in spite of their extensive credentials or the value they might add to a company. As his CV includes the ability to speak Cantonese, Mandarin, and English, as well as international tour leader experience; he freelances with Ossan Rental. They post his bio on their website and connect him with clients.



It feels as if we are visiting the rustic home of very elderly grandparents, which is exactly what the proprietors are...



Left: Nagi-san. Right: Shutter art.

I'm curious but don't pry. It really is none of my business; however, I wonder how lucrative that can be. I mention the current economic climate made infinitely worse by COVID-19, Government shutdown of schools and public facilities, and the drop-off in Chinese tourists. Nagi-san states that he takes on other seasonal work—whatever's available—and is actively considering options elsewhere. He hasn't been back in Tokyo long and his plans are fluid. He may go north to Hokkaido to try his luck, and I encourage him to explore that. Recently, my friend has set up an aromatherapy business there with significant municipal support. Perhaps suitable possibilities exist for him.

Since we are discussing his work, I ask whether there are any aspects of guiding people he finds disagreeable. I remind him that I was a teacher and that there was plenty that was disagreeable—a good deal of it on account of people. That gets a laugh but with a wince. Clients' requests to cross boundaries are difficult, he admits. I don't probe, but he volunteers the instance of one who wished to hold hands.

I don't ask what he chose to do. Instead, I concur that the request was out of line. First, the company's "no touching" policy is clear. Though some of the provocative photos on the website might belie that edict, it's not Tinder. The occasion is not a date. I also

mention I'm aware that in Japan holding hands is a significant step in the courtship process. No wonder he felt troubled by the request, especially since it's also important to avoid negative client reviews.

Wanting to ease his obvious discomfort, I ask what the most gratifying aspect is. His diplomatic answer: "Really? Having conversations like this with people like you." Given that we've shared several hours of it, I don't want to doubt his sincerity. I know if I were asked that question, I could say the same, because it's true.

On my way back to my apartment, passing my quiet neighbours in Aoyama Cemetery, and gazing across to the towers of Roppongi, I am reminded of the numerous other *ichigo ichie* (once in a lifetime) encounters with individuals like Nagi-san during my months in Tokyo. Repeatedly, in serendipitous ways, paths intersect and moments we share often surprise with genuine and even profound connection. That, despite a careless thought at the outset that it might prove a lark to rent an old man. •

**LYNDA GRACE PHILIPPSEN** is a frequent visitor to Tokyo where she embraces adventure of all kinds—especially stuff she could never do at home. More stories can be found on her blog at [www.thewayofwords.com](http://www.thewayofwords.com).

# INDEPENDENCE



BY PATTI SHALES LEFKOS

HOW COTTAGE LIFE INSPIRED A SHY  
LITTLE GIRL TO GROW UP TO BE AN  
ADVENTURER, ENVIRONMENTALIST, AND  
OUTDOOR EDUCATION TEACHER.

It was years before I realized some families couldn't afford any kind of after-school activities for their kids, or that not everyone had a summer cottage, as we did. My sheltered circle of friends didn't even include anyone who went to a commercial summer camp, let alone any working-class or rural people for whom any camp would have been out of reach.

We had no experience of what summer camps were like. I had only ever heard of the ones Dad told us about. He enthralled us with escapades from his university years, of leading canoe trips at Taylor Statten's camps, Ahmek and Wapomeo, in Ontario's Algonquin Park. "If that spoiled camper hadn't complained so much, I never would have had to accidentally tip her canoe." Every time Mom served pie for dessert he'd say, "The only thing I learned at Camp Franklin in Georgian Bay up on Lake Huron was how to cut a pie in seven pieces."

Most of our vacation time, we were alone with Mom on the island. But Dad came for weekends, and we had a cadre of extended family, grandparents, uncles and aunts, great uncles and aunts, all of whom lived in cottages on their own other islands or along the shoreline, or on the original farm. I took for granted being surrounded by these relatives who were ready, willing, and able to teach the skills needed to thrive independently. All lessons were free, non-gender or age specific, and only my two older siblings were ahead of me in the lineup for rowboats and canoes.

Our parents encouraged us to entertain ourselves, develop skills, and be independent. No TV, no tablets, no phones or computers--our summers centred on outdoor events. Dad also resisted buying a TV for home: "We don't need an idiot box in our house. CBC radio is enough for us." He didn't add that he didn't have the money.

Yet despite having no TV at home, I got hooked at an early age on the idea of far-flung adventures by watching TV. During the school year Mom stood on the porch once a week to watch as I ran down our dark, snowy Toronto street to my best friend Carol's house. Ramar of the Jungle aired on the black and white 16-inch television screen



*Top: Patti takes a picture of the photographer.  
Below: Dad in the new red canoe.*

*(Images courtesy of the author)*

every Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. The hero of the series was Dr. Tom Reynolds, referred to by locals as Ramar, supposedly African for “white medicine man”. Portrayed by American actor Jon Hall, Ramar reached remote jungle villages of Africa by dugout canoe. On lengthy trips up the Nile River, he dispensed both medicine and good will. I was hooked. At that age, I was largely unaware of the awful stereotyping of African people in the show, and I wanted to be just like Ramar when I grew up.

One lazy, hazy August afternoon during the summer of 1953 my burgeoning canoe paddling skills serendipitously came together with my newfound obsession with the world of adventure programs. My overactive imagination coupled with my developing skills combined to instill a yearning for extended canoe trips. Learning the fine art of canoeing seemed crucial to my future plans, third in line or not.

But by 1953, our old canoe, Miss Niagara, had decks sagged and floorboards that groaned under even my light step. When water began to seep through her seams, Dad pronounced her destiny: “I guess it’s time to retire the old girl.” His sad gaze reflected myriad tales of past adventures. That somber verdict made for fierce competition for the the one other boat, whether manning the oars or making use of Uncle Orie’s motor.

My brother Doug always vied to be first, “I need the rowboat to go fishing.” In his mind he needed the boat every day. “Okay, but pick up some ice on your way home then, and check the mailbox on shore at the farm while you’re there,” Mom would say. But she didn’t really like being left on the island without a boat. Dad suggested a way to remedy the situation.

For several years, Dad had coveted a red wood and canvas Peterborough canoe. He felt he couldn’t, or shouldn’t, afford the more-expensive original model, so that spring he ordered a cheaper version, made in Quebec, from the T. Eaton Company in Toronto. Sadly, when we got to the lake just south of Frontenac Provincial Park, north of Kingston, Ontario, the canoe had not arrived. Dad wasted no time heading for Charlie Hughson’s store in nearby Perth Road Village. “Can you make a call to



*Patti's big fish.*

*(Image courtesy of the author)*

Toronto for me? Our new canoe should have been delivered a couple of weeks ago.”

Charlie nodded. Dad produced a scrap of paper with the number for Eaton’s Toronto store and joined Charlie behind the counter. Charlie gave the phone a few vigorous cranks with the handle on the side of the wooden box.

“Yes, yes. I see. Okay. Just a minute.” It turned out the cheaper Quebec canoe was no longer available. Charlie relayed the message, then handed the phone to Dad to continue the conversation. When he replaced the receiver and turned to us, a smile brightened his face. “They say they’ll send us a Peterborough canoe for the same price. And we’ll get two new paddles for our trouble. It’ll arrive by train in a few days.”

Lessons started with Doug a few days later. Dad sat proudly in the stern. Doug, a little more tentative, in the bow. “Never let your paddle drag along the soft wood gunwales.” Doug frowned in concentration, paddle shaft rarely coming into contact with the delicate gunwales. Donna and I knelt on the dock, paddles dipped in the water, imitating Doug’s movements. “Okay. That’s good. Now you switch to the stern. We’ll try steering with the J-stroke.”

Donna got lessons next. Her gentle touch surprised us all. She was a natural. My lessons continued on the dock for several more days. The rough boards indented my knees, creating callouses. I didn't care. I knew in my heart I would have to be tough for the multi-day jungle river trips I planned. After what seemed an interminable number of days, I earned a place in the bow seat. Dad manned the stern. My allotted time, usually less than half an hour, was never enough for me. After all, I was sure my future held grand adventures.

As the youngest, I was always last; I was last to learn to paddle well, last to be allowed to venture solo out of sight of our granite foundation, the Front Rock. I longed to take the sleek new vessel out on my own, to show Dad how well I could manage solo, to make him proud of me. "Please, Dad. I'm old enough. I'm almost seven. I'll be careful." After endless episodes of bargaining, Dad relented, sort of. He tied one end of a twenty-foot painter rope to the stern of the canoe and the other end to the dock. My solo trips up the Amazon began.

The memory of my first 'extended' trip provided a foundation for future strength and resilience.



*Our family in the green rowboat.*

*(Image courtesy of the author)*

Because shortly after I turned seven on August 12, I paddled Dad's cedar and canvas Peterborough canoe, alone, all the way up the Nile River. The oncoming current surged against the bow. The waves splashed her hull continuously. The relentless sun reflected blindingly off the water. My arms often grew tired, but I never gave up, I forged ahead, stroke after stroke, eyes on the river, for hours at a time. All on the end of a 20-foot tether.

I learned a lot about paddling that summer. I learned how difficult it was to paddle in a straight line, how to read the wind, how not to let your paddle scrape the side of the canoe, and how great it was to have a dad who would rescue me and pull me back to the dock when I needed help.

That was the way it worked in our family. Mom and Dad gave all three of us lots of 'rope' and fostered our resilience but were always there to reel us in and provide love and support when the situation called for it.

Patti Shales Lefkos is the author of *Nepal One Day at a Time*). Patti's latest book, *Grounded by Granite*, A coming of age tale of family connection and personal resilience framed by summers on a remote island in the Canadian Shield, is now available from bookstores and on Amazon. .

Excerpted from **Grounded by Granite**, by Patti Shales Lefkos, a coming of age tale of family connection and personal resilience framed by summers on a remote island in the Canadian Shield. Now available from bookstores and on [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca).

[www.pattishaleslefkos.com](http://www.pattishaleslefkos.com) •

**PATTI SHALES LEFKOS** is the author of ***Nepal One Day at a Time***. Her article on traveling in Nepal won a PostScript Excellence Award in 2021. Patti and her husband, Barry Hodgins, founded BC non-profit Nepal One Day at a Time to support education in Gorkha province, Nepal.

