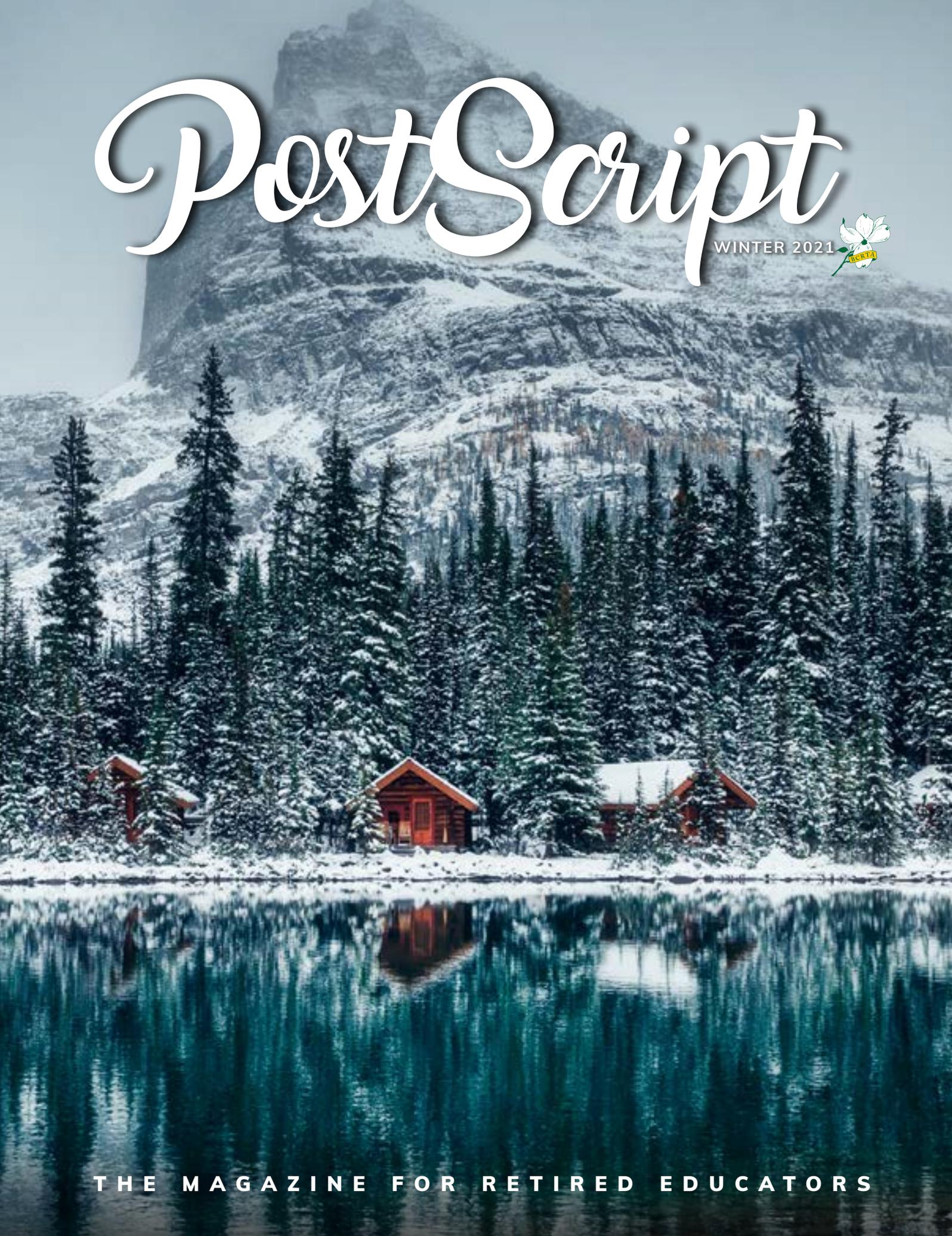


PostScript

WINTER 2021



THE MAGAZINE FOR RETIRED EDUCATORS



Exclusive Discount for BCRTA Members

Stay warm this winter with conversations that melt your heart. Hear every joke, whisper, and special announcement with our advanced, rechargeable hearing aids. Our latest hearing aids have improved hearing technology, including Bluetooth® connectivity for wireless streaming, to help you hear the sounds that are relevant and minimize the sounds that are not.

Bluetooth connectivity allows you to:



Have your hearing aids adjusted remotely via your iOS or Android device.



Stream TV, audiobooks and podcasts to your hearing aids.



Make hands-free phone calls using your hearing aids.

Get **25% off** your purchase of a pair of the latest digital hearing aids.

+ **BCRTA MEMBERS** GET AN EXTRA **10% OFF**
ALL HEARING AIDS



90-Day No Return Fee Policy!

We give you 90 days to help you decide whether your hearing aids are the right solution for you.

Book your FREE Hearing Consultation today!
No referral is required.

Call **1-888-904-7356** or book online at **HearingLife.ca/BCRTA25**

Use Promo Code: **MAG-WLOP-BCRTA**. This offer expires on January 31, 2022.



DISCOVER THE VALUE OF BCRTA'S MEMBERS' ADVANTAGE PROGRAM

www.bcrta.ca/members-advantage-program/

NEW!



freshprep.ca
fresh ingredients delivered



Enjoy travel and entertainment discounts of up to 50%



BCRTA
BC Retired Teachers' Association

PostScript

WINTER 2021



Cover: "Lake O'hara at Yoho National Park" - istock/Getty

PostScript welcomes photography submissions from members for our cover and for articles. Printing requires high resolution images at least 300 pixels per inch in printed format (3000 pixels wide by 3600 pixels high).

Submission guidelines at bcрта.ca/postscrip-submissions

BCRTA – HEAD OFFICE

100-550 W. 6th Avenue • Vancouver BC • V5Z 4P2
Phone 604.871.2260 Toll Free 1.877.683.2243
Fax: 604.871.2265

EDITORIAL TEAM

Tim Anderson, Editor
K.G.P. Cooper, Assistant Editor
Terry Green, Communications Chair
Stephanie Koropatnick, Co-Chair
Kristi Josephson, Administration



Interested in submitting an article or advertisement?
For submission and advertising guidelines, contact us:

www.bcрта.ca/postscrip

postscrip@bcрта.ca

The views expressed in PostScript are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the BCRTA.

This publication is provided for general information purposes only and is not meant as medical, legal or other professional advice.

The BCRTA is a Member of ACER-CART & COSCO, NPF & CCPA. PostScript Magazine is mailed to BCRTA members four times a year. DEADLINES for receipt of material for publications are Oct. 31, Jan. 31, April 30 and July 15. Submit material to postscrip@bcрта.ca. JULY 15 is the DEADLINE for Committee and Branch Reports to be submitted for the Summary of Reports and the year end audit. Items published reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express the policy or imply endorsement by the BCRTA. PostScript reserves the right to edit all material. If not credited, photos are licensed from Getty/istockphoto. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40062724 Return undelivered Canadian addresses to Circulation Department.



This magazine is printed on paper that comes from a well-managed, renewable resource. Please recycle.



I tossed the computer bag onto a corner of the desk and slumped into my chair. After a number of busy days working from my home office, I had pushed myself to come into the "real" office to check up on things. "Things" being mail, which piles up and needs personal attention. Hence the drive through bad traffic. With restrictions in place, the building was locked down and the office was cold and dark. On the other side of clammy glass, traffic on West 6th hissed through the pelting rain.

The envelope was hidden in the stack. Inside it a letter printed in large font was scotch-taped to the cover of a book. A member submission. It's not always easy reproducing things from books, especially if you can't get the source files. Trying to be optimistic, I gave a quick scan of the letter. It was funny, self-deprecating, colourful. I opened the book to a random page and took a look. I fell headlong into a remembered time, the open-sky world of a child on the cold prairie. Image after image of youthful joys and griefs, her many hopes and regrets made vibrant in paint and stories, and in a voice all her own.

Twenty minutes later I realized that I had other things to do. I rubbed my eyes and put the book to one side. I had just been introduced to the work of **Dutchie (Muriel) Rutledge-Mathison**. Excerpts from her wonderful book **Wild Roses** are featured in this issue of PostScript. Reproduction turned out to be no problem. The publisher, BC's own **Hancock House**, provided files and went further with a special offer for BCRTA members - 25% off their entire catalogue of art and history books of the Pacific Northwest. Check out the link to all their wonderful titles at a special price on page 24.

In this Winter issue there is much more to celebrate. New travel opportunities (and don't we need those!), terrific reading ideas, tech suggestions, health information, and much more. We hope you enjoy it.

And perhaps it will be you who puts something in the mail to us at PostScript. Or you may decide to reach out in writing to someone you know - someone who is on your mind. Whether it is a book, a note, or just a wave, it may be that your irreplaceable voice is just what someone needs to hear. So go ahead. Use it.

The best of the season to you and yours.

Yours truly,

The Editor
postscrip@bcрта.ca

contents

POSTSCRIPT MAGAZINE | WINTER 2021



GRANDMOTHERS
TO GRANDMOTHERS **9**



WINTERTIME
READING
26



16
Wild Roses



12
LESSONS: LEVEL ONE



45
ON LAUGHTER



38
DEALING WITH CHANGE

- 4** EDITOR'S NOTE
- 6** PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
- 7** LETTERS
- 25** TRAVEL NEWS
- 28** THE MYSTERY OF JOSEPHINE TEY
- 31** BOOKS OF NOTE
- 32** EXTENDED HEALTH: THE RIGHT PLAN FOR YOU
- 33** TECH FEATURE
- 37** LET'S MAKE IT EASIER: SHOPPING
- 38** DR. ROGER WONG

- 40** THE STORY OF AN ASHTRAY
- 43** GROWING IN BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT
- 46** PREPARING FOR A VISIT TO THE DOCTOR
- 48** THE GOSPEL OF FITNESS
- 49** CLASSIFIEDS
- 50** CROSSWORD
- 51** SUDOKU
- 52** IN MEMORIAM
- 54** INSPIRATION
- 55** RR SMITH



The Nelson school district was in the news recently after the “discovery” of a treasure. It was a trove from earlier days: pictures, teacher registers and school board minutes. The location of all those documents and records? They were in a school basement room named “the Vault.” I smiled upon hearing of this “discovery” because it was no secret to me.

The Vault was windowless and silent, a place of retreat when I worked in that building. When I wanted to venture back in time I would quietly slip into that room and read. Amongst the yellowed papers were early records such as reprimands for teachers. One was punished for failing to get a cord of wood to the school on the weekend. Another teacher was disciplined because she took two days off to attend her father’s funeral. After reading those accounts of what passed for professional discipline in the “old days” I always left that room with an appreciation for the vision and advocacy of the BCTF. It is astonishing that teachers were ever treated that way, but it took persistent advocacy to set things right - the change was not automatic.

Now, as a member of BCRTA, I see the same patterns emerging as we advocate for retirees.

The BCRTA 75th Anniversary celebration provided us with a rearview mirror of the vision, courage and persistence that has resulted in the secure pensions we enjoy today. How thankful I am that those leaders did not give up when the road to success was difficult and seemed out of reach.

Many of you will remember the care and work that Joanne Lauber put into the 2016 document, “A Declaration Concerning a National Health Care for

Seniors”. That document has acted as a road map for both ACER-CART and BCRTA advocacy as we have attempted to make life better for seniors. Issues so clearly identified in that document have continued to take center stage in our campaigns.

During the past year, daily concerns regarding working and living conditions in long term care homes hit the headlines. As the pandemic took hold across Canada, public health policy leaders had to acknowledge (sadly, too late) just how dramatic the human cost was to vulnerable elders.

Would this focused attention hold? Momentum was building and it appeared that finally some changes would be forthcoming. It was surprising and disappointing, then, that during this fall’s federal election those issues seemed to vanish. They did not get media attention and they were not central to any political party’s platform.

While I was disappointed, one glimmer of light kept me from becoming discouraged. In a conversation with a candidate in our riding, I mentioned seniors and he immediately raised the concerns that desperately needed attention. It was suddenly clear that our advocacy had not gone unnoticed. For this candidate there was a recognition of the need for change and acknowledgement that making change happen is the responsibility of our elected officials. The challenge appeared to be with the magnitude of the change required and how to go about it.

So, while I experienced disappointment that more was not publicly made of seniors’ issues during the election, I went away with some measure of confidence that our advocacy was having an impact. Does that mean that we can now sit down and say the work is completed? Absolutely not. The election is over, but our advocacy is not. Now is the time to continue to press for change. And we will.

When future retirees enter our “vault” it is my hope that they will leave with an appreciation for the vision and advocacy of the BCRTA. •

“You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.”

C.S. Lewis

GRACE WILSON is President of the BCRTA

PostScript Letters

Let us know what you think! Write us at postscript@bcrt.ca

2021 Conference Presenters Provoke Thought

Thanks for the on-line presentations: all packed with interesting information. As they are on-line, it is possible (necessary) to go back over them.

One comment about Brian Minter's session: My wife is well known for her work as a Principal in Vancouver's inner city and I have done volunteer work among Vancouver's poorest people, as well. The presentation seemed to be aimed at an audience with strong financial resources. Pity, because solving poverty issues goes hand-in-hand with our work on Climate Change.

As I sit watching the conference while recovering from recent surgery, I glance up from the photos of beautiful garden plants and outdoor rooms. Out my window the sun accentuates the lush forest behind our home. The natural plants are all we need.

We left Vancouver for a better and more affordable quality of life. There we taught children who had never crossed the Lions Gate Bridge. Here anyone can access semi-wilderness on foot or by bicycle from whatever they call home. I would suggest the money required to create a personal oasis would be better spent helping organizations to create more green spaces. There is still a significant population in the Lower Mainland that does not have access to safe green spaces and/or community gardens.

Barry Hodgins

BCRTA 2021 Conference: Member Comments

- Excellent, well organized, and engaging conference. Well done!
- It was great. Thank you to everyone involved.
- The entire 3 days were informative, motivating and just all around great.
- Excellent job done by all involved. Great presenters.
- I loved it and especially having the conference posted on YouTube.
- Great event!
- Informative and inspiring.
- An excellent Conference. Excellent choice of keynote speakers on a wide range of important topics.
- I was very impressed with the degree of involvement of those in positions in the BCRTA and by how well-informed they are.
- Keep doing what you are doing!
- Thank you for the opportunity to be a participant. I am proud to be a member of BCRTA!



Experience True Luxury with
TRUE KEY HOTELS & RESORTS
BCRTA Members Receive
10% OFF
At participating True Key properties. Some restrictions apply.
Visit www.TrueKey.ca/BCRTA for all the details

IRIS ADVANTAGE



IRIS ADVANTAGE JOINS BCRTA ADVANTAGE!

