

# PostScript

WINTER 2020



THE MAGAZINE FOR RETIRED EDUCATORS



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WINTER 2020



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When this winter finally strikes off the last day of 2020, there will be few who are sad to see the year put behind us. We have all suffered from the global pandemic to one degree or another. One has to guard against a reliance merely on a stiff upper lip. There are times when we should speak of loss.

For all of us, there has been the loss of many hours we would spend with family and friends. *Arnie Lambert* touches on this in his memoir to winters-past. For others, the events of this year have either taken a loved one directly, or if we lost them during this time, taken away the rituals we perform to honour them, to show gratitude for the person they were. In the past few days, we received notice of the loss of *Pat Brady*, an immense figure in the world of BC Teachers. He is remembered in these pages. As our 75th Anniversary Committee gathers the stories that trace the history of our association, no doubt we will remember other significant BCRTA contributors in the pages of PostScript issues to come.

One so named is *Sheila Gair*, she of the mighty pen and self-deprecating wit. Her column in this issue, she tells us, will be her last. We are grateful for all she has contributed.

If you are itching to see something different, we have termites. Well, sort of. *Paul Desjardins* gives us a close-up tour, but our walls remain safe. We had best hope so, since *Vic Janzen's* log buildings would look rather tasty to termites, I would think.

Members *Dan Wack* and *Linda Hoffmann* take us back, way back, to a history of their region now shared with local students thanks to the support of BCRTA.

Then of course we have our usual fine fare of health tips, personal stories, suggestions for reading and puzzles to stretch your thinking. Our letters come from many who appreciate connecting to one another through these pages.

And here's a newsflash which just came in: PostScript's own *Dr. Roger Wong* has been awarded the Order of Canada, for his service to geriatric medicine. It's his award, but we're proud too.

It's the winter of the longest year of our lives. But we are going to make it. Just you watch.

Yours truly,

*The Editor*  
[postscrip@bcрта.ca](mailto:postscrip@bcрта.ca)

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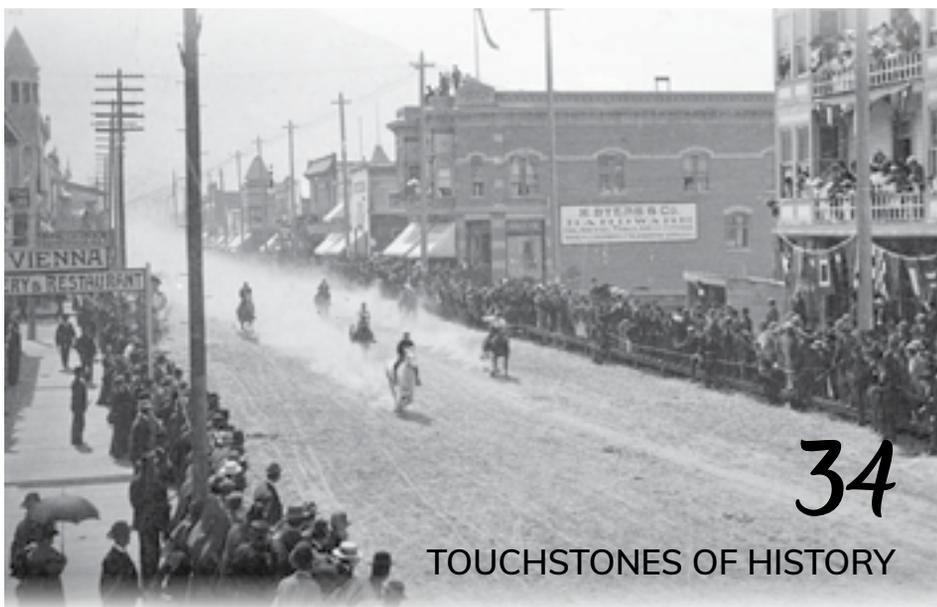
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*President Grace Wilson addressing the 2020 AGM*

March 2020 Spring Break opened with a glorious sunny day. There were rumors of a new unknown virus but I never expected it to come crashing in with travel and gathering restrictions. Suddenly there were mass runs on toilet paper. The goal was to get what you needed to stay home for an unknown period of time. From the perspective of a busy life I looked at this as an opportunity.

My plan was to bake bread. But I was running out of flour and there was not one packet of yeast in town. With the best of intentions I started going through my various collections; books, dishes, knickknacks and kids' old toys. Things I could part with were now sitting in the back porch; second hand stores were closed. My cupboards were wiped out and the house was clean. It felt good to get those things accomplished. If only someone would drop in for coffee.

Spring was on the way and it was a good time to garden. Seeds were planted, grass was cut and the edging completed. Every morning I looked over the railing to the garden below, waiting and watching for plants grow. Then I'd sit and read and drink my cup of coffee. Alone.

But there were other important things that needed attention. Overnight our BCRTA staff had gathered up necessary documents and laptops and began working from home. Through this disruption our systems upgrade pressed on, phones were answered and business continued without a day's work lost.

There was a new learning curve as directors became familiar with Zoom. Our strategic planning session was put on hold. There was

a proposed budget to prepare. How could we hold an AGM and meet the requirements of our Bylaws? All this prompted additional decision-making, made possible by the support of our committed staff.

We did meet the challenges. So seamless was the transition of working from home that members were unaware of all the changes. Committee and Board meetings continue online. Branches appointed delegates to our successful on-line conference and AGM.

Looking back can be instructive, but time doesn't stop. What lies ahead? The winter season looks to be long and lonely. Our bubbles are reduced. The second wave of COVID-19 has started. People are restless as they await a vaccine.

It could become easy to despair. But me? I intend to take more outdoor walks. I plan to spend time organizing old family photos. Christmas is coming and without family around it will be a difficult time. But Christmas is not all about me. I intend to share a special memory with a grandson – a handwritten letter telling about how we decorated the Christmas tree as we excitedly awaited his birth on Christmas Eve in 2011.

The work of the BCRTA will continue.

**Grace Wilson** is President of the BCRTA

# PostScript Letters

## A Note of Gratitude

My husband is a retired teacher, and I am a retired administrator. As I was reading and doing our banking today, I felt compelled to say a huge thank you to you, the people that write and publish Pension Life and Postscript, and those who oversee the financial aspects of our pension and benefits.

We feel so blessed to know we can pay our bills, buy our groceries, and live with a secure feeling during our retirement, but especially during this challenging and uncertain time.

Thanks to all of you who do so much to care for us.

Norman and Candis Bell  
Chase, BC

## Back 'Ome Recommended

When Gladys Schmidt's book arrived in the mail, I had just picked up several holds from our local library, but decided to take just a quick peek at the first chapter of **'Back 'ome'**. That did it, I was hooked.

Please be sure to order your own copy while they are still available, as I promise you a wonderful, unforgettable read.

Joan Dixon

(Editor's note: **Back 'Ome** was featured in our Fall 2020 Books of Note.)

## Apple Article Has Appeal

I read the article by Pat Thiesen "Apple For the Teacher" in the Summer 2020 Postscript magazine with a chuckle and a nod of understanding. I, too, have a collection of teaching mementoes and among them are apples of many kinds!

A few years ago, one of my teaching friends, Karen Sage, and I decided to use our collection of teacher gifts to decorate our former school, Uplands Elementary in Terrace. Each year in late August or early September we arrive at school and do displays in three glass cases in the hallway. We brighten them up with our colourful apple collections, World's

Greatest Teacher mugs, along with Welcome Back to School signs. We are usually able to visit with some of our former colleagues and meet new staff, too! It's a great way to keep in touch and to remember all the years of hard work and dedication and all the children who passed through our doors.

This year will be different with the restrictions associated with Covid19, and we probably will not be able to do our display, but it was fun while it lasted!

Once a teacher, always a teacher! Cheers!

Cynthia Northridge

## Onward, with a Cheer

I enjoy all the communications sent out to me from your office. I always read PostScript Magazine cover to cover and work on the puzzles. I also read through the 2020 BCRTA AGM booklet and felt both guilty for not helping out with this sort of work and also very proud and pleased to see some of my dear old friends and colleagues still so involved in this important endeavour.

But the special thank you I wanted to pass on was my gratitude for the \$5,000 donation we gave to support the interveners in the Brian Day Charter Challenge. Good for us and good for your Advocacy Committee!

Mavis Lowry

## Mystery Solved!

Dear Tim et al,

Thank you so much for your help with my query about the short story anthology that includes "Kaspar's Antelope". The item you published in PostScript resulted in two responses.

First, I received an email from a former colleague, Kris Nellis, reminding me of the anthology's title, **Singing Under Ice**. Kris was librarian at Wildwood Elementary School in Prince George, where I undertook my first teaching job, and later transferred to Duchess Park Secondary School, where my wife, Susan, was teaching. We have stayed in touch with Kris and her

Let us know what you think! Write us at [postscript@bcrt.ca](mailto:postscript@bcrt.ca)

# PostScript Letters

husband, Phil, since our mutual retirements. It didn't occur to me to contact Kris about the book.

Then Tim Anderson forwarded an email from Margaret Groome, providing the title of the anthology as well as two links to a dealer who had a copy for sale. That copy had been sold, unfortunately, but I was able to purchase the book from another dealer.

My wife and I have always felt that our colleagues in the several schools we taught included some of the most professional and dedicated people we've ever encountered. The continuing collegiality I experienced in my search for "Kaspar's Antelope" proves it!

Thanks to everyone for your interest.

Bob Ingraham  
Vancouver

**(Editor's note:** Hats off to Lexa Pomfret for also identifying the book title.)

## A Point of View Less Travelled

For the first time in 12 years of retirement, I enjoyed reading the PostScript. Sadly, it took a pandemic to strip the magazine of travel ads. You'd have thought retired teachers were devoid of a social conscience. We've known for some time that air travel is doing its part to plunder our planet of the potential for human habitation. Let's take the high road and not rekindle that relationship with travel agencies.

The Fall 2020 edition shows that the PostScript can be more than a receptacle for travel information.

Sincerely,

Leona Skovgaard

**(Editor's note:** Our 2019 survey showed that travel was the most preferred activity for our members and the level of interest in travel articles in PostScript was second only to pension security. Travel-related material and ads represent about 25% of our content at peak times.)

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SHEILA GAIR

# LIFE IN THE *slow lane*



What to do with myself with the afternoon that stretched ahead? Hanging laundry in my walk-in closet, I noticed the book shelves. My shoes were underneath, but the top couple of shelves held my photo albums, from years long past when I actually carried a camera with me. I never did latch onto those tiny little cameras and certainly don't have one of the new-fangled cell phones, which does everything but walk the dog. No, these were from the eighties when I was still up and about and aiming the Ziess Ikon. I pulled the fattest one, with Japan 1989 on the cover, poured myself a cup of tea, and opened it.

On the first page was the cover of a program advertising the splendors of Tokyo, with a charming little girl in full regalia: kimono, flowers in her hair, and a lovely parasol. On the next page was a map of an hotel, with a photo of the hotel garden and koi pond taken from a 14th floor window, and the card for my room with the statement 'Aida Group, Chorus'.

As members of the Bach Choir, we'd been invited to sing as the chorus for an opera company putting on a spectacular performance of *Aida* in downtown Vancouver. What a furore as the massive scenery of the sphynx and pyramids was barged into Vancouver for the production.

We attended rehearsals and were eventually given costumes, had our dress rehearsal and bathed in the glory of Egypt and the music of Verdi. Rumours started to spread about the cost of the production and of the costumes all fitted to our healthy Canadian bodies, and the fact that they would have to be altered at great cost for a Japanese chorus. It would be cheaper to take us over for the Tokyo production, wouldn't it? At the final performance, we were told we had to have our photos taken for our visas—we had been asked to sing in Tokyo! Not only would our fares and accommodations be covered by the company, but we were to have a per diem of \$100 to cover the cost of food!

It took a little while to sink in, but before I knew it I was headed for the border to meet the tour bus taking us to the airport in Seattle.

Once landed, our bus to the hotel had a TV monitor over the driver's head showing a sumo wrestling match. We found our rooms and checked the menus—a boiled egg was \$9 and a tuna sandwich \$22. No wonder we had such a generous food allowance! While orange juice was \$10, we could have a gin and tonic for \$9.50—that would liven up breakfast! We explored the hotel, including the seven levels underground. Tour buses took us to the dome where the opera was to perform. After rehearsal, we were allowed to wander the streets and take in the sights. Some streets were narrow and on one occasion, the side mirror of a passing car gave me a poke! We found the Bata shoe store with nine floors of nothing but shoes (paradise!) and the toy store, just as large, with a piano set into the floor that played as you walked over it.

The following day was a freebie and those of us who counted the pennies, or should I say yen, went down to the bowels of the hotel and booked a tour. We visited the Tokyo tower where I took photos from the observation deck, then visited a TV studio where we were encouraged to sit at the announcer's desk for a moment. Visiting the Imperial East Garden, we bumped into another group of tourists, Vancouver teachers! Small world! We went to a Buddhist temple where there were two weddings in progress, and finished in the Ginza with all the lovely shops. Taxis were everywhere; there were 5,000 licensed in the city. We visited shrines where small wooden blocks that would bring good luck

were hung on stands. In other spots we saw notes tied to trees to take away bad luck. City streets were often lined with vending machines selling just about everything.

At the theatre that night we watched as the scenery was installed. The next morning, horses, two camels, and three elephants were unloaded. There were tarps on the floor and bales of hay stacked around to form some boundaries for them. But by golly when an elephant relieved itself a mini-flood occurred and the staff ran with buckets and mops and tried to get it all up! We settled near the animals, and people ate, read books, knitted, wrote letters, and fought boredom until they were called. We were told that an extra rehearsal was scheduled for the next day, and then abruptly cancelled as the orchestra, which was en route, had to have a break. Lucky us.

It was time to look at the shops and I took photos outside and inside the stores. One featured French perfume for July 14th (Bastille Day in France, of all things), and one had a huge array of Japanese dolls. Hair brushes were hand made. If you picked anything up a very polite young woman would collect it, as you shopped, taking the goods to the cashier later. We watched a demonstration of a cute veggie cutter and all bought one; I used mine just this week to french some beans!

We ate at a snack bar downstairs and then looked at the other food for sale; four medium steaks on a platter were \$500 and a fruit basket \$300. A lettuce was \$5 and the seafood on offer was amazing. There was lots to tempt the sweet

tooth as well, as bakeries were everywhere. and cream cakes beckoned, with samples available!

One of our little group had a relative with a pearl company and a clerk was sent out to find us, as there were no street names or numbers! We watched as they made us jewellery. I had a lovely string of pearls, and matching ear studs. What a souvenir!

July 12th was another free day and several of us went up Mount Fuji, then had a boat ride on a nearby lake. Most places had a western washroom at the end of a row of Japanese ones, so this was the only time I used a Japanese-style washroom with squat toilets. Very tricky if you wore pants or pantyhose! And the ones outdoors—don't go there! We took a trip to the shrines and I saw the original three stone monkeys, and we were entertained by drummers before heading to view a volcanic lake.

Our last trip out to the stores before we left had four of us splurge on wedding kimonos on sale on the Ginza, for our walls at home. We had no trouble with customs, but those who got souvenir sticks on Mount Fuji had quite a problem taking them on the plane. My beautiful white wedding kimono with the golden storks all over it hangs in my hallway and I love it. Brings back all those memories of a once in a lifetime treat—never, ever expected and wonderful to look back on.

I see there are three albums marked Australia—maybe another time!

**Sheila Gair** is past editor of *PostScript*

## *A Note From Sheila*

This will be my last column.

Thank you for encouraging me, Tim.

I thank the members for their support and notes.

**Sheila**

sscribe@telus.net





## POWER OF ATTORNEY ESSENTIALS

Georgina\* (82) was surprised to receive an unexpected call from BC in March. To her shock, an official from the Island Health authority was calling to advise that they had been called by Nanaimo police to intervene in her sister Nancy's (76) care and mental wellbeing. Apparently, an occupational therapist and nurse practitioner had been called in to interview Nancy and noticed that she was not eating or practicing self-care. Her telephone had been disconnected and her Hydro was also about to be shut off for non-payment. They reported that they would be assigning a team to assess her full care needs and required that family meet with this team to help develop a full care plan in the next week. Georgina and Nancy's other sister Janet (79), in Toronto, quickly booked flights to Nanaimo.



