



Victoria Branch Newsletter

B.C. Government Retired Employees Association

Editor: Carol Cullimore

April 2011

CHAIR'S REPORT

Spring has definitely sprung and it's such a delight to see colorful blooms in Victoria. This winter has been quite dreary and wet. Pacific Blue Cross has been invited to speak at our May meeting. I'm sure many of you will be interested in this presentation. This meeting will be held in Kitty's Hideaway (Banquet Room). All of us received the Communiqué from the Pension Board of Trustees about the changes to post retirement benefits and Trustees have already asked Pacific Blue Cross to work out a plan for spouses and dependents.

The annual Directors' meeting was held in Tsawwassen on March 23. Our counsel, Albert Peeling, spoke about the class action lawsuit (look under Lawsuit and Related Activity). Past President, Lawrence Johnson, answered questions. He continues to serve the rest of his term as a Trustee. For those of you who have access to computers, the Pension Corporation has a Questions & Answers page on their website. You can visit this by entering pensionsbc.ca and clicking on Post Retirement Group Benefits Information.

All directors expressed deep concern about the changes announced for April 1, 2012. Linda Posacreta of the Better Business Bureau held our interest with a rousing talk about scams and the objectives of their Bureau. The Bureau has been in business since 1912 and will celebrate its 100th year of service next year. The mainland branch looks after the interior and Yukon but not the Peace area or the Kootenays since they are close to the Alberta border and tend to shop there. The Bureau receives approximately 80,000 calls per month by way of phone and fax. January brings in a large number of complaints about cell phone contracts and February complaints are about florists. There are 10 top scams; door to door, not so free trial offers, anti-social network (i.e. being targeted on face book or twitter), advance free

loans, relative scam (targeting grandparents), obtaining money through money transfers and direct debit, business opportunities, business directory scams and overpayment scams. Please, please, please don't give your SIN# out over the phone; don't give out your PIN# and guard it when using it publicly. Did you know that it's illegal to charge a fee when lending money (Payday lenders) and it's illegal to lend money? Yet we have payday lenders all around us. Linda urges each of us to get a credit report annually from Equifax (toll free 1 800 465 7166 or www.equifax.ca or from TransUnion Canada (toll free 1 866 525 0262 or www.tuc.ca . Beware of Identity Theft. Apparently it's the hardest to recover from!!

See you at general meetings and/or our summer lunch.

Sarjit Manhas, Chair

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Christmas Luncheon 2010 Door Prize Winners

Anita Malkiewicz; Bryan Warburton; Mary Martino; Barb West; Erna Klingspohn; Marion Kemp; Ted Bowles; Gerry Gerrard; Mary Csordas; Jerry Jasper; Berte Marr; Jocelyn Wanless; Myrna Soutar; Sylvia Kerr; Vicki White; Joyce Marshall; Al Limacher; Marjorie Baliston; Bill Dexter; Vic Marshall; Hajji Charnia.

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LAWSUIT AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Albert Peeling advised that the decision of Madame Justice Dorgan was appealed. Factum and related documents were filed and the court dates for the appeal hearing are set for 3 days – June 1, 2 and 3 in the Appellate Court, Vancouver.

Speaking briefly on the Pension Board of Trustees' communiqué and proposed changes for post-retirement benefits, he stated that from the perspective of the law, nothing has happened yet and counsel is not in a position to say whether there will be any kind of legal action taken. Some of the changes could be affected by the outcome of the appeal.

The judgement following the hearing may not be handed down for at least 8 – 10 months.

Sarjit Manhas, Chair

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BCGREA TREASURER'S REPORT

Income to date	\$6,248
Expense to date	\$6,546
Current Account Balance	(\$298)
TOTAL CASH ON HAND	
Current account	\$ 2,283
Term Deposits	<u>\$17,491</u>
TOTAL	\$19,774

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TELEPHONE AND EMAIL REPORT

I would like to thank the 16 members, who are currently phoning the members advising them of our meetings. We also contact members by e-mail, and I would like to thank these people for providing their emails. It makes a big job a lot easier. If you have not been contacted by either the phone committee or by email, please contact me at 250-384-3481 or by email at djasper@shaw.ca and I will add your name to our listings.

Thank you – Dale Jasper

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LUNCHEONS

The Christmas Luncheon was held at Kitty's Hideaway Restaurant, Banquet Room on December 14, 2010. We had 117 members attend and as at previous luncheons at Kitty's the food was very good and the staff was very friendly and helpful. Thank you to those of you that attended for donating over \$450 and some canned goods which were turned over to Our Place.

