

Vancouver Tabloid

Vancouver Retired Teachers' Association JANUARY 2021 Newsletter



JOIN FOR VALENTINE DAY'S FUN

PLEASE JOIN US for our FREE Valentine Party on Tuesday Feb. 9 ONLINE via ZOOM. Register a friend or relative as a guest as well. Put on your gorgeous red outfit or Valentine bling and sweater.

Guest speaker **Lisa Hansen**, Senior Consultant at Johnson Insurance (right), will give a presentation on ***The Future of Travel and Travel Insurance***. Movement games, humour and a Singalong with pianist Marilyn Rushton follow.



sing-a-long and Valentine's Day games replete with prizes for those wanting to participate. If you are shy, you can always mute your screen!!!".

Do you want to share a song, instrumental solo, story or poem? Please contact the Organizer Ali Pollard at **bobalipollard@icloud.com** to let her know. Door Prizes will be drawn, including **one** for Best Valentine outfit!

Pre-register by Sunday Feb. 7 at **vrta.president@gmail.com**. If you are unable to use the Internet, then you can join by phone and register with Winola, 604 872-1859 You are asked to join the ZOOM meeting 10 to 15 minutes before 10 am to ensure correct hookup by video and audio connections.

Organizer Ali Pollard says: "There will be dancing, a

Valentine ZOOM Party TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9

At 10:00 AM via your Desktop, laptop, iPad or Cell phone
Waiting room opens at 9:45 am
This is a Virtual Meeting

REGISTER with the Online Host
by **SUNDAY Feb. 7** using EMAIL and send to:
Anastasia Mirras, HOST of VRТА ZOOM
VRТА.president@gmail.com

OR PHONE Register with 604 872-1859 Winola

For Party Contributions & Song suggestions
Email Party Organizer **bobalipollard@icloud.com**

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President's Greetings



Happy New Year!

Health, Happiness, Prosperity, Goodwill and Peace to all!

Last year was a trying time for all of us. We are looking forward to 2021 as a year that will allow us to gather all we have learned and use it to create as much positivity as possible. Your Executive is

here to help wherever and whenever we can.

Recently, our Province announced the BC Recovery Benefit - a grant of \$1,000 per family (or couple) or \$500 per single person. Please check out the website to find out more about eligibility, although the general rule is that families or couples earning a net income of less than \$125,000 and singles earning a net income of less than \$62,500 are eligible. To apply, you will need to have your ID, 2019 Notice of Assessment from CRA, Social Insurance Number (SIN), and your banking information close at hand. Apply online to <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/recovery-benefit> or by phone call 1-833-882-0020. You have until June 30th 2021.

Our amazing volunteers, notably Ali and Denis, are busy organizing an array of Virtual Activities for all of us to take part in. They promise to entertain, bring knowledge, and will definitely be of benefit. If you'd like to volunteer or have an idea - please reach out!

As a reminder - ALL MEMBERS are invited to attend executive meetings - please send me an email to receive the link. We'd be grateful for your attendance and participation.

Your entire Executive hopes to see you throughout this year, in whichever way we are able to get together. Whether it's through Zoom or phone calls, or eventually in person, we wish you strength and resolve as we get through this - together.

Stay safe. Stay happy.

—Anastasia Mirras

LEADERS for Activities

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB: Diane Smith frandia@shaw.ca—3rd Wed at 2 pm
-*Contact vrta.president@gmail.com to start Second Book Club

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING PAIR: Edie Wood —edithwood@gmail.com—
Most weekdays at 10 am as pre-arranged with Edie & TWO DAYS notice

NEWSFLASH: UNDER PANDEMIC RULES NO ACTIVITIES CAN MEET IN GROUPS

Until Feb. 9 then Check www.bccdc.ca*

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

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

Vancouver Tabloid

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Barb Mikulec,

Sheila Pither, Ali Pollard,

Les Rowe, David Smith,

Diane Smith, Norma Westrom

Volunteers

Lil Cumberbirch, Ora Fraser

WEBSITE: www.vrta.ca

Calendar

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

NOTE: All events VIRTUAL; start 10 AM

Feb 2 Tue. Exec.

