

RIVERSIDE

REFLECTIONS

Newsletter of the New Westminster
Retired Teachers
July 2025



Main Exhibition Building in Queen's Park

The President's Comments

by Kerry Babiuk

Saving the best for the last. Our last meeting of the year, June 17th, 2025 featured Dr. Lauryn Oates, Executive Director of "Right to Learn, Afghanistan". (This is one of the organizations that the BCRTA helps through the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation). Her presentation was a gut wrenching, emotional rollercoaster account of how the female population of Afghanistan is being subjugated. The Taliban closed secondary schools for girls within weeks of seizing power in Kabul. One year later they banned women from higher education, which means there will be no female doctors or midwives. This means that a women in pregnancy, or the child that she is carrying, have little chance to survive as a women can only be treated by another woman and not a man. Later, some provinces also restricted access to primary schooling. Families are becoming poorer,

restrictions on women working is increasing, and with an economy that is struggling, many children aren't being sent to primary school. Instead children as young as three are working in factories, being garbage collectors, or resorting to begging. Despite this incredible suffering and injustice, not all is lost. A 15 year old girl wrote to Dr. Oates and said, "we want the world to hear us, see us, and feel us... as a woman, as a human, I don't want to be ignored" ... "we are not dead in a corner, we are still alive, with our dreams and hopes." If a person living in these conditions can have that much hope, who are we to complain about our lives. Live each moment to the fullest, help someone each day, and know that you are making a difference.

Queen's Park - Exhibition Building

(Opening photo)

In 1890, the Provincial Exhibition building was constructed in Queen's Park. It was designed by architect G.W. Grant and was a showcase of B.C. lumber. An Exhibition was held at this site from 1889 to 1929. It ended in 1929 due its destruction as a result of a fire. Queen's Park was also the site of the annual May Day Celebrations and have taken place here since 1870. This makes it the longest running May Day Celebration in the British Commonwealth.

The photograph is from the New Westminster Archives and can be reached at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3ft4c34t>

THINGS TO DO AROUND TOWN

New Westminster Farmer's Market

Every Thursday from 3:00 pm 7:00 pm until October 31st. Located at Tipperary Park. There are over 45 local venders selling produce, meat, baked goods, artisan products and more. There are food trucks and live entertainment.

Salmonbellie's Home Games

Queen's Park Arena
July 17th and 24th
7:30pm - 10:30pm
\$16.00 for seniors

Vagabond Players @ Bernie Legge Theatre, in Queen's Park

The Ladies Foursome
8:00pm - 10:00pm
July 10th - 27th
tickets \$17 - \$22

Arts New West Summer Concert Series

Queen's Park Habitat
July 20th and 27th
1:00pm - 2:00pm
Free

BASKETS FOR BURSARIES:

This year Janet Sammon, an NWRТА Executive, presented our bursary to Mahsa Soltani, and this is letter of thanks that she sent to the NWRТА.

*Dear Mrs. Babiuk(NWRТА Treasurer)
Thank you so much for selecting me as the recipient of the New Westminster Retired Teachers' Association Bursary. I truly appreciated your support and generosity. This bursary means a lot to me and my family.*

This fall, I will be moving to Kelowna to start my studies at UBC Okanagan. Your support will help with a small part of my tuition and living costs, and it really makes a difference. I am so grateful that you believed in me and my story.

I have always been passionate about helping others, and I know for sure I will continue to follow that path no matter where life takes me. I promise to work hard and make the most of the opportunities I have been given.

Thank you again for your kindness. I will do my best to make you proud and will keep you updated on my journey.

