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SUMMER 2023



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Submission guidelines at bcrta.ca/postscript-submissions

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It's always fun to put together a summer issue of PostScript. Summer is a time to let loose, get our toes into the sand, go analog and free, maybe even back to childhood. **Dale Leopkey** and his family know how to do that – they are a zany and creative "Family of Feasts."

We also received an interesting submission from Christina Schenkel-Goldt, which was pitched to me as a remembrance of the magic of learning to write. But the context was rather forbidding - an East German school behind the Iron Curtain. I thought there was more of a story here, and did she have any photos? It turned out that Christina was able to meet with me at BCRTA's offices in Vancouver. My prodding had opened up a treasure trove. First, she pulled out a beautifully organized photo album of her childhood, created by her parents. Then a sheaf of schoolwork from the time. Then - mirabile dictu! - a 200 page memoir. And despite all odds, against the very dark background of Communist indoctrination, her story evokes a theme not unlike that of the Leopkey family. She too, has special childhood memories of summertime at the beach, and the magical quality of innocence that her parents preserved in her life, in the face of very oppressive circumstances. "Days of Magic" is a story that you will not soon forget.

We have other adventures for you, too. Turn the AC up before you read **Victor Neuman's** closing installment in his series - a blazing hot "Cycling Death Valley - the Final Days." Not far from there, **Tom Skinner** takes us to a **Charreada**, a Mexican rodeo in California. We have two stories of European travel, and a special feature on Colombia (spell it right, please!) from the intrepid **Gerry Tiede**. There is an opportunity for you here, with a BCRTA group departure planned for 2024. Take a look at the trip's intinerary, which is jam-packed with equal parts luxury and adventure, all soaked in local colours.

Please take note of your opportunity to share your experiences and opinions in the **BCRTA 2023 Health** and Community Survey. Your voice matters!

Whatever you are doing this summer, stay safe, loosen up that collar, share some time with family and friends, and get your feet into the sand.

Yours truly,



contents

POSTSCRIPT MAGAZINE | SUMMER 2023













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ROAD TRIPPING

Over the years, my wife Bonnie and I have gone on many road trips, starting back when we were dating. We would head off to Chuckanut Drive and Whidbey Island for the day, or up the Sunshine Coast; trips that were great get-a-ways from university papers and part-time jobs. Over the years we've made it to all sorts of places, sometimes on our own, but also with friends or family. We have enjoyed the twisty road to Hana on Maui, Bay Saint Lawrence at the northern tip of Cape Breton, Route 66, and Skara Brae on the Orkneys, to name a few. I'm writing this as we wend our way to a unique adventure: a working BCRTA road trip to connect with several branches, and to present workshops for the Kamloops and Prince George Pro-D days.



Prince George - image by iStockPhoto

Amazingly, with the help of the branch Presidents, the week-long schedule has fit into place, and the open road awaits.

It's another cool, windy and rainy April day, but we're hoping for some better weather once we get over the mountains. An early coffee, then a ferry ride to Horseshoe Bay, and we're heading for Kamloops, and then up Highway 97 to Williams Lake, Quesnel, and Prince George. After stopping for gas and a soup and sandwich in Hope, we head up the Coquihalla, and the weather improves, living up to the rain-shadow promise of the mountains as the skies clear to patches of blue.

After a night in Kamloops, and fortified by a steak dinner in the old Railway station, it is a short walk to Norkam Senior Secondary School on Monday, where I present morning and afternoon sessions of the BCRTA workshop, Making Sense of your Pension, CPP, OAS and Group Benefits. These workshops are a major education and recruitment initiative of the BCRTA. Over the years our workshop committee and presenters have reached thousands of active teachers through virtual and in-person presentations. These workshops help teachers with important retirement decisions, and also promote the benefits of BCRTA membership.

After speaking for over four hours, and no longer used to doing so, a cold drink was needed, and coming to my rescue were Marney Bethel and her husband, who along with the Kamloops Thompson Branch executive, hosted me to a lovely dinner. That meal was the first of four meals shared with local branch members, all with lively conversation, and discussion of the many issues we face as retired teachers.

Leaving Kamloops early so we could get to Williams Lake in time for a lunch meeting, we head to Cache Creek, and turn north up Highway 97. After Clinton, the highway climbs to the Interior Plateau with its numerous lakes and streams, and the Fraser River slicing through the middle. This is cattle and lumber country, and we pass countless logging trucks and mills, along with fields lying fallow, ready for a new crop of hay, all providing evidence of what keeps the Cariboo economy going.

POSTSCRIPT COLUMN



The next three days are filled with memorable visits with the Cariboo-Chilcotin, Quesnel and Prince George Branch members. Lisa Hansen has joined us for the three meetings, with great information on our sponsored MEDOC and Prestige group benefit plans. Of course, Lisa and I get three lovely lunches, each hosted at a local branch venue. I may have had an extra dessert or two! The best part of the meetings for me is getting to sit with the members, discussing issues of concern, hearing what we are doing well, and learning we can improve to make each teacher's retirement more fulfilling and secure. I must mention that the meetings would have been impossible without the work of the Branch Presidents, Joan Erb, Lynne Wright and Debbie Page, so a big "Thank You" to them, and also to Lisa Hansen for making the time to join us.

My week ends with a repeat of Monday, this time presenting workshops at Prince George Secondary School. The four in-person workshops remind me of how rewarding it is to teach; to be able to share knowledge, and help with decisions. The classrooms are now all computerized, but seeing walls covered in students' work shows me that some things remain the same.

President Arnie Lambert and Lisa Hansen of Johnson Insurance visiting Dawson Creek.

Our trip ends with a night in Hundred Mile house, and then (a new road for us) the beautiful Marble Canyon route of Highway 99 to Lillooet, past Duffy Lake to lunch in Whistler, and finally a wait at the ferry dock in Horseshoe Bay.

Road trips are great, but so is getting home! •

ARNIE LAMBERT is President of BCRTA

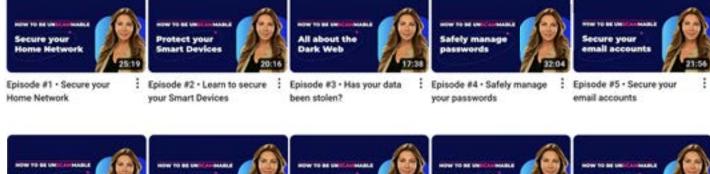


COLUMN POSTSCRIPT

GLUU OFFERS FREE TECH TRAINING VIDEOS FOR RETIREES



BCRTA TECH EDUCATION PARTNER INVITES YOU TO A FREE COURSE ON ONLINE SAFETY







Episode #7 · Protect your identity



your devices



Episode #9 - Important tips to surf the web safely



apps and online accounts

Linda Fawcus of Gluu Society has made it her mission to equip older adults with the skills they need to succeed and be safe in the new technological era of the internet and e-devices.

But not everyone has your best interests at heart. Fraud and scam attacks that target seniors are at unprecedented levels, and thousands of Canadians have been victimized. As an ally of seniors, Gluu is fighting back through education.

Glue recently released *How To be Unscammable*, a digital security TV show funded in part by TELUS Optik TV. It will also be a free online course this Fall. The show is on demand at TELUS Optik and can be viewed on the Gluu Society YouTube Channel. BCRTA members are warmly invited to visit the site below for this valuable resource.

YOUTUBE.COM/@GLUUYOU

MORE CONTENT ON TECH AND YOU

In a recent TEDxSurrey Talk, Linda spoke on the topic The Surprising Ways Technology is Transforming the Way We Age.

View this talk by visiting **ted.com** and searching for "Linda Fawcus".



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PostScript Letters

Our Needs Assessment May Need Assessment

Your recent item on the need to prepare financially for retirement was timely and helpful. I would like to add to that.

It might become necessary for a husband and wife to move into a retirement home. The usual fee structure, set for one person, depends on the facility, size and placement of the suite, dining options and add-ons for parking and the partner. It is not uncommon to pay anywhere from \$50,000 to \$80,000 annually for a couple. But if one has to go into extended care, a second set of fees applies. Given the extra personnel needed, those fees could add over \$80,000 to the original. And don't forget the annual rise in those fees. Given that so many of us are living into the nineties, caution suggests we take a very close look at our net worth. Investing in safe, long term bonds may not suffice. The stock market can be precarious, even when share dividends form part of our income. Rethink the urge to splurge on that exotic getaway.

Before 'taking the plunge' consult a financial advisor.

George Fraser Victoria

PostScript Fan Base

What a wonderful issue! So many interesting articles. So glad that former teachers are living wonderful lives. Please keep this up!

Bob and Judy Van

Hello at Postscript,

Wonderful last issue. What a fabulous article by Karen Cooper about Dorothy Sayers. Great research and superb writing. Makes me want to read all of Sayers' work - in order, of course.

Also loved Helene McGall's article about her time in the north. Inspirational!

Patti Shales Lefkos Vancouver / Silver Star Great magazine! Keep up the good work!

V. Coutu Mission

Dear Editor and Staff of PostScript

I received my Spring 2023 PostScript today. The BC Retired Teachers' magazine is so aesthetic and artistic. I know many people enjoy the articles, the crosswords, the sudokus, and the photography but my first impression was how beautifully it was put together. Thank you so much for a "breath of fresh air."

I enjoyed "The Principal of Parking" by Chris Harker and "Excuse Me, But Your Hair is on Fire" by Fern G.Z. Carr. These made me smile.

PostScript is a winner in my book.

Judy Preen Penticton

As with so many articles in our splendid Postscript, I enjoyed your informative article, "Whimsy Most Vile." Lots of fascinating facts, but one surprising error considering how well-researched the piece was. London's Metropolitan Police Force was established in 1829, not 1929. Perhaps it was an April Fools joke, and it was welcome as it made me do a little research.

In any case, thank you for offering such well-written and entertaining articles and do keep them coming!

A. Kirkpatrick

Editor's Note: Thank you for your good detective work on that error! We plead guilty and throw ourselves on the mercy of the court.

Write us at postscript@bcrta.ca

10 POSTSCRIPT LETTERS

collette Eat, Drink, Travel

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A good meal nourishes your body, but a great meal nourishes your soul, too. Distinctive culinary inclusions are peppered into every tour worldwide adding flavour to your travels.





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A Taste of the Balkans 16 days | 23 meals

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I was born and raised on a farm just outside of Winnipeg, so my experiences with large bodies of water were limited to occasional trips to Whiteshell area lakes. Not until I got married and moved to Vancouver did I became at all familiar with the Pacific Ocean, though it was still largely limited to the view as I drove over the Lion's Gate Bridge. Then I received my teacher's certificate, and my wife and I moved to Nanaimo, where we lived right by the ocean.

A few experiences of seasickness when out fishing with friends convinced me that my ongoing relationship with the ocean should take the form of "admiring it from the shore." Still, a friend had made renting a boat to take a leisurely trip down the canals in Europe sound idyllic, so we decided to take a "boat trip" on the canals of Holland, of all things. We convinced two other couples we knew to join us on this adventure. Despite the fact that none of us had any real experience with a large boat, we made arrangements through a company called "Le Boat".

We met up in a small town called Woudsend, north of Amsterdam, where we boarded our 42-foot cruiser for the trip. The boat had four staterooms, each with its own toilet and shower. We used the fourth to store our luggage. It came furnished with linens, bath towels, dish towels, a fully equipped kitchen including appliances, cutlery, dishes, safety equiptment, and all the very detailed canal cruising maps we would need to have a successful trip. We added six bicycles and a BBQ to round things off.

Once we were all loaded, the chap from Le Boat took us out into the canal where he gave us a "lesson"—for all of 30 minutes!—on how to run the boat. He wanted us to learn how to turn the boat around in the canal should the need arise and how to back it into a marina dock should we not be able to find moorage along the canals. Then he sent us off saying he would see us in Vinkaveen, the endpoint of our cruise. We could set our own route through the myriad of canals as long as we arrived in seven days in one piece.

CRUISING IN HOLLAND POSTSCRIPT 13



The trip was one of the most relaxed and enjoyable holiday experiences we had ever had. The scenery along the canals was spectacular. The ever-present windmills and thatched houses provided endless photo opportunities.

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We became quite adept at maneuvering our boat through the canals and the multiple locks we traversed on our journey. All were manned, so we needed to only make sure we didn't arrive over "lunch hour" and that we had 2 Euro ready to pop



Approaching one of the many locks along the route

into the wooden shoe the lock-keeper would lower on the end of a fishing line.

Some days we would pull up along the canal and tie up to a post or a small dock so we could bicycle into one of the villages along the route. We visited many of these small villages enjoying the shops and restaurants that we came across. As with most enjoyable experiences, the time passed far too quickly. Miraculously, we arrived in Vinkaveen on time and safe and sound, with the boat completely intact.

Dropping our Euro into the wooden shoe to pass through the lock.





LE BOAT

If anyone is looking for a new adventure, check out Le Boat. They have canal cruises throughout most of Europe: https://www.leboat.ca/en/holiday-deals

THE CANAL AND RIVER TRUST

https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/ is the website of the administrator for UK canals. Search their site for the excellent overview article "Information for First-Time Holiday Boaters". The article has lots of tips and warnings, and would apply to canal touring elsewhere.

CANAL JUNCTION

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While this is a tour company website, this article about how to choose which canals to travel is quite neutral. "Choosing the Ideal Route": https://www.canaljunction.com/canal/which.htm

TRAVEL TIPS

The Guardian newspaper offers some specific trips recommended by readers. Search for "Canal and river boat holidays in Europe: readers' travel tips"

https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2019/may/09/canal-river-holidays-europe-readers-tips-france-germany

Travellers can also check suggestions and ratings on travel sites like

- Fodors.com
- LonelyPlanet.com
- Ricksteves.com and
- CNTraveller.com (high end),
- TripAdvisor.com
- Google Maps, in the area of interest



Reached our final destination

BRENT BUSCH started teaching in Nanaimo/Ladysmith in 1974. He was a Resource Teacher before being appointed to his first principalship in 1980. He retired as a principal in 2006 and has enjoyed travelling ever since.

POSTSCRIPT CRUISING IN HOLLAND



A.K.A. HOW THIS IGNORANT TEACHER WAS NO FOOL

BY VERN GIESBRECHT

I've never won a teaching award, but perhaps should receive some sort of recognition for a rather impressive feat: I taught a high school class without knowing anything about the subject.

"That's nothing," cynics might scoff. "Incompetent teachers do it all the time." Just please hear me out.

Many years ago, another English teacher and I found ourselves with a "hole" in our timetables, while the administration had two new courses with no teachers assigned to them. The courses were Economics and Shorthand. I had a bit more seniority than my colleague, so I was allowed to pick a course. Without knowledge or interest in either subject, I chose Shorthand.

For the remaining two weeks of summer, I immersed myself in the Shorthand textbook, trying to make sense of squiggles and swirls that might have been hieroglyphics.

Happily for me, the student textbooks had been delayed, so for the first couple of weeks I masqueraded as a shorthand teacher to a friendly, talkative group of Grade 11 girls. I tried to make things as interesting as possible as I labored each day to keep ahead of the students.

The students' chattiness was interfering with my lessons (and their learning) so I suggested a compromise: I would give them a "talking break" about halfway through each class. In return they would listen and do their work quietly the rest of the time.

This tactic worked surprisingly well, but then a different problem arose. The textbooks finally arrived, and now the students had access to the same material that I did. These were bright kids, and I realized their knowledge of shorthand would soon surpass mine.

SHORT CUTS POSTSCRIPT 17



I changed tactics; no longer did I demonstrate the squiggles and swirls on the blackboard. Instead, I left them to proceed through the curriculum by doing the assigned pages from the excellent textbook. My only "teaching" involved devising fun contests to keep them interested, doling out assignments and tests, and marking them.

Now I could devote more time to my English classes. Soon, I stopped dreading being caught out by an unexpected visit from the Principal or Director of Instruction to my shorthand class. I'm sure some (or even most) of the students must have caught on that I was an imposter, but no one "ratted" on me, and I actually began to enjoy this class.

Some of the girls became proficient at shorthand and could have found ready employment as stenographers. Everyone passed the course, and the administration was happy (at least I heard no complaints).

