

BRTA MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BURNABY RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Volume 74

December 2025

President's Message

Jim Reid

I started writing this report in the bright sunshine of mid-October that quickly deteriorated into the rainstorms a few days later—the harbinger of winter to come. But back to the BRTA! At the October 2nd luncheon I had the pleasure of announcing that the BRTA won the BCRTA Annual Trophy for the largest increase in membership. Our ranks have increased by 54 members, 9.42%, for those Branches over 500 members! The BCRTA kept the trophy but we did receive a conciliatory box of Purdy's chocolates.

December Luncheon

Wow, writing about our Christmas/Xmas/Winter Luncheon in mid-October is more than a little strange—we haven't even had Halloween yet.

But to the *point*-settias, this is our highlight luncheon of the year! The trees and decorations will be up, the Andante Choir will return, maybe a puzzle or two and a wide choice in the menu are at hand. The menu ranges from two salad choices, mashed potatoes, a rice dish, veggie lasagna, your choice of glazed ham or roasted turkey and trimmings, all followed by coffee, tea and Chef's desserts! *An all-out meal!*

For this event the luncheon's price for members is \$60 and \$75 for guests. It is really important to let us know as early as possible if you will be joining us. This allows us to work with the venue to make everything just right for us. To register for the event please email Jim Reid at jreidbrta@gmail.com, Ilse Armanini at ilse_armanini@telus.net or Rennie Maierle at rmaierle@telus.net.

We look forward to celebrating this season with all of you. jreidbrta@gmail.com

... Jim



HEALTH BENEFITS & TRAVEL PLAN CHANGES FOR 2026 ... submitted by Jim Reid

BCRTA AGM REPORT – September, 2025

As of January, 2026 the newly formed Dogwood Retiree Benefit Board will take over full responsibility for our Plans using a self-insured model which covers our Extended Health & Dental and Travel Plans.

The new Dogwood Board is responsible to the “members of the insurance plans”, NOT the BCRTA membership in general.

The Dogwood Board will continue to employ Belairdirect (previously Johnsons) and Manulife as agents of the plans.

The “Dogwood EHC and Dental plans are “secure, healthy and stable”. The Dogwood Board “controls \$2 million in reserve funding to protect the plans”. This amount is “185% of the amount Manulife would require for a similar, insured plan”. Moving to a self-insured plan “has immediately saved our clients about 4.5% on their premiums”.

A new section in the BCRTA Procedures Handbook entitled Dogwood Retiree Benefit Plans will outline the “structure and responsibilities” of the new Dogwood Benefits Board.

The Extended Health Care Plan will proceed as the **Dogwood Extended Health Care (EHC) Plan**. Beginning January 2026, the Dogwood EHC plan will see an “increase in the life-time maximum to \$500,000 from \$250,000” and the annual maximum for Paramedical claims will increase “to \$1,500 from \$1,000”.

The Dental Plan will proceed as the **Dogwood Dental Plan**. Effective January 2026, Level III “major services” (“crowns, posts, inlays/onlays, bridges, dentures and implants”) will increase “to \$1,000 from \$700” as the “annual maximum”.

The Prestige Travel Plan will continue as the **Dogwood Travel Gold**. Through April 24 – 25 the Prestige TP saw a growth of 3% in policies to a total of 1,618 insured people. In September of 2025 the plan became a “stand-alone” plan allowing any EHC plan holder to participate. Members no longer have to belong to the Johnson EHC plan to qualify for Prestige Travel which uses “sudden and unforeseen claim criteria” as opposed to the “90-day stability clause” used by “most other travel plans”. “No premium increase occurred in September 2025”.

The Medoc Travel Plan will continue as the **Dogwood Travel Silver** plan. By April of 2025 it was servicing 6,228 people and a premium increase of 2% occurred in September 2025.

The Dogwood Retiree Benefit Board will “continue discussions with other groups with a view to expanding our plans” which may “become more attractive to other similar-minded groups who may wish to join us”.

Quoted from Gerry Tiede’s submitted report to the 2025 BCRTA AGM of September 26, 2025.



Burnaby Retired Teachers' Scholarship and Bursary Foundation

c/o Burnaby School District, 4054 Norfolk St, Burnaby, B.C, V5G OC3

Yes, I would like to support the Burnaby Retired Teachers' Scholarship and Bursary Foundation.
I understand the money will be used to support graduating students in their future studies.