**Michael Berton**, CFP®, RFP, CLU, CHS, FMA is a Senior Financial Planner with Assante Financial Management Ltd. In Vancouver, (604) 678-3096. Michael has taught Financial Planning courses at BCIT and TWU. He has written for *Advisor's Edge*, *Advocis FORUM*, and *Advisor.ca*. He is married to another

financial planner, has three children and lives in North Vancouver. Always discuss your particular circumstances with a financial planner prior to acting on the information above.

\* Names have been changed.

Upon arrival, they were shocked by the extent of Nancy's decline, her confusion and gaunt appearance. Always a thorny stubborn personality, Nancy had preferred living alone and had estranged herself from family and friends over the years so that no-one had been around to observe her decline. The medical team suspected that the sudden decline had been brought on by an undiagnosed stroke months before. Although Nancy recognized her sisters, she was confused between past and present, afraid of her stove and kettle and overwhelmingly dependent on her TV for what social friendship it might provide. She actually reported that she was planning to go fishing on Saturday with the guys in her TV. Her old car sat in the parking lot with expired insurance, not driven for months. She would no longer be permitted to drive it.

Clearly, she would need help with both care and finance. She had become a hoarder, requiring the two sisters to spend days pouring over the stacks of paper records in search of all the important legal documents – Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA), Representation Agreement (A BC “Power of Attorney” for Health care) and her Will. They wanted to find all these items to manage her needs now and ensure her final wishes were known and respected before her decline got any worse. Her papers were squirreled away all over her three-bedroom co-op condo. The sisters waded through years of unpaid bills, unanswered mail looking for these important documents. A will was discovered between a stack of magazines but there were no advance care documents. Letters from her pension plan requiring her to confirm her status to continue receiving payments lay unanswered. It became apparent that she had not left authority for anyone to take responsibility for her personal care, legal, or financial affairs. In her current state it was no longer possible for her to give anyone that authority.

Seeing the crisis about to unfold, Georgina and Janet personally took care of her outstanding bills, and had her telephone reconnected. They visited her bank to advise them of her condition, but without a EPOA they were barred from any financial information or the ability to automate payment of her bills. Bank statements found at home indicated that only a few monthly

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“ It is important to understand that under Committeeship, the adult loses his or her decision-making rights and is considered a non-person under the law. As Committeeship is difficult to reverse, the adult will likely have a committee for the rest of his or her life. ”

expenses were paid automatically. The statements also revealed a host of automatic monthly charitable donations that reduced the funds she would now need to cover her medical costs.

The most important new financial matter was to arrange for payment of her much-needed medical support from Island Health. The regional health authority provides support services using an income-test which Georgina and Janet had to complete from scraps of documents they had unearthed in the house. Nancy's on-going pension income, CPP, and OAS income meant she would have to pay \$1200 month for care workers to visit her twice a day to ensure she had eaten and was taking her meds. To ensure proper nutrition, Georgina and Janet were asked to arrange to pay for frozen meals to be delivered to the house each week. Although care workers would do her laundry, the washing machine had been broken for years, a replacement was needed. There were also new pharmaceutical expenses to cover somehow. As there was no family nearby, a companion service was engaged to ensure she had a social visit twice a week and to keep family advised of any problems. Without the EPOA the sisters found themselves covering these expenses in the short term until someone could gain authority to access Nancy's money to reimburse them. Not all families are fortunate enough to have the extra cash flow to manage this at the best of times.

Very little else could be done without legal authority for her care and financial affairs, so the two sisters began the long process to obtain court-ordered adult guardianship. In BC this falls under two separate frameworks:

1. One for assisting abused and neglected adults
2. One for the appointment of and authority of personal and property guardians

The first is for situations where a vulnerable adult is unable to seek support and assistance because of physical restraint, a physical handicap or an illness, disease, injury or other condition that affects their ability to make decisions about abuse or neglect. The Public Guardian and Trustee and certain other designated responders have the legal mandate to investigate and respond to these situations.

The second framework is for situations where an adult needs ongoing assistance making decisions and informal help is not sufficient and no advance planning documentation (Enduring Power of Attorney, Representation Agreement, Advance Directive, or a Trust) has been done. This was Nancy's situation.

Provincial legislation provides formal procedures to allow another person, or the state, to assume the adult's affairs and act on their behalf. In British Columbia, this is referred to as 'Committeeship' and can happen in a couple of ways:

1. Someone (usually a family member) can apply to the Supreme Court to be appointed private committee (guardian) under the Patients Property Act, or
2. The Public Guardian and Trustee can become the statutory property guardian of the adult's finances and legal affairs by Certificate of Incapability (COI).

There are two types of Private Committees:

1. Committee of the Estate (finances/property/legal) and/or
2. Committee of the Person (personal care/medical care/end of life matters).

It is important to understand that under Committeeship, the adult loses his or her decision-making rights and is considered a non-person under the law. As Committeeship is difficult to reverse, the adult will likely have a committee for the rest of his or her life.

While in Nanaimo, Georgina and Janet met with a lawyer, who gathered information about Nancy, her Island Health team's written determination of incapacity, and a thorough listing with addresses of her immediate and extended family. He drafted applications for both sisters as committees as well as 32 affidavits, which were mailed to every one of Nancy's sisters, nieces, and nephews around the world. These documents would serve to acknowledge and authorize the authority being granted. Some of the people being asked to sign these documents had not been in contact with Nancy in decades. A large undertaking, it took more than 8 weeks for all these documents to be signed, witnessed, and returned to the lawyer.

When completed in late May, these were submitted to the Supreme Court of British Columbia, which was working slowly during the spring pandemic crisis. The final court order was eventually granted in late September.

Georgina and Janet returned to Nanaimo, met with the lawyer, and were instructed about their powers. They were able to obtain court stamped copies of the court order (The courts retain the original document). Georgina, as Committee of Estate was granted various levels of access to banks accounts and investments. If further



Inconvenience, delay, expense, and additional work can be avoided by drafting a simple power of Attorney and Representation agreement before one loses the capacity to do so.

access becomes necessary, the order requires special application to the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT). Further, the committee of estate, is required to "pass accounts", (an audit report) to the PGT one year from the order date. Lastly, the document grants authority for Nancy's funds to be used to pay the legal bill of \$8,000.

All this inconvenience, delay, expense, and additional work could have been avoided had Nancy drafted a simple power of Attorney and Representation agreement before she had lost capacity. Instead seven (7) months passed by with family covering her costs while being unable to assist with important matters. Properly drafted, signed, and witnessed EPOA and Rep Agreement documents are an essential part of any person's estate plan and are much cheaper to do before they are needed! They are at least as important as a will. Check to see that you have these and know where they are. Make sure your family knows too. If you do not have these, make it a priority to have them drafted as soon as possible. This is both important and urgent.

## RESOURCES FOR POA HELP

- A notary public
- Your family lawyer
- Online resources such as [seniorsfirstbc.ca](http://seniorsfirstbc.ca) or the Government of BC's **BC Seniors Guide**.

# Our Winter's Tale

MEMORIES OF SHAKESPEARE WITH FRIENDS



**“Now is the winter of our discontent...”**

The opening line of *Richard III* seems to be referring to our coming winter. As if Shakespeare is talking about our Covid times: portending monotony and a lack of cheer; a depressing sameness of shorter days and longer nights, without the ability to gather with friends and family. Is that what we have to look forward to as autumn unfolds, as the days grow shorter, and we continue to isolate?

I dream of trips of the past; the good times spent with friends and family. My daydreaming has been taking me back to both travels on our own, and the trips we have enjoyed with friends. And one of those good memories is a trip to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, where we saw *Richard III*.

For me, “Now is the winter of our discontent...” is not an omen for the future, but a reminder of one of the most memorable performances I have ever seen—a rendering of the play so vibrant that it remains fresh in my mind even fifteen years later. James Newcomb, as Richard, seemed to fill the theatre with his deviousness and plotting, and yet had me feeling such sympathy for his circumstances. That performance marked a true highlight, and the group of friends who shared that moment has reunited and returned to Ashland a number of times since.

Our trips to Oregon have usually started with a conversation along the lines of, “Hey, do you think we could get everyone together this June, and head back to Ashland?” A few emails and phone calls later, there is much checking of calendars, scanning the website for

performance dates. Part of the joy is plotting routes and lunch stops, reserving hotels, finding new sights to see, and returning to favourites. “What was the name of that great winery?” And, “Where did we get the fresh crab?”

Our last trip together was in 2018, so it isn't as if we don't have recent memorable moments. We do, but the last six months make it seem so much longer ago. And getting together with those friends again? Not likely this year.

So how to get past the gloom? Maybe Shakespeare can help. Maybe we just need to get past the opening line, because as he wrote, “...the winter of our discontent [can be] made glorious summer...,” and “our stern alarms changed to merry meetings.”

Each one of us will have to work that out for ourself, but doesn't glorious summer sound better than discontented winter?

We do not yet know how many “merry meetings” we will be having in the coming winter months, nor when the “alarms” will dissipate. Certainly, the BCRTA will continue on a strict regimen of Zoom for a period; however, I know that our family is like many others in thinking about possibilities for joy. We all look forward to a time when isolation ends, travel can resume, and we can attend the performances of actors, dancers and musicians.

In the interim, as we treasure all that we do have, each of us will build some new good memories to sit alongside those of the past.

**Arnie Lambert** is BCRTA 1st Vice President.



# Log Building IN SIBERIA

Author Vic Janzen in Gorno-Ataisk, Russia .

At the age of 55, encouraged by the many stories of teaching colleagues re-inventing themselves after retirement, and realizing my years of physical energy were numbered, I took early retirement from the classroom. I had been cattle ranching while teaching and planned to ranch more efficiently rather than part-time, but I soon became bored. After so many years of interaction with students and colleagues, I found cattle had little to say of a simulating nature.

Then an unexpected chain of events led me to Siberia to teach in a Pentecostal Bible school in the city of Gorno-Altai and two years later to build a log church in the remote village of Onguday near the Mongolian border.

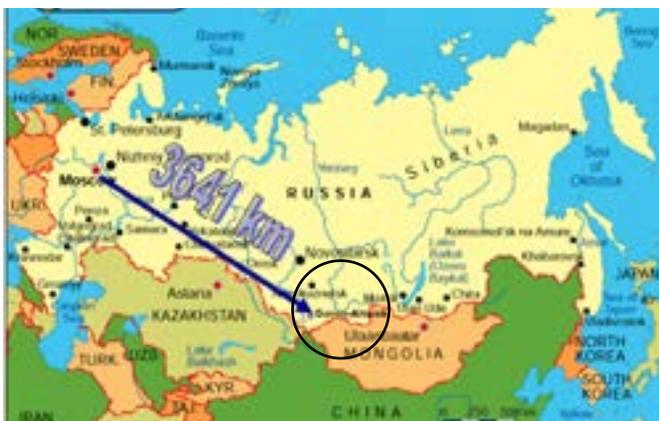
.....  
**Vic Janzen** is a member of the BCRTA who writes from his home in Chilliwack.

Early in my career I had taken four or five years of leave from teaching to build log homes. I had written a “how-to” book on log construction, and took a few copies with me as mementos for the Siberians I would meet. A couple of years later, importuned by Siberians I met during this first visit, I found myself returning to build a chapel that would also serve as a women’s shelter.

I was grateful for the low-tech methods I had used as a professional builder in the mid-1970’s. At the time there were perhaps only three or four of us in all of Canada using such methods. These techniques included the scribe-fit method—cutting a long groove to fit a log snugly to the one below—then par-buckling the logs onto the building with man, woman, and child power, using only a rope and a ramp to roll them into place.



Log buildings abound in this vast area and are easily the most common form of building in all of the thirty-odd villages I visited. Villages in western Russia near Moscow reveal the same preponderance of log structures. This map gives the location in the Russian Federation where my work was centered:



I was able to visit an ancient log Russian Orthodox Church in the City of Gorno-Altai that was built of scribed logs with round notches.

I had a vision. I would run a regular log building course of about three weeks for the local people. The student builders would then have acquired the useful skill of building log houses from the Siberian forests, which are largely untouched by the hands of loggers.

When I arrived I quickly discovered my vision and the reality had no chance of intersecting. I had the foresight to buy a 30 foot rope in the town of Gorno-Altai on my way to the village and it proved to be our only piece of log machinery. Since there was no possibility of taking logs back to the ground to saw notches and lateral grooves, we resorted to practices I knew of from the pre-machine age in Canada and the United States.

People who have worked in the old Iron Curtain countries will easily recognize much of what I am describing. The shortages and poor quality of common materials were frustrating until I finally learned to roll with the Russian way of improvising. An example: We needed a length of chain with a slip hook at one end and a locking hook at the other. After many stops, we found appropriate chain but no hooks of any kind anywhere in the village. We improvised by finding a couple of carabiners and cutting useable but not ideal hooks out of a towing strap from a Soviet-era truck.

On my last morning, I divested myself of my grubby work clothes and dressed for my long journey home, the first leg of which was via Siberia Air to Moscow.

Mostly this was a hair-raising adventure but in the end the mission was accomplished. And I was never bored!



Above, a log church. Opposite, rolling logs with rope. Photos courtesy of Vic Janzen.



## ***Have a friend who hasn't joined yet?***

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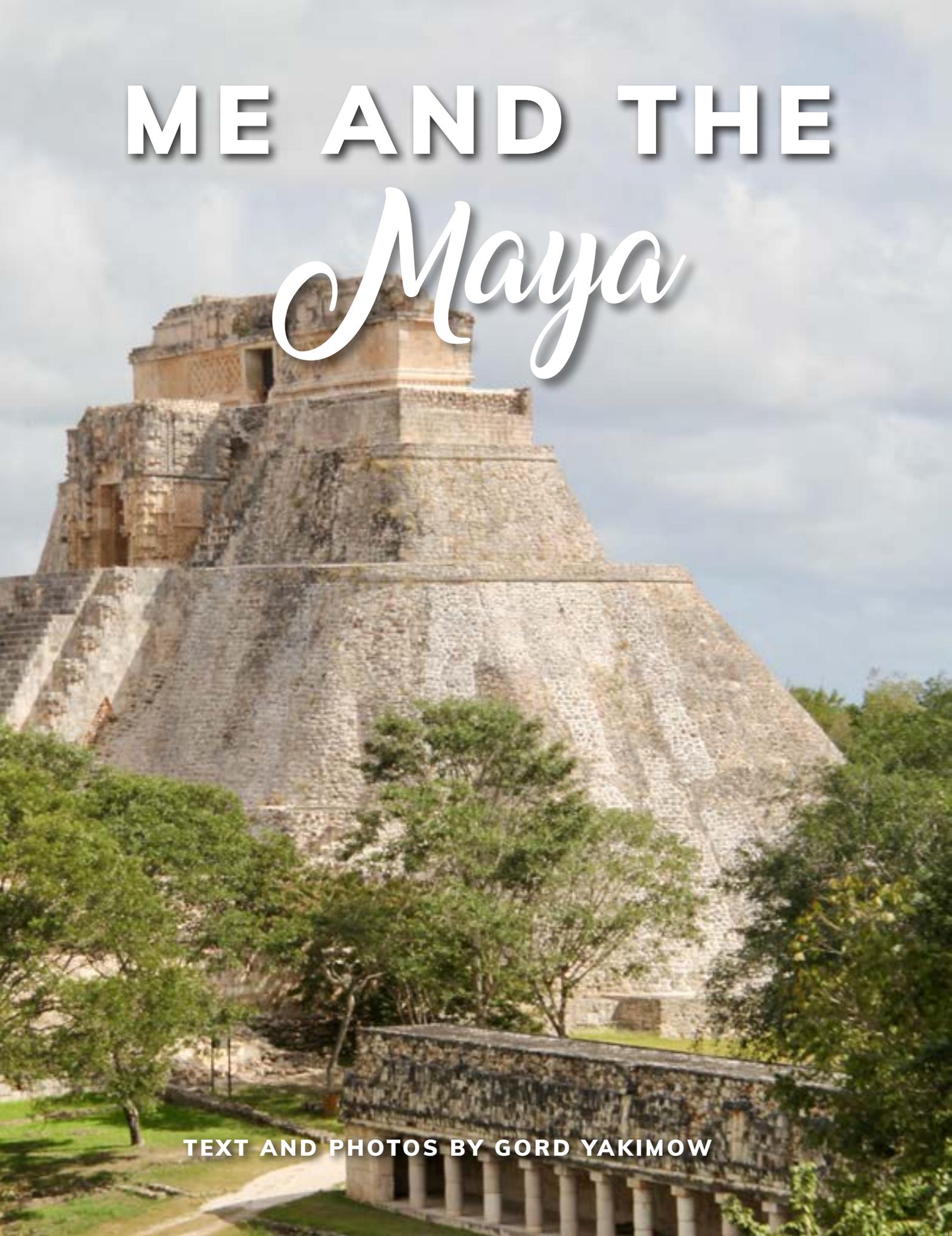
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**ME AND THE**

*Maya*

**TEXT AND PHOTOS BY GORD YAKIMOW**





Facing page: Uxmal in the hilly Puuc region of the Yucatan. Above: The author stands with the Agustine Fajardo, “Keeper of the Ruins” at Acanceh. Below: Iguana sun-bathing in Tulum.