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# important dates

## Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security

Includes the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) retirement pension and disability, children's and survivor benefits.

### Upcoming payment dates

#### 2022

- September 27
- October 27
- November 28
- December 21

## Teachers' Pension Plan

Here are upcoming dates that pension payments are directly deposited to accounts.

### Upcoming payment dates

#### 2022

- September 28
- October 28
- November 29
- December 22

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## GOLDEN STAR AWARDS

# PLANTING INTERGENERATIONAL PROMISES: GOLDEN STAR AWARDS 2022



UPPER SUMAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - ABBOTSFORD

Debbie Mar and her grade 3 class at Upper Sumas Elementary School hit the double jackpot this year. They amply met all the criteria for a BCRTA Golden Star Award as well as qualifying for the Golden Star Legion Award. Debbie and her students were presented with the Golden Star/Legion Award for 2022 at a joyful celebration on June 9.

“Planting Intergenerational Promises” is a well-established programme bringing together students and seniors, including veterans. Upper Sumas Elementary was at “ground zero” during last year’s catastrophic floods, so staff and students had to move out of their building for several months, yet still managed to carry on their core activities.

Ms. Mar, 2020 recipient of a 2020 *Prime Minister’s Award for Teaching Excellence*, began connecting students and seniors through tulip and daffodil bulbs in 2019 with the start of the “Tulip Project”. Tulip bulbs supplied by B.C. Agriculture in the Classroom (BCAITC) became a means of celebrating the Liberation of Holland in 1945. Seniors, including veterans from the Abbotsford Legion, were drawn to the project as students began an in-depth study of the role of Canadian soldiers in that event. Veterans now play key roles in the annual classroom Remembrance Day commemorations.

As students began to educate the community about the special friendship between Canada and the Netherlands, their powerful voices and engaging presentations captured the attention of the community. Many seniors became involved and shared their gifts. Students were



*Students and guests enjoyed a celebratory cake.*



*Veterans were among those to celebrate the presentation of the Golden Star/Legion Award at Upper Sumas Elementary.*

invited to Seaforth Armoury as guests of honour to receive the “Boots of Remembrance” Award and meet World War II veterans.

Debbie’s liaison with Josh Burton, supervisor of Archway Senior Services in Abbotsford, helped make the programme a well-known presence connecting students and seniors in the community.

Students and seniors connected with one another through creating gifts of art and poetry for each other. These intergenerational connections resulted in a presentation of “daffodil poetry”, an event of special significance since the school’s daffodil bed had been covered by four feet of water during the flooding. Quoting Christine Lawe, a favourite writer, Debbie says, “Flowers are lovely to look at, but more importantly they’re a tool to kick-start a conversation and foster a connection”.

Debbie’s project also led to an invitation by the Dutch Liberation Society to write lessons on connecting the bulbs to seniors.

This project is close to Debbie’s heart as an integral part of her curriculum:



*ABOVE: Students share their flower art and poetry with their senior friends during the presentation of The Golden Star/Legion Award at Upper Sumas Elementary School on June 9th. BELOW: Steve Bailey and Amber Stewart present the Golden Star cheque, trophy and certificate To Ms. Debbie Mar and her grade 3 class at Upper Sumas Elementary.*

“Students love important work. Engagement is high and they benefit from the gifts that seniors bring into our classroom. Students are effortlessly meeting many of the competencies for their grade while making a long-lasting difference in their community. Critical thinking, deep discussions, and the cultivation of empathy and compassion through shared experiences make me so proud to be my students’ teacher. I will never forget the absolute joy on each student’s face as they opened their package from their senior—a painted flower just for them and a story of why it is special.”



The BCRTA was represented at June 9’s presentation by Steve Bailey, Excellence Committee Chair, and Gloria Adam, president of the Abbotsford RTA Branch, as well as other RTA members from Abbotsford. Seniors from the community and their student friends read their poetry and shared their art. Amber Stewart of the Legion Foundation of the B.C. and Yukon Command represented the Legion and presented Debbie and her students with a cheque for \$1500 which will go toward the continuation of “Planting Intergenerational Promises”. Also attending was Adriana Zylmans, President of the 2020 Dutch Liberation Celebration and a retired teacher. Pat Tonn, Executive Director of BCAITC, represented that organization, and Josh Burton spoke of the strong relationship between the school and seniors in the community. Retired Sergeant Kelly Watson, Vice President of the Abbotsford Legion, spoke of his personal joy at being part of this initiative.

The Excellence in Public Education Committee is looking forward to next year’s Golden Star Award submissions. The deadline for submissions is April 15, 2023. BCRTA members are urged to encourage projects in their area that are intergenerational in nature to apply. Projects must be on-going and show evidence of the development of meaningful relationships between school students and seniors in their community.

Application criteria, and past Golden Star and Golden Star/Legion Award winners, can be found on the BCRTA website, at <https://bcрта.ca/bcрта-golden-star-awards/>

**STEVE BAILEY** is Chair of BCRTA’s Excellence in Public Education Committee

# Goldfinch

POEM AND PHOTOS BY PAUL DESJARDINS

When flashes of yellow reflect in a creek,  
An image of panners determined to seek  
A bounty of riches assembles in thought.  
Yet the gathering of wealth is more often than naught  
Beyond what is stored in some cast-iron coffer,  
But a treasure created to empower and offer  
A spirit malnourished and suffering in vain,  
Yearning to lighten this onrush of pain,  
Some semblance of health and life-lifting purpose.  
Perhaps within nature an answer will surface;  
When flashes of yellow in creek beds are not  
The idolized nuggets the miners had sought,  
But a tiny bird clothed in feathers so bold,  
You'd think it was dressed in garments of gold.  
Thus, a life steeped in blessings will soon be a cinch  
When eyes and ears feast on a gorgeous goldfinch.



# LAUGH-OUT-LOUD MURDER

THE CRIME NOVELS OF CAIMH McDONNELL

REVIEW BY KAREN COOPER

Sometimes the mystery that grips me is not just inside the plot, it's about the writer (why is Josephine Tey so little known?), or even about me, the reader (why on earth do I keep reading Caimh McDonnell novels?).

McDonnell's novels do not in most ways align with my usual tastes in crime fiction. While I've read books by living crime writers, I've really liked only a few. I remember thinking about McDonnell's first novel, *A Man With One of Those Faces*, "This is fun, but light. I won't want to read more of this author's work." And up to that point, there were really only two authors, Tana French and Mick Herron, whose next books I eagerly watched for.

Yet here I am in my so-many-books-so-little-time life, returning to McDonnell's stories, going through them all again, while eagerly awaiting the next instalments in a growing list of books and series by this man. Why?

McDonnell has published a total of 14 books so far, eight of which are set in Dublin, where he grew up, two in Manchester, where he lives now,

and three in the USA, in addition to several short stories and novellas. All involve crime, most of the human variety, though the *Stranger Times* series adds vampires, werewolves, a demon-possessed Jamaican printing press technician, and a National-Enquirer-style newspaper which happens to be publishing the truth.

McDonnell builds these worlds with an increasingly large number of characters, each of whom nevertheless remains distinct. If the classic police hero is Hawaii Five-0's Steve McGarrett—chiselled of face, dapper in attire, cool in demeanor—then Detective Sergeant Bunny McGarry (the most popular character among McDonnell's readers) is the anti-McGarrett: slobbish, explosive, and crass. Indeed, given the names, this anti-correlation looks deliciously deliberate. When we first meet Bunny, his ill-fitting suit is covered in greasy crumbs from eating an entire bag of croissants and he is carrying a hurley stick (a sort of more-substantial grass hockey stick), the weapon he uses to accomplish his desired ends.

“My heroes are screw-ups who are trying to do the right thing, usually in the wrong way.”

Author Caimh McDonnell

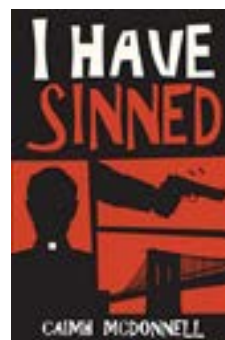
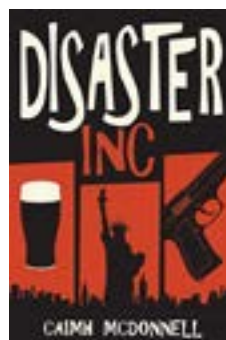
According to McDonnell, “Bunny just sort of turned up [in the first book] and refused to leave. He was honestly supposed to be a minor character and he all but took over the affair.” By McDonnell’s own confession, not just Bunny’s superiors, but also the author himself, fail to find ways to control this man. He is simply disinterested in mere niceness and mere morality. It is fortunate then, that a deep kindness and a deeper goodness inform most of his choices, even those he gets disastrously wrong.

Even minor characters are not so much sketched as engraved with a sharp-pointed stylus: “Sister Bernadette was five foot nothing of a bespectacled nun from Tipperary. In his life, Bunny had met ham-fisted brutal savages, cold-blooded professional killers and straight-up insane psychopaths, but none of them had the ability to be as intimidating as Sister Bernadette.... Bunny guessed she’d been forged from the melted-down remains of old nuns mixed with equal parts shoe leather, iron and venom.”

He also animates settings well, most especially Dublin: “You grew up in Dublin in the seventies and eighties. It was as white as white could be. Sure, we’ve diversified now, but back then, if it snowed we couldn’t feekin’ find each other.”

His plots are tight and clear, and usually involve police procedures and murders, and that means the stories explore some dark topics. His second novel, *The Day That Never Comes*, addresses the massive mis-management of the Irish economy, the scams of the rich, and the resultant losses of livelihoods and, sometimes, lives.

Another more-serious aspect of McDonnell’s writing is harder to capture. I spent the first few books wincing with anxiety as I encountered dwarves, people of colour, criminal prisoners, an apparently gormless guy dating an apparently Thai woman over the internet (is it romance or a classic fraud scheme?), and many other persons easy to stereotype or disdain—in short, to make fun of.





