



# **Prince George Retired Teachers' Association Newsletter**

## **April 2018**

### **President's Report**

*By Elizabeth Eakin*

Is it Spring yet? If not, it may be my fault for putting my winter boots in the back of the closet. Almost a foot of snow fell on the following day. Despite the weather, there are certain things that you must now do. First is to think about getting your garden going, whether it's outside in your yard or in a pot on the balcony. Second is to figure out which of your friends you can throw under the bus!

We have been beating the bushes to find a willing victim to nominate for Vice President but you as a group are wily at evading capture. More and more, I realize that most of the known world is run by retired teachers. There must be one out of 429 members who could and would fill the role of Vice President! The specific tasks of the Vice President are to assume all duties of the president during his/her absence and to attend the BCRTA AGM in the lower mainland as a delegate. Please note that in the past three years the President has been absent once!

On June 5, the PGRTA is being treated to a COSCO workshop on seniors and driving presented by Sheila Pither and (to the sound of trumpets) Pat Brady!!!! We are starting a list of interested participants. You can sign up at the meeting on April 18, phone me at 250 562-5305 or email <[ajeakin@gmail.com](mailto:ajeakin@gmail.com)>. Then you will get complete information and a reminder. This is what I have learned from Sheila's email so far: The workshop will likely be at the Columbus Centre. There will be muffins at 8:30 am for people to enjoy before the workshop begins. The workshop start time is 9:00 am. Lunch will be soup and sandwiches and dessert squares. There are always muffins left at the morning break and dessert squares

for the afternoon break. So the important stuff is dealt with. *Editor's note: See **Stay on the Road** on page 5 for more information about this workshop.*

This is my last official report as your President. I thank you all for being the wonderful people that you are! Thanks to Cheryl Mikulasik who is stepping down from the Secretary's role and to Carol Chanter who has served as Vice President. Mary Hunter is especially grateful that, after four years, she can stop being Past President! That will be me next September!



### **Annual General Meeting & April Luncheon**

Wednesday, April 18, 11:15 am  
Meeting begins at 11:30 am  
Columbus Community Centre  
7201 Domano Blvd.

Lunch - \$17.00  
Menu on page 2

**Election of Officers & AGM Delegate  
Policy & Procedure Amendments**

**Ready, Set, Go for Gardening with  
Linda Naess, President, David  
Douglas Botanical Garden Society**

**Book Exchange/Sale!  
Donation Table for SD57 Scholarship, UNBC  
Bursary & PGCOS Denture Program**

## April Luncheon Menu

From Bonnie Lamb

- ◆ **Assorted Sandwiches**
- ◆ **Green Garden Salad Bar**
- ◆ **Macaroni Salad**
- ◆ **Fresh Vegetable Tray with Dip**
- ◆ **Cheesecake**
- ◆ **Coffee/ Tea / Punch**
- ◆ **Please note that the Vegetarian Option of Vegetable Wraps must be pre-ordered**

If you have to order or cancel at the last minute, contact Bonnie Lamb directly at (250) 964-7872 or <bl\_lamb@telus.net>. Bonnie will check with the catering staff to see if the change can be made. However, no changes are possible after 2:00 pm on the Sunday before the meeting.

Please note that if you tell us you're coming, then are unable to make it, you are still responsible for the cost.

If you need a ride, please contact Bonnie who will try to arrange one. Hope to see you there!

## Election Notice

We will elect the 2018-19 President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer at the April 18 Annual General Meeting. We also elect a delegate and an alternate delegate to the September BCRTA Annual General Meeting.

If you want to volunteer or suggest someone we should ask to run, contact Nominations Chair Mary Hunter at 250 562-6338 or <[mary.hunter@shaw.ca](mailto:mary.hunter@shaw.ca)>

### Nominations to date:

President – Richard Giroday  
Vice President – volunteer needed!  
Secretary – Linda Campbell  
Treasurer – Bonnie Jean Foulds

Nominations will also be accepted at the meeting.