I have had a long-running interest in the Maya, and have visited many sites in Central America, including some of the better-known ones, but also lesser known ones accessible only after a long boat ride along the Rio Usumacinta.

Now, there was only a narrow window of opportunity, to add the Maya ruins at Cahal Pech.

The previous day, I had been at the Actun Tunichil Muknal (ATM) Cave. Five kilometres long, the National Geographical Society ranks it one of the world’s Top Ten Sacred Caves. Located in the Maya Mountains in the centre of the small Central American country of Belize, it is the source of the “water of life” for the Maya. Our exploration involved following an underground river, wearing a headlamp, at times swimming or wading in water up to our armpits. The cave contains many ancient artifacts, and the sparkling, calcified skeletal remains of children and young adults, killed likely as sacrifices, to the Maya gods.

I was in the small city of San Ignacio, called “Cayo” by the local Belizeans. At 9:00 this

morning, the small group of which I was a part would be leaving for Tikal, the pre-eminent Maya site in neighbouring Guatemala. If I wanted to see Cahal Pech, about 4 kilometres south, I had to fit it in before 9:00. So I rose in the dark of night and, camera bag strung over my shoulder, walked the narrow streets to the “taxi square” I had noted on the previous evening.

There were no taxis visible, although a gathering of four apparently inebriated locals invited me to join them for a cerveza (which I declined). In



my very limited Spanish\*, I tried to explain that I was looking for a taxi. After a long exchange with his companions, one said, "I am a taxi," and unsteadily made his way to a derelict vehicle, beckoning me to follow. The engine caught on his third attempt at starting it, and I reluctantly slid into the passenger seat, negotiated a price, accepted a beer which he insisted I take, and we were off.

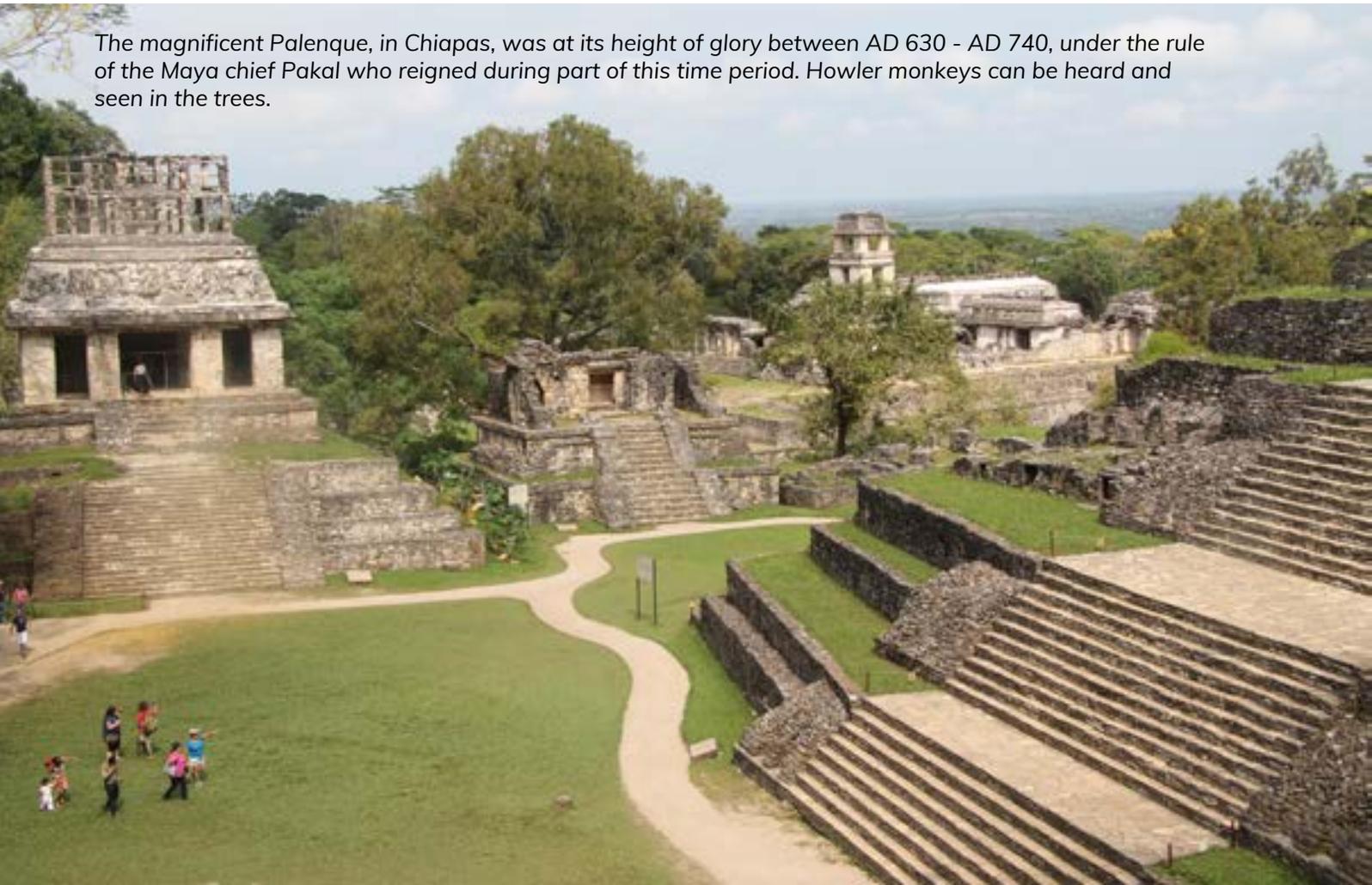
The 15-minute drive to Cahal Pech was mostly uphill on a rough gravel and dirt road, and the car stalled out four times - but we made it. It was 5:55 AM, and my driver said he'd wait for me. Instead, I paid him, added a modest tip, and he was gone.

The sky was beginning to lighten as I entered the 2.4-hectare (6 acre) site. Cahal Pech is an inconspicuous, yet quietly impressive, Maya site. For two hours, I had it all to myself, strolling about and absorbing its essence and taking photos. I encountered not a living soul (although, uncannily, I felt I was encountering several spiritual entities). Special!



X-Can Stalactite sculpture ("Unhappy Old Man"). Underground ponds known as cenotes, along with accompanying caves with stalactites and stalagmites, are often located near Maya ruins in the Yucatan.

The magnificent Palenque, in Chiapas, was at its height of glory between AD 630 - AD 740, under the rule of the Maya chief Pakal who reigned during part of this time period. Howler monkeys can be heard and seen in the trees.





Above: Considered the most impressive of the Maya ruins in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, Chichen Itza is a must-stop site for visitors to the Yucatan.

Right: On this motif in Palenque (in Chiapas) can be seen a sample of the Maya alphabet.



I was back at the entrance by 8:00 AM, hoping to have someone call for a taxi. Remarkably, my driver from the day before was there (a spiritual intervention?).

He drove me back to my modest hotel, where I picked up my bag, joined my group, and off we went to Tikal, where the next adventure of my trip would unfold.

**GORD YAKIMOW** has had teaching stints in Manitoba, Ontario, Great Britain, the Yukon Territory, and for Chilliwack SD 33 in British Columbia. He has previously contributed to PostScript Magazine.



## FINDING OUR NEXT

# Page-Turner

### TIM RECOMMENDS

#### PATRICK O'BRIAN'S **AUBREY-MATURIN** SERIES

It's an unlikely beginning. April, 1800. A powerfully built sailor sits attentively in a concert hall, taking refuge from his dissatisfaction with life in the navy. The music is obscure – a quartet by Locatelli. But it is also immensely enjoyable, and caught up in enthusiasm, Jack Aubrey shifts in the small gilt chair and starts directing the music with his arm. The stranger next to him does not approve of this display of enthusiasm and whispers harshly that if Jack wishes to conduct with his arm, he might want to keep time. Jack assesses his neighbor and finds him to be a “small, dark, white-faced creature in a rusty black coat,” and worse, “a civilian.” So it is that Aubrey first encounters Stephen Maturin, the man who will become, over the span of some twenty books, his “particular friend”.

**Patrick O'Brian** has been anointed “the greatest historical novelist of all time” by the Times, and one might expect that it is the extraordinary level of historical detail that so marks him, or the vivid depictions of life at sea and in the heat of battle. But O'Brian's achievement goes beyond those dimensions. The series is generally known as the “**Aubrey-Maturin novels**” because these stories celebrate the value of male friendship.

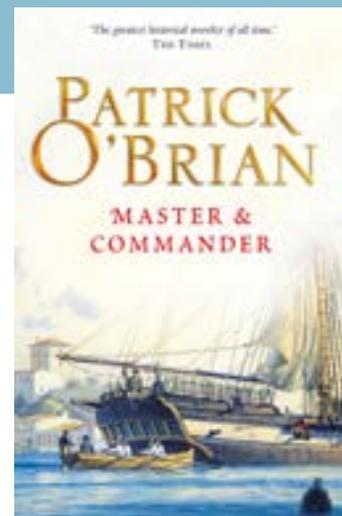
It is a tough business being a fighting man in pre-Regency England. Having lost America, the English now confront Napoleon's burgeoning navy. The Spanish and Dutch are forces at sea. Above all these practical factors are the ageless grievances of every fighting man: incompetent leaders, fickle colleagues, the challenge of self-discipline during immense stretches of boredom, keeping one's head when everything goes wrong. And here, especially, the loneliness of those who are constantly measured by their function and place in society, yet seek another to whom they can entrust their inner-most thoughts.

Jane Austen's novels explore the manners and interior lives of women living under those constraints. O'Brian's series covers the same territory for men, but these pages are also splashed with international intrigue, the sea-going world of rope and canvas, spilt blood, the deafening roar of cannons, and the coarse and joyful sound of victory on the tongues of sailors.

As he steps into his long-hoped-for first command, Jack Aubrey's buoyant confidence looks reckless to some. Yet we see how deeply he has absorbed the disciplines of sea life into his thinking. With no enemy in sight, he works his crew hard, standing over them, pocket watch in hand as they load cannons for a broadside, then pack the next charge into hot metal as fast as they can. The lazy men grumble at the hard work, the inanity of blasting empty waves to smithereens over and over. Bureaucratic administrators wonder at how much gunpowder he wastes – what of the expense, and will there be any left for the enemy? But as the moment of battle arrives, suddenly everyone understands.

“The pleasant thing about fighting with the Spaniards,” says Jack, “is not that they are shy, for they are not, but that they are never, never ready.”

Jack is jovial, quick-tempered, assertive. He has a strong dose of English prejudice toward the foreigner, believes in country and tradition and station. His counterpart Stephen Maturin has



Catalan heritage and is a physician who operates on cool observation, not fighting instinct. Maturin shuns attention and the depths of what he knows are slowly uncovered to just a few. He is so reclusive and competent, an observant person might begin to think of him as a spy. But most are not so observant.

Aubrey and Maturin pass evening hours at sea playing music in the Captain's cabin, Jack on his violin, Maturin on his cello. They express continual exasperation at the other's obtuseness on topics important to them. They trust one another.

A fathom deeper: hearing that I was writing on the Aubrey-Maturin series, BCRTA's 1st Vice President gave his enthusiastic approval. Arnie Lambert is a fan of the books, and a sailor. With his salt-dog's complexion, piercing eyes, and generous facial hair, one can imagine him as a rather cheerful privateer. More to the point, Arnie lent me a biography of O'Brian by the novelist's step-son, Nikolai Tolstoy. Yes, the step-son is also the grandson of that Tolstoy.

It turns out that there is much more and much less to the story of Patrick O'Brian. Less, because although his books bubble with astonishing levels of detail regarding life at sea, it turns out that his direct experience of the sea and indeed of all things military was extremely limited.

More, in the sense that nothing about the man is straightforward. Born in 1914, the eighth of nine siblings, at the age of four the loss of his mother set a course for a lonely existence. His family name at birth was Russ, of German descent. Patrick's father was a physician of limited empathy, something of a crackpot. Loath to spend anything towards the needs of his children, he declared himself tutor for the young boy. Unfortunately that simply meant long hours of neglect for Patrick, confined to the corner of his father's research lab where he tinkered with equipment and pursued those books that interested him. And wrote.

When for brief periods Patrick did attend school, he was ill-prepared to deal with the social environment and structured learning. His teachers quickly marked him out as one of those students of raw ability whose willful nature made success impossible. Agonizingly, he seemed incapable of making friends.

Patrick's history became his secret: an upbringing clouded with loss and shame. Better, then, to take a new name, the Irish-flavoured O'Brian, as a new fully-formed creation who could represent himself as educated, adventuresome, experienced. Yet he was not, and he knew it deeply. In his defensiveness he appeared something of a snob, a prickly dilettante. As a writer, O'Brian is wont to drop in long block quotes in Latin or French without translation. Having had to muddle through and pick it up as he went, O'Brian makes similar demands on his readers.

Knowing that young Patrick received every signal that he was a misfit unworthy of respect, one turns to the creation of Jack Aubrey with a new appreciation. Only a master novelist could create such a rich inner life for a character so unlike himself. We begin to also appreciate the genius of the presence of Maturin, so much more like O'Brian in disposition and history. Of immigrant stock with a history of personal loss, Maturin's independent and experimental approach to medicine sets a sharp contrast to the socially conservative, ordered world of the naval establishment. Moreover, spycraft trades equally on deception and loyalty. The meeting point for patriot Jack and outsider Maturin is that current of personal integrity, knowing who it is that can be trusted to bear the weight of disclosure. O'Brian puts in the mouth of the spy that moral quandary that every individual must face as a member of a group.

Says Maturin, "But you know as well as I, patriotism is a word; and one that generally comes to mean either my country, right or wrong, which is infamous, or my country is always right, which is imbecile."

Like a spy, O'Brian's very name was a fiction, but his depiction of sea life and its brave adventurers rings of truth. To step into these stories is to feel the wind in our hair, salt air on our skin, the firm grasp of a friend's handshake. Yet the men and women we encounter here are emissaries of the imaginarium of a misfit boy, grown to artist. For those who believe that whole worlds can live within such a youth, this series is a friend well-met.

**TIM ANDERSON** is Executive Director of BCRTA.

## STEPHANIE RECOMMENDS

### LOUISE PENNY'S **GAMACHE** SERIES

A little more than two years ago, during the heady aftermath of retirement, feeling a strange combination of euphoria over unlimited free time coupled with anxiety about how to fill unlimited free time, I visited a bookstore in Courtenay. My much smarter sister-in-law, with whom I was shopping, who knew I was looking for something new to read, suggested I try Louise Penny. She picked up a copy of the first novel *Still Life*, and placed it in my hand. "You'll like it" she said, "There are lots of fun and quirky characters, and it's a series, so if you enjoy it, you can read more "and it's Canadian!"

The bookstore proprietress eagerly concurred, intoning with a sly smile how very popular the series was. She assured me I would enjoy them, and then became quite stern as she warned me to read the books in the order in which they were written. Forewarned, I bought ***Still Life***, and within the next couple of days, I read it steadily, only putting it down when absolutely necessary, to eat and sleep. The characters were all at once lovable, intriguing and inspiring, and the setting, in rural Quebec, unmistakably Canadian. I was hooked.

I found Louise Penny's website and copied out the list of the entire series and began an exhaustive search of local second-hand bookstores (the 'famous' S.O.S. in Parksville was particularly helpful), as well as our Vancouver Island Library system. I also discovered friends and family who were fans and even borrowed a couple of books. I tried very hard to follow the bookstore-lady's advice to read them in order. I mistakenly read the fourth in the series before the third, and was soon very sorry indeed. Both books were almost ruined for me. The characters and stories build one upon another and as the histories are built, the world within the novel becomes richer and more nuanced.