His women, too, could start as seemingly undeveloped caricatures.

But I've stopped wincing; McDonnell comes to the edge of being offensive (by contemporary standards), but instead of stepping over, he grants nearly every character a healthy measure of human dignity and agency. This is damnably hard to do in any context, but truly impressive in fast-moving, laugh-out-loud larks. I now delight in awaiting the next way McDonnell will frustrate my expectations; he revels in upending these and other tropes and commonplaces.

Making comedy out of prison life and the Irish financial crisis sounds improbable, doesn't it? Prior to writing fiction, McDonnell performed stand-up comedy and wrote for a variety of popular British

comedy shows, including *A League of Their Own* and *The Sarah Millican Television Programme*, so he understands comic timing. He nails humorous moments in both short set-ups and in longer arcs of character or action. But his fiction is not just stand-up with a twist: "In a novel, all of the writing is there to serve the story or character. I'm a firm believer that comedy is not a genre, but it is rather a style of writing. If you're writing to try to get to a gag, then you're doing it wrong."

And the answer to the mystery you'd really like me to solve, namely how on earth to pronounce "Caimh"? A variant of the Gaelic for "Kevin", it's pronounced "Queeve" in standard English. "And yes," he says, "I use it entirely to scare the English. The fact that it is also my name is entirely a bonus." •

**KAREN COOPER** is Assistant Editor of *PostScript Magazine*.

"Good tip," said Paul. "Just so I know, where is a good place to get shot?" He'd not yet realised that Dr Sinha was not at home to sarcasm. "Gluteus maximus – most definitely. Gunshot, stab wound – if you get the option, go ass every time."

(From *A Man With One of Those Faces*)



“It was like he’d just been issued with a human head for the first time and he was trying to figure out how it worked.”

(From *Angels in the Moonlight*)

## ACCESSING CAIMH MCDONNELL’S BOOKS

My suggestions for starting out would be the free book mentioned just below, and *The Stranger Times*. A full list of the books is here:

[https://whitehairedirishman.com/caimhs\\_books/](https://whitehairedirishman.com/caimhs_books/)

**FREE:** Get a taste of the Bunnyverse with *How to Send a Message*, available for free when you sign up for the newsletter:

<https://dl.bookfunnel.com/mtzfpk1jnu>

**PODCAST:** Hear various stories and chapters, along with short, clarifying discussions of the writing process, on his podcast:

<https://whitehairedirishman.com/podcast/>

**AUDIOBOOKS:** Available at Audible.com. The Dublin books are read by Morgan C. Jones, one of the best in terms of evoking character. My current “re-reading” is actually re-listening, and his unexpected voice for Bunny McGarry is one of the most brilliant voice-acting choices I’ve ever heard.

**E-READERS:** Available for Kindle, Kobo, Nook, and others.

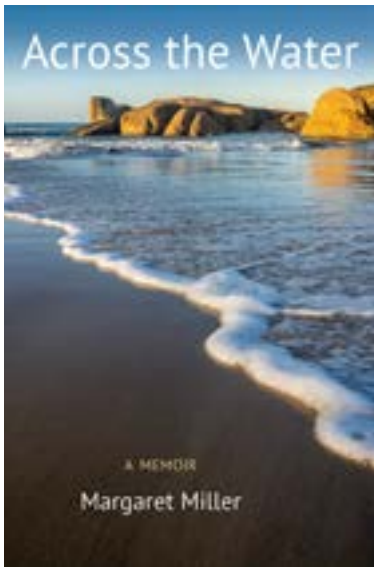
**LIBRARY:** Check with your local library. If unavailable, put in requests for print, audio, and e-reader versions. Requests really do influence librarians.

**BLOG:** One of only two non-technical newsletter/blogs I read with any regularity:

<https://whitehairedirishman.com/category/news/>

What’s on your reading list? Let us know: [postscript@bcrt.ca](mailto:postscript@bcrt.ca)

# books OF NOTE



## Across the Water: A Memoir by Margaret Miller

Margaret Miller's Australian-Canadian memoir spans six decades and describes a life of adventure and change. Miller grew up in Queensland, the second child of a small-town doctor. After university and the start of a teaching career in Sydney, she moved to rural British Columbia and fell in love with a new way of life. She adjusted to northern winters, life in a remote cabin, marriage and extended travel with pre-schoolers.

*Across the Water* examine the joys and challenges of loving two countries and the discoveries that come with embracing change. Vivid descriptions of wild landscapes - from the Australian coast and outback to the Kootenay backcountry - and stories of longing, loss and outdoor adventures reveal Miller's love of life and deep attachment to nature.

Available at Nelson's Otter Books, Creston's Cresteramics Gift Store and by mail order. Contact [miller.memoir@gmail.com](mailto:miller.memoir@gmail.com).

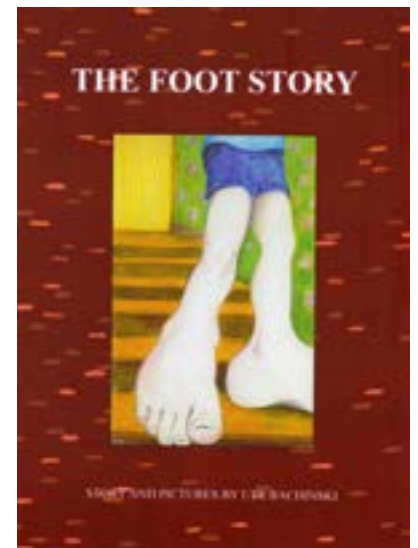
## The Foot Story by Ute Bachinski

The Foot Story started out as a made-up-on- the-spot bedtime story for my 7 year old son in the 1970's. Many years later I wrote it down.

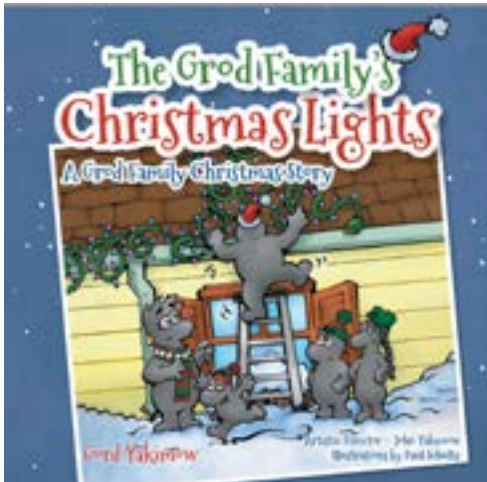
When I retired from teaching, I concentrated more fully on the book. It is basically the story of a boy becoming unbalanced, believing, mistakenly, that he can learn everything from TV.

One reviewer writes: "Local fabric and watercolour artist, Ute Bachinski has written a children's book called The Foot Story. It is a humorous tale of a boy named Michael who needs to learn all about balance in his life. The Granny is the story's wise and witty hero. The book is filled with humorous anecdotes for the adult reader and physical comedy for the young listener. I found the read amusing and insightful. It is nurturing and instructive like a grandmother and a teacher, of which Ute is both."

Available from the author for \$20 - contact [utebach@telus.net](mailto:utebach@telus.net)



# books OF NOTE



## The Grod Family's Christmas Lights by Gord Yakimow, illustrations by Paul Schultz

Despite Papa Grod's best efforts, the Grod family's Christmas lights have always looked "scruffy" and "hodge-podgey" and "tacky" (according to Mama Grod). But now, with a fresh new set of high-quality Christmas lights (in Mama Grod's favourite colours), and an eager work-crew to help him out (the three GrodKids), Papa Grod is confident that this year's Grod family light display will be the best ever in the Valley of the EverGreens.

What could possibly go wrong?

*"Wonderful illustrations!" Thach Bui*

*"In a league of its own!" L.A. Weiss*

Gord Yakimow is a retired schoolteacher from Chilliwack SD#33. He has been a frequent contributor to PostScript Magazine.

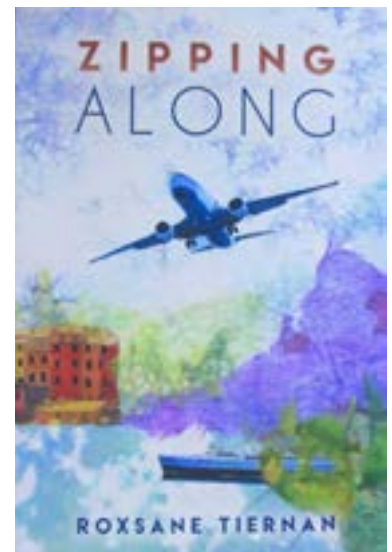
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[www.thegrods.com](http://www.thegrods.com)

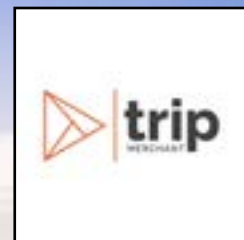
## Zippering Along by Roxsane Tiernan

Zippering Along is the story of the author's life from 1987 to 2003. Returning home from a two-year stint in Mexico as a program leader for the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Roxsane Tiernan was looking forward to reconnecting and settling down. But disrupted by family loss, she sets off for time in Europe, before restarting her life as a tutor for the disabled and later as an ESL teacher. A colourful description of many friends and adventures around the world.

Available from Chapters-Indigo and Amazon.



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\*Prices are CAD per person, based on double occupancy in a Classic Park View Room (No Balcony) and includes daily breakfast. Include all your dinners for only \*\$595 CAD additional. Single Supplement: + \$1,100 CAD (Classic Park View Room, No Balcony). Airfare extra.

**Join Gerry Tiede, Past President of BCRTA, next March on a Croatia Long Stay in the remarkable city of Dubrovnik, Croatia. Gerry and his wife, Jeanie, led the first and very successful BCRTA group trips to Morocco and the long-stay in Portugal.**

\*Friends and family of registered BCRTA travelers are welcome to join our group trips at any time. After one month of the trip announcement, if there are still spaces available, the trip is open to any friends and family of BCRTA members even without the BCRTA member traveling



**22 Rooms Total**  
**Classic Park View No Balcony – 10 Rooms**  
**Classic Park View with Balcony – 5 Rooms**  
**Classic Sea Side View with Balcony – 7 Rooms**



Trip start date in Dubrovnik is March 31st, 2023. Flights depart Vancouver on March 30th, 2023. We will starting looking at a group air block in September.

