

# Vancouver Tabloid

Vancouver Retired Teachers' Association MAY 2020 Newsletter

In January we heard of this new type of pneumonia or virus that was killing people in China yet had little idea of what a pandemic would be like here in Vancouver. In this issue read the first hand accounts of two women who became infected with COVID-19 virus, the social events before the Pandemic struck BC and how some of our members are handling this new world.

## WON'T YOU JOIN US FOR ZOOM-TIME?



**PLEASE JOIN US** for our June Social Time with your hot tea or coffee on Tuesday June 2 ONLINE via ZOOM Invitation. To join ZOOM online, you must give either your email address or your phone number to the Online Host.

Guest speaker BCRTA President, Gerry Tiede, will provide an update on BCRTA & Pension Matters. There will be a short business report. But the main part of the meeting is to Connect with you socially and provide some Community in this stressful time. There will even be a Door Prize!



So on the morning of Tuesday June 2, make yourself a fresh pot of tea or coffee as well as a plate of cookies or veggies and JOIN us online! Further details on How to use ZOOM will be available on [www.vrta.ca](http://www.vrta.ca) starting May 20; or explore the Internet to learn how easy it is to JOIN a Zoom meeting.

***Pre-registration with President is required; a limited number of invitations available for meeting.***

### Social Coffee/Tea gathering Zoom Meeting

**Tuesday JUNE 2**

**At 10:30 AM via your Desktop, laptop, iPad or Cell phone**  
**This is a Virtual Meeting**

REGISTER with the Online Host  
by Thursday May 28 using EMAIL and send to:

**Anastasia Mirras, HOST of VRTA ZOOM**  
**[VRTA.president@gmail.com](mailto:VRTA.president@gmail.com)**  
**OR PHONE Register with 604 872-1859 Winola**

**IDENTICAL REGISTRATION ON BACK PAGE**

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# President's Greetings



We hope that everyone is staying safe and keeping their distance. Your Executive has been meeting via Zoom video conference every second week since the end of March. We feel that it's vital to keep all our members "in the loop" about new developments and give you a sense of what's going on.

Congratulations to Sheila Pither and Barbara Mikulec the newly-elected President and 1st Vice President of COSCO: respectively. COSCO continues to hold its monthly Vancouver delegates meetings via Zoom. The COSCO Conference is postponed to 2021.

Our VRTA Nominating Committee -Winola Chu, Norma Westrom, and Denis Ottewell— are looking to recruit more talented and committed individuals to join the Executive. PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THEM, if interested.

We have postponed our AGM until September 8th. However, the BCRTA AGM will be taking place, October 1 to 3, probably both virtually with some "in-place" events. Would you like to be a Delegate? Six are needed. CONTACT ME BY THURSDAY MAY 28, IF INTERESTED.

...Pres. Report Continued Page 3



VRTA executive met Tue. April 29 via ZOOM to discuss our future.

## Activities on Hold for now EXCEPT Book Club meeting on Zoom LEADERS for Activities

**\*BOOK CLUB:** Diane Smith frandia@shaw.ca—3rd Wed at 2 pm  
- \*Feel free to Join Waiting list; then Second Book Club can form

**SCRABBLE:** Sayoko Saimoto— sai389@telus.net —4th Wed after 1:00 pm

**STROLLERS:** Norma Westrom normawestrom@hotmail.com—Wed 10:45 am

**WALKERS:** Margaret Yoshida margyoshi@gmail.com—Wed 10:00 am

## Vancouver Tabloid

A publication of the Vancouver Branch of the British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association

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### VRTA EXECUTIVE 2019– 2020

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**VACANT**

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### Members at Large

Tom Brunker, Barb Mikulec,  
Sheila Pither, Ali Pollard, Art Rempel,  
Les Rowe, Diane Smith,  
Norma Westrom, Patricia Wright