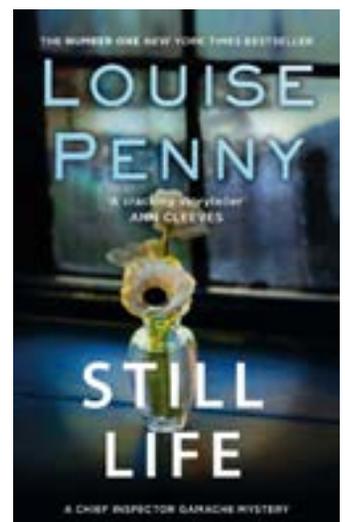
Undaunted, I continued on, reading the next several novels in strictly the correct order. Within a few months, I had managed to read the first 13 books, each one adding to my growing

feelings of affection for the world created within the pages, for the fabled town of Three Pines; a town not found on any map, but peopled by fascinating and full-bodied characters who are variously warm, demented, creative, irascible, brilliant, selfish, temperamental, generous, hilarious, absent-minded and altogether believable.

And the food.... gorgeous descriptions abound of unique and sumptuous meals that are the standard fare at the bistro in Three Pines.

When I finished reading all the novels in print to that date, I had to wait an interminable eight months until number fourteen was published. To fill the void I planned a trip to Quebec, and in the fall of 2018 I flew east and visited Montreal, Quebec City and the small town of Knowlton, where Louise Penny still lives, and which is the 'model' town on which Three Pines is largely based. In reality, it is an amalgam of many towns and locations in the Eastern Townships. The helpful proprietors at Brome Lake Books in downtown Knowlton, also known unofficially as Louise Penny Central, will kindly provide you with a map of the area highlighting all the real-life locations where fictional story elements take place. I had a blast seeing the sights, had great coffee and delicious bistro meals, and steeped myself in Louise Penny's world.

The uninitiated may be wondering at this point...how much traction can you get from a series of stories about a quirky small town? I confess I have thus far left out a rather important element and character in Louise Penny's world, because, aside from the richly drawn small-town characters, her novels are



**STEPHANIE KOROPATNICK** is a member of the BCRTA Communications Committee.

essentially crime fiction about a Great Detective. While the town and the characters are essential elements of this fictional world, they are the supporting cast to the main stories about the brilliant and brave, deeply damaged and complex Detective Inspector Armand Gamache, Head of Homicide for the Surete de Quebec in Montreal.

While the supporting cast draw you into this world, it is our hero Armand Gamache, as well as the complexity and variety of the crimes he and his team solves, that brings you back again and again. Whether the crimes are murder, political corruption, organized crime, industrial espionage or terrorist threats, Inspector Gamache, with his thoughtful and quiet manner, his kind eyes and his unflinching integrity, carefully and methodically, and not without occasional flashes of brilliant intuition, as well as a huge helping of affection for his fellow human, doggedly untangles the twists and turns, misdirections and misunderstandings to pick out a clear path through the chaos and find the solution that was previously unthinkable.

As each multilayered story unfolds, we come to have a deeper understanding and affection

for Gamache, his fiercely loyal team and his expanding family. Unlike many Great Detectives, who remain inscrutable and lofty throughout their fictional careers, Gamache becomes ever more human. Each successive book allows us a deeper look into the man's psyche, peeling back the layers to reveal a very human heart. Perhaps it is this aspect, more than all the lovable quirky characters, more than the brilliant, twisty, breath-taking plots, that endears Louise Penny's loyal readers to such an extent.

And Louise Penny fans are loyal and support a vibrant and active online presence.

There are very active Facebook fan pages; she writes a semi-monthly newsletter from Three Pines and quite a variety of Gamache-inspired giftware is available. (I have a Vive Gamache latte mug!)

Louise Penny's 16th novel in the Gamache series **All The Devils Are Here**, was recently published in the summer of 2020, and spent weeks at #1 on the New York Times Best Sellers List.

I am now waiting, somewhat impatiently, for book number seventeen, due in April 2021.



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# GOING. ABROAD.



## *An Everyman's Game of Thrones*

Many of us love to travel and we adjust, with varying degrees of success, to the differences we encounter. This is all part of the experience. Take washrooms for instance, or toilets as they are more bluntly known overseas.

The Maasai in Tanzania are tall herders with no lengthy tradition as tradesmen. However, a job is a job and they were paid well to install urinals in the Visitor's Centre in one of Tanzania's iconic parks. They did so quite professionally. Once in place, though, only members of the Raptors basketball team would be tall enough to reach them.

At an Australian-owned restaurant in Bali, I left my table in search of the facilities. There were two doors: one carried the word "Blah", the other had "Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah." I had no difficulty determining where to go. Aussies have a special kind of humour that doesn't always connect with political correctness.

In a Budapest restaurant, I found the toilets in the poorly lit basement. On the first door I came to was a picture of a figure in a fancy hat and a skirt. With some degree of confidence, I walked in to the room next door. It was full of women.

I backtracked and learned soon thereafter that Hungarian Magyars (warrior horsemen) often wore a pirate-like hat and ballooning pants, somewhat akin to culottes. Was I really to be blamed for my error?

I encountered a most unusual procedure in another Budapest establishment. Located on a busy pedestrian street, they presumably wanted to discourage people from walking in just to use the washroom. After paying my bill and realizing there was a long walk back to our hotel, I told my wife I was going to the toilet. The sign pointed up some stairs, where another sign read, "Toilets can only be accessed by using the Toilet Code at the bottom of your bill". The place was not well lit and I didn't have my glasses. I could make out a miniscule line of print but had no idea what it said. Fortunately, an English speaking server was nearby and I asked for her help.

"The number is 3446 hashtag," she said. "Don't forget the hashtag."

"Hashtag?" I realized that I had heard the word before. It was a familiar but meaningless word, something to do with computers.

“What is a hashtag?” I asked.

Although her eyebrows went up, she was very polite and took the trouble to escort me upstairs to point out the number sign. They must have changed the name when they started calling an asterisk a “star.”

A thought occurred to me as I was leaving. What happens if you want the washroom before you get the bill? I didn’t stick around to learn the answer.

My most dramatic experience, in all honesty, was self-induced. Unlike in most other European countries, in Britain, they realize that people need a toilet on occasion, so most cities provide public facilities. A contribution to this service is the Super Loo. It is a free-standing telephone booth sized structure made, I think, of fiber glass and positioned on sidewalks and squares for the convenience of the pedestrian public. Using a Super Loo at the time of my experience cost 40P. I inserted the coins and invited my wife to go first. While she was in there, it occurred to me that the door would open when she emerged and there seemed no good reason why I shouldn’t slip in at that point which would save us some time and, more to the point, another 40P.

This is exactly what happened. I nipped in and closed the door. At that point, the light went out and a highly scented spray blasted me from various angles. I tried to get out but the door was firmly locked. I had to wait in total darkness until the cycle was complete. Most of the liquid disappeared into a drain in the floor but once the squirting ceased a rigorous blower came on supposedly to dry areas that were still damp. The entire process took about a minute.

There was a click and the light came on. I opened the door as fast as I could and leapt out, soaking wet, smelling of lemons and quite chilly as it was a cool October day.

My wife, normally a sensitive, compassionate soulmate, was in hysterics but once she stopped laughing, suggested that I find a place to dry off and warm up.

“We can’t leave yet,” I replied.

“Why not?”

“Because,” I said, digging into my pocket for some change, “I forgot to pee.”

**Chris Harker** is a retired teacher and the author of the memoir *Harko Polo*.

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## *important dates 2021*

### **Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security**

Includes the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) retirement pension and disability, children’s and survivor benefits.

#### **Upcoming payment dates**

- December 29, 2020

#### **2021**

- January 27
- February 24
- March 29
- April 28
- May 27
- June 28
- July 28
- August 27
- September 28
- October 27
- November 26
- December 22

### **Teachers’ Pension Plan**

Here are upcoming dates that pension payments are directly deposited to accounts.

#### **Upcoming payment dates**

- December 23, 2020

#### **2021**

- January 28
- February 25
- March 30
- April 29
- May 28
- June 29
- July 29
- August 30
- September 29
- October 28
- November 29
- December 23



# ARE YOU *Grateful?*

Studies show that practising gratitude can make you happier, lower your stress, protect you from depression, help you sleep better, boost your immune system, and reduce stress when dealing with others. To practise it is simple, free, quick, and can be done anytime, anywhere. Now might be the time to make it a greater part of your life.

Gratitude can be defined as a strong feeling of appreciation toward someone for what the person has done for you, or toward something for the situation you are in.

Of course, being grateful doesn't mean you are ignoring your negative feelings. Nobody is suggesting that you should suck it up and

continue to be thankful for difficult situations, no matter how tough things get. Rather, gratitude is about noticing that there are always some positive things in your life, no matter how dark things may seem in the moment. This awareness helps you to see that things are not 100% terrible all the time. During your tough times, it can be comforting to have that wider perspective.

If you think that you'd like to improve your spirits by increasingly appreciating those good things in your life, you might document some of the things you have noticed for which you can express your gratitude. A simple method is to begin keeping a journal. You can use something as simple as

*Notice big things as well as small things.  
Everything counts.*

a paper notebook, a text document on your computer, or a notes app on your mobile device. Some people keep a document in the cloud using Dropbox, or iCloud, so they can access it from anywhere. The point is to write down the things that make you feel grateful. There's no right or wrong way to do it.

Set aside a few minutes each day to think about and write down one or more things you're grateful for. Notice big things (example: I'm grateful that I have a caring person in my life) as well as small things (example: I really enjoyed the weather today). Everything counts!

Read over your journal when you're feeling down or extra stressed, since reviewing your list is a good way to boost your mood and shift your perspective.

Becoming more grateful, day to day, has rewards many of us aren't aware of. When you develop the habit of noticing and being thankful for the previously unseen things constantly happening all around, your overall attitude improves and you train your brain to become naturally more optimistic. This leads you, in a beneficial cycle, to truly appreciate and pay even more attention to the good things you have.

Practicing gratitude by keeping a journal is free, easy to do, and truly does reduce stress. Why not try it for a few weeks to see how you feel?

**Pat Thiesen** is a BCRTA director

### FURTHER READING

1. Research summary: Who benefits from gratitude amongst people who are already doing well, and those who are struggling:

“How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain”

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_gratitude\\_changes\\_you\\_and\\_your\\_brain](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain)

2. Gratitude can make you happier, and suggestions for how to practice gratitude:

“Giving Thanks Can Make you Happier”

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>

3. Lifehack's “40 Simple Ways to Practice Gratitude”

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/40-simple-ways-practice-gratitude.html>

# Me and My **TRUCK**

I am the owner of a truck. I know this is not going to be a very startling announcement and you may be asking, “So why bother saying it?” It’s not a big truck nor would I describe it as a sturdy truck: no v8 engine, no four-wheel drive, and no capacity for extra-heavy wear and tear. It is a five-speed, standard transmission, four-cylinder truck. In fact, like me, my truck is and has been pretty much very ordinary.

My truck’s birth year was 1992 and I adopted it in 1994. It is, in truck years, about as old as I am, and that is getting up there! It has about 250,000 km on the odometer. Like me, it’s had an interesting life. It has had its little emergencies but has not missed work due to illness very often. I think that, like me, it has been a reliable companion even though, like me, it has its own little quirks. For example, you need a football field to do a 360 degree turn and it requires flag persons in order to parallel park. For a long time, it had a significant vibration at about a hundred clicks. Fortunately, some work on the alignment and some wheel balancing and it was significantly reduced though not eliminated.

My truck accompanied me to work at school most days and would help me relieve stress or

give me time to think and plan with quiet drives around town. It has made many long trips throughout the province, carried camping gear for numerous outdoor education programs, and helped several people move homes. It has taught three beginning drivers how to drive a standard transmission without any need for a new clutch, and has carried myriad loads of gravel, top-soil, and wood. Just before my retirement, it carried four adults, their luggage, and over a thousand pounds of pre-formed concrete fireplace hearth from Vancouver to the Okanagan over the steep climbs of the Coquihalla Highway and the Okanagan Connector-Highway 97C—all of this with little complaint. It even spent five or six years as a commuter vehicle for my daughter, chasing other vehicles in Vancouver.

In the past few years, my truck and I have entered retirement. That does not mean that either of us have been shelved and no longer participate in activities in the community.

Like me, my truck is certainly showing its age. It has some rust around the edges, it requires some additional oil between engine services, and there are a multitude of scrapes, bruises, and scars. It was injured in a hit and run where

its front grill and headlight and fender were damaged. In fact, at present, the passenger side headlight is being held in place with a couple of plastic wall anchors. It does not have anti-lock brakes, but the anti-lock failure brake light is on all the time the truck is running. The seats are starting to deteriorate, as are some of the plastic components of the interior. The undone seat-belt warning now sounds like a sick mouse pleading for a quick demise. Until very recently, the heater core was leaking so that driving meant being asphyxiated by atomized coolant fluid. Fortunately, after some surgery to repair that problem, I can breathe freely now when me and my truck are out together.

One of the things that keeps me engaged with life is devoting care during this slow deterioration of my truck into mechanical and even “metal” decline. And in my own slow degeneration in physical and mental well-being, my truck cheers me up every time I get behind the wheel. Like me, my truck now has more frequent rests and is taken off the road for a few months of the year. It is usually driven only around town or just 10km down the road to the next largest city. It is pretty much exclusively driven only in daylight hours, as one headlight does not work very efficiently with the light tending to wobble all over the road, and the other headlight is quite dim. Luckily, the turn-signals and parking lights still work, and the tires still hold air although I did have to put inner-tubes in them all.

But do you know what? Even after sitting idle for a considerable time it still cranks over on the first turn of the ignition key (do you remember those?) and when the engine starts it's like my eighteen-year-old cat who still acts like a kitten. It roars to life, eager and anxious to get moving, the valve lifters sounding like they are going to

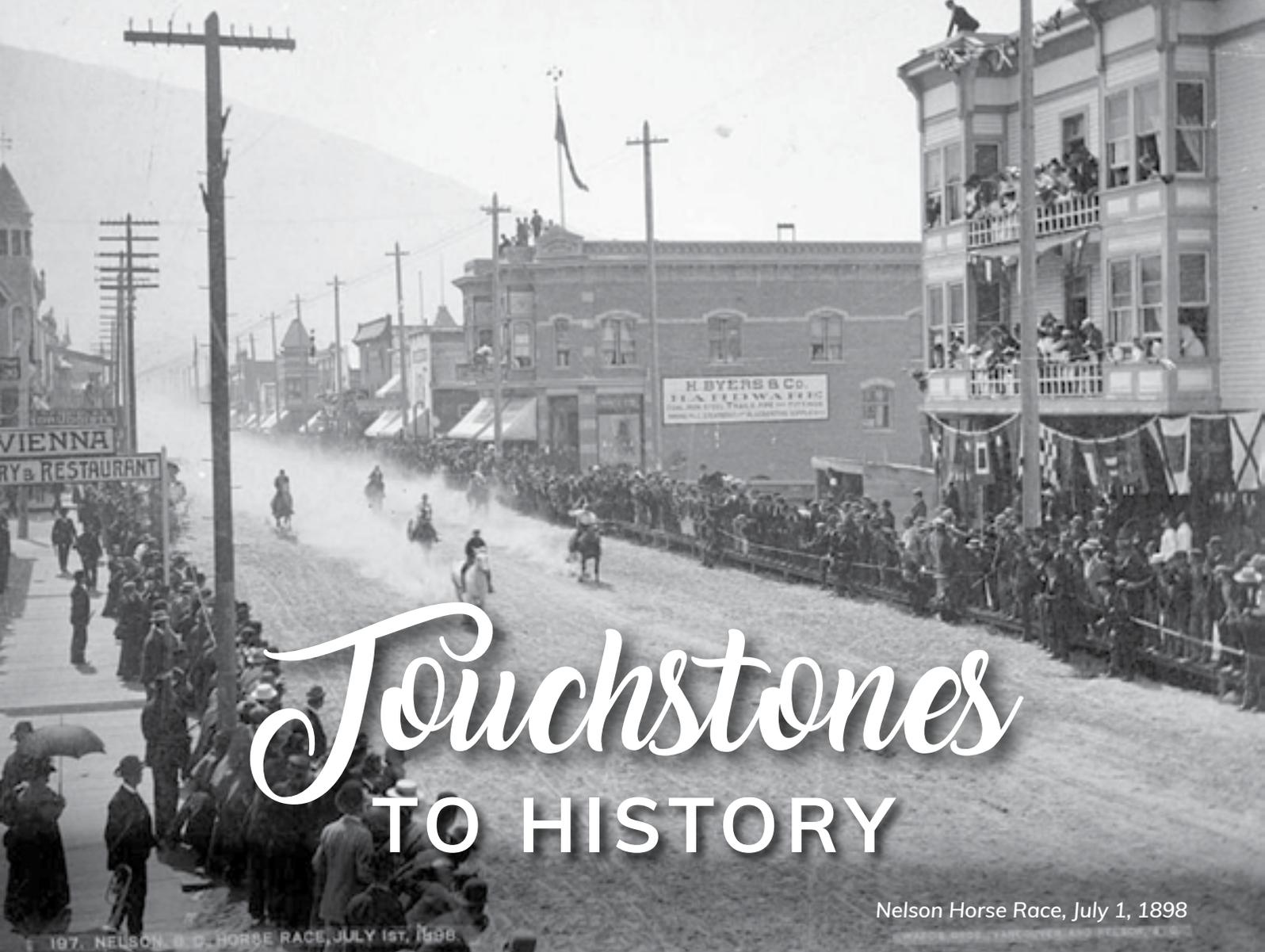


come through the engine hood! Every time, my spirit is lifted as I put the clutch in and shift it into gear. Its heater and fan warm my body and as we get a couple of kilometers into the drive the engine quiets and starts to hum, giving me comfort like the humming of a cheerful song. Me and my truck are best friends and although we are both getting old we are aging together. We can tolerate each other, and we both appreciate still being able to move and be a little bit useful to each other, to acquaintances, and in and around our community.