*With gratitude,
Mahsa Soltani*



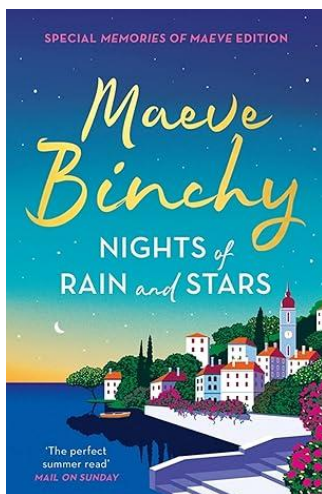
Janet Sammon and Mahsa Soltani

THE BOOK CORNER: **Nights of Rain and Stars**

By: Maeve Binchy

As retired folks, some of us may have had the wonderful experiences of spending time in Greece. Sunny and warm and where blue and white is a featured colour everywhere....in villages and towns, swimming pools, and of course, the ocean. This novel is set in the small village of Aghia Anna on Naxos Island. There is a wonderful taverna (small Greek restaurant) high up above the village and the picturesque beach and harbour below. Perhaps you have enjoyed some sunny days there! Apparently it is a glorious place where you can see the stars each night and every day is sunny. And you are transported there as you read this novel. The storyline revolves around a handful of characters brought together by chance. Four travellers who arrive at the village taverna at the same time, the taverna owner, his brother who is a policeman in Athens, and an old woman named Vonni who is an Irish exile. None of the four travelers know each other upon their arrival. And then something tragic happens in the bay below as they are hiking up the hilly path from the harbour to the taverna. Each of these four people has a life that is

somewhat in turmoil. They have escaped to Agia Anna to rethink their lives. David is from England, Elsa is from Germany, Thomas is an American from California, and red-haired Fiona and her boyfriend are Irish. But wait...that is five people. Well, the boyfriend doesn't figure into the story for long as it is Fiona who has to decide what she wants in her life. All of these folks have things to decide as they piece together what will be best for them with help from each other and from Vonni, who is quite a character in her own right. Most of us are familiar with the name Maeve Binchy who was an acclaimed author for many years. She is an exceptional writer with amazing storytelling ability. This novel is not only a comfort read, it is a compelling read. You immerse yourself in the lives of the four main characters and you begin to feel like you've know them for years, as they begin to feel like they've known each other and have been friends for ages. Once the story begins to draw to a close, each of their new roads in life begins to emerge. Sometimes the people who understand you the best can be folks who, at the outset, don't know you at all.



by: Devon Codesmith

NWRTA MEMBERS IN ACTION

We are starting a new segment in our newsletter which will feature an NWRTA

member participating in an activity, sport, volunteer position etc.. So many of our members are involved in a wide range of activities from crafts, choir, bands, billiards, gardening, painting, writing, and many more. We are hoping to include a photo and short story about their activity. Our ultimate goal is to help members to get to know each other better and maybe connect through common interests. This segment will start with our new year 2025 -2026.

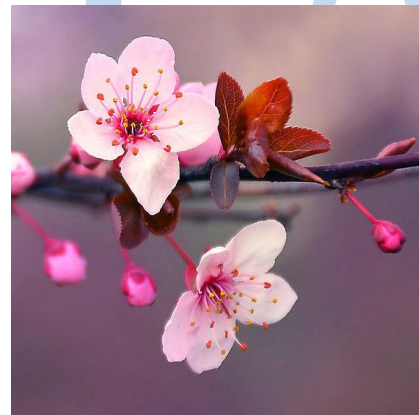
AND YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW MUSIC

...Edition#19

Contributed by: Seedy

Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White

Well, I hope you all enjoyed the previous edition, where we strayed from our usual format and paid homage to a few of the great Canadian women in the music world. Today, we plan to go "back to basics" and examine a fairly simple tune to see how different artists have interpreted it.



This tune is an example of the Latin American phase of popular music that dominated the charts between the WWII and the advent of "rock N roll" in the mid-50's. Our first offering is believed to be the first vocal in English.

Check out Georgia Gibbs: [Bing Videos](#)

IMHO, a great tune, easy to hum or play, with a simple, yet positive message. For our instrumental arrangement, you are probably expecting Xavier Cugat or Perez Prado.

