



Lake McArthur, Yoho National Park, B.C. Photo Credit Gary Bunney

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# THE BRIDGE

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## KTRTA NEWSLETTER

Editor: Donna Sharpe [onlineoffice.ktrta@gmail.com](mailto:onlineoffice.ktrta@gmail.com)

Bridges provide a link  
Bringing people closer,  
Filling the space with new possibilities.  
Let's bridge age, status, race, differences  
With uncommon humanity.  
Let's bridge the gaps that chain us,  
Unlocking our grandest vision for today.

Barb Stankiewicz

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you have had a healthy, happy, and productive fall and winter. We have come again to gather at our luncheons for September, October, and November. In January, we will meet on the 27th.

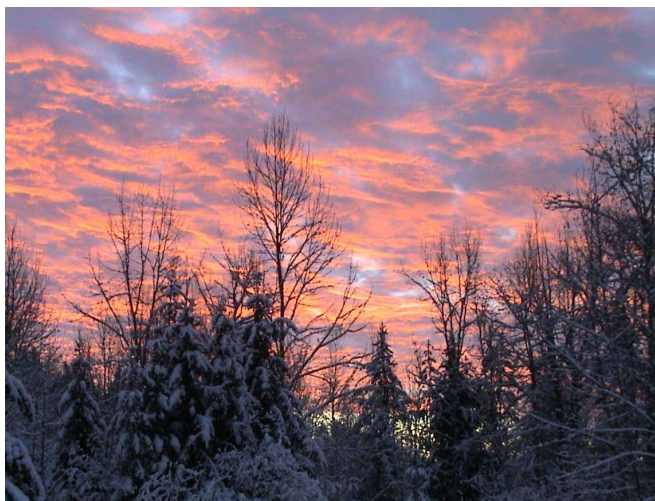
At our September luncheon, we hosted members from the Nicola Valley Retired Teachers' Association from Merritt. It was also a time to bring extra herbs, fruits and vegetables from our gardens to share with one another as we usually do on our first Fall luncheon.

Our October gathering had a few members sporting costumes, and as well we had an interesting presentation about bees by artist Elaine Sedgeman, an apiologist, author and illustrator. She has published children's books about different species of bees, not the usual honey bee or bumble bee, but solitary bees called Andrena bees.

In November, we had our usual Christmas Dinner and celebration to get us in the Christmas spirit, and it certainly did. The tables were decorated festively and Christmas music played by Marian Owens. We all received a special gift: a 2023 desk calendar with each month illustrated with an owl photo by Glenn Dreger. The calendar was published most professionally by Marney Bethell, our president.

Thank you to all who have taken the time to share their creative writing, cartooning, travel writing and articles in this newsletter. Enjoy your reading.

Yours truly, Donna Sharpe



January Sunrise Photo credit: Denise Scott

*Contributing Writers for this issue of THE BRIDGE newsletter - Fall Winter 2022-2023:* Donna Sharpe (Editor), Marney Bethell, Gary Bunney, Noeleen Bunney, Glenda Miles, Marie Laroche, Troylana Manson, Marlene Olineck, Sheila Park, Pat Petley, Marnie Strong, Frank Veszely, Dr. Trevor Watson



# CREATIVE WRITING

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## Behold The High Alpine

by Frank Veszely September 13, 2022

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Behold The high Alpine!  
It's not yours, it's not mine --  
it's *ours* and God's free land:  
in itself a godsend.

Wandering or at rest --  
behold ancient forests,  
dense but only knee-high,  
mini meadows nearby!

Makes one feel a Giant  
and yet soft, suppliant,  
humbled right to the bone  
that the Earth is my home.

Rocks, boulders, then pebbles.  
sand, silt and clay edges --  
time itself becomes moot  
once a plant takes a root!

Presto! Fertile soil  
that lasts, does not soil,  
takes up the valley land,  
which becomes Fairy Land.

But give me the Alpine,  
high where the eagles fly,  
where tiny rivulets  
the melting ice begets!

These, before reach the sea,  
sustain humanity!  
This is where all begin:  
the withal, the within.

High, where the clouds do fly,  
high, in the deep blue sky,  
high, where you don't feel sores,  
high, where the spirit soars.

Behold the high Alpine!  
It's not yours, it's not mine --  
it's *ours* and God's free land:  
for us, it is a godsend.