We have an accommodating respect and affection for each other even if we are getting a little bit loud and cantankerous!

**Terry Green** is Chair of BCRTA's Well-being Committee





# Touchstones TO HISTORY

Nelson Horse Race, July 1, 1898

Almost thirty years ago three teachers wanted to supplement Social Studies curriculum by investigating the history of the small communities in Nelson School District 8. They conducted interviews, sought out historic photos and artifacts, and created teachers' guides to assist instructors in the use of these resources in the classroom. With District support, high school students travelled to each community to interview long-time residents. Elementary school students also spent many hours practicing their interview skills. The resulting resource could be used across the district by students wanting to get in touch with their local history.

Over the years many of these historical kits have found a new home in **Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History** where they are cared for and periodically refreshed by museum staff and volunteers, and made available to educators.

Inspired by those kits created years ago, the Museum continues to provide resources that are designed to serve the educators' needs and meet the requirements of the new BC curriculum.

## **BCRTA MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

The excellent relationship between the Nelson branch of the BCRTA and the museum continues with members of the BCRTA serving as volunteers at Touchstones, and with the creation of the Nelson Museum Walking Tour app. Due to be released soon, the walking tour was developed by Museum staff and volunteers with generous funding from a BCRTA Heritage Grant, and it is hoped it will be the first of many walking tours available to the public for their edification and enjoyment.

With the help of retired teachers, Touchstones Museum and the classroom have become partners



The bank on Baker Street, in earlier times and today. (Photos courtesy of Touchstones Museum and Dan Wack)

in education. The museum has hired a School Programming Coordinator to support and help coordinate the collaboration between the School District and Touchstones. Museum staff work with educators to create learning experiences for students that include gallery tours, hands-on exploration of artifacts, visits to the Shawn Lamb Archives on site, and also reflective time in the classroom to further refine their inquiry.

Participants discover that Nelson, and particularly Baker Street, holds a rich history beginning with horse races and providing an electric street car tram system at the turn of the century. The tour shows the importance of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the development of Nelson, and how before the CPR house could be built, some graves had to be relocated.

### COLOURFUL COMMERCE

With money stuffed in his pockets, a man walked on snowshoes from Northport, WA to Nelson in 1891. He opened a bank on Baker Street. This bank would be relocated in a grand new structure in 1895. Because of an administrative error, the new bank (now a branch of Bank of Montreal) sat next to the most dangerous building in the city: the ammunition storage vault.

Continue on to the oldest barber shop in town where the meaning of the barber's red and white pole symbol is revealed. The red and white represents medical services barbers were once allowed to practice, such as pulling teeth and mending broken bones.



The Burns Meat shop building of 1899 can be identified and the iPad App reveals why the shop never ran out of fresh beef.

The beautiful Hume Hotel has undergone several upgrades. What one doesn't see on the surface is the element of "mystery" connected to this building. From this street corner participants can view two amazing stone structured buildings; the Courthouse and original Post Office. This granite stone also has an interesting story.

### PARTNERS IN LEARNING

The museum and school classrooms are becoming learning partners. The museum offers a 3-stage visiting program that is an introduction to the artifacts and historic moments and encourages students to ask about their own family history. As students become curious about their own family historic moments, they search the internet for possible connections and collect artifacts (pictures and items) that reflect these connections.

Through this dialogue between the Museum and the classroom, history comes to life and students' personal and family histories appear in the context of the community in which they live. Students are able to see how everyone plays a part in making Canada a wonderful country built from the diverse voices and stories of its rich cultures and communities.

Thank you to the BC Retired Teachers' Association for your ongoing support of projects like the one being undertaken at **Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History**, and thanks to everyone who works hard to bring people and institutions together! And a special thank you to the friendly staffs of BMO and Hume Hotel.

COVID-19 has delayed the Grand Opening. We will report when things pick up again.

**Dan Wack and Linda Hoffmann** are members of Kootenay Lake West Retired Teachers' Association.

A photograph of a man and a woman in a tropical forest. The man, wearing a red shirt and glasses, is looking at a large, dark, textured termite shelter tube attached to the outer bark of a tree trunk. The woman, wearing a light green shirt, is looking at the same shelter tube. The background is filled with lush tropical vegetation, including palm trees and pandanus plants.

# *Nasutitermitinae*

## THE BENEVOLENT TERMITE

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY PAUL DESJARDINS  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY DOUG DESJARDINS

The author examines a shelter tube constructed by an arboreal termite on the outer bark of a guayacan tree.

Vacations can be an intriguing conduit to surprising information.

My wife, Anita, a retired registered nurse, and I enjoy travelling, especially to those destinations that offer an opportunity to escape the Canadian winter. With Ixtapa and Huatulco, Mexico already under our belts, we decided to explore Cuba as a viable option. It was our first trip to the island.

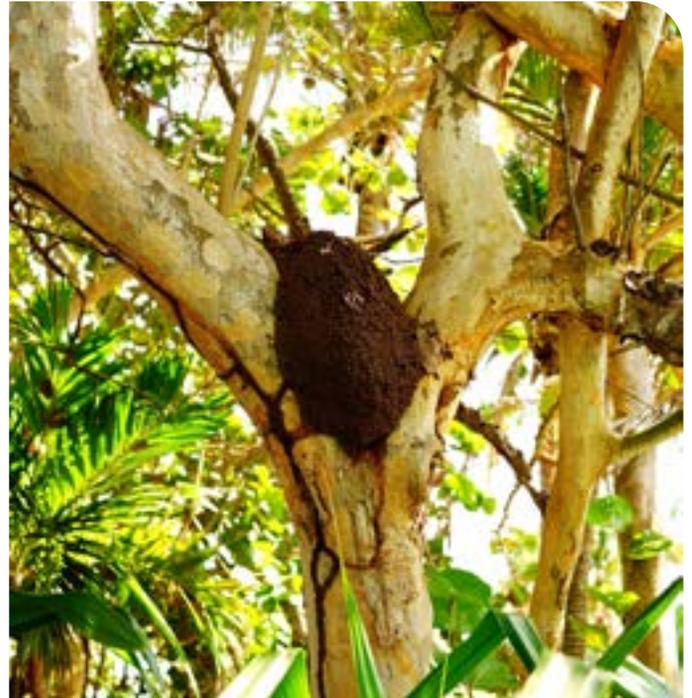
The Atlantico Hotel, a few kilometres outside of Havana, featured a courtyard of tropical vegetation that included a grove of tall guayacan (Golden Trumpet Trees). Nestled in the crook of two branches in one of the trees was a large, reddish brown 'growth'. Leading from the 'growth' to the ground was a tube of the same colour. To my utter surprise and astonishment, at the moment I scraped a small hole in the tube, a swarm of termites came rushing out. The 'growth' was a gigantic termite nest.

Taken aback momentarily, then drawn by curiosity to have a closer look, I noticed that these termites were different from those I'd seen before. These had a snout, like that of an anteater, protruding from their heads. I could feel my eyes getting larger and beads of sweat trickling down my face.

I've always been fascinated with the natural world. A great deal of my retirement is spent in photographing nature, insects and birds in particular. So, when happenstance guided us to this phenomenon, I just had to learn more about these creatures, the *nasutitermitinae* termites.

Maligned for centuries for its uncanny destructive talents, the termite can now also boast a kind of symbiotic benevolence. *Nasutitermitinae* live in nests constructed mostly in trees and use shelter tubes pasted together with tiny particles of soil and faeces to access those nests.

The workers of the colony are responsible for maintaining the nest, as well as feeding almost everyone else in the nest, including the queens, the brood, and the soldiers. They subsist on decaying wood matter primarily found on the ground. but are unable to digest that wood. Nature rescues the termite via a unique solution; within its digestive tract lies a protozoan. Unfortunately, the protozoan suffers from the same handicap and is obliged to engage a third party, a bacterium with the necessary digestive

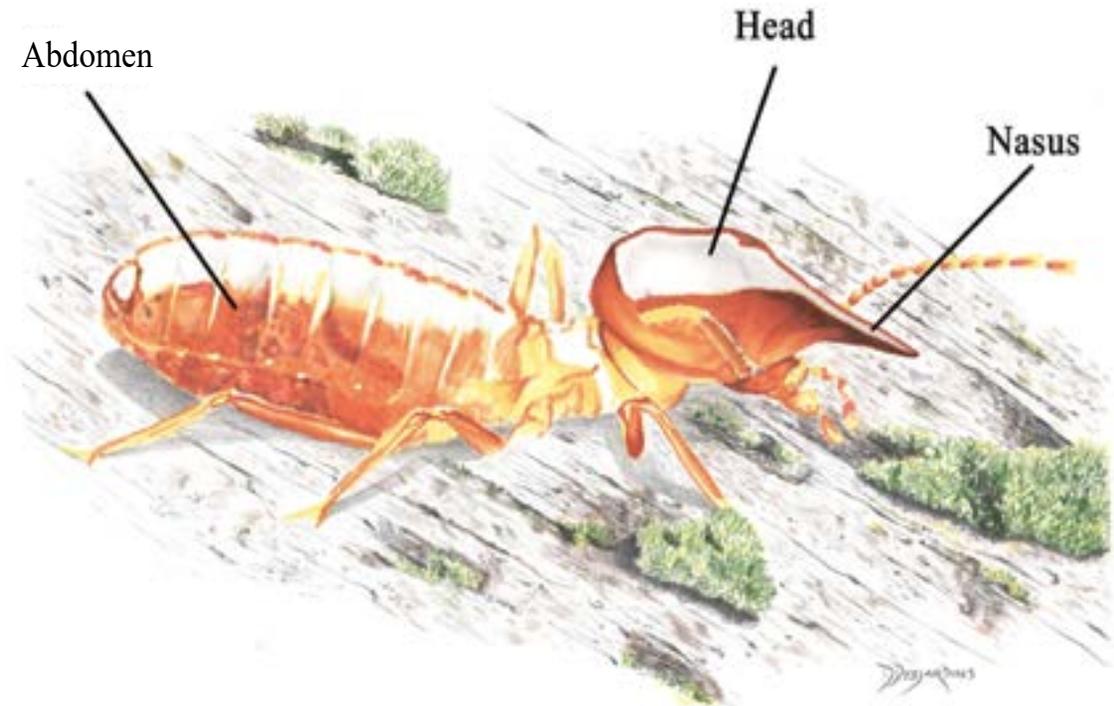


Above: The *nasutitermitinae* arboreal termite makes its nest in a guayacan tree. The guayacan is one of the densest of the ironwood family which makes it especially resistant to termite damage.

Below: Nasute soldier termites patrol a shelter tube. Arboreal termites, who subsist on decaying wood matter located primarily on the forest floor, reach their tree nests through tubes constructed of soil and faeces. If damaged, a graveyard crew of workers make the necessary repairs overnight.



ARBOREAL SOLDIER TERMITE  
Nasutitermitinae Family: Nasute Soldier



Above: A nasute soldier termite from the nasutitermitinae sub-family of the termitidae family of termites. Although these soldiers have lost their mandibles and must be fed by workers, they have evolved a frontal projection called a nasus. From this snout they secrete a noxious liquid, an astonishingly effective tactic used to ward off potential enemies.

enzymes that break down cellulose. By-products of digested cellulose engineered by the bacteria feed the protozoan which, in like fashion, feeds the worker. Finally, the termite's feast can begin.

The defense of the nest falls to the soldier termite. It has a cone-like head with a pointy snout called a *nasus*, and is called a *nasute*. Ants are the termite's most deadly predator. Displaying little mercy, nasutes will surround an ant, and through

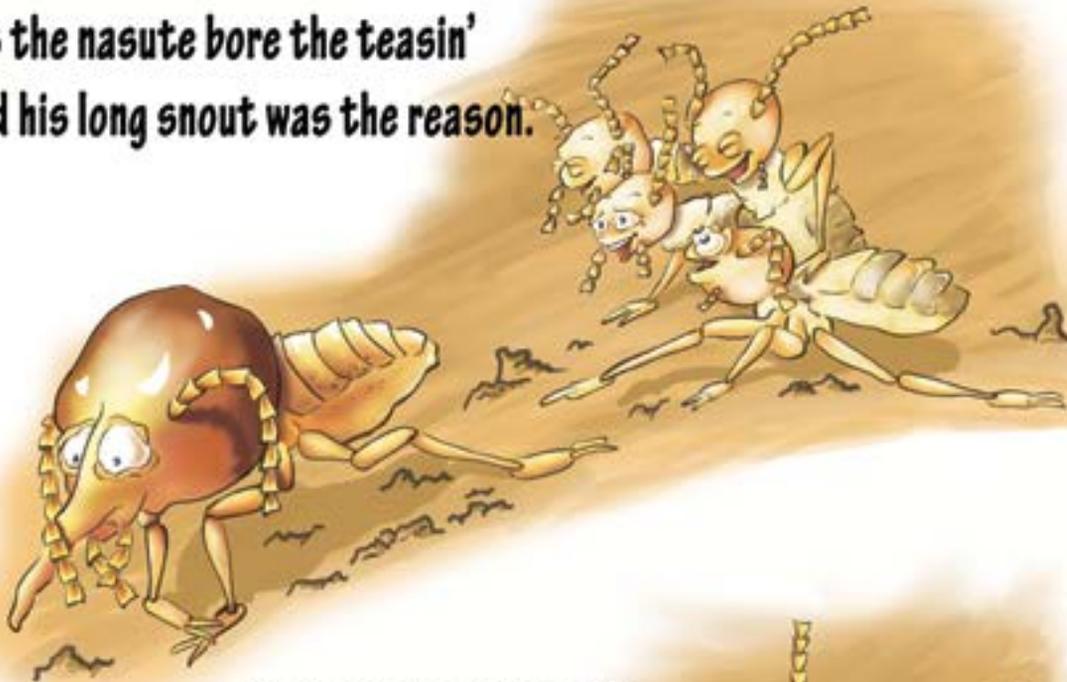
their nozzle-like protrusions, spew a toxic combination of chemicals, pummeling it with thin filaments of sticky residue, gluing their enemy to the spot.

The nest thrives in a safe and secure environment permitting each member, the queen, the workers, and their internal symbiotic friends alike, to enjoy this unique, exciting, and mutually beneficial community.

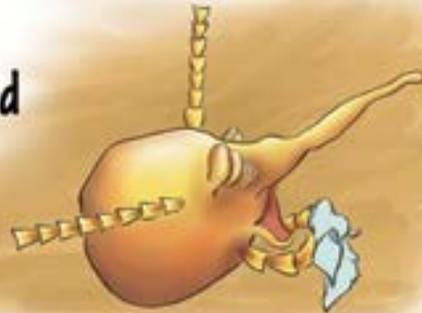
**Paul Desjardins** taught English and French at George Pringle Secondary for 29 years and the same two subjects for a further five years at Mt. Boucherie Secondary in West Kelowna, BC. He retired in 2006.

