

BRTA MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BURNABY RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Volume 75

February 2026

President's Message

Jim Reid

don't know how well we are keeping our New Year's Resolutions but we are clearly in a new year with many things afoot! So, to add a little lightheartedness to our January/February and maybe a kg or two to our waistlines, our first luncheon of the year is approaching! This is the event when we honour our members who have or will be turning 85 this year. We have eighteen members to invite to the luncheon where we can celebrate their special day.

This year we will wish a Happy 85th Birthday to: *Gord Boudreau, Dianne Braun, William Cooper, Forrest Day, Carolyn Feenstra, Jack Gair, Alan Griffith, Barbara Hart, Clara Hooge, Barbara Klier, Bonnie McCully, Roger Meyer, Carol Miller, Alicia Moroz, Barry Parish, Fred Regan, Sheila Tufts and David Warnett.*

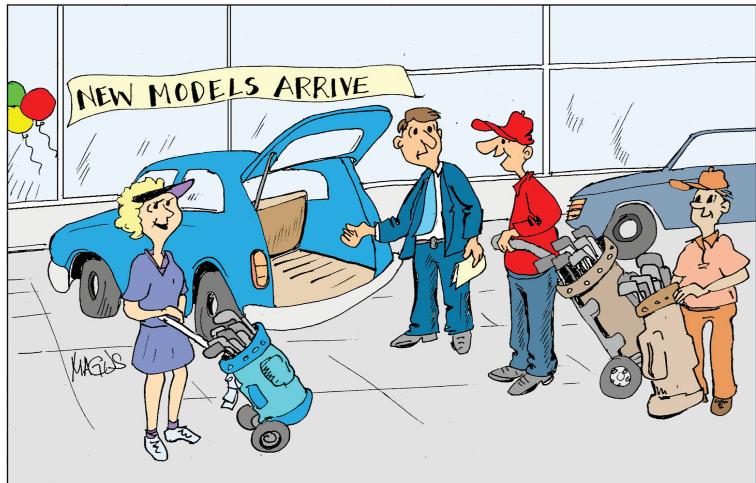
Each of our honoured members will receive a complementary lunch for themselves and a guest. After lunch each member will be given an opportunity to relate one or more of their most memorable moments from their teaching careers. These are moments that have been moving or humorous but delightful to relive.

Please come and join us as we honour our members who've reached this significant step.

Luncheon Invitation for February 26, 2026

We are delighted to invite you to our first luncheon of 2026. It is at the Burnaby Mountain Golf Course Restaurant on Thursday, February 26. The doors will open at 11:00 am and our buffet lunch will be served at 12:00 noon. You are invited to arrive early, meet new people and visit with friends. The price for our opening luncheon is \$50 for members and \$60 for non-members.

It is important to let us know as early as possible if you will be joining us. This allows us to work with the venue and make our day an enjoyable one. To register for the event please email Ilse Armanini at ilse_armanini@telus.net, Jim Reid at jreidbrta@gmail.com, Rennie Maierle at rmaierle@telus.net or Elizabeth Wilson at helliwily@gmail.com.



Now, tell me the cargo capacity in "sets of golf clubs", and NOT in cubic feet or litres!

Executive Meetings 2026: Luncheons:		February 5, April 2, September 17, November 12. February 26, April 23, October 8, December 3.	
Jim Reid	President	294-8049	jreidbrta@gmail.com
Rennie Maierle	Past President	294-3570	rmaierle@telus.net
Ilse Armanini	Phone Coordinator	762-2756	zoepoodle3878@gmail.com
Elizabeth Beer	Sunshine, Condolences	524-1507	ebeer@hotmail.com
Marilyn Bullock	Director	929-1919	stumare@telus.net
Dave Carter	Director	469-0263	goodguys3882@gmail.com
Marion Hartley	Well-Being Committee	434-0486	mdhartley@telus.net
Marguerite Henderson	Treasurer and Scholarship Treasurer	544-2611	marguerite.henderson23@gmail.com
Gail MacDonald	Secretary	524-8716	hgmac@telus.net
Merv Magus	Editor, cartoon	604-436-1672	exit33@shaw.ca
Jennifer Murn	Chair-Scholarship	754-4755	j.murn@cloud.com
Ruth Nicholson	Director	526-9222	rdtoffee@gmail.com
Barb Stoliker	Christmas Outreach	319-2690	barbstoliker@gmail.com
Richard Storch	Director	778 881 5857	richardstorch94@gmail.com
Janet White	Director	433-4373	jwhite@telus.net
Elizabeth Wilson	Director	778-792-2384	helliwily@gmail.com

Alphabetical listing

No longer with us: Rosemary Cooke, David Hendry, Edward Palleton, Wendy Richmond, Joseph Sadowski.