Mt. Dunn Photo Credit: Frank Veszely

# HOBBIES AND PASTIMES

## The Cartoon Muse

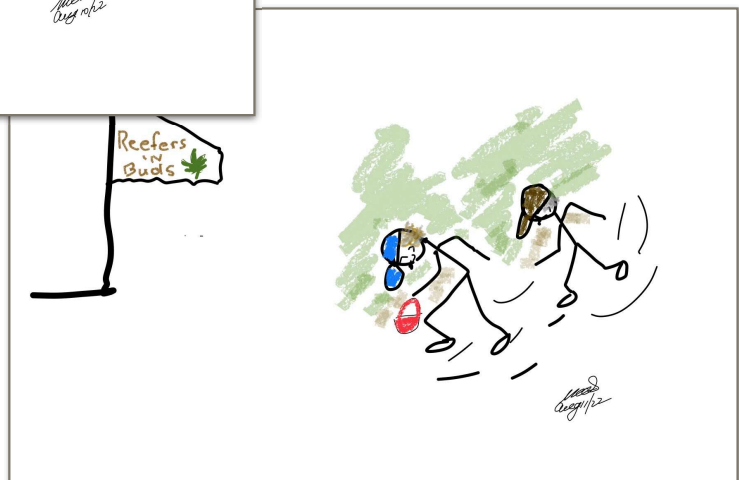
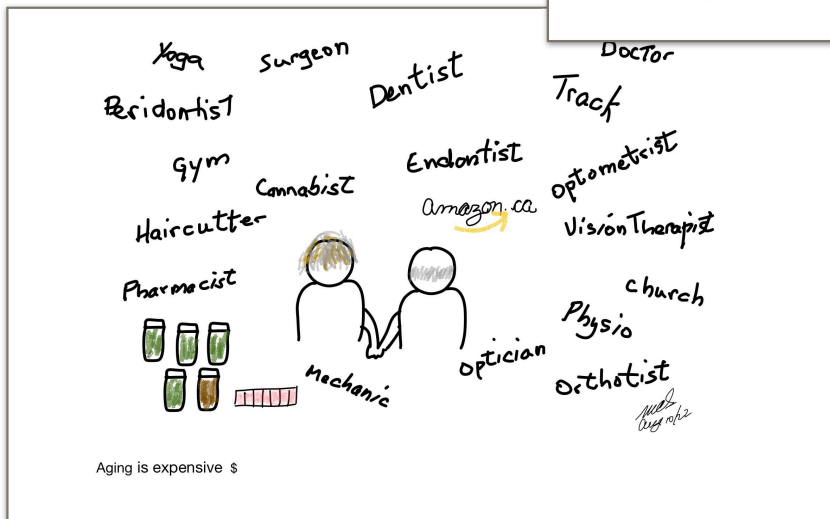
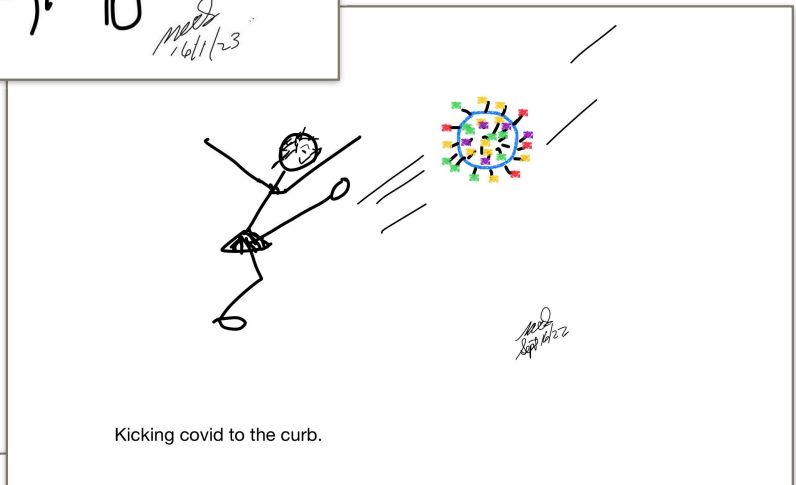
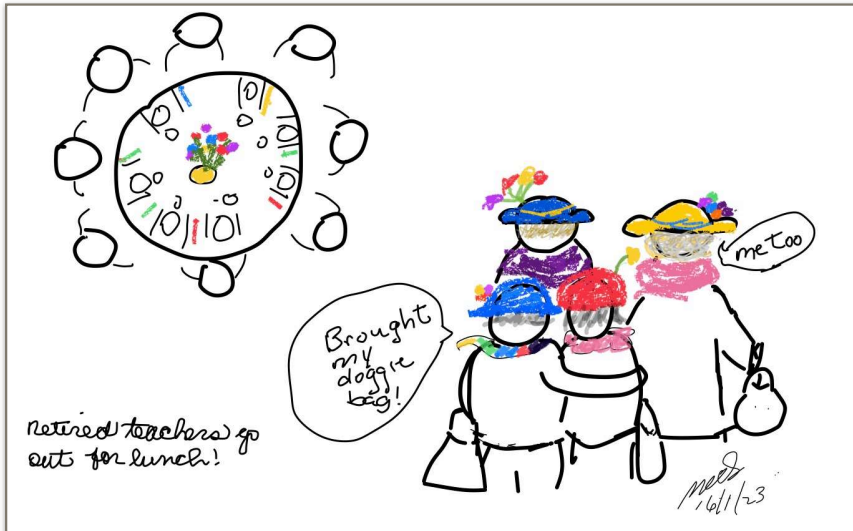
by Marnie Strong



**A MUSE** - When Marnie Strong turned eighty, she replaced her old iPad with a new Apple iPad Pro, added an Apple pencil, and was on her way. With her inner *Cartoon Muse* unleashed, she began to draw...and draw...and draw. Cartoons became a diary of daily life. Small incidents to epic events became sources for her creative mind. Her husband, Derm Strong, has been her primary material source. He frequently finds his innocent utterances transformed into caricatures of himself. There have been poignant moments along the way, and Marnie has found a form of expression for her own feelings with simple and gentle drawings. Marnie and Derm have laughed a lot since Marnie's *Cartoon Muse* emerged. No subject is too serious or too silly. Quirky is a badge of honour. Simplicity is a gift.







# Travel

## Toot-Toot: A Day on The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

by Dr. Trevor Watson



Photo Credit: Arne Hückelheim, Wikimedia Commons

My buddy Dan and I have recently returned from a ramble around Asia.

We spent most of our time in West Bengal, in the northeast of India. I want to tell you about an experience of the greatest interest to us – a day riding the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway – from the city of Darjeeling (elevation 6700') in the Himalayas to Siliguri Junction (elevation 328') in the plains. Siliguri Junction is three hundred miles north of Calcutta;

its very name brings to mind that dear old imperialist, Rudyard Kipling, who wrote so fondly of these parts.

The railway is also called the “Darjeeling Toy Train” and is recognized as a *UNESCO World Heritage Site*. At Darjeeling station is a bronze plaque placed by the “Hon’ble Minister for Railways, Miss Matama Banerjee”, on 26 November, 2000. The DHR is declared to be “Dedicated to the people of the world”. The thought warms my heart.

At the Darjeeling station is a notice board identifying *Passenger Amenities Available*. Note is made of smart features such as the Upper-Class Waiting Room, urinals (5), latrines (3), posted timetables, a tea stall, a bookshop - and, to top it all off – “Lighting.”

Signs festooned the place; one noted, “PASTING POSTER IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE”; another reminded us that “CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS.” The DHR is clearly a no-nonsense outfit. Apparently, the Indian Railways *babus* expect possible offenders to be proficient in English.

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**“...it was an experience of the greatest interest to us – a day riding the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway...”**

India is mad about signs.... they're on every visible vertical surface. I believe that once a sign is posted, it's a serious offence – probably bad karma – to take it down. Hence, there are discoloured, peeling signs *everywhere* you go, often *layers deep* – many referring to businesses that have long since passed into history.

Let's look at some highlights of the railway's extraordinary history. Calcutta was the capital of British India from 1773 to 1911. It was full of civil servants whose productivity declined abruptly during the murderous pre-monsoon heat. Naturally, the idea arose among senior officials that it would be good to escape into the hills – say, Darjeeling – to cool off for a bit. One could bring a briefcase; the change was bound to do wonders for productivity.

In the 1800s, it took two weeks to make the punishing journey from Calcutta to Darjeeling. Every type of conveyance was required – train, ferry, bullock cart, tonga, rickshaw – you name it. Rising to the challenge, an agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway named Franklin Prestage had an idea: he envisioned something then unheard-of: a *rail link* from the plains to the mountains. Happily, his idea was favoured by Bengal's Lieutenant Governor, Sir Ashley Eden, and plans were made to proceed.

Accordingly, between 1879 and 1881, track was laid between New Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. To save space and material, the tracks were placed only two feet apart – a foot narrower than usual. This 'narrow-gauge' railway turned out to be an engineering marvel, incorporating an ingenious system of zig-zags, loops and spirals to deal with otherwise impossible grades. Her Royal Highness, the Empress of India, the great Queen Victoria herself, knighted Prestage for his efforts.