## Updating Our Policies and Procedures

By Jim Caldwell

Last May the Executive Committee determined that the BCRTA's financial/legal review required that we change our operating practices. The Executive Committee is recommending changes to bring our processes into line with the BCRTA's requirements. We have also sought to simplify the duties of the Treasurer. As always, there are some minor housekeeping changes. Here is a brief summary of the important changes:

✓The Awards Chairperson's role will include forwarding donations from individual members since the PGRTA no longer funds bursaries, etc.

✓The Membership Chairperson's role includes assisting the President and the Newsletter Editor in communications with our membership.

✓Finances have been simplified by making all transactions through one General Account and by prohibiting use of funds to support charitable organizations.

The full text of the proposed revisions is available on our website <[pgrta.ca](http://pgrta.ca)>. The April 18 AGM will be asked to approve the changes.

## Awards Update

From Aleta MacFadden

I will again be available at the April luncheon to receive your donations for our awards.

Our current balances are \$1599.00 for the UNBC bursary and \$3896.51 for the SD57 Open Scholarship. We will be presenting a \$1000 SD57 scholarship in June.

The next issue of this newsletter goes out in October. Gardens not yet planted will have been harvested. Why not write an article about your spring or summer activities and adventures? Send your submissions to Bob Steventon <[bstevent@uniserve.com](mailto:bstevent@uniserve.com)> by October 5.

## **Green Shield: Check Your \$200 Deductible!**

*By Bob Steventon*

Extended Health coverage provided through our BC Teachers Pension Plan switched from Pacific Blue Cross to Green Shield Canada at the end of March 31, 2017. You must pay the first \$200 of the cost of prescriptions and other services under our plan. The \$200 deductible for 2017 applied to the full year and to the total of expenses claimed under both carriers.

Income tax time is a good time to review your medical expenses. A look at my prescription receipts turned up the fact that GSC was not taking a prescription purchased in the first three months of 2017 into account when calculating my deductible. I contacted GSC and was told to send documentation of the purchase under PBC. I've done that and am waiting for a refund. You might want to check your receipts, especially if you had substantial claims under PBC. In my case, the amount is small. One is left wondering – was this just a random error or a systematic issue?

## **PG Council of Seniors News**

*From Kathi Hughes*

All programs are flourishing! *Better At Home* is now located at the Native Friendship Centre. The *Denture Program* has allocated \$4006 to seven applicants. *Meals on Wheels* provided 450 meals for the month. Non-perishable leftovers from the *Christmas Hampers* have been divided between the Schizophrenia Society and the Native Friendship Centre. The renovations to the reception area are almost done and look great.

Family Dental Care (four locations in Prince George) and PGCOS are partnering to provide free dental procedures to seniors with no insurance coverage. Family Dental Care staff are volunteering their time April 14 - 15. Read *The Senior Times* for more information on the importance of dental care and the inability of many seniors to pay for it.

Income Tax Prep runs on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 am until the end of April.

## **Quintessential Burgundy or ... Barging in on Wine Country!**

*By Sandra Hay*

Sampling a premier cru Burgundy wine in a renowned chateau with a group of twenty others is not what I usually do when I travel. Nor do I sit down to gourmet meals in an intimate but elegant little dining room while cruising past pretty countryside. So was I travelling or was I on vacation during my recent trip to France and Germany? The answer has to be both. In my mind, travelling and vacationing can be two very different experiences. When I travel I never really know what to expect and often it is the unexpected and adventurous times that I enjoy the most. To me a vacation, on the other hand, is more relaxing and predictable. I would say that last October, I was travelling for a month with a ten-day vacation planned for the middle of my journey. That vacation was a wonderful barge trip through the heart of Burgundy wine country with GAdventures and National Geographic. I had never done anything like this before and must admit that I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



I arrived in Dijon, the starting point of the barge trip, after exploring the lovely Mosel River Valley of Germany and the quaint villages of Alsace in Eastern France. At the orientation on the first evening of our tour, I realized there was going to be an emphasis on French food and wine as we cruised the Burgundy backwaters through what is known as the Cote de Nuit. This is the wine region born from the expertise of monks, the former land of the powerful Dukes of Burgundy. The itinerary included visits to famous wineries,



villages with prestigious names and local food markets, the starting point for the famous French cuisine.