The limerick on the facing page was written by Paul Desjardins and illustrated by **Doug Desjardins**, the author's son.

**For years the nasute bore the teasin'  
Convinced his long snout was the reason.**



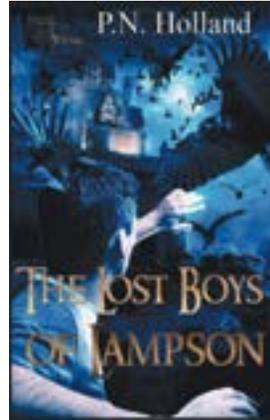
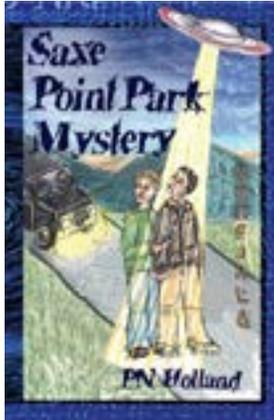
**Then one day it is told  
The bug caught a cold,**



**And took out half the nest with his sneezin'.**



# books OF NOTE



## The Vancouver Island Mysteries Series by Neil Holland

These are fantasy, magical, mystery stories that follow the exploits of three curious children on Vancouver Island, B.C.

**The Saxe Point Park Mystery**, **The Lost Boys of Lampson**, and **The E&N Escape** have been enjoyed by many school children, teachers and adults in Victoria, B.C. and elsewhere throughout North America and overseas.

**Neil Holland** taught for over 30 years in Powell River, Prince George, Gold River and Victoria. He was recognized as an emerging author by The Victoria Public Library.

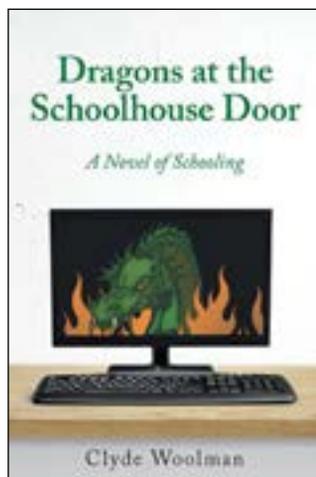
These action mysteries can be found in libraries, online at Amazon, Chapters/Indigo, or directly from the author, [pnholland@shaw.ca](mailto:pnholland@shaw.ca)

Website: [www.pnholland.com](http://www.pnholland.com)

BCRTA members who have authored a book are featured in Books of Note.

To be included, send your book details to [postscript@bcrt.ca](mailto:postscript@bcrt.ca)

# books OF NOTE



## Dragons at the Schoolhouse Door by Clyde Woolman

Satire, humour and mystery: Educators unearth a stunning plan to transform public education, using their school as the launching pad.

“Enjoyable! A candid and humorous look at public education from an author who has been there.”

*Todd Phillips – Teacher-Librarian*

“I really identified with the colourful characters and the humour poked at the system.”

*Judy Berkeley – Vice-Principal (retired)*

“Woolman’s characters are brilliant composites that anyone in education can recognize and relate to.”

*Gerald Fussell – Principal*

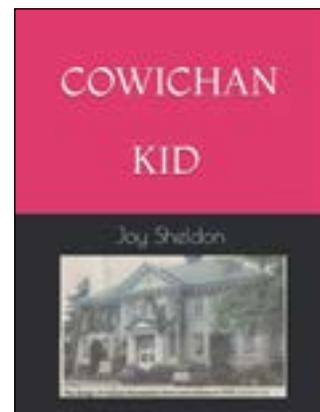
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## Cowichan Kid by Joy Sheldon

Wringer washers, sad irons, ‘n hog jowls! Such was rural life in Cowichan back in the 50’s! Stratfords Crossing: growing up on a small truck farm near Duncan, B.C. was vastly different from what kids experience today. From party lines to bucksaws! A hard-working life interspersed with the antics of several, often dysfunctional, family members. From Nestor Nelson, the hermit, to Mr. McGonagal who blew himself up with dynamite! Bottle-diving in the Chemainus River. Eating home-made yummys washed down with milk straight from the cow’s teat. School days: from Old Somenos School (now the Community Center) to Cowichan High. And all under the shade of that unusual red ‘crossing house’ named Stratfords.

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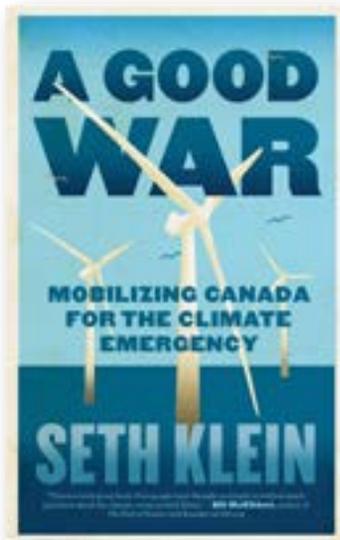
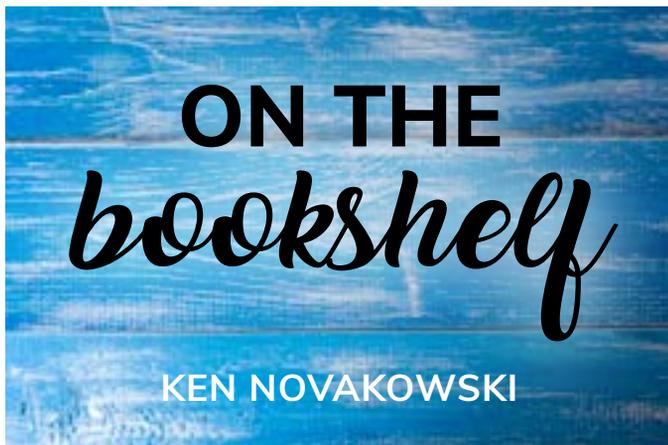


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Offers shown are available until **December 31, 2020** or while quantities last and are subject to change without notice. **1** 10% off applies to the Talk & Text monthly plan fees, and 15% off applies to the Smartphone monthly plan fees. Discount applies for as long as you are a member of the BC Retired Teachers Association and cannot be combined with Bring Your Own Phone discount, Tablet Data plans and Wireless Home Phone plans. **2** Device pricing and minimum monthly rate plan apply for each line, and vary by term and plan chosen. Early cancellation fees apply with a 2-yr term. **3** Tablet data bonus and \$0 tablet offer apply only with Tablet data plans on a 2-year term. Some conditions apply, call 1-888-281-2102 or visit [simplyconnect.ca/bcrtat](http://simplyconnect.ca/bcrtat) for details.



## **A Good War – Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency**

by Seth Klein  
ECW Press, 464 pp.  
Paperback \$24.95

As retired BC teachers, we can look back at how our generation collectively experienced a lot of change in the teaching profession. Together we gained full collective bargaining rights and better classroom conditions, good pensions and a teacher voice in curriculum matters. And our union, the BCTF, also pursued changes in the broader community that would lead to a more progressive society overall. And, even though we are facing a major threat to our health and well-being by a global pandemic, there is another major battle we have yet to effectively address; the climate crisis.

Klein, who for 22 years was Director of the BC office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, provides an excellent summary of what we are up against. But most of his book is dedicated to how he thinks Canada can make a significant contribution to tackling this crisis.

To do this, Klein first recounts the important steps taken by the Mackenzie King government during the Second World War to do our part in defeating the threat posed by Hitler's Nazi Germany and other fascist countries. Through the establishment of numerous new Crown Corporations, and the effective mobilization of all sectors of Canadian society, we proved capable of remaking our economy and making a contribution to the Allied war effort that far exceeded what anyone might have expected from a country our size. Klein argues convincingly that if we could do it then to tackle an existential threat to our existence, then surely we could do it again, this time to deal with the threat posed by the climate crisis.

Klein also deals with the mistakes that government made during the war, such as the forced internment of Japanese Canadians, and argues that we can learn from that and ensure that peoples' civil rights and liberties are not suspended as they were then. He lays out a strategy that involves indigenous peoples, civil society, and all levels of government in this important struggle. It is a plan that can create thousands of new "green" jobs, address the need for just transitioning of those working in the fossil fuel industries and deal with reducing the significant economic inequalities we currently face. Klein's analysis and ideas for dealing with the climate crisis are timely. And as a country we need to move from "words" to "actions" if we want to see Canada once again playing an important role in a critical global struggle.

**Ken Novakowski** was recipient of the 2015 G.A. Ferguson Award for outstanding service to public education. A former president and staff member with the BCTF, Ken's work in labour and education continues at the BC Labour Heritage Centre.

# GUARD AGAINST DETACHED RETINA



The retina of the eye is a postage-stamp sized tissue at the back of each eye. The retina contains rods and cone cells that receive and organize visual information for the brain to interpret allowing us to “see”. The information travels from the retina to the brain via the optic nerve. Detachment of the retina or tears in the retina can occur without a person being aware through the usual pain mechanisms of the human body. But usually there are warning signs that accompany such injuries. The symptoms one might experience could be one or more of the following: flashes of light, noticeably more floaters of the eye that appear as specks or threads in your vision or like a shadow or a curtain being pulled across the eye, blurred

vision, and/or reduced peripheral vision or that vision on the outside of your normal line of sight.

Should you experience such symptoms you should seek medical help as soon as possible. Having such conditions looked at immediately may allow for successful intervention through laser surgery and may contribute to a complete recovery. Other factors leading to detached retinas are being over the age of 50, severe myopia, history of detachment in the family, previous surgeries such as cataract surgery, previous eye injuries, previous eye diseases, diabetic retinopathy, or a previous detachment.

**Terry Green** is a BCRTA Director and Chair of the Well-Being Committee

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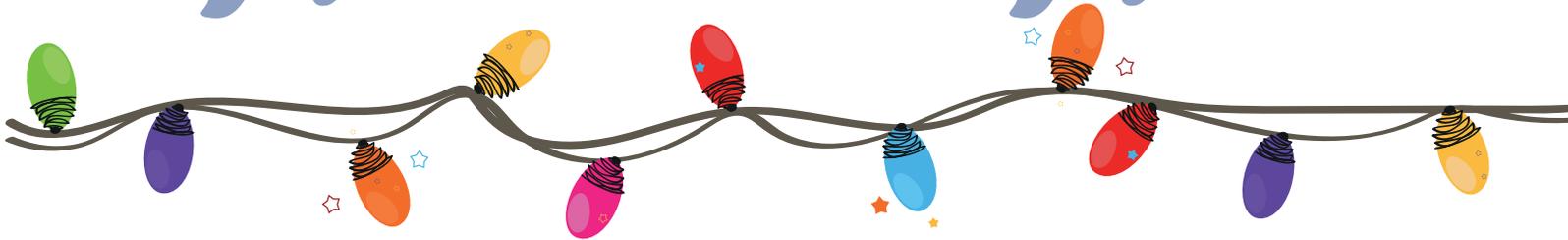
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# Winter-Wise



Snow sparkling in the trees! A soft white blanket covering the ground! It's a Winter Wonderland! Winter comes in many forms to most parts of BC, from heavy snowfalls in the mountains, to the dry powder snow of the Interior, or the wet, heavy snow that falls on the Coast. Are you ready for what comes your way?

There are many things we can do to help us through the winter months. First, we need to look at our homes. Are the doors and windows sealed tight enough to keep out the cold? Check the weather stripping and replace it if looks worn or if you can feel a draft around it. There are plastic storm windows that can fit into existing windows or you can fasten plastic sheeting to add an extra layer of insulation but still allow light in. Outdoor or indoor shutters can also be installed and can add an attractive feature.

Ensure that the heating is in good working order. This may require a service call to check the furnace, heat pump, or gas fireplace. Call the chimney sweep before lighting the logs in your fireplace or wood stove.

Before the snow or ice comes, have your snow shovel or whatever you use close at hand and readily accessible. If you don't feel up to removing the snow yourself, make arrangements with someone who can do it for you. Many municipalities have volunteer "Snow Angel" programs you can contact for help with snow removal.

If you drive, make sure you have winter tires on your vehicle. . All-season tires may not be of much use in snow or slushy conditions. Snow tires have a snowflake symbol on them. From October 1 to March 31, snow tires are mandatory in BC if you drive on mountain roads. Remember to top up with winter windshield washer appropriate to the temperatures you can expect in your area. And don't forget your ice scraper/ snow brush; keep it in your car!

Lastly, check your winter wardrobe. Is it adequate for the winter weather? When visiting at the coast last year, I learned the hard way that my down jacket (good for the powdery snow of the Okanagan) was not waterproof. This year, I have invested in a 3-in1 coat: a waterproof/windproof outer shell, an inner removable fibrefill coat, and, when zipped together, a coat that provides both warmth and protection. In some places in BC, snow boots may not be necessary, but cleats that can attach to shoes or boots offer protection on icy surfaces.

A set of plastic drawers in my front closet organizes my gloves, mitts, scarves, and hats for easy selection. Make sure you have all these available before the cold weather hits.

When the snow comes, winter can be a wonderful season! You will enjoy it all the more if you are Winter-Wise!

**CHERYL HALSTEAD** is a member of the BCRTA Well-being Committee.



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# special

## HEALTH POLICY FEATURE

DR. STEVE MORGAN

### PHARMACARE

*This article is adapted from a keynote presentation made by Steve Morgan, to the BCRTA 2020 Conference. Our thanks to Dr. Morgan for his permission to use this material.*

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared health as a fundamental human right. Canada played a leading role in helping the United Nations translate the Declaration into agreed-upon obligations of governments worldwide, specifically including an obligation for all governments to provide universal access to necessary health care, including an obligation to provide universal access to necessary medicines. Every high-income country with a universal health care system now provides universal coverage of prescription drugs – every such country except Canada, that is.

Canadian medicare is unique insofar as our universal, public coverage for necessary health care essentially ends as soon as a patient is handed a prescription to fill. Since the 1930's, virtually every major commission on our health care system has recommended that coverage of prescription drugs be part of our health care system. The most famous of these, Justice Emmett Hall's Royal Commission on Health Services (1961 to 1964) argued that a system of



universal, public coverage for medicines should be added as the next essential stage of Canadian Medicare. Here we are today, more than a half a century later ... still waiting for that pharmacare program.

Canadians are justifiably proud of our “medicare system”, designed to provide equitable access to high quality health care on the basis of need, not on the basis of where in the country we live or how much we can afford. But if Medicare is a source of national pride in Canada, our lack of universal pharmacare should be source of national embarrassment.

Virtually all other costs of medical and hospital care in Canada are publicly financed through the Canadian Medicare system. In contrast, only 43% of the cost of prescription drugs used outside of hospitals in Canada is financed by public drug plans.

That 43% is financed through 114 different public drug plans across Canada. Coverage under these plans varies depending on age, income, disease, and province of residence. None of these plans covers everyone in any province of Canada. Indeed, no province funds even half of all prescription drug costs incurred by patients in its jurisdiction. Thus, Canada's financing of medicines relies very heavily on private financing of medicines, including payments out of pocket by patients or through private insurance plans that are paid for by employers and employees.

The privilege of having private drug coverage in Canada very much depends on who you work for, what job you do, whether you are a member of a union, and whether you work full-time, part-time, or on contract. About two thirds of Canadian workers have private drug insurance plans. There are literally thousands of different private drug

“ Skipped prescriptions have an impact on both patient health and the health care system... ”

plans in Canada, each negotiated and paid for independently by different employment groups. Overall, our patchwork of private and public drug plans leaves about one in five Canadians without coverage for prescriptions they or their family members need.

So, what is a national pharmacare system? Well, in simplest terms, a national pharmacare system is a comprehensive prescription drug benefit plan integrated with a country's universal health care system. These plans: 1) provide universal coverage of prescription drugs for people of all ages and all incomes, 2) charge patients limited co-payments to fill prescriptions, ranging from zero (in Scotland and Wales) to a maximum of 35 Canadian dollars (in Australia).

### IMPACTS ON HEALTH OUTCOMES AND COSTS

Patients seldom report difficulties affording prescription drugs in countries with universal pharmacare systems. But in Canada, those lucky enough to have either private or public coverage often face significant deductibles and co-insurance, and one in ten adults report skipping prescriptions because of cost. With an adequate, universal, public pharmacare systems, 2 million Canadians would be filling prescriptions that they are currently foregoing.

