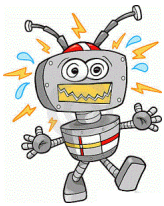


# Vancouver Tabloid

Vancouver Retired Teachers' Association January 2018 Newsletter

## DIGITAL DEVICES: ARE THEY TAKING OVER YOUR LIFE?



As the New Year brings new challenges, members ask how digital devices can help AND hinder us. More and more digital communication is replacing real receptionists: online books now replace hardcopy textbooks; electronic watches calculate our fitness. Are we losing some of our human control as we let machines assist and run our lives? What do you think? Read others' opinions on pages 4 and 5



### Join Us: VALENTINE'S LUNCH

**PLEASE JOIN US** for our February Luncheon on Tuesday Feb. 13 at the Langara Golf Clubhouse 6706 Alberta Street. Guest speaker **Barbara Kirby**, an Eldercare Advocate, will speak on Better Later Life Care planning.

The Mediterranean Menu includes chicken souvlaki, lemon

rice pilaf, classic Greek salad with olives, pita & tzatziki, and assorted dessert goodies. Cost is \$30. **\*Pre-registration required; there are a limited number of seats available.**

PLEASE use new address and phone number of our new Treasurer, **Dave Ellis**, to pre-register.

The fragrance of red roses can evoke feelings of love and loyalty. "Love is like the wild rose-briar; friendship is like the holly-tree. The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms, but which will bloom most constantly?"

— **Emily Brontë**, from *The Complete Poems*

### Valentine Luncheon-Feb. 13

TUESDAY FEB. 13 at 11:30 AM

Langara Golf Clubhouse

6706 Alberta Street (x West 49th Ave.)

Complete the registration form ON THE LAST PAGE

by Tues. Feb. 6 to:

**Dave Ellis** 2086 Newport Avenue,

Vancouver, BC. V5P 2H8

P:604 327-7734 or email dellis7734@gmail.com

Cheque (\$30) payable to: BCRTA -Vancouver Branch

**LUNCH REGISTRATION ON BACK PAGE**

### In this Issue:

Page 2 – President's Greetings/Ski Club/Calendar

Page 3 – Lunch & Photographs

Page 4 – Digital World Concerns/ Editorial

Page 5—Digital Concerns/ Membership/Theme of next Issue

Page 6 – The Cruise of a Lifetime

Page 7— Live Stage Offerings / Favourite Puns

Page 8 – Why join BCRTA?/ Announcements/ Registration Form

# President's Greetings



## *A Happy New Year to you all!*

Thank goodness this is a mild winter compared to last year. Hopefully, you will stay healthy with an updated flu vaccination and by avoiding large crowds. There is an increased flu outbreak this winter. The new year brings new beginnings, including new technology. I have found the best way to communicate with my

sons, sister, brothers and other relatives is through texting—they answer immediately! My smart phone and iPad allow me to stay in touch and get work done despite traveling. However, these devices are expensive, updates are needed every two to three years, and they are addictive. Be careful as they can consume ALL of your time!

Back to face-to-face endeavours, a Big Thank you to those who helped deliver poinsettias to our retirees aged over 85 years. I hope you will continue next year and we will look for more help as well.

The Christmas luncheon was a great success with a turnout of 78 people. The traditional turkey dish was served while we were entertained by the talented Vancouver School Board choir with Christmas songs after the lunch. Our Valentine's luncheon is set for February 13th at the Langara Golf Clubhouse. It can hold 50 people so get your money in early. Hope to see you there!

**- Winola Chu**

## MORE SKIERS WELCOME!

Yes, we have started a cross country ski club on Friday mornings. So far



Margaret Yoshida and I have driven up Cypress Bowl together on Friday mornings. You are welcome to join us! Meet at 9:30 am at 16th and Maple or about 10:10 am at the Cypress ticket booth, weather and health permitting. Please contact Edie at 604 228

0830 or edithwood@gmail.com to register.