Many years after this adventure, my knowledge of shorthand remains virtually non-existent. I recall something about a "J stroke", but perhaps I'm confusing this with a canoeing manoeuvre. Still, this shorthand class remains a fond memory, even if my remarkable feat has never received the acclaim it deserved. •



VERN GIESBRECHT taught in several BC school districts before becoming an Adult Basic Education instructor and literacy co-ordinator at Capilano University.

18 POSTSCRIPT SHORT CUTS



Those who do not enjoy kayaking often ask those of us who do if we worry about falling in while in the middle of the lake and having to swim to shore. In the ten years I've been kayaking, this has never happened - fall in at the edge of the water. Most of us have some form of arthritic pain interfering with embarking and disembarking. Trying to get my balance while the footing beneath me tips back and forth is tricky regardless. Add a sore knee into the equation and nothing stable to hang onto; that's when slip-ups happen.

The tow ropes at ski hills have me wishing for some strategically-placed lines at kayaker-eye-level, running from the shallows right up to the beach. Even more fun would be a strong lifeguard on the beach who could pull you up out of the kayak--the bigger his muscles the bigger his tip!

Naturally enough, I did fall in while getting out of the kayak on a day when we had planned to drive up to our local resort for lunch. I had soaked my shorts, so now it looked like I had wet my pants! My friend suggested I attach my shorts to her side mirror. As we cruised down the highway, I'm sure we looked like a five-car parade--our friends following right behind us, kayaks on every car, and flying my shorts as a flag at the front. Thanks to a scorcher of a summer it all worked out—the shorts were toasty and lunch was great.

Other mishaps, such as the "tragic garage incident" a few years back, have nothing to do with the lake. Driving home from kayaking, a friend was one day so engrossed in a CBC podcast she forgot her

garage door opening was not tall enough to accommodate both the car and the kayak. She damaged the kayak, the roof rack, and the garage door, but the biggest damage was to her wallet. Blame it on the CBC!

Still, we keep going. One spring day, two of us were enjoying the quiet of the lake. With only a few kayakers, the atmosphere was very Zen. There are always a couple of loons—the avian kind not the human kind. They call out across the lake, letting us know that we are invading their territory. We watched the occasional fish jump out right in front of us. When it was time to go in, we noticed two other kayakers heading toward the very small beach.

My friend said, "Let's hang back and wait for them to beach first, because I might need more time to get out."

"Me too," I agreed. We watched with empathy as they struggled to get out of their boats.

"Do we look like that when we get out of our kayaks?" I asked.

"Probably, but who cares. I plan to paddle until I'm old," she replied.

"And I'll be right there with you." •

SYLVIA OLSON taught in Edmonton and was an exchange teacher in Germany. She retired from Kamloops SD73 and is currently working on a memoir of her year in Germany.

KAYAK MANOUEVRES POSTSCRIPT 19

important dates

Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security

Includes the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) retirement pension and disability, children's and survivor benefits.

Payment dates 2023

2023

- January 27, 2023
- February 24, 2023
- March 29, 2023
- April 26, 2023
- May 29, 2023
- June 28, 2023

20

- July 27, 2023
- August 29, 2023
- September 27, 2023
- October 27, 2023
- November 28, 2023
- December 20, 2023

Teachers' Pension Plan

Here are upcoming dates that pension payments are directly deposited to accounts.

Payment dates 2023

2023

- January 30, 2023
- February 27, 2023
- March 30, 2023
- April 27, 2023
- May 30, 2023
- June 29, 2023

- July 28, 2023
- August 30, 2023
- September 28, 2023
- October 30, 2023
- November 29, 2023
- December 21, 2023



POSTSCRIPT IMPORTANT DATES

IT'S COLOMBIA NOT COLUMBIA

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY GERRY TIEDE

Have you ever arrived in a far-away city very early in the morning and wondered what to do until you could check-in to your hotel? Try shopping, cooking, and talking with a local Colombian chef!

We landed in Bogota at 5:00 AM, collected our luggage and passport stamps, and, with relief, found our driver holding a sign with our names. We picked up a local chef on our way into the city, and went directly to the Mercado Paloquemao, a giant food and flower market, where the chef introduced us to many exotic fruits and other local delicacies. Once her baskets were filled, we drove to her apartment, where she made a sumptuous lunch and taught us how to make empanadas.

Bogota is a large, high-altitude city with a messy history. In the oldest part, La Candelaria, you'll find cobblestone streets, the 17th-century church, the city square, and the museums. We especially enjoyed Fernando Botero's paintings at the Botero Museum. with inflated figures, such as his Mona Lisa, that look like balloons in the Macy's Thanksgiving parade.

We learned about the legend of El Dorado (literally "The Golden One") at the Gold Museum. In ancient times, a new chief of the Muisca people was covered in gold dust and placed, with more gold and precious stones, on a raft on Lake Guatavita. At the right time,



Above and below: At the Mercado Paloquemao





Fernando Botero's Mona Lisa

it was all tipped into the middle of the lake to inaugurate the new leader. Stories of such vast wealth motivated the Spanish to explore and settle in South America, and they apparently did drain Lake Guatavita to plunder its vast treasures.

Later, on our way through the countryside to visit the lake, we stopped for a meal and were unexpectedly trapped in the parking lot by a parade of costumed school children celebrating Carnival. When you are open to whatever happens, don't

"When you are open to whatever happens, don't you often find that the journey is even better than the destination?"

you often find that the journey is even better than the destination?

In Bogota, we confined our exploring to the tourist areas and found it very safe. Even late in the evening the restaurant and shopping areas were hopping with local people and European and Central American tourists. The parks and neighborhood squares had beautiful street art, buskers, entertainers, and lots of other goodnatured activity.



Bogota Street Art

22 POSTSCRIPT IT'S COLOMBIA





"Trapped" by a parade

Cartagena, a short flight away on the Caribbean, quickly became one of our all-time favourite cities. We stayed within the 500-year-old city walls in historic Hotel Santa Clara Cartagena. Built as a Spanish Colonial convent in 1621, it also served as a hospital before falling to ruin. The Sofitel hotel chain has been restored to its original condition. We ate breakfast each morning in cloistered gardens full of flowers, trees, and birds; it was as if one could dine in the McMillan arboretum in Vancouver.

A butler explained the history of the hotel, showing us the Mother Superior's quarters, (now the wine cellar) and the chapel with a one-way grill at the back which allowed the nuns to see their families during service, without being seen themselves. We were told that only 20% of the nuns entered the cloistered convent willingly. For the rest, an illegitimate pregnancy could result in forced entry, as could a family's inability to afford more than one dowry for a suitable groom. In that case, any remaining daughters might be forced into the convent by their families, rather than risk an "unsuitable match".

When the convent crypt was cleaned out to restore the building, the bones were carefully collected to be reburied. The reporter and novelist Gabriel García Márquez watched the proceedings and when one niche was opened, a stream of coppercolored hair poured out, allegedly 22 meters, 11

centimeters. Remembering a legend from his youth, Marquez wrote about a wild 12-year-old girl who was venerated for the miracles she performed before dying from a dog bite. I read the resulting novel, *Of Love and Other Demons*, on the return flight.

In 1533, the Spanish established Cartegena on a site which had been occupied for at least 6000 years before the colonial period. It grew because of its strategic port, the departure point for the Zenú, Muisca, Aymara, and Quechua silver and the gold plundered by the Spanish. (One piece they stole was a 132-pound solid gold porcupine!) Much worse, it was also the entrance for enslaved Africans, with over 100,000 brought through the port during just its worst 100 years.



Cartegena

IT'S COLOMBIA POSTSCRIPT 23

In 1619, a group of slaves escaped into the forest and formed the first free African town in the Americas...



We spent hours exploring the cobblestoned streets, ancient buildings, slave market, churches, and museums. While cycling the city walls, we came upon a very skilled men's baseball game being played on an odd diamond in the street between the wall and the buildings—the distance from 1st to 2nd base was twice the distance from 2nd to 3rd. When one team went in to bat, the players left their gloves in the field for the other team to use. There were about 200 boisterous fans, some on the wall with us.

As a day trip, we visited Palenque where, in 1619, a group of slaves escaped into the forest and formed the first free African town in the Americas. The Spanish attacked many times over the years, but the village survived and grew and has been declared a *Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* by UNESCO. 3500 people, intensely proud of their history and culture, live in a self-governing village complete with its own justice

system. In addition to a local healer with jars and jars of natural medicines, we were surprised to find a well-equipped gym with two boxing rings; the town boasts a World Boxing Association welterweight title holder who returned to inspire and train the youth of the town. Who knows—perhaps the young man we met during a pause in his training could be the next world welterweight champion!

Colombia is on the equator with a warm climate but in the mountains and on the coast the weather was very comfortable. We enjoyed the native Colombian foods, but the international fine-dining scene was spectacular and half the cost of the equivalent in Vancouver. Put Colombia on your bucket list, or better yet, join me for 2 weeks on the BCRTA Group Tour in January 2024 organized by Trip Merchant! •



Street baseball

GERRY TIEDE was President of BCRTA from 2018 to 2020. An experienced traveller, he has led BCRTA group departures to Portugal and Morocco, Egypt and Jordan, and recently to Croatia. **See the following page to learn how you can join him on a trip to Colombia.**

24 POSTSCRIPT IT'S COLOMBIA



*All sightseeing and meals as per itinerary (26 meals – 13 Breakfasts, 9 lunches, 4 Dinners), all tipping for drivers and guides, all entrance fees as per itinerary, arrival and departure transfers, private English Speaking guide throughout the entire trip, local specialty guides, all taxes, 3 domestic flights within Colombia (Bogota to Pereira | Pereira to Medellin | Medellin to Cartagena) *Not Included: International airfare.

Join Gerry Tiede as we uncover the beauty and diversity of Colombia, the 2nd most biodiverse country in the world! Gerry and his wife, Jeanie, have led very successful BCRTA group departures to Portugal, Morocco, Egypt and Croatia. Don't miss this one!

Your extensive itinerary includes:

3 Nights: Bogota – Sofitel Victoria Regia (5 star)

3 Nights: Coffee Region (Pereira) – San Carlos Lodge (4 star)

1 Night: Guatape — Hotel Los Recuerdos (3 star) 2 Nights: Medellin — Hotel Park 10 (4 star)

4 Nights: Cartagena – Hotel Nacar Cartagena (4 star)

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FaMily of Feasts

BY DALE LEOPKEY

Of the nine Leopkey families, three live in New Brunswick, four in British Columbia, one in the state of Georgia, and one in Irapauto, Mexico. At time of writing, the age range is five to over eighty years. The Eastern Leopkeys meet annually, the Western Leopkeys twice a year, and sometimes East meets West and they all get together.

These Leopkeys are for the most part serious-minded citizens who go about daily lives of home, school, and work with purpose and dedication. However, on Sandcastle Weekend, a group compulsion urgently

overtakes them. They determinedly make their way by land, sea, and air to the ever-mysterious island in the Salish Sea called Texada.

They flock together at the island home of the family elders known as Marzie and Pops. (N.B.: for their own protection and reputation on Texada Island, these persons have been given pseudo-names.) Upon arrival from near and far, hectic, happy, and harmonious preparations for a parade and castlebuilding begin. Magic happens – they shed their usual decorum and become most playful!



Day of the Dead Parade

26 POSTSCRIPT FAMILY OF FEASTS



The Greeks

As with many Canadian families, this family is quite diverse, with English, Acadian, American, Japanese, and Mexican heritages. When flocked together it is not uncommon to hear English conversation mixed with French, Japanese, and Spanish and on occasion Meg throws in a word or two of Russian. Even in English, there's a pleasant mix of Maritime and Western Canadian accents. In honour of this diversity, the Texada property often flies the red and white Maple Leaf, along with Japanese koinobori fish flags, the colourful Mexican national flag, and for those who just cannot make up their minds, a pirate flag – Arrrrrgh!

Many ask, "Where do they all sleep?"

The Texada property includes a home and adjacent cottage. The property was purchased in 1949 by Marzie's parents, Evelyn and Lindsay Phillips. A tent sufficed for several years while Lindsay built a small cottage, which has been lovingly maintained by the subsequent three generations of family members. It has two bedrooms accommodating two double beds, one single, and a bunk bed. It also accommodates some itinerant mice and a permanent population of spiders, both of which are

popular with some, not so much with others; Tara tends to favour a "catch and release" policy; others go for "immediate extermination".

The family house, built by Marzie's parents in 1976, contains the main bedroom (AKA a sanctuary for the elderly Leopkeys), the "Princess Room" (named for the granddaughters Princess Miyuki and Princess Satsuki) with a double bed and a special Princess bunk-bed, and the adjacent "dungeon", with two double-beds and a bunk bed (for many of the Leopkey riff-raff). The young newcomer Leopkeys and the "wanna-be" Leopkeys pitch tents in the yard. On occasion, when East meets West, local B&Bs have been booked.

Who feeds them, and what do they all eat?" others ask, in awe.

Thanks to the family social convener, Chloe, each family comes prepared to host a special meal. Two "Pan Pops" make mac & cheese and prepare 100 crepes. Jay and Meg bring fresh Victoria bagels and many exotic cheeses, and also prepare homemade pizza. Tobin and Kana prepare and present an exquisite Japanese meal and, of course, Tara and

FAMILY OF FEASTS POSTSCRIPT 27





Gabriel host a great Mexican fiesta (which means "feast"). Tim the BBQ man plans a final-day feast on the beach, his specialty BBQed oysters on the shell. Marzie and Chloe always come up with scrumptious meals and there are salads and desserts of every description. In the past few years, kids have been competing in a "Food Chop", preparing great dishes, but woe is the kitchen, as clean-up crews are hard pressed to deal with the aftermath.

"Why do they come?" you ask. The answer? Because they like to play!!!!!

During the year, themes for the parade are bandied about through the family app on our phones. One may be chosen at the last moment, and even then, changes are often made. Niece Lola came up with

28



Kian, our Mexi-Canadian grandson came up with this year's theme: "Pollinators are Super-Heroes".





last year's "Greek Mythology" theme, and Kian, our Mexi-Canadian grandson came up with this year's theme: "Pollinators are Super-Heroes".

Whatever! The family members respond big time. Scrounging in closets and thrift stores begins. The result: everyone comes prepared with a costume or the makings of one. On the Friday before the parade, costumes are finalized, revised, and sometimes abandoned. Also on this day, a float is built—last year Tim's truck was The Parthenon, and this year, a giant dragonfly with flapping wings made from two fishing rods. This costume and float day is filled with help, cajoling, haranguing, and much laughter! The next day, ten minutes before the start, Danny, our choreographer, puts us through our dance steps and musical score. We are off to the parade!

On Sandcastle Day, much last-minute organizing occurs. Family teams are chosen, teen teams organized, and of course elite adult teams are discussing design and gathering garden tools for the grand assault on the beach. Creativity and lots of hard shoveling have produced some amazing sculptures over the years. Awards are often won, but the most coveted trophy seems to be: "Most Sand Moved".

As Sandcastle Weekend comes to an end, sobriety overtakes the Leopkey families and after many hugs and goodbyes, the Magic disappears, costumes are abandoned to the dress-up box, and trophies are packed. The Parthenon-Dragonfly Truck reverts to being just Tim's truck, filled with damp and soiled camping gear. The exhausted Leopkey families struggle with their long trips across the Salish Sea to their respective homes where they once again will take up their daily lives of home, school, and work.

As families leave, Marzie and Pops remain in their home on Texada Island, with fridge and freezer packed with left-overs, piles of bedding to be washed, and mountains of fond memories to be cherished. They give a sigh of relief at family departures, but within the hour they are missing everyone and beginning to plan for the next Family Play-date!

We love our diverse and playful families. •

DALE LEOPKEY wrote his memoirs for the benefit of family, who encouraged him to share some of them with PostScript. He has been retired for 28 years and resides in Gillies Bay on Texada Island.

FAMILY OF FEASTS POSTSCRIPT 29

ADVENTURES IN HOME EXCHANGING

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BILL LOW

Jennifer and I have been passionate travelers for many decades, enjoying a variety of travel modes including vacation rentals, road trips, rail tours, river and ocean cruises, and self-directed touring. One favourite, perhaps less-well-known, mode involves home exchanges. We've done 26 in 20 years!