Your exclusive benefits are combinable with your extended health plan. There is no cost to join, it is easy to register and you receive all the benefits IRIS offers like direct billing to your insurance, interest-free financing, IRIS No Matter What Guarantee and more!

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF YOUR EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

PRESCRIPTION EYEWEAR **SAVE \$150***

When you purchase any frame with fully coated prescription lenses (lenses valued at \$250 or more) or prescription sunglasses.

REPLACE PRESCRIPTION LENSES **SAVE \$50***

Save when you purchase a pair of fully coated progressive lenses for your current frames (lenses valued at \$250 or more).

CONTACT LENSES **SAVE \$50***

When you purchase an annual supply of contact lenses.

*These offers can not be combined with other IRIS offers, instant rebates, IRIS Cards, IRIS Certificates or any other offer or in-store promotion. Not applicable on Safety glasses, sports safety glasses, TruBlue glasses, RKS sunglasses for children, COOL KIDS packages for children or other IRIS eyewear packages. The IRIS Advantage Benefits Program offer can be modified without notice. No offer from the IRIS Advantage Benefits Program is transferable.



REGISTER NOW IN THREE QUICK STEPS

AND START RECEIVING YOUR IRIS ADVANTAGE BENEFITS TODAY!

- 1** Here is your **Access Code: BCRTA**
- 2** Go to iris.ca/advantage and enter your **Access Code**
- 3** Complete your registration form and submit

Need help registering or accessing your benefits?

Contact us at advantage@iris.ca or 1.800.663.3937 ext 224

Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign: A Call to Action

Imagine what it would be like to bury your adult children who died of AIDS. Now imagine that in addition to your own grieving, you are left alone to raise multiple children, with little assistance or money, and while worrying about adequate water, food, education, and safety. Stephen Lewis, former Canadian ambassador/UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS, established the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF), in response to the carnage of HIV/AIDS. This deadly virus spread rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa's 15 hardest hit countries, which soon accounted for 70% of global AIDS cases, with just 10% of the world's population. This condition destroys the immune system, claiming the lives of millions of young Africans, and turning a generation of children into orphans, 40–60% of whom live in grandparent-headed households. Fueled by poverty and gender inequality, an already desperate situation was exacerbated by lack of access to antiretroviral drugs. Girls aged 15–24 are twice as likely to be living with AIDS as males and five out of six new infections are in girls aged 15–19 (UNAIDS). The face of AIDS in Africa is of women but Africa's best hope is also with women, particularly the grandmothers.

GRANDMOTHERS TO GRANDMOTHERS CAMPAIGN (GTG)

On the eve of International Women's Day (March 2006), the SLF launched the GTG Campaign. After an International AIDS Conference, Lewis brought together 100 African grandmothers to tell their stories and connect with 200 Canadian grandmothers. African grandmothers declared, "We have buried our own children. We will not raise our grandchildren for the grave." Canadian grandmothers responded with a call to action, "To do nothing is to turn our backs on a global injustice...we will not rest until they can rest."



Canadian grandmothers and grand'others from coast to coast started meeting and fundraising. Within months, over 100 groups had formed. Recognizing that gender inequality drives the AIDS pandemic in Africa, the Campaign model designated essential programs to support grandmothers, women, and girls. Recipients apply for funding for projects, and for field reps in Africa to visit those projects, ensuring services meet the SLF's standards. To remain non-partisan, SLF operates on an "ask me" grassroots approach with African grandmothers. Although the SLF/GTG currently funds over 1800 projects and partners with 325 Community-Based Organizations, it keeps administration costs to 10%, ensuring 90% goes directly where needed most. The Campaign goals are to raise funds and awareness, and to build solidarity among African/Canadian grandmothers.

FUN'DRAISING

I joined the campaign when I heard Lewis speak on International Women's Day (March 2008). Six months earlier, my husband and I had committed to guardianship of our grandson, so I was living the reality of the daily care of a toddler while teaching full-time. Forming the Abbotsford Gogos (Gogo is Zulu for grandmother), a group of us organized to raise awareness and fundraise. Events included fashion shows, craft sales, concerts, and birthday

fun'draisers! Chilliwacky Gogos hosted the Empty Soup Bowl, Sunflower Sales, Name That Tune, and the Sardis Secondary *Drumline Drummin' for Change* concert with the SFU Pipe Band. The programs have high appeal for educators, who know how to plan, organize, and advocate for children.

REGIONAL EVENTS

The Greater Van Gogos (GVG), has members from Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, and the Sunshine Coast. They received a New Horizons for Seniors Grant and used it to build a website and start new groups. BC's 49 groups meet annually for regional gatherings to hear African grandmothers speak and share fundraising ideas.

To mark the Campaign's 10-year anniversary, over 60 groups across Canada participated in a flash mob on World AIDS Day. As the music began, I led a wave of 120 GVG in red t-shirts who erupted into dance and song! Crowds cheered and local news/TV provided wide coverage. In 2018 I choreographed moves for a teaching video with Ubuntu Ogogos for another flash mob. Currently, there are 169 groups in Canada, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom with over 10,000 members. This isn't charity—it's global sisterhood!



Ariel Eastman is front and center as she leads the Greater Van Gogos 'Flashmob' at Guildford Mall on World AIDS Day, 2016. They danced to "Sisters Are Doin' It For Themselves" (by Annie Lennox/Eurythmics and Aretha Franklin).

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

The SLF does not fund treatment for HIV/AIDS. Its mandate is to provide funding to community-based organizations working holistically to address medical, educational, and economic support. Home-Based Care is a network of health-related services outside of hospital/medical clinics run by mostly women volunteers. More people in Africa are now living with HIV/AIDS than dying from it! Yet, AIDS remains an albatross around sub-Saharan Africa's neck: 75.7 million infections and 32.7 million deaths, and, as noted, most of these are women. There is no cure, but with treatment and proper nutrition, one learns to live with HIV/AIDS, and in populations receiving proper treatment, the transmission rate drops dramatically. Under COVID-19, social distancing, lining up for water, food insecurity, and difficulties accessing medical care have greater impacts for people living with HIV/AIDS. Given how Western countries have addressed the race to develop a vaccine, the fact that in Africa HIV/AIDS meds move at a snail's pace, is unconscionable. No strangers to poverty, disease, and lack of resources, these anchors in the storm, Africa's grandmothers are standing tall as this next pandemic has reached their shores. As the Campaign marks its 15th Anniversary this year, we celebrate over **\$36 million** raised. Yet we will only rest when they can rest. Together, we can change their world, sisters in solidarity (SIS) because—their lives matter.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Join or start a grandmothers' group (or be a grand'other)
- Invite a member to talk about the Campaign or to sell crafts at your event/group
- Attend or hold a fundraising event in your community

LEARN MORE AT

www.greatervangogos.org

www.grandmotherscampaign.org

DONATIONS

www.stephenlewisfoundation.org

ARIEL EASTMAN is a retired teacher (Sardis Secondary) who lives in Chilliwack.

Interested in Tutoring? Join Teachers' Tutoring Service.

We are a non-profit society established over 30 years ago by teachers, for teachers. We are a Society of over 200 BC licensed teachers that offer tutoring services across the greater Vancouver area.

We are looking for qualified applicants with teaching experience and qualifications. *Retired teachers make terrific tutors!*

At Teachers' Tutoring Service, we offer great flexibility to our tutors: you decide how much you wish to tutor, when, where and in what subjects. We pride ourselves on being easy to work with and committed to excellent customer service to both our tutors and our clients.



To find out more
visit tutor.bc.ca
or call 604-730-3410



Have a friend who hasn't joined yet?

Teachers and Administrators

School Support Staff

Post-Secondary Educators

BCRTA Membership - First Year Free

Joining Means a Better Retirement

More Choices with Prestige EHC & Travel

Advantage Partner Discounts

Pension News and Advocacy

Learning and Social Opportunities

Supporting the Cause of Public Education

PostScript Magazine

Share the Link: bcrta.ca/join

**TEST
DRIVE**
Your 1st Year
100% Free!



LESSONS: Level One

BY LYNDA GRACE PHILIPPSEN

Images by istockphoto/Getty



*From November 2017 through January 2018 I lived in Tokyo to attend classes at Sogetsu Kaikan, a stunning blue glass building adjacent to the Canadian Embassy. There I studied Ikebana (Japanese flower arranging), beginning at Level One, Lesson One. Concepts in Level One include *shin*, *soe*, and *hikae*: the three fundamental stems in a Sogetsu Ikebana arrangement. The *kenzan* is the pin-frog hidden in the bottom of the container, securing the foliage.*

Canadian and Japanese methods of instruction vary significantly. In Japan, little attention is given to learning styles or the varied strategies I used as a teacher. However, it's not my aim to pit one pedagogical approach against the other but to chronicle the struggle and insights gained during the first seven weeks at the back of a classroom after 34 years at the front of one.

LEVEL ONE

I'm a few weeks into this first level, and today, I can't win. I get no guidance as Sensei and the teacher-interpreters spend the entire class assisting other students. I'm stuck reading the text and doing my best to figure things out. At the lesson's end, Sensei points out my numerous errors. The *shin* is in the wrong direction. Yesterday I was wrong for *not* having it this way. Remembering that error mid-lesson, I hastily changed it thinking to avoid a mistake. Rats!

In addition, the *hikae* is too short and the support for the *shin* is in the wrong place. But that isn't all. I've made the classic beginner mistake of taking guidance from the photos in the textbook, rather than the diagrams which map the correct positions for all the elements. Nor have I created enough open space. Do I see? Sensei wants to know.

Though I am more than miffed that such feedback wasn't offered while I could have corrected things, I don't wish to sound peevish. After weeks of classes with

a different teacher each day, I know this one won't be back on the roster for many more. I'm also wondering whether I inadvertently offended someone last week. Is this a message? As no translator will answer that question, I'll need to "read the air."

Therefore I lower my head respectfully, keep my eyes on the floor and hope my annoyance isn't obvious. I offer Sensei a dulcet Japanese-style *yes* that means *no*. A *yes* that means I believe this is unfair. A *yes* that also means I'm annoyed to have paid the same fee as the students who received guidance when I did not.

After Sensei moves on to evaluate the next students, I take a deep breath, review my work, and list everything that I've done well along with her critique in my lessons log. Although it's not perfect, the result isn't dreadful. The black container sets off the vibrant colours well, the *kenzan* is properly hidden, the *soe* is correct, and none of the leaves touch the container or the immaculate water. I also note that I must never go by yesterday's assignment. Next week, if guidance isn't forthcoming I must consult the text, double-check the diagrams, and be





more assertive with the interpreters rather than give way to pique.

The log is a detailed record of each lesson and has proven an instructive practice throughout my Ikebana studies. This record of plant materials used and feedback from each evaluation boosts my confidence as my self-assessments grow to more closely match the teachers' appraisals. My developing discernment enhances my ability to self-correct, and after four weeks in Tokyo I begin to find a groove.

To my delight, Monday's freestyle arrangement draws high praise for its form and superb colour. Sensei shows me an alternative way to place one of the *Anthurium* flowers but stresses that it isn't criticism. She's simply showing me an additional option I could choose in the future.

Tuesday I feel unwell for lack of sleep and dial in the morning's assignment without high expectations. Even so, I achieve excellent results. Bonus, I catch the error on the length of the *hikae* without having it pointed out to me, though I do confirm my assessment with the interpreter before cutting it back. There's no way to correct a stem that's too short.

I don't much care for my arrangement in the evening class. I'm merely relieved that the thing doesn't fall down and don't believe it has any particular distinction. However, Sensei has other ideas. She notes not only the perfect angles, but also the colour harmony between the materials and container I've chosen. Nice. I value this specific feedback as I must recognise when I hit the target as well as when I miss.

Thursday's lesson is a bomb. The branches are a pain, and working against gravity I struggle to fix them to the correct angles. It's close but not quite. Then while

photographing the finished arrangement the translator holding the backdrop jostles it, the rose *hikae* shifts out of place, and afterwards she says that the angle is wrong. Indeed. Whose fault is that? Though she's keen to fix it for me before Sensei's evaluation, I refuse.

At this stage I am secure enough to say *no*. Of course, that's not the Japanese thing to do. They have numerous ways of saying *yes* that actually mean *no*, but I haven't the language skills or the patience for that. However, the past weeks have taught me that I need to set boundaries with the translators who stroll by without allowing me reflective time for self-assessment before pouncing on a flaw.

"May I?" they ask. Without waiting for a *yes* as *no* is not their option, they dive in. I would have blessed that interference when I wrestled with quadratic equations, but not now. Though it's usual practice for an Ikebana teacher to fix and complete an arrangement for a student, I have yet to master skills by watching someone else perform.

In order not to be misunderstood, I cross my forearms in front of my body when I decline last-minute offers of help. Yes, I know that will likely seem abrupt and rude; however, that infraction will be attributed to the fact that I am a foreigner. Still, because I know my response is rude by Japanese standards, I offer a Canadian *sorry*. Then, knowing the interpreter is required to say *yes*, I ask, "Could you kindly explain the mistake to me so that I can understand it? And may I try to fix it myself first?"

Therefore, I tell the translator who has jostled my arrangement that I do not have enough time to pull it apart to fix it properly. Nor do I mind if Sensei says it's wrong; I already know that. Besides, over time I've noticed that the interpreters occasionally offer conflicting advice. Often Sensei doesn't mention the alarming error I'm urged to fix. Through that repeated experience I've begun to hone and trust my own instincts.

When Sensei reaches my station I ask the interpreter to let him know that I realize the *hikae* is not correct but that I ran out



of time to fix it. He pauses longer than usual before speaking. Sensei then explains that although the *bikae* is technically wrong, the space created as a result of the error is exceptionally beautiful. It's an example of *ma*, the highest criteria in judging Japanese art. Therefore, the mistake is acceptable—and the translator emphasizes each subsequent word—In. This Case. Sensei nods, smiles his encouragement and moves on.

Though it will be several years before I develop a rudimentary understanding of the nuanced complexity of what is meant by *ma*, something shifts and clicks. I experience an ineffable up-leveling of my comprehension. Huh. Had I permitted a hasty attempt to fix my error, I would not have learned that so-called errors can be both beautiful and profound.

Mid-December I tackle the final lesson of Level One: Special Materials; Special Occasions. It's freestyle which allows more latitude for creativity without boundaries of form and is my favourite. The lesson also coincides with Christmas fever which has filled Tokyo shops since the last week of October and now hits Sogetsu's campus.

Expecting freedom, I wasn't prepared for the buzzkill. *Kurisumasu* at Sogetsu is strictly red and white and green without deviation. Therefore, blindsided by this required uniformity, yet another example of never-ending rules and restrictions my studies entail, I lose interest.



