

North Island Retired Teachers' Association

Spring Newsletter 2019

President Greg Murray, Secretary-Treasurer Fran Jenkins

Word is, as you get older, that time goes more quickly. Well, I sneezed and it's spring time.

I don't know what that says about growing older but, lately, I seem to have a much stronger appreciation for the finer things of life. I try to eat my food "mindfully" enjoying the texture and flavour of each bite.

Walking is an adventure as I am aware of the leaves rustling in the trees, the warm sunshine on my shoulders, and on occasion I look up at the clouds to find shapes I haven't seen for many years.

Over the course of a lifetime we gather a lot of experience, a certain understanding about the things around you. This can produce an understanding, within ourselves, that evens out the daily chores and obligations producing a calm understanding of the master plan for our world.

This serene understanding is a result of all of the tribulations we have endured getting to this point. All of the good that we have done, all of the mistakes that we have made, add up to this one point.

Where do we go from here? Do we fade away gracefully or grab the time that we have left and just have fun?

I find that many seniors are going for the latter. They are downsizing, getting rid of the material gains and travelling the world. They are sharing their experiences with family and finally sharing the joys of this life with others.

Seniors have money, a life time of scrimping and saving bit by bit, that adds up to a monetary pool that politicians are aware of, and that companies are eager to engage.

As a senior, you need to stay engaged. You need to give your input, to say your piece, to add to the development of our local culture. You have completed a career but there are many possible

careers still to come. After working for thirty or forty years you have another thirty or forty years in front of you.

Run for School Board, or councillor, take a new job in any field that you find interesting. This is not the “sunset” of your life where you fade away. There are many people these days, living to be a hundred years old. Some scientists have stated that the natural human life-span could be around 120 years, if you eat right, exercise and remain socially active. It is just a new chance to accomplish a new goal.

Learn a new language, a musical instrument, write a book or visit a place you have always wanted to go to.

You can be whatever you decide to be. The future is before you. Take it, embrace it, but most of all enjoy yourself.



Fall Conference/AGM Report

The Fall conference was at the Hilton, in Richmond, in late September. We had two members, myself and Fran Jenkins attend.

We went through all of the various business items, a presentation by Bob Taverna about how to keep presidents out of jail, uplifting but depressing at the same time.

The highlight was that the North Island Chapter won an award for being the highest increase in membership (12.5%) in the province, per capita.

We got a shiny trophy, which we get to keep for a year, and a big box of chocolates, which we handed out as a door prize for our February meeting.

All together, the conference was informative and a great venue to put faces to names and generally get a much better feel for the whole drive behind the provincial RTA.

The food was terrific, I had Beef Bourignon at the annual dinner, which you could cut with a butter knife, truly a world class dish from the chefs at the Hilton.

Being afraid of heights I, of course, took a picture of the swimming pool, eighteen stories below, and looking like a postage stamp. Getting into bed was like Richard Geer in "Pretty Woman" where he inches himself across the wall to rescue her. The glass wall, open to the elements, presented a special obstacle to overcome as I sidled under the triple thick quilt to get a warm duck-feathered sleep, well worth the adventure in getting there.

I hope that Fran also enjoyed the pampering.

All together, we received a surfeit of information and came away with a much more focussed understanding of the entire provincial RTA and the people who spend tireless hours advocating on our behalf.

We had a major talk from a woman who has travelled the world and gave many tips on how to make it successful for you. She talked about things that you need to take with you, things that people forget, and things that will save you a lot of money when you miss a flight, get sick or have a sudden change in your itinerary. She was terrific.

I highly recommend that executive members go to a conference/AGM. It is more than worth the time. It also generates a lot of motivation to become an active RTA member.



Bill C-27 Petition Read in Parliament

The petition, concerning Bill C-27, has been read in parliament by Rachel Blaney our MP, and is now entered into Hansard which is the official record of all the proceedings in parliament.

Our little “twig” of a branch has had its voice heard across the country and has stood up for a principle, concerning our pensions, that we believe in.

Thank you to all the people who signed the petition.

☺ Accept that sometimes you are the pigeon and some days you are the statue. ☺

How About a Group Hug?

It has come to my attention that there are quite a number of retired people in many organizations out there. The Government Retired Workers Organization, the National Pensioners Organization, the BC Government Retired Employees Association and finally the BC Pensioners Old Age Security Organization all exist as entities unto themselves.

I seriously wonder if there is a possibility of putting them all under the umbrella of one organization that could address all of the needs of its various members?

Could we all benefit from creating one entity that encompassed all of them? It is definitely food for thought.