WHAT IS HOME EXCHANGING?

Home exchanges usually involve a swap of homes, anything from a cabin or condo to a detached home and often include a car as well. Several organizations provide this service, but we have been really satisfied with HomeLink, which has its Canadian headquarters in North Vancouver. While not usually our preference, they also offer "home hosting" whereby the host is still on site while the guest occupies part of the home. On 5 occasions this has been the best option.

The details and timing are worked out between the parties months before the trip. We like to meet the other party in person if possible, so we invite them to come the day before we leave so we can show them the home details and host them for dinner at a local restaurant. Often we depart that evening to the airport or a hotel.

OUR DESTINATIONS

A few of our early experiences can give a flavour for how this all works.



AMSTERDAM, OUR 1ST HOME EXCHANGE

We did not know what to expect when first we listed our home in Maple Ridge on the international HomeLink website, but soon, a couple from the Netherlands contacted us asking if we would exchange with them that summer. They offered their luxury condo on the Herengracht Canal in downtown Amsterdam.

Although they were younger than us, we made a good connection with Ruud and Therese when they arrived, and they gave us the keys to their Amsterdam condo. When we entered the attractive centuries-old waterfront building and took our luggage up the stairs to the second floor, unit 4, the key would not open the door! We were knocking and talking about what to do when a neighbour came out of his unit to see what the fuss was. We explained our instructions – second floor, unit 4. He said "This is the first floor, the one above the ground floor. In Europe, you have to go up one more level". Once we got in, the accommodation was wonderful: modern, bright, and with all conveniences.

We had given the Dutch couple our car to use, but they did not have a car in Amsterdam, so they gave us train and tram tickets instead. We explored all over Holland and Belgium from this base for three weeks.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

The Grand tour: After our retirement in 2003, we headed to Australia and New Zealand. We planned to be away from the beginning of September until Christmas in 2003. Canadians want to go "Down Under" in our fall or winter, and they want to come to Canada between April and October, so we needed to use the "non-simultaneous" exchange option: we would owe these Aussies and Kiwis our home on future dates as mutually arranged. We had a summer cottage on Harrison Lake, or could take off on some other trip while they were here. It was



quite a feat to arrange one simultaneous and three non-simultaneous home exchanges in Australia, on the west coast, in the middle, and on the east coast, and another two stays in New Zealand!

We started on the far west coast at Mandurah, south of Perth, on the Indian Ocean, a wealthy suburban town with beautiful homes on canals (Florida-style). We landed in Perth after a gruelling 24 hours of travel, exhausted and suffering jetlag. Then Jennifer sat on our luggage outside the terminal in the heat while I hiked up and down rows and rows of white cars looking at licence plate numbers to find our hosts' vehicle.

The home was very modern and had a pool. We explored Perth, Fremantle, Rottsnest Island, and south to the wineries of the Margaret River Valley. Perth is the Vancouver of Australia—the locals there complain that "all the decisions and economic power are on the other side of the desert" meaning across the continent in Sydney and Canberra, just as we say, "on the other side of the Rockies". With the permission of our hosts, we invited Canadian friends who were also touring Australia to join us there for a week.





We wondered if someone living in downtown Vancouver might like to spend a few days out in the countryside in the Fraser Valley...

For Alice Springs, our next stop, no home exchange was available, but HomeLink members Tony and Helen loved hosting visitors from all over the world. They took us on bush walks in the area where we saw lots of wildlife including kangaroos, giant lizards, and exotic birds. We stayed with them two days, then took a land tour to Uluru and Kings Canyon in the "red centre" of Australia. At that time, one was still allowed to climb to the top of Uluru (Ayers Rock) on certain days of the week, so I was fortunate to check off that bucket-list adventure.

We next travelled to Adelaide on the famous Ghan Train, spent a few days there in a hotel, then flew to Sydney for our next home exchange up the coast at Anna Bay, where we had dinner with Mel and Sharon before they departed. Anna Bay is a beautiful area, and the house was in a nice neighbourhood. For one of many adventures, we explored the sand dunes in a large dune bus, including tobogganing down the dunes, digging for pipi cockles (clams) and visiting a koala and kangaroo rescue centre. (Interestingly, Mel did a teacher-exchange to Northern Ontario the following year.)

We proceeded to further adventures in Queensland and then New Zealand.

EXCHANGES CLOSER TO HOME

In 2004 we did an exchange to Quebec City. Our daughter and her husband were posted to Valcartier, Quebec in the Canadian Forces, and our first grandchild was born that spring. This two-week home exchange was a perfect way to spend time with them and yet have our own house and car. Hubert and Carmen had never been to BC and had a wonderful time staying here.

At one point, we wondered if someone living in downtown Vancouver might like to spend a few days out in the countryside in the Fraser Valley, and arranged short exchanges on two occasions. Condo dwellers were excited to come out to a large home in the valley for a few days, and we got to enjoy city life.

Subsequent exchanges took place over the next 15 years to places as nearby as Vancouver, Victoria, Parksville, and Seattle, and as far away as Germany, Switzerland, England, New Orleans, Lake Tahoe, and three more trips to Australia.

BILL LOW had three careers: 20 years as a military engineer in the Canadian Forces, 17 years as a city engineer and then as Director of Facilities for the third largest school district in BC (Coquitlam), and finally as president of his own small consulting company. Bill and his wife Jennifer have traveled extensively using a variety of methods.

Is Home Exchange Right for You?

HOW IT WORKS

Once listed on the site, you can search for compatible exchanges that would suit your travel plans (location, timing, type, etc.). Then you send offers to several potential exchanges, via the website. You may get many "No Thanks" before one works: it might not suit the other party's preferences for location, timing, and so on. Don't be discouraged.

You may have to compromise. For example, we only wanted to exchange with couples, but twice we have accepted families with teenagers or adult children. Sometimes, we included a car (essential in BC) but accepted that we did not need one in a European city. In beach locations like Maroochydore and Lake Tahoe, the exchangers included kayaks and beach toys for our use. HomeLink offers the option to insure your home exchange for about \$35. We often did, and once had to use it when an exchange was canceled on short notice.

PROS

The biggest attraction is that you live in the community, meet neighbours, shop, explore locally, and experience daily life, so different from staying in a hotel or even some rentals. The second advantage is cost. Apart from your membership fee of about \$150 per year, you get a home and often a car for free.

CONS

Home exchanging isn't for everyone. You must be comfortable turning your home over to strangers for 2 or 3 weeks. We do lock one room or closet with our personal files and valuables, but they have full use of the rest of the home. We have found members of the program to be very respectful of our property.

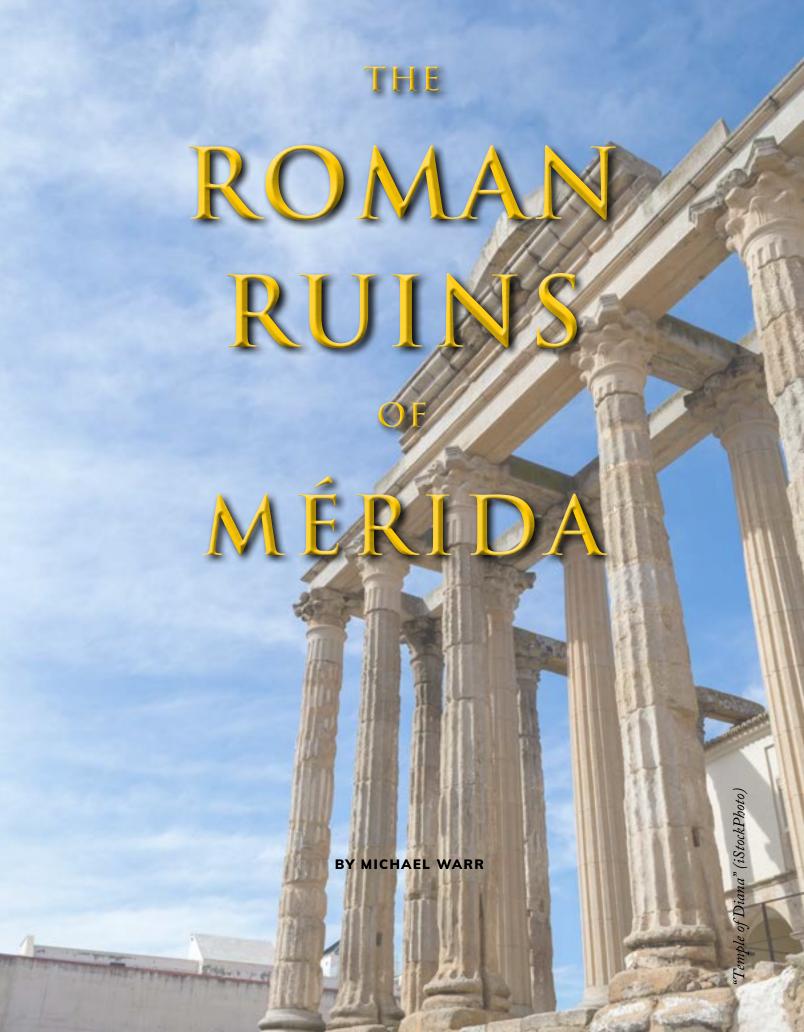
There is a risk that the home will not be exactly as described, though only once in 26 exchanges have we been disappointed. You may have to compromise regarding the dates or accommodation type, but these choices can surprise you with positive experiences, too.

SAMPLE HOMELINK LISTING IN 2018 - OUR PREVIOUS HOME IN CHILLIWACK BC



DESCRIPTION OF THE HOME WE ARE OFFERING FOR EXCHANGE

Experienced exchangers (24) offering a modern house in a quiet friendly neighbourhood in the beautiful Fraser Valley, surrounded by snow-capped mountains. The 4-bedroom home has a large front verandah, and a back patio with gas barbecue. Located in Chilliwack, where you can cycle or walk along the Vedder River on the Trans-Canada Trail, explore a blue heron sanctuary, hike the nearby Coast Range mountains, fish for salmon and sturgeon, visit Fort Langley museum, visit First Nations native sites, swim or golf at Cultus Lake or Harrison Hot Springs, and kayak/raft the white water of the Chilliwack River. The City of Chilliwack also offers live theatre, concerts, museums, dining, and shopping. Vancouver is accessible by freeway about one hour away. Mount Baker ski resort is just across the US border, one hour away. The spectacular Fraser Canyon, Hell's Gate, and Manning Park are about an hour to the east.



I started to learn Spanish as a result of four tours to Antarctica; one generally leaves from Argentina or Chile for the Antarctic. I had plans to live in Buenos Aires for three weeks in the spring of 2020, but COVID intervened. That led to studying Spanish for almost three years, via two ninetyminute Zoom sessions per week with a teacher in Prince George, where I live, and another with a teacher in the Dominican Republic.

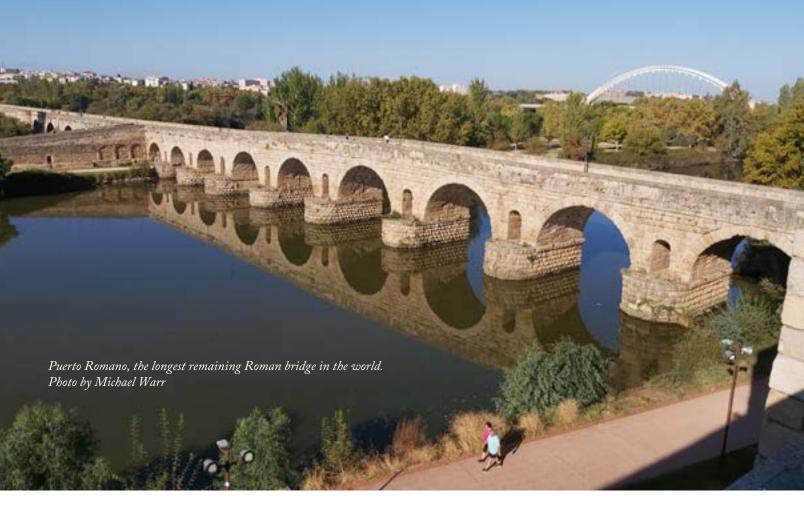
My sister lives in London in the United Kingdom, and I had never been to Spain, so in 2022 I spurned the better-known tourist places—the Costas, Barcelona, Sevilla—and instead headed to Mérida, in Extremadura. The only difficulty I had in reaching the city, which lies three-and-a-half hours southwest from Madrid, was in finding the right train station; while next to the Atocha rail stations, it was tucked underneath a major road.

This region is one of the poorer areas of Spain, and its capital, Mérida, is an unprepossessing city of 60,000. But it had what I wanted for my two-week

October holiday: predominantly Spanish-speaking people, a city of a walkable size, and the best collection of Roman ruins in Spain.

Caesar Augustus completed the conquest of Hispania in 29 BCE and in 25 BCE founded Emerita ("Retired" or "Veteran") Augusta for two retired legions. The city remained the administrative centre of southwest Hispania for four hundred years, and was important off and on during the Visigoth, Islamic, and Christian eras that followed. Other Spanish cities have one or two better examples of specific Roman structures, but Mérida has all the major ancient structures, including a beautiful 6,000-person performance theatre, an amphitheatre that could hold 15,000 people to watch gladiatorial events, and an oval racing circus, now an open space with few remains. Even more than gladiator fighting, chariot racing, with 30,000 people watching, was the most important entertainment here. Expensive horses and charioteers were brought in from all over the Roman Empire. Within the city lie remains





of Roman baths, cemeteries, and several villas, including the 2000 square meter Casa de Mitreo (named for the Mithraeum next door). There were also two underground rooms for when the owner and his family needed relief from the heat; the slaves would have had to suffer up top. In the centre of the city stand the remains of the mis-named "Temple of Diana" (actually built to honor the imperial cult of Augustus). Its granite Corinthian pillars were spared when the Count of Corbos incorporated them into his palace in the 16th century, to very odd effect.

The Puerto Romano which spans the Guadiana River is the longest remaining Roman bridge. But my favourite ruin was the Los Milagros ("Miraculous") Aqueduct that once brought water from six kilometres away. The occasional stork stood on top of the remaining 25-metre-high arches.

I explored most of the city's ruins, including the few Visigoth and Arab remains, and other local city institutions. I also made two trips outside of Mérida. I hired a car and drove to the Montfragüe National Park, with its medieval castle, dammed

rivers, and vultures soaring around a three-hundred-metre cliff. On the way back I stopped at Trujillo, the birthplace of Pizarro the conquistador; the local castle was used in an episode of *Game of Thrones*.

On another day, I took the train north to Cáceres. Established as a city by the Romans in 25 BCE, today it's a popular tourist town full of Moorish towers from the Islamic era. ("I'll just hire these North Africans to help me deal with my local enemy," said one Visigoth leader in 711. It took





Above: the rustic dehesa. Below: Cáceres (iStockPhoto)

over seven hundred years for the Christians to retake all of Spain.) Cáceres also has many fortified buildings from when local Christians battled amongst themselves in the 15th century. Once Ferdinand and Isabella took full control of Spain at the end of the 15th century, the fighting petered out, and these were turned into palaces during the peace of the 16th century.

Most of the surrounding countryside is *dehesa*, an ancient multipurpose land system. This mix of oak trees and pastureland is intensively managed to produce cork, acorns which sustain Iberian pigs and wildlife, and grazing to support the pigs, Spanish fighting bulls, and sheep. The main meat in all restaurants and cafes at any time of the day is ham. It is very good, though the best ham is extremely expensive. I am not a vegetarian, but I missed having vegetables, which were, at best, secondary items at mealtimes.

My only difficulties came from temperatures that consistently climbed to above 30 degrees centigrade in the afternoons, 6-7 degrees above average, making it too hot for walking. I would retire to my hotel for an extended siesta, and also had time to talk to one of the receptionists. On the afternoon of my arrival, she had asked whether she should speak English. I had firmly replied, "Tú hablas inglés y yo hablo español." We got on well with our two-language conversations.