Disgruntled, I select a red container and first set two bare branches with closed buds, then dark green *Pieris Japonica* leaves into the *kenzan*. I add bridal wreath spirea (*Spirae aprunifolia*), as the arching blossoms remind me of snow laden evergreens. There. It's red and white and green but not particularly Christmas-like. Humbug!

When Sensei arrives to evaluate the arrangement she mentions that the artist's state of mind is vital to the work. Oops. Am I about to be busted? She considers the arrangement for some time and points out the arrangement's great sensitivity to the other students. It sparks a feeling that is both deep and profound.

I suppress a snort. Thankfully, I am not asked to share my contrary mental state. Nor do I volunteer the information. In general, the Japanese don't get irony. I smile, bow, thank Sensei, and mentally shake my head. It's the story of my life. Things I blow off and fail to value are often esteemed by others; things I bust my gut for are discounted, disparaged and dismissed. I rarely understand why.

After a New Year's recess, classes resume at the next level. Quite inexplicably I don't fret as much about making sense of the art form or judging whether I'm making appreciable headway. Something has unlocked and I no longer attribute my aggravation to my mistakes, to a teacher, a pedagogical system, or the endless rules. Rather, I recognize that the key to my progress is my state of mind. No surprise, that; Ikebana's origins are in Buddhism.

In hindsight, I also appreciate what I managed to pull off in spite of floundering through those first two months of confusion and uncertainty. As I continue through the Sogetsu curriculum, alternately studying in Canada and returning to Tokyo to learn more, my skills improve, my poise and assurance increase. That journey has not been without new challenges every day. However, the joy of creation now replaces the angst of those earliest days. As Sofu Teshigahara, founder of the Sogetsu School said, "Ikebana...is about the love and need of the artist to create beautiful forms.... It is about the person who arranges them."

A person who now loves her art and embraces beautiful errors.

LYNDA GRADE PHILLIPSEN is a BCRTA member who has previously written for PostScript Magazine about her Ikebana studies. Visit Lynda's blog at thewayofwords.com



Wild Roses

ART AND TEXT BY DUTCHIE RUTLEDGE-MATHISON

I created *The Long Walk Home* because I remember it as a time of determined silence and ever changing color.

The winter sun sank beneath the horizon well before we reached home and painted pictures on the drifting snow— yellows, pinks, and red, to midnight blue and the blackness of a starlit night. When the snow fell and the wind swept it across the land and buried the homestead fences, we nestled our faces into our scarves and watched our feet walk home.

On the coldest of nights the smoke from the chimney in our home would rise straight up into the sky. The light from the windows welcoming us was a comfort I shall never forget.

I never understood until I was much older what Dad meant when he referred to the lighted windows as “the golden orbs of welcome”. Now I know that beneath his farmer façade lurked the heart of a poet.

LONG WALK HOME

acrylic / canvas
44 x 60 cm

DUTCHIE RUTLEDGE-MATHISON is a member of BCRTA. She says “I learned to pitch cow manure with a 6 tined fork and to write with an inkwell.” In 1999 her daughter gave her a set of acrylic paints and encouraged her to not just talk about art, but to create it. “All the years I had sketched through long staff meetings, on telephone books.” In retirement that energy flowed onto canvases and beyond into writing of her memories of her family homestead on the southern shores of Lesser Slave, Alberta.

These excerpts are from her book *Wild Roses* (Hancock House, 2007), reprinted with permission. www.hancockhouse.com



dutchie

WINTER WOOD

acrylic / canvas
61 x 77 cm



The green vegetables died with the first frost; the tops of the potatoes lay limp on the ground, dead, except for the harvest beneath the rich soil. The sheaves in the field had been threshed. Grain was taken to the elevator or stored for fodder; the hay dried and stacked. The last berry crop was safely canned and lined cellar shelves. The homesteaders in the valley were ready for the dark days of winter.

Winter darkness, brightened only by coal oil lamps and a few hours of sunlight, settled across the land. It was a time to enjoy the fruits of summer's labor. Keep the wood box full. Eat hearty. Dress warmly.

It's not hard to recall the mournful howl of the timber wolves as they gathered in the valleys, the nervous bawl of cattle, and the bark of the dog as he put up a brave front.

Several times a week my sister, Blackie, and I would check our trap line on the way home from school. I was reminded of this a few weeks back when my seven-year-old grandson, Danté, asked, “What did you do, Grandma, when you were a kid that you wished you had not done?”

I knew he must be guilty of something. But I didn’t dwell on it because I was suddenly back a half century ago standing beneath the dense spruce that surrounded our farm taking careful aim at a small red squirrel.

I told Danté about the squirrels I used to shoot and catch in my leg hold traps and how I am still sorry that I killed all those little animals. He looked at me and I knew that he had just seen a side of me that he didn’t understand or like very much. I tried to explain that it was our way of life; that I had shot prairie chickens for food and trapped weasels, mink, and squirrels for money. He could not understand how I could do such a cruel thing.

We ended our conversation with him declaring, “Boy I could never do that,” and me thinking, “Why the hell didn’t I just lie?”

Our conversation ended but my thoughts carried on.

My sister and I, like most farm kids in the area, had an unregistered trap line, which meant that we staked out an area around our homestead and set traps. It was considered less than honorable to rob anyone else’s traps; however, if I recall correctly, our trap line honor slipped once or twice. We learned how to bait traps and to remove small frozen bodies from their cruel leg holds without damaging the fur. We took our catch home, thawed it out by the wood stove, then skinned and stretched our pelts.

The time I remember with the most remorse is when, upon checking a trap, I found only a small weasel leg, chewed off by its owner, at the edge of steel that had held him prisoner.

I know times are different now. We were survivors; we all did what we had to do. But I still wish I could give life back to all those little animals whose coats I sold for thirty-five cents.

THE TRAP LINE

acrylic / canvas
34 x 44 cm



DAD AND THE SINCLAIR BOYS

acrylic / canvas

51 x 91 cm

Farming in the valley was a way of life, not a livelihood. My dad, and most valley men, left their farms for several months in the winter to seek employment. They had no choice.

They had to develop their homesteads to government standards or they would never receive the deed to the land. My dad chose to work in forestry as a way to earn money to keep his farm. Every winter he would leave the valley to run a sawmill in Slave Lake. This left tending the livestock and raising six kids to Mom.

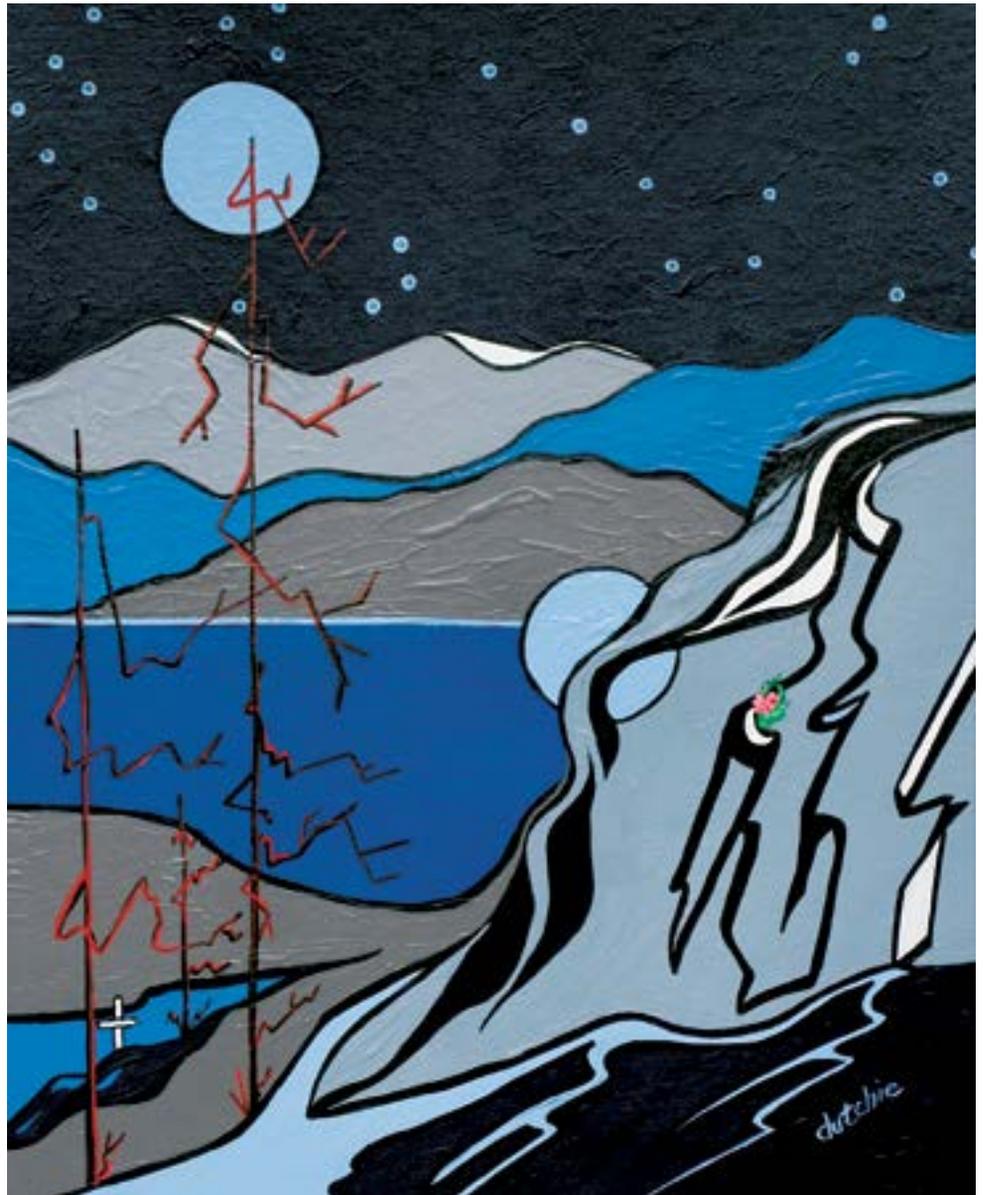
The hard work, the winter darkness, the isolation; I can't imagine how lonely she must have been. And still, aside from frozen toes and noses, I remember winter as a time of peace and solitude. We had food, shelter, clothing. And most of all we had Mom.

Dad would return to the farm when the spring winds thawed the earth making it impossible to log the muskeg. The season of planting and reaping the harvest of the land was once more alive in the valley, made possible by Dad running a sawmill in the winter months and Mom running the farm. We always said Dad went to work in the winter. I don't think we had a name for what Mom did. We simply knew that Mom stayed home and that seemed to say it all.



SOME MOTHER'S CHILD

acrylic / canvas
66 x 51 cm



Death is universal and grief is no respecter of time or place. Our valley was not exempt, and had its share of sadness. I was reminded of this several years ago. I was trekking north of Lesser Slave Lake, enjoying the solitude and memories of childhood when I happened upon a small cross nestled among the deep underbrush.

It was a small child's grave, as rocks outlined where a mound of earth once lay.

Too often I had passed the symbols of other people's sadness and felt, not empathy, but gratitude for the gift of life. I could not, however, dismiss this rough-hewn cross. No name. No date. Both long since erased by

time. I stood many minutes as sadness overcame me and tears filled my eyes. I knew that no matter how long ago, a mother had lovingly placed her child in this bleak wilderness and had felt the pain of all mothers when they bury their babies. I knew that beneath the silken moss of summer and the barren snows of winter lay some mother's child.

We lost our son to cancer recently. Therefore, *Some Mother's Child* was very difficult for me to paint. However, I knew that not to tell this story would be as corrosive as the northern winds, for it would dismiss all the forgotten crosses that make up such a large part of our northern heritage.



MY MOTHER'S BEDROOM

acrylic / canvas
66 x 51 cm

Death was not the only tragedy that lingered in the Valley of the Swan. Sadness and despair take many forms.

I was five or six years old when I watched the horse-drawn sleigh disappear around the first corner, taking my dad across the windswept fields, beyond the frozen muskeg where the birch trees stood. Gone for a day of hand falling trees for our fuel. As the sleigh disappeared from view, my child's heart wished he would die out there in the cold and never come home again.

More than one half a century has passed since that cold winter morning. I know there is never an excuse for domestic violence. I do now, however, understand the harsh conditions under which my parents lived, and how those hardships could nourish anger and fear.

My dad is now 93 years old. His eyes still sparkle. He occasionally calls me by my mom's name. His best

memories are of the farm. Occasionally his Irish temper surfaces. I no longer fear him. I hug him. We are at peace, my dad and I. He did his best. Now I wish him life.

I hesitated to hang the painting *My Mother's Bedroom* when I returned home to celebrate Alberta's Centennial in 2005. I did not want to abase my dad's memory, and yet I felt a need to show my mom's side of the story as some folks criticized her harshly for gathering up her six kids, loading the horse and wagon with her belongings, and leaving my dad in 1949. I had always been proud of our family, including my dad, who in many ways was a very good man. I thought that Dad's temper was a well-kept family secret. I was greatly touched by the many women who came and hugged me and said, "We knew, dear."

For those women, who stood and gazed at the picture *My Mother's Bedroom* for long moments with tears in their eyes, then came to me and said, "Your mom was a wonderful woman." I knew they understood.

And so we hugged and cried together and I whispered a silent thank you to my mom, "Thank you for your silent courage, for your leadership by example. I love you, Mom."

[This] reminded me of the day Mom left Dad. I think I was ten. I was glad Mom was leaving. Even at that age I knew she could not stay. What I was not expecting was the great loneliness I felt for my dad.

He helped her on to the wagon, shook her hand with great dignity and wished her well. I didn't want Mom

to stay. I just didn't want it to be so damned painful. As the wagon rounded the corner taking Mom from the farm, from Dad, from the home she had helped build, I felt such sadness for my dad. I knew Mom would be all right now. I knew my dad would not be.

And he wasn't.

May 27, 2004 my dad died at the age of ninety-four.

I miss him.