Financial Report

...by Marguerite Henderson

Balance as of October 15th, 2025 \$ 3,394.76

Income

Membership Fees	\$ 4,770.00
Luncheons	\$ 4,590.00
Total	\$ 9,360.00

Expenses

Bby Mountain Golf Club
Deposit 2026 \$ 1,050.00
December Luncheon \$ 5,169.00



Newsletter	
Printing	\$ 87.10
Postage	\$ 118.90
Flowers	\$ 27.99
Poinsettia Campaign	\$ 667.69
Total	\$ 7,120.68

Balance as of January 30th, 2026 \$ 5,634.08

R. R. Smith Memorial Foundation

Last call for applications to the R R Smith Memorial Foundation for grants to be distributed in March of each year. Consider a request through the www.rrsmith.ca website with charitable groups able to fund their literacy programs in BC and in developing countries.

Treasurer is Jim Reid for further information.

Submitted by Barb Mikulek

Confederation Seniors Association

Confederation 55+ Centre, 4585 Albert St. Burnaby, Registration at 604-294-1936

... Upcoming events ...

Monday Feb. 9th - Monday Night Dance Group – Valentines Dance 6:25 – 8:45

Monday Feb. 9th – Lifestyle lectures – Nutrition for Seniors 10 AM

Saturday Feb. 28th – Special Events – Sweet Treats Tea Party – 1 PM – 3 PM

Art Workshop Series – Jan., Feb., Mar. – Wednesdays – 1 PM – 2:30 PM

Hits and Harmonies 50's to 70's sing-a-long for Srs, 5 wks, **from Jan 29, 11:15 AM – 12:30 PM**

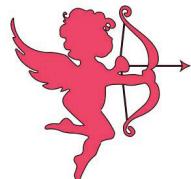
Lunch Program- Tuesday through Friday – 11:30 – 1:00

Always more being added as well as our regular groups and clubs that meet every day.

Origins of Saint Valentine's Day

Taken from Wikipedia

Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is celebrated annually on February 14. It originated as a Christian feast day honoring a martyr named Valentine, and through later folk traditions it has also become a significant cultural, religious and commercial celebration of romance and love in many regions of the world.



There are a number of martyrdom stories associated with various Saint Valentines connected to February 14, including an account of the imprisonment of Saint Valentine of Rome for ministering to Christians persecuted under the Roman Empire in the third century. According to an early tradition, Saint Valentine restored sight to the blind daughter of his jailer. Numerous later additions to the legend have better related it to the theme of love: tradition maintains that Saint Valentine performed weddings for Christian soldiers who were forbidden to marry by the Roman emperor; an 18th-century embellishment to the legend claims he wrote the jailer's daughter a letter signed "Your Valentine" as a farewell before his execution.

(This is a repeat notice from the December Newsletter which applies to the current year, 2026.)

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 0C3

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_____



A thank you letter to the Retired Teachers of Burnaby

At the Christmas luncheon on December 4, I was honoured by the BRTA for contributions made to different initiatives of the organization. I thank everyone for this recognition. I was a student, teacher and administrator in Burnaby for 54 years and a member of the BRTA since 2002. As I looked around at the people at the luncheon I thought back to how the Burnaby School Board was such an important part of my life. The word that kept coming to my mind was “excellence”. Excellent teachers, excellent schools and excellent programs. I am proud to have been a part of this legacy. A special shout out to the Executive of the BRTA, a group of outstanding people who continue to serve with such commitment and humour. Again, thanks to all those wonderful teachers who were part of my journey.

• • • Dave Carter



Andante Choir



Andante Choir, conducted by Gail MacDonald, performing to a sell-out audience at the Christmas Luncheon held at the Burnaby Mountain Golf Course.

Our Andante Choir-Spring 2026

What began as a Burnaby Retired Teachers' Choir has now become a singing community of 30+ retired teachers in their 50's to 80's, along with friends, new acquaintances and family members.

Returning this year will be Gail MacDonald as our director, Dayle Piller as our accompanist, Dorothy Mills as our responder, and Marguerite Henderson as our treasurer.

