
BRTA MATTERS

Volume 53

Newsletter of the Burnaby Retired Teachers' Association

June 2020

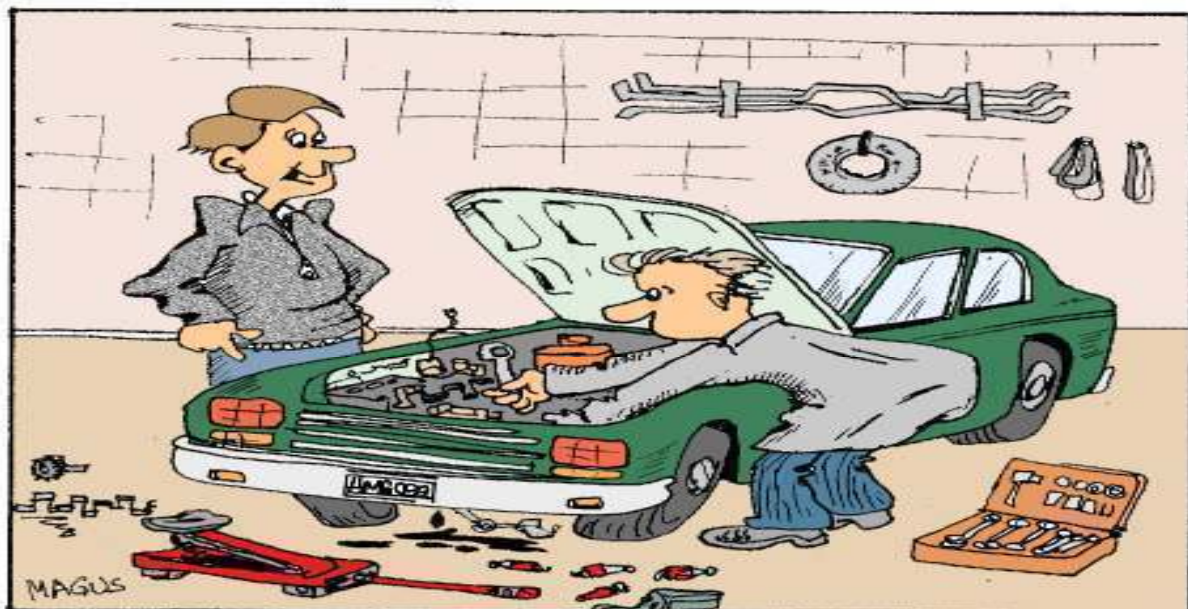
President's Message: I hope that you are doing well, and that you're as healthy and comfortable as possible. This season will pass and our lives, at some point in the future, will return to 'normal'. I'm really hoping that a vaccine can be developed in the not too distant future.

The BRTA Executive recently had a 'zoom' meeting. We've cancelled luncheons for this year. We've asked Art Hister, our guest speaker for October, to reschedule for next year. We've postponed our annual general meeting to next year. We also decided that we would maintain all Executive positions until next year.

Teachers in our province need to be congratulated for maintaining our education system through these very difficult times. Trying to provide online learning for a cadre of students has been very challenging. I've had the opportunity to speak to a few teachers about how things were going. The biggest challenge seems to be with technology. Some homes don't have a computer. Some homes aren't able to allow children to use the computer because parents are working from home and need to use the only computer they own. Teachers must also be worried about their health and that of their students as schools begin to reopen. It might be a nice gesture if you could send a message of support to a teacher you know or our local BTA office.

There are a lot of things that have happened during the time I was crafting this column. I've tried over and over to write something about racism and human rights. After each attempt, I erased what I wrote because my words couldn't do justice to hurt and suffering that I've been witness to. My hope is that the protests will be the impetus for change. I think the start is for each of us to reflect on our own thoughts and actions.

What keeps me on a positive track are my friends and family. I especially treasure my time with my grandchildren. I've been enlisted to help with their education. I assist with reading and weekly science experiments. If I knew how much fun it was going to be, I would have had my grandchildren first! I hope to see you soon where we can share our stories about trying to survive the pandemic.



I bought it from a little old high school teacher, but how was I supposed to know she lent it to her students on weekends.

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS-On Zoom until further notice

LUNCHEON MEETINGS-On hold

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With Sadness: No longer with us-Amy MacRae, George McCluskie and Dorothy Wollitzer.

Burnaby Retired Teachers' Scholarship and Bursary Foundation

c/o Burnaby School District, 5325 Kincaid Street, Burnaby, B.C, V5G 1W2

Yes, I would like to support the Burnaby Retired Teachers' Scholarship and Bursary Foundation. I understand the money will be used to support graduating students in their future studies.