Hotel Vettonia, a modern two-star hotel, was comfortable. I probably overused the air conditioner. Needs must. The hotel was a block away from a small square with four cafes and restaurants. 67% of Spaniards live in apartments, so squares are gathering places for locals. Especially on Friday afternoons, there would be continual greetings, talking, flirting, and acting up. And this was just the adults. After school, kids would gather and wait for their parents to treat them. I could hear the chatter of conversations from a block away. I sat at my favourite café and listened to the life around me, even though with the local accent and the fact that Spanish is one of the fastest languages, I could understand little. Still, people in the city put up with my basic Spanish. I only encountered one person who criticized my use of the language, perhaps because she had spent several years in London and spoke very good English.

I do have a way to go in my Spanish skills, so I am planning a second trip this fall to another small city. I only hope it will not be as hot.



MICHAEL WARR taught in Fort St. John for 3 years, then 23 years in Prince George, mainly learning assistance. On retiring he wrote a book, **South of Sixty**, about his experiences of living in the Antarctic for over two years.

BCRTA's 2023 SURVEY

WHY THIS SURVEY, AND WHY NOW?

BCRTA's commitment to serve our members' well-being is the impetus for this survey. We want to hear from you about the things that concern you and the aspects of your life which are going well.

There has been significant disruption to the health care system's ability to care for Canadians of all ages over the past several years. These challenges ring particularly true for retirement-age populations, who have experienced much higher rates of significant illness and mortality during the pandemic, and have also faced rising food and home maintenance costs, while on a fixed income.

BCRTA'S 2023 *Health and Community Survey* has a focus on these key issues. By taking a few minutes to share your thoughts with us, you will help your association better advocate for your needs and plan for the services that will help you most.

FINANCIAL

Ah, retirement, that time when your busy life of getting and spending is all behind you and everything is simple, right? Hardly. Retirees often have complex financial situations, with a mix of pensions, savings, investments, and uneven government assistance. Maintaining your established living situation and health needs may become more difficult over time. By collecting data from members we will better understand our members' range of financial situations and will be better able to identify the information and resources you may need to stay financially stable. Beyond the technical aspect, identifying your financial pressure points will help us understand where we can provide useful information.

HEALTH SERVICES ACCESS AND QUALITY

Accessing health services can be challenging for many seniors, particularly those living in rural areas or who face transportation or mobility issues. Through this survey, we will gain a better understanding of how members are accessing health services, the barriers they face, and the particular services that are most important to them. This information will help us prioritize advocacy efforts to ensure that BC seniors have access to the health services they need, and it will also help us develop a picture of what you are doing to maximize health.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Many seniors live alone or have limited social connections outside of their immediate family, particularly since the onset of the pandemic. This can be challenging for mental and emotional well-being and can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. We want to understand our members' social connections and any challenges you may be experiencing. This information will help us identify areas where education or outreach efforts are needed to promote social connections and combat isolation.

A SAFE PLACE AT HOME

Seniors face a variety of safety concerns, from the risk of falls or accidents in their own home to concerns around crime or fraud. Through the survey, we can gain insight into members' safety concerns and the specific issues you face. This information will help us prioritize advocacy efforts to improve home safety, reduce the risk of fraud, and ensure that seniors are safe and secure in their homes. We are coming to realize that there will not be unlimited government-provided resources in specialized care facilities, and also that most people prefer to maintain their independence. Let us know your thoughts on this topic.

This survey will take just a few minutes, and the postage is paid for you - if you prefer, complete the survey online. This small investment of your time will give us very valuable insights into how to serve the needs of you and your peers.

Thank you for your participation!

Health and Community SURVEY 2023 BC RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Welcome to the BCRTA 2023 Survey, where we are exploring our members' experience with health and life in their community. Your answers are completely confidential. You can also do the survey online at **bcrta.ca/survey**.

At the end of the survey, you have a chance to enter to be eligible to win one of these prizes: \$100 Visa Card · \$25 Starbucks Cards (5) · \$10 Tim Horton's Card (10) · BCRTA Pen (10)

1.	Are you a member of BCRTA? (you must answer) *		Things I Enjoyed This Year
	Yes	7.	In the last year I was able to enjoy
	○ No		Check all that apply.
2.	How long have you been retired? Not yet retired Less than 5 years Less than 10 years 10 - 15 years over 15 years		Walking in my community Hosting a special dinner for family or friends Cycling, swimming or hiking Coffee out with friends Social media connections Cultural activities, such as a museum visit or concert A longer trip outside of Canada Camping or long nature walks Dancing in a class or socially
3.	What is your age? 59 or less		In person participation in a club, association or faith community
	60-65 66-70 71-75 76-80 Over 80	8.9.	How would you rate your current health? Poor
	Your Household		Check all that apply.
4.	How many people are in your household? Just me Two people Three or more		Walking Cooking, cleaning and taking out trash Sports, hiking and work-outs Communicating by phone Computer tasks such as email Zoom online meetings Paperwork for finances, taxes, etc.
5.	Do you provide regular essential care or support for someone else in your household? Yes		Online purchases and deliveries Grocery shopping at the store
	□ No		Getting Around Town
6.	Do you receive personal care from someone in your household or a family member? Yes No	10.	My location is convenient for shopping, medical appointments and seeing friends. Poor

11.	Which of the following are concerns in your current location? Check all that apply.	and support you need?						
	Annual housing costs Accessibility to public transit Feeling safe in the neighborhood Accessibility (adequate handrails and ramps) Distance from loved ones	Never						
	Property taxes	17. How concerned are you with the cost of prescription medications?						
	Financial Security	Not Very Concerned 1 2 3 4 5 Concerned						
12.	How would you rate your overall financial security?							
	Poor Excellent 1 2 3 4 5	Our Health Care System						
13.	Please select the items below that are true for you	18. How much confidence do you have in the government bodies responsible for healthcare in BC?						
	Check all that apply. Not sure I can maintain my lifestyle with my current income I plan my financial outlays with extreme care I go with the flow when it comes to spending I am financially better off than most seniors My housing situation is not too expensive for me	Little Confidence 1 2 3 4 5 Complete Confidence						
	I defer my property taxes Rising interest rates affect me negatively I currently rent I have the money to pay for personal support in my home I feel I cannot afford some of my household repairs or strata costs	 19. Do you feel that government policy prioritizes the daily needs of seniors and vulnerable populations? Not						
14.	Health Experiences Please indicate which of the items below are true for you Check all that apply. I have a family doctor or nurse practitioner I have specialist doctors (cardiologist or other)	20. Do you feel that government officials and providers are held accountable for the effectiveness of the system? Mark only one oval. No Somewhat Completely						
15.	In the last year how many times did you talk with a health professional for a check-up, appointment or procedure? once or twice	21. How much confidence do you have that your local hospital could help you in a crisis?						
	3 to 5 times 6 to 10 times More than 10 times I was hospitalized	Little Confidence 1 2 3 4 5 Complete Confidence						

22.	Which of the following is true for you personally?	Lifestyle Now and in the Future							
	Check all that apply.	25.	Indicate which pla	ns for the futu	for the future you already have in place				
	I have family members who still need my financial support I get some financial help from family members I provide childcare for family or friends I personally know most of the neighbours close to me My neighbours have helped me out in the last year I have helped out my neighbors recently I'm living in a place I prefer to stay Things are going well in my city/town I volunteer regularly I work part-time I have close connections via my RTA, clubs or faith community		of health probl I have researche in my commur I have discusse I have planned f I have looked in I have complete I have discusse I have a power of	ergency housing and care plan in case oblems ched the in-home support services available					
	Living								
23.	Which of the following is true for you since the onset of COVID19?		Your Association	on					
	Check all that apply.	26.	26. How important to you are these dimensions of B						
	Since COVID my circle of friends is smaller than it was Since COVID my circle of friends has become larger Since COVID my relationships with some family are more difficult Since COVID my relationships with family have improved		Mark only one oval p	er row. Not Important	Important	Very Important			
			Pension Security						
	☐ I have concerns about group activities since COVID	Saving money / Special Offers Insurance Options							
24.	Where do you live?		Travel Opportunities						
	Mark only one oval.	Issues Advocacy (Townhalls)							
	Northern BC		Health Information						
	BC Interior Kootenays	Advoc	acy for Public Education						
	Okanagan	Con	necting with Colleagues						
	Lower Mainland Vancouver Island / Gulf Islands		PostScript Magazine						
	Outside BC		Email News						

Your Thoughts
Please share any other concerns or comments you have on the topics covered by this survey.
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Tell as more about what you like about bernix of what you would like to see.
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DAYS OF Maying

BY CHRISTINA SCHENKEL-GOLDT



Fin Wendepunkt im Leben!

1. Sept. 1948



Tag der offenen Tür 20. Mai 1950

Wearing a new dress and new shoes, with my hair freshly washed and braided in two skinny pigtails, I was proudly cradling my *Schultüte* (a pretty cardboard cone filled with candy and other treats to delight a 6 year-old heart) as I entered the Heinrich Heine Schule on my long-awaited first day of school. My Mutti (mom) held the freshly-bought, lined notebook and the freshly-sharpened, new pencil we had been instructed to bring.

We entered the classroom, she and I exchanged our items, and I found a place to sit down next to three other girls on the bench of a long wooden desk made for four. I duly folded my hands on top of the desk as I saw others do and waited quietly. The parents stood or sat at the back of the room. I didn't know anyone.

Just as I became aware of a lady sitting at a table at the front of the room, she rose from her table, moved to the front of the table and introduced herself. She wrote her name, Frau Struck, on the blackboard and welcomed us most warmly with a kind and gentle voice. Dressed in a plain dark brown skirt and a soft beige blouse, she looked to me just as I had imagined a teacher would look.

She smiled broadly and asked us to raise our hand if we liked magic. Pretty nearly all hands went up. Well, she was going to show us how to do a magic trick. I hadn't expected to do magic at school! This was a complete surprise and I was quite eager to see what was about to unfold.

She went to the blackboard and with a bright white brand-new piece of chalk she drew a beautiful,





Above, detail from a drawing "We Are Learning for Peace", by school-age Christina.

Below, the school.

Facing page: young Christina's first day at school in 1948 "A Turning Point in Life!"; in the classroom.

perfect cane in a single stroke. She asked us to open our brand-new notebooks and with our brand-new pencils to draw one just like it between the first and second line on the first page. She then slowly and carefully drew another cane near the first one and even a third one near the second one. "Can you draw a whole line of beautiful canes for me? Be sure to leave a small space between them." We eagerly went to work while she walked slowly around the classroom, offering praise and encouragement to each pupil. When she came to me, she said that my canes were beautiful.

When she arrived back at the front of the classroom she went to the blackboard again and drew a hook, the same size as the cane, a simple hook just like an upside-down cane. We were to draw a whole line of hooks precisely between the 3rd and 4th lines in our notebooks. Again she helped and encouraged each of us.

Upon returning to the front of the class she asked how many of us were ready to do magic. All hands shot in the air. We watched eagerly as she drew a cane on the blackboard, attached a second cane to the first one, attached even a third one to the second and with a grand flourish added a hook to

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the third cane. In a whispering conspiratorial tone she asked, "Abracadabra, do you recognize what I have conjured up?" When we all hesitated to reply she announced, "I have created the letter 'm' for you. Can you do the same in your notebooks? Try it between lines 5 and 6 in your notebooks. Again, she walked around with help and encouragement.

Our homework was to draw 2 more lines of 'm's' into our notebooks, always careful to leave a line between the writing. "And tomorrow we will learn 2 more magic tricks. For today you are dismissed."

Frau Struck's parting words made me all the more excited for tomorrow to arrive, but it seemed it would take forever. But I had my 2 lines of m's done in no time and both my parents approved of what I had done.

The next day, finally, after walking to school by myself, we were seated as yesterday, waiting breathlessly for the magic to start. Frau Struck welcomed us back and asked to see our homework, quickly going around the room. I don't remember anyone not having their work done. Finally, finally, she asked us who would like to do magic 2 times? All hands shot in the air.

She went to the blackboard, drew a small circle about the size of yesterday's 'm'. We quickly drew a line of circles on line 2 of the backside of yesterday's work. When she had seen everyone's work she went back to the board, attached a hook to the circle and said, "Abracadabra! This is your letter 'a'! We proceeded to proudly draw a line of a's in our notebooks while she did the round of the classroom of 39 pupils.

I was all excited wondering what the third magic trick might be. Soon Frau Struck had a very eager



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class at full attention. Soon the whole class was collectively holding our breath as we watched her draw an 'm' from yesterday, join the new letter 'a', add a second 'm' and even another 'a'. Abracadabra! The result was the word "mama"! She quickly had us sound out our first real word. Bravo! In the space of the first 2 days of school we had learned to write a familiar and meaningful word in cursive writing.

It did not take long for us to learn to make all the letters of the alphabet, lower and upper case, in cursive writing. We never did learn to print - I learned that on my own a few years later.

This happened in Communist East Germany in 1948. Over the next three years of school, I brought home school artwork depicting Russian flags and self-designed campaign posters claiming that a vote for the East German Communist party was a vote for "Freedom".

As I advanced in school, I started to have friends and opportunities for activities outside the family. One that particularly appealed to me, being an only child, was the "Junge Pioniere" (Young Pioneers), with activities just like Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Girl Guides. We went on outings, we did crafts, we met to sing songs, play ball



Propaganda posters. Left, "We Are Learning for Peace". Above, promoting the DDR's 5 Year Plan.

POSTSCRIPT DAYS OF MAGIC

games, and so on. The one big difference - it was a Communist Youth Organization. I could not understand for the life of me why my parents wanted me to go on a Sunday walk or outing with them instead of letting me have fun with the *Junge Pioniere*. East German Young Pioneers wore blue neckerchiefs while the Russian and other countries' pioneers wore red ones. We were well organized and encouraged to participate in activities that seemed quite appealing to my age group. And all my friends were pioneers too!

Much later, in Canada, Pappi told me about his nagging worries that I would become a little communist considering the atmosphere at my school and my enthusiasm for the *Junge Pioniere*. It became one of the main reasons my parents decided it was time to leave the DDR (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*).

My parents were fully aware of what I was learning but they could never voice their disapproval. Any 7 or 8 year-old would be proud to disclose to friends what their mom or dad had said privately. The East German Stasi had turned millions of neighbors, schoolmates and families into informants who monitored their fellow citizens and reported on all who were deemed to be erring ideologically. So my parents gave me their approval and offered no opinions.

THE BEACH

I suppose you could say that my parents were beach bums. We spent a lot of time at the beach with several other young families. We were all very close and there was a warm party atmosphere when we were all together. In this way my childhood was full of light and protected from darker realities.

In 1943, for my first birthday, my father wrote me a loving poem, which I now keep in a formally typed format. He noted that it was *Im 4. Kriegsjahr* (in the fourth year of war). He addressed me as



Der Rakaukenklub

The beach gang (literally "The Bullies' Club") of four young families. Our fathers were all mechanical engineers responsible for the rebuilding of the shipyards.

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Mein liebes Püppchen! (my little doll), and the unfolding verses speak of how outdoor adventure was part of the life my parents wanted to give me.

Wir sind nicht allzu.--zimperlich mit Dir verfahren; Du warst 9 Wochen erst, da reisten wir zum Darß, und sicher wirst Du schon in jungen Jahren erleben mehr als manche auf dem Lebensmarsch.

Auf dem Darß, an der Oatsee, im Blaubeerenwald, im Hauschen .mit Herz am regennassen Strand, Im Zelt und bei Fischer da wuchs Deine Gestalt umhegt von der Mutter liebevoller Hand.

We have not treated you all too delicately; you were only 9 weeks old when we took you to the Darß, and surely in your early years you will experience more than many people in their life's journey.

On the Darß, at the Baltic Sea, in the forest of blueberries, in the lovely little house on the rain-soaked beach, in a tent and at the Fischer's, you have grown with tender care from your mother's loving hands.

TONGUE TWISTERS

In Grade 1, I was able to say a tongue twister faster than any of my 40 classmates - my prize was a delicious crusty bread roll.

