

**NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA BRANCH
OF THE B C RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

THE TRUANT

President's Message

"Act as it what you do makes a difference. It does". William James

As in the past 10 years for me, it is difficult not to think that PNE time, the last event before getting organised for school, signals new and different challenges for all of us in retirement. With a provincial election less than a year from now, it is time to take stock of where we are as seniors and to get involved to ensure that seniors' issues form an important part of the election. We can't afford to sit back and let others take the lead on issues that are important to them without promoting our own cause. Earlier in August your executive met to discuss what the future directions and activities will be for the DRTA this 2016/17 year.

We are very pleased to have the Provincial Seniors' Coordinator, Isobel Mackenzie, as our speaker at the September 14th luncheon at the Town and Country. Also confirming their return is BTO, the Backer Turner group of retired teachers for the Christmas lunch. As we no longer have a phoning committee please email (pat.thiesen@gmail.com) or phone me 604 943 1817 your intention to come to lunch. Any positive response will be considered a confirmation as we need to set our numbers with the hotel before the preceding weekend. I hope you all enjoy the final days of summer and I look forward to seeing you at the luncheon

Patricia Thiesen

Town and Country Inn - September 14th 2016

11.30 for 12 noon - Members and Guests \$30

Please contact Pat Thiesen for your place at the luncheon

Thanks to the BCRTA office for help in producing this newsletter.

DELTA RETIRED TEACHERS' EXECUTIVE 2016/2017

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Submissions for Truant to sscribe@telus.net please!

DRTA Executive Board Meeting, August 10th 2016

Five of us met around a table at the Delta Manor Educational Centre in Ladner. This building is undergoing quite the renovation and the second floor is being redesigned as office space and meeting rooms are now at ground level. Even the entryway has been spruced up.

We looked at the agenda, and added nothing. Angelika had our finances all squared away and what comes in, goes out. Our two scholarship winners each received \$1000 and they are Ravneet Kahlon from North Delta and Sophie Burk from Seaquam. There will be a photograph and write up for the local papers. The criteria for choosing our scholarship recipients will be written up so that we can use it in future years.

Angelika will attend a special session for branch treasurers at the upcoming BCRTA AGM in September and suggestions will be made then regarding fund raising as well as any other changes where money and branches are concerned. Our new fee structure of \$38 to the BCRTA and \$2 for R R Smith will also be on the agenda for a vote.

Pat had a list of former teachers in Delta who had not joined our local branch although they had joined the BCRTA. Discussion as to how we might encourage them to join us, and what methods we might use. Those teachers retiring from Delta this year have their names on lists which are not available to us because of privacy reasons. So no welcome mat out this year as has been printed in previous newsletters. Peter thought a face book page might be a good place to start and the BCRTA communications committee has plans along that line as well.

We will need help on the doors for the Christmas lunch and Peter will twist a few arms. We have booked our musical group again. Dates were set for the next lunches, September 14th and December 14th for 2016, and May 10th for 2017. Pat has asked Isobel Mackenzie to speak in September, and she will also have a hand out regarding falls.

Please encourage all former retired Delta teachers to come and join us - being social keeps us young! Sheila Gair, secretary.

President's Column

I view my report to you as a way to let you know about the activities of the BCRTA since the last Truant, as well as what I have been doing as it relates to you as members. With that goal, I hope that you are getting the latest e-mail issues of Liaison Priorities whose aim is to keep you up-dated on the various BCRTA committees' activities. If you aren't receiving them, you can access the LP through the BCRTA website (www.bcrta.ca) or requesting a printed copy by calling Kristi at the BCRTA office (604 871-2260). As I wrote in the last Truant, the commitment of those elected to the committees is exceptional.

I had the opportunity in May to attend the 25th Annual Gerontology Conference held at the Vancouver campus of SFU. The focus for this year's conference was reviewing current issues and future innovations relating to late life; research-based studies on housing, aging in place, dying at home, physician assisted dying, dementia and family effects, social isolation and loneliness. One of the more interesting sessions was Substitute and Supported Decision Making as it relates to information about and for the elderly in our society. If you want to view the content (videos and power points) of the conference, go to the SFU Department of Gerontology website (www.sfu.ca/grc/friesen/Friesen2016.html)).