Enclosed is my cheque for \$25 \$50 \$100 other

A tax receipt will be issued

Signature

Address

Name (Please Print)

City Province Postal Code

BRTA TREASURER'S REPORT-April 2020-AGM Report-Marguerite Henderson

Balance-April 1, 2019 \$6 973.45

Income- Membership Fees \$5 105.00 Lunches \$6 100.00 Bank Interest \$5.84 Total \$11 210.84

Expenses- Scandinavian Centre \$703.50 Catering \$2 573.19 Bby Mountain Golf Club \$5 124.14

Newsletter-Printing \$435.78 Postage-\$379.04

Special Events-Poinsettias \$531.72 Keyboard Rental \$42.56 Gifts (Honoraria) \$175.00

Total Expenses \$9 964.93

Balance as of March 31, 2020 \$8 219.36

From **Marilyn Bullock**- (Sue Callahan found a poem that sure reminds me of some people I know. It was quite the process to track down the author: **Jane Beaumont** from Auckland, New Zealand.)

I'm normally a social girl, I love to meet my mates,
But lately with the virus here, we can't go out the gates.
You see, we are the 'oldies' now, we need to stay inside,
If they haven't seen us for a while, they'll think we've upped and died.
They'll never know the things we did, before we got this old,
There wasn't any Facebook, so not everything was told.
We may seem sweet old ladies, who would never be uncouth,
But we grew up in the 60s, if you only knew the truth!
There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll!! the pill and miniskirts,
We smoked, we drank, we partied, and were quite outrageous flirts.
Then we settled down, got married, and turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana, who on earth did we become?
We didn't mind the change of pace, because our lives were full,
But to bury us before we're dead, is like red rag to a bull!
So here you find me stuck inside, for four weeks, maybe more,
I finally found myself again, then I had to close the door!
It didn't really bother me, I'd while away the hour,
I'd bake for all the family, but I've got no bloody flour!
Now Netflix is just wonderful, I like a gutsy thriller,
I'm swooning over Idris, or some random sexy killer.
At least I've got a stash of booze, for when I'm being idle,
There's wine and whiskey, even gin, if I'm feeling suicidal!
So, let's all drink to lockdown, to recovery and to health,
And hope this bloody virus, doesn't decimate our wealth.
We'll all get through the crisis, and be back to join our mates,
Just hoping I'm not far too wide, to fit through the flaming gates.

Burnaby School Board-highlights May 26, 2020

Connecting with Each Other and Creating Community

Even as COVID-19 has changed how people come together, schools continue to find creative ways to build community. Several elementary schools are holding virtual Sports Days, including **Inman, Kitchener and Rosser**. A teacher at **Burnaby North Secondary**, who normally gives her Advanced Placement students a little goodie bag to encourage them during exam time, got them their own theme song this year, instead. The AP English Literature teacher commissioned a talented friend and trumpet player to create a song just for them. Meanwhile students from **Second Street Community School** paid a heartwarming and virtual visit to two local seniors' homes: Normanna and George Derby. Building on another project, their history of service in the community, and their school tradition of a "joke of the day," students created a "virtual visit" in the form of a video for residents, which can also be seen on our website. Several schools have also created videos for students and families.

Inventiveness Maintains Long-Standing Traditions

This is the 38th year of **Arts Alive** – an annual showcase of exceptional student art that's held in partnership with the Burnaby Art Gallery. Working with art teachers from all eight of our secondary schools, the BAG took the exhibition virtual this year. Fifty pieces of art from talented students in Grades 8 through 12 were chosen for the online display. Also online this year, is the annual **Words Writing Project**, which celebrates the best in student writing. Unique to Burnaby Schools, Words began in 1985. More than 100 pieces of poetry and prose are available to read on the district's website – along with images of the incredible cover art created by Elizabeth, a Grade 12 student at **Byrne Creek Community School**. A full page ad, sponsored by the Burnaby Now, that included a letter from the Board congratulating the student authors on their achievements, was published in the paper. Each writer also received their limited edition print anthology and certificate in the mail. Both Arts Alive and Words provide career exploration opportunities for student artists and writers.