These skipped prescriptions have an impact on both patient health and the health care system. In 2016 alone, 374,000 Canadians reported having to use additional medical and hospital services because their health was compromised by financial barriers to medicines they needed. One estimate puts the cost of such negative consequences of gaps in drug coverage to our hospitals at \$1 billion per year. More tragically, research indicates that at least 300 Canadians die prematurely each year because of cost-related barriers to basic, preventative prescription drug treatments. That's equivalent to an airplane

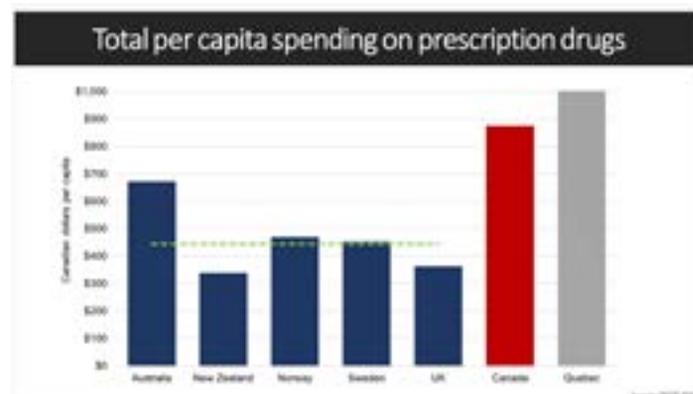
full of Canadians crashing to the ground every single year, through a choice not to act.

What is particularly infuriating about our lack of action on this problem is the fact that universal, public pharmacare systems not only save lives, they save money. A lot of money.

### COST DATA

Canada spends more on medicines than any of the comparable countries with universal pharmacare systems. Canadians spend almost \$900 per capita on prescribed medicines – and Quebec spends over \$1,000 per capita. In contrast, countries with universal, comprehensive, public pharmacare systems spent an average of \$444 Canadian dollars per capita on prescription drugs during 2018. For perspective, if we adopted a universal, single-payer pharmacare system we would see a dramatic improvement in access to medicines ... AND we would save a staggering \$15 billion per year in total. \$15 billion is enough to more than double the number of family doctors working in Canada ... paying them each \$300,000 per year.

I know, you are probably now thinking, “how on earth are we overspending by as much as \$15 billion ... every ... single ... year?” My studies show that Canadians spend a lot more on medicines because we pay higher prices for both brand name and generic drugs. Bulk purchasers – that is, national pharmacare systems – obtain better deals



through the power of price negotiations which include supply guarantees.

## EQUITY DATA

Universal, public pharmacare systems keep costs to households and employers down. Canada's current patchwork system of private and public drug plans results in massive costs to patients and employers. This represents a considerable burden on Canadian households and a rapidly rising cost of doing business in Canada.

In 2016, nearly three quarters of a million (729,000) Canadians reduced their household budget for food in order to afford the out-of-pocket costs of medicines they were prescribed. Nobody in Canada should be contemplating choosing whether to pay rent, put food on the table, or fill the prescriptions they or their family members need.

## SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Our patchwork system of private and public drug plans provides worse access to medicines, at higher overall costs, with greater financial risk to employers and households than universal, public, pharmacare systems do. The good news is, Canada can have a pharmacare system that provides better access to medicines, at lower overall costs while better protecting employers and households from financial risk, without compromising levels of industry investment.

So, in the midst of a global pandemic and economic crisis, you might be asking why now? The short answer—the right answer—is that it is the right thing to do. We have a moral obligation to act. Canadians are literally dying from inequities in access to necessary medicines. Families are going without food to pay for medicines. Unions and employers are giving up other health benefits to pay for medicines.

Millions of Canadians have lost their jobs during this COVID recession. With those job losses, they have also lost the “privilege” of having prescription drug coverage. Now is no time to have more Canadians skipping their prescriptions because they cannot afford them. We need to do everything we can to be keeping Canadians healthy and out of our hospitals during this crisis.



## PHARMACARE SAVES MORE THAN IT COSTS

Every credible study of the cost of a universal, comprehensive, public pharmacare program, including recent studies by Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer and Canada's Department of Finance, finds that such a system will save Canadians billions of dollars more than it will cost government to run. When planning a post-pandemic recovery for Canada, the choice isn't pharmacare or another program, such as improvements to long-term care. The choice is pharmacare and another program because pharmacare will literally save the money needed to do those other things.

Universal pharmacare has been studied to death. It works. It saves lives. It saves money. It ensures no family or business has to bear hardship because of needs for treatment. It has taken 60 years, but universal pharmacare is an idea whose time has come. It is just like Medicare. And, just like Medicare, it is going to take a fight to get it.

You can help! Engage with your colleagues and your community to take part in the fight for Pharmacare. Talk to people. Share what you know. Sign petitions. Write letters. Join in marches. Just don't be silent. Windows of opportunity for this scale of radical, positive change in our health care system are rare.

**Dr. Steve Morgan** is a renowned Canadian health economist and a full professor in UBC's School of Population and Public Health. Widely published, he provides policy advice to governments in Canada and abroad. He has represented Canada at the World Health Organization and his work has won many accolades, including awards from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, the Commonwealth Fund, McMaster University, the University of British Columbia, and the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

## GOLDEN STAR AWARDS

# Intergenerational Project

### TECUMSEH ELEMENTARY - VANCOUVER



Kudos to teachers Tilia Prior and Marion Collins, twenty-six students in grades 5 and 6, and thirteen residents at Shannon Oaks Seniors' Residence! The Intergenerational Project at Vancouver's Tecumseh Elementary School was a Golden Star Award winner for 2020. In its fourth year, the goal of the Intergenerational Project was to help students develop personal and cultural identities by building relationships with local seniors through art, film, poetry and music.

Every senior was partnered with two students for each year of the program. Seniors played games with the students during the first joint session. During the remainder of the sessions, seniors and students shared drawings, weaving, storytelling, personal artifacts, music and photos. Interviews between students and seniors were recorded by taking notes, videos and audio recordings. Students worked with their senior buddies to create a fine arts based project that was shared at the seniors' residence.

The students were deeply involved in their relationships with their senior buddies and worked diligently and thoughtfully as they created poems about their buddies, illustrated with portraits drawn by the students. During the program, students also produced short animations and films featuring their buddies and created playlists of their buddies' favourite songs and music. Students gained experience and skills in leadership, arts, and social intelligence.



Both seniors and students commented on the fun they had while mutually developing life expanding relationships and skills that led to program outcomes. When COVID -19 restricted personal contact, students wrote letters to their senior buddies.

Golden Star Award monies will be used to provide microphones for iPads for recording interviews, splitters for headphones for students to work on film making, art materials to create portraits with and for seniors, funds to work with artists and indigenous mentors, field trip funds to tie the project in with the community, and music for the intergenerational choir.

Congratulations to all involved!

*Excellence in Education Committee*



## GOLDEN STAR AWARDS

# Intergenerational Learning

### THETIS ELEMENTARY - THETIS ISLAND



Congratulations to teacher Genny Redman, her students and seniors from Thetis Island! For the past three years, this program has flourished in the unique setting of a one room school house on Thetis Island. Students from Kindergarten to grade six, seventeen in number last year, interacted with at least twenty-five seniors who live in their community. Both students and seniors benefitted from the strong connections that developed between the generations. Students received enhanced learning opportunities and a diversity of perspectives.

Intergenerational activities were rich and varied. At least three times a week, seniors and students read to and listened to one another. An extension of this activity is an annual “Drop Everything and Read” event. During the year, students and seniors came together to learn about mason bees, local marine life, indigenous culture and history, Canadian history, music and singing, ukulele lessons and soccer.

Students and seniors participated in the creation and maintenance of an in-school seaquarium and held an annual beach walk led by a retired marine biologist. In June 2020, the beach walk was socially distanced.



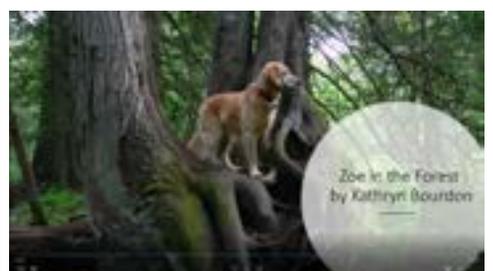
Due to COVID – 19 restrictions, BCRTA is unable to visit the school to present the Golden Star Award trophy and certificates. However, we are hopeful that an in person celebration can be held in the future. The award monies were sent by mail and will be used to purchase a video camera for the school’s seaquarium and a variety of books to serve the multigrade classroom. Kudos to everyone involved!

*Excellence in Education Committee*





# SNAPSHOTS





# SNAPSHOTS



# CLASSIFIEDS

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As office hours and personnel have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic you should contact Tom Robertson at [tom@cuba1tours.com](mailto:tom@cuba1tours.com). At this time I am just taking names and will 'PENCIL YOU IN' for future tours and keep you updated.

Cuba is working hard to safely open airports and some have already opened.

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## PRE-RETIREMENT WORKSHOPS

**BCRTA** is offering pre-retirement workshops for active teachers. Workshops are free and cover important topics such as pensions, comparison of EHC plans, travel insurance, dental coverage and more.

Members are encouraged to share this info with friends who are active teachers. Visit [bcrt.ca/workshop](http://bcrt.ca/workshop)

### 2021 WORKSHOP DATES

January 20 @ 4PM

February 17 @4PM

March 3 @4PM

April 7 @4PM

April 21 @7PM

May 12 @4PM

May 26 @7PM

June 2 @4PM

SIGN UP at [bcrt.ca/workshop](http://bcrt.ca/workshop)

# crossword

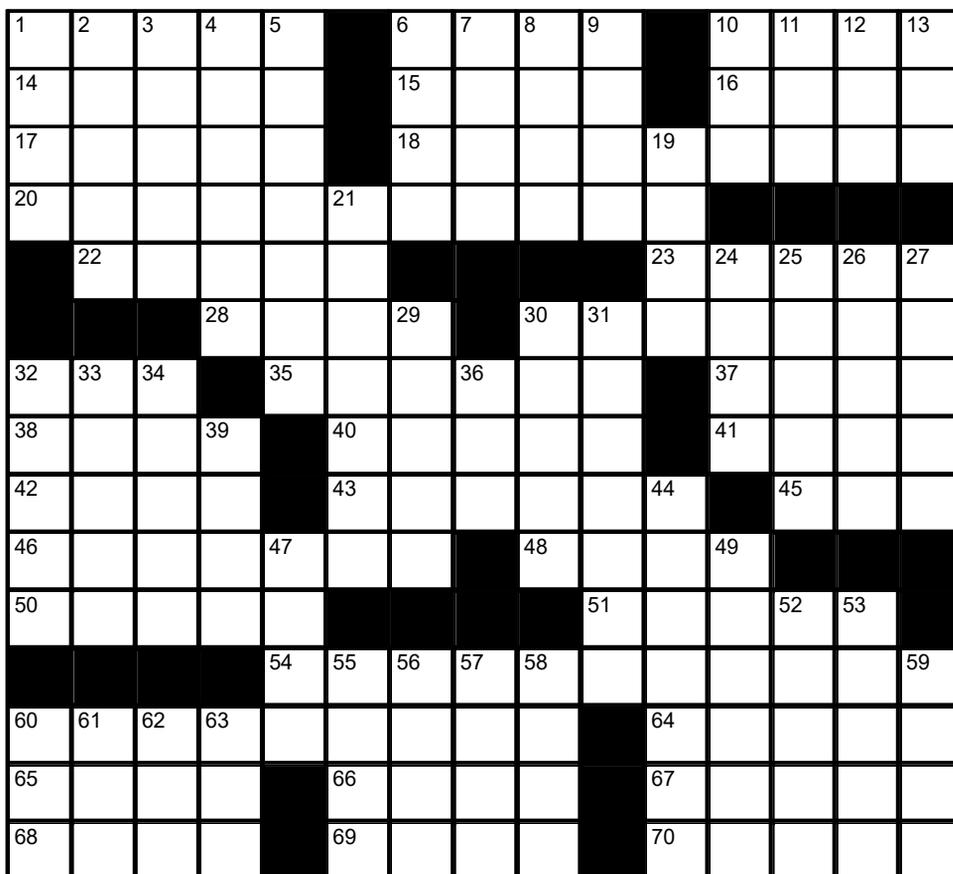
By David Squance, Victoria

## ACROSS

1. Persona non \_\_\_\_\_
6. Spreading idea, usually via the internet
10. Support, as a venture
14. Common type of triangle
15. \_\_\_\_\_ de Cosmos, one-time BC Premier
16. Girl's name
17. Oldsmobile model
18. Type of number
20. Part of a fraction
22. Beer mug
23. Water refuge in the desert (pl.)
28. What may be left after an operation
30. Trigonometric function
32. Active ingredient of aspirin (abbr.)
35. Hidden shooter in a conflict
37. Language spoken in south Asia
38. Puts on, as an attitude
40. Turn away
41. About half of whole numbers are this
42. Death notice (abbr.)
43. "I \_\_\_\_\_", follow-up to a threat (2 wds.)
45. Spoken hesitations (pl.)
46. What our common number system is (2 wds.)
48. Where two pieces of fabric come together
50. Swelling, as ankles or legs
51. Little
54. Calculation
60. Set of numbers
64. To throw oneself at
65. \_\_\_\_\_ Musk, wannabe space traveller
66. Luau instrument, (colloq., abbr., pl.)
67. Paul \_\_\_\_\_, prominent 20th C. mathematician
68. Trigonometric function
69. Brown or char, as meat
70. Connery and Penn

## DOWN

1. Senior student upon leaving high school (abbr.)
2. Irks, annoys
3. Person selling insurance or real estate
4. Pangs, spasms; as in "the \_\_\_\_\_ of childbirth"



5. The science of nuclear energy
6. Most significant or important, as a street in a small town
7. Jane Austen title
8. Water around a castle
9. "Post hoc \_\_\_\_\_ propter hoc"
10. Eliminate from use, as plastic straws
11. Collection of anecdotes
12. Major transportation company (abbr.)
13. Lock opener
19. Fe
21. Juliet says, "What's \_\_\_\_\_" (3 wds.)
24. Cold symptom
25. First hit in a tennis point
26. Curling coup--an eight \_\_\_\_\_
27. Renders speechless
29. Torn, ripped apart
30. Northern sea birds
31. Most oriented toward music, painting, etc.
32. Type of building material in the southwest U.S.A.
33. "That was \_\_\_\_\_", often in reference to a pun (2 wds.)

34. Seed used for flavouring liqueur, etc.
36. Green vegetable
39. Part of a plant
44. Mexican food item (pl.)
47. Mexican food item
49. Ripe; of age
52. Girl's name
53. What you may need to do to access your computer
55. Responsibility of proof
56. Create
57. Make a supplication
58. Agglomeration of nations once led by Khrushchev (abbr.)
59. Loch \_\_\_\_\_ monster
60. Familiar abbreviation for a university dormitory
61. Former world heavyweight boxing champion
62. Non-metric weight measurement
63. Chemical suffix

# Sudoku

		9		3			7	1
	3							
	2	6		8				
	7	3			8			
9		4	2	1	6	7		8
			9			5	1	
				6		9	5	
							4	
6	9			4		2		

	9		6		8			4
	2			4			3	
8			5		3			
4	8				1			
		1		5		6		
			3				2	8
			4		5			2
	7			3			6	
5			2		6		9	

## TO SOLVE SUDOKU PUZZLES:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

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Vancouver BC V5Z 4P2

## FOR MORE ONLINE SUDOKU PUZZLES:

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## DEADLINE FOR SUDOKU AND CROSSWORD SUBMISSION IS:

JAN 31, 2021

**Congratulations to the winners of the last issue. Your cheques are in the mail!**

## Crossword:

Pearl Wong (Surrey)  
David Annis (Cowichan)  
Martine Wakefield (Vancouver)

## Sudoku:

Chris Hicks (Williams Lake)  
Trudy McGrath (Vernon)  
Chris Bischoff (Kelowna)

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## FALL 2020 CROSSWORD SOLUTION

1	S	2	P	3	E	4	W	5	F	6	R	7	I	8	T	9	O	10	P	11	E	12	C	13	K
14	O	15	L	16	D	E		17	R	18	I	19	V	20	A	21	S	22	A	23	T	24	E	E	
25	N	26	E	27	S	S		28	I	29	G	30	O	31	R	S		32	R	33	U	34	D	E	
35	A	36	B	37	E	T		38	S	39	E	R		40	O	41	B	42	R	43	I	44	E	N	
45	R	46	E	47	L	I	48	A	49	B	L	50	Y	51	B	52	E	53	E	54					
55				56	N	57	A	58	Y	59				60	Q	61	U	62	I	63	D	64	P	65	R
66	V	67	O	68	L	69	G	70	A	71				72	T	73	U	74	C	75					
76	O	77	U	78	I					79	F	80	O	81	L	82	I	83	O	84					
85	C	86	E							87	R	88	E	89	C	90	T	91		92	A	93	C	94	R
95	T	96	H	97	U	98	N	99	D	100	E	101	R	102				103	C	104	U	105	R	106	
107								108	I	109	V	110	E	111				112	T	113	H	114	E	115	G
116																		117	H	118	O	119	D	120	
121	P	122	I	123	C	124	N	125	I	126	C	127		128	H	129	O	130		131	S	132	O	133	M
134	A	135	L	136	O	137	E	138		139				140	B	141	O	142	L	143	A	144			
145	N	146	E	147	S	T		148						149	L	150	O	151	S	152	E	153	R	154	
155	S	156	T	157	A	158	Y	159						160	L	161	O	162	E	163	S	164	S	165	
166																									

# Did You Know?



2020 marks 75 years of service to retired educators by the BC Retired Teachers' Association.

