

**President's Report-**I recently read an article that spoke to artificial intelligence (AI) and how it will allow an online program to reproduce someone's voice and/or video image. Apparently, the AI program can duplicate a person's voice and/or video image from information posted on social media like YouTube, Facebook, etc. The article states that the program is able to duplicate a person's manner of speaking with exceptional precision and that the AI program has produced versions of Bernie Sanders singing 'Dancing Queen' and Donald Trump singing 'Sweet Dreams'. Using YouTube information, the AI program could make Trudeau, Obama or Sanders say anything whatsoever.

How are we going to trust anything electronically mediated in the very near future? There is already concern, rightly or wrongly with fake news. What do we do when anyone can use an AI program to imitate anyone else, for any reason that suits them?

Can you imagine a scam where a parent or grandparent gets a call from a computer program representing their child or grandchild using the actual voice and/or video image...a voice and/or video that is indistinguishable from the real thing?

The information above was gleaned from an article by Jordon Peterson in the Vancouver Sun on Saturday, August 24, 2019. I thought that the article was an interesting follow up to the presentations from Linda Fawcus.

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Oh, my old car already has 'driver assist'.  
...My wife!

**EXECUTIVE MEETINGS**-February 6, (2020), April 9, (2020), October 1, (2020), November 19, (2020)

**LUNCHEON MEETINGS**-December 5-(Christmas Luncheon) Feb. 20, (2020) April 23 (2020) October 15 (2020) December 3 (2020) -All luncheons now at the Burnaby Golf Course!!!

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**BURNABY RTA EXECUTIVE**

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**Editor**-Dave Carter. **Production**-Elizabeth Beer **Distribution**-Ilse Armanini, Marguerite Henderson

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**CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON-BURNABY MOUNTAIN GOLF COURSE**-Ilse Armanini

DATE/TIME: Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019 @ 12:00 noon (come earlier if you like)

NEW VENUE: Burnaby Mountain Golf Course, Banquet Room (enter through restaurant)

ADDRESS: 7600 Halifax Street, a couple of blocks east of Duthie. The golf course driveway is off Burnwood/Phillips Ave.

TRANSIT: From Holdom Skytrain Station, take the 136 bus.

MENU: Christmas smorgasbord/buffet, and we have access to the restaurant bar.

ENTERTAINMENT: Andante Choir with their Christmas concert

PRICE: \$30 – Pay us in the banquet room as usual. Remember the lunch must be preordered and is a commitment. We have been requested to finalize the number of attendees somewhat earlier than our previous caterer.

If you haven't been contacted, but would like to attend, please respond no later than Friday, Nov. 22 to:

D'Arcy Bader [bad5120@gmail.com](mailto:bad5120@gmail.com) 604 438 873

## **BRTA TREASURER'S REPORT-October 31, 2019-Marguerite Henderson**

**Credits**-April Luncheon-\$1040.00 Interest-\$.31 Membership-\$55.00

**Debits**-Scandinavian Centre-\$351.75 Catering-\$1,412.78 Newsletter-Printing-\$114.91

**Balance** as of September 30<sup>th</sup> \$4,031.98

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**WITH SADNESS**-no longer with us-David Farris

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**ANOTHER READ** -The Elegance of the Hedgehog-Muriel Barbery-Europa Editions-2008

The Housekeeper and the Professor-Yoko Ogawa-Picador-2009

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**R.R. SMITH- "BUILDING A LEGACY IN B.C. and AROUND the WORLD"**. R.R. Smith is a Canadian registered charity. Its purpose is to provide funding to support innovative projects which advance public education. All members of the Burnaby Retired Teachers' Association are also members of the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation. Each year the Foundation approves grant requests that have been submitted (by the end of February) for educational projects in Canada and abroad. University Scholarship requests are referred to those B.C. institutions already supported by R.R. Smith. This year the granting budget has been set at \$40 000.00. Burnaby is well represented on this Committee by Steve Bailey, Sarah Joyce and Dave Carter. Although the number of requests exceed the amount set aside for grants, the Committee is always encouraging new organizations to apply. The terms of reference are available on the R.R. Smith website. It is important to note that grants cannot be given for: food, salaries, construction, projects beyond the granting year or grants in perpetuity. If you know any organizations that qualify for grant consideration, please encourage them to apply by the end of February deadline.