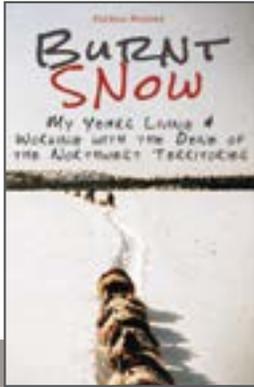
STAMPEDE...THE DUDE

acrylic / canvas
66 x 51 cm



**SPECIAL OFFER
FOR BCRTA MEMBERS**

HANCOCK HOUSE PUBLISHERS
RECENT AND FORTHCOMING TITLES

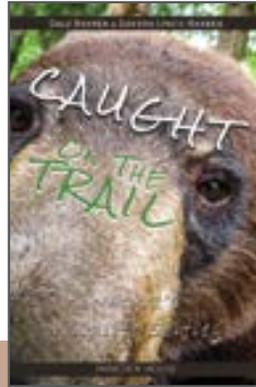


Burnt Snow
*My years living & working
with the Dene of the
Northwest Territories*

Moore, Kieran

978-0-88839-100-1 [paperback]
978-0-88839-356-2 [hardcover]
978-0-88839-265-7 [epub]
6 x 9, sc, 272pp

\$24.95



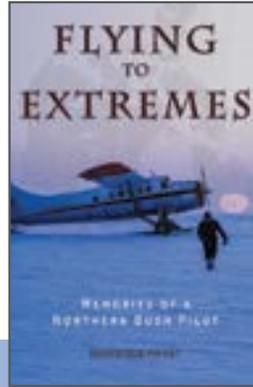
**Caught on
the Trail**

Nature's Wildlife Selfies

Bakken, Dale & Sandra

978-0-88839-058-5 [paperback]
978-0-88839-263-3 [epub]
6 x 9, sc, 160pp

\$24.95



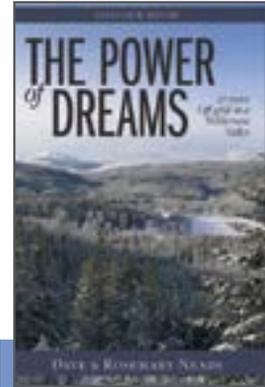
**Flying to
Extremes**

*Memories of a Northern Bush
Pilot*

Prinot, Dominique

978-0-88839-145-2 [paperback]
978-0-88839-234-3 [epub]
5½ x 8½, sc, 280pp

\$24.95



**The Power
of Dreams**

*27 Years Off-grid
in a Wilderness Valley*

Neads, Dave & Rosemary

978-0-88839-718-8 [paperback]
978-0-88839-742-3 [epub]
5½ x 8½, sc, 246pp

\$24.95

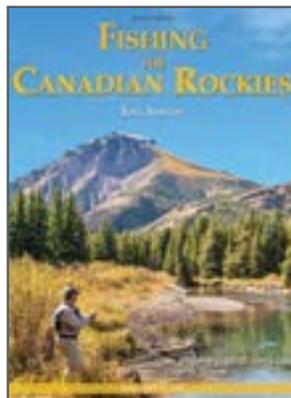
**Fishing the
Canadian
Rockies 2nd Ed.**

*An Angler's Guide to Every
Lake, River & Stream*

Ambrosi, Joey

978-0-88839-425-5 [paperback]
978-0-88839-349-4 [epub]
8½ x 11, sc, 248pp

\$39.95



Hancock House Publishers, Ltd

19313 0 Ave, Surrey, BC V3Z 9R9

www.hancockhouse.com

info@hancockhouse.com

1-800-938-1114

British Columbia Retired Teacher's Association

Receive 25% off all titles at checkout
when using coupon code **"BCRTA"**

View our catalog of over 500 titles at

www.hancockhouse.com

SPECIAL BCRTA OFFERS!

MAY 21, 2022 GROUP DEPARTURE

ALASKA 7 NIGHT CRUISE

Join Dave and Bon Scott for this unforgettable experience

- 7-night cruise, all meals, entertainment, exclusive cocktail reception and more!
- Startling at just \$1274 per person*
- Koningsdam (with Holland America)
- Watch for whales, Dall's porpoise and bald eagles en route to majestic Glacier Bay National Park.



NOV 15 TO 30, 2022

WONDERS OF EGYPT + OPTIONAL 5 DAYS IN EXOTIC JORDAN

Join Gerry Tiede, Past President of BCRTA as we explore the ancient sites and exotic locales of Egypt.

- Pyramids of Giza and the Great Sphinx
- Egyptian Museum of Antiquities
- Sail the legendary Nile River on a 4 Night Cruise from Aswan to Luxor
- Valley of the Kings and the Queens
- Guides, luxury accommodations for you, family and friends, and much more
- **ACT QUICKLY - ONLY A FEW SEATS LEFT!**

MAY 16 TO 19, 2022

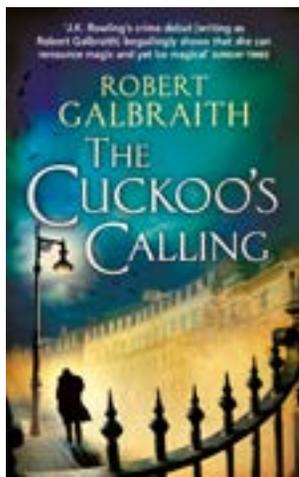
OKANAGAN WINE TOUR AFFORDABLE BC ADVENTURE



To learn more call **1-800-481-9739**
Email info@tripmerchant.com
<https://bcrtatripmerchant.com>

* CONTACT TRIP MERCHANT FOR A COMPLETE QUOTE OF ALL FEATURES AND PRICE OPTIONS

WINTER-TIME RECOMMENDATIONS



THE CUCKOO'S CALLING

by Robert Galbraith (J. K. Rowling)

Mulholland Books, Paperback \$23.27

The Cuckoo's Calling by Robert Galbraith (a J. K. Rowling pseudonym) is the first in a series of five novels featuring a disabled Afghan war veteran whose life is a bit of a mess on all fronts. Cormoran Strike is a damaged man, physically and emotionally. An investigator while in the army, he sets himself up as a private eye after his discharge.

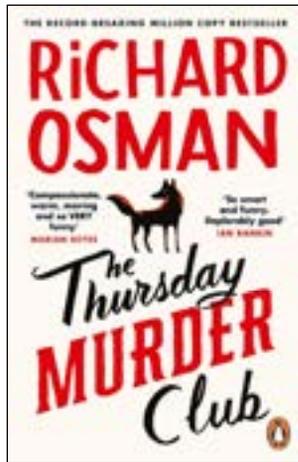
Despite having had a rich fiancée, Strike is now struggling to get paying clients. Then John Bristow, older brother of Cormoran's dead childhood friend Charlie, approaches him to investigate the suicide of his sister, Lula Landry. Given that a thorough police investigation has already taken place, Cormoran is initially skeptical. But his mounting debts, especially to his biological father, a former rock star, and the upfront money offered, overcome his doubts.

Just as he begins the investigation, along comes Robin Ellacott. Sent as another of Cormoran's short-term secretaries, she turns out to be far more competent than

he has expected or experienced to date. Combining their talents, this seemingly odd pair set about interviewing the various friends and colleagues of Lulu, one of whom gave her the nickname Cuckoo. With each witness's retelling, Cormoran and Robin begin to suspect that the circumstances of the young model's death are far murkier than initially imagined, and the choice of nicknames more telling.

This is the second adult novel written by J. K. Rowling of Harry Potter fame. While it shares elements with that series, *The Cuckoo's Calling* is a finely crafted genre murder mystery, with many layers. It does not fail to intrigue from beginning to end.

How did Rowling choose her pseudonym? "Robert" because she liked the name and it is the name of one of her heroes, Robert F. Kennedy, and "Galbraith" was from a childhood pseudonym she created for herself, Ella Galbraith.



THE THURSDAY MURDER CLUB

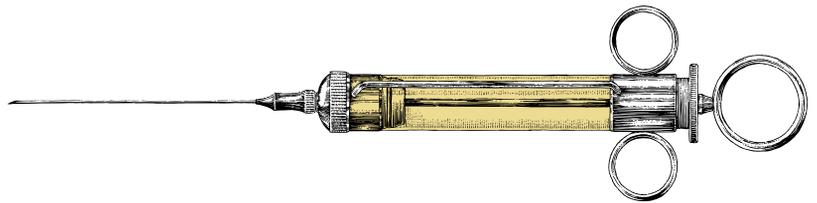
by Richard Osman

Penguin, Paperback \$23

What are the ingredients of an interesting and delightful read? A young policewoman in charge of her first big case, a brutal murder, and four septuagenarian retirees! Welcome to the *Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman.

Elizabeth, an elegant former intelligence agent, Ron, a rough and ready former trade union leader, Joyce, a quiet, observant former nurse, and Ibrahim, a well-informed, former psychiatrist, live in a luxurious retirement complex in southern England. This group meet every Thursday in the Jigsaw Room between “Art History” and “Conversational French” to discuss unsolved murders from the files of one of their former members, now in complex care. It’s an enjoyable pastime with the added benefit of keeping their minds active as they search the file notes for clues.

Then a brash, vulgar local developer is given a lethal injection during a scuffle while leaving the complex.



All of a sudden, the Thursday Murder Club find themselves in the middle of their first live case.

As the bodies begin to pile up, this unorthodox but brilliant gang set out to catch the killer before it’s too late. On the surface, the story could be considered ‘light’ reading, but it is in fact deftly crafted, funny, and tragic in equal measure.

Why write a story set in a retirement home with a cast of characters pushing eighty? Richard Osman’s decision to write a murder mystery in such a unique setting with an equally unique cast of characters was inspired by his visit to an affluent retirement village that, like the book’s Cooper’s Chase, boasted a full range of recreational and medical facilities, including an upmarket restaurant.

Definitely worth reading with a beverage of choice in hand!

CAROL BAIRD-KRUL is a member of BCRTA’s Communications Committee. She is a retired librarian and writes from her home on Gabriola Island.



How's this for a mystery? In 1990, one of Josephine Tey's books was chosen as the top mystery novel of all time by the Crime Writers Association. She had another novel in their Top 100 Crime Novels of All Time, and three in the Mystery Writers of America list five years later. Despite these acknowledgments and strong sales and reviews throughout her career, she was not inducted into the prestigious Detection Club, which included most every other notable crime writer of her day. Nor is she now usually mentioned in the same breath as other female writers such as Sayers, Christie, Marsh, Allingham, and Heyer of the Golden Age of crime fiction. Even in Scotland, where she was the best-selling Scottish author and most performed playwright, for many years the critical establishment took little notice of her, and many people today have no idea of her many successes.

This obscurity is not due to the quality of her writing, which is very high, nor her content, which is ahead of its time.

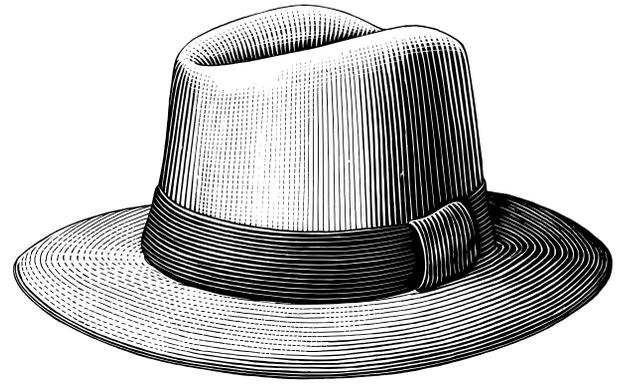
Tey was born Elizabeth MacKintosh in Inverness, Scotland, in 1896. At the age of 27, Tey was happily living and working near London when her mother died. As the eldest, unmarried daughter, she was called back to care for her father. This move marked the start of her serious writing career.

While living in Inverness, she wrote 18 stage plays, movie scripts, and television and radio plays, which starred John Gielgud, James Mason, Laurence Olivier, Jimmy Stewart and the other stars of the day. She also published short stories, poems, a biography, and a total of eleven novels. Her books were highly popular, making her very wealthy, yet

in Inverness, she lived quietly and frugally. She did very little socially, spending her time caring for her father and writing, with occasional outings to tramp around the highlands.

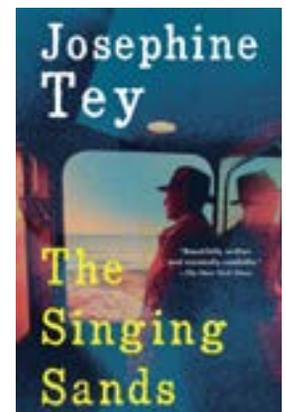
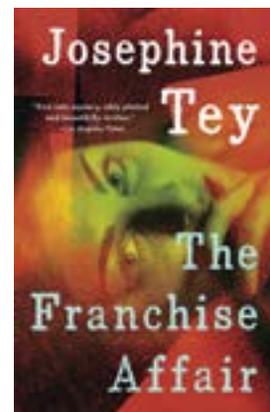
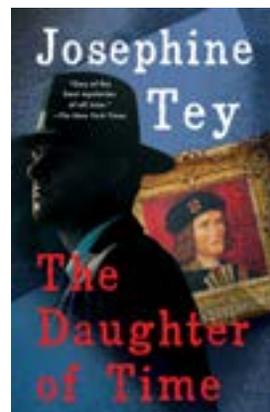
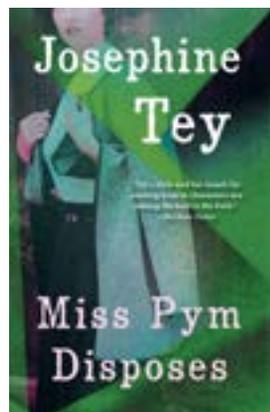
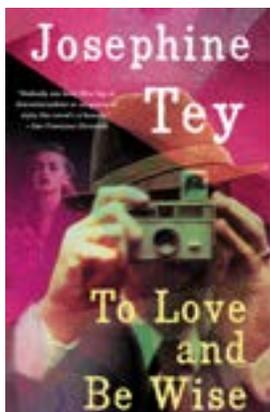
But every few months, she would hire a caregiver for her father, take the night train to London, pick up her elegant city wardrobe from her furrier, and re-enter her London life. She had seen Gielgud, then essentially unknown, in a Shakespeare play. Using Gordon Daviot as a pseudonym, she had written the drama *Richard of Bordeaux* with him in mind for the lead. The play was the most popular in London for a full year, and indeed a global success, playing in London's West End and on Broadway at the same time. It launched Gielgud's career as an actor and director. She maintained close friendships throughout her life with Gielgud, Olivier, leading actress Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, Dodie Smith, and others. She led a busy social life with the sophisticated members of this group for a few weeks, then returned to Inverness, where they seemed not to know what to do with her, so did very little at all.

While perplexing to some, this double-life may well have been to her liking, for despite her wide renown, and despite keeping close tabs on her reviews and discussing them in multiple letters with her agent, she refused almost entirely to grant interviews or otherwise interact with the press.



Her six Inspector Alan Grant novels and two stand-alone mysteries are each very fine and anything but formulaic. It should come as no surprise that she trod her own path with her novels; her exclusion from the Detection Club likely resulted from her disdain of their Covenant (a series of rules banning things like co-incidences and twins, rules she found “silly”). Indeed, she not only refused to follow the rules, she deliberately broke as many as she could in almost every book, leading to a kind of freshness that sets her apart from her contemporaries.