Dubrovnik is one of the world's unique cities. Surrounded by medieval walls in a most dramatic setting, it is a great base for exploring the local islands, Montenegro and coast.

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# BASICS OF BIOMETRICS

**This exceptionally secure way to log in to devices and online accounts removes the hassle of passwords.**

Biometrics are cutting edge technology that use human features to replace passwords. When you use a fingerprint, voice, or face to unlock a device or log in to an online account, you're using biometrics. The account is asking, "Who are you?" Biometrics confirms your identity – no password needed. Anything that removes the hassle of remembering dozens of passwords is a welcome relief.

**The chance that someone could unlock your device by using their face is one in a million. A weak password can be hacked in seconds.**

Biometric security is increasingly common, and the trend has only just begun. By 2023, it's estimated that over 1.5 billion people will use biometrics to secure their digital life.

Facial recognition is taking over fingerprints on mobile devices due to its lower failure rate. With facial recognition, only a truly identical twin could fool the system. However, identical twins make up just 0.003% of the population—this is not a risk that applies to many.

Getting comfortable using biometrics is an important skill. But if you don't want to use this security feature, you can turn it off and opt for a secure passcode and unique, strong passwords instead.



## ARE YOUR FINGERPRINTS WORKING?

Fingerprint recognition makes your device more secure and easier to get into—that's when it works. Check these tips around common issues with fingerprint recognition technology:

- Make sure the Home Button is free of moisture or debris.
- Make sure your fingers are clean and moist. Dry, chapped skin may affect how the scanner works. But too much moisture, cream, sunscreen, make-up, dirt, etc., can make it difficult for the sensor to read your fingerprint accurately.
- Inspect the screen or Home Button for scratches.
- **Apple devices:** Make sure your case or screen protector is not blocking the Home Button.
- **Samsung devices:** Make sure another screen protector has not been installed on top of the pre-installed screen protector.

## MORE GLUU FINGERPRINT TIPS

- Add more than one fingerprint. Apple devices can have up to 5 fingerprints. Samsung devices can have up to 3 fingerprints.
- Add a digit from each hand — index finger and thumb are popular choices.
- Add the middle finger from your non-dominant hand. It is less likely to be affected by cuts and scrapes, which can affect the scan's accuracy.

# HAND-ME-DOWNS? MAYBE DON'T.

**Internet is a basic human right. That means any mobile device is better than none at all. But giving older devices to seniors takes some thought. Here is what Gluu Digital Coaches have learned from the front lines.**

You have a device that's collecting dust, or you are upgrading and want to hand down your device to an older person in your life. Nice! Any device is better than no device – that's our world today. But if you can swing it, in the right circumstances, helping a senior get into newer technology means a safer and better user experience for them.

Here is what Gluu Digital Coaches see on the front lines. Giving older devices to seniors in care homes or those with cognitive impairment makes sense. The likelihood the device will get damaged or go missing is higher. It hurts less to lose an older device. In this situation, don't forget about old smartphones or iPods – load them with music and podcasts. Add a pair of headphones, and you are providing an enjoyable way to pass some time.

But for seniors interested in getting connected with the modern world, newer technology makes more sense. As we age, change is hard. Helping them learn to use a new device means they will have the same hardware for many years. And, they can rest easy knowing their device is secured with the latest technology. Security features on newer devices, like biometrics, make it easier to keep the device and its data secure. The big win

with a new mobile device is that all popular apps work on newer operating systems - not so with old, old operating systems. There isn't much point in a mobile device that can't use the apps that connect us to the world like Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp, etc.

### 6 REASONS TO INVEST IN A NEW MOBILE DEVICE

1. Fingerprint or facial recognition keeps devices secure without requiring a passcode or password all the time. This makes it easier to lock down the device and secure its data.
2. Magnifier tools usually found in a newer OS make reading more comfortable.
3. Dictation & Voice Assistants mean more talking and less typing. That's a better user experience.
4. Lighter, thinner hardware makes the device easier to hold and carry around.
5. Wireless keyboards, printing, and sharing make a mobile device feel like a computer.
6. A new battery holds its charge longer.

## THE RESULTS TELL THE STORY

BCRTA MEMBERS' EXTENDED HEALTH CARE INSURANCE

# Satisfaction Survey

Green Shield  
Plan Users

BCRTA Johnson  
Prestige Users

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND  
YOUR CURRENT EHC PLAN?

35.2%

88.9%



# OF CATEGORIES  
WITH THE HIGHEST RATING

1

21



Since 1998, BCRTA has been offering insurance options to our retiree members. Thousands of BCRTA members now enjoy friendly, reliable coverage at a reasonable price. Prestige EHC and Travel by Johnson has much higher satisfaction levels than competing plans. Visit <https://bcрта.ca/ehcsurvey> to see the peace of mind the right plan can give.

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# MEDICATIONS AND YOUR MEMORY

BY DR. CARA TANNENBAUM

## MEDICATIONS: POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Did you know that some medications can slow down the thinking process and harm your memory? Certain medications can make your brain foggy, which interferes with your ability to concentrate on a task and makes it more difficult to remember things.

Memory loss and medication side effects are two of the top three health concerns of older men and women in Canada.<sup>1,2</sup> Approximately 17% of adults aged 65 and older suffer from mild cognitive impairment.<sup>3</sup> Mild cognitive impairment is a condition characterized by a slight, although noticeable, loss of memory. A person with mild cognitive impairment is still able to carry out their normal daily activities.

A number of medications have been shown to impact memory and function, either when used alone or in combination with other drugs. The

effect they have on our memory can lead to a diagnosis of cognitive impairment.

Medications may interfere with attention, memory, language, executive function, or other cognitive faculties. The effects of medications on our memory may be temporary or long-term. Have you ever forgotten where you parked your car? Where you put your keys? Or a friend's name? Some medications can contribute to these lapses.

As we age, our brains become more sensitive to medication effects. Avoiding medications that can affect our memory is key to optimizing brain function. Guidelines strongly recommend that patients diagnosed with cognitive impairment or dementia avoid taking medications that may make cognition worse.<sup>4</sup> Often, there is a safer or more effective alternative therapy. Improvement in cognition may be observed after stopping these medications.

Medications may interfere with attention, memory, language, executive function, or other cognitive faculties.

*continued...*

## EXAMPLES OF MEDICATIONS THAT CAN AFFECT MEMORY AND BRAIN FUNCTION

<b>Sleeping pills</b>	Benzodiazepines For example: lorazepam (Ativan®), oxazepam (Serax®), diazepam (Valium®)	These medications are generally prescribed to people who have trouble sleeping.
	Non-benzodiazepine prescription sedatives or “z-drugs”. For example: zopiclone (Imovane®), zolpidem (Sublinox®)	
<b>Over-the-counter sleeping aids</b>	For example: diphenhydramine (Unisom®, ZzzQuil®, Tylenol Nighttime®, Advil Nighttime®)	These medications are available without a prescription and generally taken for insomnia (trouble sleeping).
<b>Some anti-allergy medications</b>	For example: hydroxyzine (Atarax®), diphenhydramine (Benadryl®)	These medications are generally used to treat itchy skin or allergies. More rarely, they may be used to treat insomnia or anxiety.
<b>Some anti-nausea medications</b>	For example: dimenhydrinate (Gravol®)	These medications are generally used to treat motion sickness when travelling.
<b>Antipsychotics</b>	For example: quetiapine (Seroquel®), risperidone (Risperdal®)	These medications are often prescribed inappropriately for sleep or anxiety, or to treat symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias.
<b>Some antidepressants</b>	For example: amitriptyline (Elavil®), nortriptyline (Aventyl®), paroxetine (Paxil®)	Although these medications are called antidepressants, they are prescribed for a number of reasons, including for sleep, the prevention of migraines, the treatment of pain or depression.
<b>Medications for urinary incontinence</b>	For example: oxybutynin (Ditropan®)	These medications may be prescribed to treat overactive bladder (a condition where a person has sudden urges to urinate).
<b>Muscle relaxants</b>	For example: cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril®), methocarbamol (Robaxin®, Robaxacet®, Robax Platinum®)	These medications are generally used to treat spasms, and neck or back pain.
<b>Opioid (narcotic) medications</b>	For example: codeine (Tylenol NO. 3®), morphine (Statex®), hydromorphone (Dilaudid®), oxycodone (Percocet®)	These medications may be prescribed for acute pain (e.g., short term pain after a surgery), as well as chronic pain.
<b>Medications frequently used to treat nerve pain or epilepsy</b>	For example: pregabalin (Lyrica®), gabapentin (Neurontin®)	These medications may be prescribed for a number of conditions, including nerve pain caused by diabetes or shingles.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you think one of your medications may be affecting your memory, speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

### 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR, NURSE OR PHARMACIST ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS

1. Why am I taking this medication?
2. What are the potential benefits and harms of this medication?
3. Can it affect my memory or cause me to fall?
4. Can I stop or reduce the dose of this medication (i.e., deprescribing)?
5. Who do I follow-up with and when?
6. Other questions that arise. (Make a list)



### OTHER TIPS

- Remember to always carry a complete list of your medications with you.
- **Always** talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before stopping or changing any of your medications.

**Dr. Cara Tannenbaum** is a leader in cutting-edge geriatric research both nationally and internationally. As a Professor in the Faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy at the Université de Montréal, she became the inaugural Chair of the Michel Saucier Endowed Fund in Geriatric Pharmacology, Health and Aging in 2008, and won the CIHR Betty Haven's Knowledge Transfer Prize in Aging in 2013 for her work on the EMPOWER study: "Eliminating Medications through Patient Ownership of End Results". Her EMPOWER brochure for reducing benzodiazepines has since been translated into 10 languages worldwide. As the principal investigator on a CIHR Partnership for Health System Improvement Grant, she co-founded the Canadian Deprescribing Network, and continues to conduct deprescribing trials involving patients, pharmacists and primary care practitioners across Canada..