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### **ADVICE FOR A DIFFICULT DAY**

"Today was a Difficult Day," said Pooh. There was a pause.

"Did you want to talk about it?" asked Piglet.

"No," said Pooh after a bit. "No, I don't think I do."

"That's okay," said Piglet and he came and sat beside his friend.

"What are you doing?" asked Pooh.

"Nothing really," said Piglet "Only I know what Difficult Days are like. I quite often don't feel like talking about it on my Difficult Days either."

"But goodness," continued Piglet, "Difficult Days are so much easier when you know you've got someone there for you and I'll always be here for you, Pooh."

And as Pooh sat there, working through in his head his Difficult Day, while the solid, reliable Piglet sat next to him quietly, swinging his little legs...he thought that his best friend had never been more right.

## **BRTA SCHOOL REUNIONS**

The BRTA Executive has decided to focus on specific schools as part of the regular luncheon meetings so that teachers can contact colleagues and organize a get-together.

The BSB's district zones will be used as the framework for school selection starting with Cariboo Lougheed and alternating between elementary and secondary. Please phone your former colleagues and encourage them to attend on the appointed day to connect with old friends.

Here is the schedule:

Feb. 20, 2020-**Cariboo Lougheed**- Armstrong, Cameron, Edmonds, Forest Grove, Lyndhurst, Seaforth, Second Street, Stoney Creek, Twelfth Avenue, and University Highlands.

April 23, 2020 -Burnaby Mountain and Cariboo Hill.

October 15, 2020 - **Central West** -Elementary. Brantford, Buckingham, Cascade Heights, Chaffey-Burke, Douglas Road, Gilpin, Inman, Lakeview, Marlborough and Morley.

First meeting of 2021-Burnaby Central and Moscrop.

The other zones will follow in a similar fashion.

Please note: 1. **Everyone is still invited to all meetings.**

2.. Notice of numbers is required in advance so lunch can be ordered at the Burnaby Golf Course

If you have questions or comments, please contact Leslie Lennox at 604-298-3776.

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## **Volunteer Opportunities at Royal Columbia Hospital!**

Are you interested in doing some volunteering? The Royal Columbian Hospital has a variety of programs where volunteers can help. Some choose to work in our Gift Shop, Lotto Booth or in the or 'New To You' Store. These are big fundraisers for the Auxiliary. Other options include being a Wayfinder around the hospital, providing refreshments for families around the Critical Care units or supporting patients with mental health issues. We also have volunteers who help maintain the clothing cupboard which provides clothing for patients in need, when they are discharged, as well as a variety of other volunteer tasks within the hospital.

Each year we raise a very large sum of money that is used to purchase much needed equipment for the hospital. Staff from the different units throughout the hospital make requests for funding for equipment that they need and the Auxiliary determines which equipment will be bought.

In so many ways, being a volunteer at RCH is enriching and very rewarding and in most cases you can choose when and for how long you will volunteer each week!!

If you are interested and would like more information on these opportunities, please call our Volunteer Coordinator, Kathy Corbeil at 604-520-4482, or our Coordinator, Louise Peters at 604-520-4237, or the Auxiliary President, Marlene Braidwood at 604-521-0551. They would all welcome any questions that you might have about volunteering at RCH.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR-My Family Tree-A Tale of Dry Rot and Scab Disease

It never crossed my mind to search for information concerning my ancestry, but my husband, Quinn, insisted. He felt that the only way to “get to the bottom” of my ‘proclivities’, and the reason why I ‘perseverated’ on so many topics and why I often ‘pontificated’ was to dredge up information from my past. (I would like all of you to know that I did not marry Quinn for a single thing that starts with the letter ‘p’). He had discovered an inexpensive website called “Whosyourdaddy” and for my birthday present, sent away for their registration kit.