Virtual Assembly Supports Grads with Safe Choices

Kevin Brooks is a Road Safety Speaker who travels to schools during grad season, sharing his personal story, and how after making the choice to drink and drive, he's now permanently paralyzed. Brooks was scheduled to speak at **École Alpha Secondary**. It would have been his third year having frank conversations with Grade 12s there about the consequences of intoxication and driving. Rather than cancel because of COVID-19, Alpha arranged for Brooks to speak with all students from across the District in a way that has never been done before by him or us. During the virtual assembly, students posted questions for Brooks in the chat. He talked about perseverance and supporting each other during tough times – messages all the more poignant as students manage living through a pandemic. Film students from **Burnaby North** recorded the talk for future viewing and so closed captioning could be added later.

IDAHAAT Reimagined Each year, the District recognizes the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia – or "IDAHAAT" – with a student breakfast and speakers. Our **SOGI Committee** re-imagined its annual event for 2020 in light of COVID-19. On May 22, it held a virtual "breakfast," which was broadcast live and recorded by **Burnaby North** students. More than 100 people registered to watch. The event was emceed by the District's SOGI leads Dan Adrian and Bryan Gidinski and included BC's Minister of Education, Rob Fleming, and our own Board Chair, Gary Wong. The virtual event also featured a collection of pre-recorded videos from a diverse group of local, queer community members ranging from prominent authors and trailblazing politicians to Burnaby's own students.

Letter to the Editor: One unanticipated benefit of the COVID pandemic is that in lieu of walking, exercising, visiting the grandkids, shopping, going to the hairdressers, etc. I now have three sleeps per day (at night, mid-morning and mid-afternoon) and therefore three separate dream sequences to entertain, baffle and terrify me. My husband, Abner, has no time for extra sleeps as he spends every waking hour on the couch, (avec suds) viewing, ‘Basketball Wives’, ‘Bob’s Burgers’, ‘WWE Raw’, ‘Darts’, ‘Pawn Stars’ and reruns of ‘Baywatch’. I can’t blame him because his mother, affectionately known as Mammy Yokum, home schooled him by having him watch ‘Search for Tomorrow’, ‘Love of Life’, ‘As the World Turns’, ‘General Hospital’, ‘The Edge of Night’ and ‘Days of Our Lives’. He still perseverates about Luke and Laura saving the world from being frozen, Marlena being possessed by the Devil, Timmy, the doll that came to life, the obsessive orangutan nurse, the horny gorilla, the reincarnated aborted fetus and Skye falling into a volcano. Even his day-to-day conversation reflects this bizarre upbringing. At supper yesterday, he looked at me and said, “Erica, I’m just not ready for a different kind of woman, not a spitfire like Kendall or Maureen. You’re kind of opposite of that in a way”.

Back to my dreams! Most people have visions of flying, falling, torture, being chased, being lost, sex, alien abduction, financial status, pot-bellied stoves, blissful moments, swimming, food processing, medical problems, dental appointments or primary earth elements, but because of COVID, I have nightmares and night terrors about **HAIR!** In one dream I am a young girl and in my “tonorial splendor” I am sporting Shirley Temple rag curls and dancing around singing “On the Good Ship Lollipop”. Then I am transformed wearing Heidi braids and have somehow learned to yodel. Then I sprout Pippi Longstocking tresses and I turn into a tomboy. These are my happy memories where my locks are my ‘crowning glory’ with swoopy, subtle flowing waves, blessed with lots of bulk, camouflaging my forehead wrinkles, with amplifying body ready for any style that I might want to consider. I even imagine looking incredible with my beehive at graduation!

There is another pleasant dream where I am a young woman who looks magnificent with every type of hair style; Audrey Hepburn, pompadour, pony tail, ironed, crimped, updo, Sinead O’Connor, page boy, bangs, tapered, spikey, blunt, funky, edgy, swept, pomade, pixie, tousled, messy beach wave, blowout, gender neutral, fringe, deconstructed or an inverted bob. I picture numerous visits to salons named, “Curl Up and Dye”, “Clippety Do Dah” or “Bobs and Weaves”. My hair stylists, Marcelle and Mister Roland, brush, tease, comb, feather, shampoo, condition, wash, set and cut my strands into magnificent creations. I am a golden or honey blonde, or with balayage colour, or gorgeous in my androgynous look, sometimes with a fall or extensions, copper streaks, silver highlights-but always with a natural, youthful look.

My hair nightmares and night terrors began at the onset of the pandemic! My hair and I were suddenly on our own! I see myself with many horrible hairstyles. There is the shag, the bush, the scrag, the mutt, the flat head, the hat-head, the Einstein, best in show, gone with the wind, the rug, or snakes eating pretzels on bedsprings. I suddenly realized my hair doesn’t take well to instruction. I constantly look as if I just rolled out of bed. My hair could use a registered nurse to deal with all the snarls and tangles! My pleasing silhouette is replaced with a full figure and double chins. In desperation I phone the local dog grooming parlour (declared an essential service) called “From Scruffy to Fluffy” but he only knows how to do poodle cuts. The ending is always the same-I buy a wig!

