

# North Island Retired Teachers' Association

President: Greg Murray 250-949-7838, Secretary: Anne Whitney 250-949-8001, Treasurer: Sharon Campbell 250-8009

PO Box 1040, Port Hardy B.C. V0N 2P0

## Spring Newsletter 2023

It's a bit strange starting to live again after the Covid pandemic. All around me I see people who have decided that working from home is more preferable than carpooling to work. I see families that have decided to teach their own kids at home.

There is a distinct uptake on cooking more and eating pre-boxed food less. Because prices are also jumping people are going out less, ordering online less and backtracking on some of their previous goals.

If anything good can come out of such a horrible pandemic it is that there is a general rethinking going on as to which direction lives should go. This is turning out to be a terrific problem for stores and institutions that relied on a physical presence of workers. Across the board we are seeing cut backs, layoffs and restructuring in many of the largest corporations including the tech sector. Even music festivals are short of volunteers.

When it all settles down, whether we have a recession, depression or a complete restart, things will be different. History will record the pandemic as a starting point for some

wonderful things to come. It is events like this that bring out the best in people. It is always when we are down the most that we come together and rally. Historically, we have been here before. We have come through depressions, wars and waves of flu, polio, whooping cough, tuberculosis and dust bowls that used to be farmland. The end result has always been to pick ourselves up and go on. Start again. Continue.

Technology just might be the thing that saves us this time but the people behind it who are not filing patents but are sharing their knowledge so others can manufacture, create and produce the things that are necessary for us to get through it all, are the ones I am saying thank you to. They are the ones who shine, the ones who take the chance, people who move us in amazing directions that make our lives easier to live.

I am just saying take heart. Out of all of this will come a new vision and life style. We are a part of a momentous change in our history. I think it is exciting to see where we it will take us. The first commercially produced flying car is scheduled to be for sale in 2025. 😊

## Senior Centers

Our local Senior Center is growing leaps and bounds. Many of our BCRTA members are also members of other organizations, many of them service oriented. That means people helping people. The BCRTA through COSCO has the Seniors Health and Wellness Institute Society. They present workshops on a

province-wide basis (many online). Check them out at [www.seniorshelpingseniors.ca](http://www.seniorshelpingseniors.ca). Right now I am completing my current year membership for my local Senior Center. 😊

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### Real Headlines

Helicopter Powered by Human Flies

Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case

Slow Driver Arrested After Four County Chase

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## Seniors Technology

I ran into this amazing fact the other day. The cost of a cell phone in 1984 was \$4,198. All that phone did was let you talk to someone else on the phone. There were no games, apps, newsfeeds, social connections, movies or satellite photos. All you could do was talk on the phone.

Some of you might remember a cartoon strip called Dick Tracey. He was a detective who had a wrist watch phone that he could talk on. Who knows, that could have been the start of a dream someone completed and produced.

As seniors, we have more technology available to us today than ever in human history. For those of us who have wrist phones today, we can get a live feed from the surface of Mars

and talk to anyone in the world (soon to be a free call). I see no reason at all why seniors should not have one of these.

It takes your blood pressure, pulse, heart rate and other vital functions which can, by choice, be sent to a medical practitioner for evaluation. Maybe that is the way we have to go nowadays with the shortages that are being felt in our medical system.

If you know any seniors who could benefit from these items see about it. Remember we are people helping people.

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Baskin Robbins once made a ketchup flavoured ice cream.

Read the labels – Some shampoos contain formaldehyde.

Mono sodium glutamate (MSG) is found naturally in wheat.

Non-dairy creamer is flammable

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## Truth in Labelling

Getting older can mean that the body's immune system is taxed a bit more heavily. This can also result in new allergies appearing and the ability to fight diseases reduced.

As a senior I have taken it upon myself to read the ingredients in all products I consume. There are some surprising things that become evident as total ingested amounts skyrocket across products, even more so in processed goods.

Salt is a major item. Often used as a preservative, it can add up quickly and surpass the daily recommended amount before

breakfast is over. Some additives can also react with medications that are being taken. Checking online can give you a list of things that react with what you are taking.

Other chemicals are added to make the product “shelf friendly” which means it stops it from degrading long enough for us to buy it while it still looks good. There is nothing wrong with this as consumers have demanded good looking products over the years. Even a bruised tomato will sit on the produce shelf and be discarded because a perfect, waxed and pampered tomato sells beside it. I saw a bottle of SoyLent Green for sale the other day. I didn’t look closely at it but the thought is still in my mind.

As a senior consumer, I have realized that a blemish does not mean a poorer produce. It is actually the reverse. A blemished item reflects the true nature of that food. It can be delicious.

My trend is towards natural products these days. I find myself turning away from the boxed refrigerated food aisle and spending more time with the local farmers and seasonal produce.

For those of us who rely on processed items, please read the ingredients and decide what your limits are for ingesting additives that do not provide nutritional value but have to be digested anyways.

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Paul McCartney wrote “When I’m Sixty-four when he was 15.

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# Reducing Monthly Bills

For those on fixed incomes paying the monthly bills has required some serious decisions to be made. As the funds seem to run out more quickly these days some people are skipping dental cleanings, not buying needed prescriptions or paying bills rather than purchasing food.

I have discovered some new sources for products that have significantly reduced the money demands and freed up funds so they can go where they are better needed.

Adding up the internet, wifi charges, cable and phone bills comes to a surprising total. Cancelling a land line can actually increase wifi charges if you have a bundled account. Take a closer look at what you actually need and change your account to one that fits your activities. Seniors can get a reduced rate on phone plans.