Looking around at my fellow travellers I could also see that the majority of us were of a “certain” age group. Given the fact that the itinerary included two days on which we were to cycle 40 kilometres, I knew this was an active group of more mature adults. As it turned out, most of my fellow barge mates were Canadian. A lone New Zealander and an American family made up the rest. Our young guide, Stefi, gave us a thorough orientation. Her constant advice, prefaced by the expression, “Oh, and just one more thing...” earned her the nickname of Columbo.



After a wet day in Dijon and our initial night on board, we were off on the first of our cycling days. We left Dijon behind in a matter of minutes and soon were following small paths and back roads that meandered through golden vineyards and numerous wine villages. At midday we stopped at the famous Chateau de Clos de Vougeot founded in 1110 AD. Here they produce one of the world’s most expensive wines. We toured the impressive wine cellars and then came the tasting. It was quite a surprise to discover that the charming young sommelier, Justine, who was educating us on the virtues of Burgundian wines, had attended UNBC just five years earlier. A long and delicious lunch in the village followed and then more cycling back to the barge where aching limbs were soothed in the hot tub located on the front deck.

Our barge, Danielle, was not short on luxury. Although designed to slip through the canal locks with inches to spare, she was fitted out superbly. Each room had a lovely ensuite, flat screen TV, safe, lots of storage space and a writing desk. There were lounge chairs on the top deck although these were not used much. We were simply too busy. Each day we were visiting a local village or a once elegant chateau, a family estate, now opened for guests and striving to maintain the enormous costs of upkeep. We strolled along the canals watching as our barge navigated the small locks and then there was our second day of cycling and another world-class wine cellar to visit. We had on-board tastings with lectures about the Bourgogne terroir: the elements of soil, weather, orientation and wine growers know-how that produce the world class noble grapes. Everyone was given a passport to Bourgogne wines. I feared I was in danger of becoming a wine snob! Needless to say, the meals on board were amazing. Each course was served with the appropriate local wine. Wine, beer, and espresso were available all day and included in the tour cost. The countryside we passed through was beautiful. The vineyards in October are golden and grapes are still hanging on the vines. There are special vineyard trails for cyclists. Walking and cycling trails along the canals are lined with walnut trees, fields and pretty villages.

Our tour of Burgundy ended in Beaune, a city famous since medieval times for its hospital, founded in 1443. The grand Hospices de Beaune served the area for over 500 years. The last patients left in 1971. We had a fascinating tour of this beautiful building which is now an interesting museum. The tour carried on by train from Burgundy to include two days in Paris. There we spent a crisp fall morning being guided around a local market where all the details of French food preparation were explained. Samples of many cheeses, fruits, pastries etc. were enjoyed by us all. A final dinner at a small family run Parisian restaurant completed our tour.

I was extremely lucky to have booked this trip during a period of lovely fall weather in Europe. After Paris I carried on for another ten days of travel that brought me back to my

starting point of Frankfurt, the highlights of this last segment of travel were visiting The Vimy Memorial near Arras and the magnificent cathedral cities of Reims and Strasbourg.

For those who want a smaller and more intimate experience in Europe, a barge tour could be an alternative to the well-advertised river cruises. Many companies are now offering barge trips or, if you can get a group of friends together, you can rent your own barge, complete with crew and prepare your own itinerary, activities and meals. I personally loved the mixture of luxury and active adventure. You can check it out at [www.gadventures.com](http://www.gadventures.com). The tour I booked is called “Quintessential Burgundy” and if you are a last minute person (spontaneous like me) you may even get it on sale.

### ***Historical Memories Wins Award***

The Education Heritage Committee has laboured for more than a decade to research and publish, *Historical Memories: People, Places, Programs & Services*. Now that hard work has been recognized. The committee received the 2018 *Jeanne Clarke Memorial Local History Publication Award* in February.