A friendship with a 7 year-old neighbour fueled my interest in languages. Her father was a Russian Navy officer stationed in the harbour. She spoke only Russian and I spoke only German. One afternoon we were sitting on the rim of my sandbox pretending to have "polite conversation" in the manner of an afternoon tea. We were eating a slice of black bread and some raw geen onion, alternating bites between us. When it was my turn to speak I made up gibberish with foreign intonations, as if it were meaningful. We finished eating and she said "Idi damoi, Christina, dosvidania." I had learned that much Russian. (I'm going home, Christina, bye.)

Her name was Stalina.







With Pappi at the beach (photos supplied by the author)

REGIMES

I had no awareness of the fact that both my parents had grown up and lived under the pressures of the Nazi Regime. Perhaps there had also been pressure on Pappi to stop asking so many questions during the communist indoctrination sessions that the engineers had to attend one afternoon a week. Knowing his character, I could easily imagine that he would thoroughly enjoy philosophical discussions with committed communists - and get himself in deep trouble for his opposing views. Many years later, during a Fathers' Day lunch in Vancouver, Pappi confided to me that he had been asked by the Russians to travel to Hamburg, where his mother (my Omi Goldt) lived and whom he was anxious to visit. He could only visit her with permission from the police if he agreed to bring back a Hamburg telephone book. This was still the era of Stalin's Soviet Union where any kind of information was next to impossible to obtain.

Street maps and telephone books were rare and highly prized. He agreed and it was the first of several visits he was able to make, but each time his "assignments" were raised to the next level. He decided it was getting too tricky for him and he wanted out.

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My parents had been through the economic collapse in the aftermath of WW 1, the interminable lies of the Hitler years in the 1930's and WW 2, and now again the lies and contorted propaganda of the East German communists. They were fed up with being preached to about the workers' paradise, the hypocrisy, deceptions and betrayal of the "sacred socialist dream", the compliant silence in the face of Stasi spying, and the indoctrination of their child that the state was the great protector.

It is hard for me to imagine how Mutti and Pappi could ever again believe in the sincerity and good will of humanity.

PLANS

My parents did not breathe a word of their plans to me or to anyone else. When my father was not around on New Years' Day 1951, I asked Mutti where he was. She told me that he had left our family and that from now on she and I would be alone. She even cried and when your mother cries you know things are serious. When I thought about not having a father any longer, I did remember that I had heard from other children at school that their fathers had also left; mine was not a unique situation. It was one way that people tried to flee to "The West".

One day several months later she again confided something to me and made me promise not to tell another person: absolutely no one. We were going back to Hamburg in 6 days! Sadly, we would only be able to take with us what we could carry - for me, just my tiny backpack and the very small brown leather suitcase with my doll and her clothes. This little suitcase had been my mother's as a young girl. I would have to leave behind my other toys and possessions. Letting go of my favourite, the play kitchen, was heart-breaking, and I still feel a pang of sadness whenever I think about it (those stupid, horrible, East German Communists!). The hardest part of this whole exciting development was not being able to share my excitement with my friends. Even now I am truly amazed that my mother had such complete trust in me.

Unbeknownst to me, for several months Mutti had been sending parcels containing some of our most important possessions to Hamburg. She had



The National Front Communist propaganda – fighters for peace and progress! (photo supplied by the author)

to address them to various relatives with different addresses in order not to arouse suspicion.

THAT DAY

In the early hours of the day of our departure, we left the house as it was: the beds unmade, our remaining possessions abandoned. It was barely dawn as we climbed on the train. After a few hours we got off and started walking into the countryside for what seemed hours and hours. The day was cool but sunny; it was the end of August, 1951. We eventually reached an open area of fields with a wide shallow ditch running through the middle. We settled onto the sandy, dry, flat bottom of this ditch and ate our picnic lunch. Around us were open fields that had already been harvested, with a dirt roadway running towards a forest in the far distance. My instructions were not to leave the ditch, but I could walk around in it and play in the sand, as if I was at the beach. We would cross the border when it got dark.

Sometime in the late afternoon Mutti made me aware of a man walking along the dirt roadway towards us from the direction of the forest. As he came closer Mutti told me to stay in the ditch and watch our things while she went to talk to him. After an interminable length of time, she finally returned and we sat huddled together while she explained: "Also, jetzt muss ich eine Entscheidung treffen." Those were her exact words which I will never forget. ("Well, I now have a

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decision to make.") This man had asked her about her escape plans and when she told him her plan was to go through the forest (why did she trust him with this information?) he told her that the border guards patrolled the forest with guard dogs. His recommendation was for us to hide in the hedgerows surrounding the open "no-mans-land" field right beside the guarded highway once it was pitch dark. We should then run across this field staying very close to the border guard tower and run right behind the beam of the circulating searchlight. At the end of the open "no-mans-land" field we would find another hedgerow, and just past it a small ditch. Once we were over the ditch we would be in West Germany.

At this point the seriousness of our situation dawned on my 8-year-old brain and I asked Mutti what would happen if we were caught. She had been displaying a master performance of calm and serene confidence for weeks and she continued her calm act to say very casually that nothing much would happen: we would probably just be sent back to Warnemünde. Much, much later I learned about some of the things that were done to those who dared try to escape and were caught during the era before the Berlin Wall was built in 1961. If they were not shot, the children would often be sent to orphanages and the parents sent to prison or forced labour. The variety of punishments seemed to depend on the particular mood and whim of the Stasi officer in charge at that hour of that day.

Eventually as the light of day became dimmer and darker Mutti said that we would run across that no-mans- land behind the searchlight beam and that I was to hang on to her hand tighter than I had ever held on to anything before, and not to let go -

no matter what. The route through the forest with German Shepherd guard dogs would have been out of the question because she was quite afraid of dogs - something that I have unfortunately inherited from her.

When it was finally as dark as it was going to get, we made our way to the hedgerow, crouched down in the bushes and waited. Together we watched the searchlight beam circle round and round the guard tower several times and finally Mutti said that we would watch one more round and then start to run.

Was I ready to hang on tighter than ever? Yes, I was. And off we went in the pitch dark. It was not an easy run, especially since the field had been freshly ploughed perpendicularly to our direction. With my short legs I had to jump over each furrow. I became quite frightened but most importantly I held on to Mutti's hand as tightly as I could. I didn't even tell Mutti that I wet my pants. In no time the running was done and we were crawling through the other hedgerow. Out of the bushes and there it was, the narrow but somewhat deep ditch with a bit of water in the bottom. I remember how Mutti helped me jump – but I do not remember landing. Nor do I have any memory of the following minutes, or how we eventually got to a railway station.

OUR NEW LIFE

I woke up on a hard, wooden railroad station bench. There were many, many people crowded into the smoke-filled waiting room. Large bundles, sacks, suitcases and boxes filled every bit of floor space. I do not remember how we arrived in Hamburg, but for a few nights all 3 of us stayed in the single

I remember how Mutti helped me jump – but I do not remember landing.

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room Pappi had rented in the apartment block where Omi Goldt lived with my aunt, uncle, and cousins: Herta and Heinz Walter, Peter, Monika and Anke. I was very happy to see everyone again. Soon we were able to move back into Omi Wolf's upstairs. We had two rooms and shared the toilet (no bath) and kitchen with Herr Jacobasch and his housekeeper, Minna.

My family was once again together, this time in freedom, and with Canada in our future. We arrived at our eventual destination of London, Ontario on Coronation Day in 1953. Initially my mother had concerns about Canada. With the fever around Queen Elizabeth's coronation, the streets were bristling with flags. She'd seen all that before. Could she trust these new neighbours?

In 2003, when Mutti was dying of cancer I asked her why she had felt that she could trust that stranger who appeared at the edge of the forest on the afternoon of our escape from East Germany.

Without hesitation and in a confident voice she said: "Das war ein Engel." ("That was an angel.") •

CHRISTINA SCHENKEL-GOLDT taught French, Spanish, and German before her retirement in 1998. She lives in Vancouver.



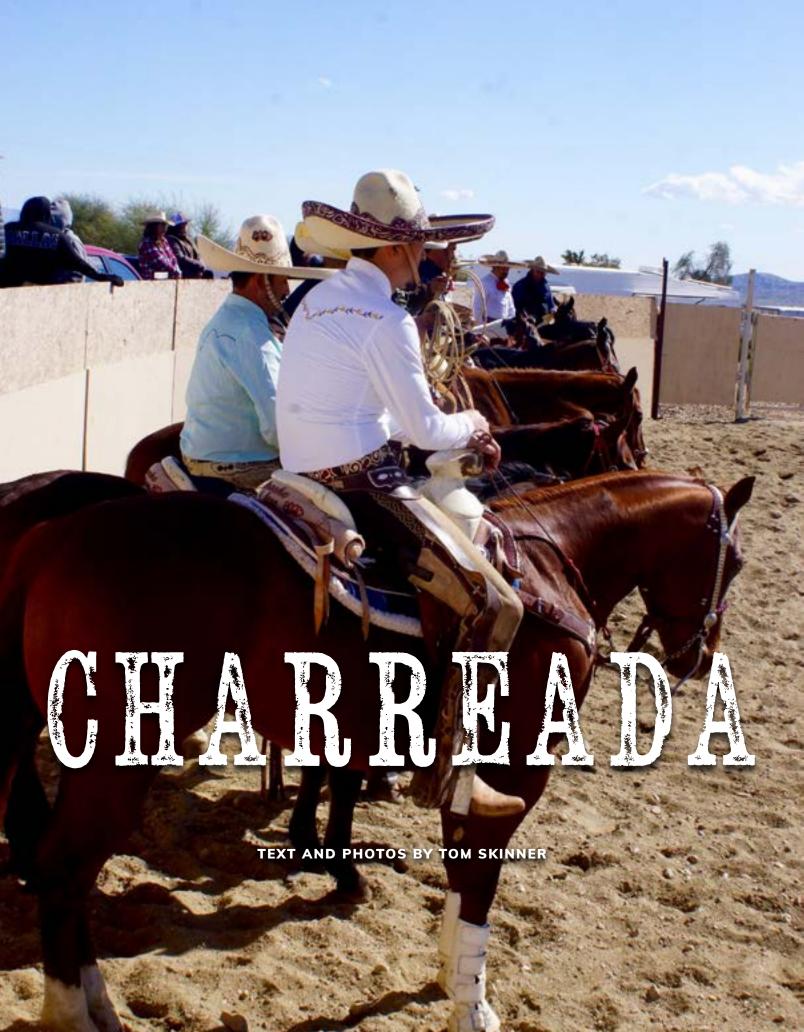


Arriving in London ON, Coronation Day, 1953.

Below: Our first days of freedom in Hamburg, West Germany, 1951.



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We've been visiting Desert Hot Springs, California, for eight years or so, and we've probably driven past a small arena along Dillon Road at least fifty times without really paying attention to it. But my wife was an equestrian in her youth and we've both ridden western pleasure horses for years, so when I noticed livestock, a dozen horse trailers, and a lot of people, I had to check more closely.

My Spanish is not great, but the young lady at the gate was fluent in English and gave me all the information I needed. A *Charreada* (Mexican rodeo) was taking place all afternoon: admission ten dollars, no charge for parking, and a booth was selling tacos. I tried my best to ask whether the taco sauce was hot and the response I thought I got was *petito* (maybe *poquito*?). Either way, it was close enough to petite—in my more-adequate French-that I figured I'd be safe.

When I was ten, my aunt bought me a book, "Randy at the Rodeo", that gave me a good understanding of most North American Rodeo events. I've watched the Calgary Stampede on television enough to be conversant with the rules. I've also spent time at the Falkland Stampede, one of Canada's oldest rodeos, and have photographed rodeos in small communities. I have a great deal of respect for the athletes and the livestock.

With help from anyone who could answer my questions, I proceeded to photograph the event, trying to get a first-hand sense of the differences in between the *Charreada* and North American rodeos. There were no programmes, no announcers (not that it would have helped me), which suggested a small-scale or even a "friendly" competition. Still, lots of excitement, many horses, and superb roping skills were all on display.

The three teams, each in distinctive colours, were from the local Palm Springs (Riverside County) area, Las Vegas, and San Diego. They interacted warmly and clearly knew each other. As the afternoon progressed, a couple of very friendly competitors answered as many questions as I could ask between events.

A Charreada has nine events, some comparable to North American Rodeo, some different though easy to explain, and some that appear downright dangerous. A parade of riders transitions to the Cala de Caballo (Test of the Horse), with horses galloped, reined in, and circled both left and right in half, full, and even triple turns. Charros demonstrate roping skills from horseback and from the ground. In Coleadera (Arena Bull Tailing), a charro riding alongside a bull calf reaches over and lifts the bull up by the tail to bring the calf to the ground. Jineto

CHARREADA POSTSCRIPT 53



de Toro is bull riding, although the bulls average 1,100 pounds, smaller than North American Rodeo bulls, who average around 1,500 pounds. *Tineta de Yegua* is bareback bronc riding on wild mares.

The afternoon's culminating event was the *Paso de la Muerteh*. Not much imagination is required to guess that an event with "mort" in it--as in "mortal" or "mortuary"--is dangerous. In this Pass of Death, a *charro* rides his own horse (bareback, though with a bridle) parallel to an unbroken horse with no tack. He leaps from horse to horse and rides the new horse until it stops bucking. The unbroken horse is guided around the ring by charros on horseback, two directly behind and one beside the horse. Should a competitor fall, the risk of being trampled by these accompanying riders is very great.

The afternoon was pleasant, colourful, and highly entertaining. The *charros* were skilled and very approachable. The tacos were great, though a bit spicy for this gringo. The bonus was a set of photos of the various events and of my new amigos. The horsemanship, the artistry in the equipment, and the fierceness of the competitors all impressed me. It was evident that *Charreada* is not just a physical contest, it is a demonstration of riding and roping skills and of pride in the importance of the *charro* in Mexican culture.

Indeed, Charrería, the set of wider cultural traditions that stem from and include the Charreada, was added a characteristic of the *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mexico* by UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 2019.

Should a competitor fall, the risk of being trampled by these accompanying riders is very great...

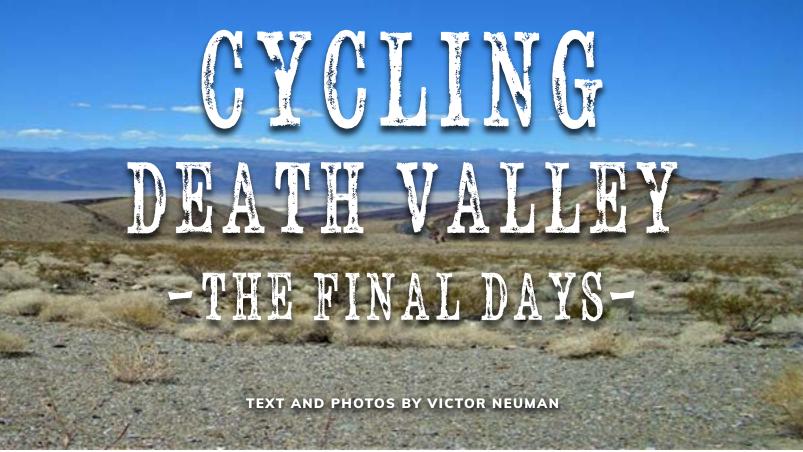
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TOM SKINNER and his wife Myna are both retired educators and have been thrilled to reconnect with friends through Postscript. His article "BC is Birding Country" will be published in **Our Canada** June/July 2023.

CHARREADA POSTSCRIPT 55



First look at the Panamint Valley, descending from Towne Pass

EMIGRANT CAMPGROUND TO PANAMINT SPRINGS

It was another 5:30 a.m. start, because it was still miles to Towne Pass and around 3,000 feet still to climb. With luck and no screw-ups, I expected to be over the hump and on the downhill run when the going got hot.

Two cyclists came up behind me, barreling their way up from Stovepipe Wells. I asked them what misfortune brought them to be grinding their way to the top of Towne Pass.

"Oh we just wanted to get in some hill work."

That stunned me. I guess one guy's hell on wheels is another guy's "hill work." Before long, I met them on their return down from the summit. They gave me a thumbs up and called to me as they whizzed by. "Keep going... you're almost there."

I tried to feel encouraged, but I didn't quite trust guys that thought of a 5,000-foot climb as "hill work."