After the BC Teachers' Federation was formed in 1917, retired teachers began meeting in private homes in Vancouver, and they formed themselves into an association with the primary purpose of improving teachers' pensions. At about the same time a group of retired teachers in Victoria formed an association with the same goal.

In time the two groups joined in common purpose, which led to the formation in 1945 of the BCRTA. The B.C. Retired Teachers' Association was incorporated as a Society in 1955 with its main objective "to guard the interests and to promote the welfare of its members."

We now have over 17,000 members and 49 branches across BC.

Over the coming year, our 75th Anniversary Committee is gathering images and records of significance to the history of our retiree association and its branches.

A celebration of our shared history  
will take place at our 2021 AGM.





**PATRICK T. BRADY**

1937-2020

President, BCRTA 2000 – 2003

President, ACER-CART 2005 – 2006

Pat Brady passed away on Sunday, November 22, 2020.

*This profile of Pat Brady is adapted from a PostScript article from years past by JoAnn Lauber.  
A longer version of this profile is available on the BCRTA website.*

When Pat Brady and Wim (William) Vander Zalm, his school pal, graced the halls of their high school in Abbotsford in the 1950s, few of their teachers could have imagined the impact these two students would have on future British Columbians – Bill would become the *fantastic* politician, and Pat matured into a leader of educators in every phase of their working lives. After high school, Bill went on to sell his father's Bradner farm tulip bulbs while Pat went on to the University of British Columbia. A star amongst us, he was a combination of professionalism and playfulness, practicality and inspiration, wit and knowledge, vast experience and exemplary leadership skills.

When the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) convened each year, Pat was there – longer than most of us can boast of any relationship, personal or professional! His reasons for being at those meetings may have been to fulfill various obligations, but the underlying motivation was always the same: a prevailing interest in the welfare of his peers and a desire to serve them so that all would benefit.

Pat first attended an AGM of the BCTF as an observer when he was a student at UBC – can you honestly conjure up an image of Pat, the silent observer? From that point on he would be at the AGM either as an elected delegate or as a guest speaker. However, he would be there most often because of his skill in chairing a meeting. When Brady was in the chair the meeting

ran according to Brady – a chair renowned for his knowledge of the Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure, and for his dexterity in shaping these guides to smooth out contentious issues. He chaired AGMs and RAs of the BCTF for more than 25 years. And he did the same for the Canadian Teachers' Federation in other parts of the country.

*Editor's Note: In October of 2020, Pat chaired BCRTA's first online AGM.*

As a teacher, in four different districts, Pat spent thirty-five years in classrooms at all levels of the public school system. At the secondary level he taught math, history, economics, geography, keyboarding, business education, and home economics – the only male 'Home Ec' teacher in the province at that time. His most memorable teaching experience, however, occurred when he was just past his teen-age years. The District of Chilliwack assigned him to a Grade 7 class of 47 students! He reminisced that not only was he to deal with all of their various levels of readiness for learning and their pre-pubescent hi-jinks, but he had also to be prepared for the possible drop-in visit of the school inspector, one who wielded "the power of professional life or death", one whose whims and observations on a single visit could determine the career destiny of a classroom teacher, no matter how earnest and dedicated that teacher might be or how accurate, complete, and balanced his classroom register might appear.

As an active teacher, Pat enjoyed working with his colleagues, always valuing the advice of his peers. He was also a leader who recognized and served the precept that on occasions leaders have to step back and become followers. He went on to serve as president of the Prince George District Teachers' Association, President of the BC Teachers' Federation (1977 – 1978), and President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (1981 -1982). As well, he attended meetings of the World Confederation of the Teaching Profession. In Geneva, he worked with other national teacher organizations, drafting the International Labour Organization's "Conditions of Work for Teachers" protocol.

Pat was also involved in local government: four years as Alderman on the Prince George City Council; Regional Director for the North Central Regional District; Interior University Society for UNBC; Director of the Fraser-Fort George Regional Hospital; and Regional Museum societies. Pat continued with his alma mater, serving for 15 years on the UBC Senate.

While teaching in Prince George, he was commanding officer of both the Rocky Mountain Rangers Cadet Corps and the Rocky Mountain Rangers Militia Company; and, for many summers, he served at the Vernon Cadet Corps Camp. He was on the Executive of the Aldergrove, branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

In 1997, he attended an AGM of the BCRTA where he envisioned the prospects of positive organizational change. He was invited to chair the Finance Committee. He led a team that recommended sweeping changes to the way the Executive and the association did business.

As President of the BCRTA from 2000 to 2003, he initiated other significant changes. These include a concerted effort to increase the number of branches; the complete overhaul of the Bylaws, Policies and Procedures; the present AGM delegation ratio and costs coverage; a designated delegate training day as part of the AGM; the separation of the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund from management by the board to its present form as a charitable society; the establishment of policies that spelled out our Fund investment guidelines and that saw the growth of our Reserve Fund's revenues; and the entrenchment of the four insurance plans we

have with Johnson. Recognizing the strength of partnership, Pat encouraged the BCRTA to join actively in COSCO, the vibrant Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations in BC; and also with two national organizations – the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens' Federation (NPSCF) and the Canadian Pensioners Concerned (CPC).

Pat consistently acknowledged and promoted the contribution the BCRTA has to offer in these arenas – "it is one of the most active, dynamic, informed, and positive forces advocating for seniors in this province and, indeed, in this country."

Pat held positions in the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER-CART), including President (2006 – 2008) and Past President (2008 – 2010). In the time of his leadership, ACER-CART teamed with other like-minded organizations to advocate for, and achieved, the enactment of pension income splitting legislation as well as an increase in the age of mandatory RRSP withdrawal. He also held several leadership positions at the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations (COSCO) and National Pensioners Federation.

Every organization he touched became better organized, more financially sound, more focused on its philosophical goals, and more cognizant of the needs of its individual members.

An honorary lifetime member of the Prince George District Teachers' Association and of the BC Teachers' Federation, Pat was decorated by the Canadian Armed Forces and was awarded the BCTF's George Fergusson Award for outstanding contribution to education.

He was also made a Life Member of the BC Retired Teachers' Association.

This was Pat Brady – Renaissance Man in the true sense and a remarkable embodiment of all the attributes: scholar and soldier; adventurer (those trips to Vegas) and artist ("tickling the ivories" and wielding a persuasive pen); sportsman (surely hosting 40 annual Grey Cup parties is qualification enough in this pursuit); pragmatist and visionary; politician and active, contributing citizen; a trusted mentor; a respected leader.

And a delightful friend.

# Obituaries

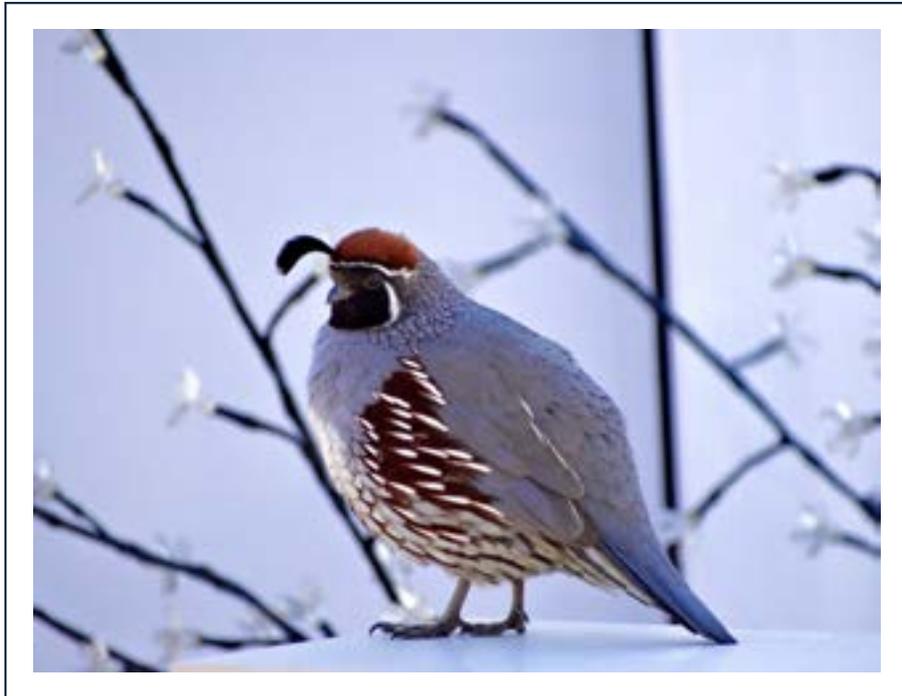
Location listed is the area given as "last taught"



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Bell, William	Prince George	Kellas, G. Steven	Coquitlam
Brady, Pat	Mission	Larsen, Richard	Surrey
Bone, Ronald	West Vancouver	Macpherson, Kenneth	Vancouver
Brinham, Lynn Naomi	North Vancouver	Marcinko, Bonita	Langley
Burnes, Rodger	North Vancouver	McDonald, Julie	Coquitlam
Cahill, William A.	Vancouver	McIntosh, Don	Sooke
Campbell, Robert A.	Vancouver	McKee, Marilyn	Delta
Chapman, Roland	Delta	Meikle, Jean	Victoria
Chow, Leo	Nanaimo/Ladysmith	Mitchell, Irene	Parksville
Coverdale, Sandra	Prince George	Onarheim, A. Marie	Burnaby
Dahl, Waldo	Grand Forks	O'Connor, Helen	Greater Victoria
Daniel, Leila	Vancouver	Osten, Jacquelin	Vancouver
Duyf, Jelle	Cowichan Valley	Ostrowercha, Vivian	Surrey
Ellis, Judith	Coquitlam	Pearson, Ted	Vancouver
Farrell, Carol	Richmond	Ruymar, Lorene	Vancouver
Froese, Barbara	Coquitlam	Rempel, Arthur	Vancouver
Fukui, Frank	Vancouver	Roberts, Muriel	Courtney
Harris, Gordon	Courtney	Robinson Ione	Sooke
Harrison, Jim	North Vancouver	Ruddick, Karyn	Surrey
Haynes, Maryanne	Burnaby	Shold, Lois	Greater Victoria
Hirst, Joyce	Surrey	Simmons, Mary	Richmond
Hume, Valerie	Coquitlam	Sparks, Donald	Langley
Jarvis, H. Frank	Greater Victoria	Whitmore, Allison	Coquitlam
Jokanovich, Robert	Vancouver	Zubyk, Grace	Vernon

# inspiration



Winter in Arizona, photo by BCRTA member Manon Cloutier

## THE SPELL OF WINTER

*“It is the life of the crystal,  
the architect of the flake,  
the fire of the frost,  
the soul of the sunbeam.*

*This crisp winter air is full of it. “*

**John Burroughs**  
NATURALIST AND ESSAYIST  
1837-1921

# THE IMMEASURABLE VALUE OF A

# Toonie



What can you get for a toonie these days? The **RR Smith Foundation** supports the advancement of public education in BC and internationally by collecting and investing a toonie a year from each of our 15,163 members. This year the Committee granted \$40,000 to educational initiatives within B.C and Internationally. Monies were awarded in March just days before the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. We have since received letters from many recipients whose stories speak to the immeasurable value of a toonie.

The **Canadian Harambee Education Society** (CHES) is one such recipient. The objective of CHES is to provide secondary school scholarships to Kenyan and Tanzanian girls whose families cannot afford to send them to school. The opportunity of an education alters their lives.

Due to COVID-19 measures in Kenya and Tanzania, schools were closed in March and CHES girls were sent home to their villages. Coming from impoverished circumstances, they were expected to help their families survive the pandemic. When schools in Tanzania reopened in June, twenty-six girls did not return to CHES facilities. CHES representatives reported that some girls were pregnant, others were married off, and others have been kept home.

*“The knowledge that 26 of our girls have lost their chance to complete their secondary education is very hard for us to take. However, being aware that this group of teenage girls is multiplied by many girls worldwide and that this group is taking the brunt of the effects of the pandemic in Third World countries, reinforces our commitment to continue supporting girls’ secondary education. This has been an unusual and, for many, a tragic year world-wide and because of the Coronavirus Pandemic, we have had challenges in Kenya and Tanzania. Fortunately our CHES Boards in both countries have risen to the occasion and done a marvellous job of keeping in touch with the girls and maintaining our programs.*”

*In Tanzania, CHES board members are finding replacement girls for those we lost. The girls who returned to school are now working extremely hard to complete their year. The July holidays and therefore our academic tutorials were cancelled and the school day has been extended by two hours. Many schools are holding classes on Saturday and even Sunday so that the students will catch up. Our girls are finding this very demanding. From the bottom of our hearts at CHES we thank you, all our sponsors and supporters, so very, very much for all your caring, commitment and continued support.”*

## **Jacintah Simiyu writes:**



*“I am always so happy about the help I have received from CHES which has really changed my life. Because of your generous hearts, I am among the top students in my class and my parents are not struggling to send me to school. I am going to reach my goals at university and, because of your support, I will also support other people generously.”*

## **Witness Baraka writes:**



*“If it were not for CHES, I don’t know where I would be by now and life would be very horrible. I had lost hope in continuing my education. My mother had nothing to pay my fees and my father was in jail, so I had nowhere to go and no one to offer me assistance. By the grace of God, I was offered a scholarship and my life changed. Then, with everything sorted out, I marched to school majestically with all my courage.”*

The hope, commitment and gratitude expressed by CHES and other recipients of RR Smith monies are stellar returns on toonie investments. That’s what you get for a toonie these days.



**R.R. Smith  
Memorial Fund  
Foundation**

## **BUILDING AN EDUCATIONAL LEGACY**

The R. R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation is a charitable organization which provides scholarships and bursaries as well as makes grants to Canadian registered charitable organizations for literacy, both in BC and overseas. Your \$2 yearly donation delivers improved educational opportunities when combined with other member donations.

The R. R. Smith Fund has grown through careful management of the VanCity Community Fund/R. R. Smith. We are now able to direct contributions to this fund. VanCity promptly produces a tax-deductible receipt for contributions over \$20. This change took many months of negotiations, but we are satisfied with the results. It will be more efficient and less time-consuming for all.

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. Education students make application 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. The examination of each applicant requesting a grant was an exciting process. The Board discussed each application and over \$40,000 was distributed to various groups. 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.

To learn more about the work of the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation, visit  
**[www.rrsmith.ca](http://www.rrsmith.ca)**



## Voluntary Benefits for BCRTA Members.

BCRTA's goal is to provide the best voluntary benefits at a competitive price to meet the insurance needs of the majority of retired teachers. Since 1998, we achieved this through BCRTA's sponsorship of an increasing range of voluntary insurance options.

A variety of voluntary insurance options are available to BCRTA members and their eligible dependents including:

- **Extended Health Care**
- **Dental Care**
- Prestige Travel with Trip Cancellation
- Additional Stand Alone Trip Cancellation
- Guaranteed Issue Life Insurance
- MEDOC® Travel Insurance
- Home Insurance

**1.877.989.2600**  
**bcrta.johnson.ca**



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