At one time in the not-so-distant past, the Truant was a much more interactive publication. We were able to keep up-to-date on the travellers amongst us, activities were promoted, and other members (not just the editor, Sheila Gair and the President) wrote the articles. To try to bring back more interaction, I would like to suggest a few new column ideas which are

member driven, such as a recipes column designed to generate meal ideas for 1 or 2 people, a book (or movie) review column, and/or a places-to-go column, or whatever you think/opinion column. Let me know if you think this is something I should pursue.

Information as well as requests for help come to me more frequently now that other organizations have become aware of the power of volunteers (and retired teachers are a terrific source for people of commitment who have an unbelievably wide array of issues and causes). [You should find Val Windsor's article about one avenue in which to get involved included in this issue.] As a result of wanting to dispense these requests, and getting information to you, our 2nd VP, Peter Scurr, Treasurer, Angelika Medley, and I have been discussing the possibility of getting a DRTA website into operation. Because our collective knowledge about the process is limited, we are looking for members who would like to get involved to guide, assist, create, develop, and whatever may be needed for us to get the project underway. If you are interested, please contact us.

At the DRTA AGM in May, Angelika, Meriel Ahrahamson and I were elected as Delta Reps, to the BCRTA's AGM again being held in Richmond. Part of the focus will be dealing with issues relating to Canada's Health Care System. My report of the AGM will be in the next Truant. Immediately following the RTA's event, Angelika and I are heading down the road to this year's COSCO conference. Its focus will be promoting "Aging Well".

I hope that I can get more excited about being a member of the DRTA and by getting you more involved could lead to a more vital organization that fits what you want it to be.
Pat

WELCOME ABOARD!

While it isn't possible to list off our new retirees as we have done before, there may be one or two of you reading this newsletter who might benefit from a few words of advice from those who have gone before. Enjoy life to the full was one piece of advice, and reach out to avoid isolation. Explore your options and don't put off doing what you want - time flies! We've all heard that before. Keep active but 'treat' yourself frequently - it's well deserved after many years of dedication. Why not start that business you have toyed with over the years?

Keep in touch and maintain relationships with teachers and administrators - read those novels you haven't had time for through the years, and volunteer somewhere. Recycle your 'teacher' stuff and avoid discovering silver fish! If you travel make sure you cover yourself -Johnson has paid claims for at least five people this past year - and don't stop learning - try Elder College.

Summer Trivia Quiz.

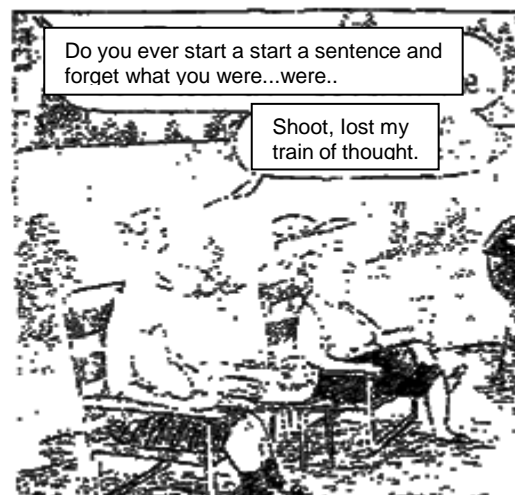
1. Antigua and Barbuda lie in which sea?
2. How was choreographer Berkeley William Enos better known?
3. What part of the eye gives it colour?
4. 'Sunday in the Park with George' is based on which painting?
5. What North American country enacted the War Powers Act to quell the Separatist Rebellion of 1970?
6. Which politician said 'read my lips: no new taxes'?
7. Aruba maintains the strongest ties to which European country?
8. John Jacob Astor died on the maiden voyage of which ship?
9. A baby rabbit is called what?
10. What did Neil Armstrong say immediately before 'the eagle has landed'?