Finally, five hours after leaving Emigrant campground, I was at the sign. "TOWNE PASS – ELEV. 4956 FT." I was enjoying the breather and

the cooler temperatures at that altitude. A sublime moment, but with it came a gulping realization that I had been thinking two-dimensionally about this part of my ride. In my imagination, the climb out of Death Valley was my only challenge and, after Towne Pass, I would be on some sort of plateau that extended all the way to Lone Pine and the rest of my ride. I hadn't done my homework properly. West of Towne Pass was another steep descent to the Panamint Valley.

This next valley had almost the same elevation as Death Valley and promised to be just as hot. "Out of the frying pan and into the fire" was never more appropriate.

As always, the wind on the downhill run was a delight. Carried away with the euphoria of rapidly clocking effortless miles, I decided to go for a speed record. At 72 km/hr I began to get nervous with thoughts of my front wheel disengaging and taking its own tour of the valley. I decided the new record was good enough for bragging rights and spent the rest of the downhill cruising at a relatively sane 50 km/hr.

I could soon see the town of Panamint Springs ahead, but distances are hard to gauge in the desert. I

arrived at the bottom of the grade in mid afternoon, but Panamint Springs wasn't exactly there. I could see it clearly, two or three miles up a grade. It was not a lot of distance to cover normally but here it was yet another uphill climb at three in the afternoon. Temperatures were 100 degrees plus, and I was out of water again. Shamelessly, I bummed water off folks in a parked car.

In town I booked into a cabin and headed over to the town's only restaurant.

Here I met Uncle Bill – a local whose role seemed to be doing odd jobs around the place. I suppose he had a surname, but I don't think anyone in town remembered it - including him. In Panamint Springs, life slows to a crawl, and that seems to suit some people just fine - including Uncle Bill. But having strangers in town was a delight to him. It gave him a chance to rattle off stories about the area to folks that hadn't heard them ten times before. Bill liked recounting tales that reflected the dangers of life in the harsh desert climate, and fatal mistakes.

"Last summer some locals were driving out on Darwin Plateau and found the body of a man alongside a spur road. They drove on a little further and found the guy's van with the rest of his family dead inside. His wife and two kids - all dead. Our guess was that their van broke down, and the guy left to find help. He didn't make it, and his family must have died in the heat when they ran out of water."

Uncle Bill saw I was looking a little skeptical, so he turned to the waitress.

"Hey, Gail. Remember that family that died in their car?"

Gail replied, "Which one?"

That pretty much confirmed the story. It also inspired me to do something I will always regret. I couldn't face the prospect of another long upward slog for the third day in a row. On a whim, I asked Uncle Bill if he would transport me and my bike to the top of the grade for 50 bucks. He was on it like a hobo on a ham sandwich.

"When do you want to leave?"

"Eight tomorrow morning?"

"You bet."

I made the request on a whim, but now I was stuck with it. The ride was purely my own to that point, but now it was partly me and partly machineassisted. I felt like I was cheating. But I had to console myself with vowing to never taint any future rides this way.

APRIL 22 - PANAMINT SPRINGS TO LONE

I was ready at 8:00 a.m. with gear loaded, but an hour later Uncle Bill was still a no-show. My patience ran out - it was already too late in the day to do the ascent on my bike, and I had no idea where my car ride was. I didn't know which cabin was Bill's, or where he spent his nights, so I asked around with no success until I came upon one fellow who seemed to have a handle on things.

"So, Uncle Bill had a deal to give you a ride someplace...an hour ago? I sure do know where he is. Bill works for me. I own this place. Hang tight, and I'll get him for you. Jeez – that guy!"

I had ratted out Bill to his boss, and the fur was going to fly. Bill appeared in short order, apologizing, looking like someone dragged out of deep sleep, still dressed in the clothes he wore in his nightmare.

UNCLE BILL REVEALS ALL

Timeliness aside, Uncle Bill proved to be knowledgeable about more than just death and dying in the desert. Brilliant in his grasp of the local geology, he identified many features of the terrain we passed through, as well as telling me about the town of Darwin – born of the lead and silver deposits in the late 1800s. I was so impressed with his vast knowledge that I told Bill he should be running guided tours out of Panamint Springs. He brightened.

"That's exactly what I told the boss the other day. He's thinking it over. I'd love to do that. And it would pay a little better too. I think those guys get tips."

"Especially if they leave on time," I said. We laughed.

Uncle Bill parked at Father Crowley Vista and we stood at the viewpoint to take in the incredible view. I could see Panamint Springs far below, most of the Panamint Valley, and the road snaking down from Towne Pass on the far side of the valley. Bill

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was not particularly in awe after being to that spot many times, but he seemed to enjoy the impression it made on me. We said our good-byes, and I was off on my ride to Lone Pine.

Things that caught my eye along the way were the Joshua trees (tree-like cacti with bundles of sharp leaves the size and shape of railway spikes) and the roadside graves. Nothing rots or deteriorates quickly in the desert, and markers that go back many years look like they were created yesterday.

One monument was particularly noticeable for its carefully laid line of perimeter stones and a white cross that looked as freshly painted as the day it was placed. The inscription: LORENZA McKELLIPS LARSON, DIED IN INFANCY, 4 YEARS OLD 1874. Sweet dreams, Lorenza. I hope the afterlife is more joyous than this one was.

It was only 2:00 p.m. when I arrived in Lone Pine. With time to kill, I booked into my motel and went

across the street to take in a museum dedicated to movie cowboys. There were hundreds of posters and artifacts from the golden era of cowboys: Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, Annie Oakley, Randolph Scott, Gene Autry, Audie Murphy, Tex Ritter –heroes I grew up with in the fifties.

Then I stumbled on one name that resonated with me in a different way. My dad used to tell me of a cowboy hero he loved when he was a kid growing up in Warsaw, Poland in the 1920's. I always thought that his hero cowboy was obscure. But no. There in front of me was a veritable shrine to one of the greatest cowboy heroes of all time – my dad's own Tom Mix. Topping it off (literally), was the very hat Tom Mix wore when he was chasing bad hombres and mesmerizing a young Jewish kid in a Warsaw cinema. My dad passed away in 1987 but, for a moment, he was right there beside me, an awestruck youngster, looking in wonder at the hat Tom Mix wore. Pass the popcorn, Dad.









Left, The Cowboy Museum and Tom Mix's hat.

Above, the grave of Lorenza McKellips Larson, 1870-1874.

APRIL 23 - LONE PINE TO BISHOP

With no worries about heat, I had a leisurely 7:30 a.m. start and made good time, thanks to a strong tail wind. The 45 miles to Big Pine flew by and I was there by 1:00 p.m. I stopped long enough to tank up on water, inhale lunch and get back on the road. The wind kept up. I stayed in my highest gear all the way to Bishop, taking almost no effort to cover 16 more miles. I had covered the 61 miles to Bishop by 2:00 p.m. After crawling my way through Death Valley like a slug in a sand box, I was a bird on the wing. I could fly.

APRIL 24 - BISHOP TO MAMMOTH LAKES

The next day was more typical. I ran out of water again just before the Sherwin summit (7,000 feet), and I was becoming decidedly thirsty. Still, I knew there was a dot on the map humbly called Tom's

Place, so I skipped my water-begging routine (which I was getting good at) and carried on. Tom's Place turned out to be a perfect stopover. There was a restaurant, motel accommodation, gas – the works. I had an actual restaurant meal and enjoyed myself so much I contemplated calling it a day. However, it was only 2:30 p.m., and I decided that I might as well try for Mammoth Lakes, a scant 14 miles away. I was soon cursing that decision. In a short time, I ran into an uphill grade and severe headwinds that were the worst I'd ever encountered. For the entire 14 miles, I was stuck in my lowest gear, and it took me four exhausting hours. I rolled into Mammoth Lakes at 6:30 p.m. and booked a room at the first accommodation I came to. Mammoth Lakes is a resort town and prices were high, but I didn't care. All I could think of was getting myself into a sandwich, a bath, and a bed.

DEATH VALLEY: THE FINAL DAYS

APRIL 25 - MAMMOTH LAKES TO BRIDGEPORT

Snow on the ground! It was only four days since I had been begging for water on the way to Panamint Springs, and here I was cycling through snowfields!

For the first time I did two passes in one day. Deadman Summit came first at 8,041 feet and then Conway Summit at 8,138 feet. The second pass was harder and took longer but I made Conway three and a half hours after the start of the climb. From that point it was an easy downhill to Bridgeport.

APRIL 26 - BRIDGEPORT TO GARDINERVILLE

Another day, another mountain pass. This time, Devil's Gate Summit – clearly named by someone who attended the Death Valley School of Nomenclature. At 7,915 feet, it wasn't as high as Conway but, to be honest, my patience was wearing a little thin with the endless supply of mountain passes. I was even a little nostalgic for Oregon and Washington's tunnels; they may be noisy and dangerous, but at least they have the good grace to blast through the mountains instead of going over them.

What kept me going was the thought that this was my last summit. Get over it, and it would be a speedy downhill run to Gardnerville, a warm bath and my ride's end.

I was in for a disappointment. At the summit I found that there was a powerful blast of air coming straight at me from the valley below. On the ascent, I had been in the wind shadow of this gale, but now I was feeling the full effect. It was so strong that I had to gear down to go downhill! The climb to Devil's Gate had no payoff on the downhill side. I had worked my way up, and now I would have to work my way down.

Part way down, serious trouble. A set of minor factors can combine to cause a major disaster. It's why planes fall out of the sky. The strong wind had shifted slightly and was coming at me from my left side. I was safely on the paved shoulder but,

to counter the wind, I had to lean slightly toward the travel lane. I was worn down from fighting the wind and – as was often the case – was zoning out a little from fatigue and boredom. I didn't notice the semi-trailer approaching from behind, and I didn't notice the oncoming truck that left him little room to move over. The semi came by me at close quarters. At that moment, his bulk created a wind block, and suddenly the wind I was leaning into was blocked and replaced with a vacuum effect. I was being sucked, bike and all, toward the side of the semi. Momentarily, I lost my balance and could only get it back by veering toward the truck. Thankfully, I recovered quickly enough to steer away before I hit. It was close.

Shaken, I carried on down the mountain. I was thankful to be alive, but the headwind didn't let up, and it was a dragged-out effort to finally get to Gardnerville at the valley bottom after 11 hours of cycling. I booked a room in Gardnerville and headed for the tourist information centre to check bus schedules to Sacramento and my train north. In front of me, a lady was complaining to the person at the desk.

"I can't believe this wind you have. It's horrible. I could hardly drive my car!"

I just let it go. Nothing else seemed important just then. My ride was over. I had done it.

Then a song that had been playing in my head all day long came back me. I hadn't been thinking much about its lyrics, but now I realized it was the right song for the moment. It was Dylan's "Shelter from the Storm."

Twas in another lifetime, one of toil and blood When blackness was a virtue, the road was full of mud I came in from the wilderness, a creature void of form Come in, she said I'll give ya shelter from the storm.

After Death Valley there was very little about being on a bike that scared me. Nothing seemed beyond my reach. Death Valley gave me a gift. It made all things possible.

The year after his Death Valley ride, **VICTOR NEUMAN** cycled the 6,500 km from Vancouver to Halifax.

THE RESULTS TELL THE STORY

BCRTA MEMBERS' EXTENDED HEALTH CARE INSURANCE

itisfaction Survey

Green Shield BCRTA Johnson Plan Users **Prestige Users** WOULD YOU RECOMMEND YOUR CURRENT EHC PLAN?

35.2%



OF CATEGORIES WITH THE HIGHEST RATING



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A LETTER OF

Gratitude

The following letter first appeared in The Bridge, the publication of the Kamloops Retired Teachers' Association. The letter has been edited for brevity.

Dear Kamloops Thompson Retired Teachers,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support. Your generosity and kindness will not be forgotten. To fully convey my gratitude, I want to share my story with you.

I was born in Mexico City in 1991. In the autumn of 1998, an assailant held my father at gunpoint outside my family's home demanding that he unlock the door. Knowing my mom, younger brother, and I were inside, he refused. A car drove by the house with its high beams on, and the assailant was scared away, thus saving my father but it was clear that Mexico City was just too unsafe. My parents applied to immigrate to Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, knowing that my brother and I would have a better future outside our native homeland. The first embassy to respond was Canada - we were approved! We immigrated to Canada in May 1999.

As we landed in Toronto, I asked my father, "Dad, what does 'potential' mean?" He said, "Potential is something that you could be but does not yet exist. You must actively bring it into existence, and the right conditions need to exist to allow you to fulfill your potential."

We lived in Toronto for two years, facing the struggle I am sure many immigrant families are forced to confront. In Mexico, my father had been a software engineer and my mother, a lawyer, but their foreign credentials weren't recognized in Canada. They were forced to take any and all jobs to make ends meet. We sometimes did not have the resources to feed all four of us, so my parents would take turns having dinner each night, ensuring their children ate first. My mother worked on recess duty at my school in a suburb of Toronto and saw children throw perfectly good sandwiches into the garbage bin. She has confessed that her hunger was so great that she would sometimes pull a sandwich from the garbage and consume it.

Our luck started to change when my father found a job on Vancouver Island writing computer code. However, my brother and I performed terribly in school. Guessing that the language barrier was at fault, my parents placed us in Late French Immersion, since Spanish is more similar to French than to English. We began getting better grades, but our behaviour became increasingly problematic. At the end of grade 8, I was expelled for selling alcohol to other students-more than once. My brother ended up following in my footsteps. The only high school that would take us in the region was Catholic School. My parents, unsure what to do with their badly-behaved children, heard from friends that the Catholic Schools would "take anybody." We stayed in the Catholic school system and eventually received our Dogwood Diplomas.

62 POSTSCRIPT GRATITUDE

What changed our lives were good, kind, generous, supportive teachers who never gave up on us...

What would you think ELLs (English Language Learners) who had been expelled from a public school, and whose parents had been through such hardship, could amount to?

What if I told you that my brother is a lawyer who completed his B.Sc. (Honours) degree in Economics and Political science from the University of Victoria, went on to complete his Juris Doctor at the University of British Columbia, and now works in real estate law? And what if I told you that I completed a B.Sc. in Biochemistry from the UVIC, then a M.Sc. from the University of Toronto, and am about to finish my B.Ed. (STEM designation) at Thompson Rivers University (TRU)?

You might well ask, "Did the water you drink change? Was there some magic formula you ingested?" What changed our lives were good, kind, generous, supportive teachers who never gave up on us.

I started by wanting to be a scientific researcher. As part of my graduate program at the University of Toronto, I was required to teach some undergraduate laboratories. At first, I saw these teaching assignments as distractions from my research. but as time went on, I increasingly enjoyed teaching. Eventually, my love of teaching superseded my affinity for research.

After finishing my graduate degree at U of T, I married a wonderful woman I had met as a UVIC student, and I landed an appointment teaching organic chemistry and general chemistry at a local university. With introspection, I began to realize that high school teachers had made a tremendous difference in my brother's and my life by supporting us and forming relationships with us. Their classrooms made me feel safe and provided a sense of belonging. They helped me see that I mattered and that my learning mattered. I, too, wanted to dedicate my career to the betterment of students, even before they attended university, so I decided to become a fully licensed BC educator.

My wife and I chose the TRU program because of the STEM specialization and because her family resides in Kamloops. I have completed two practicums in Kamloops. My first one in September was at Westsyde Secondary School. My second practicum was at Valleyview Secondary School. Currently, I am doing my certification practicum at Oak Bay High School in SD 61 in Victoria. My teaching load includes Chemistry 11, Chemistry 12, and Science 9. I will graduate at the end of June.

My favourite aspects of the TRU program are the wonderful peers and instructors, each competent, caring, and compelling. The instructors, faculty mentors, and staff have all been helpful and supportive. Their generosity of heart inspires me to be the best educator and person I can be. After I graduate, I intend to apply for a few different districts: SD 73 in Kamloops (close to my wife's family), then SD 61 and SD 63 in Victoria and Saanich (near my own family), SD 35 in Langley (we have connections in that community), and SD 81 in Fort Nelson, where one of my old high school teachers is now in a position of influence.

