

Prince George Retired Teachers' Association Newsletter April 2017

The President's Report

By Elizabeth Eakin

You can relax, attend our Annual General Meeting and enjoy your lunch, without fear that you will be nominated to fill an empty position on the branch executive! We have a full slate since all officers have agreed to continue for the next year. (Can you believe that there are some meetings that people just don't attend because of the nomination dangers?) Next year, however...

I hope you are enjoying the Spring Election season with the many showers of promised money raining from Victoria. It is a good time to get into the Zen of gardening and other outdoor pursuits and practice breathing for calmness and serenity. I am sure you are all carefully perusing *Seniors' Issues for the 2017 Provincial Election* in PostScript. As well, there is an interesting article about provincial fee increases over the past couple of years, amongst other reports, in the latest *Liaison Priorities Newsletter* available on the BCRTA website.

Your executive is considering booking some of the many interesting and useful workshops available through COSCO next year. The workshops run longer than the usual half hour duration of our luncheon meetings. It would mean starting earlier for those who wish to attend the workshop. It would be lovely to have some feedback – would you be interested and which topic would be most preferable? The general topics are Better Living, Better Health, Legal, Financial

and Safety. The detailed list is available on the COSCO website www.coscobc.org. Another suggestion is to invite Johnson Inc. to explain their plans. Contact anyone on the executive to give your opinion.

We had hoped to have a member from the provincial executive give an address at our AGM, but that unfortunately did not work out. Chair Yoga is probably better for you anyway.

Our provincial body is experimenting with recruitment lures, so next year any new retirees will be offered the first year of membership free! Let your working friends know. So far the BCRTA has not agreed to make that a retroactive first year. Rats!

I hope to see many of you at the meeting on April 19. I would especially like to see someone decide to contest for the role of President! That would be exciting! And fun! Now I must go practice my fiddling. Hope nothing burns.

Awards

By Aleta MacFadden

We can no longer put branch funds into scholarships and bursaries. I will continue to collect individual donations at each meeting. Donations will be passed on to SD57 and UNBC to issue tax receipts. I received a \$20 donation for the SD57 Scholarship at the February General Meeting. The \$65 earned by the book sale will go towards the UNBC bursary.

Election Notice

We will elect the 2017-18 President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer at the April 19 Annual General Meeting. We also elect one delegate and an alternate delegate to the September BCRTA Annual General Meeting in Richmond.

If you want to volunteer or you can suggest someone we should ask to run, contact Nominations Chair Mary Hunter at 250 562-6338 or mary.hunter@shaw.ca

We have the following nominations to date:

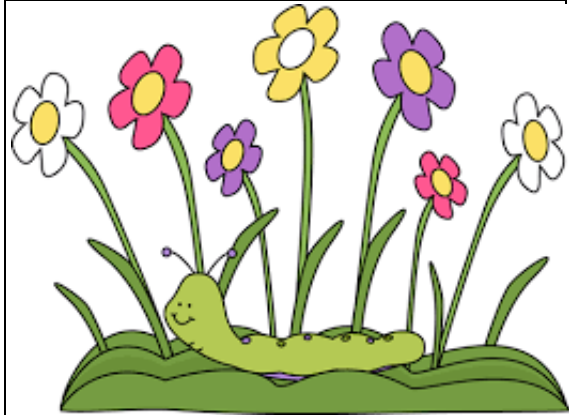
President – Elizabeth Eakin
Vice President – Carol Chanter
Secretary – Cheryl Mikulasik
Treasurer – Bonnie Jean Foulds

Nominations will also be accepted at the meeting.

Prince George Public Library

Gale Courses: Anyone with a PGPL library card can register for one of these free online courses. Topics include computers, finance, health, photography, writing and many others. Register at www.pgpl.ca Classes begin on the third Wednesday of every month.