CKPG described the project: “It's a four-part series that covers the history of about 138 schools, past and present, in School District 57. It took more than 33 contributors to complete the book over about 12 years. The book tells everything from original staff, sports teams, school mascots, and memories from former students and teachers.”

Copies will be available for purchase at the April meeting.

### **COSCO Train the Trainer Workshop**

Doug Edgar will be presenting a full day Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC (COSCO) Train the Trainer workshop in the PGRTA Education Heritage Centre on April 27. Ten people have signed up. For more information, contact <[kathihughes@shaw.ca](mailto:kathihughes@shaw.ca)>.

### **Stay on the Road**

*An invitation from BC COSCO*

The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British Columbia has received a grant from New Horizons to conduct a one-day workshop for people who are interested in learning more about driver assessment, particularly when they are nearing the age of 80. However, drivers of any age are welcome to attend. The presentation will be useful for anybody who gets behind the wheel. The program is called *Stay on the Road* and COSCO's facilitators will be accompanied by driver examiners from ICBC and occupational therapists from the Car Fit program all of whom will be providing practical advice, driving tips and vehicle comfort and safety information. The BCRTA contributed additional money to allow us to expand from 15 locations around the province to 20.

COSCO welcomes this opportunity to assist you to continue to drive safely and confidently for many years. We are grateful to *RoadSafetyBC* for helping us to get our show on the road. There is no charge for the workshop and COSCO will provide lunch and snacks free of charge.

It may seem like an unusual pairing but *Navigating the Emergency Department*, written by Providence Hospital in consultation with COSCO, will be presented on the same program.

### **Busted in Bali ... Part Two**

*By Kathi Hughes*

Ah, Bali ... a sensual delight. I dreamed of wandering the rice fields, biking around the volcanoes, playing with the monkeys, swimming on pristine beaches and visiting the many temples. As well, I thought a visit to laid-back, relaxed Bali would be a great yin to the yang of 16 days bustling in chop-chop tour style through China.

The unique mystique of Bali, “The Land of the Gods”, is partly due to its history of early settlement by Indian traders of the Hindu faith and its isolated physical location as an outer island in the 18,000 islands of the Malay Archipelago. Bali is the only surviving Hindu

island in the world's largest Muslim country, Indonesia, but the form of Hinduism is different from stereotypical Hinduism. It is much more animistic. Temples and shrines are as frequent as PG potholes. Every home has a temple and many shrines. Every morning, offerings of canang sari (small trays made of palm-leaf and filled with a variety of flowers) are prepared for the gods and distributed through the streets, on doorsteps and in the many temples and shrines.



I was greeted at the terminal by my driver, Mr. Nengah. A few omens suggested that my vision of an idyllic experience in Bali was not to be. En route to Ubud, the cultural capital of Bali and my future home for five days, we stopped at several ATM's. Alas, no success with my bank card ... and my cell phone did not work. With increasing financial anxiety, I changed my emergency US cash to Indonesian rupiahs. Finally, I was delivered to the wonderful ambience of Santana's Homestay and the beaming, welcoming faces of Mr. Santana, dressed in typical Balinese sarong, shirt, sandals and udeng (square piece of cloth wrapped on the head), wife Puta, 15 year-old daughter Iyu and 17 year old son Wayan. They offered me a bottle of water, but I opted for the ubiquitous beer, Bintang, which is as strong and tasteless as a Coors Light. I was shown my amazing spotless second floor room ("the best

for Mama Kathleen") complete with fridge, air-con and a balcony with a stunning view of gardens, temples, flowering trees, birds and decorative hangings to celebrate the start of the week-long festival of Galungan – the most important Balinese religious festival of the year.