On July 4th, 1881, the first train rolled proudly into Darjeeling, blasting its whistle the whole time. India does love a party; the crowds must have roared themselves hoarse. Some say the sounds of that mighty celebration still echo through the mountains – all the way to Kathmandu. In subsequent years, the railway has become a huge part of everyday life in the towns along its route. The DHR is now a source of enormous regional pride and a huge tourist attraction.

Today, locomotives are a motley mix of steam and diesel units. The antique steam locos (*B Class*) are utterly charming, like big, greasy, sooty toys. They were built by Sharp, Stewart and Company of Glasgow between 1889 and 1925. They require ceaseless repair and rebuilding, but thanks to the elite maintenance team, they are lovingly cared for, and still do the job in matchless style.

#### The Whistle Queen!

So it was that at 0830 hours on Friday, March 16, 2019, Dan and I hopped aboard and took our seats. We weren't sure what class we were in, so we just sat anywhere. The loco fired up with quite a fuss – a great

**“...an engineering marvel, incorporating an ingenious system of zig-zags, loops and spirals to deal with otherwise impossible grades...”**



The Whistle Queen!  
Photo Credit: Dr. Trevor Watson



chugging, huffing, puffing, wheezing and whistling – all enveloped in billows of gritty black smoke. We lurched bravely out of the station; we were excited to be on our way. Knowing that the train averages less than ten miles an hour only promised to prolong the fun.

The tracks parallel and often cross the highway known as Hill Cart Road, starting in Darjeeling and ending in the plain – without the benefit of signals or barriers of any kind. As we set out, our wee train squeezed past stooped pedestrians in flip-flops with great loads strapped to their foreheads, shiny-faced kids in school uniforms, battered cars, trucks and motorbikes. Cows, donkeys, dogs and hens ran for their lives. We could have lifted a freshly-plucked chicken or a bunch of bananas from a stall at arm's length. Many people looked up, waved and smiled at us; one girl threw us a kiss. Dan thought it was for him....but I think he was dreaming. We agreed on a 50/50 split.



Not having any fun at all!  
Photo Credit: Dr. Trevor  
Watson

We chugged along with the windows open. Most of the time, we seemed on the verge of some bottomless precipice as we competed for space with pedestrians, idlers, livestock, traffic and construction equipment. At Agony Point, a 360-degree loop north of Tindharia, we peered into the ultimate abyss – rocky and forested, stretching away thousands of feet below. Our hearts raced, and our hair stood on end – but in an entirely pleasant way. It was *grand*.

The train passed through plantations of tea and cardamom, forests of maple, chestnut, oak, walnut and cedar, as well as orchards of pear and cherry. Brilliant blooms flashed by – rhododendrons, bougainvillea, cream magnolias, and orchids. The train wound its way steadily downhill and southward, passing through towns with intriguing names: Ghoom, Sonada, Tung, Kurseong, Rangtong, Rangbul...

At Kurseong station, I left the train in search of two cups of that magical potion India runs on – *chai*. I found a shop nearby and ran in, panting. I got the chai, I paid up and then became alarmed when I saw the train pulling out of the station. I ran across a dusty traffic circle, got whistled at by an irate traffic cop, and dodged a skinny dog, but somehow managed to hop aboard as the train gathered speed. Despite first-degree burns to both hands, I'd retained most of the precious chai. Dan and I savoured ours as long as we could. This is our idea of a good time. I firmly believe you can't get a decent cup of chai anywhere but in India.

After eight hours of high jinks of this sort, we finally rolled into Sigiluri Junction. We planned to spend the night there, so we grabbed a rickshaw to our hotel. The day had been splendid in every way – a trip through a lunatic dreamscape of heights, depths, colours, smells and sounds. It was surely one of the most interesting, thrilling and enjoyable days of our lives. Two big thumbs up for the DHR. Try it yourself some time.

Toot-toot!

Trevor would love to hear your thoughts. His contact information is available on his website: [recklesstraveller.com](http://recklesstraveller.com)

**“Knowing  
that the  
train  
averages  
less than  
ten miles an  
hour only  
promised to  
prolong the  
fun.”**

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## That is a Ridiculous Idea!

by Gary Bunney

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Prince Edward Island National Park Photo Credit: Bonnie Moreland

A couple of years ago, our family decided to go on a family holiday to Prince Edward Island. Our family consists of three adult children, their spouses and seven grandchildren. The plan was to share the cost to rent a beautiful, spacious beachside home that would easily accommodate all 15 of us. We would share the rental costs equally between our three daughters and us, each paying one-quarter of the vacation rental. It was also agreed that Mom and Dad would pay for everything else: the food, festivities, airfare, theatre tickets, etc. The plan seemed perfect for some mid-summer fun. Lighthouses, red sea cliffs, Anne of Green Gables, swimming in the warm waters and lounging on the beach. With this in mind, and all agreed, the plans came together quickly, and the rather pricey vacation home was booked a full year ahead of our travel.

A few weeks before our trip, one of our daughters phoned with the disappointing news that she and her family couldn't go on the trip after all. I'm not sure that our daughter realized the financial impact of her decision on the rest of us. It meant that if we continued to share the cost of the vacation rental, the price increased appreciably for the three remaining families. Then, as the departure date came closer, it became obvious that money was tight for one of our other daughters, and she was feeling quite stressed about it. So, we decided we would need to subsidize her share. After a few moments of additional thought, we realized it wasn't fair to pay the share of the daughter who was no longer attending, and one of the daughters who was attending but couldn't afford to pay, then not pay for our other daughter's share. Clearly, we had to pay her share, too. As is common with *The Bank of Mom and Dad*, the vault opened, and before we knew it, we were paying the full amount for the vacation rental, airfares, car rental...well, everything! We had been bamboozled!

In addition to spending one week at the vacation rental with the kids, we also planned for Noeleen and I to explore PEI, Cape Breton and Nova Scotia for a couple of weeks, staying in quaint seaside hotels and B&Bs. We felt somewhat financially overwhelmed; our travel budget was strained to the breaking point! With most of our plans well past the cancellation-without-penalty deadline, our trip was full steam ahead, but way over budget. That got Noeleen thinking of creative ways to stay within our limits and still have fun.

Noeleen said, "I have an idea...instead of staying in hotels and B&Bs while exploring on our own, why don't we camp instead? That would save money." We like camping, but flying across Canada with all of our camping gear sounded too difficult to manage. Before I could put my mouth in check, I blurted out, "That is a ridiculous idea!" Noeleen took a calming approach and asked me to consider it for a little while, first by setting aside the minimum camping equipment we would need, much like backcountry camping with our backpacks, and then see how much bulk it would be and how much it would weigh. She thought it could all fit in a suitcase. "That's a ridiculous idea," I muttered again, under my breath this time. I was completely skeptical, but I grudgingly took on Noeleen's challenge of pulling together the minimalist camping equipment we would need to prove to her that it would be impossible to fit everything needed for camping in one suitcase.