Enclosed is my cheque for ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ other (A tax receipt will be issued)

Print Name _____ Signature _____



Burnaby Retired Teachers' Scholarship and Bursary Foundation

Again this year, the BRT awarded 8 scholarships worth \$1,000 each, and 8 Wynn Richmond Bursaries of \$3,000 each to deserving students nominated by their schools.

The following students received scholarships - Edward Le, Hariah Dhaliwal, Taraneh Halami, Nina Liu, Janelle Den Haan, Russell Bartolome, Jenny Lee and Yiling Wang.

Wynn Richmond Bursaries were awarded to Alishba Noor Sahukhan, Chiara Lucarelli, Lily Chen, Daisy Li, Makenna Com, Kylee Almendarez, Alice Boa-anh Tuong and Alicia Golota. Congratulations to all winners and thanks to all of the school contacts .

Special thanks to all who donate to the scholarship fund - the students are very appreciative of the support from the BRT.

Jennifer Murn
Chair BRT Scholarship Committee



Seasonal Trivia Contest

Submitted by Merv M

1. Which country did eggnog come from?
2. What did the other reindeer not let Rudolph do because of his shiny red nose?
3. How many ghosts show up in A Christmas Carol?
4. Where was baby Jesus born?
5. The movie Miracle on 34th Street is based on a real-life department store. What is it?
6. What are the two most popular names for Santa Claus?
7. In Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol, what was the first name of Scrooge?
8. Which real-life person is Santa Claus based on?
9. What did Frosty the Snowman do when a magic hat was placed on his head?
10. Which Christmas song was recorded by Jose Feliciano in 1970?
11. What do children get from Santa if they're on the "Naughty List"?
12. What are you supposed to do when you find yourself under the mistletoe?
13. Which one of Santa's reindeer has the same name as another holiday mascot?
14. Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?
15. According to the song, what did my true love give to me on the eighth day of Christmas?
16. How many gifts in total were given in "The Twelve Days of Christmas" song?
17. Which fairy tale were the first gingerbread houses inspired by?
18. What Christmas decoration was originally made from silver?
19. Which Christmas ballet premiered in 1892?
20. This holiday treat was originally designed to resemble a shepherd's staff. What is it?
21. In Canada, which holiday is celebrated the day after Christmas?
22. Which popular phrase was made popular by Ebenezer Scrooge in "A Christmas Carol"?
23. Which Christmas treat is known for its notoriously long shelf life?
24. In North America, what's another name for wild reindeer?
25. How many reindeer appear in the poem, "Twas the Night Before Christmas"?



Answers: *No cheating, please. Otherwise you get a lump of coal.*

1. England. 2. Join in any reindeer games. 3. Four. 4. In Bethlehem. 5. Macy's. 6. Kris Kringle and Saint Nick. 7. Ebenezer. 8. The Christian bishop St. Nicholas. 9. He began to dance around. 10. "Feliz Navidad". 11. A lump of coal. 12. Kiss. 13. Cupid. 14. Germany. 15. Eight maids a-milking. 16. 364. 17. Hansel and Gretel. 18. Tinsel. 19. "The Nutcracker". 20. Candy canes. 21. Boxing Day. 22. Bah Humbug. 23. Fruitcake. 24. Caribou, 25. Eight.

My long time job sharing partner and dear friend, **Maureen Williams** passed away recently from ALS. She would have been 77 on October 17. We had a long history of teaching together in a job where a lot of what you do is 'on your own' with a bunch of 20-34 students. Yes, we once enrolled 34 Grade 4 and 5's in one classroom in the 1990's! For twelve years, Moe and I enjoyed sharing a class.

I had been a substitute teacher in 1979, when I first met Wayne Gottschau, my foot in the door of Burnaby School District. Fast forward to 1988 when I am the community school coordinator at Stride, chairing an interagency meeting that Mr. Gottschau attends, as I was waddling around at eight months pregnant. He wondered if I might like to work part time in a job sharing position as he knew someone he thought I would work well with and her name was Maureen Williams. Remember in 1988 job sharing was not a thing. One person, did one job.

I got her number from him and called her. We hit it off right away, drafted a proposal to share a job and Mr. Wayne Gottschau hired us. He was way ahead of his time especially when it came to advocacy and support of women. Maureen and I teamed up in 1988 at Twelfth Avenue Elementary and even applied to transfer to the new South Slope/School for the Deaf grand opening in September 1992. When I went off on two further maternity leaves Maureen covered for me and worked full time. We both coached teams, sat on committees, attended Pro-D and field trips so truly felt our students got 110% from each of us.