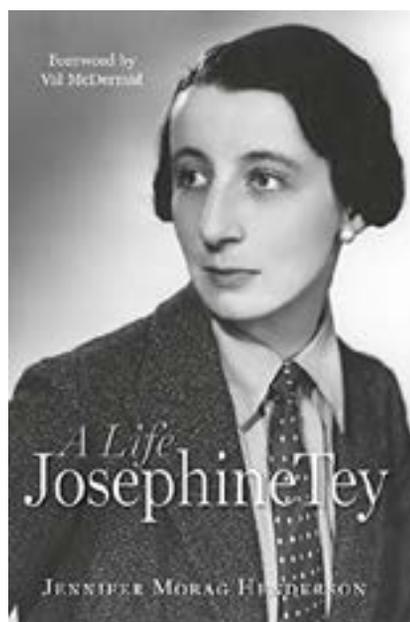
Each book has its own tone which is established unobtrusively as she begins the narrative in an easy and straightforward way. Then, as the story unfolds, complex moral choices arise, challenging her protagonists. These dilemmas are not layered in with a heavy hand. Rather they sneak up on the reader, emerging organically from the characters and



stories. As crime writer Val MacDermid, a huge fan of Tey's, puts it, "She starts these moral dilemmas with quite small seeds."

She's also daring in her settings and pacing. In *Miss Pym Disposes*, murder does not occur until well beyond the half-way point. In *The Daughter of Time*, she sidelines Alan Grant in hospital with a broken leg. Beyond bored, he decides to solve the question of whether Richard III had the little princes murdered. This book, with its apparently dull premise, kept me up far too late; I just couldn't put it down. It received rave reviews at the time of its publication (1951) and was voted number 1 in the Top 100 Crime Novels of All Time 40 years later. While she made unorthodox choices, she did a great deal of research, including running plots and procedures by senior police officials to test their accuracy and believability.

Her prose is light and spare, invoking a character in a brushstroke: "Toby is fertile in inventing small revenges"; or a group - "It was from the ranks of the ineffective that the minor critics were recruited."



BOOKS BY AND ABOUT JOSEPHINE TEY

The Inspector Alan Grant Novels: *The Man in the Queue*; *A Shilling for Candles* (the basis of Hitchcock's 1937 film *Young and Innocent*); *The Franchise Affair*; *The Daughter of Time*; *To Love and Be Wise*; *The Singing Sands*

Collected on Kindle, Kobo, and other devices: *Inspector Alan Grant Novels: Complete Series*. Publisher: e-arnow

Standalone mysteries: *Miss Pym Disposes*; *Brat Farrar*

Video: The Backlisted Podcast crew with Val MacDermid at the Aberdeen Performing Arts Festival, discussing Tey's work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omuqekhpM8A>

Biography: *Josephine Tey: A Life*, by Jennifer Morag Henderson

Yet she's never afraid to lavish a few words to paint a scene: "Spring was all of a sudden wild and robust. Glittering showers slanted across the landscape. Great clouds soared up over the horizon and swept in shrieking squalls across the sky. The trees cowered, and plumed themselves, and cowered again."

There's much else to admire: her attention to faces, especially eyebrows—yes, eyebrows!—the fact that an intelligent, gorgeous actress and a handsome detective can be very close adult friends, rather than love interests, and her deft handling of her casts of characters.

Her mysteries are available at many libraries. The six Alan Grant novels are packaged as a very reasonably-priced collection of e-books for Kindle and Kobo. If intrigued by her obscurity, you could also read her biography for a few more answers to the mystery of Josephine Tey. •



KAREN COOPER is a member of BCRTA. She earned her PhD from UBC. After teaching literature for several years, she is now working on a contemporary thriller. Karen is Associate Editor of PostScript.

books OF NOTE



Before I Knew: A Village Boyhood by Scott Montgomery

Stuey Moore is in trouble—again. When he’s not carving his initials on the family piano or stealing his mother’s prized curling gloves for dubious winter “sports,” the somewhat impulsive youngster is likely buying candy at Mr. Beck’s store, or riding his bike up Hospital Hill after watching actual dog fights in the village of “Sunderland” (Cumberland). This coming of age book is brimming with vignettes and humorous personal anecdotes detailing a bygone era in a coal-mining town whose heydays are dwindling. It’s a time when Vancouver Island’s resource-based industries lured Asian and European immigrants to the small village, creating Stuey’s friendships with boys nicknamed Foo and Norgy. Told through Stuey’s eyes, *Before I Knew* beautifully blends Canadiana and nostalgia in snapshots that chronicle his life from childhood to his awakening as a young adult.

www.scottmauthor.com

Ebook, paperback, and hardcover versions are available at friesenpress.com or through your local bookstore.

Insurance that'll get tails wagging.

*"I'll stop
chasing mine"*



Prestige Travel Insurance for BCRTA Members.

From health, dental, travel & trip cancellation insurance, BCRTA's Health Care Plan provides peace of mind offering comprehensive coverage and affordable rates.

Get your quote today!

1.877.413.4391

bcrtajohnson.ca



JOHNSON

Johnson Insurance is a trademark of Johnson Inc. ("Johnson"), a licensed insurance intermediary, and operates as Johnson Insurance Services in British Columbia. Prestige Travel Plan is underwritten by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada ("RSA") and administered by Johnson. Extended Health Care Coverage is underwritten by Desjardins Insurance and administered by Johnson. Valid provincial or territorial health plan coverage required. RSA and Johnson share common ownership. Eligibility requirements, limitations, exclusions or additional costs may apply, and/or may vary by province or territory. Policy wordings prevail.

THE RESULTS TELL THE STORY

BCRTA MEMBERS' EXTENDED HEALTH CARE INSURANCE

Satisfaction Survey

Green Shield
Plan Users

BCRTA Johnson
Prestige Users

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND
YOUR CURRENT EHC PLAN?

35.2%

88.9%



OF CATEGORIES
WITH THE HIGHEST RATING

1

21



Since 1998, BCRTA has been offering insurance options to our retiree members. Thousands of BCRTA members now enjoy friendly, reliable coverage at a reasonable price. Prestige EHC and Travel by Johnson has much higher satisfaction levels than competing plans. Visit <https://bcрта.ca/ehcsurvey> to see the peace of mind the right plan can give.

Is it the right choice for you?

GET A FREE NO OBLIGATION CONSULTATION

Visit bcрта.johnson.ca or call 1.877.989.2600

CHECK OUT YOUR LIBRARY'S DIGITAL COLLECTION

Support your local library by using their digital collection. You get experience managing an online account and downloading apps, plus the bonus of no late fees and anytime access to a fantastic collection of material.

Your library's digital collection brings the library onto your screen. Practice with it as another online account. The librarians are there to help should you need it.

And even if you don't want to read e-books, your online library account is still useful. Use it to see if the title you want is available in their stacks. For a small fee, place a title on hold for pick up later –no more wasted trips.

Different apps give you access to your library's digital collection on your mobile device. Which app you use depends on what type

Gluu Tip: Try downloading library e-books and then put your device into Airplane Mode. The book will be returned at the due date, but you can keep it longer. Once your device is connected to Wi-Fi again, the title will disappear. A great use for an old device.

of content you want to enjoy: audiobooks, e-books, magazines, or newspapers. A computer can be used to gain access to the same material. You will incur no late fees as titles that need to be returned are done so automatically.

All you need to get started is a library card. If you haven't used your library card in a few years, pop into your local branch with some ID and have your account updated. Bring your mobile device with you and get help downloading and using their apps.

SOME LIBRARY APPS



LIBBY

Borrow ebooks and digital audiobooks from your public library. Titles are automatically returned, so you don't have to worry about late fees.



RBDIGITAL MAGAZINES

Offers 200 magazines from popular titles such as Canadian Living, The Economist, Newsweek, The New Yorker, Oprah Magazine, Reader's Digest, and Rolling Stone. Download onto a computer or mobile device, and keep the magazines as long as you like.



PRESSREADER

Digital versions of over 7,000 newspapers and magazines in more than 60 languages including The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Globe and Mail.



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

BC Hydro's website is well designed and provides useful information about your account. It's also the perfect place to practice managing an online account and an email newsletter.

Getting comfortable managing online accounts and email newsletters is essential. Thanks to COVID, more of our lives are being lived online. This pandemic has shown us that a critical skill is knowing how to go online to access our doctor, shop for groceries and other necessities, bank online, and connecting with our loved ones.

Email newsletters are an excellent way to have news and information from your favourite companies and websites delivered to your Inbox.

Managing online accounts and email newsletters takes some practice. BC Hydro's website is a great place to start. Your BC Hydro online account has standard features, like online billing, viewing account balances, and online bill payment. You can also access your statement anytime and see up to three years of billing history. We really like the graphic charts that give detailed consumption information and estimate how much our next bill will be. Email notifications can be

set to tell you when electricity consumption is heading into the higher price range. If you are not ready to go paperless, setting up your MyHydro account is still worth it. You can get paper bills as well as use the impressive features of your MyHydro online account.

If you have questions, call BC Hydro Customer Support 1 800 224 9376.

The best feature of practicing with your BC Hydro account is that their Customer Support people are there to help. So if you get stuck or have any questions, a human is only a phone call away.

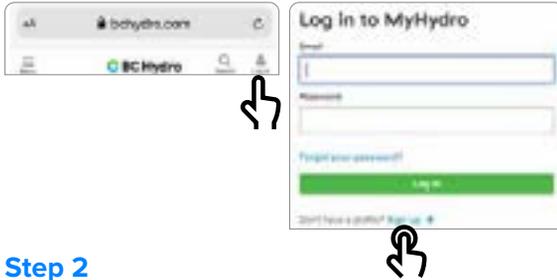
Gluu Tip: To receive an email newsletter from a company you visit their website and subscribe. If you don't like the email newsletter, you can unsubscribe. The best way to unsubscribe from an email newsletter is to use the options located at the bottom of an email from that company. An unsubscribe can take a few weeks, so patience is key here.

GLUU TIP: SET UP YOUR MYHYDRO ACCOUNT



Step 1

Go to www.bchydro.com. Tap on **Sign up** (top right) OR tap **Log in** and then tap **Sign up**.



Step 2

Fill in details using the name on your BC Hydro bill. Choose a strong password and record the security question answer somewhere safe.



Step 3

Check **I'm not a robot**. Select **Submit**.



Step 4

Select **I agree** to agree to the Terms of Use. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address provided in Step 2. If you don't see the email, check your Junk or SPAM folder.

Step 5

Open the confirmation email and select **Verify your email address** (green box). You will be taken to BC Hydro's login page.



Step 6

Enter the email address and password you created in Step 2. Select **Log in**.

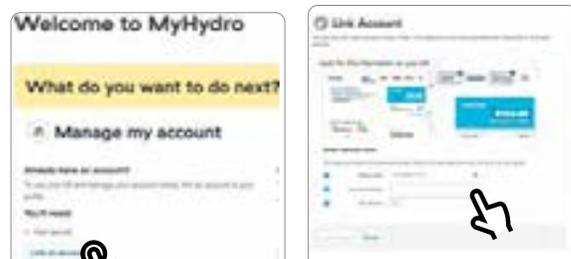


Step 7

Select **Link an account**

Enter your BC Hydro Account Number, as seen on your bill.

- Enter the amount of your most recent BC Hydro bill.
- Select 'Link account'



Done! 😊



Exclusive discounts for BCRTA members

10% OFF
Talk & Text plans¹

15% OFF
Smartphone plans¹

- ✓ Friendly Canadian customer service
- ✓ Reliable national network coverage
- ✓ No activation fees

Simple and affordable wireless service that suits your needs

~~50~~
25⁵⁰
/month¹

**1 GB of data
+ unlimited Canada-wide calling**

~~40~~
34
/month¹

**4 GB of data
+ unlimited Canada-wide calling**

SHARED PLAN

~~85~~
72²⁵
/month
for 2 lines¹

**12 GB of shared data
+ unlimited Canada-wide calling**



Plans include **unlimited text messaging** and voicemail, call display and name display.

Call **1-888-281-2102** and quote promo code **"BCRTASAVE2022"**

Other **plans, phones and promotions** are available at simplyconnect.ca

Offers shown are available until **March 31, 2022** or while quantities last and are subject to change without notice. **1** 10% off applies to the Talk & Text monthly plan fees, and 15% off applies to the Smartphone monthly plan fees. Discount applies for as long as you are a member of the BC Retired Teachers Association and cannot be combined with Bring Your Own Phone discount, Tablet Data plans and Wireless Home Phone plans. **2** Device pricing and minimum monthly rate plan apply for each line, and vary by term and plan chosen. Early cancellation fees apply with a 2-yr term. Some conditions apply, call 1-888-281-2102 or visit simplyconnect.ca/bcrtasave2022 for details.

LET'S MAKE IT EASIER TO SAVE

PLANNING OUR NEXT SHOPPING TRIP

As former teachers, most of us are fortunate to receive pensions that are sufficient to live comfortably. Nevertheless, some may have a hard time making ends meet, or simply want to save money on their groceries and other shopping.

Here are a few ideas to help:

- Stores may give discounts to seniors on certain days, e.g., Shoppers' Drug Mart on Thursdays.
- Time sensitive purchases, e.g., discounts before/ between certain hours.
- Stores such as Cob's Bakery sell off end-of-the-day items at reduced prices.
- Have you thought to share with a friend? Items are often cheaper if you buy 2, e.g., 3.99 each vs. 2 for \$6.00, or 2 kg of apples in a bag vs. each apple bought individually.
- If you can afford it, buy 2 of less-perishable food items when there are great savings, e.g butter, margarine, or canned goods.
- Buy the large size of dry goods if you can *a)* afford to do so, and *b)* will use it in a timely manner, e.g., flour and sugar.
- Find the most cost-effective way of purchasing items: check bulk sections, or a bulk food store. Check out a dedicated meat or fish market.
- Watch for deals and coupons in store flyers.
- Use the calculator on your phone to compare prices and sizes.
- Make your own salad dressing and other simple condiments. Freeze smaller amounts in ice-cube trays, then put in freezer containers or bags.
- When cooking a meal, make an extra one or two and freeze them; it saves time and power, and they are wonderful when you don't feel like cooking or are pushed for time. About the only thing you cannot freeze are salad and hard-boiled eggs.