**-Edie Wood**

## **WANT TO JOIN in? New Members Welcome CONTACTS for Activities**

**Book Club:** Diane Smith frandia@shaw.ca—3rd Wed at 2 pm

**Cross-Country Skiers:** Edie Wood edithwood@gmail.com—Fridays 10:10 am

**Scrabble:** Barb Mikulec mikulec@telus.net—4th Thurs evening

**Strollers:** Norma Westrom normawestrom@hotmail.com—every Wed 10:45 am

**Walkers:** Margaret Yoshida margyoshi@gmail.com—every Wed 10:00 am



## **A publication of the Vancouver Branch of the British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association**

#100, 550 West 6th Ave,  
Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4P2

### **Office Administrator**

Kristi Josephson (kristi@bcrt.ca)

### **Administrative Assistant**

Laurie Boyd (laurie@bcrt.ca)

**Website:** www.bcrt.ca

## **VRTA EXECUTIVE 2017– 2018**

### **President - Winola Chu**

604 872-1859 wderechu@hotmail.com

### **Past President - Norma Westrom**

604 731-3937

normawestrom@hotmail.com

### **First VP - Anastasia Mirras**

604 736-4670 avmirras@gmail.com

### **Second VP - Edie Wood**

604 228-0830 edithwood@gmail.com

### **Treasurer - Dave Ellis**

604 327-7734 dellis7734@gmail.com

### **Secretary - Denis Ottewell**

604 526-7561

dennyottewell@outlook.com

### **Membership—Elaine Anderson**

604 929-3306

ebanderson@shaw.ca

### **Editor-Tabloid - Rosalind Kellett**

604 873-0568 roskellett@gmail.com

### **TABLOID-Distribution—Patricia Wright**

Vancouvertabloid@gmail.com

604 876-7939

### **Members at Large**

Elaine Anderson, Merle Bennett,

Tom Bruner, Elizabeth Johnston,

Arnie Lambert, Barb Mikulec

Carol Perdue, Litsa Petoussis,

Sheila Pither, Ali Pollard, Bea Raymond,

Art Rempel, Les Rowe, Diane Smith.

### **Volunteers**

Lil Cumberbirch, Ruth Deshaies,

Ora Fraser and MaryAnn Nelson

**WEBSITE** [www.vrta.ca](http://www.vrta.ca)

## **Calendar**

**Please feel free to join us!**

(Exec. Meet at 10:00 AM in BCTF Building)

**Feb 13 Tue** Valentine's Lunch

**Feb 27 Tue** Workshop—

**Mar 28 Wed.** Exec. Meeting

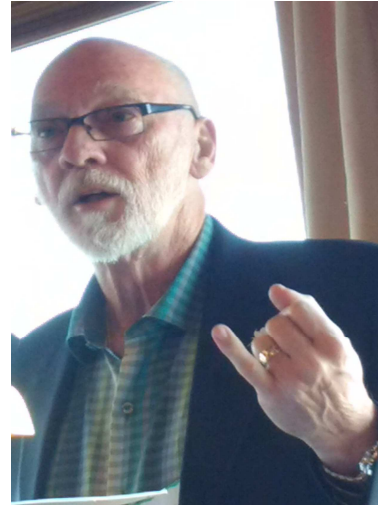
**May 8 Tues.** Exec Meeting

**June 5 Tue—AGM**

# December Luncheon at Royal Vancouver Yacht Club



*More than 75 people attended the December 5 Lunch on a sunny cold day and gazed out at the waves and sail boats of Burrard Inlet from the ballroom.*



Guest speaker **Arnie Lambert**, BCRTA director and VRTA member-at-large, spoke about the federal government's Bill C-27, which passed First reading in the Canadian House of Commons on October 19, 2016. This bill seeks to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act of 1985 to provide a framework for target benefit plans (TBP), replacing defined benefit provisions (DBP). This would affect federal workers and Crown Corporation employees directly, possibly leading the way to changing pension benefit plans across the country. The Bill has not reached second reading, the committee stage, and Arnie urged us to continue to show our opposition to this plan through letter writing and other means of communication to our MPs. There is still time to express your opinion.