What an honour it was to work alongside Maureen Williams in this capacity. We were both very different people and each brought our own unique gifts to the classroom. Maureen was special. She had great energy and enthusiasm about her work. Using her creativity and artistic abilities she was able to draw out the artist in each and every student. Volleyball was her favourite sport to coach and teaching PE was a fun time. Her athletic prowess was evident as she taught fitness on the side and played volleyball recreationally.

The most memorable part of our long career together was her sense of humour. She liked to make others laugh and employed a variety of techniques. She knew a corny joke for every occasion, her repertoire of very inappropriate imitations of our students and colleagues were hilarious. I feel so fortunate that I met Maureen and that we 'clicked' like we did for a dozen years. Those were some good times! **She was a masterful educator you may not have had the good fortune to meet.** Rest in peace my sweet and very funny friend.



See Photo: Next page



Maureen is on the left and I am on the right. Big hair was a thing in the 1980's.

Christmas Outreach Program.

Poinsettia Drivers needed!



Barb Stoliker oversees our Christmas Outreach program. Every year in December our team of 'Poinsettia Santas' deliver a poinsettia and card to all our Burnaby seniors who are 85 or more. This is a picture of our volunteers before they headed out to spread some Christmas cheer.


This year we plan to make deliveries on Thursday, December 18.

Contact **Barb Stoliker**
604-319-2690

... We are looking for a few more retired teachers to be poinsettia drivers to help out.

Can you name the following places in B.C. from these descriptions?

Submitted by Dave Carter

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Former Queen | | 13. Attack a large animal |
| 2. Fishy Appendage | | 14. Famous Mom in a rocking chair |
| 3. To Woo a joint | | 15. Dicken's character |
| 4. Two thousand pound monarch | | 16. Cat's rug |
| 5. Sea drops | | 17. Aching last digit |
| 6. Horse drawn buggy |  | 18. Automotive shaft circles |
| 7. Big utensils | | 19. Loving Cove |
| 8. Massachusetts tavern | | 20. Unfriendly veil fabric |
| 9. Noisy Dog Town | | 21. A sense of purpose |
| 10. Tough Limb | | 22. Left side of a cantaloupe |
| 11. Bee's bum | | 23. Woman at forge |
| 12. Gritty saliva | | 24. Fuzzy joint |
| | | 25. Soup stream |



Answers to both questions on Page 10



In each sentence fill in the blank or blanks with an expression commonly used during Christmas.

- 1 On December 24, Adam's wife was known as _____.
- 2 In Charles Dicken's "A Christmas Carol, Scrooge was visited by the ghost of _____.
- 3 An opinion survey in Alaska is called a _____.
- 4 What does Santa do with his three gardens? _____.
- 5 When the salt and pepper say "Hi" to each other, they are passing on _____.
- 6 A happy, holy man, bereft of "change", could be called _____.
- 7 When you cross a sheep with a cicada, you get a _____.
- 8 A quiet, medieval armor-wearer is a _____.
- 9 A cat walking in the desert is bound to get _____.
- 10 People who tell jokes on December 25 might be called _____.
- 11 Actress Burnett and actress Channing used to be known on December 25 as _____.
- 12 What do Spanish sheep say when they wish each other a "Merry Christmas"? _____.
- 13 Bad spellers refer to December 25 as _____.

1. I always invest in companies an idiot could run, because one day one will.
2. I always wanted to be somebody, but now I realize I should have been more specific.
3. Whenever there is suffering, injustice and oppression the Americans will show up, six months late, and bomb the country next to where it is happening.
4. I treat opinion polls with a lump of sugar.
5. The marvelous thing about a joke with a double meaning is that it can only mean one thing.
6. The thing about high-tech is that you always end up using scissors.
7. If you don't have time to sit down and write, and you think of a melody, call your answering machine and sing it.
8. You just have to work with what God sends, and if God doesn't seem to understand the concept of commercial success, then that's your bad luck.
9. They say the definition of ambivalence is watching your mother-in-law drive over a cliff in your new Cadillac.
10. I wouldn't say I was the best administrator, but I was in the top one.
11. If voting changed anything, they'd abolish it.
12. The first rule of consumerism is never buy anything you can't make your children/grandchildren carry.
13. Be open-minded but not so open-minded that your brains fall out.
14. Students who pay their way through university almost never flunk out.
15. The more mistakes you make, the smarter you get.
16. We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.
17. Don't be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt for years.
18. Lending money to friends and relatives causes them to get amnesia.
19. No situation is so bad that losing your temper won't make it worse.
20. A mother is only as happy as her child.