Within a week I received an acknowledgement from Miss Inlink, including a specimen container in which I was to return a urine sample. The instructions stated:

1. “Please do not fill above the dotted line as ‘topping up’ will not enhance the results.”
2. “Do not substitute Holy Water as that will automatically trace your descendants back to Pope Adrian II and his family.”
3. “Wait for at least three days after eating asparagus before beginning to collect the sample.”
4. “When shipping the receptacle back to us, do not label it “Urine Sample” as it most likely will be stolen by the Russian Athletic Federation.”

It would take me months to list all the branches and twigs that surfaced when my tree arrived and the nuts that later fell out of it but suffice to say that there wasn’t a single rich, famous or even marginal human being worth mentioning. I have listed some of the rag tag and bobtail that surfaced.

\*In Africa, a ferocious tyrant terrified the populace. The natives called him “The Po Tuss” and his henchmen, called ‘Toadies’ roamed the countryside wrapped in wildebeest hides (fake gnus). His right-hand man was named Mel Mac and some historians claim that “The Po Tuss” was the ‘missing link’. Even if that isn’t true, he certainly was missing something. He eventually was stoned to death in a nectarine orchard and his last words were, “I’m peached!”

\*The Golden Horde was famous for marauding, wenching, despoiling and other raucous activity in Mongolia in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. One of my relatives, Bowlarama, was a conscientious objector who began a program called “U Khan Tu” to encourage young men to forgo the ‘pleasures of the flesh’ and pursue instead, ‘self-abnegation and sacrifice’. Genghis found out about it and the very next day, Bowlarama was found in his yurt, drowned in a vat of rancid, coagulated yogurt.

\*My great-great grandfather, Ever Infaust, started a security company in Chicago in the Roaring Twenties. The company was called ‘Sure Lock Homes’ and on February 14, 1929, he had a call-out to Lincoln Park Garage to fix a broken door. Wrong place at the wrong time! His Valentine gift was a concrete kimono at the bottom of the Chicago River.

\*Blondel the Unwitting, my distant relative, was a court minstrel for Henry VIII and was famous for his ballads and his political views. On June 29, 1534, at a court banquet, he performed his “Chanson d’Amour” which suggested Henry should stay married to Anne Boleyn and not pursue Jane Seymour. His hung, drawn and quartered body was buried on June 30, 1534.

\*My great-uncle was a lion tamer in Spuzzum and stumbled into one of the cages after a night of debauchery consuming local ‘screech’. Unfortunately, the lioness was teaching her mate to “jump through a few hoops” and my uncle, Claud Bawled, was attacked. His wife suffered a case of Peladophobia, and their marriage never fully recovered.

I am now going to search for the females in my family, beginning in Egypt, through the website “Whosyourmummy”. Stay tuned!

Malala Tett

## **BURNABY SCHOOL BOARD**-so much to be proud of!

-Burnaby Schools Win One-fifth of Provincial Awards-at the BC Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education. There were thirty finalists. Scott Stefanek and Wendel Williams were tops in their categories and the other finalists were Bryan Gidinski and Sabha Ghani.

-This summer, four secondary students from Byrne Creek represented Burnaby Schools at a prestigious competition held at NASA's Kennedy Space Center. Three of those four students were on the winning team judged by engineers from NASA. The competition emulates the experience of working as a member of an aerospace industry team. Students Umamah, Justin, Wayne and Wilson were tasked with designing a space settlement. Each team was provided with one of the attending aerospace managers from Australia, India and the United States.

-University Highlands has been designated as a "Fair Trade School", the first and only in BC. There are twenty-five Fair Trade schools across Canada. A "Fair Trade" designation requires that a school community learn about Fairtrade products which secure well-being for workers and farmers to ensure sustainable communities for all. Students were presented with a framed certificate at SFU's StreetFest held on Burnaby Mountain.