BECOME A VOLUNTEER TUTOR

The Learning Disabilities Association, Fraser South Chapter seeks volunteers to become literacy or math tutors to a child aged 7 to 13 in an after school program. You would work one on one with a student twice a week for 14 weeks. Locations are in Surrey, Langley and Delta. Commitment would be from October 3rd to December 15th, two weeknights per week. You must attend a personal interview and all training dates. If interested please contact Hayah at 604 591 5156 Mon/Thursday 9 to 4 Email info@ldafs.org and the website is www.idafs.org.

SALMON CANNERIES ON-LINE EXHIBIT

The manager of the Audience Engagement at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Shannon King, is looking for feedback from teachers regarding a bilingual virtual museum exhibit which will document the fish canneries of coastal BC. A teacher advisory committee will be established to oversee this project aimed at students at the grade nine level. The committee will address multiculturalism, technology and change and environmental issues. If interested please contact Shannon at 604 664 9282 or Shannon.king@gogcannery.org.



Preventing Falls

I'm writing this article more as a reminder to myself, but also to clarify to you some of the things we don't always think about until an incident has occurred. One of our favourite members had a fall earlier this year when she was descending her basement stairs. Luckily she was found and not too seriously injured, but her recovery has been slow and painful. She told me she thought she had reached the bottom step and began to walk to her destination when she was one step above the bottom. It's an easy thing to do. Since I don't know when, and probably because I like numbers. I count my way up and down the stairs (I have 14 steps up in my house) and often count how many stairs are in other homes and facilities. Safeco Field is a great place to practice counting - sections of 20+ stairs. 3 or more times per level. Good exercise as well. I hope you give some thought to the information gleaned from the Canada Health people.

Anyone can fall, but the risk of falling becomes greater with age. There are a number of simple steps you can take in and around your home to help prevent falls and the injuries caused by falling.

Every year, one in three Canadian seniors will fall at least once. Hip fractures are the most common type of fall injury among seniors, and about 20 percent of injury-related deaths among seniors can be traced back to a fall.

Factors that can increase your risk of falling include poor balance, decreased muscle and bone strength, reduced vision or hearing and unsafe conditions in and around your home.

Nearly half of all injuries among seniors happen at home. The bathroom and stairs are particularly dangerous areas. However, you can prevent falls by making adjustments to your home and lifestyle, and by making sure you eat well, stay fit, and use whatever devices you may need to help keep you safe.

Here are some suggestions to help you prevent in-home falls.

In the bathroom:

Use a rubber bath mat for the tub and shower. Install the mat when the tub is dry.

Install grab bars by the toilet and bath to help you sit and stand.

Use a bath seat in the shower and a raised toilet seat, if you need them.

Wipe up any moisture or spills right away.

In the living room and bedroom:

- Reduce clutter. Get rid of loose wires, cords and other obstacles.
- Consider using a cordless phone so you will not have to rush to answer it.
- Have good lighting throughout the house and install nightlights.
- Make sure the path is clear between the bedroom and bathroom.
- Scatter mats are tripping hazards. Get rid of them or make sure they are non-slip.
- Move slowly out of your bed or chair. Getting up suddenly can make you dizzy.

In the kitchen:

- Store kitchen supplies and pots and pans in easy-to-reach locations.
- Store heavy items in lower cupboards.
- Use a stable step stool with a safety rail for reaching high places.
- Always wipe up spills immediately to prevent slipping.
- If you use floor wax. use the non-skid kind.
- Ask for help with tasks that you feel you cannot do safely on your own.

Around stairways:

- Make sure your stairs are well lit.
- Have solid handrails on both sides of the stairway.
- Remove your reading glasses when you go up or down stairs.
- Never rush up or down your stairs. Rushing is a major cause of falls.

Around the exterior of your home:

- Keep front steps and walkways in good repair and free of snow, ice and leaves.
- Keep the front entrance well-lit.
- Put gardening implements and other tools away when you are not using them.

Other considerations for your well-being and fall-resistance include maintaining **good nutrition** to help keep up your strength, resistance and sense of balance. Do not skip meals. It can make you weak and dizzy, which will increase your risk of falling. **Stay active.** Do what you can to maintain your flexibility, balance and strength. Start slowly and build up until you accumulate a total of 30-60 minutes of moderate physical activities on most days. A few short exercise sessions during the day are as valuable as one longer session.