OTHER RESOURCES

Dieticians of Canada

20 Ways to Save Money on Your Groceries

<https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Budget/20-Ways-to-Save-Money-on-Your-Groceries.aspx>

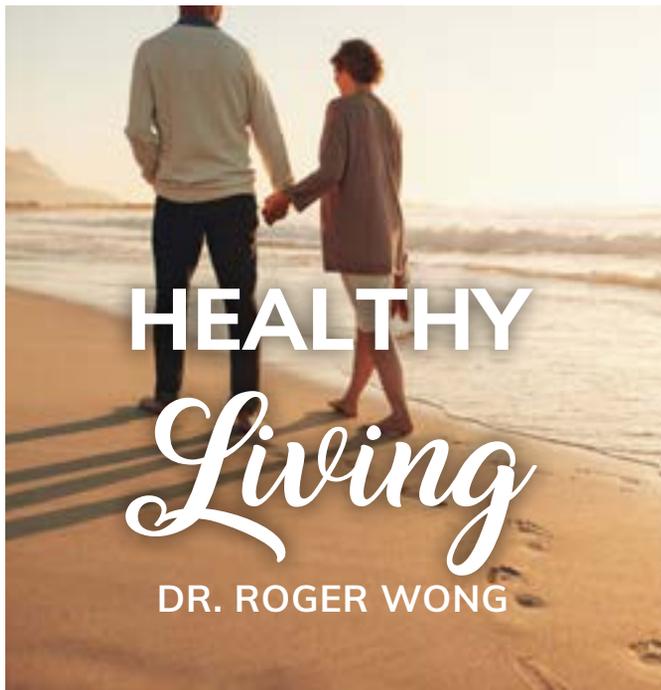
AARP

10 Ways to Save Money on Food

<https://www.aarp.org/money/budgeting-saving/info-2018/ways-to-save-on-food-groceries.html>

MARGARET SUTTON is a member of BCRTA's Well-being Committee who lives in Dawson Creek.





Trust is the basis of every positive solution because without trust nothing positive is going to happen...

keeping everything in order and then the family suggests “Hey, we’re going to get this outside housekeeping person to come in to help out.” They may think, “What’s going on? I’m still here. Don’t you think I can do all this stuff? And if I can’t, what is my role? What am I doing here?” So it may have to do with their sense of identity, something other members in the family may not think about, and they should.

In those situations, the best approach is to have a dialogue that is similar to an interest-based negotiation. A negotiation needs to happen in order to maintain a trust that the wishes and identity of older adults are not reduced or even ignored. Trust is the basis of every positive solution because without trust nothing positive is going to happen.

Families may become concerned in terms of safety or that something bad is going to happen to their older loved ones, but we should first listen to what seniors have to say. There is nothing wrong for folks to continue to look after their own well-being provided that there are no significant risks or safety issues. A real challenge may come when we get an inkling of increasing memory difficulty, such as seen in a condition called mild cognitive impairment. It’s not yet progressed to dementia



DEALING WITH CHANGE

This article is adapted from a interview BCRTA Executive Director Tim Anderson had with Dr. Roger Wong.

DRIVE AND DISAPPOINTMENT

Q. One thing I’ve noticed about seniors who are doing well is that they are often very determined people. They may be described as tough or stubborn, and that has a benefit when they’re pushing themselves to do things and they are thriving. But there comes a point where maybe they’re not doing so well and that unfulfilled determination becomes a source of frustration. Can you talk about that?

A. That is a very common scenario and the first thing that we need to do is to be an active listener. Listen and try to understand what the seniors are going through. It may involve situations that may not be apparent on the surface. It may have to do with the life transitions and losses. We are brought up in our own unique ways, and a change in our routines can bring new challenges which require us to adapt. So it is important, for example, for seniors to establish new routines that help them function and age well in their homes.

For some seniors, their frustration may result from a perceived erosion of their traditional role in the family - for instance if they’re always maintaining the house and

or Alzheimer's disease but the person has become more forgetful in everyday matters. That is something hard for individuals to assess for themselves. So keep your family doctor involved for a proper medical evaluation.

EXPECTATIONS

Q. So those are good practical notes. How about the attitude within us? We might say I'm going to have a growth mindset; I'm going to have these new adventures but then we discover that our 85 year-old body won't quite do what our 45 year-old attitude wants it to do.

A. It's about expectation management and expectations don't only come from the outside world but from within ourselves. We are often our own worst judges and therefore our mindset has to include saying it is okay.

It is okay that we take a little bit longer to read through some complex information to get it. It is okay that we do just one task at a time and that we stay focused on that task. People idolize multitasking, but from a cognitive point of view, the benefit of multitasking is not as positive as we think. The flip side of multitasking is easy distraction and a higher chance of mistakes, tumbles and injury.

In our senior years we may experience physical changes in terms of reduced muscle strength or endurance, our vision and our hearing. It can be troubling to people. They say to themselves – how did this happen? When those things start to change you need to tell yourself – okay, this is part of the life journey. An example that I use often is that I wear glasses – without glasses I cannot see a thing! But that's okay because I'm adapting to that reality. So in many ways as we grow older there are physical changes related to aging, and our goal can't be to deny those realities, but to have a mindset of adaptation to maintain function. That's the key word – function – as long as we're able to do the things that lead to our well-being, we can say to ourselves, it's okay.

ANXIETY

Q. Do you see the stresses and uncertainty of these pressures manifest as anxiety?

A. Yes. But let's remember that a mild degree of anxiety is a normal human emotional reaction so all of us will feel anxious at some times. When the anxiety reaches a level that is disproportionate to the initial stimulus and therefore starting to affect day-to-day function at a social



level or self-management level then that is abnormal. In terms of an abnormal degree of anxiety, it is something that can be quite common in the older population. There can be multiple sources that lead to abnormal anxiety. Our recent experiences of isolation certainly don't help.

But one of our learnings in geriatrics is that often our assessment will point to multifactorial causes, so with that in mind we can reframe questions about anxiety. There are situations in our lives that put pressure on us and make us more anxious, but there may also be physical factors involved. So if there is a large degree of anxiety that cannot be readily explained, it is important to seek the advice of the family doctor. The anxiety could be a prelude to something else such as a mood disorder or depression, or in some forms of cognitive impairment or early dementia. Your physician will talk to you about the actions you can take to manage anxiety and if other steps need to be taken.

DR. ROGER WONG is Vice Dean (Education) in the Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, a geriatrics specialist doctor, clinical professor of geriatric medicine, the 13th President of the Canadian Geriatrics Society, and a TEDx speaker. He tweets at @RogerWong10.

The content of this article is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

THE STORY OF AN



Ashtray

Not long ago, as my wife was doing some digging around outside the wall that separates an area we cut by lawnmower, but otherwise usually leave to fend for itself, she found the above ashtray. Do you remember these? This one was buried, chipped, and caked with dirt. She showed it to me, wondering how the ashtray could have ended up where it was. The first part of the answer: we now live in the home I grew up in.

The ashtray is made of clear glass and has the name 'Safex' on the bottom. I am sure it dates to the 1940s or '50s and is probably Japanese-made, since their goods were to us at that time what Chinese goods are today. I was born in 1949; from the time I can remember our house had, I would guesstimate, about six or eight of these ashtrays. Although we also had some fancier ones, ashtrays like this were

the ones used daily. This ashtray likely dates from when I was growing up.

Both my parents were smokers, though to give them credit, not heavy ones. Much later in life, my stepmother admitted that she smoked only socially and rarely inhaled. My father was a pharmacist, so smoking was confined to non-work hours. I have few recollections of him smoking at any other time than when he was also consuming alcohol: so more than a social smoker, but probably much less than a pack-a-day person. My stepmother smoked Matinees and my father smoked Buckingham's which seemed to be the Canadian equivalent of unfiltered American Camel cigarettes.

My family was a blended family; my stepbrother was seven years older than me and very much a

rebel in the 50s context. He introduced me to smoking when I was only four and he was eleven, and had already taken to sneaking cigarettes from my parents. I still remember that first inhalation of cigarette smoke: the dizziness, the coughing, but also the satisfaction of that hit of nicotine.

So from the time I was not much more than a toddler, smoking and smokers were part of my life. When I was five, a neighbour across the street from us used to smoke Sportsman cigarettes. They had beautifully coloured pictures of fishing “flies” on the back of the package, contained in circles with the name of the fly underneath. I would beg him to give them to me, cut them out, and collect them.

Even though there were few opportunities to smoke regularly while a pre-teen, I was a confirmed smoker from that first hit. I certainly did my share of stealing cigarettes from my parents and I introduced the nasty habit to my best buddy growing up. When we couldn't manage cigarettes, we would often smoke what we called back then ‘monkey weed’ (no relation to the Cannabis substitute). It came from a vine that grew everywhere in the Okanagan and was so porous you could light it and inhale smoke through it. It was harsh, but we were quite persistent in those days! We got money by collecting pop and beer bottles and used it to buy cigarettes at a corner store. We'd say our parents had sent us. The owner, I am sure, knew the truth but never argued the point.

By the time I entered grade seven, I was a more-than-intermittent smoker. I became quite good at pilfering cigarettes from my parents without them being aware of it. I introduced my sister to tobacco around this time and she was five years older than me! Several times my parents caught me smoking in our unfinished basement or later in the finished TV room down there. I would be reprimanded, but even in the early- to mid-60s, smoking was not considered a social no-no. I took more static drinking coffee and being told it would stunt my growth!

I think it was about this time that I would take an ashtray like the one above and regularly empty it outside to hide the evidence from my parents, and that is likely how it became buried in our yard. I probably hid it behind some wood or under some piles of yard waste and forgot about it. By the time I was sixteen and driving, I was a regular smoker, forgoing my lunch money for tobacco and pool at the pool hall rather than eating food. My parents had given up and certainly by graduation I was smoking happily even at home.

I was a heavy smoker at university. Fortunately for me, when I became a teacher the opportunity to smoke during the workday was limited. When I started teaching in 1977, smoking was allowed in the staff room, but within a few years, it was banned from school property. Even then I would regularly “go for a drive” at lunch time to get a fix and “go for

By the time I entered
grade seven, I was a
more-than-intermittent
smoker...



a coffee” after instructional hours were completed. I remember a colleague of mine criticizing me and saying, “Why don’t you quit smoking and live to see your daughter graduate?”

My wife was a non-smoker and insisted that I not smoke in our home, and not smoke in front of the children while they were little. I became a proficient closet smoker; surreptitiously sneaking cigarettes at every opportunity, bumming them from other smokers, and slinking away to the local Royal Canadian Legion or going over to my smoking friends’ houses to light up at their places. Until my own daughter and son were teenagers, they had no idea I was a regular smoker.

Finally, after much pleading from my family and after numerous futile attempts to quit the addiction, I went to my family doctor. I had convinced him I was not smoking without directly telling a lie (I was quite good at that too!). Cold turkey was not going to work for me. I ended up going on two regimens of Zyban, equivalent to a year’s worth of treatment, and as of May 6, 2001, I had stopped smoking. This



year is my twentieth anniversary of quitting and in all those years I have not once used tobacco again. The reason is that I know if I were to light up even one cigarette or cigar, I would be hooked again. I am pleased to say that my childhood buddy was smarter than me and quit smoking by the time I was sixteen. A good university friend that I introduced to cigarettes quit long before I did.

Unfortunately, my stepbrother died at 68 from throat cancer due to smoking Export Plain (unfiltered) cigarettes. My children have never been smokers, at least not tobacco; and my grandchildren have no idea what an ashtray is. They are six and four, and when they saw the ashtray in my den, they asked what this glass thing was. I distracted them and avoided giving them an answer; I don’t ever want them to know what an ashtray is.

I am fortunate that at seventy-two I am still alive and (touch wood) currently cancer free. I do believe I am going to suffer from COPD and/or emphysema but I am hopeful that having quit after 40 years of smoking it may be delayed long enough that I can still maintain an active life. I can walk 10,000 steps or more a day, I still snowboard in the winter and sail, swim, and cycle in the summer. So far, I can even keep up with my grandchildren.

So, for any of you out there that are still smokers, there is still time to quit and quite possibly avoid the full destructive and life-threatening effects of a nicotine addiction. I know what an addictive force nicotine is--the hardest thing I ever did was to quit smoking. I was physically, psychologically, and emotionally attached to tobacco, but I also know it can be overcome. Talk with your doctor, seek whatever assistance will help you wean off the cancer-sticks, and take the opportunity to prolong your life expectancy with better health and energy.

Oh, and it will save you a lot of money!

READY TO QUIT?

Visit quitnow.ca for support and info.

TERRY GREEN was recently named Chair of BCRTA’s Communications Committee.



Growing in Body, Mind, and Spirit

Looking back on the past four decades, I have been on a journey of discovery which has brought growth in body, mind, and spirit. My years teaching ESL, Special Education, and Grade Two added to my progress in so many ways. Those with transformational wisdom--such as Alan Watts, Brene Brown, Byron Katie, Marianne Williamson, and William Glasser, to name a few--also brought much growth. Sometimes the life lessons were difficult and painful, but these periods only increased the insights. As Thich Nhat Hanh says, 'No mud, no lotus'! Here are some of the insights which have helped change my life in wondrous ways.

LISTENING TO GROW IN EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

I was always aware of the power of listening but this power came into sharp focus when I became a teacher, whether during small group instruction or with a whole class. The children enjoyed sharing stories and items from home with others, for example, but when they were talking, their classmates would pump their arms wildly in the air waiting for their turn to speak. They were not listening to a thing their classmates shared!

After lots of discussion, we decided together that no one would wave their hands when a classmate was speaking and when they did put up their hand they could only pose a question to the person

who had just shared! We decided together on questions that would help the children understand their friends more fully, like, 'What did this mean to you?' Or 'What were you feeling when that happened?' It was heartwarming to witness these young ones, especially those from other lands, learning to grow in empathy and love for each other just by listening in a focused and active way. This one strategy let a deeper kind of listening evolve; the insights and kindness the children developed with each other brought tears to my eyes.

KEEPING PERCEPTIONS NEUTRAL TO ELIMINATE INCORRECT JUDGEMENTS

I believe that being quick to judge is one of the worst tricks the human ego mind plays! The truth is that our perceptions are often totally incorrect. Our judgements about life's happenings can be so pervasive we don't even know we are making them! We often decide the meaning of what a person says or does without really knowing anything about their thinking. When we decide that our interpretation is true with no evidence at all, we can hurt others. These errant interpretations are often due to wounds from our early life. These hurts can resurface in our later years and generate, for example, the fear that we are not worthy of love, belonging, or friendship. Then we misinterpret something said or done to us through these ancient hurts.

I remember being very shy as a child and often standing off to the side observing others talk and play. Even then, I believed that my classmates were prettier and thinner than I was, were better at sports, were more popular, and had much more fun than I did. These interpretations hurt at the time and the same pain tended to surface later in life, often hitting unexpectedly hard! This is because I still believed those early impressions were true, when they may have been generated by things not really understood by my young mind. I am now much more aware of those false beliefs!