Below: Answers to questions on page 9

Expressions commonly used during Christmas.

1. Christmas Eve
2. Christmas present
3. North Poll
4. Hoe, hoe, hoe
5. Season's Greetings
6. Jolly St. Nickleless
7. Baa! Humbug
8. Silent Knight
9. Sandy Claws
10. Christmas cards
11. Christmas Carols
12. Fleece Navidad
13. Xmas



Name the following places in B.C.

1. Victoria
2. Salmon Arm
3. Courtney
4. Princeton
5. Ocean Falls
6. Surrey
7. Grand Forks
8. Boston Bar
9. Barkerville
10. Armstrong
11. Enderby
12. Sandspit
13. Sicamous
14. Whistler
15. Oliver
16. Kitimat
17. Sorrento
18. Kamloops
19. Honeymoon Bay
20. Tulameen
21. Mission
22. Port Melon
23. Ladysmith
24. Fernie
25. Campbell River

*Please come and join us in some of our Holiday Season activities.
For Registration call 604-294-1936.- \$2 fee*

Upcoming Activities •••••

- **Tech Help** – Saturdays – 11AM – 1PM: Tech wise high school students can help with your laptops, iPads and phones.
- **Wills, Power of Attorney and Representation Agreements** -Thursday Nov.13th
10AM – 11:30AM
- **Remembrance Day Ceremony** – Tuesday, November 11th at 11AM. Royal Canadian Legion hosting at the North Burnaby Cenotaph
- **Japanese Flower Arranging** – Monday, November 17th – 9:30 – 11:30AM
Early Holiday Season Activities
- **Holiday Craft Sale** - Sat & Sun - Nov 8th & 9th – 10AM – 4PM: 30+ artisans with unique works for sale.
- **Holiday Card Workshop** – Wednesday, Nov 26th – 1-3PM: Make that special card!
- **Candle Making Workshop** – Thursday, Nov 27th – 9:30-11AM: For home or that special gift.



December Holiday Season in Full Swing •••••

- **Tree Decorating** – Tuesday, Dec 2nd- 10AM: Join us in the lobby and help make our tree special. Treats and warm drinks!
- **Holiday Ornament Workshop** – Wednesday – Dec 3rd – 1PM – 3PM: Make your own special ornament for your tree.
- **Holiday Centerpiece Workshop** – Wednesday – Dec 10th – 1PM – 3PM: Create your own holiday centerpiece.
- **Holly Jolly Lunch** - Friday, Dec 12th – 11AM – 1PM: Terrific food, prizes and the Confederation Park Elementary School Choir.
- **Melody Makers Singing Group** – Tuesday, Dec 16th – 3:15 - 4:45PM: Sing along or just sit back and enjoy familiar holiday songs.
- **Christmas movie and munchies** – Friday, Dec 18th – 2 – 4PM: TBA but always one of the fun ones we have watched for years.
- **Monday Night Dance Group** – Christmas Dance – Monday Dec 22nd – 6:15PM – 8:45PM: Dance to a live band and seasonal music.



Merry Christmas, Everyone!

INSIDE BURNABY SCHOOLS

October 28, 2025



HONOURING TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Schools across the District gathered to mark **Orange Shirt Day** and the **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** – as seen here in assemblies at **Nelson**, **Taylor Park**, and **Brentwood Park Elementary** schools. Many – including this one at **Stride Avenue Community School** – also provided opportunities for highlighting culture, such as drumming. There were several moments for learning and reflection, including at **Montecito Elementary**. At **Byrne Creek Community School**, students came together to talk about Truth and Reconciliation. Many chose to create an “I statement” which is an opportunity to share a personal commitment to Reconciliation. Grade 2/3 students at **Buckingham Elementary** wrote about their thoughts on wearing orange and feeling safe at school. At **Confederation Park Elementary**, students looked at the symbolism of the journey toward Reconciliation and the salmon’s journey. Students at **Twelfth Avenue Elementary** shared learnings and drumming with the **Song for Courage**, which was gifted to the District in 2017 by **Sherryl Sewepagaham** from **Little Red River Cree Nation**.