Much to my amazement, I found that when I got our backpacking tent, fly, tarp, down sleeping bags, sleeping pads, and other camping odds and sods, including lightweight folding camp chairs, I was able to get all items to fit into our largest suitcase - with some room to spare! So, the first hurdle was overcome, but now for the second hurdle. How much does this suitcase full of camping gear weigh? Again, to my surprise, it came in at just 48 pounds (22 kg), a couple of pounds under the airline baggage weight limit. I was completely shocked. This idea might actually work. Meanwhile, Noeleen was making some discoveries of her own. She had found excellent oceanside campsites available at PEI National Park, plus national and provincial campsites available in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island. One lakeside provincial campground in Cape Breton had a luxurious yurt available, best of all, it was a short drive to *The Red Shoe Pub*, of Rankin family fame, where we planned to take in a ceilidh! Another campsite was near Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, a spot on our list of must-sees. All of these were available to reserve for the exact days we needed. It seemed that it was meant to be. I had to admit to Noeleen that her idea was actually pretty good. We felt immediate relief about our trip's financial aspects and were excited about the great possibilities for adventure and exploration.

I am happy to report that the camp-in-a-suitcase idea far exceeded our expectations. It was economical, yes, and relieved the financial strain of a typical three-week vacation. Still, most importantly, we discovered that being able to fly to another region of Canada with our 48 lb. camp-in-a-suitcase took us to the precise places, views and experiences we wanted to explore. In PEI National Park, we camped right on the edge of a cliff



Stanhope-By the-Sea Photo Credit: David Broad

overlooking the ocean, listening to the sea birds and having a wonderful night's sleep every night as the ocean waves lulled us to sleep. One evening we dressed in our finest and went off to the theatre in Charlottetown to watch the play *Anne of Green Gables* and have a wonderful dinner at a downtown tavern. In Cape Breton, we did go to a ceilidh at *The Red Shoe Pub*. Our days were spent exploring the coastal areas and doing everything we had intended with our original plan of staying in hotels and B&Bs. The once ridiculous idea of a camp-in-a-suitcase has turned out to be much more than saving money; it got us exactly where we



wanted to be. We used the idea again last summer for several nights of camping in a provincial park near Ottawa with one of our daughters, her husband and three of our grandchildren. Just think, if she hadn't bailed on the family trip to PEI, a year earlier, we would never have developed the camp-in-a-suitcase idea. The opportunity to camp on the other side of Canada would never have crossed our minds, never mind actually becoming a reality. This is a prime example of *necessity being the mother of invention*, and one 48-pound suitcase did the trick!

I'm now a fan of the camp-in-a-suitcase idea for exploring faraway places. So much so, I'm planning to mention my latest idea of seaside camping in Hawaii. I hope Noeleen doesn't say, "That's a ridiculous idea!"

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## The Call to Travel Home

by Noeleen Bunney - Frank Veszely's poem, *The High Alpine*, featured at the start of this issue of *THE BRIDGE*, inspired me...

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It comes so loud and clear. It does. It's a call from deep within me. It's the call to travel home - home to the mountains, to a well-loved alpine lake in Yoho National Park: Lake O'Hara, and, once there, to further ascend the many trails climbing to Wiwaxy Gap, Lake Oesa, Opabin Lake, and Lake McArthur. It's a call to hear, once again, the pika's high-pitched whistle and the hoary marmot's chirp, see a mountain goat, or find a bit of wool from a mountain goat caught in the bark of a tree. Again and again, my heart desires to explore the exquisite alpine meadows with their miniature zen gardens and the glacier-fed lakes' radiant jewel-blue colours. I've been to these lakes many times, and as I sit at the lake shore, gazing toward the glacier, each mountain encircling me is familiar. Old friends. I have hiked the rocky Huber and Yukness ledges of the alpine circuit, leading from each mountain to the next. I have watched the glaciers suspended in the mountains above each lake and heard the rushing roar of their torrent of water descending powerfully to the lakes below.



Wiwaxy Gap, Yoho National Park Photo Credit: Gary Bunney



Yoho National Park Photo Credit: Gary Bunney

As a child, in a neighbourhood on the edge of the prairie in Calgary, I would energetically swing back and forth, as high as I could, on the schoolyard swing and gaze far, far across fields of prairie grasses and crocuses toward the foothills and beyond to those majestic high mountain peaks of the Rockies. As I swung to and fro, eyes fixed on the vast mountain range, I watched the mountain range's many colours displayed in the changing light and weather. The deepest grays, blues and purples were set against an enormous backdrop of sky, at times vibrant blue and, at others, turbulent greys and wintery whites — all those changing colours of the peaks sharply contrasted against the sky's dynamic colours, displaying wondrous hues by the time of day, weather and season. I remember the feel of the warm chinook

winds cascading down the eastern slopes and melting all the snow in a flash. I also recall skating around the outdoor rink and getting a western glimpse of alpenglow in the high peaks of the Rockies with each counterclockwise pass. My heart's attachment to the alpine had begun. The mountains had made their call.

And I did go, not just as a child, but as a teenager, an adult, a newlywed, a mother, and a grandmother. I keep answering the call to return home. These are the mountains, trails, forests and lakes I know well. Perhaps they, too, know me in some mysterious way, for these mountains have seen me grow.

My appreciation for Lake O'Hara has deepened over the decades. Fond memories continue to call me home to its rocky alpine trails and ledges.

[Lake O'Hara](#) is a lake at an elevation of 2,020 metres (6,630 ft) in the alpine area of Yoho National Park. The lake and the valley are accessible through a bus service run by Parks Canada or by an 11 km hike along a road with an elevation gain of approximately 500m. Reservations via a Parks Canada 'lottery system' are not easy to get but are well worth the effort!

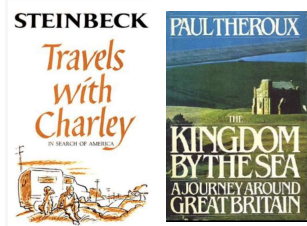
## BOOKS OF NOTE

by Donna Sharpe



I suggest, *Mad Honey*, by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan. It is a murder mystery with many interesting connections to the world around us. One of the main characters is a beekeeper and we hear a lot about the details of that activity. The son of Olivia, the beekeeper, is charged with killing his girlfriend. As Olivia tries to get her son free of the charge of murder, the authors weave a web of connections to the worlds of the legal system, forensics, abuse, music, fencing, the LGBTQ community, and probably many more before I finish the book. But most important, it is a riveting love story.

by Trevor Watson



Here are a few recommendations from 70+ yrs of diligent book worming: *Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame; *Travels With Charley* by John Steinbeck; *The Great Railway Bazaar*, *Kingdom by the Sea* and *The Pillars of Hercules* by Paul Theroux; *Down & Out in Paris & London* by George Orwell, and *Mila 18* by Leon Uris. Also, you can't go wrong with authors A. J. Cronin, Morris West, Graham Greene, H. G. Wells, H. Rider Haggard, Arthur Conan Doyle and Colin Dexter. Time is short - read only good books!