### Volunteers

Lil Cumberbirch, Ora Fraser,  
Carol Perdue, Bea Raymond

**WEBSITE:** [www.vrta.ca](http://www.vrta.ca)

## Calendar

*\*Please feel free to join us - \*Notify  
vrta.president@gmail.com*

**May 26 Tue.** Exec. Meeting  
(\*Exec. Meet Biweekly at  
10:00 AM by ZOOM)

**June 2 Tue VRTA SOCIAL**

**June 3 Wed Exec. Meeting**

**Sept 8 Tue VRTA AGM**



# VALENTINE'S LUNCH



*VRTA members and their guests wore red in support of Saint Valentine's Day week at the lunch and exchanged greetings before all restaurants were closed down a month later due to the Pandemic.*



*Melodie Mallinder from St. James Academy of Music spoke at Valentine's Lunch.*

Around 37 people attended the Valentine's Lunch, on Tuesday February 11 at the Langara Golf Clubhouse. Development officer for St. James Academy of Music, Melodie Mallinder, described the

history of the Academy and its mission to provide music lessons FREE for students in downtown Eastside Vancouver. The school arranges for the transport and after school snacks for these stu-

dents to ensure they really can enjoy their musical instruction with each other and their teachers in comfort. Later, the executive decided to donate \$200 to this non-profit service group.

*Pres. Report Continued fr.pg. 2*

We passed these motions :

- *That the VRTA support the COSCO initiative that the pharmacists not charge three dispensing fees for a 90 day prescription.*
- *That the VRTA support the BCRTA initiative to provide high dose flu vaccines for seniors at no cost.*

PLEASE DO JOIN us at our "Virtual Social" on June 2nd, in place of our regular June AGM. Find details on page 1 as to HOW to register for it. I really want to SEE you all!

Keep an eye on your Inbox for further updates.

**-Anastasia Mirras**



*Diners (from left) Noel Herron, Tom Tylka, Ora Fraser, Pirkko Halonen, Donna Faye Madhosingh, Patricia Wright, Norma Westrom, Marilyn Rushton and Winola Chu (side view) enjoy the healthy hot, Mediterranean meal.*

# SURVIVING THE VIRUS

## The VRTA's Past President describes her medical ordeal

*Winola Chu, past president of the Vancouver Retired Teachers' Association, caught Covid-19 virus in April. She agreed to describe her harrowing tale for members. Fortunately, she is now completely free of the virus.*

**Three days prior** to the onset of my fever, I was tired. My fever began on a Tuesday and by Friday, my fever returned after the Tylenol wore off. I called my physician and reported my symptoms including low energy, no appetite and weakness. She sent me to UBC urgent care. There they took a series of blood tests, chest x-Rays and urine samples. Due to my age, the doctor decided to give me a Covid -19 test, told me the results would take a couple of days and then sent me home since I did not have any medical difficulties.

To my surprise, the hospital called the next morning to tell me I tested positive for Covid -19. I was to return to the hospital immediately if I had trouble breathing. That was Saturday and by Monday morning, my blood pressure dropped to 85/50, I nearly passed out due to weakness, I had diarrhea and everything tasted bitter: I could not take deep breaths!

Back I went to UBC for more tests and then to VGH where they had all the medical equipment I needed. I was placed in the respiratory trauma care to receive oxygen but while giving a urine sample my ox-

ygen level dropped and would not return to the 90% level, even after receiving oxygen.

The team of doctors decided to place me in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), intubated with a respirator for 4 nights until my oxygen level



reached 80+%. I experienced a lot of discomfort with tubes up my nose, down my throat, plus an IV and catheter for urine. They medicated me a lot for infections and pneumonia so I could fight the corona virus and handle the pain. I received neither food nor water, and was unable to speak; they fed and medicated me intravenously.

**Eventually I was unhooked** and placed in a ward bed for 6 days until my oxygen reached 90+%. Meanwhile the virus triggered an episode of Atrial Fibrillation and I am on a blood thinner. They will monitor me and take an echocardiogram in a month's time. Finally I was discharged with instructions to return in 3 months' time for X-Ray and pulmonary tests.