I bid goodbye to the family and ventured into the dark at 6:00 pm to find dinner. I did ask Mr. Santana how safe it was for me to wander the streets as a solo senior. He assured me I was safe. Little did I imagine the true meaning of "safe". Off I ventured, without headlamp or cell phone, expecting the streetlights, impeccable pavement and controlled traffic of China. NOT. Within 5 minutes from the Homestay on a dark, narrow side street, one foot slipped into a PG pothole. My right leg crashed into a storm culvert and I landed on my knee while my left leg, with flayed foot, stayed in the street level pothole. Hmm. No-one around. Cell phone not working. No headlamp. A true dilemma. I could not put weight on my left foot. I could not get my right leg out of the culvert. What a demise – stranded in a culvert in Ubud. I am sure the gods were laughing ... and singing "watchyerstep". Finally, I inhaled my deep yoga breath and painfully manipulated myself onto my bum, swung the bloody right leg onto the pavement and, heaving, finally stood up. I tried to clean the blood off my knee and elbow, carefully turned around and hobbled for dinner and beer directly across the street from the Homestay. Then, I hobbled to a little store next to the Homestay for a Bintang to go. I figured my left foot had a long night ahead. I stealthily crept into the Homestay, too embarrassed to be noticed, and thumped my way upstairs to my room, washed the blood off, smothered my foot with ice, and inhaled my Bintang.

With one misstep, my visionary Bali dream shattered. Hmm ... how to adapt? The next day, my battered and bruised foot slowly limped to the cell phone shop and learned that, when entering a new country, you have to turn the phone off and then on to activate. Once the phone was working, I dealt with the fraud alert on my bank account. I then solicited sympathy from the Santana family and Myriam, a solo retired classical dancer from France, who was



also staying at Santana's Homestay. All examined my foot and clucked and proclaimed "not broken". I chose to believe them as I didn't want to waste precious time dealing with the Indonesian medical system when it was festival week and I was flying home in 8 days. Like Tiny Tim, I dragged my foot through the streets of Ubud, slowly, slowly hobbling behind Myriam as I limped through the potholed streets by the light of my headlamp to attend an amazing Balinese dance performance.



On Day 2, Myriam and I relished a four-hour Balinese cooking class that included a guided tour of a local food market. We then returned to the Homestay where I enjoyed the family and Myriam pampering me with beer and ice. My active thanks to Myriam for all her solicitous attention was a nightly gecko search of her room. She was absolutely terrified of geckos so I had to ensure, with my trusty headlamp, that none were lurking in her curtains or the bathroom. Day 3 was the most important day of the Galungan festival. We slowly wandered Monkey Sanctuary Forest enjoying the antics of the tourists, the locals and the monkeys. I limped through the streets behind Myriam, enjoying the processions and dancing in the streets, the colourful ethnic clothing, the beating of the drums, the special decorations of the houses, temples, trees and shrines. I even allowed Mr. Santana to tour me through the streets on the back of his motorcycle (with my eyes shut) to a coffee plantation to sample the celebrated kopi luwak – coffee made from the poop of the cat-like luwak - and on to Mr. Santana's personal art gallery.

I did cancel my day of biking around the volcanoes and a day of hiking. Instead, I hired Mr. Nengah to drive me to various amazing sites including the massive royal water temple, Pura Taman Ayun, the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Jatiluwih rice terraces where I hobbled through the idyllic fields with Mr. Nengah marching behind me watching my back ... and my steps, and Pura Tanah Lot – one of the most venerated sea temples in Bali. At the end of the day, I received a rare compliment from Mr. Nengah: "Mama Kathleen is very tough."