Technical Assistance for all your “Devices”: Drop-in sessions run every Tuesday from 4:00 to 5:00 pm and every Thursday from 1:00 to 2:00 pm at the Bob Harkins Branch. Sessions by appointment run every Friday between 12:30 and 3:30 pm at the Nechako Branch. Call 250 563-9251 (ext. 300) to register.



Annual General Meeting and April Luncheon

Wednesday, April 19, 11:15 am
Meeting begins at 11:30 am
Columbus Community Centre
7201 Domano Blvd.

Lunch - \$17.00
Menu on page 5

**Election of Officers
and BCRTA AGM Delegates
Membership Fee
Recommendation
Chair Yoga
Presented by Chinook Yoga**

There will be a Book Exchange/Sale!

Sharing the Camino Part Two – Tips!

By Kathi Hughes

In the previous newsletter, I explained the ambience, nuances and history of walking the Camino from Porto, Portugal to Santiago, Spain. We concocted a litany of seminal tips at the end of each day while either massaging or duct taping our feet and sipping wine or port.

Congratulations to those of you who figured out the meaning of most of the tips. For those of you who were totally befuddled, here is a succinct description of each.

1. Expand the bladder: Washrooms exist in restaurants and coffee houses en route but there may be several hours between them. NOT drinking water was not an option. We were, after all, walking between 11 and 33 km a day. Work on expanding your bladder before leaving home.

2. Increase the Advil: Thank goodness for LP, our resident Fab Five physician, who scoffed at the recommended dosage on the Advil package. We all doubled our intake. She was the only one who had to walk backwards down the hills to alleviate some kind of muscle or ligament pain (she was in too much pain to really explain the injury). Fortunately for the rest of us, we had doubled our doses so escaped pain.

3. Find the dirt: This axiom surfaced on about day two after too much walking on pavement and cobblestone. To protect our tender feet, we sought dirt as an alternative – even if we had to hug the trees and plants. I now pay homage to dirt ... and to Voltaren.

4. Accept the unexpected: This started as the cliché of “expect the unexpected” (the norm for travelling in a foreign country with a different language, history and culture). We soon realized, after ordering sandwiches and receiving omelettes, to just laugh and accept the unexpected. The ordering of coffee was especially challenging as so many variations exist ... but, in the end, whatever we received was delicious, just perhaps not what we expected. And the greatest lesson? During a hot day, I

ordered my favourite beer. Several questions accompanied my order. I responded “si” to all. I was so thirsty I accepted the unexpected non-alcoholic beer and laughed at myself ...and decided to peruse my phrase books.

5. Learn without suffering: Hmmm. A little preplanning goes a long way in preventing learning without suffering. Drinking lots of water, wearing super awesome hiking socks, duct taping feet prior to walking, using hiking poles, having a cell phone that works – all are examples of learning through discussion, experience and research without suffering!

6. Duck/duct tape is your savior: Duct tape is indeed a savior while travelling. When can you **not** use it? Our feet, hiking poles, packs and clothing all benefitted. Some threatened to use it on mouths and ears, but fortunately this did not become a reality.

7. Speak clearly, slowly, loudly: This is not what you think. One of our most laughable moments was IK saying to CB (who, to offer excuses for her hearing, was walking ahead of IK) “Valencia (the last town) is in Portugal, right?”...the response from CB, “Picasso is from Spain”. This was repeated twice before we all looked at CB and exploded with laughter – so much so that the Dreadlocks stopped to see if we were ok.

8. Do not be de-feeted: Alas, the blisters for some of the Fab Five were horrendous. IK scoured every farmacia en route and gained an extra backpack full of guaranteed cures to no avail. Regardless of the pain, she was not de-feeted and she hobbled into Santiago wearing layers of duct tape. Her souvenirs? Yes, a pack full of foot care products.

9. Pee-on with vigilance: The only day we lost the route was the day that the bladders needed immediate relief after several hours in a town that offered no options for discreet relief. CB and I were so intent on finding a sacred spot that we totally missed the route markers. The other Fab Three were lost in conversation and also missed the markers. We ambled along a country road for a kilometer before a friendly local redirected us. Oh – and be sure to bring your own toilet paper.