*Content reprinted with permission of DeprescribingNetwork.ca*

### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Tannenbaum C, et al. CMAJ July 2005; 173 (2):153-159.
- <sup>2</sup> Tannenbaum C, The Aging Male Jun 2012; 15 (2):103-8.
- <sup>3</sup> Petersen RC, Neurology Jan 2018; 90 (3).
- <sup>4</sup> AGS Beers Criteria Update Expert Panel. Journal of the AGS; April 2019; 67 (4): 674- 694.

# Your Vision: About AMD



If you've been keeping abreast of the various topics concerning your eye health, then you must have noticed that Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is often listed as a potential disease. Have you been wondering exactly what AMD is, what the symptoms are, and what you can do to prevent it? Here are the answers to your questions.

## WHAT IS AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION?

AMD is the deterioration of the small central portion of the retina, called the macula. The retina provides our brains with visual recognition, so if parts of it stop functioning or if its ability to transfer information diminishes this will cause vision problems.

There are two types of AMD:

**Dry** – This is the most common form of AMD. It consists of yellow fat and protein deposits on the macula. People tend to notice it while reading and it often leads to dimmer or distorted vision. In severe cases, the tissues surrounding the macula can become atrophied, leading to blind spots, or in the worst cases, central vision loss.

**Wet** – This form of AMD is caused by abnormal blood vessels underneath the macula that leak or bleed and eventually form scars. Blood leaking into the retina causes blind spots, making straight lines appear wavy. Once the scars form, they may cause permanent vision loss. Vision loss in the wet form is faster and more significant than in the dry form.

In around 10% of people, the dry form of AMD can lead to the wet form.

Although this disease tends to affect people as they age, there are other factors that can cause AMD. Some of the causes are unfortunately genetic. However, you can control and manage some factors like smoking, high blood pressure, and diet by choosing a healthier lifestyle.



## WHAT WE CAN DO.

Even though this all may seem bleak, it is important to note that there are ways of preventing or slowing the progression of this disease:

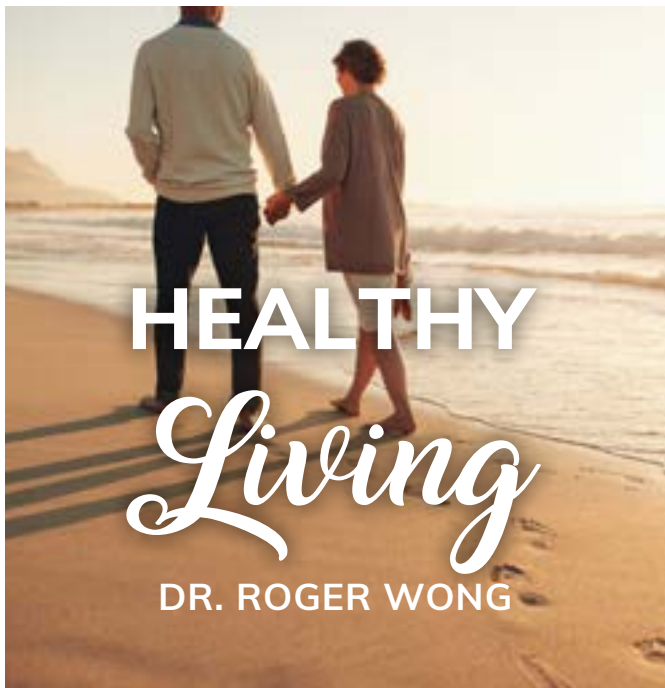
- Book a yearly eye exam. This is especially important as we age, since your optometrist can detect early signs of AMD or other diseases that may affect your overall health.
- Don't smoke.
- Eat a healthy diet of greens, antioxidant filled fruits, and foods rich in lutein, zeaxanthin, and beta carotene. If you're looking for inspiration, we have plenty of healthy recipes on our blog.
- Take good quality omega-3 fish oil supplements or eat salmon.
- Exercise regularly.

- Maintain a healthy body weight and speak to your family doctor about controlling your blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- Wear quality sunglasses to protect your eyes from UV.
- Wear blue light filtering glasses when using a digital device

In the unfortunate event that you develop AMD, there are options available to you to stabilize or slow the disease progression. Consult with your optometrist to know how to maintain and promote your vision based on your specific condition and needs. •

Content provided by BCRTA Advantage Partner **IRIS OPTICAL**. IRIS offers BCRTA members significant discounts off prescription eyewear, including sunglasses. Visit [bcrta.ca/iris](http://bcrta.ca/iris) to learn more.





People living with MCI are more likely to develop dementia over time, although having MCI does not necessarily mean for sure you will have dementia in the years to come. Early and comprehensive assessment and management of MCI can be helpful to reduce the likelihood of progression to dementia. This can be done through your family doctor or a specialist, such as a geriatrician. An important aspect of the medical management of MCI is to lower the chance of stroke, such as by optimal control of blood pressure, glucose and lipid levels.

### **LOSS OF ABILITY TO PERFORM DAILY ACTIVITIES**

During the initial stage of dementia, some relatively complex daily functions will prove difficult. For example, decision-making becomes more challenging than it was previously. Or perhaps the person has always run their own financial affairs but now those affairs become disordered and they can't sort them out. Or the ability to safely drive a car becomes impaired as there are more close calls than before with more minor or major accidents. Or problems may show up in routine activities such as cooking or operating household appliances.

When dementia progresses and becomes more severe, basic daily functions can also be affected. For example, getting dressed, going to the bathroom, or taking a bath may be difficult. People living with advanced stages of dementia can experience difficulty with walking or feeding themselves.

**Dementia is not a part of normal aging, a common myth that we must dispel...**

## **WHAT IS DEMENTIA – MYTHS AND FACTS**

### **DEMENTIA AND MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT**

Dementia refers to a spectrum of health conditions that affect how the brain works, usually (but not only) involving memory loss. There are many types of dementia, and the most common type is Alzheimer's disease.

Here are some foundational facts to consider for older people about a decline in brain function, a process known as "cognitive impairment".

Dementia is not a part of normal aging, a common myth that we must dispel. As you get older, many brain functions can be expected to remain normal, yet we often hear of "senior moments" with transient memory lapse that recovers spontaneously. But if you begin to have increasing issues with memory loss, it may be an early indication of a condition called mild cognitive impairment (or MCI). It means that your memory is not as good as it was, but your daily functions are still intact, with no life-changing challenges. However, if individuals can no longer perform certain daily activities as a result of the memory changes, they may be living with dementia instead of MCI.



*Coloured post-it  
notes can keep daily  
activities on track...*

## **MORE THAN MEMORY**

While memory loss is the most common warning sign that is associated with dementia, there are other worrisome signals that might point to the possibility of dementia. A person who cannot recognize and/or misidentifies family or friends, or who has difficulty in staying focused on task, or who keeps repeating the same conversation should seek medical advice for proper assessment and treatment.

## **DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR**

Some people living with dementia may become very anxious, to the point where it affects their daily functions and/or interpersonal relationships. This might manifest as repeated expressions of disabling worry, or unrealistic risk assessments of daily situations and interactions. Look for subtle personality changes. If someone has always been cool, calm, and collected, but now becomes unusually irritable or even aggressive, there is something going on. In some cases, people living with dementia may experience either visual or auditory hallucinations. These examples of behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (abbreviated as BPSD) can be worrisome for family members, and a significant source of care provider stress.

DR. ROGER WONG

## **COPING: STRATEGIES AND ROUTINES**

There are some effective strategies to cope with dementia, such as using a notepad or coloured post-it notes to keep daily activities on track. Someone who functions well at home but tends to get lost may find it helpful to have their family members trained in the use of the GPS tracking function on their smartphones. The same strategies can start early, such as for those with mild cognitive impairment.

There are useful resources in English or French and other languages from the Alzheimer Society of Canada (<https://alzheimer.ca/>). In particular, the First Link program provides helpful support to care providers for people living with dementia.

## **SOCIAL ISOLATION AND ACTIVITIES**

It is concerning that many older people, including those living with dementia, have experienced social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic for the past two-plus years. An appropriate amount of socialization is important for everyone, including people with dementia. Ideally, this is combined with the usual elements of healthy living: getting enough sleep, good nutrition, regular physical exercise, and having positive interactions with friends.



A schedule of daily routines is helpful. Keeping up positive mental inputs like games and puzzles, staying in contact via social media, and, enjoying music can help to promote well-being.

## **MEDICATIONS**

There are several prescription medications that can potentially slow the progression of dementia. These include donepezil (Aricept), galantamine (Reminyl), rivastigmine (Exelon), and memantine (Ebixa). These medication therapies do not reverse dementia, but they can potentially help to maintain daily functioning. In the meantime, research continues around the world to discover therapies that can hopefully cure dementia one day.

## **THE IMPACTS**

It is crucial to seek help early because those who take care of people living with dementia can also feel a serious impact. Establishing a diagnosis of dementia is an important first step in accessing resources and putting in place a meaningful and practical treatment plan.

You may be afraid of receiving a diagnosis for yourself or a loved one, but dealing with an undiagnosed case of dementia is not more simple or easier than one that has been properly assessed. The reality is that caring for someone with dementia can be challenging, but understanding the health condition, its causes, and its effects will better equip people living with dementia and loved ones to adapt to the situation. This is also a critical step that all of us can take in reducing stigma that is connected with a diagnosis of dementia.

If you or someone you know is living with dementia, know that you are not alone and that help is available. Contact the Alzheimer Society of Canada (<https://alzheimer.ca/>) today. •

**DR. ROGER WONG** is Vice Dean (Education) in the Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, a geriatrics specialist doctor, clinical professor of geriatric medicine, the 13th President of the Canadian Geriatrics Society, and a TEDx speaker. He tweets at @RogerWong10.

*The content of this article is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.*



# Blood, Sweat and Cheers

## The Critical Need for Blood

BY BARRIE STREET

At the right, a photo of my 102nd donation!

My fellow teachers, I have a question for you: How often in Canada does someone require a blood transfusion?

Answer: Astonishingly, 1440 times per day, that is, every 60 seconds!

I'm passionate about giving blood. I am 86 and have been donating since I was 18. I am equally enthusiastic about encouraging others to donate. Are YOU willing to give?