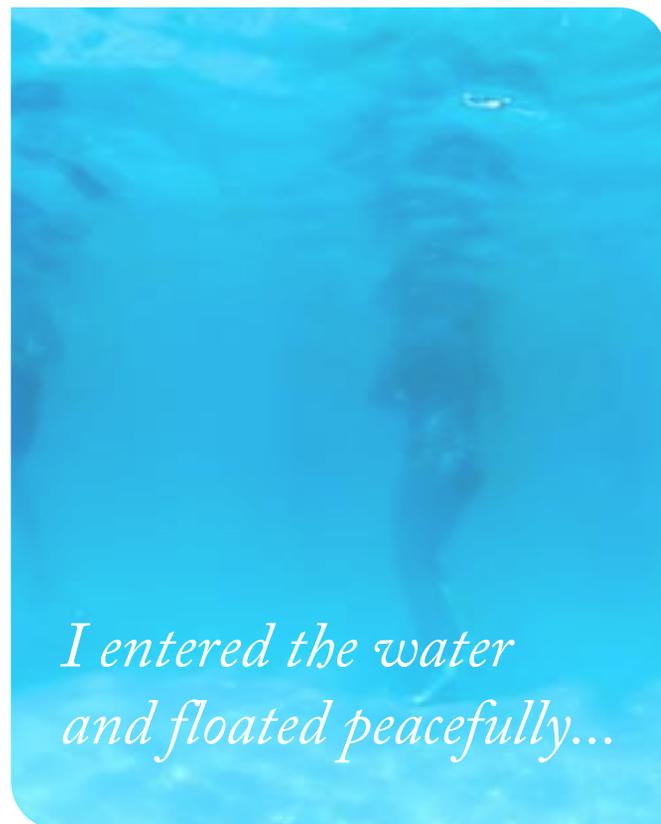
When we feel pain, we have likely judged ourselves or others harshly and incorrectly. Our best approach is to stop immediately and ask ourselves, 'Do I absolutely know for certain that my belief about this person's actions or words is correct?' So often the answer is that we do not know this to be true at all! It helps to then ask when we first had this fearful feeling; we can then look back at our younger selves and let that belief go knowing that it may never have been true in the first place! This is when healing begins; our illusions disappear and our worthiness for love and all that is good comes sifting in.

STRENGTHENING OUR BODIES

I seem to have a genetic propensity to gain weight easily and this brought no end of struggles from an early age! I must have gone on 50 'diets' and lost much weight but immediately gained it back. The good news is that at the young age of 70, I have learned how to eat in a way that has allowed the weight to fall away. Every person's approach to dietary health is different. For some it entails changes in diet, for some mindful eating practices, and new approaches come online all the time.

I now limit carbohydrates and eat a lot of protein, vegetables, nuts and fruit; this eating pattern has taken away that constant urge to eat. I have now lost almost 100 pounds and have not gained it back. Check in with your doctor and ask for a referral to an up-to-date nutritionist.

Another activity which has helped in this transformation is swimming. Our family had a



cabin at Shawnigan Lake near Victoria when I was young, and I was a passionate swimmer then. When I retired from teaching I joined an aquacise class at the nearby pool. The first time I entered the water and floated peacefully waiting for the class to start I knew I was beginning another chapter of my life. It felt heavenly. From that moment onward, I swam almost daily and have continued to do so for the past ten years.

A PATTERN OF RENEWAL

Changing our patterns around listening well, addressing incorrect interpretations, moving towards physical health may seem like daunting projects, but some daily willingness and a resolve to live joyfully in body, mind, and spirit can go a long way. It is never too late to start. This may prove to be a long journey, but if we commit to making a small step forward each day, it will happen. Be blessed as you try some new ways of being. These strategies are some of those that have been important in transforming my life and I hope they will do the same for yours! •

ANN MICKELSON is a member of BCRTA.

On Laughter



PAT THIESEN is Chair of BCRTA's Well-being Committee.

One of the best surprises for me coming out of the isolation of COVID-19 was being re-introduced to laughter. Sitting outside at a few appropriately distanced tables on a segment of the parking lot, chatting with my friends and hearing the interactions of those nearby, was so spiritually uplifting. Frequently a burst of joyous laughter filled the space around me, echoed by the others in the group, sometimes quieter, but no less joyful. And it immediately made me feel so much better. Laughter is contagious. Just try not to respond. Why? Partly because it draws us together: people are 30 times more likely to laugh at the same joke or situation in a group, than when alone.

Perhaps also because our brain wants us to be healthy. Laughing makes you feel alive with positivity, optimism, and hopefulness. Unless it is a mirthless and bitter laugh (which is something else entirely!) you can't feel angry, anxious, or sad when you're laughing. It helps you focus, relaxes your aggression, and puts life's situations into a different perspective. Sharing laughter can strengthen our relationships with others, especially in difficult times.

Laughing is also physically healthy for everyone in so many ways. After having a good, hearty laugh, your body is relieved of physical tension and stress for up to 45 minutes or so. Your stress hormones

are decreased, while your immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies increase. Endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, are released into your blood stream giving you an overall sense of well-being, possibly relieving pain to some degree. Your heart, too, benefits from a good blast of laughter as blood vessels' flexibility and blood flow are improved, which helps protect you against cardiovascular issues and heart attacks. Because laughing involves the whole body, it's not surprising that 10 to 15 minutes a day of laughter can burn about 40 calories, enough for a loss of 2 kg over the span of a year.

You were born with the ability to laugh. Babies begin to smile within weeks of birth and laugh out loud within months. Look for situations that are out there to laugh about, and help improve your life physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. •

THE SCIENCE OF LAUGHTER (SERIOUSLY!)

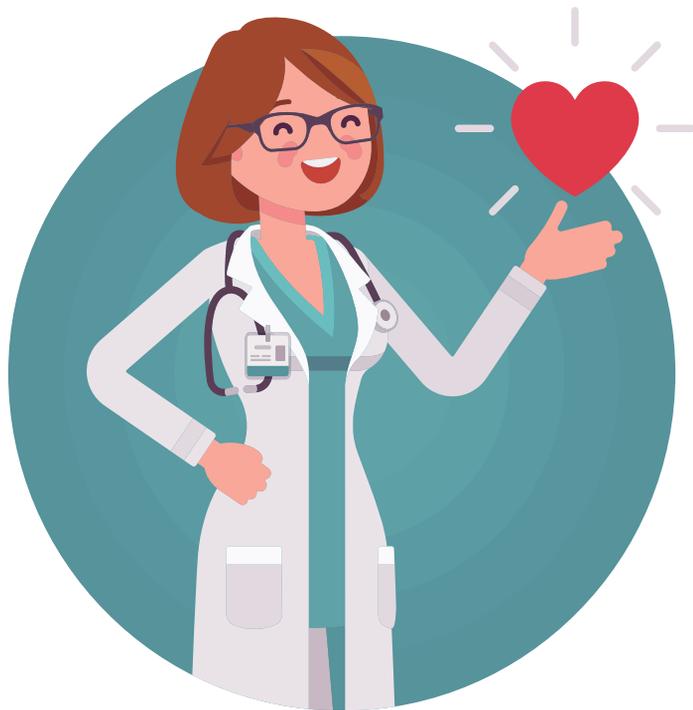
Laughter: It's No Joke

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>

Why Do We Laugh?

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-do-we-laugh/>

Preparing to visit the



-DOCTOR-

PAT THIESEN is Chair of BCRTA's Well-being Committee.

If you are like me, visiting with your MD at her office has not been happening much; renewing prescriptions on the phone has been about the extent of your interaction with your GP.

Even in non-COVID times, my small diary of recorded blood pressure numbers is about all I take with me when I have my twice-a-year appointments. Yet I always have questions. Should I request a full physical exam when I book my appointment since it has been 3 years since I last had one? What else should I be reviewing with my doctor? I decided to do a bit of research about re-engaging with our family doctors, once we are able to do so face-to-face.

Before you go, you can review: How are you feeling? Has your appetite increased or decreased? Are you having trouble sleeping? Do you have any pains? Has your mood been fluctuating? Are you feeling unusually tired? Are there other changes which worry you?

Medications: What medications Are you taking and what they are for? Know the name of each prescribed drug and the dosage, and the number of times a day you take it. Include any herbal remedies and over-the-counter drugs you take, even multivitamins, and take note of any side-effects you've experienced from those drugs.

Make a List: Write down the answers to the above questions, and any other issues you wish to talk about with your doctor. An appointment can be anxiety-inducing if you worry about the doctor's time, or focus on one issue may distract you from others. A list will help.

Be prepared to take notes. During the visit, tell your doctor that you would like to take notes by hand or on your smartphone. (Ask yourself if you should ask someone you trust to come with you to the appointment to simply take the notes silently?)

Always be honest with the doctor. Don't leave out details about your symptoms or concerns. Don't be embarrassed-she has heard it all many times over.

Be open-minded even if the doctor disagrees with your computer-researched diagnosis. After hearing your symptoms, trust her to know the difference between a tension headache and a brain tumour.

Be sure you understand what is discussed. If the doctor uses medical jargon, ask for clarification. Repeat what she has told you to be sure you understand and ask for further clarification if you need it. In the end, if the doctor is really not listening, is there another doctor you can speak to?

Are you getting a new prescription? You need to know why you need it and what, if any, side-effects or interactions with your current prescriptions there could be. What happens if you inadvertently miss a dose? Keep in mind that you really don't want to be one of those seniors who takes unnecessary medications which could lead to further health problems down the line.

Have a plan for next visit. Before you leave, clarify what you should expect regarding tests, (like dates, locations, and your personal preparation for them, how you will be getting the results), any specialist referrals, and how long before you should schedule the next appointment. •



BCRTA CONNECTIONS



Keep up your Connections!

- BCRTA's email newsletter
- BCRTA and advocacy news
- Useful links and articles
- Special member offers
- Download as PDF magazine

View online and subscribe at
www.bcrta.ca/connections

THE Gospel OF FITNESS

I have a question for you: Why is fitness so important?
Answer: Its benefits are incalculable, among them – an improved quality of life and physical condition, more energy and zest for life, better sleep, mood improvement, and an entirely different outlook on life.

Fitness has played a huge part in my life since being a kid. However, now at 85, it has generated an even more significant role. If you are over 50, do not exercise, and have a deep desire to live a long and vibrant life, I want to help you. Now in my ninth decade, reflecting on the astonishing benefits of fitness, I remain passionate about others joining me – will YOU?

We have forged busy – not necessarily active – lifestyles, but this does not mean that we cannot make changes and free-up times for fitness.

INCREASE IN LONGEVITY

As our longevity continues to increase, there is even more need to exercise. It is important to know that we are never too old to begin exercising. Studies reveal that the overwhelming majority of seniors in North America do not meet the minimum physical activity levels needed to maintain health. Their sedentary lifestyles that predominate in older ages result in premature onset of ill health, disease and frailty.

COMMITMENT

Committing yourself to fitness may require immense discipline and may seem overwhelming. Training and sticking with your exercise is very demanding: life's busy schedule, lack of energy and illness are just a few of the factors which can interrupt your routine.

NO ILLUSIONS

I have no illusions about being an expert on fitness. My blogs are about the experiences of a layman who has learned from a combination of expert advice, diligent personal research, and personal trial and error – lots of errors!



“Any one at any age can be fit,” says BCRTA member Barrie Street, 85.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is a key element in starting and continuing exercises. To help, you may choose to exercise with a buddy or join a class, get a cheering squad of family or friends who will support you, choose a time of day when you have the most energy and stick to this time, or keep a journal of what you have achieved. You just might surprise yourself how well you will succeed.

***Caution:** I strongly urge you to consult your family doctor before you begin an exercise program, particularly if you have not exercised for a long period of time. In addition, start slowly and gradually add more time and then intensity.*

The generally recommended amount of exercise time to ensure a healthy lifestyle is 150 minutes/week; this represents about 2% of your waking hours.

Age is not a barrier, and fitness could become your new best friend! I would be delighted to help you in any way I can through my website: over50andfit.ca

Yours in fitness,

Barrie

BARRIE STREET is a BCRTA member and fitness enthusiast. His website is over50andfit.ca

CLASSIFIEDS

TRAVEL

DISCOVER CUBA WITH CUBA1TOURS

Starting January 2022 cuba1tours will once again offer the best guided tours to the most intriguing parts of Cuba with a personal touch and excellent local guides.

All tours operate through Square1travel of Courtenay, BC, a licensed travel agency. All tour details are at www.cuba1tours.com

As office hours and personnel have been affected by COVID-19 you should contact Tom Robertson at: tom@cuba1tours.com or tomcr@shaw.ca or use the contact form on the website.

CO-HOUSING

Cohousing combines private strata ownership with a sense of extended family. Visit compasscohousing.com and learn how you can transition to a multi-generational village of authentic living in Langley.

.....
The Coastal Village – A Community-Based Neighbourhood. Ready to downsize? Homeownership, a burden? Imagine owning/renting a new apartment in a multigenerational, environmentally-sensitive building, with ALL neighbours being your Friends.

Development progressing, downtown Sechelt. Contact: info@thecoastalvillage.ca

ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

Victoria Rental. February 1/22 to April 30/22. Two bedroom plus den condo located at Bear Mountain Golf Resort and Spa overlooks the first fairway and Mt Finlayson. This is our home so the unit is fully furnished with a well-stocked kitchen. For more details contact junehinshaw@shaw.ca

.....
France - Heritage house in Alsace-France, Vosges Mountains, three bedrooms, modern kitchen, wifi, located on wine route, close to Germany (Freiburg) and Switzerland (Basel). Cleaning included, CA\$700 per week. mano936@gmail.com

.....
For rent: One bedroom suite available in Maui, Kihei. Only 2 weeks left: from Saturday February 26 2022 to Sat. March 12 2022. Price per week: \$1200. USD Maui Schooner Resort in Kehei. <https://www.maui schooner.com>

Contact: lavoieadline@shaw.ca

FOR SALE

For Sale - a beautiful waterfront home in the Comox Valley. Overlooks the Coastal Mountains, Savary Island and Powell River, often sighting whales and other wildlife. 5 bedrooms, 4 full bathrooms plus a powder room. Perfect for a growing family with an added suite for grandparents or a live in Nanny. 15 minutes to the towns of Comox/Courtenay.

Please call 250 897 2420

EVENTS

VANCOUVER OPERA GUILD ESCORTED OPERA TOUR
New York Metropolitan Opera March 21 – 27, 2022

- Madama Butterfly with Eleonora Buratto
- Rodelinda (Handel) with Elza van den Heever
- Eugene Onegin (Tchaikovsky) with Ailyn Perez and Igor Golovatenko
- Don Carlos (Verdi) with Matthew Polenzani, Sonya Yoncheva and Elina Garanca

Tour includes return airfare, 6 NTS Park Central Hotel and 4 opera tickets. For info call Great Expeditions 604 257 3364 or Toll Free 1 800 663 3364.