**-Ros Kellett**



*The Vancouver School Board choir led by the guitar-playing choir leader, **Ian Nicholls**, raised the spirits of all present with a variety of seasonal songs and sing-along carols*



*Treasurer, **Dave Ellis**, writes the cheque for the Luncheon.*



*Participants Elizabeth Johnson, Barb Mikulec, Ros Kellett and Neale Adams beam with delight at the delicious meal being served.*



# Editorial



## FEAR OF ROBOTS



While I love the Internet because I can access information at my fingertips, I fear misuse of social media unless it is

imbued with a sense of social responsibility. I fear increasing automation and robotic technology taking away jobs. With shrinking jobs for livelihood, what will happen to the economy and social order?

**Elizabeth Johnston**

As the seeds lie dormant in the Earth, waiting for the warmth of spring to begin new life, many of us relish in the newest technologies that protect us from winter storms and keep us in communication with the busy world. Are these digital technologies an asset? Read on to learn how members consider them both an asset and a liability. Yet all agree with the need to stay informed of their uses and to speak out and exert influence, guided by the experience of our years, to ensure support for all to have the chance for real tangible face to face conversations with loved ones as well as enjoying online connections when separated by great distances while working or travelling abroad. **-Ros Kellett**

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The digital world is changing my lifestyle in ways I find both fascinating and scary. Take Artificial Intelligence (AI) also known as machine intelligence (MI). This intelligence displayed by robots and increasingly more other devices, is in contrast with the natural intelligence displayed by humans and animals.

Machines now are capable of performing tasks once considered requiring natural intelligence: understanding human speech, optical character recognition, self driving vehicles, strategic game systems, controlling content delivery networks eg Google, even bank-

ing systems and medical research fields to name a few.

Every time that we use an electronic communication device our "content" can be gathered and stored somewhere. That information is useful for those "businesses" and "data collectors" which can develop a composite of our preferences and lifestyle. Our privacy is being "invaded", but some of the information when grouped and analysed can be important regarding social, research and production needs.

Other problems relate to job automation where robots are replacing workers. One suggestion is that

robots "should be taxed" to offset the loss in tax revenue received from salaried workers. A greater worry is the need to control cyberattacks and the use by the military and others of drones (MI robotics) in indiscriminate combat. What ethical and moral issues need to be addressed as AI advances try to replicate the human mind yet have no ability to experience feelings and emotions.

For more information, I refer you to Wikipedia -Artificial Intelligence –a long read, with an extensive bibliography but most interesting!

**- Denis Ottewell**



My biggest complaint with the digital age is that I can not remember all the passwords. Every provider of a service requires a password. So I record all my passwords but still find problems. So then I have to go and make a new password. Today I received a statement for a small RRIF by email. I tried to access my bank Online, using my bank card number and password. Not good enough. Now I can't find the original documents nor the RRIF number.-they are in that folder of forgotten memories. So tomorrow I will have to go to the bank and resolve this with a face to face meeting!- **Elaine Anderson**

My lifestyle has improved with the array of information available on the Internet. I keep in touch with friends on Linked-in or Facebook – which also reminds you of birthdays. My smart phone has no data so I use it as a phone to message and text to my husband! Now I am learning to do Facetime with our grandson! **- Barb Mikulec**

## A LOVE OF LEARNING NEW THINGS

My new iPad is fantastic as I can do Globe Cryptic, Sudokus, and the NYT Crosswords with my fingertips! We easily stay in touch with family in Ontario and the States by email, messaging and phoning. But it's hard to learn to use new hardware and apps and how to access the help available. I do like learning new things.

**-Arnie Lambert**

## LET'S NOT FORGET THE DIGITALLY CHALLENGED

As digitalization grows, for those of us who have difficulty coping with "email", the world shrinks. Let us not forget those who are not online (including figuratively) but include them in the wide world of communications.

**- Les Rowe**

## HOW DOES ONE "TEXT"?!



I find that phone messages and emails aren't being answered by my younger friends. They don't seem to

bother with them. My daughter tells me that if I want to hear more from my granddaughter I'd better learn how to text!-

**- Diane Smith**

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT **-Elaine Anderson**

As of January 10, we have 1365- members, of whom 801 receive the TABLOID via Canada Post and 582 receive it by email. As well 211 members continue to receive the TABLOID via Canada Post but have given us their email addresses so they receive e-Alerts and e-Reminders of upcoming events. However, we have a problem keeping our membership lists up to date and take time each year re-working the lists. So far this year I have had to remove 20 names from our postal list because our contact information is incorrect. Too often, a member moves or passes away and our VRTA office is not informed. Our membership list comes to us from the BCRTA who get most of it from the Teachers' Pension Plan