10. Do not spurn the taxi: If your feet are failing, the rain is falling and the wind is blowing, you can hire a taxi. Distances are short. Solo Margie was very creative. When almost de-feeted and without a rain poncho, she hired a local towns person to take her to her hotel. She kindly offered us a ride, which we declined. We all had great rain ponchos and did not want to be de-feeted.

11. Appreciate hot air: We rated our hotels/ guest houses according to availability of functional hair dryers. None of the Fab Five are the pack-a-hair-dryer type of traveller. Now I have changed my packing list and purchased a little travel hair dryer for the next trip. How else can one dry one's laundry or rain-drenched clothing?

12. Respect your pain: We decided that pain was part of the pilgrim process. After all, it was our choice to be pilgrims for 240 km. We were not homeless refugees. So, not one of us sniveled, whined or cried (in public).

13. Accept wisdom from strangers: Fellow pilgrims and locals were so amazingly helpful. We cast aside doubt and accepted help from so many...from the truck driver who re-directed us while lost, to the pilgrims in the early morning

fog who showed us the route, to the local farmer who shared her figs, to the young Portuguese woman who escorted us through a train station to the correct train. All were wonderful and full of wisdom.

14. When packing, less is more: Remember to keep it simple when packing for a trip. You do need room to bring back bottles of port or several pair of fancy shoes (AK of the Fab Five). A suitcase full of duct tape, a rain poncho, a small hair dryer for drying clothes and good socks are all you really need. You think you have less than you need, but you always end up having more.

Walk on....

Scents in Public Places – A Plea

Letter to the Editor from Susan Flynn

Hello Happy Fellow Retirees,

Since I retired (almost four years ago now), I have enjoyed the variety of presentations/entertainment, catching up with former teachers and colleagues and, of course, eating at the Retired Teachers' Luncheons.

However, I am compelled to make a humble request so that I may continue to be comfortable participating in this experience. I have a low tolerance to many scents (i.e. perfume) and can suffer symptoms ranging from runny nose, burning eyes, scratchy throat, to dizziness, nausea and migraines.

Although I am writing on my own behalf, I have spoken to other retirees who are being similarly affected. I do not wish to disregard anyone's right to wear scents, but if attendees who use scented products could forego their use for this event, I would be very appreciative.

Thank you.

April Luncheon Menu

From Bonnie Lamb



- ◆ **Beef and Pork Souvlaki**
- ◆ **Mediterranean Chicken**
- ◆ **Roasted Lemon Potatoes**
- ◆ **Rice Pilaf**
- ◆ **Pita with Tzatziki and Hummus**
- ◆ **Greek Salad**
- ◆ **Assorted Squares**
- ◆ **Coffee, Tea and Punch**
- ◆ **The vegetarian option is Stuffed Peppers but must be pre-ordered.**

We contact members by phone or email prior to each luncheon. The deadlines were earlier this month due to the Easter weekend. If you have to order or cancel at the last minute, contact Bonnie Lamb directly at 250 964-7872 no later than Monday April 17. Bonnie will check with the catering staff on Tuesday morning to see if the change can be accommodated. You can also email Bonnie at <bl_lamb@telus.net>. 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!

The next newsletter will be published in October. Send your articles, letters, announcements, etc. to Bob Steventon <bstevent@uniserve.com> no later than Friday, October 6, 2017.



The RiverBend Seniors Community is currently under development at 20th and Oak Street in Prince George. The community has two components. RiverBend will consist of 106 privately-owned one and two bedroom condos. RiverBend Manor will consist of 60 studio suites and 6 one-bedroom units.

RiverBend Manor is the supported living component of the RiverBend Seniors Community. The Oncore Seniors Society, in conjunction with BC Housing, will own and operate RiverBend Manor.