Abner is almost bald with just a few tufts of growth in all the wrong places. He could be the poster boy for any medications used to treat cradle cap. He is trying to patent a solution for other glabrous males. It is a mixture of lemon juice, alum, rhubarb and sauerkraut. It doesn’t grow hair, but the scalp shrivels when you rub it on, and the rest of your hair fits better. I don’t know why he doesn’t just grow his eyebrows long and comb them back. I am now frequenting my favorite hair stylist and the nightmares are finished. If I get enough length snipped I plan to present Abner with a merkin. In the meantime, I am well-coiffed, and Abner is well quaffed.

Daisy Mae

What have I been doing during the pandemic? Is that like writing an essay about your summer vacation?

I started by learning how to produce a Power Point presentation about healthy eating for seniors. I volunteer for the Seniors Health and Wellness Institute (COSTCO.) I never had to learn to put together a Power Point when I was teaching so between learning the technology which is relatively simple and researching the most accurate information on healthy eating, I kept my self quite busy. At the same time I purchased some yarn on-line to make a complicated sweater. I knit almost every night and I have yet to finish it although it's getting close to being done.

The Director of the Seniors Programs at South Vancouver Neighbourhood House knows that I'm a sewer. I volunteer there. She asked me if I would make some masks for the volunteers who were grocery shopping and delivering them to seniors who are unable to get out. Some volunteers are putting food hampers together for families who have been hit really hard by the pandemic. So far, I've made 100 masks. I have used up all my fabric stash that I'm willing to part with and even used a beautiful percale sheet that had a hole in it.

I've met with friends via Zoom and even had a couple of book club meetings that way. I've met a few friends for coffee – bring your own chair and sit in a nice green space 2 metres apart.

The most fun was a choir practise via Zoom. We couldn't hear anyone but our director. She got each section singing their parts. If everyone was like me they were singing with gusto. Normal it's not but this is not a normal time. I hope everyone is listening to Doctor Bonnie and staying safe. **Marion Hartley**

Burnaby Retired Teachers' Scholarship Recipients-2020

	BRTA Scholarship	Wynn Richmond Bursary
Alpha	Emily Ng	Maryam Salah
Burnaby Central	Ruby Yang	Christina Heslop
Burnaby Mountain	Donald Lin	Pianpian Ma
Burnaby North	Zuzanna Liniewski	Cassandra Sacilotto
Burnaby South	Joanne Lee	Dante Kirton
Byrne Creek	Elisha Pizarro	Kison Raveendran
Cariboo Hill	MacKenzie Wong-Nguyen	Natasha Rolleston
Moscrop	Burak Ozkan	Geneta Ng

“Janet, you better get down here right away if you want your hair done.” It was 7:15 a.m., Sunday, March 15. My hairdresser had to shut down the following week. Norma had been my hairdresser for thirty-seven years and just had to squeeze one more customer in.

The next day, Monday, again at 7:00 a.m., I was back at Bonsor Rec Centre for what was to be my last Heart Beats exercise class. Three people showed up and we sat at least six feet from one another. And so began our COVID isolation. Two months. At first it was so different. I was used to getting up early every morning, except Sunday, to go to exercise class, or bike riding or Martial Gym. I rather enjoyed sleeping in. I found I liked having no responsibilities ... for awhile. I even spent two whole days in pajamas. It was delicious.

I especially loved driving with no traffic to fight through, being the only car coming up the Royal Oak hill, with the gas prices going down lower and lower. The quiet...almost like 9-11, with no planes in the air: the air so amazingly clear and clean. You could see the trees on the mountains. The blossoms on the cherry trees never looked so beautiful. The azalea flowers never looked so large. The rose bush I planted when my Mom died produced a lovely reminder of her. Every blossom was larger than I remember. Was this the first time I had ever stopped to smell the roses?

Best of all was my cat, with his nine lives. His name: Tonka, with his Stage 4 kidney failure. I had thought about putting him down last summer and made the appointment, but he sprang back to life with CBD oil and special vet kidney food. How many times he sat on my lap and stared into my eyes. What was he thinking? On May 4th, he turned nineteen.