ELEMENTARY ARTISTS SHOWCASED IN NEW BURNABY GALLERY

Art by students at **University Highlands Elementary** is making history; it’s one of the first exhibitions in a new gallery at **Simon Fraser University**. Two Grade 4/5 classes spent eight weeks at the end of the last school year creating their art project **Where Does the Rain Go?** Supported by their teachers and three local artists and art educators, the children explored the path of rainwater from the peak of Burnaby Mountain to creeks and beyond. During their investigations, the students used rain and creek water to make paintings. They also created audio art, including by recording the sounds of the creek. The students shared their learning with the school last June, when their exhibition was temporarily installed in the library at **University Highlands**. The professional exhibition runs until February. It was featured in a new local media outlet called **Freshet News**.

ROOTED IN NATURE: STUDENTS BUILD CONNECTION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

A group of students at **Nelson Elementary** spent their lunch break picking up garbage after learning about how to protect the land. Grade 6/7 students at **Maywood Community School** grounded the start of their outdoor adventures with learning about local plants. Children at **Edmonds Community School** visited the animals at **Aldor Acres Family Farm**. Through a partnership with **Sprouting Chefs**, students at **Edmonds** did cooking classes after school, including food grown in the school garden. The after-school **Garden Club** at **Edmonds** has been harvesting carrots and more. Students at **Confederation Park Elementary** created art with natural materials, such as salt dough, pasta, and wood. Grade 3/4 students at **Montecito Elementary** used their imagination and fall leaves to bring their creations to life. As part of celebrating the **Mid-Autumn Festival**, primary students at **Marlborough Elementary** made mooncakes with the help of family members.

IT'S BEEN 'GAME ON' FOR FALL SPORTS

Students' participation in sports quickly gained momentum with the elementary cross-country season. Hundreds of children from schools across the District participated in the meets. Youth at **Burnaby Central Secondary** were among those to celebrate fall sports and student-athletes with a pep rally. Many youth, such as these Sports Executive members at **Moscrop Secondary**, volunteer behind the scenes. There have been several tournaments, including for volleyball. Grade 9 girls from **Burnaby South Secondary** took top spot at a tournament in New Westminster. Banner competitions are underway in some sports, such as these victories by student-athletes at **Burnaby North Secondary** in both cross-country and soccer.

FOSTERING OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT MENTAL WELL-BEING

On **World Mental Health Day**, the Student Government at **Burnaby North Secondary** set up a "Take What You Need" board with kind and uplifting messages. Students were encouraged to take one for themselves or share a message with a friend to support each other. There are several opportunities throughout the year that are focused on kindness and inclusion, such as this one at **Marlborough Elementary**. A class at **Maywood Community School** started their focus on mental wellness by exploring building self-esteem. Grade 3/4 students at **Buckingham Elementary** made "selfies." Meanwhile "smart cookies" in a Grade 1/2 class at **Buckingham** wrote about what they're good at. At **Montecito Elementary**, children reflected on their very own superpower.

POWERED BY PARTNERSHIP AND STRENGTHENED THROUGH COMMUNITY

Across the District, partnerships enhance learning and opportunities. Children who are not yet school age benefit from the many District-run **StrongStart BC** programs. Connections with the community, such as this visit by the **Burnaby Public Library**, also strengthen the experience for families. Through a partnership with **Shadbolt in Your Community**, children at **Edmonds** enjoyed after-school clay works. A community barbeque at **Twelfth Avenue Elementary** was elevated through partnership, with students getting the chance to explore emergency vehicles with **Burnaby RCMP** and the **Burnaby Fire Department**. **Dennis Thomas-Whonoak** is with the **UBC Sauder School of Business** and from the **Tsleil-Waututh Nation**. He spoke with Indigenous students at **Byrne Creek Community School**, as they consider their future careers. **Byrne Creek** band students collaborated with Grade 6 and 7s at **Stride Avenue Community School**. The youth gave the elementary students a chance to try each band instrument at their workshop. Leadership students from **Alpha Secondary** led some pre-Halloween fun with children at **Brentwood Park Elementary**, making crafts together. The **Parent Advisory Council** at **Brentwood Park** sponsored a Pumpkin Patch, complete with games and face painting. While the **PAC** at **Branford Elementary** supported hip hop lessons. At **Kitchener Elementary**, the **PAC** hosted a community movie night. Students often give back to the wider community, such as this sock and leftover Halloween candy drive for the Downtown Eastside by Leadership students at **Alpha**. Staff at **Gilmore Community School** promised students a **Water Bucket Challenge** if the school collected \$1000 for the **Terry Fox Foundation**. After nearly doubling their target with \$1849 raised, staff kept their promise – all to the delight of students. Let's take a look at some of the fun. [VIDEO PLAYS]