FACEBOOK.COM/GIBBLEGUTS

By Dan Gibson



Seniors day at the amusement park.

Travel Opportunities for Seniors

Merit Travel is now planning travel packages for retired people. As an open water diver I have a chance to cruise the Mediterranean and dive the ancient ruins at each stop. What a magnificent time that would be.

When I was younger I got to touch the Rosetta Stone at the British Museum and felt a connection to all the wonders of the Egyptian language that the words on it unlocked. It is now covered over. Too many people were rubbing it, in their search for an ancient connection, that it was being erased.

I have stood on the bridge across the Rubicon River and, possibly, put my hand where Ceasar had pondered whether to return to Rome.

Walking the Champs-Elysee in Paris and discovering the subways in London England were all awe inspiring activities. They added a whole new chapter to my life experiences.

There are many travel companies offering packages to seniors. You can cruise the BC coast, visit Haida Gwai, take a train ride across our spectacular country, or sleep in a tent on the plains of Africa during a safari.

There are many such wonders out there. Why not take advantage of one of these trips? You may rediscover the joy of simply being there.



BC Ferries Senior Discounts

BC Ferries has reinstated the senior's discounts on ferry runs to Horseshoe Bay and Tsawassen from the island. Seniors travelling on Tuesdays to Thursdays can travel for a reduced fair.

Many thanks to the Ministry of Transport for your thoughtfulness.



Greg Murray, North Island President wins Led tv, donated by Johnson Insurance, at the AGM.

Seniors' Aging

So you are getting older. Your hip hurts when you walk a lot, you might feel dizzy when you tilt your head and you might not remember and old friend's telephone number.

These are conditions that occur as you get older. I recently went to an optometrist for an eye check and was fascinated by the technology presented in the office. One screen showed me the inside of my own eye and I could follow exactly what the

optometrist was looking for. He explained to me what I was seeing.

He recommended glasses and explained to me that I was getting older and was “resisting” the idea. That was a turning point for me. I answered “Yes, I am”.

Since then I have done a lot on research on aging. Discovering chemical shortages as we age, enzyme imbalances, vitamin reductions and calcium deficiencies has enlightened me. At that point, I decided to take a more active part in my physical being. I just didn't fit into the plan that aging meant a decline in the quality of life, a dependency on eyeglasses, hearing aids, replacing joints and pacemakers.

Since then I have developed an exercise regime, socialize more, eat a “mindful” diet based on my needs, and take twenty-two supplements a day. These are things that are produced less by our body as we age. One of them is Lutein. Over the course of several years my eye sight has changed from 20/40

in the right eye and 20/30 in the left eye to 20/16 in both eyes.

This means that I can read the union label on the bottom of the eye chart and have been able to remove eye glasses from my licenses.

A tremendously encouraging event can change your perspective on daily life. Resisting can make a difference.

Aging is inevitable but the quality of that aging is up to you. Take advantage of it. It's your choice.

My weight is perfect for my height – which varies.

A New Car

When I was 18 I had a fifty-seven Chevy that I spent hours on. A six hundred horsepower blown engine with a four speed Hurst shifter and twelve inch slicks.

I've recently had an urge to get a new car. This one looks interesting.... 😊



Hobbies

Having trips and Discovery Tours available to seniors is great but some of us can't climb the Great Pyramid or canoe down the Amazon.

So what can we do to refresh our daily quality of life? The answer I have is a hobby. This is an activity that you can do easily, anywhere you like, and get a reward from it. It may be a sense of accomplishment, an emotional reaction to creating

an artistic work or simply baking a peanut butter cookie.

I have always been interested in the stars. Buying my first telescope opened a very special world. It let me look at the constellations, peer into a crater on the moon, see moons actually moving around another planet. You see, expanding my own horizons is what I really needed. The telescopes give me that chance.

There are many things that seniors can do to expand their horizons. The “secret” is to stay active. Do something that you like doing. Better yet, start doing something you have always thought about but never got around to.

I became a pilot, to get me closer to those stars. I became an open water diver and got to pet a six gill shark as it swam past me.

Yesterday I applied to a culinary arts college. I think I'd like to be a chef.

You are retired. These are not your “Twilight Years”. Think of it as your second career. Want the number of the college?

Changes to Senior Health Care

There have been some very exciting changes to health care on our province. The recent budget announced amazing changes to a large sector of health care issues that have bothered us for years.

On January 1, 2020 the MSP bill, in BC, will be cancelled for many people on the low income list. We are the last province in the country to finally cancel this hidden tax.

The government has announced **1.2 million hours** of additional paid staff time in care homes for seniors. This alleviates the tremendous shortage of care that has resulted in untold stories of need for our elders.