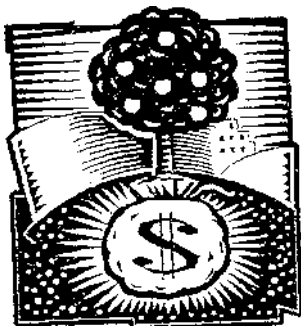
Use Medication Wisely. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about the possible side-effects of combining prescription drugs with over-the-counter remedies, natural health products, or

foods and juices. If your medication makes you dizzy or sleepy, adjust your activities to prevent the risk of falling. Natural health products can have potent effects on the body. While the intent is for positive health effects, there is also the potential for side effects. Therefore, before you take any self-selected or over-the-counter product, including a natural health product, you should take steps to be sure it is the correct product for you. Also, ask your doctor whether or not you can drink alcohol with the medications you are taking. Alone or in combination with drugs, the misuse of alcohol can cause falls. **Use Safety Aids.** Use devices that can help keep you safe and active. Wear your glasses and hearing aid. Consider using a walker or cane. If using a cane, make sure it is the correct height and has a rubber tip for safety. If you will be walking on icy roads or paths, consider using grippers on your boots and a special ice-cap for your cane with cleats to prevent it from sliding. Ask your health care provider about other devices that can make your life safer and easier. **If you fall,** try to land on your buttocks to prevent more serious injuries. Make sure you are not injured before you try to get up or let others help you. Also, do not let the fear of falling again prevent you from being active. Inactivity creates an even greater risk of falling.

I hope this information helps you and other members lead longer, fall-free days. Pat



MONEY MATTERS



Many of us own our own homes now. Mortgages were paid through the years and thankfully paid off. Our house is our biggest asset, and for many the legacy we will leave our children. The real estate bubble that has grown over the last year has been quite incredible. A year ago I was constantly barraged by real estate agents, and had two or three leaflets in my mailbox daily. I made a rather tongue in cheek comment to my offspring in a letter stating that if somebody was on the step with a cheque for a million dollars I might think about it.

Well that time has come, with three immediate neighbours selling for over a million each, and two more listings on the block, for over two million. Am I happy with that - well, sort of, but I have no plans to move. I like my house, my family are all near so why would I want to move. I almost feel like putting a sign at the end of the driveway stating 'I ain't movin' folks!'

The government's move to slap a 15% tax on foreign buyers sounded good - but was done too quickly. Those with deals already half finished should have been grandfathered - I wonder how many people who have already made an offer on a new home, have found their signed deal has fallen victim, been cancelled and the domino effect has hit innocent sellers.

Have your taxes increased? Mine are up \$20 a month over last year which I can cope with. I

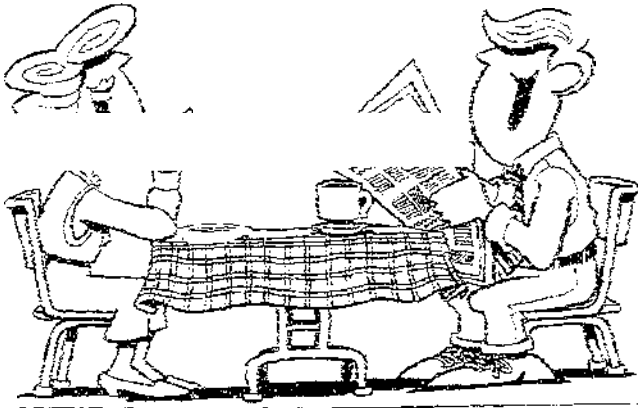
see our utilities are creeping up, but our gas at the pump is lower. I pat myself on the back many times for choosing teaching as a career and bless our pensions - I can live comfortably on mine. My childhood and growing up in the war years has helped - I look at everything twice and never use spare time as an excuse to shop. The Sun has a half page once a week devoted to what's in the stores. The fashion spread the other day had shoes that were over \$900 and a purse which was \$3129! I would ask if people really did spend that much, and of course the answer is yes. As a former baker I checked out the baking items recently - a cookie sheet was \$150, a tartlet pan \$30 and a rolling pin \$29.99. I'll bet those of you rolling pastry have had that pin in the kitchen drawer for much of your married/adult life!