PERSONAL PRODUCTS

SpotNots™ - Underwear for Men - underwear with a difference: An ultrathin, waterproof layer stops drips from showing on clothing. Stylish and comfortable, made from 4-way stretch fabrics.

For those needing more protection, SpotNots2 has an added layer of absorbency. SpotNots by Portala Solutions. PS... do we have a solution for you!

To order, please visit www.spotnots.com
Questions? portalasolutions@outlook.com

BOOKS

The dawn of online learning brings a sordid scheme to transform public education, making investors happy and educators cringe in a new novel fusing humour, satire, and mystery. clydewoolman.com

crossword

Women of Influence

By David Squance, Victoria

Send your compliments and quibbles to crossword@bcrrta.ca

ACROSS

1. Barbara _____, former CBC radio host
5. Air pollution
9. Character in "Beetle Bailey"
14. Entice
15. Cat's sound of contentment
16. What could be downloaded to a Kindle
17. Country on the Arabian Peninsula
18. William _____, American playwright
19. Glue (Fr.)
20. Was Liberal Minister, then Independent BC MP (2 wds)
23. Insignificant member of an organization
24. Common transportation system in large metropolitan areas (inits.)
25. Male reproductive glands
29. Fish species
30. The Blues on a score board
33. Cause to happen
34. Plug of chewing tobacco
36. Essayist Lamb's pen name
37. Figure skating idol from the 1940s (3 wds.)
40. Road assistance organization (inits.)
41. Not in active use
42. Wooden peg (old-fashioned)
43. Gasoline treatment (inits.)
44. _____-been, out-of-date
45. Upright; correct
46. Chop; slice
47. Character in The Jungle Book
49. Canadian literary figure (2 wds.)
56. _____ McLachlan, Canadian singer
57. Half of two Rons (2 wds.)
58. _____ Fitzgerald, American singer
59. Bring together
60. Now non-standard distance measurement
61. "_____ and the Tramp", Disney film
62. Styles
63. Friends
64. Colourings

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20				21					22					
				23				24						
25	26	27	28					29			30	31	32	
33						34	35			36				
37					38					39				
40					41					42				
43				44						45				
			46				47	48						
	49	50				51					52	53	54	55
56						57				58				
59						60				61				
62						63				64				

DOWN

1. Pour forth
2. 13th C. Persian poet
3. Mountain range in Russia
4. _____ rea, "guilty mind"
5. Backbones
6. Canadian literary Nobelist
7. Musical instrument with a keyboard
8. Zane _____, author
9. Canadian historical figure
10. Approximately
11. Turn, as in one's grave
12. Medal colour
13. Scrape out a living
21. Musical theatre production
22. No longer usable, as a fuse or chances
25. "They call me Mr. _____"
26. Stage, as a role or play
27. Small piece of fabric
28. Musical instrument
29. Walking stick
30. Type of sailboat
31. Name, as of a novel
32. Some time down the road
34. Rogues, scoundrels
35. Computer in 2001, a Space Odyssey
36. Reverberate
38. Lasso
39. Walk overly proudly
44. Clara _____, Canadian Olympian
45. Woodworking tool (pl.)
46. Shipping box
47. Marshal _____, henchman of Stalin
48. Small island or reef
49. Hand (Sp.)
50. Very dry
51. _____ up, increase
52. Join pieces of metal
53. Oil of _____; cosmetic brand
54. "Ye _____ Little British Sweet Shoppe"
55. "All the _____ of our lives"
56. Total

Sudoku

9		6	5					
					3	9	1	4
				9	8			
	3			7			2	
6		4				7		9
	8			5			4	
			4	6				
5	6	3	8					
					5	2		8

1					8			7
			9	5		4	8	
					6	5		
7		1	8	6		9		
	9		4		7		3	
		2		9	5	7		8
		3	5					
	8	7		1	9			
9			6					4

TO SOLVE SUDOKU PUZZLES:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

SEND COMPLETED PUZZLES TO:

100 – 550 West 6th Avenue,
Vancouver BC V5Z 4P2

FOR MORE ONLINE SUDOKU PUZZLES:

www.fiendishsudoku.com

DEADLINE FOR SUDOKU AND CROSSWORD SUBMISSION IS:

Jan 31, 2022

Congratulations to the winners of the last issue. Your cheques are in the mail!

Crossword:

Georgia Thorneycroft, Victoria
Lucinda Tocker, Maple Ridge
Rose Kwiatkowski, Saanichton

Sudoku:

Patricia Rankin, Duncan
George Fraser, Osoyoos
Bill Kennedy, Campbell River

Like and share BCRTA
News and links relevant to you.



facebook.com/BCRTA
 twitter.com/bcrta1

FALL 2021 CROSSWORD SOLUTION

1	S	2	L	3	A	4	M	5	S	6	A	7	C	8	C	9	T	10	A	11	S	12	I	13	F
14	N	A	V	A	L					15	P	A	A	R				16	M	A	R	E			
17	O	N	I	C	E					18	E	C	R	U				19	O	R	A	L			
20	B	E	D	D	E	R				21	R	S	O	D				22	N	A	T	O			
										24	O	P	E	D				25	M	E	I	G	H	E	N
										29	L	A	N					30	N	I	S	S	A	N	
32	H	U	L	A						33	H	O	O	P				34	U	N		35	B	E	N
39	O	N	A	L	E					40	N	A	S					42	E	R	R	O	R		
43	P	A	N	D	A					44	S							45	M	U	L	R	O	N	
										47	R	E	D	S	E	A			48	S	E	A			
50	P	A	Y	E	T	T	E			52	T	T	E					54	T	R	A	D			
56	A	L	I	S						57	S	P	A					58	A	B	B	O	T	T	
63	G	I	E	S						64	O	I	L	S				65	A	B	E	L	I	E	
67	A	B	L	E						68	F	L	E	E				69	A	N	A	R	T		
70	N	I	D	S						71	F	L	E	A				72	S	T	Y	E	S		

Obituaries

Location listed is the area given as "last taught"



Abbott, Robert A. E.	Victoria	Engelson, Harold M.	Cowichan
Backer, Arnold A.	Delta	Erickson, Janelle	Coast Mountains
Barrett, M. Joy	Victoria	Essex, Ronald Lee	Shuswap
Blakey, Allen	Vancouver	Frankish, Margaret	Abbotsford
Boner, Jeanette	Prince George	Garland, Christopher B	Burnaby
Brown, Robert D.	VCC	Ginnever, David A.	Coquitlam
Bryant, Jerry	Victoria	Guthrie, Doris E.	Surrey
Cacchioni, Roland D	Central Okanagan	Haensgen, Gary	Vancouver
Campbell, Lillian	Richmond	Harrington, John Patrick	Kimberley
Carpinter, Eileen V	Beneficiary	Holt, Don	SE Kootenay
Carriere, Len	Powell River	Joseph, Winston R.	Alberni
Chalk, Howard John R.	Vancouver	Killough, John McLeod	Okanagan/Skaha
Crowe, Donald M.	Central Okanagan	Lee, Howe Yet	Burnaby
De Girolamo, Mavis	Victoria	Liedtke, Peter	Beneficiary
Dundas, Joyce Marie	Prince Rupert	Lupini, Dante	Vancouver
Egan, Valerie	Victoria	Luttin, Lorna Dale	North Vancouver

Maclean, Malcolm B.	Vancouver	Stewardson, Pat	Sooke
Maynard, Margrit	North Vancouver	Telford, Andrea Gayle	Sooke
Mcgillivray, Beverly Allan	Vancouver	Thomas, Philip Wynne	Creston Valley
Mcintyre, Geraldine G.	Central Okanagan	Thompson, Frank Leslie	Gold Trail
McNay, Diane	Victoria	Travis, Robert	Victoria
McOrmond, Phyllis	Victoria	Van De Vyvere, Bert	Central Okanagan
Meachin, Lorna	West Vancouver	Van Ryswyk, Alwilda A.	Kamloops
Molland, Edith	Beneficiary	Wadge, Marjorie J.	Gold Trail
Molyneux, Alfred E.	Courtenay	Whaites, Donald L.	Surrey
Murphy, Patricia	Cariboo-Chicotin	Wild, Helen Joy	Vancouver
Page Hopher, Beverley	Kootenay Lake	Williams, Mark Anthony	Vancouver
Pauliuk, Leo	Surrey	Wise, Richard A.	Vancouver
Pollard, Lynn Howard	Surrey	Woodward, Wendy Nadine	Delta
Seim, Reidun	Delta	Wright, Julie E	Abbotsford
Sison, Carolina	Quesnel	Wurz, Paul Joseph	Campbell River
Steele, Nadine E.	Southeast Kootenay		

Inspiration



“Beautiful young people
are accidents of nature,
but beautiful old people
are works of art.”

- ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Photo: Eleanor Roosevelt and her beloved Fala. Image from the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration. In the public domain.



R.R. Smith
Memorial Fund
Foundation

Thank You!

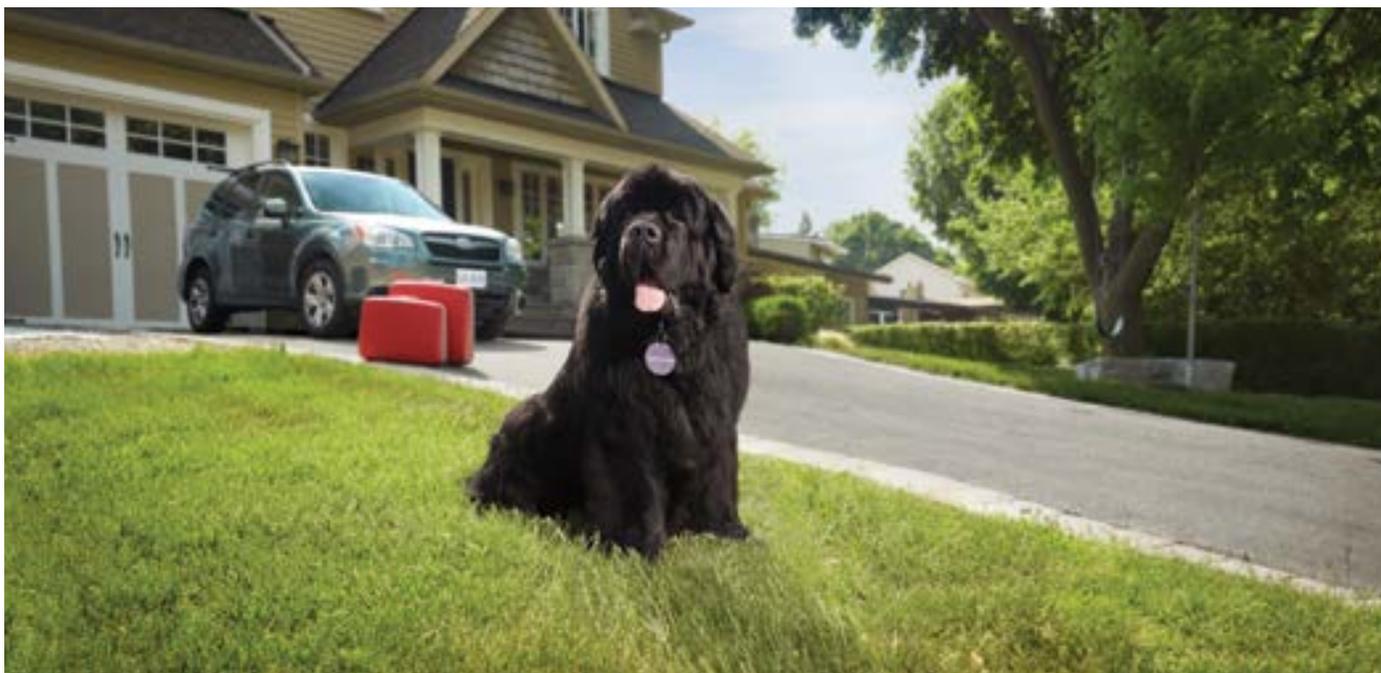
RR SMITH CELEBRATES ANOTHER YEAR OF GIVING IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATION ACROSS THE GLOBE

After a year of celebrating the grants made to organizations in B.C. and around the world, R.R. Smith is receiving letters of thanks from the registered charities we are privileged to support.

The six B.C. universities which received endowment funds in 2006 from R.R. Smith to generate an annual bursary for worthy students enrolled in their education programmes continue to experience fund growth. The universities set their own criteria and forward information regarding their successful applicants to R.R. Smith each year.

Our funds are managed by the VanCity Foundation which is providing a good interest rate on our investment. Check out the R.R. Smith website for the latest information on how your annual R.R. Smith membership dues of \$2.00 and your additional contributions are put to good work at home and internationally.

Learn more at www.rrsmith.ca



Voluntary Benefits for BCRTA Members.

BCRTA's goal is to provide the best voluntary benefits at a competitive price to meet the insurance needs of the majority of retired teachers. Since 1998, we achieved this through BCRTA's sponsorship of an increasing range of voluntary insurance options.

A variety of voluntary insurance options are available to BCRTA members and their eligible dependents including:

- Extended Health Care
- Dental Care
- Prestige Travel with Trip Cancellation
- Additional Stand Alone Trip Cancellation
- Guaranteed Issue Life Insurance
- MEDOC® Travel Insurance
- Home Insurance

1.877.989.2600
bcrta.johnson.ca



Johnson Insurance is a trademark of Johnson Inc. ("JI"), a licensed insurance intermediary, and operates as Johnson Insurance Services in British Columbia and Johnson Inc. in Manitoba. Home policies primarily underwritten, and claims handled, by Unifund Assurance Company ("UAC"). Described coverage and benefits applicable only to policies underwritten by UAC. Home insurance not available in NU. Eligibility requirements, limitations, exclusions, additional costs and/or restrictions may apply, and/or may vary by province or territory. MEDOC® is a Registered Trademark of JI. MEDOC® Travel Insurance is underwritten by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada ("RSA") and administered by JI. Valid provincial or territorial health plan coverage required. Travel Assistance provided by Global Excel Management Inc. The eligibility requirements, terms, conditions, limitations and exclusions which apply to the described coverage are as set out in the policy. Policy wordings prevail. JI, UAC and RSA share common ownership. JI administers the EHC Plan and the options for Prestige Travel and Dental Care ("Options"). The EHC Plan and Dental Care Option are underwritten by Desjardins Financial Security ("DFS"). Coverage under the EHC Plan is subject to proof of enrolment in the applicable Provincial Pharmacare program. Prestige Travel Insurance is underwritten by RSA. Valid provincial/territorial health plan coverage required.