(TPP) as most members have their dues deducted from their pension. The TTP only sends us the names of those who have had their membership deducted in this manner. It does not provide us with address changes or notice of those who have passed away as it is not obligated to do so. This is a problem because many of our members older than 90 years do not pay dues so when they die we are not notified. I have found many names on our membership list of people who are deceased. This fall the TTP provided the BCRTA with a list of names of those people over 85 who had died in the last 10 years. Several of those names were still on our records, including one person whose death was listed as 2010. For seven years

mail was sent to someone who is no longer there. We do phone or email people whose mail is returned to us but if we can't reconnect with them then their name is removed from our list for the current year. Yet each Fall we get a new list of current members and go through the same process again.

I am asking for your cooperation. PLEASE inform the BCRTA office (604-871-2260 or laurie@BCRTA.com) when you move or change your contact information. **PLEASE provide us with your email address even if you do not wish to receive the TABLOID by email** as it is a means by which we can contact you even if you move residences. THANK YOU!

### Interested in submitting a Letter or Opinion?

PLEASE send letters, advice or news items to Ros Kellett <roskellett@gmail.com> 604-873-0568 Include name, email address & phone number. Keep letters under 150 words; they may be edited for length and clarity.

### THEME & DEADLINE for the NEXT ISSUE - Friday May 4 , 2018

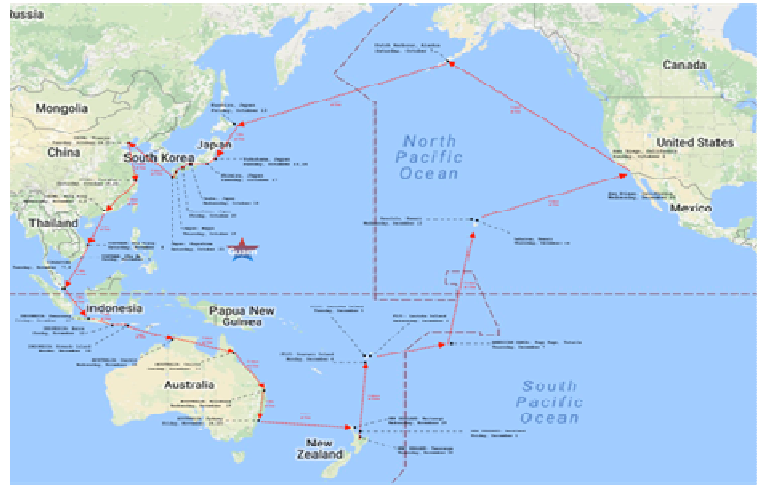
***How much has Depression—either yours or that of a person close to you—affected your life?*** Also, please send us your recent Travel stories and photographs. Opinion pieces limited to 200 words.

# The CRUISE of a LIFETIME! Part 1



*Sylvia Helmer with Lee Wood holding koala bear in Darwin, Australia on their grand cruise.*

**Sylvia Helmer**, former VSTA ESL teacher and UBC teacher trainer, retired fully in 2017 and set off with her husband **Lee Wood** on October 1 on an 80 day cruise. They “set sail” from San Diego, California and headed for Alaska then Japan



to start their exploring of the Pacific Ocean on the Holland America **MS**

**Amsterdam.** From the map one can see they stopped at seaports in 11 countries to explore further. “The beauty of cruising is that you only unpack once but get to experience a great deal while being pampered and having your creature comforts met 24/7”, exclaimed Sylvia. They kept a blog of their trip at :<https://snljourneysjournal.blog>

Sylvia shares her adventures with TABLOID readers by describing how they coped with the many days spent at sea beyond the sight of land.