The TRU Faculty of Education has my back, and I trust that the opportunities will present themselves. I often think about the question I asked my father when I was a boy, "Dad, what is potential?" so let me end with this parting thought: through your generous donation to support my studies, the Kamloops Retired Teachers are helping me fulfill my potential.

It's the role of the teacher—to help students reach their potential, regardless of their background. What more noble and honourable aim could exist?

Thank you!

Respectfully yours,

José Mendez

GRATITUDE POSTSCRIPT 63

DID YOU KNOW? FASCINATING HEALTH FACTS

BY PAT THIESEN

BCRTA WELL-BEING COMMITTEE



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EMBRACE THE WISDOM OF THE WORM

"To stop bleeding, doctors often apply pressure to the wound and seal the site with medical glue. But what happens when applying pressure is difficult or could make things worse? Or the surface of the wound is too bloody for glue?" Researchers from McGill University have developed a medical adhesive, modeled after structures found in marine animals like mussels and flatworms. that could save lives, and eventually might replace sutures, or even deliver drugs safely.

https://www.mcgill.ca/newsroom/channels/news/flatworm-inspired-medical-adhesives-stop-blood-loss-342730

READ AND JIVE TO FEEL MORE AND TO FEEL BETTER

Research has shown that reading books and fiction in early life shapes our brains and molds our social skills, particularly via empathy. Non-fiction does not appear to have the same effect at all. But now there's also strong support that reading literary fiction has the power to shape even adults' abilities to think about and empathize with others' states of mind (Theory of Mind). Furthermore, engaging with the arts more broadly may have this impact as well.

More surprising is the research on the effect music has on people's experience of pain. Music "interventions" (listening to music) has been shown in many contexts to enhance "the relief of acute, procedural, and cancer/chronic pain in the medical setting."

Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.1239918

The Effects of Music on Pain: A Meta-Analysis https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27760797/



POSTSCRIPT HEALTH FACTS



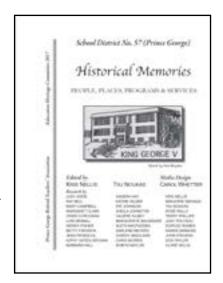
Local Schooling: A brief history of the first six decades of formal education in the Fraser Fort George region by Tiiu Noukas, et al.

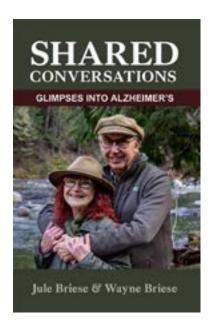
School District 57 (Prince George) is positioned east of the central point of the province continuing to the Alberta border. The 52,000 sq. km covers the area north to Mackenzie and south to Hixon. There have been 139 registered schools since 1910.

The Prince George Retired Teachers' Association Education Heritage Committee's Archival Newspaper group searched microfilm, microfiche and online sources for any reports on schools and teachers to create this history. Articles covering the period of 1909 to 1946 form a multi-volume resource.

The SD 57 Education Heritage Collection has about 11,000 items which were a valuable resource. Thirty-three of our members contributed to this endeavour. The Northern B.C. Archives and Special Collections at UNBC provide online access. It is a large file so allow some time.

https://unbc.arcabc.ca/islandora/object/unbc%3A59269





Shared Conversationsby Julie Briese and Wayne Briese

In January 2018, Julie Briese's husband, Wayne, received a Alzheimer's diagnosis from the Brain Health Center in Vancouver. Thus began a four-year odyssey ending January 6, 2022 in Wayne's death through MAiD.

Between October 2020 and December 2021, with Wayne's permission, Julie Briese recorded their conversations which reflected Wayne relaxed and Wayne struggling. The author hopes that this book will offer glimpses of what life challenged by Alzheimer's can be like. It may also enhance communication skills in conversations with someone experiencing Alzheimer's.

Ebook or paperback, available at Friesenpress.com.

Books of Note features publications by BCRTA members. To have your book included, send the details to postscript@bcrta.ca

BOOKS OF NOTE POSTSCRIPT 65

OVERSEAS ADVENTURES

BY ARTHUR SHEARS

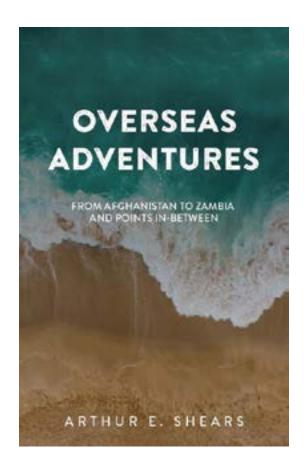
BOOK REVIEW BY LINDA LEHR

I expected a strong travelogue with descriptions of the countries in which Arthur had worked, but this book proved to be so much more.

The writing is indeed full of vivid descriptions of the countryside, and he's careful to include details of local life as well. When he writes, "the rain was pounding down," on his tin roof, I can remember that sound from my own time in Africa. 47C heat is, "so hot and dry that you could almost start hanging your washing at one end of the clothesline and, by the time you were finished you could come back and collect the first ones."

Arranged chronologically, the chapters begin with a brief overview of each country's geography and historical notes about changes since Arthur's time, and then describe his experience and work there. We begin with his first CUSO (originally Canadian University Service Oversees) posting in Nigeria, when he was, "naïve and didn't understand the complexities of colonialism."

We follow him through decades of gaining the skills and knowledge to have an innovative and effective career. We are also shown changes across this time such as the onset of the internet and the positive impacts of some of those changes on International Development.



The author's wide-ranging work included women's empowerment programs and working alongside other NGO's with groups such as street children, rural and urban poor, and people with disabilities. He clearly especially valued his chances to work with local apprenticeship and professional development programs: "This was one of the reasons I loved working in international development, the ability to support local counterparts in their professional growth through international fellowships."

A final point to note: Shears' empathy for others. In East Timor, unemployed youth gangs threw rocks at cars whose passengers were foreigners.

When this happened to him, he considered their actions to be "more of a call for help than anything else." •

Overseas Adventures is available in paperback and eBook format from Amazon.

LINDA LEHR is a member of BCRTA.

66 POSTSCRIPT BOOK REVIEW

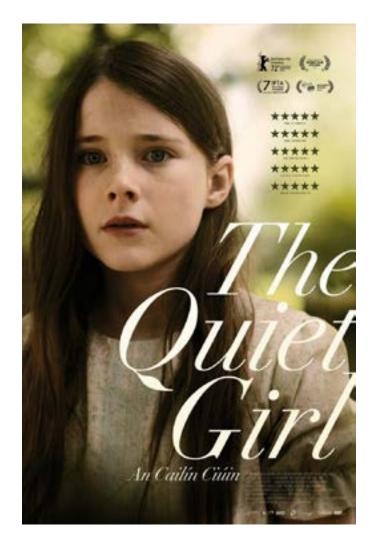
The Quiet Girl

FILM REVIEW BY MICHELE LE NOBLE

The Quiet Girl, a Gaelige (Irish-language) film written and directed by Colm Bairéad, tells the story of a Cáit, a neglected 9-year-old girl played by Catherin Clinch. Based on Claire Kinsella's 2010 novella 'Foster', the story takes place in the Irish countryside in the 1980's. Cáit is the youngest in a large, impoverished, and dysfunctional family; her mother is exhausted and six months pregnant and her father spends most of his time at the local pub. The film opens with the girl hiding in the fields as her mother calls for her. Evidence of her despondency permeate scenes both at home and at school. When her parents are unable to care for her, she is sent to live with distant relatives for a summer.

In his first feature film, Bairéad skillfully focuses his camera to successfully reveal the essence of a silent and lonely child desperate for love and acceptance. While she says little, her actions and demeanor reveal her misery in a performance, "where every tiny shift, every movement of her eyes, ever tensing up of her posture and wary glance tells you everything you need to know" (David Fear, *Rolling Stone Magazine*, FEB 2023).

Although this film tells a heartbreaking story, a glimmer of hope is present. Cáit's time away from home is short, but the attention and care she receives is sufficient for her to develop a sense of confidence and self-worth. *The Quiet Girl*, Ireland's nominee for Best International Film at the Oscars, is a must-see on many levels: the simplicity of the storyline, the revival of Gaeilege, the moving portrayal of Cáit by first-time actor Clinch, the emotional connections of characters through loneliness and pain, and most importantly the healing effects of love and compassion. •



The Quiet Girl can be streamed on Apple TV and Amazon Prime.

MICHELE LE NOBLE is a a recently retired teacher who enjoys reading, writing and going to the movies.

FILM REVIEW POSTSCRIPT 67

NOTICE OF 2023 AGM

78th BCRTA Annual General Meeting (9:30am)

called for Saturday, September 30, 2023

BCRTA Positions for Election

President - 1 year term 1st VP - 1 year term 2nd VP - 1 year term

ACER-CART Representative - 2 year term 2 Directors (2 yrs) from outside the Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley 2 Directors (2 yrs) from inside the Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley

21st Annual General Meeting of the RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation

(9:00am) called for Saturday, September 30, 2023 RR Smith Positions for Election 8 Directors - 1 year terms

This meeting will be held in person AND online.

Location: Vancouver Airport Hilton Hotel, Richmond, BC. Online details to follow.





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68 POSTSCRIPT AGM 2023

NOMINATION FORM FOR 2023-2024 BCRTA DIRECTOR POSITIONS (SEPTEMBER 30, 2023 AGM ELECTIONS)

Note that the President and the two Vice-President positions have one-year terms. All other directors have two-year terms.

Information about directors' nomination and election procedures is summarized below, along with a guide to related information contained in the BCRTA Handbook (www.bcrta.ca) - look under the "About Us" heading.

Nominators: (Two required. Must be Active or Life BCRTA members in good standing. Signatures on the same form are not necessary - it is acceptable for nominators to endorse the nomination of a candidate by email to kristi@bcrta.ca)

Name:		Sign:	Pnone:
Name:		Sign:	Phone:
We nominate	(please print clearly):		
(Nominee mus		RTA member in good standing)	
President	1st Vice-President	2nd Vice-President	
Director (Lowe	er Mainland) Dire	ctor (outside Lower Mainland)	ACER-CART Representative
By signing her	re I affirm that I accept th	is nomination:	
Nominee, plea	se fill in the blanks below	and attach item #4 to this form.	
1.	Address:		
2.	Phone:	Email:	
3.	Branch membership (if applicable):	
4.		eferably in item form - not to excee lication submission deadline July	ed 200 words - for publication in the Summary of 15th) .

like to serve on the BCRTA Board of Directors. Please note: Candidates do not have their expenses paid to attend the AGM unless they are elected by their branches as

Summarize educator positions held, experience on executive and other committees, and why you would

Acknowledgment of receipt of your nomination will be forwarded to you as soon as possible.

Return this form by July 15th to:

Grace Wilson, Nominations Chair, c/o BCRTA, 100-550 W. 6th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 4P2, or fax to (604) 871-2265, or email a scanned attachment to <kristi@bcrta.ca>

delegates. There are not usually any candidates' speeches at the AGM.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION RULES AND PRO-**CEDURES FOR BCRTA DIRECTOR POSITIONS**

There are usually five 3-day (Mon.-Wed.) meetings of the Board of Directors each year. Most directors are asked to chair a BCRTA committee, and there is usually homework. Travel, accommodation and meal expenses are reimbursed by the BCRTA.

In summary, you may be nominated:

- a. by completing the nomination form and your c.v., and submitting them to the office by July 15th. Your c.v. will be published in the Summary of Reports booklet; OR
- b. by completing the nomination form and your c.v., and submitting them to BCRTA staff after July 15th but before the day of the AGM. Your c.v. will then be distributed to the AGM delegates; OR
- c. by being nominated from the floor of the AGM -- whereupon you and all the other candidates for that particular position will be given two minutes to introduce yourselves.

The following refer to sections in the BCRTA Handbook, located on the BCRTA website at www.bcrta.ca

Handbook Section B. Bylaws:

- 2.16 Member not in good standing
- 2.7 Rights of Active and Life Members
- Number of directors 6.1
- Eligibility to become a director 6.2
- 6.3 Election of directors
- 6.9 Limits on directors' terms in office
- 6.10 **Board of Directors Meetings**
- Powers and Responsibilities of Directors 6.11

Handbook Section C. Procedures:

Pre-AGM nomination procedures for Director positions

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5. **Duties of Directors**

Handbook Section E. Rules of Order:

- 84 Nominations from the floor
- 8.5.3 Voting in elections 8.5.4 Order of the elections

8.5.5 Balloting rules

POSTSCRIPT AGM 2023

BCRTA DELEGATES TO THE 2024 BCTF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOMINATION FORM

The BC Teachers' Federation holds its AGM each year during the March spring break. A block of time during the AGM is normally set aside for debating recommendations and resolutions relating to pensions. The BCRTA sends a number of delegates to participate and vote in the "in-committee" consideration of those motions. Our delegation consists of BCRTA directors and BCRTA members elected at the BCRTA Annual General Meeting—to be held online on September 30, 2023.

To be elected as a BCRTA delegate to the BCTF AGM, you must be an **active or life member of the BCRTA**, and a **member or honourary associate member of the BCTF**. If you were a BCTF member when you retired, you are almost certainly an honorary associate BCTF member now. If you are unsure, you should contact the BCTF to check. (Google "BCTF" to get phone nos. etc.)

A background of past membership on a BCTF or local association Pensions Committee is a requirement, and experience on BCRTA or Branch executive or other committees would also be helpful. If elected you may be asked to attend a pre-AGM session to become familiar with the issues. You should be prepared to go to a microphone at the BCTF AGM to speak for or against a motion if the opportunity presents itself and to stay until the end of the Pensions section of the BCTF AGM agenda.

Filling in and submitting this form will result in your name being added to the list of candidates on the **BCRTA Delegates to the BCTF AGM ballot** used in the elections at our BCRTA AGM, scheduled for September 30, 2023. Nominees do not have their expenses paid to attend our BCRTA AGM unless they are delegates. You will be notified after our AGM if you are elected. If elected, your expenses will be paid to attend the **BCTF** AGM.

BCRTA DELEGATES TO THE MARCH 2024 BCTF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOMINATION FORM

Must be in the hands of BCRTA staff by 5 p.m. on September 29, 2023.

Name (please print clearly):		Phone:	
Address:			
City:	Postal Code:	Email:	
Branch (if any):			
Signed:			
Nominated by 2 BCRTA meml	oers (email notice of your nom	nination from nominator to kristi@bcrta.ca is also acceptabl	<u>e):</u>
Nominator (please pri	nt):	Signed:	
Nominator (please pri	nt):	Signed:	
have done in the BCTF and/or	BCRTA:	ns experience through positions you have held and/or work	you

Mail this form to: BCRTA, 100 – 550 W 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4P2, or email scanned copy to kristi@bcrta.ca

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2023-2024 BCRTA COMMITTEES - APPLICATION FORM

DEADLINE for receipt of applications: September 30, 2023

BCRTA committees meet 5 times a year during a 2-day period prior to each Board of Directors meeting. Some meetings are held electronically and in-person meetings are held in Vancouver. Appointments are made at a post-AGM Board of Directors meeting, and terms are two years. Members may serve on any one committee for up to a maximum of 4 consecutive years (i.e., two 2-year terms). Travel, accommodation and meal expenses are reimbursed.

To learn more, see a description of BCRTA Committee activities and responsibilities www.bcrta.ca/committee-profiles

Members are expected to sit on one or two committees, as selected by the committee chairs. For further information see

the **Handbook** on our website (www.bcrta.ca), and look in "Section C-Procedures", parts 7 and 8. _____ Postal Code: _____ Email: _____ Branch, if any: ______ Signed: _____ Nominated by two BCRTA members in good standing: (email notice from nominator to kristi@bcrta.ca is acceptable) Nominator (please print): ______ Signed: _____ Nominator (please print): ______ Signed: _____ Signed: _____ The BCRTA Committees are: COMMUNICATIONS EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION **HERITAGE MEMBERSHIP** PENSIONS & BENEFITS (A pensions background, e.g., in the BCTF or a local, is required.) [The FINANCE, ADVOCACY and PERSONNEL Committees are Directors only] WELL-BEING Please list in order of preference: Committee Applying for: #1 _____ Why would you be a good choice for this committee? _____ Committee Applying for: #2 _____ Why would you be a good choice for this committee? ______ Committee Applying for: #3 _____

Note: All applicants will be informed of the Directors' decisions concerning appointments.