Safeway is advertising - not doing so well under the Sobey's banner - and one advertisement states 'better meat at lower prices every day' so why when I looked at the boxes of bulk chicken breasts, usually \$32 and often on sale for \$26 (which is when I buy) -they were \$39?

I sent a small donation to the Heart and Stroke foundation and they sent me a scarf. I don't wear scarves and wondered what it cost - why not use donations for the research - and that goes for the notebooks, note pads, pens and address labels that come. They must cost something, along with the administration and overhead costs.

Remember school supplies? When my four started school the supplies were provided, but grade seven had to be paid for. Then free supplies were gone and I remember the days of heading to the Army and Navy in New Westminster with our lists, gathering up notebooks and HB pencils, and if there was some money, crayons and paints and pencil boxes. I heard an ad the other day and it was for an \$800 computer, and another was for a cell phone. Even some of those compulsory back packs cost a mint.

OVER THE GARDEN FENCE



My usual column start for the last several issues has been the one where we send our condolences to the family of loved ones who have passed. This month we note the death of Reg Rainbow in May. With all of us growing older we have to expect sad news every once in a while, but a full page in the Postscript came as a shock.

Thank you to David Wei for your photo which I used in the last Postscript.

I keep in touch with Bonnie Chapman in Grand Forks where she and her husband, Norman, a retired Surrey teacher, have started a craft brewery, growing their own hops and building a brew house. They have been looking after a neighbour's sheep while they are away, but don't need any meat this time as there is still some in the freezer.

I also keep in touch with ex Devon Gardens teachers and we eat lunch together every couple of months. I met with Marianne Skonnard and Betty Williams yesterday and had hoped that Betty would write me an account of her three weeks in the Ukraine in July, when she went with other Canadian teachers to help with the professional day of the teachers of English over there.

One hundred teachers were gathered and each of the visiting volunteers had ten within a

group. Betty said that teaching adults was vastly different from the primary grades here, but she was determined to do her best. She was billeted with a young teacher and found each and every day something which made her realise how lucky she was to live here in Canada.

This conversation took me back to the three summers I spent in Prague with the group put together by Alex Juk - you readers will know who you are. We lived in student residences, where two of us shared a small two bed suite with a communal kitchen, shower and toilet. There was a minute frig and a two burner hotplate - and the shower had coat hangers strung across the rail to hold our laundry -which I did in the kitchen sink.

We took a lot of food with us - dry packed meals, rice, instant soups, pasta and crackers and peanut butter. Shopping took an afternoon with travel by bus, tram and sometimes train, and you bought only what you could carry. I guess I went to bed thinking back on the city and the people and places we visited for I dreamed of it last night! I'm so glad I had the opportunity to travel and see Europe - wouldn't have the energy today!

Peter Scurr is asking for class photos for his posters announcing the lunches and I have dug out several. Perhaps you could let him have one or two at the next luncheon as well? Sheila

Trivia Quiz Answers:

1. Caribbean Sea
2. Busby Berkely
3. The iris
4. Sunday Afternoon on the island of La Grande Jatte
5. Canada
6. George H W Bush
7. The Netherlands
8. TheTitanic
9. Kit or kitten
10. Tranquility Base Here.

I wonder who came up with the rather pointless ten minutes on one local radio station called Punctuation Pickle? Do you really care how you pronounce advertisement, or how your best buddy does? Surely there is enough news to fill that gap?

I am fascinated as I am sure many are, by Donald Trump - his hair, his shouting and that index finger wagged constantly at all the naughty people in front of him. What comes out of that mouth is simply astounding at times and so obviously fiction that one wonders where his advisors are, or if indeed there are any left! Surely there is a clear thinking Republican somewhere who realises that this campaign is off the rails, and somebody has to get him off centre stage and pronto - or the USA will be the laughing stock of the free world. I am sure we as neighbours are holding our collective breaths and waiting for November.