This Spring we will meet every Tuesday afternoon from 2:00-4:00 at Deer Lake United Church starting on March 24 through to the end of May and we will perform 5-6 concerts this May/June. Our final concert for the season will be at Deer Lake United Church on June 16,

Our repertoire is varied with some traditional, jazz, gospel, swing, folk and ballad styles. We sing in unison, 2-part, SAB, but mostly SATB arrangements. There are no auditions but some experience singing in a choir is helpful.

Studies have repeatedly shown the many benefits of singing in a choir; it can "increase respiratory function, improve overall health, heighten your immune system, improve brain function, increase confidence, give you more energy and improve posture and balance."

So, if you think that this would be a good fit for you, please RSVP to Dorothy Mills at dmills@shaw.ca asap.

If you have any further musical queries, please feel free to contact Gail at 604-524-8716 or hgmac@telus.net.

Christmas Outreach Program

Spreading Christmas cheer every year to all our senior retirees who are 85 or better is one of the outreach programs your Burnaby Retired Teachers participate in during the month of December. This year we reached out to 76 former colleagues and had a visit and delivered a poinsettia. A big shout out to Dave Carter who joined the 85+ club this year. Ever the wordsmith, he has been the editor of our newsletter for many years and always writes a delightful 'Teacher Poem' to share with senior retirees.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of 30 'Poinsettia Santas' who volunteer their time at a very busy time of year. The feedback is overwhelming appreciation for these visits. Thank you to the following former teachers who put on a Santa hat in 2025 and delivered a poinsettia to a former colleague.

Louise Meville, Marilyn Bullock, Ray Myrtle, Ruth Nicolson, Marguerite Henderson, James & Mary Anne Brown, Janet White, Jim Reid, Sheila Caselton, Pat Greenfield, Elizabeth Beer, Holly Rogers, Marie de la Ronde, Jennifer Murn, Dianne Nicholas, Cathrine Conings, Ilse Armanini, Donna Polos, Mike & Lynda Coutts, Dorothy Mills, Margaret Paris, Jane Allen, Gail MacDonald, Maureen Hill, Elizabeth Wilson, Elaine Peterson.

If you would like to join Santa's poinsettia team please contact ...

Barb Stoliker
604-319-2690
or barbstoliker@gmail.com



Our poinsettia Santas, Marilyn Bullock and Ruth Nicolson delivering a poinsettia to one of our 85+ seniors Flo Tocheniuk

A TEACHER'S WISDOM

There are many times, I think of you, and what you came to mean to me,
You stood behind my every dream, to be the best that I could be ."
And though it was long years ago, my memory holds the words you said,
They helped to shape my path in life, those seeds of wisdom in my head.

"The love in your heart wasn't put there to stay,
Because love isn't love until you give it away".

"The measure of love is to love without measure,
To touch someone's heart, is life's greatest treasure".

"And don't ever worry if you're big or you're small,
Because size doesn't matter if you always stand tall".

"You've been born with two wings, so spread them and fly,
Better the trying and failing than the failing to try".

That year was filled with special days, you taught our class with gentle grace,
You touched our hearts and filled our minds with quiet voice and smiling face.

Your words of wisdom come back to me, in almost everything I do,
So many things I'm thankful for, but most especially YOU.

Fill in the blanks to complete the “Dad” jokes below.

••• by Dave Carter

1. I went to a seafood disco and I pulled a _____.
2. I'm reading a book on anti-gravity. It's _____ to put down.
3. When the past, present and future go camping, they always argue. It's _____.
4. To the guy who invented “zero”, thanks for _____.
5. Did you hear about the guy who lost his left arm and left leg? He's _____ now.
6. To write with a broken pencil is _____.
7. The scarecrow won an award because he was _____ in his field.
8. Did you hear about the terrible sausage party? It was the _____.
9. If a clock is _____ it goes back four seconds.
10. I gave my batteries away, free of _____.
11. I asked the librarian if she had any books on _____. She whispered, “They’re right behind you”.
12. Bread can’t survive without _____ to the occasion.
13. The thief who stole the calendar got _____.
14. If you think talk is cheap, you haven’t hired a _____.
15. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a _____.
16. When she saw the first strands of gray hair, she thought she’d _____.
17. Old skiers never die, they just go _____.
18. Don’t trust _____, they make up everything.
19. I couldn’t figure out how lightning works, and then it _____ me.
20. I had a job at an orange juice factory but I was fired because I couldn’t _____.
21. I broke my finger last week. On the other _____, I’m okay.
22. The photo of a clock is really _____.
23. A painting of a mountain will _____ your interest.
24. Pottery is always a _____ experience.
25. I stayed up all night to see where the sun went down, and then it _____ on me.