I was impressed with the care, pro-

fessional knowledge and team work by the nurses, doctors and respiratory technicians whom I needed 24/7 to keep me alive. I am grateful that the doctors decided on early intervention. Otherwise, I would have been sedated and in ICU for 7 or more days and may not have made it.

**I returned home** to quarantine for 14 days and it took that many days to regain some strength but I am still building my stamina. I unknowingly passed the Virus to my son but he has recovered mostly at home yet got pneumonia. It is a strange and unpredictable virus as the symptoms are similar to influenza but with so many different symptoms. I luckily did not have nausea, vomit constantly, dry cough nor pneumonia. How did I get this virus?

I realized that for two weeks before my first symptom, I was out every day in large crowd-type activities, tired, run down, stressed with low immunity. Anyone over 65 will have a lower immunity compared to those younger, even if you are in great shape and healthy. I must have been exposed many times to Covid-19 and I was not careful; I forgot to wash with soap constantly or to avoid touching my face. Everyone should be aware (especially over 65): stay safe, be careful and follow all of the guidelines. Take care!

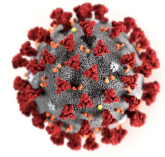
**-Winola Chu**





**Ros Kellett, Tabloid Editor**

# COVID-19 has changed everyone's life



**As I write**, the last two months have changed our daily lives dramatically. TABLOID has changed its theme to address the COVID-19 virus. We are grateful BC's public healthcare system saved the life of Winola Chu.

## Editorial

This time of Self Isolation and social distancing releases me from many responsibilities, such as weekly care of grandchildren. We have more time and Life seems wonderful! But for non-seniors without work and income and especially parents who are trying to work as well as co-teach and care for their children- they are busier than ever; and the virus still lurks in BC. Life seems awful! But I am grateful for the federal and provincial governments giving frequent updates on the financial relief and regulatory changes now available. Changes continue as BC will lift some restrictions in mid-May and perhaps more over the summer. Life is uncertain!

One thing is certain – Be Prepared to Change!. We need to use virtual communication tools more. Anastasia helps the executive work with ZOOM as we learn how easy it is to connect. Denis Ottewell takes superb minutes and TABLOID photographs. Come meet us June 2!

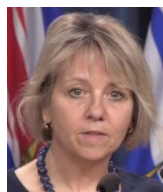
## COVID –19 PRESUMPTIVE SURVIVOR

On March 11th after a wonderful 4 weeks in Portugal I flew home to Vancouver but felt ill on the trip. Back home I coughed even more, and was shivery and overall aching. My travel companions were being diagnosed as COVID 19 positive and some went to hospital but I didn't have a high fever or any breathing problems.

I phoned all the appropriate resources, was instructed to presume I had COVID 19 and was required to stay home. They wouldn't test me as I wasn't a Front line worker. So I was forced into Self-Isolation. For over two weeks I never got out of my pajamas; I hardly ate as I had no appetite and I lost 8 pounds. My energy level was zero; I napped a lot.

Gradually I worked each morning on the crossword and Sudoku puzzles in the newspapers. Occasionally I went downstairs to work on my quilt and even took short walks outside the house. Each day I feel stronger; maybe before this is over I will do some house cleaning and decluttering.

**-Elaine Anderson**



*Dr. Bonnie Henry, BC's Provincial Public Health Officer, provides daily updates and always ends with this good advice:*