Feb 9 Tue. -Valentine Social

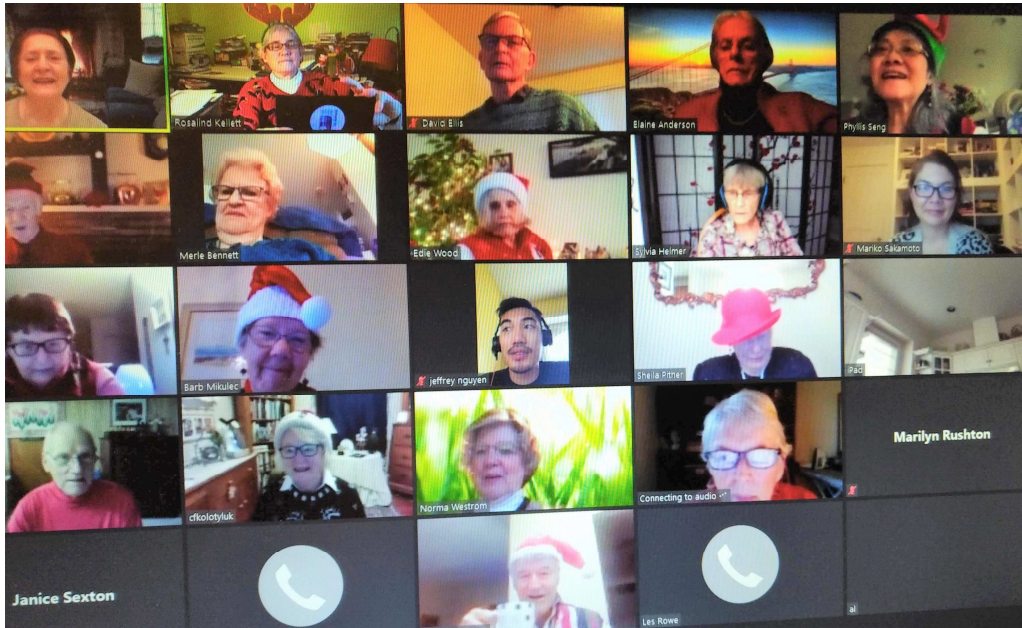
Feb 18 Thur. -Workshop

Mar 30 Tue. Exec. (TBC)

Apr 13 Tue. - Workshop

May 4 Tue. Exec. (TBC)

2020 Christmas Social



One screen shot of half of those on the December ZOOM party is shown above. Personnel key to a successful meeting include Jeff Nguyen (young man in centre) who provided technical help; President Anastasia Mirras (top left) who hosted the gathering; guest speaker Mariko (2nd down on top right) and the many organizers and participants (YOU!) who dressed up and contributed to the happy event).

Over forty people connected on line to the VRTA Virtual Christmas party on Tue Dec 8. Most connected by video but two connected by phone. Anastasia welcomed everyone and Dave Ellis lead off the fun with an Ice-breaker game, sharing the name of a favourite Christmas carol.

Then Dr. Mariko Sakamoto told us about her nursing career, her current work as a COVID-19 contact tracer and her interest in researching why some adult patients become “stuck in hospital” (more details on page 8).

Slides make members want to travel again!

Former BCRTA President

Gerry Tiede (right) presented a slide show of his trips to the south, north-west and central regions of Africa.

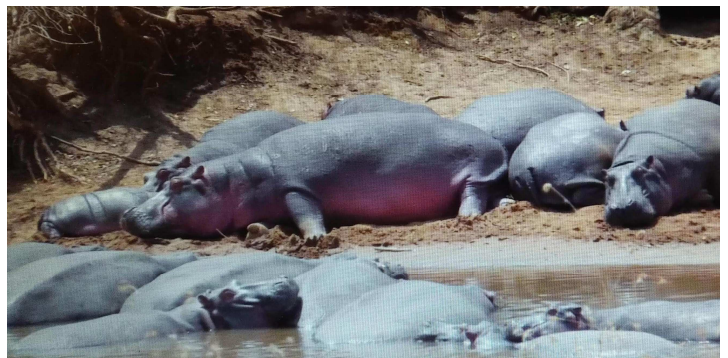


In a series of trips arranged by himself or local tour companies, Gerry and his wife learned a great deal about the rich and different cultures across Zambia, Namibia, Kenya and Morocco.

Gerry was particularly intrigued with the BCRTA trip to Morocco, arranged by Trip Merchant. The group saw the remains of ancient Roman cities and Islamic mosques amongst the shifting sand dunes and unique flora and fauna. Watching goats climbing trees was a sight one could only believe by seeing them climb up with one's own eyes!



Slides of natural wonders – for example, the Victoria Falls – and native African animals impressed the ZOOM party observers and made all want to go travelling again!



Hippopotamuses lie in the mud in the Serengeti plains of Kenya. At left: Goats like to climb trees in Morocco.