-Five hundred Grade 4 and 5 students participated in the first ever Indigenous Week of Learning. In partnership with the City of Burnaby, the program at the Burnaby Village Museum was a chance for students directly from Coast Salish elders and knowledge keepers who guided students in gaining a deeper appreciation and understanding of local First Nations history.

-Students throughout the District participated in the annual Terry Fox Run. Many schools had projects and assemblies where they discussed how Terry Fox had inspired people to contribute to community and to be courageous and hopeful. Students also raised funds-Chaffey-Burke Elementary alone raised \$7 049.50 for cancer research.

-At the end of the last school year students from Parkcrest, Lochdale, Capitol Hill and Montecito competed in the first-ever "Hunger Games" to collect for the Food Bank. Now that the Greater Vancouver Food Bank has completed its move to Burnaby, the elementary students dropped by to welcome them and share in more of their efforts.

-Students continue to enjoy outdoor learning. Examples this year include Lochdale Elementary's annual three-day trip to the Sunshine Coast. While there, students discussed what leadership means. ConnEx students went on an all-day canoeing trip at Deer Lake. ConnEx is a Program of Choice held at Burnaby Mountain Secondary School where Grade 9 and 10 students explore ideas, curriculum and local surroundings-all with an emphasis on experiential activities.

-Cross Country Meets are held rain or shine and hundreds of students took place at the starting line at the 1.2 kilometre course near Burnaby Lake. This is a partnership with schools, parents and families as volunteer drivers are critical to getting students to the meets. Staff members volunteer their time.

-Lochdale Community School used the creation of a new mural to bring together students, staff, families and members of the community. Students used an inquiry model to explore ideas. They were asked to consider what it means to be both a Lochdale student and a community member.

**\*Editor's Note: It was with sadness that we said goodbye to Sandra Wade who retired from the Burnaby School Board Office at the end of October. She was a great contributor and supporter of the BRTA Newsletter. We welcome Joanne Simpson who has taken her place.**

**BURNING MAN-Janet White** Describing Burning Man is like describing the Grand Canyon or sex to someone...you must be there to experience it. I wondered why 68,500 people would gather on a desert prone to dust storms to ride their bikes around all day. I was impressed at the sunset on the surrounding Sierra Nevada Mountains, but nothing else looked exciting from the tower cam. My brother was picked in a lottery for tickets and invited me to go along with him. I did not hesitate to say yes. We packed up the huge bus-like RV and headed off to Nevada.

170 miles from Reno, on a cracked bed of a long dry lake, is Black Rock Desert, where a miracle occurs each year from August 26th to September 2nd. It is an art festival called Burning Man. People may hear that it is a big week-long party of drugs and sex, but both are overshadowed by the sheer size, quality and creativity of the art forms.

At the entry to the desert, a loooooong line forms just to get onto the desert floor. Four and a half hours just to get to the entry area. 'Pulsing', it is called: stopping and starting, sometimes for half an hour, but out of cars, vans and RV's pop people with their hula hoops, juggling, bikes, and fire sticks to entertain the lineups. We got the blender out and made margheritas. When we arrived at the gates, we are searched for drugs and stowaways. All us 'virgins' to Burning Man get initiated to our future week of life on the desert, in a secret, but fun ceremony.

Now we searched for a suitable campsite. The Burning Man Festival community is called Black Rock City and is laid out like a clock. We eventually settled at Interstellar. Every year there is a theme and this year it was 'Cargo Cult', translated as what you make of 'stuff' left or washed up on a beach. My brother knew to camp far enough away from the 24/7 techno-music to get a good night's sleep, but also close enough to the action to enjoy it.

Then we jumped on our bikes and headed out in the desert, called the 'Playa', to look at art installations and the 'Man' they were going to burn. It was very cool early in the morning, so a jacket, long pants, and a scarf to cover your face were necessary. The Burning Man was a huge green-lit space man on an enormous wooden spaceship (all made without nails). He would be burned on the 6th day. Next was a three-part temple, reminiscent of Thailand, containing a 20-foot Inukshuk, made from shiny basalt. People here were reverently silent, as they tacked up pictures of their loved ones that had passed or wrote notes to them on the rafters...this whole structure, too, would burn, in a solemn ceremony, on the seventh day.