Adapted and edited from their blog:

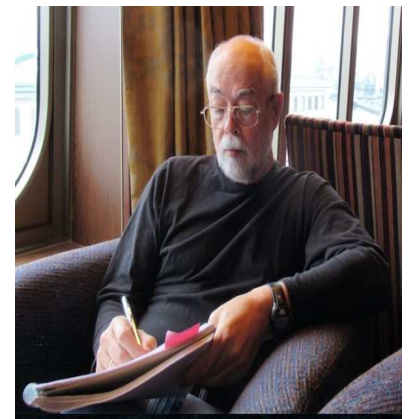


*Sylvia Helmer relaxes while writing aboard ship.*

Late each afternoon we received the ***When and Where list*** describing the next day's many special and ongoing activities. We liked walking the promenade deck but we could also use the basketball courts, a fitness centre, or one of two pools and hot tubs. Each day there was live entertainment and games (both sedentary and active), socializing, dancing, karaoke, health spa, movies and shopping opportunities. There were also opportunities such as cooking or bridge classes. We liked to do our writing or even to

*Sylvia Helmer relaxes* curl up with a good book in one of the *while writing aboard ship*. many lounges. The food was abundant and varied. The **Sweet Spot** was available all day and the pastries and cakes were made fresh daily. As Lee wrote, tongue-in-cheek, "After our meagre breakfast of fresh fruit, croissants, and lattés, Sylvia and I strolled the promenade deck, suffering the morning breeze and 25°C temperature, all the while lamenting the fresh pineapple stuck in our teeth. Life's never easy aboard the MS Amsterdam. Yet, somehow we endure!"

**Part 2 – Port visits** -To be continued in next TABLOID issue.



*Lee Wood reflects in comfort during the 80 day Asia-Pacific cruise.*





# Live Stage Offerings

January to February – 2018

By Ora Fraser



The Arts Club winter offerings include **Jitters** at the Stanley's Industrial Alliance Stage (Jan.25-Feb.25), Fun Home at the Granville Island Stage (Feb.8-March10) and **Top Dog/Underdog** at the Goldcorp Stage (Jan.18-Feb.11). **Jitters** is billed as a "raucous comedy that celebrates the ups and downs of life in the theatre." **Fun Home** is a Tony Award winning musical memoir, a coming of age musical billed as both "heartbreaking and fiercely funny." **Top Dog/Underdog** is billed as "a modern fable of battling brothers" and features two brothers who are looking to make easy money playing cards. Check ARTSCLUB.COM or phone 604-687-1644.

For Jan.-Feb offerings at The Vancouver East Cultural Centre go to the cultch.com/shows or phone 604-251-1363.

Richmond's Gateway Theatre is staging **Salt-Water Moon** by David French from Feb.15-24. A sold-out hit in Toronto last year, this Canadian classic is about "love, loss and reconciliation." Set in 1926 Newfoundland the play focuses on two young lovers separated for a year who meet to contemplate a possible shared future. Contact boxoffice@gatewaytheatre.com or phone 604-270-1812.

Metro Theatre Vancouver presents **Murder By The Book**, a murder mystery by Duncan Greenwood and Robert King from Jan.20-Feb.10 (Thurs. to Sat.). Evening curtain time is 8 p.m. with matinees on Sun., Jan.28 and Sun., Feb.4 at 2 p.m. Contact metrotheatre.com or phone 604-266-7191.

Michael J. Fox Theatre in Burnaby presents **Legally Blonde** Feb.2-17. Contact michaeljfoxtheatre.ca or phone 604-664-8875. Tickets are apparently selling fast.

Studio 58 presents **The Skin Of Our Teeth** by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Thornton Wilder from Thurs., Feb.1-Sun., Feb.18. Wilder wrote this play just before America entered WW II. It is billed as a play about "fortitude and the fate of humanity" and is especially timely and appropriate for today. For tickets contact studio58.ca or phone 604-323-5227.

United Players winter offering from Jan.19-Feb.11, 2018 is **Merrily We Roll Along** based on the book by George. Furth. Music and lyrics are by Stephen Sondheim. The play is billed as a Broadway fable about "friendship, compromise and the high price of success." For tickets contact unitedplayers.com or phone 604-224-8007.

## Use your Wits!

-Denis Ottewell

**RETAIL SIGNS** – Question:  
What humorous sign would you put up on a store or truck?

Answers below.