There is money for kids, there is money for Pharmacare, there is money for families.

Google BC Budget 2019 and get a look at the list. You will feel good after reading it.

Scams

At one meeting I handed out the National Anti-fraud center booklet called the “Little Book of Scams”. It lists many scams that seniors are confronted with on a daily basis.

If you are a victim of a scam, or fraud, report it. Tell others. You may save others from becoming a victim as well.

Canadian Anti-fraud Centre

1-800-495-9501

R.R. Smith Services to Members

Just a reminder that, even with our new restraints for chapter financing, the R.R. Smith Foundation exists as an outlet for charitable donations. Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$20. They also supply travel opportunities for members

through an affinity plan with Enjoy the Journey Tours.

If you feel like getting away, take a look at the wonderful tours being offered for our members.

Five minutes on a search engine can make an invaluable contribution to your quality of life.

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I planted some bird seed. A bird came up. Now I don't know what to feed it ...
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Travel Insurance

At our last meeting I mentioned the tremendous availability of travel insurance providers for seniors. My last trip to Mexico with my young son cost me \$500.00 in travel insurance. We were covered right down to hang-nails but it got me to thinking. Half an hour on Google and I had found some very affordable companies who provided the same service for much less. I could have, easily, purchased the same insurance for several hundred dollars and spent the difference on tequilas, tours or some grand dining experiences.

It pays to take the time to look around. Johnson Insurance has an ad in our latest issue of Post Script Magazine. Medoc Travel customers can receive good service for a good price. Check it out.

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Teach a child to be courteous and polite in the home and, when they grow up, they will never be able to merge the car onto a freeway.

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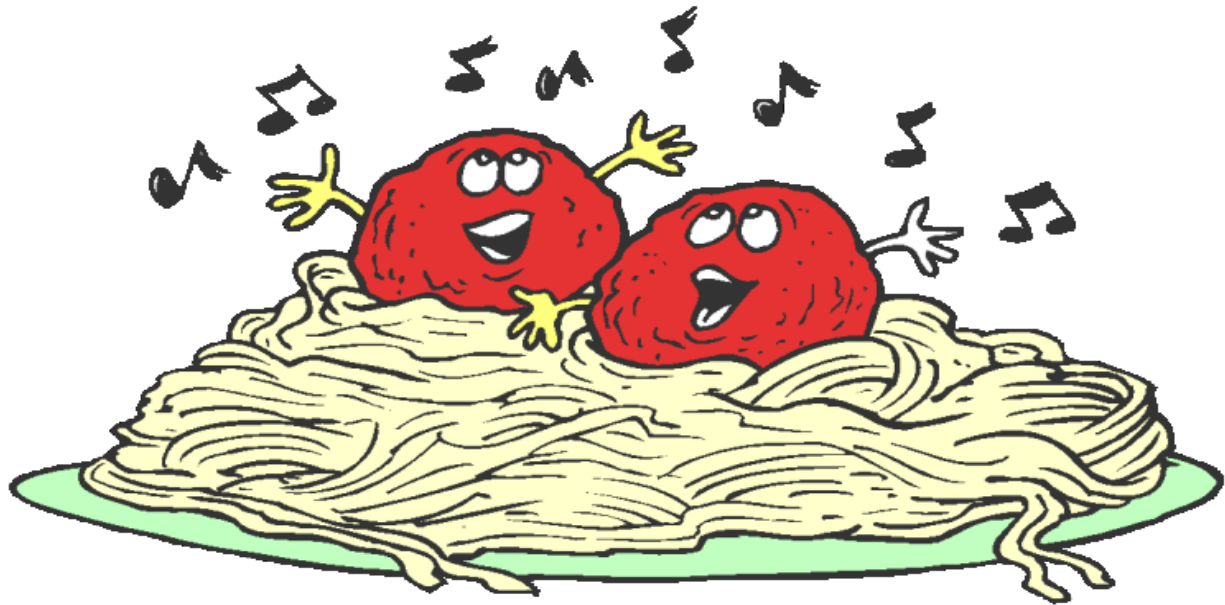
Celebrate Your Circumstances

Remember to celebrate your circumstances. Whatever you have, wherever you are, you are valued. When I get down I look around me. I see people with diseases, people who have lost everything, people who have endured revolutions and devastating climactic events.

It puts my own circumstance in perspective. Nothing I have experienced compares to those events.

Celebrate what you have, who you are, what you have accomplished. There is someone out there who remembers you and thanks you.

Live for the moment.



You never know, for sure, what tomorrow may bring.

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They told me I was gullible – and I believed them.
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We hope to see you at our next meeting.