Supported living will consist of three meals daily served in the dining room, weekly housekeeping, and recreational activities. Our room & board rates are very affordable and based on your income.

We are very excited as we anticipate a late summer opening this year. We are currently taking applications from interested residents and look forward to answering any questions they may have. Please call Cindy at 1 778 470-8221 to learn more about living at RiverBend Manor or visit our website at www.OncoreSeniorsSociety.ca

Information about RiverBend Manor can also be found at the RiverBend Kiosk in the Pine Centre Mall. Please stop by and let us show you pictures and give you a sense of the new Community being developed that you could be part of.

As well, our society is looking to recruit new directors to sit on the Board in Prince George. Call us if you would consider taking on such a commitment.

May 9 BC General Election

From Suzanne Sharp

Elections BC is looking for election workers for voting places on election day May 9, 2017 and in the Advance Polls on April 29, 30, and May 3-6. For more information on election jobs and duties, visit www.elections.bc.ca/jobs

Apply in-person at the Prince George – Mackenzie District Electoral Office at 1511 Lyon Street, phone 250 561-3504 or email Recruitment Officer Suzanne Sharp at prmjobs@elections.bc.ca

Apply in-person at the Prince George – Valemount District Electoral Office at the 4th Floor, 1777 Third Avenue, phone 250 561-3491 or email Recruitment Officer Tony Cable at prvjobs@elections.bc.ca

Elder College – What is It???

By Kathi Hughes

Currently more than 18 communities in BC have some variation of Elder College. But what is it? The concept originated with French universities. It was modified in the United Kingdom where it was recognized that people of retirement age have something to contribute. The emphasis has been on sharing without formal links to traditional universities. In North America the concept took hold in an organization called Institutes for Learning in Retirement. The first ILR began in 1962 in New York City but it was not until the early 1980s that the idea spread rapidly. There are currently about 180 ILRs in the United States and Canada, dedicated to meeting the personal development and wellness needs of older adults. Read more at the website: <http://tinyurl.com/elderlearning>

There are more than 18 organizations throughout BC providing Elder College

programs or some variation of lifetime learning. These programs are sometimes called “Elder Learning”, “Elder Scholar” or “Lifetime Learning”.

An example of a vibrant Elder College program occurs in Williams Lake. The Cariboo-Chilcotin Elder College is a volunteer organization committed to meeting the lifelong learning needs and educational interests of older adults in Williams Lake and surrounding areas. Elder College provides a relaxed learning environment without grades or exams, based on a curriculum of particular interest to members. Elder College seeks to meet its mission by recognizing the unique experiences and capabilities of its members. All instructors, and the Board, are volunteers.

The Cariboo-Chilcotin Elder College is a society with its own executive, constitution and by-laws. It is currently affiliated with Thompson Rivers University. Annual membership in Cariboo-Chilcotin Elder College is \$10 and the usual cost of a course is \$30 to \$35. For more information, see the website: <http://www.wleldercollege.com/>

Although we have ample opportunities in Prince George for lifelong learning, we do not have a specific Elder Learning/Elder College program that facilitates sharing of information and learning opportunities between and amongst senior/55+.

Question: Do we have a need and a will to develop a Seniors’ learning program through the PG Council of Seniors similar to Elder College programs in communities throughout BC?

If your answer is “yes”, please email elderlearning.pgc@gmail.com by April 30, 2017.

SD57 Bursary – A Thank You

From Martina Solonas

I was the graduate chosen to receive the Prince George Retired Teachers' Association Open Bursary. I would like to sincerely thank you for making this generous award possible. I am very grateful for this financial assistance.

My post-secondary plan is to finish the two-year Social Work Program. I am in the second year of the program now. I will be finished the first semester of my second year soon. I will be at a practicum placement at a women's shelter in the second semester. In one and a half years of being in the program I have learned not only social work practice. I have learned more about myself and the way I visualize society in a helping hands concept.