- 1. On a Septic Tank Truck
- 2. On a Blinds and Curtains truck
- 3. In a Podiatrist's office
- 4. At an Optometrist's Office
- 5. On a Plumber's truck
- 6. On an Electrician's truck
- 7. On the back of Garbage Pickup Truck
- 8. On a Maternity Room door

## ANSWERS

- 1.Yesterday's Meals on Wheels
- 2.Make way for the BLINDS driver
- 3 Time wounds all heels
- 4 If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place
- 5 Don't sleep with a drip. Call your plumber
- 6 Let US remove your shorts!
- 7 We carry the Latest Political Promises
- 8 Push! PUSH!

## TRAVELLING IN THAILAND AND MYANMAR



Barb Mikulec, *left*, with husband Mark toured **Thailand and Myanmar** in Nov. 2017. Barb loved the elephants especially.

The tour included a public school visit. School started at 8 am with the raising of the school flag and sports/music activities. Classes began at 9 am. Students wore white tops with a blue skirt or brown pants.

(*right*) Education is highly valued by the Thai.

-Barb Mikulec



# WHY I BELONG TO THE BCRTA

## Interview with Ali Pollard



I was sitting idly in the lobby of my condo one day when a teacher I had met some years previous in Costa Rica (on one of Ollie Whitcutt's fabulous trips) came up and said hello. During the course of our conversation she mentioned that she was a member of a book club and a walking group...and kindly extended an invitation to me to join both groups. I acted on her suggestion and discovered...to my delight...that I enjoyed both activities immensely. The women I was introduced to were wonderfully interesting and fun. I enjoyed their company so much that...when the topic of the next VRTA luncheon came up...I wanted to go. To do so I had to join the BCRTA. Thus, the friendship of the VRTA members I had already met was the incentive for me to join the organization. I have since become a Member-at-Large and now attend all VRTA Executive meetings. As a result I've discovered there are also bright, active, capable men in the organization. How amazing!! Belonging to the VRTA has definitely perked up my life as a retiree.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

**VOLUNTEER JUDGES ARE NEEDED** for three Saturdays -Feb 17, Mar 3, Apr 7 —



9 am to 3 pm. **Odyssey of the Mind** promotes creative problem solving for students from kindergarten through college. Our program is open to ALL students, not only the gifted. Training provided on first Saturday, with free lunch each Saturday. Contact Silke Kaumann at [volunteer.odysseybc@gmail.com](mailto:volunteer.odysseybc@gmail.com) or **website** [www.odysseybc.ca](http://www.odysseybc.ca). Judges please REGISTER online at: <https://secure.blueoctane.net/forms/N4M3COWR3CTO>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### VRTA WORKSHOP -



**Tue. Feb. 27 — *Mental Health for Seniors –How can one improve one's own mental health?* 9:45 am—Noon** Hel- lenic Com. Centre 4500 Arbu- tus St. Free registration & parking. Refreshments avail- able. **Pre-register:** Denis 604-526-7561 or [dennyottewell@outlook.com](mailto:dennyottewell@outlook.com)

### Not a member of BCRTA?

For a SECOND Year former non-member retirees can join both BCRTA & VRTA for FREE in their 1st Year - Sign up at [www.bcrta.ca](http://www.bcrta.ca) or phone: 604 871-2260



### Our REQUEST to You

**PLEASE subscribe to the VRTA TABLOID by email and enjoy the Benefits**

Coloured photographs and graphics for you & hundreds of dollars savings in postage costs for us. You stay up-to-date with **IMPORTANT REMINDERS** of upcoming events. **SEND** your email address to Patricia Wright at [vancouvertabloid@gmail.com](mailto:vancouvertabloid@gmail.com)

**HAVE YOU RECENTLY MOVED?**

Please submit **CHANGE OF ADDRESS** to [VancouverTabloid@gmail.com](mailto:VancouverTabloid@gmail.com) OR 604 876-7939

### REGISTRATION FOR FEB 13 LUNCH 11:30 AM Langara Golf Clubhouse

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose cheque for \_\_\_\_ attendee(s) @ \$30 each ☐

Those wishing vegetarian entrée/special diet, check here \_\_\_\_

**See Page 1 for where to send. Please Register  
by Tuesday February 6  
TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT**

**Donations for the FOOD BANK are appreciated**