On my final day in Ubud, I sat on my balcony with-ice-on-the-foot marvelling at the family bustling around in the courtyard below, smelling the frangipani, lulled by the birds, sipping my Balinese coffee while savouring Putu's house specialty, dadar gulung (sweet coconut pancake) delivered to my balcony and thought, busted or not, Bali is great. I bid a grateful farewell to the family and Myriam and headed out with Mr. Nengah for a visit to Tirta Empul or the Holy Springs. These holy springs are believed to have magical powers. The springs bubble up into a large crystal clear pool within the temple and gush out through waterspouts into a bathing pool. Ah – I soaked my foot in the Holy Springs and prayed to the gods. On I went with Mr. Nengah to the ocean-side city of Sanur where he dropped me at my hotel. I had chosen Sanur, a laid-back coastal city, for its orchid gardens, museum, beach and 10k paved path along the beach. I had chosen the hotel for its pool and supposed proximity to the beach. Alas, my foot could not walk in the sand and the hotel was a far distance from the best beach. I indulged in a great massage (although the masseuse, in the Balinese local language, looked at the foot and suggested I wash it – she thought the bruises were dirt), a hilarious sign language hair-cut and delectable Balinese food. After three days in Sanur, I flew home to PG and went directly to the walk-in clinic and then the hospital – yes, my foot was busted in Bali.

My Balinese learning – always "watchyerstep", carry a headlamp, understand your cell phone and avoid PG potholes.

## Hurrah for Saima Fewster, Recipient of the 2018 Hazel Davy Award

By Kathi Hughes

Congratulations to our very own PGRTA member, Saima Fewster, who is the 2018 recipient of the BC Teachers of Inclusive Education PSA *Hazel Davy Award*. The award recognizes an individual's professional contribution to inclusive education in BC.

Saima's first teaching job in Prince George was as a substitute teacher at Blackburn in 1981. Her succinct description of that first teaching experience with a very challenging class: "a total shock". She inherited, in October, a class that had burned through 5 teachers in two months. Saima just assumed this was the norm. To this day she credits Jack Blair for saving her sanity and to that class for instilling the need for understanding and teaching to diversity. She moved into Learning Assistance with Curriculum Enrichment and Kindergarten to a variety of leadership roles in the District including District Resource Teacher. Her passion, flexibility and collaboration skills continued throughout her career.

Saima's passion was supporting and mentoring teachers. Locally, she was involved with the Prince George Learning Assistants PSA. She then took on a provincial role with the Special Education Association PSA and served on the executive for 11 years. In the year 2000, she completed her Masters degree with a focus on curriculum-based assessment and curriculum-based measurement. Her work was adopted throughout the district and the province. She was also instrumental in successfully developing, with the BCTF, teacher mentorship and teacher leadership and assessment for learning

After 34 years of positively impacting education in Prince George and the province, she retired in 2015. She is now travelling, enjoying her grandchildren, volunteering with Grandmothers for Africa and smelling the flowers. When asked for her greatest accomplishment, she responded with "making a difference for kids" and "influencing instructional opportunities" for teachers. Congratulations, Saima, for all your dedication,

commitment and supreme success positively impacting learning for students and educators throughout the province.

## Projet Jumelage et Mentorat -- Twinning and Mentoring Project

From Therese Guillemette

AFRACB (the Francophone Assembly of Retirees and Elders of BC) is implementing a program to link seniors who have French as their mother tongue or who identify as francophones with French Immersion or Core French Teachers having French as their second language. The main objectives of this program are to help these teachers improve their French and to make them more fully acquainted with French culture and the BC francophone community. Teachers will pass this knowledge to their students and seniors will actively promote Francophone culture. Retired French Immersion and/or FSL teachers interested in participating can visit <[www.afracb.ca](http://www.afracb.ca)>, email <[projets@afrcb.ca](mailto:projets@afrcb.ca)>, or 778-747-0128.

BC Old Time Fiddlers' Association

# THE SWEET LOW DOWN CONCERT

With the rough waters of the Pacific around them and the wilds of the Canadian North above them, THE SWEET LOWDOWN have developed original acoustic roots music that draws from earth and sky.

**With Special Opening Guests**

**April 20, 2018**  
**7:30pm**  
at Knox United Church  
1448 - 5th Avenue, Prince George

For more information call Beth at 250-565-1025  
Find us on Facebook at [f/pgfiddle](https://www.facebook.com/pgfiddle)

Tickets Available at Books & Co. or through BC Old Time Fiddlers **\$20**

Poster from Michelle Sims.