Television programs are nice to watch but cable increases on a monthly basis. Programs are now costing more through slight increases every month. Canadians pay the highest amounts in the world for some of these services.

A smart television that can handle streaming channels, answer phone calls and create a link to Zoom meetings can fill the need that previously cost more to have. It is well worth looking into current technology which is coming down in price significantly.

Memberships in Senior Centers has skyrocketed in recent years. Many supply food services, deliveries, travel to appointments and just plain conversation in meetings and activities.

My local Seniors Center has also sent me food packages during a time when food banks are recording record numbers of people.

Many cost a low yearly fee which is well worth it. Check your area for their location.

## Getting Out

One sunny day I went for a walk and actually considered taking a taxi back home. I knew I had to do something about my physical condition. What really got to me was I rationalized and thought "Save the taxi fare, I can buy a hamburger on the way home." The mind is a rather devious device and mine was in drastic need of an upgrade.

After getting home, at a slow crawl, I realized I was at a turning point. I was having difficulty breathing after going up stairs, I was snoring a lot at night and woke up several times short of breath. One night I actually stuck my head out the front door to get some fresh air. This time my thoughts were on the Emergency Room. Something had to change.

I booked an appointment for a check up, this was a number of years ago before Covid, and got the results I was expecting plus

more that I was not aware of. The doctor told me I was ten pounds away from being “morbidly obese”. I got the picture.

The end result was that I started to make some changes in my lifestyle. I was divorced, alone, as the kids had moved out years ago, knocking around in a big house with empty rooms full of memories. I started reading a lot about diets, exercise, mental states and nutrition. Having taught for many years I had learned how to learn. The “bug” started to take hold.

I also realized that a very large percentage of senior people, many retired, are in a similar position. It is very difficult to give up everything and move from a lifetime of memories. The lifestyle I was leading had only one ending and the end was getting closer every day.

As this is a newsletter let it suffice to say I completed that journey. Getting out of the house, going for a short walk, starting slowly and building on that success with a longer journey the next day, eating a lot smarter (no more steaks at midnight) and being honest with myself about sticking to the goals was what I needed.

The other day I was boxing up clothing I used to wear and my daughter said “Why are you keeping these things? Are you planning on wearing them again?” That started a flurry of activity that resembled the scene in a Jack Nicholson film where he loaded up his RV and threw everything out at a Thrift Store.



The house cleaning has to take place both physically and mentally. Join a Senior Center where you can talk to others who relate to your situation, start a gym class or go to a pool session for seniors. One of my boxes contained a lot of processed food, cans (some expired), salt, sugar and other artery clogging additives. If you have someone to help you with the cleanup even better. Start the cycle by getting out both physically and mentally.

Good luck with your journey.

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Human beings blink more than four million times a year. I get tired just reading this.

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As this newsletter has turned into a general Health and Wellness issue, I thought it would be appropriate to leave you with a list of places you can contact that will get like-minded people on the other end who can possibly help you out with issues at hand. I've discovered some very nice people just by asking their name and where they are during a subscription renewal. Have the courage to reach out and ask.

## Helpful Places

British Columbia Retired Teacher's Association (BCRTA)

1(877) 683-2243, (604) 871-2260, office@bcrt.ca

National Pension Federation 1(519)350-3221,  
<http://nationalpensionerfederation.ca>

Age and Comfort Magazine – 1(800) 520-3250  
<http://agecomfort.com>

Canadian Anti-Fraud Center 1(888)495-8501  
<http://antifraudcentre-centreantifraud.ca>

Canada Benefits Program 1(800) 622-6232

Government of Canada 1(800) 567-6868; 1 (819)997-8338

Emergency Watch and response Center 1 (613) 996-8885

Canada Post 1 (866) 607-6301; 1 (800) 267-1177

Canada Revenue Agency 1 (800) 959-8281

Canadian Cancer Society 1 (888) 939-3333

Canadian Association of Retired People (CARP) 1(800) 363-9736

Telecom Complaints Division 1 (888) 221-1687

<http://ccts-cprst.ca>

Credit Counselling Line – 1 (800) 527-8999

Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) 1 (866) 293-2774

Elections BC – 1-(800) 661-8683

Financial Consumer Agency – 1 (866) 461-3222

Hearing Life Clinics – 1-(888) 913-8109

BC Hydro Customer Service – 1(800) 224-9376

Ministry of Public Safety – (250) 387-7747; 1(855) 387-7747

Ombudsman – 1(888) 451-4519 (banking issues)

Teacher's Pension Plan 1(866)876-8877

<http://TPP@pensionsbc.ca>

Poison Control Center – (not 911) 1(800) 222-1222 questions

411 Seniors Centre Society (lower mainland) 604-684-8171

Access Pro Bono (legal advice low income) 1-(877) 762-6664

Assisted Living Registrar 1(866) 714-3378 (complaints and questions)

BC211 – Toll free 211; bc211.ca (referral to government services)

First Nations Health Authority – 1(866) 913-0033

Health Insurance C – 1-(800) 663-7100

Healthlink – Toll free 811; health services nurse/pharmacist

PovNet.org – provides low income answers to issues

Seniors First BC – assistance with issue to over 55 years old

Service BC 1(800) 663-7867; <http://servicebc@gov.bc.ca>

Service Canada – 1-(800)- 277-9915; <http://servicecanada.gc.ca>

Hope to see you at our meetings!

Bye for now!