## HEALTH

### Fall Prevention

by Noeleen Bunney

I fell in Quebec, just minutes after we had arrived at the most beautiful log hotel I have ever seen - and the most significant log building in North America - the Chateau Montebello. Staying at this hotel was our Christmas gift to one another this year - we have always wanted to go to Montebello in the winter because they have cross-country skiing, skating, snowshoeing, sleigh rides, and a gigantic indoor swimming pool. We had just put our luggage in our room and decided to stroll in the afternoon sunshine along the Ottawa River. It was a lovely wide pathway, and we both wore hiking boots. The weather was just above freezing. My accident was sudden; our mistake was venturing off the main pathway onto the lawn area to look at the picturesque marina. There had been a light dusting of snow earlier in the day, and it hid a patch of ice that had formed in a low area of the lawn. One step onto this icy patch and boom, down we both went. Yes, both Gary and I fell at the exact second, so although we had been walking arm in arm, he couldn't save me, nor me, him. I fell backward, landing sharply on my outstretched hand. Gary went down onto his back and elbow. I knew immediately that my wrist was broken when I landed. That's how quickly it can happen! Life in a cast has its challenges!

Adults fall for many reasons, including chronic conditions, balance problems, poor vision, cognitive impairment, medication side effects, improper footwear, the dog/cat getting underfoot, and even previous falls. Scary, right? With so many factors threatening to knock us off our feet, the fear of falling is no laughing matter, either. Fortunately, there are things we can do to keep our feet safely on the ground. Exercise, for example, is well known to prevent falls.

Find out what the research says about exercise, nutrition, common health conditions, mental health, caregiving, and healthcare at the [McMaster Optimal Aging Portal](#). Here are some Canadian websites for information on safety and preventing falls:

[Avoid Falls With These 4 Simple Steps](#)

[Canada Safety Council – Senior Safety](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada – The Safe Living Guide: A Guide to Home Safety for Seniors](#)



# BCRTA CONFERENCE & AGM

## Overview

By Marney Bethell



Marney and Troylana

Executive Director

BCRTA Executive

On September 29, 2022, Noeleen Bunney, Troylana Manson and I attended the BCRTA Annual Conference and AGM held in Richmond at the Airport Hilton.

On Thursday evening, we attended the Registration and Meet and Greet. It was wonderful to meet with the BCRTA Executive team, including our

own Dave Scott, former president of our local teachers' association, BCRTA Executive Director, Tim Anderson, and retired teachers from all regions of the province. BCRTA Members' Advantage Program partners were there to explain benefits to members: Hearing Life, Colette Travel, Johnson Insurance, and Iris Eyewear. Friday was a full day, with keynote presentations, RR Smith Awards, Gold Star Awards, President's updates, membership awards, ACER-CART report, Zone meeting group discussions, and PostScript Awards. Saturday was packed full, too, with the BCRTA AGM and R.R. Smith AGM.

Regarding the motion from KTRTA, I presented at the R.R. Smith AGM. Our motion was read: "The RR Smith memorial Foundation contributes additional funds to each of the Six BC Universities R.R. Smith Bursaries annually. Moved and seconded by Bev Maxwell and Donna Sharpe." The R.R. Smith Executive appreciated receiving information about our branch's motion ahead of time, so we were not springing it on them during the AGM. We also discussed it ahead of time with various AGM delegates to pave the way for discussion of the motion. After I presented our motion during the R.R. Smith AGM, I spoke to it. It was debated (a lively discussion), with several people speaking to the motion, both for and against. However, it was voted on by the delegates to go forward to the R.R. Smith Committee to decide if they could give additional money to the Universities each year. It was explained that the money that the six Universities - UBC, SFU, UVIC, TRU, VIU and UNBC - use to give bursaries came from money teachers paid to the BCTF after a teacher's strike decades ago. At that time, the money was not divided equitably, and UBC received the "Lion's" share of the funds. Each University foundation holds and invests its own R.R. Smith Memorial Foundation funds, and students apply directly to each University. It was explained that the bursaries each year come from the interest these funds generate, not from the \$2.00 collected for R.R. Smith with our BCRTA membership fees. The yearly \$2.00 collection is used for various projects in BC, Canada and abroad. There is an application process, and people and groups write to convince the R.R. Smith Committee that they are worthy. It is a challenging but rewarding process for the committee members. The RR Smith Committee will respond to our motion and reply to us once it has been determined. I will let everyone know once we hear from them.

I came home from the conference full of information and gratitude for being able to attend.

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## Keynote by Shishona Austin: Culturally Relevant Education

By Marney Bethell

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The first day of the BCRTA Conference was also the Canadian National Truth and Reconciliation Day. The Land Acknowledgement was given by Burnaby teacher, Shishona Austin. Shishona is a First Nations teacher with two school-aged children. She was born in Kamloops and adopted as an infant. She was raised in a non-native family with a younger brother and sister. She spoke about her upbringing, where her heritage and adoption were never hidden, but she grew up with little information about her First Nations background. As a First Nations Teacher in the Burnaby School System, she is working to improve on that for current students. Shishona spoke about Jo Krona's book *Beyond Cultural Education*. There is increasing understanding that effective education systems respond to the learners they serve by ensuring that they see themselves reflected in the curriculum, resources, and learning environments. This process has come to be termed by many researchers as "culturally relevant" or "culturally responsive" teaching, and it has been identified as a necessary element of student success (Allen & Labbo, 2001; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Young, 2010).

Shishona showed a touching video of Trent, a 10-year-old First Nation student who lives in Anaheim Lake. The video follows Trent as he discovers he is chosen to be an ambassador and fly to Montreal to meet the famous hockey player, Carey Price, to take thank you letters and messages from his classmates to give to Carey Price. Carey Price, an NHL Goaltender for the Montreal Canadiens, is also First Nations. He was born in Vancouver but moved to Anaheim Lake as a 3-year-old when his family wanted to reconnect with their First Nations heritage. His mother is the Chief of the Anaheim Lake community, and Carey has never forgotten his roots. Carey and his wife, Angela, are involved in several programs, including the *Stick with School* program; the *Breakfast Club of Canada*, where Price has been an ambassador for First Nations kids and helped provide more than 10,000 meals to children in Anaheim Lake and the *Carson Kolzig Foundation*, which helps families affected by autism.