Blood donation is a vital part of worldwide healthcare. It allows for blood transfusion as a life-sustaining and life-saving procedure. Over 100 million units of blood are donated annually throughout the world.

### HOW DID DONATING BEGIN?

It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that certain blood groups were identified. Transfusions were only carried out on a limited basis. Interestingly, during this period, blood was transferred instantly and directly from donor to recipient. Blood was “banked” for the first-time during World War I in 1916. A US Army Medical Corps Captain combined the blood with glucose and was able to store blood in refrigerated conditions. Up to this time, soldiers were dying of otherwise non-fatal wounds due to the inability to perform a timely blood donation.



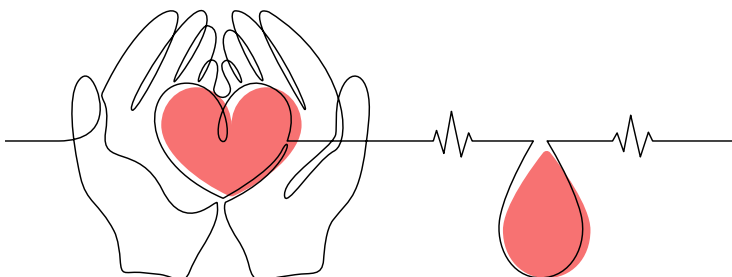
*Barrie Street has been donating blood for 68 years.  
Photo courtesy of the author.*

### YOU CAN REACH THREE PEOPLE

Each unit of what is called blood may be divided into its component parts: red cells, platelets, and plasma. Consequently, each donation has the potential to reach three patients, all the more reason to give.

### PROCEDURE FOR DONATING

You must be at least 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in good health. The whole process takes less than one hour, including the actual blood donation of about 10 minutes. You will be comfortably seated in a reclining chair. All instruments are sterile, and you are



well protected. I find that technicians are very friendly and supportive. Time passes quickly. Some people may be concerned about being pierced by a needle, but you might be surprised at how pain-free the insertion is. Finally, you will be supervised for 15 minutes and given a tasty snack and beverage.

### **ARE THERE BENEFITS FROM REGULAR BLOOD DONATIONS? YES, LOTS!**

- Encourages the creation of new blood cells and the maintenance of good health
- Linked to a healthier heart and vascular system
- May lower the chances of having a heart attack
- Can reduce blood pressure
- Can reveal potential health problems

Perhaps the most gratifying reason for donating is the overwhelming emotion of satisfaction, knowing that you have contributed to a person's life.

Blood donation and transfusion is a vital part of medicine in the treatment of hundreds of thousands of patients annually. However, donated blood lasts no longer than 42 days, and maintaining an adequate blood supply is an ongoing challenge, dependent entirely on volunteers.

Half of all Canadians will either need blood or know of someone who will need blood at some point in her life. Yet only 4% of the adult population in Canada donates. Will YOU?

I welcome any suggestions you have, and would be delighted to answer any questions at [Over50andfit.ca](http://Over50andfit.ca)

Yours in fitness,

*Barrie Street*

## **MORE INFO ON THE GIFT OF BLOOD**

### **HOW TO DONATE:**

Visit <https://myaccount.blood.ca/> to find a location near you.

### **CURRENT CRITICAL SHORTAGE:**

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/number-of-canadian-blood-donors-plummets-to-lowest-point-in-a-decade-during-covid-19-1.5944187>

### **REASONS TO DONATE:**

Visit <https://www.blood.ca/en/ways-donate/reasons-join-canadas-lifeline> to see just how important your donation will be.

### **BENEFITS TO DONOR:**

Visit <https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/news/surprising-benefits-donating-blood>

# ADVERTISEMENT

FROM THE TEACHERS' PENSION PLAN  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF EXTENDED HEALTH AND DENTAL COVERAGE THROUGH YOUR PENSION PLAN

Are you enrolled in the Green Shield Canada extended health and/or dental program offered through the Teachers' Pension Plan? The Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees wants to hear from you.

The board is currently reviewing the pension plan's retirement group health benefits program. Your voice is important to the board as it completes this review.

There will be two opportunities to provide input:

1. In October 2022, sign up for a chance to take part in a focus group or individual interview to discuss your experience and what matters most to you.
2. In 2023, take part in a membership-wide survey.

To learn more and sign up for the  
chance to participate,  
visit [tpp.pensionsbc.ca](http://tpp.pensionsbc.ca).

# CLASSIFIEDS

## ELDER DOG

ElderDog Canada supports seniors in the care of canine companions. Volunteers help with dog care activities like dog walking, basic grooming, feeding, administering medication, and transportation to and from the vet or groomer. We provide foster care when a senior is temporarily unable to care for their dog and re-homing. Vancouver Pawd provides services to the Lower Mainland at no charge.

Phone 1.855.336.4226 or visit [www.elderdog.ca](http://www.elderdog.ca)

## PRODUCTS

Anyone that uses a microwave needs a FingerSaver™.

Have you ever burned your fingers when taking a hot bowl of soup/chili/porridge out of the microwave?

It will never happen again if you use a FingerSaver, a fabric bowl that holds your food. It also acts as a tea-cozy to keep the food warm at the table.

Visit [www.spotnots.com](http://www.spotnots.com) and see the FingerSaver information after the underwear information.

## CRRTA PUBLICATION

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the BCRTA, the Campbell River RTA is publishing a photo journal of the early School District 72 schools (1893-1993). Included are photos, anecdotes from the first teachers and students and stories of our own retired teachers, elders of the three native reserves and their early schools.

The history encompasses the Discovery Islands, Phillips Arm, Sayward, Oyster River, Strathcona Park and Campbell River. Fifty contributors with 100 pictures from the archives of the Campbell River Museum, and the Cortes Island Museum.

To purchase contact Bonni Roset, CRRTA President: [crrtapresident@gmail.com](mailto:crrtapresident@gmail.com)

## NUTRITION BOOK

BCRTA CONFERENCE SPEAKER James McCormack has released his book "The Nutrition Proposition". Available as a paperback or Kindle e-book on Amazon, or visit [nutritionproposition.com](http://nutritionproposition.com)

## Events and Features

### WRITER'S WORKSHOP WAS HELD JUNE 22, VIA ZOOM

View it at [bcrtc.ca/writers](http://bcrtc.ca/writers)

### BCRTA CONFERENCE SEPT 30

Keynote speakers:

Sue Lantz and Noel Bentley

### BCRTA AGM OCT 1

# CLASSIFIEDS

## TRAVEL

### DISCOVER CUBA WITH CUBA1TOURS

Once again, cuba1tours is offering the best guided tours to the most intriguing parts of Cuba with a personal touch and excellent local guides.

All tours operate through Square1travel of Courtenay, BC, a licensed travel agency. Check out all our tours for 2022/23 at [www.cuba1tours.com](http://www.cuba1tours.com)

Contact Tom Robertson at: [tom@cuba1tours.com](mailto:tom@cuba1tours.com) or [tomcr@shaw.ca](mailto:tomcr@shaw.ca) or use the contact form on the website.

## COHOUSING

Imagine... ALL who live in your new multigenerational, environmentally sensitive, apartment building in Sechelt, are not just your neighbours - they're your FRIENDS! Rent-then-purchase in The Coastal Village – A Community-Based Neighbourhood. <https://www.thecoastalvillage.ca>

## VOLUNTEER

The Literacy Circle is seeking certified teachers to teach Indigenous elders starting their English literacy journey at elementary school levels. Classes start in September in Nanaimo, with a plan for provincial expansion. For more information and to apply, visit us at [www.theliteracycircle.ca](http://www.theliteracycircle.ca)

## ACCOMMODATION WANTED

Elementary teacher from Coquitlam, now living and teaching English in Italy, looking for accommodation in the Tri-Cities end of July through August. Two bedroom. Contact Janice [janicegayleb@gmail.com](mailto:janicegayleb@gmail.com)

## ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

France - Heritage house in Alsace-France, Vosges Mountains, three bedrooms, modern kitchen, wifi, located on wine route, close to Germany (Freiburg) and Switzerland (Basel). Cleaning included, CA\$700 per week. [mano936@gmail.com](mailto:mano936@gmail.com)

## ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

Crete, Greece: Small family hotel. Studios and Villa right on a sandy swimming beach. 7k west of Chania, short drive to villages. Fully equipped kitchens, each unit sleeps 1 to 6 guests. Wine, olive oil and fresh fruit always available. Authentic Greek hospitality. 500€-1000€ per week. Contact [mjtglenabbey@gmail.com](mailto:mjtglenabbey@gmail.com)

New Zealand November rental. \$1800. Subtropical Karikari Peninsula, Northland. Close to Bay of Islands, Cape Reinga. Historical villages, beautiful beaches and walking, nature lovers Paradise. Contact [rosemarynelson46@gmail.com](mailto:rosemarynelson46@gmail.com) or phone 250 248 6516 for more information.

## MUSIC TOUR

### VANCOUVER OPERA GUILD ESCORTED TOUR

#### MILAN-PARMA-CATANIA-PALERMO

OCTOBER 12 – 24, 2022

- Verdi Festival, Parma (5 nights) with Verdi's Simon Boccanegra, Quattro Pezzi Sacri and more
- Catania, Sicily (3 nights) Italian Opera Arias in Taormina
- Palermo, Sicily (3 nights) with Verdi's Nabucco at Teatro Massimo
- Optional: Milan and Giordano's Fedora at La Scala
- Plus sightseeing tours to Cremona, Busseto, Bologna and Agrigento

Great Expeditions 604-257-2040 or 1-800-663-3364 or [www.vancouveroperaguild.com](http://www.vancouveroperaguild.com) for more information.