Answers on the next page - No cheating, please.

Medical terminology for beginners

••• by Dave Carter

1. Artery-the study of paintings
2. Benign-what you will be after you’re eight
3. Bacteria-back door to cafeteria
4. Barium-what doctors do when patients die
5. Cesarean Section-a neighbourhood in Rome
6. Cauterize-make eye contact with her
7. Cholic-a sheep dog
8. Coma-a punctuation mark
9. Dilate-to live long
10. Enema-not a friend
11. Fester-quicker than someone else
12. Fibula-a small lie
13. Impotent-distinguished, well known
14. Labour Pain-getting hurt at work
15. Medical Staff-a doctor’s cane
16. Nitrates-cheaper than day rates
17. Node-I knew it
18. Outpatient-a person who has fainted
19. Post Operative-a letter carrier
20. Recovery Room-a place to do upholstery
21. Secretion-hiding something
22. Seizure-a Roman emperor
23. Terminal Illness-getting sick at the airport
24. Tumor-more than one
25. Varicose-near by

Imponderables?

Submitted by Dave Carter

1. Are part-time band leaders semi-conductors?
2. Crime doesn't pay. Does that mean that teaching is a crime?
3. Did Noah keep his bees in archives?
4. Do hummingbirds hum because they don't know the words?
5. Do people in Australia call the rest of the world "up over"?
6. Do vegetarians eat animal crackers?
7. Does a man-eating shark eat women too?
8. Does that screwdriver belong to Phillip?
9. Have you ever seen a toad on a toadstool?
10. How do they get a deer to cross at that yellow road sign?
11. How do you know that "honesty is the best policy" unless you've tried some others?
12. How do you know when you've run out of invisible ink?
13. How do you write "zero" in Roman numerals?
14. How many weeks are there in a "light" year?
15. If a tree falls in the forest, does the Earth scream in pain?
16. If all the countries in the world are in debt, where did all the money go?
17. If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy all her friends?
18. If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do the rest have to drown too?
19. If you try to fail, what have you done?
20. If you're a kleptomaniac, is there something you can take for it?
21. Is a halfback more valuable than a quarterback?
22. Is drilling for oil boring?
23. What do sheep count when they can't go to sleep?



The British Penny-European Directive #456179

In order to bring about some future integration with the single European currency, the Euro, all citizens of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland must be made aware that the phrase "Spending A Penny", is not to be used beginning immediately. From this day forward the correct term will be "Euronating". It is hoped that this will be a *great relief* to everyone.

Answers:

1. Mussel
2. Impossible
3. Intense
4. Nothing
5. All Right
6. Pointless
7. Outstanding
8. Wurst
9. Hungry
10. Charge
11. Paranoia
12. Rising
13. Twelve Months
14. Lawyer
15. Banana
16. Dye
17. Downhill
18. Atoms
19. Struck
20. Concentrate
21. Hand
22. Timely
23. Peak
24. Hands-on
25. Drowned

INSIDE BURNABY SCHOOLS

January 27, 2026



NEW YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNERS

As classes began in 2026, students at **Brantford Elementary** welcomed the new calendar year with art. Children at **Westridge Elementary** created a wish tree, sharing their dreams for the year ahead. **Lakeview Elementary** students got their "January Jog" on. A Grade 1/2 class at **Buckingham Elementary** wrote about their perfect winter day. Back at **Brantford**, a Grade 6/7 class took their dreams of winter a step further. They visited the cold on Grouse Mountain, where they learned how to snowshoe. At **Marlborough Elementary**, children also connected with the environment – gaining knowledge of the journey that their school's salmon eggs will take. Across the District, students in Grades 4 to 7 have been attending **Young People's Concerts**, learning how to recognise the essential blues chord progression, which is the foundation of popular music. Students from seven high schools came together to showcase their dance skills in a performance called **South for the Winter**. Secondary students in a Metalwork class at **Byrne Creek Community School** created barbeques from scratch, using 3D modeling, CNC plasma and welding. A Grade 2/3 class at **Brentwood Park Elementary** did a winter STEM project, courtesy of a leadership class from **Alpha Secondary**. The students used two ingredients to create "reaction snow." Also at **Alpha**, youth began the year supporting community with their Birthday Box drive for **Burnaby Neighbourhood House**. The boxes included cake mixes, and are designed to make celebrating possible for everyone. An art class at **Alpha** worked with an Indigenous teacher on a project that explored connection to the land. A Grade 3/4 class at **Buckingham** studied landforms, including relationships to Indigenous peoples. Children at **Twelfth Avenue Elementary** retold an Indigenous trickster tale about Coyote and the Bluebirds – using story to make explorations of music both meaningful and memorable.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE WITH CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