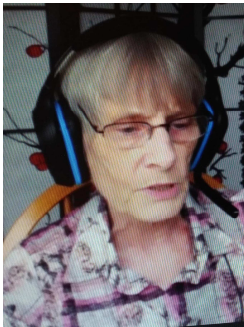
2020 Christmas Social—Second hour

The party continued for the second hour with the prize draws followed by a poetry reading then group singing, led by Marilyn Rushton playing her piano.

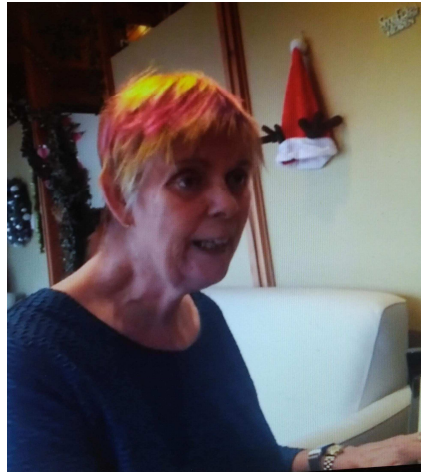
Marilyn Rushton had us singing lustily (most of us muted ourselves!) as she led us in a medley of songs. Norma Westrom had carefully prepared large print verses of 10 popular seasonal songs so

all could sing the actual words as Marilyn ably played the piano.

Sylvia Helmer read a humorous



Sylvia reading



Marilyn on the piano

COVID version of the Night Before Christmas.

Participant prizes were awarded to: Phyllis Seng (right) in her festive hat won the prize for best Christmas outfit; Betty Anne Hamilton won for having a birthday closest to



December 8. Mary-Jo Campbell (top) was resplendent in her Christmas sweater.

The VRTA is blessed to have such talented musical people on our executive and amongst our membership.

Sing Out (Virtually) -- It's a New Year

A new year has begun and this issue wants to help you make a Fresh Start! Sadly, the COVID-19 virus has spread world-wide and claimed over 2 million deaths. Wearing a well-fitting mask is important; read page 5.

The digital world continues to change and our devices or the software on them ages. Alas, my new SAM-SUNG cell phone is a challenge. It won't connect with the car Wifi setup and it requires two or three steps before I can answer a call. On the other hand, it streams family and news video smoothly and pops up with all sorts of Apps one can get lost on. Do come to our technology workshop on Feb. 18 so we can share concerns.

For those of us who crave music, singing and togetherness, the recent Virtual Christmas party let us sing

along joyously and gain a Christmas highlight. It was pure fun to watch the musical Marilyn, along with the beautiful voices of several participants, call out the leading lines to the carols and so many did sing along.



It was clear we miss the opportunity to sing in choirs or hum along at concerts, services and musicals. It has been proven that singing releases endorphins in our bodies, a healthy response that improves our immune system and brightens our outlook on life. Do register for our Valentine Party on Feb. 9.

May we ALL be vaccinated soon! - **Ros Kellett**

Editorial

For excellent, current advice on the Wearing and Types of non-medical masks that are appropriate for BC residents, refer to: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>



MASKS

After wearing this new accessory for several months you've no doubt learned there are great variations with regard to comfort, convenience and effectiveness. My first mask (#1) was made for me by a kindly neighbour and I was thrilled. However, I soon found that having long ties didn't work well. They were awkward to do up, totally hairstyle damaging and didn't keep the mask in place. My next mask (#2), made by my daughter, is still my favourite. It fits snugly and comfortably, has stretchy ear loops and is made from a fabric that makes me feel safe. Needing more masks I started buying them in packages, a little tricky to do as it's not possible to determine exactly what the mask is like. (#3) was a great buy. Each has a third layer of cotton and a pocket for inserting a paper towel or coffee filter, super effective.

(#4) has two layers with a pocket for more safety. The fabric is soft and stretchy with ear loops tied around the back of the head, making them very adjustable. They're the most comfortable



Ali's collection of 9 masks are numbered from #1 (top right) down and across to #9 (bottom left)

ble of all my purchased masks. (#5) is unique, made in Canada, with a separate nose piece sewn in at the top for extra safety and to avoid the eye glasses steaming up. (#6) Is cut from a single layer of stretchy polypropylene and was originally comfortable but now it has stretched with wearing and washing so I fight to keep it from riding up in front of my eye or falling down below my nose. (#7) was not a good purchase for going on walks. As you breathe in, the fabric covers your nostrils and you have to pull at it to avoid asphyxiation. For a dressy occasion these masks (#8) that incorporate velvet stripes, rhinestones, lace, sequins and pearls are well made and comfortable. The throw-aways (#9) now come in many different colours and designs. That's great for those who must keep changing their masks, but not wonderful for the environment. – **Ali Pollard**



Animal masks on Ros Kellett's grandsons Ozzy and Gus



Mask humour



Elaine Anderson made masks for her grandsons, Declan and Rory.