## HELP WANTED

WANTED: Editor for Vancouver RTA Newsletter. The newsletter is published four times a year and covers members' news and events, contributions on a theme, reports and other items of interest to retirees. An honorarium is provided. If interested, contact [vrtapresident.e@gmail.com](mailto:vrtapresident.e@gmail.com). More details available on VRTA website <https://vrta.ca>

# crossword

## Sign Off

By David Squance, Victoria

This is the last crossword provided to PostScript by David, who passed away on June 4, 2022. Thank you, David, for sharing your genius with your colleagues. The crossword will continue. Email: [crossword@bcrrta.ca](mailto:crossword@bcrrta.ca)

### ACROSS

1. Tibetan monk
5. Nation
10. Flintstone's pet
14. Cain's brother
15. In a frenzied state
16. Adequate amount (archaic)
17. Former Japanese Prime Minister
18. Go in
19. Main room in a church
20. Feathered pet
22. Food staple in Asia
24. Typist (common short form)
25. Afternoon (abbr.)
27. Furry pet
31. Unties, as a shoe
34. Utilize
35. Applaud
39. Human energy field, in the paranormal
40. Abrupt; short
42. Furry pet
44. Questionable medication
46. Women's name
47. Biblical king
49. Long-handled garden tools
50. Skating surface
51. Tropical disease
54. Passes again and again in a race
56. Near
57. Uncertainty
62. US space program entity
64. What Emily Carr had as a pet
65. A fad pet many had in the 1970s
68. Follow
71. Marketing event
72. Racetrack shape, usually
73. Turn hair frizzy
74. Italian noble family (13th C to the 15th C)
75. Naked, as a tree in winter
76. Perspire
77. Thomas Hardy heroine

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20				21				22		23				
24						25	26		27			28	29	30
				31	32			33				34		
35	36	37	38		39					40	41			
42				43				44	45					
46						47	48				49			
50				51	52					53				
54			55				56			57	58	59	60	61
			62			63			64					
65	66	67			68		69	70			71			
72					73						74			
75					76						77			

### DOWN

1. Woolly nursery rhyme pets
2. Having to do with
3. Vulgar, French oath
4. Straighten so that edges match
5. Captain Hook's first mate
6. Beige
7. Sometime picnic spoiler
8. Level, as a wedding cake
9. To write (French)
10. First magnitude star in Cygnus
11. "I'm \_\_\_ \_\_\_ quandary", dilemma
12. A very wet month in 2021 (abbr.)
13. Have debts
21. Informal acknowledgement of 13 down
23. Throws
25. Noun form indicating more than one
26. Damage, scar
28. Small beast of burden
29. Matter in question, topic
30. Is alive with, abounds with
32. Scottish negative
33. Feathered pet
35. Person running a meeting
36. Spear
37. Lady Black of Crossharbour
38. Short form of most of BC's winter clock setting
41. Biblical verb suffix
43. City in Florida
45. Japanese sash
48. Abbreviated form of a Montreal hockey player
52. Resources; plus side of the ledger
53. Kerfuffle
55. Lower part of the leg
58. Beginning, as of a disease
59. Decree from a tsar
60. Straps; hits very hard
61. Types of chinook salmon
63. All over again
64. Racing event
65. Steal
66. Eggs
67. Train unit
69. Common acronym on motor oil
70. Elephantine neighbour (per P.E.T.)

See the crossword solution at [bcrrta.ca/crossword](http://bcrrta.ca/crossword) AFTER OCTOBER 15

# Sudoku

5		3	7	1				
		9	4					
4	7		3			2		5
		5					4	2
3	4					5		
6		8			3		2	7
					9	3		
				5	2	4		8

	6	4	2			7		5
5		1		7			9	
	3		1					8
						6		1
	2						8	
3		7						
2					1		7	
	7			6		2		9
8		3			7	1	5	

**TO SOLVE SUDOKU PUZZLES:**

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

**SEND COMPLETED PUZZLES TO:**

100 – 550 West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue,  
Vancouver BC V5Z 4P2

**FOR MORE ONLINE SUDOKU PUZZLES:**

[www.websudoku.com/](http://www.websudoku.com/)

**DEADLINE FOR SUDOKU AND CROSSWORD SUBMISSION IS:**

OCT 31, 2022

**Congratulations to the winners of the last issue. Your cheques are in the mail!**

**Crossword:**

Sharon Clement, Castlegar  
Rob MacDonald, Sooke  
Lois Marleau, Kitimat

**Sudoku:**

Marjorie Mackenzie, Pitt Meadows  
Patra Panser, Surrey  
Anne McCormick, Nanaimo

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 [twitter.com/bcrta1](https://twitter.com/bcrta1)

**SUMMER 2022 CROSSWORD SOLUTION**

1	B	L	O	C		5	E	Q	U	I	P		10	T	H	O	U	
14	E	L	S	A		15	N	U	R	S	E		16	E	O	N	S	
17	F	A	I	R		18	S	E	G	E	R		19	N	O	M	E	
20	O	M	E	E		21	U	L	E		22	S	H	A	P	E	D	
24	G	A	R	F		25	I	E	L	D		26	I	A	N			
						27	U	P	S			28	E	A	S	T		
32	P	A	U	L	A		35	L	O	A	N		37	N	O	A		
38	A	P	R			39	I	R	R			40	A	N	N			
41	R	E	S			42	S	N	A	P		43	F	E	L	I	X	
45	T	R	A	F	F	47	I	C			48	S	E	A				
						49	R	I	A		50	S	E	M	E	S	T	
55	S	C	H	I	S	M			58	T	M	I		59	T	A	R	O
60	P	L	I	E		61	E	R	R	O	L		63	E	L	E	M	
64	E	A	R	N		65	S	A	U	T	E		66	R	I	C	E	
67	E	Y	E	D		68	E	T	T	E	S		69	N	A	T	O	

## NOTICE OF 2022 AGM

**77th Annual BCRTA Annual General Meeting (9:30am)**  
called for Saturday, October 1, 2022

### *BCRTA Positions for Election*

President - 1 year term  
1st VP - 1 year term  
2nd VP - 1 year term

2 Directors (2 yrs) from outside the Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley  
1 Director (1 year only to complete a term) from outside LM and FV  
2 Directors (2 yrs) from inside the Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley  
1 Director (1 year only to complete a term) from inside the Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley

### **20th Annual General Meeting of the RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation**

(9:00am) called for Saturday, October 1, 2022

RR Smith Positions for Election  
8 Directors - 1 year terms

**This meeting will be held in person AND online.**

**Location: Vancouver Airport Hilton Hotel, Richmond, BC. Online details to follow.**



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# NOMINATION FORM FOR 2022-2023 BCRTA DIRECTOR POSITIONS (OCTOBER 1, 2022 AGM ELECTIONS)

Note that the President and the two Vice-President positions have one-year terms. All other directors have two-year terms.

Information about directors' nomination and election procedures is summarized below, along with a guide to related information contained in the BCRTA Handbook ([www.bcrt.ca](http://www.bcrt.ca)) - look under the "About Us" heading.

Nominators: (Two required. Must be Active or Life BCRTA members in good standing. Signatures on the same form are not necessary - it is acceptable for nominators to endorse the nomination of a candidate by email to [kristi@bcrt.ca](mailto:kristi@bcrt.ca))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

We nominate (please print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

(Nominee must be an Active or Life BCRTA member in good standing)  
for the position of (circle):

President      1st Vice-President      2nd Vice-President  
Director (Lower Mainland)      Director (outside Lower Mainland)      ACER-CART Representative

By signing here I affirm that I accept this nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee, please fill in the blanks below and **attach item #4** to this form.

1. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Branch membership (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
4. A curriculum vitae, preferably in item form - not to exceed 200 words - for publication in the Summary of Reports booklet (**publication submission deadline July 15th**).  
**Summarize** educator positions held, experience on executive and other committees, and why you would like to serve on the BCRTA Board of Directors.

**Please note:** Candidates do not have their expenses paid to attend the AGM unless they are elected by their branches as delegates. There are not usually any candidates' speeches at the AGM.

Acknowledgment of receipt of your nomination will be forwarded to you as soon as possible.

## **Return this form by July 15th to:**

Gerry Tiede, Nominations Chair,  
c/o BCRTA, 100-550 W. 6th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 4P2,  
or fax to (604) 871-2265, or email a scanned attachment to [<kristi@bcrt.ca>](mailto:kristi@bcrt.ca)

## **NOMINATION AND ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR BCRTA DIRECTOR POSITIONS**

**There are usually five 3-day (Mon.-Wed.) meetings of the Board of Directors each year. Most directors are asked to chair a BCRTA committee, and there is usually homework. Travel, accommodation and meal expenses are reimbursed by the BCRTA.**

In summary, you may be nominated:

- a. by completing the nomination form and your c.v., and submitting them to the office by July 15th. Your c.v. will be published in the Summary of Reports booklet; **OR**
- b. by completing the nomination form and your c.v., and submitting them to BCRTA staff after July 15th but before the day of the AGM. Your c.v. will then be distributed to the AGM delegates; **OR**
- c. by being nominated from the floor of the AGM -- whereupon you and all the other candidates for that particular position will be given two minutes to introduce yourselves.

The following refer to sections in the BCRTA Handbook, located on the BCRTA website at [www.bcrt.ca](http://www.bcrt.ca)

### Handbook Section B. Bylaws:

- 2.16 Member not in good standing
- 2.7 Rights of Active and Life Members
- 6.1 Number of directors
- 6.2 Eligibility to become a director
- 6.3 Election of directors
- 6.9 Limits on directors' terms in office
- 6.10 Board of Directors Meetings
- 6.11 Powers and Responsibilities of Directors

### Handbook Section C. Procedures:

- 4.6.2 Pre-AGM nomination procedures for Director positions
- 5. Duties of Directors

### Handbook Section E. Rules of Order:

- 8.4 Nominations from the floor
- 8.5.3 Voting in elections
- 8.5.4 Order of the elections
- 8.5.5 Balloting rules

# BCRTA DELEGATES TO THE 2023 BCTF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOMINATION FORM

The BC Teachers' Federation holds its AGM each year during the March spring break. A block of time during the AGM is normally set aside for debating recommendations and resolutions relating to pensions. The BCRTA sends a number of delegates to participate and vote in the "in-committee" consideration of those motions. Our delegation consists of BCRTA directors and BCRTA members elected at the BCRTA Annual General Meeting—to be held online on October 1, 2022.