However, I offer you the same arrangement with a MUCH funkier video to accompany it. And, if you watch closely, you'll see something I don't think I've ever seen before (hint: does a violinist ever SMILE when they are playing?)

[Bing Videos](#) See what I mean?

Now, "Hauser" would normally be good enough to be a "closing act", but a great fan and advisor to this column suggested the following, which is a WONDERFUL example of music that is not only for listening: the proper music can inspire you (I found it very useful when writing dull reports in the olde days) mentally and also physically. Marching would be a good example, as would teamwork - pulling together, if you will. This example shows not only some interesting instruments but some fairly good dancers (**alert** - men with heart issues should be in a sitting position to watch this:

<https://tinyurl.com/4ce77f44>

Again, thanks to a reader who recommended this. It makes quite a change in mood from the first arrangement, eh? For next month, I plan to continue with the same theme. Hint - anyone remember Carmen Miranda?? As always, if you like what you read, please tell the editor. If not.....

Seedy

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Paradise on Earth

If you could fit the entire population of the world into a village consisting of 100 people, maintaining the proportions of all the people living on Earth, that village would consist of:

57 Asians

21 Europeans

14 Americans (North, Central and South)

8 Africans

There would be:

52 women and 48 men

30 Caucasians and 70 non-Caucasians

30 Christians and 70 non-Christians

89 heterosexuals and 11 homosexuals

6 people would possess 59% of the wealth and they would all come from the USA:

80 would live in poverty

70 would be illiterate

50 would suffer from hunger and malnutrition

1 would be dying

1 would be being born

1 would own a computer

1 would have a university degree

If we looked at the world in this way, the need for acceptance and understanding would be obvious. But, consider again the following :

If you woke up this morning in good health, you have more luck than one million people, who won't live through the week.



If you have never experienced the horror of war, the solitude of prison, the pain of torture, were not close to death from starvation, then you are better off than 500 million people.

If you can go to your place of worship without fear that someone will assault or kill you, then you are luckier than 3 billion (that's right) people.

If you have a full fridge, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are wealthier than 75% of the world's population.

If you currently have money in the bank, in your wallet and a few coins in your purse,

you are one of 8 of the privileged few amongst the 100 people in the world.
If your parents are still alive and still married, you're a rare individual.

AND SO?

Work like you don't need the money.
Love like nobody has ever hurt you.
Dance like nobody is watching.
Sing like nobody is listening.
Live as if this was paradise on Earth.

A Walk down Memory Lane

The first 40 years of New Westminster.

1859 - The Royal Engineers survey the downtown area and made a grid with **streets** running up the hill and **avenues** across it.

1859 - New Westminster is proclaimed the capital of a united Colony of British Columbia.

1860 - New Westminster is incorporated as a municipality, which included the area below Royal Avenue, now Downtown.

1864 - The Downtown streets are cleared and graded and docks constructed at Front Street. Irving House is built for Captain William Irving who was a pioneer in the steamboat industry.

1868 - B.C.'s capital is moved from New Westminster to Victoria. OUCH!

1870's - Canneries, lumber mills and metal fabricating plants were constructed along the riverfront, which today is home to the Quay and numerous townhomes and apartments.

1883 - Captain John Irving's Canadian Pacific Navigation Company established the K to K ferry from New West to Surrey.

1886 - The CPR extended a branch line to New West.

1888 - An area along Front Street, between Lytton Square and the Fraser River was the city's first Chinatown.

1889 - the provincial exhibition is founded complete with an Exhibition Building in Queen's Park.

1891 - downtown New West is connected to the B.C. Electric Interurban Railway line.

1893 - the City Market opens in Lytton Square, which is at the intersection of Front and Church Streets.

1896 - the Armoury, home of the Royal Westminster Regiment, opens on the southeast corner of 6th Street and Queens Avenue.

1898 - New Westminster's Great Fire destroys all but two buildings in Downtown.