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## Keynote by Noel Bentley: Everyone Has A Story

by Troylana Manson

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Noel's lecture on storytelling was inspiring, even for the non-writers among us. He downplayed the editing process in favour of the cathartic process of allowing yourself the freedom of writing run-on sentences. He says sharing our experiences through writing releases emotions and generates healing, and confidence-building. Noel talked about the essential elements of story writing, character (someone), setting (somewhere), action (something) and some 'change' that happens, resulting in a feeling of peace or a release of emotion. He described our need to hear each others' stories. There is a lot of benefit, power and purpose in writing our stories. These reasons include: better brain health, better memory, working through trauma, educating others, helping others, expressing gratitude, honouring others, passing along information and core values, chronicling traditions, making connections, encouraging others, sharing a point of view, plain old fun and laughter.

Noel mentioned common reasons people give for not writing their stories: "I have no time." "No one wants to hear my story." "It's not a good story." "I'm a terrible storyteller." "I just don't want to tell it." (privacy). Here are Noel's six tips to help you start writing more: 1. Create a story from the details of a brief moment. 2. Over time, write down 'notes to self' to develop a personal anthology from which you can take bits for a story 3. A sensory experience is a great way to start a writing session. Describe each sensation of an experience. 4. Tell the story just like you are telling your best friend. 5. Write quickly (3 minutes) using a topic word. You never know where your writing will take you. Noel's last advice from his lecture was this: 6. Write your stories! Someone needs to hear your story... and the main person who needs to hear your story is - YOU!"

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## Keynote by Sue Lantz: *Mapping Your Best Aging Journey*

by Noeleen Bunney

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I had a trip to California with my husband. It was a fantastic journey through the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains, well-planned and with excellent stops. We could have started our driving adventure without plans, hotels booked or roadmaps marked clearly with our route, simply throwing our chances to the wind. Instead, we took time to think things through, and our pre-planning ensured everything fell perfectly into place. It was a pleasant and memorable journey.

Similarly, we all want to experience a nice trip as we navigate our later years. Sue Lantz stresses the idea of navigating our later years in what she refers to as *collaborative aging*. She spoke to us at the BCRTA 2022 Annual Conference and presented thoughts from her book, *Options Open: The Guide for Mapping Your Best Aging Journey*. Her book uses a *travel plan* approach to ensure better health, safety and enjoyment as we age. Her idea is to create a practical plan, or an *aging roadmap*, for solutions to problems that may need to be solved along the way. "If we think about what we want for ourselves earlier," she says, "we engage in the self-navigation part of health care, housing, and caregiving. And by doing that, we're creating more certainty for ourselves and more choice. The good news is we're living better, and more healthily, we're more connected, more digitally literate, and more interested in positive aging than we ever have been." She advises us to make detailed plans sooner rather than later - before a crisis hits. Pre-planning means we will think through what we want for ourselves: our health care, our housing, our relationships, our caregiving team and our resources, carefully considering the challenges that may come with each decade ahead. With an 'aging roadmap' in place, we will have many *more* options and choices when we encounter the inevitable forks in the road along the way. Five key ideas:

1. ***Maintaining our best health:*** Improving your lifestyle habits to include more healthy options, learn how to accept help from others, and use your extended healthcare benefits for the health treatments you require now.
2. ***Making timely housing decisions:*** If aging in place is your plan, determine if your current home needs adaptations. If you decide to move as you age, consider transportation alternatives, multigenerational options, adaptability as you age further, age-friendly amenities, and proximity to favourite activities. Co-ownership and co-rentals are options, too. You may want to be part of a ***naturally-occurring retirement community*** (NORC) These are a collaborative and inclusive mix of older and younger generations, perhaps living together in multi-generational households.



3. **Establish a solid social network:** Have a mix of levels and types of relationships. Consider having peer and intergenerational social interactions: Think family, friends, neighbours, and organizations specializing in seniors programs and peer learning opportunities.
4. **Create a caregiving plan:** For example, consider having a mix of people on your team who provide paid or unpaid support and care. Ensure that you have proper legal documentation and direction for your caregivers.
5. **Look at all your resources and finances:** For example, determine what you can afford; perhaps consider how much it costs for an overnight nurse. Make detailed plans and set aside funds for caregiving in advance. Use bank advisors, lawyers and accountants to provide advice. Examine community amenities, such as senior centres, medical clinics, pharmacies, hospitals, recreation centres, libraries, and parks. Consider the role of technology and government-funded programs.

## KAMLOOPS RETIRED TEACHERS' CLUB

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### Amy... Our TRU Bursary Recipient, My Guest, and So Much More

By Glenda Miles

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Late last fall, the TRU bursary recipients of our Kamloops Retired Teachers Bursaries were announced. At this time, there was much publicity about a shortage of accommodation for university students. I had the pleasure of a phone visit with one of our bursary recipients: Amy Whitaker. During this conversation, I invited her to come and stay at my home after her last practicum in Golden. Amy has a degree in Engineering and had six more weeks of study at TRU to complete her qualification for teaching high school in B.C. She accepted my invitation, and I looked forward to her staying from May eighth to June eighteenth. I had much to learn about the life experiences of this thirty-seven-year-old *mature student* who had emigrated to Canada from England and left her engineering career behind to become an Adventure Tourism guide and instructor.

Amy's six-week stay has come and gone. I miss her. We hung her white water kayak on my garage wall when she arrived and wheeled her mountain bike into the basement. Then we went for a long walk together. During her stay, Amy would come home from TRU and head out to run in the surrounding hills, mountain bike in the bike parks or go out with the Kamloops canoe club for an evening on the river. I joined her once to canoe up the South Thompson. The time on the river was beautiful, with beaver sightings and an eagle alighting in a tree very near a back eddy where we were taking a break.

Early in her stay, Amy noticed that my kitchen sink wasn't draining well. Her response was, "I can fix that for you." We borrowed a wrench from my neighbour, and she dismantled pipes, cleaned out the blockage and reassembled all with no leaks! Amy brought a dutch oven and baked bread several times during her stay. True to her age group, she had all the electronic items needed: cell phone, computer, earbuds... and all these were in constant use. It soon became apparent that other students turned to her as a leader within their study groups. She helped me with things I needed to do on my computer, and I appreciated her help!

Amy shared stories of her adventures as a guide on several rivers. Two trips were especially impressive. She led 18 people on a 23-day trip through the Grand Canyon. Her video showed lots of scary white water scenes,

beautiful side trips, and a still shot of her raft tipping over near the end of their travels — the only mishap of their trip. Another trip was to the Yukon, where she guided adventure tourism students. It became frightening one afternoon when dark smoke rolled in from behind them, complete with the red glow of a forest fire. They had to bushwhack to another river and walk for three days against the current to get to a lake where float planes could land to airlift them to safety.

Amy's program of studies in Education at TRU seemed very different than when I was studying at UBC in Education. Yes, times have changed. Some classes were attended in person with many group assignments; sometimes, lessons were watched on a computer at home. There seem to be more studies on how to problem-solve and understand the needs of students in their classrooms. Amy has applied to work in the Golden School District. Her enthusiasm, life experience, leadership skills and kindness will make her a valuable addition to any school staff. Her time with me was a special gift.