It was very obvious at the Christmas Luncheon that our members love desserts. As a result by the time the last members got up to get theirs there wasn't much left. Please think about those that are following you in the lineup and leave a bit for them. There really is plenty for everyone.

The June luncheon will be held at Kitty's on June 14, 2011. The doors will be open at 11:30, lunch is buffet style and there will be a cash bar if you wish to have a glass of wine or other liquid refreshment with your lunch. Tea and coffee is included with lunch. Kitty's is located next to the Vacation Inn, 3020 Douglas Street. Tickets are \$21 per person and can be purchased at the General Meetings in April and May, 2011. A cheque made payable to BCGREA for the number of tickets required could also be mailed to: Carol Cullimore, 1906 San Pedro Avenue, Victoria, BC V8N 2G8. **Please remember to enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope if you send a cheque.**

June 8 is the deadline for buying tickets for the luncheon.

We will once again take up a collection for "Our Place" as help is needed all year around by them. Cash works the best for Our Place as they have more buying power with cash.

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GOODWILL COMMITTEE

If you know of any member who is hospitalized, sick, ill or injured, please let Archie know at 250-477-3191 or mahwoo@shaw.ca.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS with GUEST SPEAKERS and EVENTS

Location and time of regular meetings is noted on the back page. We normally have a short (less than half hour) meeting followed by a guest speaker. At the end there is always time during coffee and tea (and really nice "goodies") to talk to the speakers. We would like to thank our guest speakers: Jim Anderson for his talk on BC Parks 100th anniversary; Lisa and Lynde from Johnson Inc.; Martha and Jo-Anne from Camosun College; and Bev from the Canada Revenue Agency. Their talks were very interesting and informative.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 – CRD Regional Parks – Nancie Dohan of the Visitor Services and Community Development, CRD Regional Parks will talk on walking trails and new and updated parks in the CRD (Capital Regional District).

Tuesday, May 11, 2011 – Please note that in order to accommodate a larger group, this event will be held in Kitty's banquet room (in the Vacation Inn) next door to our regular meeting hall. – Pacific Blue Cross – Brenda Dixon will give an overview of the PSPP EHC and Voluntary Dental plans as well as their individual travel products. Agenda will also include election of officers.

Tuesday, June 14, 2011 – Luncheon at Kitty's Hideaway.

Tuesday, September 13, 2011 – Better Business Bureau – Rosalind Scott will speak on the services of the BBB including watching out for scams, etc.

Tuesday, October 11, 2011 – Life Members recognition – speaker TBA.

Tuesday, November 8, 2011 – Our guest speaker will be from the B.C. Securities Commission speaking on their services including financial education and investor scams.

Tuesday, December 13, 2011 – Christmas Luncheon at Kitty's Hideaway

If you know of a nice speaker on just about any topic that you think other members like yourself would like to hear, please contact the Program Committee, Vic Marshall at 250-384-7812 or vicmarshall@shaw.ca .

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MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

It has been a busy year as the Membership Director. Our membership remains strong but the numbers are shrinking. Last year at this time our membership was 2,062 and currently we are 2,044 strong. If you know of a colleague or former co-worker who has or is soon to retire why not mention to them the benefits of joining the BCGREA or directing them to the website.

While too numerous to list here we have had 77 members pass away in the last 12 months. Just as we take a minute at each meeting to remember those who have passed, let's take a moment here to do the same Rest in Peace!

Address or Personal information changes?

Has your address, telephone number, and/or email address changed? Please ensure that you forward the changes to my attention at 250-744-4275 or kccruickshank@gmail.com .

It is also very important for you to remember to notify the Pension Corporation of any changes.

Are you presently paying your annual membership dues by cheque? Renewals for 2011 are well underway. If you don't currently pay your dues by having them deducted annually from your February pension cheque you should have received a renewal notification either by email or conventional Canada Post. Contact me if you haven't been notified and/or if you wish to change over to automatic deduction 2012. Thank you for your consideration.

Ken Cruickshank
Membership Chair

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NEWSLETTER

With a view to cutting postal costs, your executive has decided to post the Victoria Branch newsletter on the web at www.bcgrea.com . If we have your email address to send you notices you will be informed when the newsletter is available on the web. If you do not use email you will receive your newsletter by Canada Post as usual.