The market, the docks, the opera house, the library, and even the post office were all gone. The two buildings that survived are the Guichon Block (Queen's Hotel) and the Burr Block ([The Met Hotel](#)) next door.

KERRY'S TOONIES WORTH

or

One Step Away from Relevance

One Liners

1. I've reached the age in my life where my train of thought often leaves the station without me.
2. Life is too short to worry about what others say or think about you. So, have fun and give them something to talk about.
3. If you think you are smarter than the previous generation... 50 years ago the owner's manual of a car showed you how to adjust the valves. Today it warns you not to drink the contents of the battery.
4. If we wanted to boldly send billionaires where no billionaires have been before, we could just send them to the tax office.
5. If common sense was lard, most people wouldn't have enough to grease a pan.
6. For those people who don't want Alexa listening in on their conversations, they're making a male version...it doesn't listen to anything.
7. I'm on two diets now...I wasn't getting enough food on just one.
8. To err is human, to blame it on someone else shows management potential.

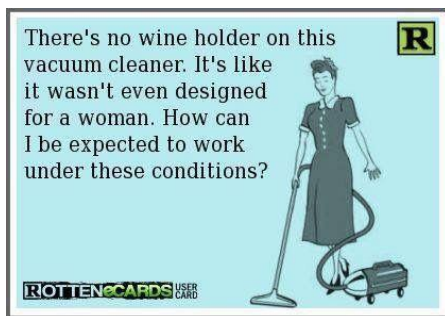
9. They say every piece of chocolate that you eat shortens your life by two minutes. I've done the math, seems I died in 1537.



10. My doctor has given me three days to give up drinking. I picked July 17th, August 21st, and October 9th.

Things to Ponder

1. If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed.
2. Why do people run over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it and then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?



3. If it's true that some of us are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?
4. What hair colour do they put on the driver's licenses of bald men?
5. Why is it that when someone tells you that there are one billion stars in the universe you believe them, but if they tell

you there is wet paint you have to touch it to check?

6. Is there ever a day that mattresses are not on sale?

7. If people from Poland are called Poles, then why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

8. A bookseller conducting a market survey asked a woman, "Which book has helped you most in your life?" The woman replied, "My husband's checkbook!"

9. I wear memory foam insoles to remember why I walk into a room.

10. Peanuts are one of the ingredients of dynamite!

Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus

How men and women record things in their diaries.....

----- Wife's Diary:

Tonight, I thought my husband was acting weird. We had made plans to meet at a nice restaurant for dinner. I was shopping with my friends all day long, so I thought he was upset at the fact that I was a bit late, but he made no comment on it. Conversation wasn't flowing, so I suggested that we go somewhere quiet so we could talk. He agreed, but he didn't say much. I asked him what was wrong; He said, 'Nothing..'. I asked him if it was my fault that he was upset. He said he wasn't upset, that it had nothing to do with me, and not to worry about it. On the way home, I told him that I loved him. He smiled slightly, and kept driving. I can't explain his behavior. I don't know why he didn't say, I love you, too. When we got home, I felt as if I had lost him completely, as if he wanted nothing to do with me anymore. He just sat there quietly, and watched TV. He continued to seem distant and absent. Finally, with silence all around us, I decided to go to bed. About 15 minutes later, he came to bed. But I still felt that he was distracted, and his thoughts were somewhere else. He fell asleep; I cried. I don't know what to do. I'm almost sure that

his thoughts are with someone else. My life is a disaster.

-----Husband's Diary:

A two-foot putt.....who the hell misses a two-foot putt!

What causes arthritis?