Two virtual workshops coming with technology theme

TECHNOLOGY and AGING

Thursday February 18

Speaker Royce Shook, COSCO trained, will describe a range of devices that help with daily living, such as blood and diabetes monitors, hearing amplifiers as well as home and communication technologies.

Pre-register by Mon. Feb. 15 by Phone Denis 604-526-7561 or dennyottewell@outlook.com The ZOOM link will be sent the day before.

USING TECHNOLOGY with OUR CHANGING VISION

Tuesday April 13

Marilyn Rushton, VRTA vice-president, will demonstrate coping procedures and technologies, including cell phones and computers, to allow one to participate in the visual world. Marilyn is a former teacher of blind and visually impaired students; she has been totally blind from birth. Discussion and questions welcomed.

Pre-register by Thur. April 8: Phone Denis 604-526-7561 or dennyottewell@outlook.com

COVID fails to stop VRTA poinsettia delivery

Using 30 drivers, over 98 poinsettias were delivered on Friday Dec. 4 to VRTA members who live in Vancouver and are 85 years or older. A seasonal poem was mailed out to those elders living outside Vancouver.



Ali Pollard and Edie Wood spent hours organizing the list of receivers into manageable groups for the volunteer drivers to engage with. The weather was dry and sunny and fun times were had by all.



Co-organizer, Edie Wood (on the right) hands off a pot of poinsettias to volunteer, Margery Kellett for delivery. Co-organizer Ali Pollard was busy loading a car.

STAYING FIT during COVID TIMES

Dear Editor,
Since I haven't wanted to phone "50 hours ahead" to reserve my deep water exercise class and I haven't lost weight



**LETTERS
TO THE
EDITOR**

(gained inches around my middle!) I am losing muscle and stamina. I'm unable to walk any distance at a substantial pace. Covid has affected me in a very bad way! Help!

- **Diane S.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Valentine Party— Tue. Feb. 9; Register by Sun Feb. 7 —see page1

Workshops—See announcements at left

Pension changes—Are you concerned about or How to handle Boredom in COVID times? Check out the bcrt.ca website

Volunteering?—Want to volunteer or learn about Advance Medical Planning? Check out this Canadian site: seniorshelpingseniors.ca/



To reach **Tabloid**

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

HAS YOUR POSTAL OR EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGED?

Laurie Boyd of the BCRTA prefers that you contact her 604 871-2260 directly or using the ONLINE Form. <https://bcrt.ca/update-member-info/>
Please also NOTIFY VRTA membership chairperson, Elaine at 604 929-3306 or ebanderson@shaw.ca

Live Stage Offerings

January to April 2021



Due to current COVID-19 Restrictions all live theatre shows are closed; some virtual shows may be available. But live actors need support. Click on the website of your favourite local theatre and DONATE to help them survive this lockdown! Our theatre critic has chosen to review a timely book below.

- **TABLOID Editor**

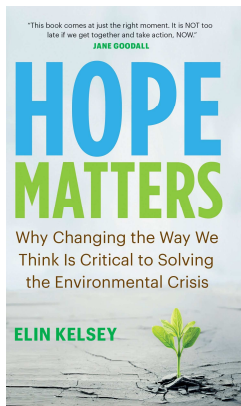
Book Review

I was given a very thoughtful book for Christmas, *HOPE MATTERS, Why Changing the Way We Think Is Critical to Solving the Environmental Crisis*. The author, Elin Kelsey, PhD, is a scholar, public speaker, educator and award-winning writer who argues how we can fight apathy and inaction by spurning fear and embracing evidence-based hope in working towards a sustainable future. Kelsey bases her positivity on the resilience of nature and on large and small actions taken both individually and collectively by people world-wide. Her book is uplifting and hopeful as the world faces clear evidence regarding climate change. I was especially encouraged by her many examples from

nature which include the dramatic increase in bald eagles (once almost extinct) and the appearance of a new and prolific coral reef in Australia. She also cites Sudbury, Ontario which was

once one of the most polluted landscapes on Earth but is now a model of ecological recovery. The list goes on. Kelsey's book was published by Greystone Books and is also available as an Ebook or an Audiobook.