**BE KIND, BE CALM, BE SAFE.**

## Some Tips and Observations on COVID-19 Virus

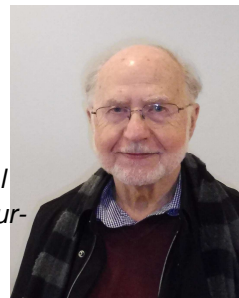
- understand how and when to use; masks, gloves, sterile wipes, hand sanitizers.
- senior shopping hours are offered by some food and merchandise stores; usually very early in the am.
- many banks and financial businesses are closed, with just one branch open for business, often with restricted hours. (This is my experience in Burnaby, where only one branch of VanCity is open.)
- many people have been laid off or lost their jobs. Their financial needs are a priority; families need help. (Our daughter-in-law in Montreal was laid off with thousands of others, by Air Canada, despite 23 years seniority).
- cash will not be accepted, only "cards", especially for "take outs" and home deliveries.
- your reusable packing/storage bags, can't be used. We are back to plastic bags.
- keep in touch with others and avoid social loneliness. Use your phone or computer Internet.
- find a project or something to do. Avoid becoming bored because you are stuck at home.
- The list goes on. Life will never be the same for many.

**-Denis Ottewell**

# WORKSHOP ON DRUGS AND ADDICTIONS



*Retired physician, Dr. Alexander Cherkzoff (right) provided medical advice and guidance during the February workshop.*



*Members and guests, 27 in all, attended the Feb. 18 workshop on*

There was a good turnout of over two dozen members and guests at our double-header Workshop Tuesday February 18 at the Hellenic Centre. Betty Kosel, former VSTA rep to the VBE District Health and Safety Committee, led the first session on Medication Awareness and why our aging bodies may be more vulnerable to drug overdoses, side-effects and unintended drug interactions. There was lively discussion and expert practitioners, nurse Ester Aneke and retired physician, Dr. Alexander Cherkzoff, pro-

vided valuable advice. Following a short break, retired RCMP officer Neil Munro spoke on a variety of Addictions that can cause problems for the individual and their families in the “golden” years of their life. He relayed some of his on-the-job experiences related to drinking and gambling, for example, and how hard it was for the individual to recognize they had a problem. Handouts with useful links were distributed at both workshops and are available from COSCO (see their website) or our secretary, Denis Ottewell.

*At right: Retired RCMP officer Neil Munro spoke on addictions at the Workshop.*



*Speakers Betty Kosel (left) and Ester Aneke (right) flank Barb Mikulec who introduced them at the Workshop.*



## COPING WITH SOCIAL ISOLATION

### HOW I am staying SANE during this Pandemic LOCKDOWN!

I was lucky to be visiting the library when they announced their abrupt closing so I loaded my arms with wonderful books which will not be due until the COVID 19 crisis is over. Then I looked at my craft area and discovered several quilt patterns and fabric ready to sew. This wonderful hobby has given much pleasure. The third enjoya-



ble area for my time is walking with my husband, especially where we meet few people, and we usually

take our camera to capture lovely gardens, tree lined streets of cherry blossoms, etc. In the evenings I am putting my photos on the computer into files, and getting the Morocco photos ready to be printed into a photobook. Hobbies, and phoning friends keep me sane!

— **Barb Mikulec**

# Live Stage Offerings

MAY-JULY



With the pandemic occurring and social distancing rules in place there is nothing to report regarding Live Stage Offerings. Instead, I thought I would write about how much we miss the Arts and the role they play in our lives. They make us think, they broaden our perspectives, they entertain us and they make us laugh and cry. Not being actors or actresses ourselves we appreciate the passion and energy that goes into each performance. We look forward to upcoming seasons with curiosity

and enthusiasm.

So, for now, when we are not able to experience the thrill and immediacy of live performances, we have time to reflect upon past performances and we look forward to the time when we will eventually be able to gather in large groups again. We are grateful for the variety of all our local Arts venues and with a future Covid-19 vaccine I am sure we will happily continue to support the Arts with renewed vigour.

- Ora Fraser

## MUSICAL opportunities during COVID-19

Many organizations are offering free streaming of performances while we physically isolate. Check out the websites for: Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, CBC, BBC, The London Theatre, The English National Ballet, Shakespeare's Globe, The National Theatre at Home etc.

The **Metropolitan Opera** is currently streaming shows every night at 4:30 pm PDT on the Met's website <https://www.metopera.org/nightly-opera-stream/>. Each production stays viewable for 23

hours until 3:30 PDT the next day.