My career plan is to experience different aspects in the community. I would like to be more hands on in the field. My general plan was to become a Youth Care Worker, however, since learning about the high demand for social workers, I would make my way to completing my Master of Social Work (MSW).

Once again I would like to say thank you so much for providing this award for me.

PGCOS News and Dates

From Kathi Hughes

Phone 250 564-5888 for information

By-Laws Committee: In March and April, the committee presented proposed changes to several groups including the PGRТА executive. Please come to the Special Meeting on June 16 to vote. You can read about the changes at http://www.pgcoss.ca/?page_id=3172

Volunteers Needed at the PGCOS Office: Expand your knowledge of

seniors' issues and concerns by volunteering at the PGCOS office.

Volunteers for Better At Home: Volunteers are needed to visit seniors in their own homes. For more information on the Better At Home program, see www.betterathome.ca or contact the PGCOS office.

Now to April 27 - Income Tax Clinic: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30 am at the PGCOS office. Criteria are 55+, a simple tax situation, total income per individual \$30,000 or less; total income per couple \$40,000 or less. Phone the office to see if you qualify for this service.

May 26-27 - PGCOS Garage Sale: 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm on May 26 and 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on May 27 at the PGCOS parking lot. Items can be dropped off the preceding week at the PGCOS office but please, no electronics.

June 16 - Special Meeting of the PGCOS: This means you! The meeting will adopt new By-Laws. 10:30 am at the Native Friendship Center. Lunch is provided.

September 30 - Second Annual PGCOS Trivia Competition: Stay tuned for more information. The first ever Trivia Competition was a resounding success with fourteen teams of trivia competitors and over 120 people in attendance.

The PG Council of Seniors publishes a monthly newsletter. We email a link to our PGRТА email list so members can download the latest newsletter:

<http://www.pgrta.bcra.ca/pg-council-of-seniors.html>

Green Shield Takes Over

By Bob Steventon

If you have Extended Health and/or Dental Plans through your pension, coverage is now provided through Green Shield Canada rather than Pacific Blue Cross. The change took effect April 1. You should have received a new card and information on submitting claims in the mail in March. Let your pharmacy or other health care provider know about the change by showing them that new card.

My first contact with Green Shield was a rather impersonal form letter that arrived in the mail to inform me that one medication, prescribed by my doctor and reimbursed in the past by PBC, but also available at greater cost over-the-counter, would not be covered by GSC.

The Winter 2017 issue of Pension Life explained the change and provided a comparison of the rates charged by the two companies. GSC's rate for Extended Health is roughly \$10 per month per person cheaper. Will we be happy with the service? Time will tell.

A New Name

A New Website



ALCOA (Active Living Coalition for Older Adults) is now *Active Aging Canada*. Visit the new user-friendly, adaptive website at www.activeagingcanada.ca

Explore More Seniors/55+

From Kathy Hughes

Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers and the Otway Caledonia Nordic Ski Club, our Explore More cross-country ski and snowshoe sessions for seniors/55+ were a resounding success this year despite the lack of snow and unpredictable weather.

The average number of participants for the four cross-country ski sessions was 25 and the average number for the three snowshoe sessions was 19. Amazing.

Our primary goal this year was to encourage new and beginning skiers and snowshoers and we met that goal. We had 30 “first-timers” to our ski sessions and 28 “first-timers” to our snowshoe sessions. Almost all survived. Overall, 60 different participants attended the ski sessions and 39 different participants attended the snowshoe lessons.

We are working with Otway to continue a special seniors' rate and the Explore More series for next year. Stay tuned. You too can play and have fun while overdosing on Vitamin D.

Over the summer, do explore the trails and pick the berries. Otway is a hive of buzzing activities with hikers, walkers, bikers, runners, bike clinics for young people and berry picking – all for free.

And a quote from an Explore More participant:

My favourite part of the Explore More free cross-country ski lesson was learning “helicopter”. At age 77, I never thought I could gently fall down, “do the helicopter”, get up and ski again! I can hardly wait to show my grandchildren.