A drunk man, who smelled of liquor, sat down on a subway next to a priest. The man's tie was stained, his face was plastered with red lipstick, and a half-empty bottle of gin was sticking out of his coat pocket. He opened his newspaper and began reading. After a few minutes the man turned to the priest and asked, "Say Father, do you know what causes arthritis?" The priest replies, "My Son, it's caused by loose living, being with cheap, wicked women, too much alcohol, contempt for your fellow man, sleeping around with prostitutes and lack of a bath." The drunk muttered in response, "Well, I'll be", and returned to his paper. The priest, thinking about what he had said, nudged the man and apologized. "I'm very sorry. I didn't mean to come on so strong. How long have you had arthritis?" The drunk answered, "I don't have it, Father. I was just reading here that the Pope does."

Bagpipe Blues

As a long time bagpiper, I play many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. The man had no family or friends, so the service was to be at a pauper's cemetery in the Nova Scotia back-country with only a pastor and the funeral director, but they thought it would be special to give the poor man some music at his final resting place. Since I was not familiar with the backwoods I got lost and, being a typical man, didn't stop to ask directions. I arrived about an hour late. The funeral guy and pastor had evidently gone and the hearse nowhere in sight. Only the three digging guys were left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly, apologized to the men for being

late, and then went to the side of the grave and looked down. The vault lid was already in place, already covered with quite a bit of dirt. Not knowing what else to do, I began to pipe. The workers put down their lunches and gathered around while I played out my heart and soul like never before for this friendless and homeless man. Upon piping Amazing Grace, the workers looked like they were really touched by the beautiful tune, and sorrowing with me for this dearly departed poor man. Finishing then and my bagpipes packed up, I headed for the car, my head low and sad but my heart so full. Opening the car door, I heard one of the workers say, "I've never seen anything like that before in my life, and I've been putting in septic tanks for almost twenty years."



Golden years, or rusty years?

1. "Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what happened." (Stevie Wonder)
2. "The older I get, the more clearly I remember things that never happened." (Mark Twain)
3. "I'm at that age where my back goes out more than I do." (Phyllis Diller)
4. "Nice to be here? At my age, it's nice to be anywhere." (George Burns)
5. "First you forget names, then you forget faces, then you forget to pull your zipper up;

then, you forget to pull your zipper down." (Rob Reiner)

6. "I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a lot more as they get older, and then it dawned on me — they're cramming for their final exam." (George Carlin)

7. "Looking fifty is great — if you're sixty." (Joan Rivers)

8. "Time may be a great Healer, but it's a lousy Beautician." (Zsa Zsa Gabor)

9. "You spend 90 percent of your adult life hoping for a long rest and the last 10 percent trying to convince the Lord that you're actually not THAT tired." (Princess Grace)

10. "At my age, flowers scare me." (George Burns)

More from, How do Court Reporters keep a straight face?

1. **ATTORNEY:** This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?

WITNESS: Yes.

ATTORNEY: And in what ways does it affect your memory?

WITNESS: I forget.

ATTORNEY: You forget? Can you give me an example of something you forgot.

2. **ATTORNEY:** The youngest son, the 20-year old, how old is he?

WITNESS: He's 20, much like your IQ!

3. **ATTORNEY:** She had three children, right?

WITNESS: Yes.

ATTORNEY: How many were boys?

WITNESS: None.

ATTORNEY: Were there any girls?

WITNESS: Your Honour, I think I need a different attorney. Can I get a new attorney?

4. **ATTORNEY:** Were you present when your picture was taken?

WITNESS: Are you kidding me?

5. **ATTORNEY:** Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: Did you check for blood pressure?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: Did you check for breathing?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: So, then it is possible that the patient was still alive when you began the autopsy.

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

WITNESS: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

ATTORNEY: I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

WITNESS: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law.

Time for some Dark Humour

1. My wife and I have reached the difficult decision that we do not want children. If anybody does, please send me your contact details and we can drop them off tomorrow.

2. I just came across my wife's Tinder profile and I'm so angry about her lies. She is not "fun to be around."

3. My parents raised me as an only child. This really infuriated my sister.

4. Son: "Dad, did you get the results of the DNA test back?"

Dad: "Call me George."

5. Remember, being healthy is basically dying as slowly as possible.