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## KTRT Club Bursaries and Charitable Giving

By Pat Petley

The Kamloops Retired Teachers' Club was established for charitable giving; this goal is near and dear to the hearts of our members, and we are gratified to provide a way for retired teachers to give to the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Foundation and the Canadian Harambee Education Society (CHES). Donations to the TRU Foundation support bursaries for two Faculty of Education students. Donations to CHES assist impoverished female students attending school in Tanzania and Kenya. Check [www.canadianharambee.ca](http://www.canadianharambee.ca) for more information on CHES and how our contributions have made a difference. We are proud of our long-standing tradition of giving!

## KTRTA LUNCH & LEARN - SEPTEMBER

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### Our September Get-Together Lunch & Learn: Dr. Rose Balan

by Marney Bethell and Donna Sharpe

A year had passed before we could proceed with hosting the Nicola Valley Retired Teachers Association (NVRTA) for lunch to show our support, after the severe flooding that affected Merritt in November, 2021. But, finally, on September 23, 2022 we hosted the Nicola Valley Retired Teachers for lunch. Dr. Rose Balan, Ed.D., Nicola Valley Retired Teachers President spoke to the group:



October Lunch and Learn Speaker Rose Balan and members from Nicola Valley Retired Teachers' Association Photo Credit: Noeleen Bunney



Dr. Rose Balan, President Nicola Valley RTA Photo:  
Credit Noeleen Bunney

"Thank you so much to the Kamloops Thompson Retired Teachers' Association for your very gracious and kind invitation to join you for lunch. This invitation first arrived last fall when the City of Merritt was under evacuation out of concern for our members and to provide a forum for us to get together during a very challenging time. At that time, our members were spread out between Kamloops, the Okanagan and points in between.

Some of our members camped out for the duration. It was challenging to determine where any of our members were, and many were without the internet. Most of us were out of our homes for three weeks. Since then, some of our members

have still been working on restoration while waiting for funding. Restoring hasn't been easy. Worker shortages, funding delays, and inflated materials costs are only some of the issues. The flood was especially devastating to those who lived by the river. Even now, we have several people in our community who are living in hotels. On the positive side, people in our community came together to support their neighbours in every way possible. Volunteer organizations like Samaritan's Purse, local churches and the Merritt Sikh Society, to name only a few, were extremely helpful to those who were most affected.

The support from local and area volunteer groups was tremendous. The Big Three: COVID-19, forest fires and flooding affected our group of retired educators very hard, and at this time, we have yet to meet face-to-face since Public Health orders limited social contact at the beginning of COVID-19. Our most recent NVRTA membership list from the BCRTA has 46 members. Of those, ten have moved away from Merritt, and others are in the process of moving away. Some have chosen September for their travel. Despite that, we had a good turnout at our annual breakfast, with some members travelling from the Okanagan to attend. We keep our breakfast purely social with no business discussion to allow our members to catch up. The ice was broken when a former teacher and principal mentioned that he started teaching in the Nicola Valley 63 years ago with the intention to move on once he had gained some teaching experience. As many others had, he ended up marrying, raising a family, and staying in Merritt into retirement. Like all groups, we have some very faithful members. Our executive is small – the treasurer is Allan Rasmussen, and the newly appointed secretary is Susan Rasmussen. We tend to discuss things quite informally via the telephone without the need for meetings. Fortunately, email has given us a means of keeping in touch."

Our other speakers at the *Lunch and Learn* were from Kamloops Immigration Services. Liza Ferris Ortiz and Paolo described the Ukrainian Effort in Kamloops, and answered our questions. It was also a time for members to bring extra herbs, fruits and vegetables from their gardens to share with one another.



Harvest sharing from our gardens.



# KTRTA LUNCH & LEARN OCTOBER

## Our October Get-Together - Lunch & Learn: Elaine Sedgeman

Donna Sharpe



October Lunch and Learn with Speaker Elaine Sedgeman

At our October get-together we had an interesting presentation about bees by artist Elaine Sedgeman, an apiologist, author and illustrator. She has published children's books about different species of bees, not the usual honey bee or bumble bee, but solitary bees called Andrena bees. Her book about Andrena is scientifically correct in all of its facts, but it is an entertaining blend of fact and fiction creatively and cleverly formatted as a graphic novel that very much appeals to children. We heard a most interesting bee story read aloud by Elaine Sedgeman with photos of each page projected on the large screen. Many entertaining bee actions were added joyfully by Rosemarie Stoltze.

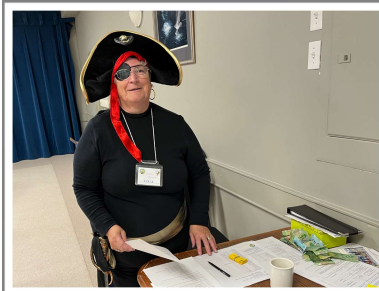
She didn't tell the usual story about the honey bees who work together in a hive. The bees in her story were the kind that live a solitary life burrowing in the ground to make their nest in little pockets underground. Andrena, the name of the bee in her story, is also the name of the kind of bee who lives a solitary life, a mining bee, living in tunnels underground. As she was storytelling, Rosemarie jumped in to pretend to be a bee illustrating the actions that they would take to dig their nest. The two of them, with their illustrating antics, kept us quite entertained as well.



Rosemarie Stoltze acting out the story of Adrena the Bee as Elaine Sedgeman read the story to us, providing extra scientific details throughout her presentation. Photo Credit: Sheila Park



Our lunch buffet! Photo Credit: Noeleen Bunney



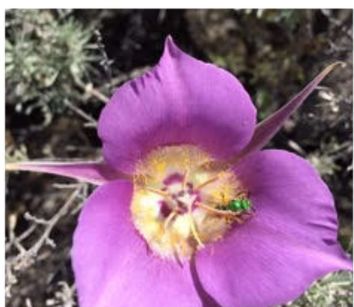
We were greeted by pirate, and KTRTA Treasurer, Sandy Baird. A few members wore Halloween costumes. Photo Credit: Donna Sharpe



Our October meeting provided some interesting content. Here are Suzanne Legault and Mildred Kolody (to the left), and at the table, Carolyn Ramsay and Mary Ellen Patterson. Photo Credit: Donna Sharpe

## A Hike on Mt. Dufferin

by Pat Petley



Sweat Bee on Mariposa Lily Photo Credit: Pat Petley

THE BRIDGE

Elaine Sedgeman spoke to my Probus group a few years ago about native bees. Ever since, I have been more aware of the variety of wild bees and other pollinators. Early in our Covid-19 experience, I went for a hike on Mt. Dufferin when it was deemed unsafe to be near anyone not in our bubble. I chose a trail that started from the City composting compound. Not only did I have a great view of the valley, but I noticed my first ever Sweat Bee. It was conspicuous because of its bright green colour and because it collected pollen on one of our prettiest wildflowers - a Mariposa Lily.