—**Ora Fraser**



THEME & DEADLINE for the NEXT ISSUE - Friday April 30, 2021

How am I coping with my Changing Vision?

Photo welcomed. About 100 words.



Snowshoeing at Cypress Bowl, Barb Mikulec (left) and Edie Wood removed masks for the photo.

2021 MASK RIDDLES

-from huffpost.com

With help from Winola Chu

1. Why are the man's ears like a purse?
2. What can I do if I sneeze while wearing a mask?!
3. What did the young man reply to the joke his Grandpa had just told?
4. What did the doctor say to the overweight patient?
5. How did the soccer player keep his rival away?
6. A man walks into a bar wearing a mask; everyone screams; and then what happens?

ANSWERS

1. They are carrying sunglasses, headphones and a facemask!
2. Remove the mask and sneeze into your sleeve!
3. Your joke is like the new vaccine. Older ones get it first!
4. You must keep wearing your mask inside your home as well and stop eating so much!
5. He wore a facemask that said: If you can read this, you are TOO close!
6. "Relax", the man orders. "I'm just here to rob the place!"

Friends of VRTA Scholarship Gets a Boost!



Dr. Mariko Sakamoto, the last recipient of scholarship money from the VRTA before the VRTA reconstituted its donation funds into a separate scholarship



organization, called the Friends of the VRTA (FOV), inspired many to donate on December 8. This charity organization is housed within the RR Smith Memorial Foundation Fund, banked within the VanCity Community funds of the credit union.

Mariko was most grateful for the \$1000 VRTA scholarship that allowed her to finish her PhD in 2019

-20 as a fulltime student, as well as running her family home with two teenagers. Without that money, she would have taken an extra year or two to complete her studies, as well as taking on extra jobs to make ends meet. She defended her PhD thesis in gerontology studies on Thurs. Dec. 3, six days before our Christmas party.

Mariko did not have time to explain her thesis in more detail. She did say that she learned that older adult patients, who have nowhere to go after their acute condition has been taken care of, get labelled ALC Alternate Level of Care and can get “stuck” in hospital with nothing to do. She became aware of the stigma of ageism and declin-

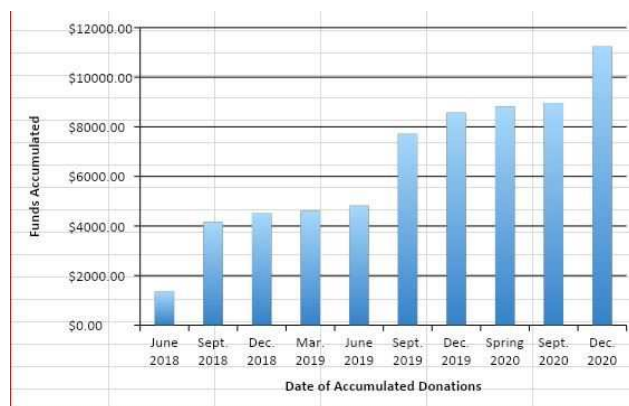
ing health. Answering questions Mariko responded that she would be happy to come to another ZOOM session and share more of her insights with the VRTA at a future event. Meanwhile, she is helping BC public health as a COVID contact tracer.

Thank You

The Friends of VRTA Board would like to THANK ALL of you who contributed in 2020 to the Fund. The Board hopes to issue the first Scholarship from this new account in 2021!

HOW TO DONATE ONLINE:

Go to Van City Foundation <http://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca>, Click “Funds” at the top of home page, Type R.R. Smith in the “Search” area, Click on “R.R. Smith Community Fund”, then Click on “Give to this Fund” and Fill in details. Designate the funds by typing **Friends of VRTA** in “Leave a comment” space. Donations over \$20 get a tax receipt immediately.



The graph shows how the Friends of VRTA scholarship fund received a boost after the December 2020 Virtual Christmas Party.

HOW TO WRITE A PAPER CHEQUE:

PAYABLE TO: **R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation**

In the Memo line: **Friends of VRTA –Scholarship & Bursary Fund**

Name (PRINT) _____ Amount of Donation: (cheque)_____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ Postal Code: _____

NOTE: Don't forget your name and address so we can send out a charitable tax donation receipt!

MAIL TO: Friends of VRTA, c/o **Dave Ellis**, 2086 Newport Avenue, Vancouver, BC. V5P 2H8