Why do people found guilty of a crime start the process of an appeal before they have virtually left the courthouse steps? With most trials these days lasting months and weeks and not days, the appeals take almost as long. Maybe my grandson's change of direction and upcoming applications to law school

PATS AND PANS



means he will have a very lucrative career ahead, though he may not go the criminal law route.

I wrote the local paper about the instant garbage dump at the turnaround in the newest subdivision in my area. They printed the letter and the mess vanished. But there it is again when I walked this week - not only are there neatly tied black bags stacked, but there are chairs, and bits of cars -Surrey has four days when you can dump for free, but perhaps these dumpers cannot read?

Mentioning papers - I had said I had cancelled the Post - well I back tracked when they called and offered me three days of papers a week, including Saturday, for a fixed sum of ten dollars a month-for six months. I really missed that cryptic on the weekend - and while much of the Post is in a section of the Sun I do enjoy a second paper. I just wish the local papers delivered to

the door like they used to. Guess nobody delivers on a paper route these days!

Two or three years ago there was a study into the disappearance of all those First Nations women along Route 16. Now we have an even bigger study coming up which will cost millions. That last one is languishing on a shelf somewhere, never opened and never put into effect. Will this one simply keep some people employed at large salaries for two years and support the pulp and paper industry and printers? Why is there no transit along that route, and no policing? Sounds simple so why is it so hard to do?

I saw many reviews of a new movie called Suicide Squad. Each one panned it as being not worth a visit, poorly acted and scripted and yet that week it made over one hundred million at the box office. Now I see one just into theatres is about hot dogs - I can imagine the ribaldry there. Guess it will do as well!

The trains below me have been silenced this summer -no more whistles. Took me a while to realise what was missing - I am under a flight path though and notice the aircraft. This weekend is the air show so I hope to see some of the formation flyers. I'll watch from the comfort of my deck.

Survey of Residents in Government Assisted Residential Care

BC Seniors Advocate, Isobel MacKenzie, needs your help. Between now and December 1, 2016, Isobel and a core group of volunteers will be interviewing the 28,000 seniors in government assisted residential care. This is the first time a process has been initiated that directly involves the residents. To be able to reach all of the residents will require a large number of volunteers. One day of training will be provided and interviewers will be kept close to home.

Isobel's office has produced a number of reports on topics that deal with issues seniors face. Information is gleaned from in-depth interviews with those most impacted by the topic. Some of the reports include: Caregivers in Distress, More Respite Needed, Seniors' Housing in BC: Affordable, Appropriate, Available, and Placement, Drugs and Therapy... We Can Do Better. Isobel's office can be reached at 1-877-952-3181 or www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca.

Please call Jas Cheema from Fraser Health at 778 628 1249 for further details about this volunteer opportunity. Isobel's office will collate the results of the survey and prepare a report with recommendations for the future of residential care. This is your chance to help influence the direction residential care will take. Your assistance is needed.

Val Windsor, Delta Retired Teachers' Association BC Seniors Advocate Council of Advisors Member

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I have just bought the paper for this issue of the Truant and realized it was almost double the cost of plain white paper. I am sure most of you recycle your copy, so from now on I will buy the cheaper white!

I have had some 'moments' this year as I expect you have. Another great grandchild is on the way and one young couple re-enacted their wedding vows with all the families present, in a charming ceremony at Bear Creek Park. The family continues to expand.

When I retired life was ahead of me, hours, weeks, months, years -to relax and enjoy. I filled my days with many activities and always said my garden would keep me busy if all else failed! Life has a habit of changing mid-stream and after twenty years the energy levels drop - and how they drop! I have recently turned another page and have given up my small paid job which I have really loved for the past eight years. The dark, the traffic, the rain - time to call it a day. As for the garden I have just picked a bucketful of tomatoes, and vowed to cut back next year!

Sometimes life is just a question of getting through each day - and we all manage, don't we? We only have to look at the world around us, to know how very fortunate we are. Until next time. Sheila