# KTRTA LUNCH - NOVEMBER

## Our November Get-Together: A Festive Holiday Celebration!

by Marlene Olineck



Our get-together in November was strictly social. It was a time to see everyone and start the holiday season. We had a traditional turkey dinner, lots of socializing, laughter, gifts and Christmas music. It was a perfect example of superb teamwork by our volunteer executive group.

What a JOY to walk into the room and see all the festively decorated tables while hearing the cheerful Christmas music provided by none other than the effervescent Marian Owens. Huge kudos to all those who spent a great deal of time, effort, and love to make it happen. I left with a spring in my step and Christmas spirit in my heart! Heartfelt thanks to Marney and Glenn, too, for the surprise gift of a perfect little desk calendar depicting "wise" owls.

Festive Christmas Luncheon Photo  
Credits: Donna Sharpe



Desk calendar with owl photos by Glenn Dreger on display! Photo Credit: Donna Sharpe



Our Festive Christmas Luncheon with special guests, wildlife photographer Glenn Dreger and also, Marian Owens, playing the piano. November 25th, 2022

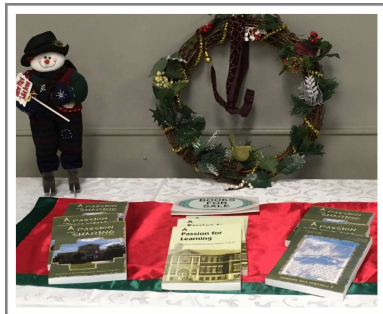


Marney Bethell and Glenn Dreger



## A Passion For Sharing and A Passion For Learning

by Marie Laroche

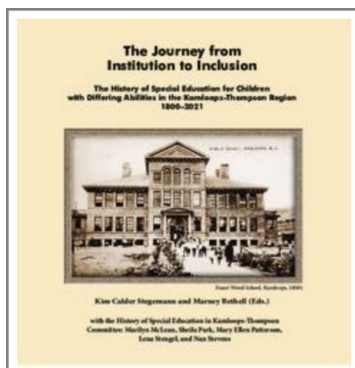


*A Passion For Sharing and Passion For Learning Written by our KTRTA Heritage Committee led by Marie Laroche Photo Credit :Donna Sharpe*

Two books, written by the KTRTA Heritage Committee, were on display at the Christmas luncheon. *A Passion for Sharing* and *A Passion For Learning* were written by the KTRTA Heritage committee in the early 2000s beginning with Warren Damer being the committee's chairperson. The Principal who encouraged us was Ron Hatch (District Heritage Rep.) at Marion Schilling School. Darrell Johnson and I were at the first meeting held at Warren Damer's home. The first edition of *A Passion for Sharing* was in 2005. We then decided, in 2007, to publish anecdotes of retired secondary teachers in: *A Passion for Learning*. We sold three hundred issues quickly, and we published more in 2011. Darrell Johnson, Brian Thompson and I did the proofreading. It is now 18 years since those anecdotes were collected! Perhaps the Heritage Committee should consider writing down their memories and changes in teaching methods and present-day students' expectations.

## The Journey From Institution to Inclusion

by Marney Bethell



KTRTA Heritage Committee Members Mary Ellen Paterson, Sheila Park and Marney Bethell wrote this book jointly with the Kamloops Special Education Committee Photo Credit: Marney Bethell

At the Christmas luncheon, our recently published book was displayed: ***The Journey From Institution to Inclusion***. It was written jointly by the Kamloops Special Education (SPED) Committee and our KTRTA Heritage Committee! Click the [link](#) to the new electronic version, free from the TRU library. Just click on the link, it takes you to the TRU library website. Once there, click again on the photo of the book's cover. This will give you full access to the electronic edition. The link to this electronic book via the TRU Library is also available on our [ktrta.ca](http://ktrta.ca) website: scroll down to the *Other Links* section in the black area at the bottom of each webpage. **We want to thank the BC Retired Teachers' Association (BCRTA) for their generous support in providing the grant that made publishing this book possible.**

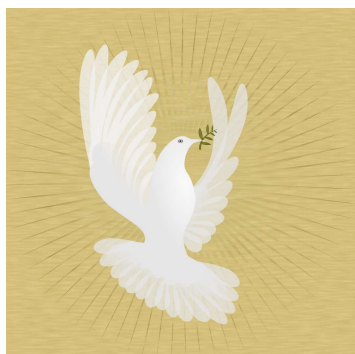


Northern Pygmy Owl  
Photo Credit: Glenn Dreger

# Kamloops Peace Walk

## A Little History About The Walks For Peace

by Sheila Park



May 7th, 2022, the 46th Annual Walk for Peace, the Environment and Social Justice was held at the Kamloops downtown Farmers' Market in the 200 Block of St Paul Street on the Stuart Wood Play Ground.

Anita Strong, President of the Kamloops Chapter of the Council of Canadians, stated that this event was "More important than ever this year with the devastating war in Ukraine happening now, the fires and floods that ravaged our area last year and the social justice issues affecting our community."

The Kamloops Peace Walk has consistently had guest speakers, local musicians, and activities for children and then the walk through a designated area of the city. In recent years this walk has been on sidewalks, but in the past, the walk was a bit different.

The Kamloops Anti-Nuclear Group planned the first walk in 1975. Back then, the walk was down Victoria Street for a few blocks and then to a gathering place in Riverside Park. In the 1970s, I remember walking with Kamloops District Teachers' Association members. We had a KDTA banner; Anita told me that the banner is still stored alongside more recent banners. The Kamloops Labour Council also was involved in planning the annual Peace Walks, and in 1999 the Kamloops Council of Canadians started organizing it.

The Kamloops Thompson, Retired Teachers Association, started attending and contributing to the Peace Walk after the organization was formed. I do not know how the group first got involved, but I bet Alf Law and Doug Nichol (former KTRTA Presidents) had a hand in it!

The 2023 Peace Walk will hopefully be held on Saturday, May 6th, 2023. I hope to see you there.



Photo Credit: Glenn Dreger

Please submit your articles, stories and photos to Donna Sharpe at [onlineoffice.ktrta@gmail.com](mailto:onlineoffice.ktrta@gmail.com). Submissions may cover a range of topics, such as:

- Travel experiences,
- Recommended books,
- Creative endeavours, writing, poetry
- Hobbies and sports.

Authors agree to allow their submissions to be edited, as needed. We appreciate submissions of articles and photographs. We use photos for article illustration and as content for its own sake. Photos must include photo credits.

The information contained in *THE BRIDGE* is not dispensing legal, medical or financial advice. Opinions are those of the writers.

In Kamloops, we acknowledge that we are located, live, work and play on Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc territory, situated within the unceded ancestral lands of the Secwépemc Nation.