Next, an enormous forty foot wire mesh woman with her hands raised to the sky, rose from the desert and people were there to watch the sun appear as her glowing heart through the wire mesh, then as it rose, as if it was caught in her hands. This spiritual woman was to remain my favorite art installation and I often headed out at sunrise to see her. She represented freedom from tyranny: I later learned the artist models a different pose of this woman, each year.

For seven days we enjoyed just a small portion of what everyone 'gifted' to us...no money is exchanged for anything except ice. Everyone did ride bikes, but they were decorated and lit-up, and many wore Cirque de Soleil-type costumes. There was Tutu Tuesday, White or Wedding Wednesday, and Rabbit Thursday. Skydiving, margheritas, Playland-type rides, trapeze, wrestling, medical clinics, TED talks, sex workshops, and thirty-five weddings...everything was free. Hundreds of art-cars and monster vehicle floats cruised the 'streets' and lit up at night with LED lights, often with propane shooting from them. And MOOP, Matter-Out-Of-Place, there was none; everyone kept the area immaculately clean. It was the best of every New Year's party, PNE parade and adult Disneyland combined. The techno-music, by the best DJs in America, provided the background boom-boom ambiance, and oh, how we danced on the 'playa'.

We left as we came, in a long-snaking line-up, pulsing off the desert, but this time, with a smile on our faces, a strong sense of what community really meant, what cooperation could be like if everyone in the world really shared, were kind and accepted everyone for who they were and how they wanted to be. We now were officially 'Burners'.

# Safety Tips for Seniors-How to Avoid Being Targeted

Prevention should always be your primary objective. After all, the best way to stay safe is to not get into dicey situations in the first place.

Did you know that your body language and mannerisms can give off signals that make you more likely to be a target for criminals? In one famous study, researchers recorded more than 60 people walking along a busy New York City street. Then, they showed the video to a group of prison inmates who had been convicted of assaulting strangers. The prisoners were asked to identify the people on the video who would make the most desirable targets.

The inmates were remarkably consistent in their choices. It turned out that age, size, and gender were not the deciding factors. Instead, the criminals selected victims who dragged their feet and moved awkwardly, who were slumped over, and who kept their eyes on the ground.<sup>2</sup> Those people were perceived as being easy to overpower.

If you can exhibit confidence and self-assurance, a potential attacker may decide you're not the easy mark he or she was hoping for. To avoid appearing vulnerable, try following these tips:

- **Be alert and aware of your surroundings.** Developing the habit of scanning the area around you will help you spot potential threats and allow you to avoid them.
- **Stand straight and keep your chin up and your shoulders back.** A hunched posture and a lowered gaze will make you seem fearful and timid.
- **Walk smoothly and fluidly to convey confidence.** If possible, keep the same pace as the pedestrians around you.
- **Make brief eye contact with the people around you** to demonstrate that you are aware of them (but don't stare or act aggressively). If a potential assailant knows you have seen him or her, the advantage of surprise disappears.
- **Don't talk on your phone or stare at a map while out walking.** Doing so indicates that you aren't paying attention to what's going on around you. Plan your route before you leave your home, hotel, or other point of origin; if you need assistance, step into a store and ask a clerk to help you.
- **Don't let a potential attacker distract you.** If a stranger asks you for the time, don't stop and look down at your watch. Instead, keep walking and raise your watch up to your eye level in order to keep the person in your line of sight.
- **Stick to well-lit and populated areas at night.** It's also a good idea to keep a mini flashlight and whistle on your key ring and keep the keys in your hand (with one key sticking out between your fingers) while you're walking.
- **Don't draw attention to yourself.** Keep valuables out of sight and don't wear expensive clothes or flashy jewelry. If you use a purse, carry it close to you and don't let it dangle too far from your body. You might even want to conceal your purse under your jacket or coat.