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Shuswap District Retired Teachers

Vol IV No 4; October 2018

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## **From The Prez:**

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This will be another quick newsletter published in support of our October 29 meeting to deal with Bill C-27, which is clearly on the agenda of the federal Liberal government.

If this legislation succeeds (which in a majority government it will, of course) there is a real threat to not just new pensions, but also the pensions upon which we retired teachers depend. It will also see other pensions to take the cheap road, **and form as defined-contribution plans** offering no guarantee of benefits. Our current plan, which may not survive, is a **defined-benefit plan** wherein our pension amounts are guaranteed. This is why we must fight as hard as we can against Bill C-27. We will be launching a petition drive at the meeting, with the petition to be read in the House of Commons when complete.

In other happenings, **Leslie and Paul** attended the annual BCRTA general meeting at the coast, and Paul has given us a report which I shall print below. I was unavailable because of my surgery, which went well. As of November 1 I expect to be allowed to drive again, which will be very liberating.

I understand the Adams River Salmon Run went well, even if marred by a bad traffic accident on the evening of the last day. My wife took her class out last week and reported that there were fish, but not in staggering numbers. Thank you to those who volunteered as guides for the event!

--Larry

## **BCRTA Annual Conference and AGM**

By Paul Bennett

The Provincial Conference and AGM followed the usual format with registration and a meet-and-greet Thursday evening. Friday was filled with excellent presentations, reports, and a Zone Group Discussion. The Annual General meeting was held Saturday morning.

Claire Newell from Travel Best Bets gave a very informative talk on Travel Tips, including some very good advice and some current good buys on international cruises. Brad Barker, a First Nation district principal (responsible for indigenous education with the North Vancouver School

District) shared thoughts and ideas regarding moving forward in wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Inquiry.

Friday morning concluded with the presentation of awards to local branches with the highest percentage membership increases. Surprise, surprise! In the 200-500 member category, our branch placed Third, with a 5 per cent increase!

Our newly-hired Provincial Executive Director spoke briefly regarding his role in the organization and was well-received. Jo-Ann Lauber who has represented us at the national level for some years reported that Bill C-27 (allowing the federal government to convert federal Defined Benefit plans to Defined Contribution plans) is still alive and considered a threat to plans such as ours. Currently a petition campaign is under way with the goal of having all petitions read in the House of Commons by every constituency MP in BC.

Gerry Tiede (now our President) reported continuing good news regarding our Teachers Pension Plan! The 5-year annualized rate of return on investments is 10.6 per cent, well above the required 6.5 per cent return. This means a surplus, which means some plan improvements, including money flowing into the inflation adjustment account. Gerry also discussed improvements in our group insurance plans offered through Johnsons. Amongst other things these include improved benefits to our Travel Plans, a top-up trip cancellation plan, and the introduction of a stand-alone Extended Health Care Plan which provides an alternative to Green Shield. Gerry also provided a positive and reassuring update regarding the strategic plan our Patricia Clough was instrumental in implementing during her 2 - year tenure as Provincial President.

The RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation annual general meeting led off Saturday morning, followed by the BCRTA annual general meeting.

In keeping with tradition, Patricia Clough stepped down from the presidency after serving members in that role for the last two years. She was an active president who got out to local branches and instigated significant changes and improvements to our organization particularly through the work of the Innovation and Strategic Planning Committee.

Thank you Patricia for a job well done! Going forward, the organization is in good hands with Gerry Tiede as the new president.

## Don't forget...C-27 Pension Meeting

10 am

Monday, October 29

Downtown Activity Center Library

Salmon Arm