With much excitement from the students, construction has started on an addition at **Nelson Elementary**. Through provincial funding, the school is getting a four-classroom prefabricated addition that will add 100 seats. The educational zone in which **Nelson** is located is expected to have a 17.5 percent increase in the number of students over the next ten years. The District is also continuing its work to support families with children who are not yet school age. In addition to programs such as **StrongStart BC**, work is underway to increase child care spaces on school properties. The newly constructed facility on **Twelfth Avenue**'s property is now complete and has received occupancy. This brings the total to three new provincially funded child care centres in recent months, with facilities at **Stoney Creek** and **Kitchener Elementary** schools having received their occupancy permits at the end of 2025. All of the child care providers are engaged with licensing in order to begin the work of welcoming children as soon as possible. Collectively, the three facilities will add 60 new preschool spaces and 72 before- and-after school care spots.

BLACK EXCELLENCE DAY EVENT BREAKS RECORDS

A record number of school districts joined the Burnaby Schools province-wide **Black Excellence Day** celebration. 28 school districts and more than 20,000 students viewed the video event, which offered an opportunity to learn about Black history and lived experiences. The welcome was provided by the Chair of the **Burnaby Board of Education**, with the fifth annual event sponsored by and co-planned with the **BC Black Educational Leaders Association**. Designed for children and youth from Grades 4 to 12, student voice was at the centre. At **Byrne Creek Community School**, a District-wide audience gathered live for the event. Grade 11 students from **Cariboo Hill Secondary** created a segment for the audience to learn about Black innovators. Their video's technical work was done by students in **Cariboo Hill's Black Excellence Club**. Music from R&B and gospel artists was also a highlight, including the **Black National Anthem**. Artists, athletes, educators and other leaders who are accomplished in their fields were featured. Collectively, the event honoured the rich history, achievements and joy of Black communities.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH EARN RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING TALENTS

Students from three Burnaby Schools took top honours in a national French-speaking contest called **Dites-le en vidéo**, or in English: Say It on Video. Eleven youth at **Moscrop Secondary** were among the top three in their categories, including five who earned first place. Additional winners from **Brantford Elementary** and **Cariboo Hill Secondary** brought the total up to 15 champions from Burnaby Schools in the annual contest. A **Burnaby South Secondary** grad designed the **Vancouver Canucks** logo for the NHL team's first **Filipino Heritage Night**. In a promotional video, her mother talks about her daughter's autism diagnosis at a young age and how the way she sees the world makes her special. The former Access program student created an eye-catching design that features elements and colours found on the Filipino flag. Students from the **Cisco Networking Academy** at **Burnaby South Secondary** placed in the top five percent in round one of the **CyberPatriot** games – the world's largest cybersecurity competition. The students in the District-wide Program of Choice finished in the top 44 percent of nearly 2000 teams from across North America. A **Moscrop Secondary** class is being featured in a publication by the **National Model Railroad Association's Pacific Northwest Division**. A Grade 10 student is quoted saying the course is: "one of the most unique classes a high school student can take." A **Burnaby North Secondary** student was one of two youth across Burnaby, New Westminster, and the Tri-Cities to be published in a holiday story contest. The creative writing challenge was for the first print edition of **Freshet News**. The local media outlet also featured a **Cariboo Hill Secondary** student after she earned international recognition. The Grade 9 student captured a silver dance medal at the **World Dance Championships** in Italy as part of the junior **Team Canada** group. An **Aubrey Elementary** student, who has been learning about visual design and symbolic communication in class, has independently won a design contest. The Grade 6 student entered **TransLink's Pink Shirt Day Art Contest**. Her winning art, featuring iconic Vancouver landmarks, will be displayed later next month at SkyTrain stations, transit platforms and on digital screens – spreading her message of compassion across the transit system.