To be elected as a BCRTA delegate to the BCTF AGM, you must be an **active or life member of the BCRTA, and a member or honorary associate member of the BCTF**. If you were a BCTF member when you retired, you are almost certainly an honorary associate BCTF member now. If you are unsure, you should contact the BCTF to check. (Google "BCTF" to get phone nos. etc.)

**A background of past membership on a BCTF or local association Pensions Committee is a requirement**, and experience on BCRTA or Branch executive or other committees would also be helpful. If elected you may be asked to attend a pre-AGM session to become familiar with the issues. You should be prepared to go to a microphone at the BCTF AGM to speak for or against a motion if the opportunity presents itself and to stay until the end of the Pensions section of the BCTF AGM agenda.

Filling in and submitting this form will result in your name being added to the list of candidates on the **BCRTA Delegates to the BCTF AGM ballot** used in the elections at our BCRTA AGM, scheduled for October 1, 2022. Nominees do not have their expenses paid to attend our BCRTA AGM unless they are delegates. You will be notified after our AGM if you are elected. If elected, your expenses will be paid to attend the **BCTF AGM**.



# BCRTA DELEGATES TO THE MARCH 2023 BCTF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOMINATION FORM

Must be in the hands of BCRTA staff by 5 p.m. on September 30, 2022.

Name (please print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by 2 BCRTA members (email notice of your nomination from nominator to kristi@bcrtc.ca is also acceptable):

Nominator (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are applying see note above and outline your pensions experience through positions you have held and/or work you have done in the BCTF and/or BCRTA:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to: BCRTA, 100 – 550 W 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4P2, or email scanned copy to kristi@bcrtc.ca

# 2022-2023 BCRTA COMMITTEES - APPLICATION FORM

DEADLINE for receipt of applications: October 1, 2022

BCRTA committees meet 5 times a year during a 2-day period prior to each Board of Directors meeting. Some meetings are held electronically and in-person meetings are held in Vancouver. Appointments are made at a post-AGM Board of Directors meeting, and terms are two years. Members may serve on any one committee for up to a maximum of 4 consecutive years (i.e., two 2-year terms). Travel, accommodation and meal expenses are reimbursed.

To learn more, see a description of BCRTA Committee activities and responsibilities [www.bcrta.ca/committee-profiles](http://www.bcrta.ca/committee-profiles)

Members are expected to sit on one or two committees, as selected by the committee chairs. For further information see the **Handbook** on our website ([www.bcrta.ca](http://www.bcrta.ca)), and look in "Section C-Procedures", parts 7 and 8.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch, if any: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominated by two BCRTA members in good standing:** (email notice from nominator to [kristi@bcrta.ca](mailto:kristi@bcrta.ca) is acceptable)

Nominator (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

The BCRTA Committees are:

COMMUNICATIONS    EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION    HERITAGE    MEMBERSHIP

PENSIONS & BENEFITS (A pensions background, e.g., in the BCTF or a local, is **required**.)

WELL-BEING    [The FINANCE, ADVOCACY and PERSONNEL Committees are Directors only]

**Please list in order of preference:**

Committee Applying for: #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you be a good choice for this committee? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Committee Applying for: #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you be a good choice for this committee? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Committee Applying for: #3 \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you be a good choice for this committee? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Outline positions held and/or the work you have done in your branch: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Note: All applicants will be informed of the Directors' decisions concerning appointments.**

# Obituaries

Location listed is the area given as "last taught"



---

Angelomatis, Alex	Vancouver	Ebbeson, Darla	Cariboo-Chilcotin
Atkey, Marion L.	Delta	Einarson, Patrick D.	Coquitlam
Baker, Kenneth	Boundary	Fahlman, Grant	Langley
Baldock, Lynette	Delta	Frank, Shirley	Revelstoke
Barrieau, Helen	North Vancouver	Frier, William J	Cowichan
Blair, Gordon L.	Burnaby	Gatenby, Colleen	Quesnel
Bloomenthal, Clarice	Saanich	Giesbrecht, Elizabeth	Abbotsford
Bonkowski, Helga	Nanaimo	Graham, Lenore P. F.	Richmond
Brandback, Richard L.	Nanaimo	Guerin, James Joseph	Nanaimo
Bridal, Carolyn	Vancouver	Halsted, Arthur	Wine Country
Buchanan, Constance M.	Summerland	Hameister, Roxine J.	Nanaimo
Bulat, Gwen	Mission	Harrison, Florence	Kamloops
Campbell, Judy G.	Castlegar	Holmes, Candace	Campbell River
Christopherson, Lloyd M	Summerland	Huey, N. Diane	Princeton
Coffin, Dolores	Abbotsford	Jacobsen, E. D.	Saanich
Dye, Stephanie	Vancouver	Kujawa, David	Coquitlam

Kulai, Derek M.	Cowichan	Squance, David	SE Kootenay
Linley, Michael F. K.	Grand Forks	St Dennis, Inez A.	Saanich
MacKenzie, Margaret	Victoria	Thomas, Patrick H.	Vancouver
MacLeod, Marina M.	S. Okanagan	Tosdevin, Marjorie M.	Burnaby
Manning, David C.	Howe Sound	Van Dolah, Ronald L	Vanderhoof
McDonnell, S. Lindsay	Burnaby	Walters, Ken S.	Vancouver
McDonough, Travis W.	Powell River	Wareing, Sheila	Vancouver
Mckinnon, G. L. (Les)	Vancouver	Webb, Louise M.	Penticton
McLeod, Kathleen H.	C. Okanagan	White, Donna	Campbell River
Neufeld, Maria-luise	Vancouver	Woods, W. John	New Westminster
Parkinson, Irene H	Victoria	Yirka, Brenda	Powell River
Rikkinen, Cheryl G	Vancouver	Zilber, Alice	Surrey
Robinson, Joyce L.	Burnaby		
Scott, M Maureen	Coquitlam		
Shogren, Harvey A.	Prince George		
Sindell, Phyllis G.	North Vancouver		

# SENIORS IN THE MARKETPLACE

## HOW TO CREATE AN AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS

Canada's senior population now exceeds the number of children aged 14 and under for the first time ever. In British Columbia, over 650,000 residents are aged 65 and over. This vibrant and active group not only has a lot of purchasing power, they've also got plenty of time to shop.

## ADVANTAGES OF RUNNING AN AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS

Catering to this older class of consumers isn't just good business, it's an increasing necessity in modern business. And, while most older people are healthy, independent individuals, there are still steps you can take to make the experience more comfortable for them. Doing so will see your customer base increase, your revenues will rise, and you'll earn a reputation as a community-minded entrepreneur. To help you get started, here are some tips for creating an age-friendly business.

### THINK ACCESSIBILITY

Some senior citizens face the reality of limited mobility daily. Consider how these people access your business. Do they have to climb stairs? Access will become much easier for seniors if you offer the following:

- Ramps, sturdy railings and non-slip surfaces.
- Wider aisles free from clutter that could inhibit walkers or wheelchairs
- Automatic doors or doors that easily open

### MAKING THINGS COMFORTABLE

Providing a more comfortable shopping experience isn't just good for seniors. It makes your place of business more hospitable for pregnant women and people with disabilities. Consider offering ample seating for customers to avail of while waiting. All chairs should have arms (for customers who need to push themselves up), while you should also offer an easily accessible customer washroom. Are your counters or cash registers accessible for customers in wheelchairs? If not, consider making this important investment.

### SIGHT AND SOUND

Not all your customers are going to have 20/20 vision or perfectly clear hearing. Offer facilities for those with poor sight or hearing so customers will always be aware of their surroundings. Make sure your premises are well lit and all signage is clear and understandable. Staff training should include how to handle customers with vision or hearing challenges. Do you play music in your place of business? This can be disorientating for customers with hearing challenges.

### RESPECT

The good news is, becoming a business that promotes respect won't cost you a cent. Ensure staff are trained not to treat older customers impatiently or dismissively. Avoid condescending behaviours, be patient, friendly and able to identify if someone is in medical distress. Ensure your staff know how to recognize the signs a person needs help or is being physically or financially abused. For more information on how to spot this issue, visit the SeniorsBC website.

### ASK YOUR CUSTOMERS

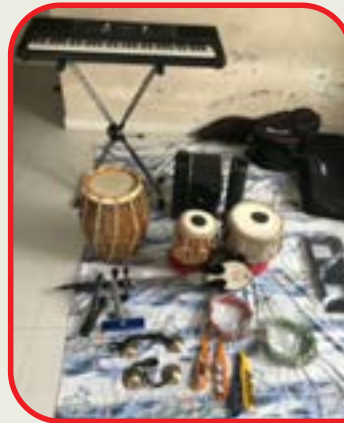
The easiest way to find out what changes are needed is to simply ask your client base. Don't just limit your questioning to current customers which fit the older demographic, ask all age ranges. What one older person may not see as an obstacle, a younger person may think of when considering a someone they know.

Source: <https://smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-to-create-an-age-friendly-business/>



This year the R.R. Smith Board of Directors approved over \$47,000 in grants to worthy organizations. Every cent of R. R. Smith membership fees collected were spent in funding educational projects.

The R.R. Smith Memorial Foundation Fund dispenses funds to Canadian registered charitable groups operating in BC and in developing countries. One of the recipients this year was the Families for Children group. They purchased instruments for their children in care, to learn to play. The faces on these children tells the story of how much they appreciate the funding!



R.R. Smith members give \$2 per year to the foundation. If you wish to give additional funds to the R. R. Smith Fund, you can donate on-line at [www.vancitycommunityfoundations.ca](http://www.vancitycommunityfoundations.ca)

Click “funds” at the top, type R. R. Smith in ‘search’ area, click on “R.R. SMITH COMMUNITY FUND”, click on “give to this fund” and fill in details. Donations receive a tax receipt immediately.



Another way to support the fund is to use the ‘Enjoy the Journey’ trips. Troy Oppen of Enjoy Travels provides a small amount of money to the R.R. Smith Foundation when you take one of their trips and say you are an R.R. Smith member when you book your trip. Visit [www.enjoythejourney.ca](http://www.enjoythejourney.ca)



**Learn more at [www.rrsmith.ca](http://www.rrsmith.ca)**



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