Music also saved my soul. In the past year I have been with the FunStrum ukulele players at Century House in New Westminster. My friend, Eileen and I, started to play on FaceTime, every day for half an hour at ten o'clock. Our cheery leader, Carla, would send us a song with the strum chords, an Irish joke, a few thoughtful words and a video of herself we could play and sing along to. She deserves an award as an unsung hero, for providing this free email every couple of days to her gang of fifty or sixty ukulele seniors.

Going out into nature was the best, for walks on unexplored streets, for hiking with my daughter Christie, and my grandsons, eight and four, in the lovely woods of east Maple Ridge. The highlight was all the creatively painted rocks, people had tucked away, in crevices and old stumps – a new treat around many a corner, painted by kids and adults alike. I also did bike riding in North Van with my other daughter, Cathy, and her one-year old riding in a bucket-seat in front. With little traffic on the road, it was a joy to ride down Grand Boulevard and back up again, on specially laid out paths.

The first month was harder. I found myself crying several times and feeling scared. I had to hunt around for my old anxiety pills, took a few, but that wasn't what I needed. I missed the social contact. ZOOM meetings, on our computers or iPads saved the day: my biking group: “Gears and Beers” would each get their glass of wine out and we would have our forty-minute chat on Fridays, at four in the afternoon. Our Saturday morning coffee ZOOM was great too, and we graduated to parks when they re-opened. Luckily, we had some really good weather. We even did our Retired Teachers' Executive meeting by ZOOM, which they kindly extended past the forty-minute time limit.

I only knew one person, my daughter's father in law, just fifty-eight years old, who caught the virus, and had a miserable five weeks in and out of hospital. His company also folded. Thank God we have our pensions. It will be a new world out there as we start to get back into the community. I just hope we do not have to stand in line for half an hour to get into stores. It looks like face masks and keeping our distance will be with us for some time. And all our planned trips? Not for many months, if ever, I fear.

I am going to miss my quiet freedom-days sometimes. I had a lot of time to evaluate what was truly valuable in my life. My bucket list of travel suddenly doesn't seem so important, anymore. Grandchildren, music, nature, and chats with friends is 'where it is at'. And three of those four boxes, of unfiled papers, I was going to sort, are still there. My sister-in-law invited me for a swim and lunch next week and my daughter, a grade 2/3 teacher, asked me to baby-sit two days a week in June: the new normal has started...

“What is this life full of care, (if) we have no time to stand and stare?” Janet White



R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation

President's letter 2020

This year has rolled out into a wave of changes. With the support of our dedicated Board we have found the momentum to steer the course for success. We managed our important meeting to award grants –one week before COVID-19 closed everything and meetings changed to Zoom. The R. R. Smith Fund has grown through careful management of the **VanCity Investment Fund/R. R. Smith**. We are now able to direct contributions to this fund with VanCity producing a tax-deductible receipt promptly for contributions over \$20. This change took many months of negotiations, but we are satisfied with the results, which will be more efficient and less time consuming for all. We were able to produce business cards for each of our Board members and we updated our website page thanks to Tim Anderson.

Our grants to universities came about from the 2006 court decision which gave funds directly from BCTF to the R. R. Smith Foundation and enabled 6 universities to share the \$150,000 and set up bursary programs in their education/PDP programs. Applications are made directly to the universities –University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, University of Northern BC, Thompson Rivers University, and Vancouver Island University.

Our grants to charitable groups working in BC or internationally are given yearly in March. Our granting of \$40,000 was an exciting process where the Board discussed each application carefully. Our change to the process this year is to not require a local branch of the BCRTA to endorse the application, as this may be difficult to obtain for some of the qualified applicants.

Our Board also discussed with our lawyer about our status, and with the suggestion of the BCRTA president, we have taken off the wording ‘the charitable arm of the BCRTA’ from our advertising, as we are both independent organizations. We hope all members of the BCRTA join the R. R. Smith Foundation, but there is an option to opt out. The R. R. Smith funds are only \$2.00 yearly per member.

We have now produced a two-sided postcard which we hope will be widely distributed, at the AGM, Zone meetings and retirement seminars, or similar venues. This postcard explains our purpose, grants to universities, and to literacy grants in BC and internationally. Many thanks for all the input, support and dedication of our Board, who are elected at the AGM. Members include: Steve Bailey, Dave Carter, Gail Chaddock-Costello, Andy Hattrick, Karen Kilbride, Sarah Joyce, Sheila Pither. BCRTA representatives are Caroline Malm and Sterling Campbell. We thank our lawyer Anders Ouram for his exemplary service, too.

Barb Mikulec