Fans of Andrew Lloyd Webber can enjoy a collection of his greatest musical hits for free online. A different Musical streams each week on **The Show Must Go On!**...a new YouTube channel devoted to this project. Shows are available for 48 hours or longer if you pay. Check out: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdmPjhKMaXNNeCr1FjuMvag>



## COVID JOKES

-Diane Smith

- Half of us are going to come out of this quarantine as amazing cooks. The other half will come out with a drinking problem!
- I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
- Still haven't decided where to go for the Weekend ----- The Living Room or The Bedroom?!
- PSA: every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
- I used to spin that toilet paper like I was on a Wheel of Fortune. Now I turn it like I'm cracking a safe.
- Home schooling is going well. 2 students suspended for fighting and 1 parent-teacher fired for swearing on the job.
- Day 6 of Home schooling: My child just said "I hope I don't have the same teacher next year".... I'm offended!
- Better 6 feet apart than 6 feet under!

**THEME & DEADLINE  
for the NEXT ISSUE -  
Friday  
August 7 2020**

**How to Resume  
Life after COVID-19**  
Photos welcome. About  
200 words.



## Scholarship Fund –HELP RAISE FUND TO \$10,000

The fund received a modest boost from December donations; so the funds now are over \$8200. More funds are needed to build a stable account capable of providing significant and continuing scholarships to support post-secondary students who study teaching, geriatric care or gerontology research as a career.

**DONATING ONLINE IS EASY**— Get an instant tax receipt. Go to [www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca](http://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca), click "Funds" at the top, type R.R. Smith in "Search" area, click on "**R.R. Smith Community Fund**", click on "Give to this Fund", and fill in details. Designate funds by typing **Friends of VRTA** in "Leave a comment" space. Donations of \$20 or more get a tax receipt.



## HOW TO LIVE A LONG LIFE!

### Thoughts on my 103rd Birthday

On May 1 Art Rempel, former BCRTA President and long time VRTA executive member, turned 103 years old. His observations:  
-On my 100th birthday, if anyone told me I would be here for my 103rd I would have told them “\*#!\*#!”

-Keep involved and connected with family and friends. Cultivate friendships with people of all ages and cultures. We can learn so much from each other and your life will be enriched greatly. Always believe in the goodness of people.

-I am so grateful for the years I have been given and look forward to seeing my grandchildren and great grandchildren achieve their dreams.

-Change anything you wish to!

**Art Rempel** (as told to Joanne Rempel his daughter)



*Art waits for his Birthday Cake while receiving greetings from family and friends on that great day. He received personal greetings from BCRTA President Gerry Tiede, saying Art is an Inspiration to us All!*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### VRTA AGM -

Tue. Sept 8

Probably ONLINE

—Details available in AUGUST VANCOUVER TABLOID



**Did you know that your non-teaching spouse can become a member of BCRTA?**

If you are an active member of the BCRTA then your spouse can join as an associate member. The spouse is then eligible for any of the member benefits, such as \*MEDOC, \*Johnson Prestige Insurance and other Member Advantage programs.

(\*Dual membership is not required in these and some other programs).



### HAS YOUR POSTAL OR EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGED?

Laurie Boyd of the BCRTA prefers that you contact her directly using the new ONLINE Form. <https://bcrt.ca/update-member-info/>



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send letters, advice or news items to [roskellett@gmail.com](mailto:roskellett@gmail.com) 604-873-0568. Add name, email address & phone number. Keep under 150 words; they may be edited for length and clarity.

**REGISTRATION -TUE. JUNE 2 COFFEE TIME  
10:30 AM**

**ONLINE ZOOM GATHERING-**  
**To attend please register online & tell us:**

Full Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Email [VRTA.president@gmail.com](mailto:VRTA.president@gmail.com)

Register for Phone only connection: Winola (604) 872-1859

**by THURSDAY May 28**

**See Page 1 for More details of our Coffee Social Time**