Why would you be a good choice for this committee? _____

Outline positions held and/or the work you have done in your branch: _____

CLASSIFIEDS

HOUSING

IMAGINE...own or rent-then-own your apartment in a Green building in a multigenerational, community-based neighbourhood, a half block from the ocean, in downtown Sechelt, BC, CANADA. Design and timeline revised after recent Zoning bylaw changes.

www.thecoastalvillage.ca/events

TRAVEL BOOK

New Canadian Publication by Arthur Shears: **Overseas Adventures - From Afghanistan to Zambia and Points In-Between**. Want a great read this summer; get this informative, and entertaining memoir. Available in paperback and ebook from AMAZON.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



The Literacy Circle is seeking certified teachers to teach English and computer literacy skills to Indigenous adults at various school levels.

Classes continue in Nanaimo, and soon Penticton, Victoria and Campbell River BC.

For more information and to apply, visit us at www.theliteracycircle.ca

JOHNSON SCHOLARSHIPS

OPEN TO CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF ALL BCRTA MEMBERS

Since 1998, Johnson Insurance has awarded over 1,500 scholarships and academic grants valued at more than \$1 million to support young Canadians coast to coast in pursuing their post-secondary education. This year, we are pleased to offer 50 scholarships worth \$1,000 each to students across Canada who fall into at least one of the following categories:

- if you, your parent/quardian or grandparent, have a:
 - o home or car insurance policy through Johnson or
 - o MEDOC travel insurance policy or
 - o group benefits plan (such as health, dental or life insurance) through Johnson
- if you, your parent/guardian or grandparent, are a member or employee of a Johnson recognized group* (policy not required)

Students must complete high school in 2023 and must be beginning post-secondary education this fall or CEGEP (if living in the province of Québec). Completed application forms must be submitted by **July 27th**, **2023** and must include a transcript for the period of September 2021 to December 2022.

For information and to apply, please visit johnson.ca/scholarship



* BCRTA is a recognized group. All BCRTA members are eligible.

CLASSIFIEDS

TRAVEL

DISCOVER CUBA WITH CUBA1TOURS (since 1995)

Cuba1tours continues to offer the best guided tours to the most intriguing parts of Cuba with a personal touch and excellent local guides. All tours are safe and worry-free. For more tour information contact Tom Robertson at: tom@cuba1tours.com or use the contact form on the website: www.cuba1tours.com.

WANTED: HOUSE EXCHANGE

Would you like to spend a week or more in the sunny Okanagan this summer? Our house in Vernon BC has an expansive view over Swan Lake and the Vernon Golf Club. We are 5 minutes from Kalamalka Lake, and 15 minutes from Okanagan Lake. Silver Star Mountain Resort, with hiking and cycling paths, is 35 minutes away. We'd like to exchange with a house in the Lower Mainland or on Vancouver Island.

If interested, please contact bdharris2208@gmail.com

ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

Heritage house in Alsace-France, Vosges Mountains, three bedrooms, modern kitchen, wifi, located on wine route, close to Germany (Freiburg) and Switzerland (Basel). Partial cleaning included, CA\$900 per week. mano936@gmail.com

BAJA CASITA RENTAL reasonable for 2024 April-November. Fully Equipped with Air Conditioner, Internet, Salt water pool. Canadian Caretake on Site. Hike Beaches, Mountain Bike, Shop, Volunteer, Music Central.

No Vehicle Needed. Email micallef197@yahoo.ca

MAUI. One bedroom suites available for rent in Maui, Kihei, from Friday February 9, 2024 to Friday March 1, 2024. Please contact me for details. Aline 778 896 9315 lavoiealine@shaw.ca

ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

PALM DESERT, CA - Tri Palms Resort January 2024 only

2 bedroom home. This is a 55+ resort with an 18 & 9 hole golf course. Clubhouse with restaurant, bar, billiards room, library, card room, 2 swimming pools, 2 hot tubs, tennis, pickle ball, shuffleboard. Great views. \$2,000 per month plus refundable damage deposit. Non-smoking and no pets. Email barbara_grundy@yahoo.com or call 778 757 8876.

NEW ZEALAND home for rent: Karikari Peninsula, subtropical Northland. Gorgeous views. Pristine beaches, world class golf course, winery, charming, historical villages, Bay of Islands and Cape Reinga all nearby. November: \$1800, December: \$2000 Contact: rosemarynelson46@gmail.com

For Rent: Two bedroom, two bath 1300 sq. ft condo overlooking the first hole at the Westin Bear Mountain Golf Resort and Spa in Victoria, BC. Available Nov 1, 2023 to Feb 29, 2024 with the intention of renting for the full 4 months. Price: \$3,200 for one month. \$6,000 for two consecutive months, \$10,800 for four months. For pictures and further information, text to 250 588 1348

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



Canadian Blood Services needs volunteers!

Volunteers are vital to supporting Canada's Lifeline and building connections between donors and recipients. What you do makes all the difference.

Visit **blood.ca/volunteering** to learn more.

Or contact: volunteer.bc@blood.ca

(include BCRTA in the subject line)

CLASSIFIEDS POSTSCRIPT 73

crossword

Double Trouble

By Lynn Hembree

Email: crossword@bcrta.ca

ACROSS

- 1. Swindle or fraud
- 5. Lawn pest
- 9. Deep-six
- 14. Painted metalware
- 15. Bone-dry
- 16. Cost or fee
- 17. Wading bird
- 18. -tone or -let
- 19. Woody vine or a girl's name
- 20. Unprocessed beets and carrots (2 wds)
- 23. "Don't ___ the flames!"
- 24. Unagi, at a sushi bar
- 25. Donkey, but not a mule
- 26. Popular class for immigrants, abbr.
- 27. Whip
- 29. Greedy, gaping gullet
- 32. Digital files, briefly
- 35. Almanac tidbit
- 36. Very
- 37. Do what's best for your cardiovascular system (3 wds)
- 40. Asteroid discovered by R. Luther in 1865
- 41. Buddy
- 42. Mediterranean and gluten-free
- 43. Opposite of "bro"
- 44. Angler's hope
- 45. "That's ___ ...hmm?"
- 46. ___-relief
- 47. It may end in "-imate", "-imo" or "-ra"
- 48. Stellar aircraft, in short
- 51. Summertime request in Keremeos (3 wds)
- 57. Potting soil
- 58. United ___ Emirates
- 59. "Wow, I had no ____!"
- 60. Solid, liquid or gas
- 61. Roman Emporer (AD 54-68)
- 62. Bombard
- 63. Monica ____, with nine Grand Slams
- 64. Like the taste of venison
- 65. Irish language

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					65			

DOWN

- 1. Rigid
- 2. Venomous snake
- 3. 1979 Sci-fi starred Sigourney Weaver
- 4. Bungle, with "up"
- 5. Spider-Man publisher
- 6. Type of bay window that sounds like a bird
- 7. Pacific cod
- 8. Not a vertex or a face, geometrically speaking
- 9. 1984 Rom-com with Hanks and Hannah
- 10. Baby jails?
- 11. 100 dinars
- 12. Scourge of teens
- 13. Two ___ in a pod
- 21. "Siddhartha" author, Hermann
- 22. One sense
- 26. Bounce back, in a way
- 27. Caffè __
- 28. Advil target
- 29. Quiet
- 30. "Eight", in Frankfurt

- 31. Last of the five W's (pl.)
- 32. Sounds during a scary movie?
- 33. Spanish surrealist artist
- 34. Big name in elevators
- 35. House for males, in short
- 36. Tried to get on base, maybe
- 38. Awry
- 39. Build on (2 wds)
- 44. Cleans up
- 45. A "good" one, far
- south of the 49th (2 wds)
- 46. "Please", in Munich
- 47. Remove a weapon
- 48. Milk dispenser?
- 49. Has an opinion
- 50. Sound off
- 50. Sound on
- 51. Come clean, with "up"
- 52. Tariff
- 53. Range in Russia
- 54. Orange drink that
- went to space
- 55. L x W
- 56. Mature

Sudoku

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

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

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.websudoku.com/

DEADLINE FOR SUDOKU AND CROSSWORD SUBMISSION IS:

JULY 15, 2023



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

Crossword:

Shirley Gibson-Bull, Cariboo-Chilcotin Cheryl Fary, North Vancouver Roberta Ling, Courtenay

Sudoku:

Janine Goodall, Central Okanagan Ron Crosby, Prince George Mary Gawryluk, Surrey

SPRING 2023 CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Т	0	С	Н		1	D	L	Ε	S		Н	Α	Ν	K
Α	L	0	Ε		Ν	0	Т	С	Н		0	В	0	Ε
L	I	L	Α		С	L	Α	R	Α		٧	Ε	R	Υ
С	0	Α	R	S	Ε	\circ	0	U	R	S	Ε			
			S	Α	Ν	Е			Р	Е	R	U	S	Е
S	\circ	L	Α	U	S			Ρ	Ε	R		Ν	Α	S
Т	Η	Ε	Υ	R	Ε	Т	Н	Ε	R	Ε		В	Υ	С
R	I	G	S			Н	Е	Ν			Ν	Α	S	Н
U	S	Α		Н	0	Α	R	S	Ε	Н	0	R	S	Ε
Ν	Е	T		0	В	-			Τ	Ε	Ν	S	0	R
G	L	0	В	Α	L			0	Α	R	S			
			W	R	I	Т	-	Ν	G	D	Ε	S	Κ	S
S	0	F	Α		G	0	0	S	Ε		Ν	0	Α	Н
Р	Α	1	Ν		Е	Ν	Т	Е	R		S	Α	L	Ε
Α	Т	Ε	Α		S	K	Α	Т	Ε		Ε	K	Е	D

PUZZLES POSTSCRIPT 75



Almas, Patricia

Arkell, Diana J.

Bisset. Derek

Bonnett, Gordon Laird

Bourbonais, Margo

Campbell, B. Elizabeth

Cannon, Robert Denison

Carr, Beverley J

Cassidy, Eileen M.

Castellarin, Ivo S.

Chen-Wing, John M.

Conway, Jean

Croft, John Thomas

Crumlin, Roberta L.

Danielson, Thelma Joan

Davies, Vivien

Doe. Diana

Douglas, Paula

Ebenezer, D. L.

Ellwood, Margaret

Eriksson, Joanne E.

Eriksson, Barbro

Ernst, Clara

Eyres, Sherrill M.

Fairbairn, Shirley

Feldes, Joseph J.

Rocky Mountain

Powell River

Langley

Okanagan

North Vancouver

Kamloops

Surrey

Saanich

Central Okanagan

Burnaby

Coast Mountains

Sooke

Howe Sound

West Vancouver

Nanaimo

Saanich

Terrace

Campbell River

Kamloops

Coquitlam

Coquitlam

Coquitlam

Greater Victoria

Greater Victoria

Greater Victoria

Vancouver

Fergusson, William J.

Fischer-Credo, Susan

Fleming, A. June

Forrest, Douglas

Friesen. Edward

Galbraith, Gary

Gould, Yvonne

Grahauer, Carol

Green, Terry

Harte, Pamela L

Hasfjord, Osbjorn

Herd, Kerry Anne

Hilderman, Ruth

Holtsbaum, Laura

Howell, Norma G

Johnson, Don

Kaye, Nancy

King, Peter C.

Kovacevic, Milina

Kristmanson, Frederick A. Richmond

Larsen, Lorraine

Linburg, Phyllis R

Lindgren, Philip A.

MacPhee, Sandra

Malcolm, Mary

Mancinelli, Joyce

Chilliwack

Vancouver

Greater Victoria

Prince George

Greater Victoria

Surrey

Coquitlam

Chilliwack

Okanagan-Skaha

Saanich

Chilliwack

Langley

Abbotsford

Abbotsford

Trail

Greater Victoria

West Vancouver

Sooke

Vancouver

Surrey

Vancouver

Sooke

Greater Victoria

Vancouver

Delta

IN MEMORIAM

Marsh, Raymond M.	Burnaby	Ryeburn, Jo Anne	New Westminster
Maultsaid, Denise G.	Coquitlam	Schofield, Grace E.	Surrey
McCallum, Philomena	Vancouver	Secret, Dennis	Coquitlam
McConville, Peter	Maple Ridge	Shellon, Robert M	Arrow Lake
McCullough, Anthony	Maple Ridge	Shout, Frederick B.	Campbell River
McInnis, Lois A.	Kamloops	Sikula, Edward	Nelson
McManus, Richard A.	Alberni	Slater, Norman	West Vancouver
McNamee, Denis J.	Nanaimo	Solheim, Bernice	Chilliwack
Melnichuk, Margaret	Mission	Sullivan, Robert A.	Coast Mountains
Meronek, Diana L.	Quesnel	Tan, Gek C.	Vernon
Morgan, Robert R.	Surrey		Cowichan
Mulligan, David R.	Prince George	Taylor, Donald L.	
Nash, Martina	Nanaimo	Taylor, Sherry	Vancouver
Neu, Doreen E.	Surrey	Thomas, Catherine	South Okanagan
Neudorf, C. Hanna	Langley	Thompson, Brian E.	Kamloops
Neufeld, Alfred	Delta	Thompson, Esther	Courtenay
Page, Joyce	North Vancouver	Thomson, Edna B	North Vancouver
Parker, Margaret E.	Greater Victoria	Tupman, Dennis F.	Vancouver
Parkinson, Glenn J	Langley	Van Eerden, Audrey	Greater Victoria
Pavelich, Amy	Shuswap	Walkley, Mavis	North Vancouver
Pease, Sharon	Quesnel	Walsh, Mary Lorraine	Surrey
Plotnikow, Victor	Peace River North	Warren, Loretta	Lake Cowichan
Pocock, Albert	Burnaby	Whitworth, Patricia	Langley
Pokomandy, Julius	Delta	Wishlow, Alex	Creston
Puffalt, Ellen J.	Vancouver	Williams, Betty Lynn	
Richardson, Alison R	Vancouver		Maple Ridge
Richardson, Diana M.	Langley	Woodley, Michael	Greater Victoria
Rollins, Jim	Vancouver	Young, Kim A.	Delta
Rollins, Hartley	Courtenay	Young, Daniel	Sooke
Rose, Taimi	Alberni	Young, Doreen	Vancouver
Rotta, Viola	Burnaby	Zaklan, George L.	Surrey
IN MEMORIAM			DOSTSCRIPT 77

POSTSCRIPT 77

IN MEMORIAM



This year the RR Smith Board of Directors approved over \$40,000 in grants to 27 worthy projects. One hundred percent of RR Smith membership fees in 2022- 23 were used to support educational endeavours in BC and abroad. Lower returns on our investments meant that we had to stretch our toonies this year. Kudos to RR Smith Members for your continued support of the Foundation.

- Afretech: This aid society provides training for teachers of technology in Kenya, Malawi and the Philippines. Grant monies will fund training materials and printed paper certificates.
- **2. BC Heritage Fairs:** BCHF facilitates local and regional heritage fairs in BC. Grant monies will be used to sponsor a delegation to the provincial heritage fair in Prince George.
- 3. Betty Huff Theatre Company: BHTC provides inner city kids in Surrey with after school programs in music, dance and acting. Grant monies will go towards the purchase of needed stage curtaining.
- **4. Bright Beginnings:** BB provides bursaries to low income post secondary students from Surrey. Grant monies will fund tuition for deserving students.
- **5. Canadian Harambee:** CHES operates in Kenya and Tanzania. Grant monies will fund learning materials for girls whose personal circumstances would otherwise prevent them from attending school.
- **6. Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan:**CW4WA supports groups and individuals who provide alternative education to students in Afghanistan. Grant monies will fund phones, tablets and power banks.
- 7. Children's Care International: CCI provides guidance and support for girls freed from sexual exploitation in India and Thailand. Grant monies will fund school supplies.



- **8. Compassion Fruit Project Samos:** CFPS works with impoverished indigenous children in Guatemala to build literacy and love of reading. Grant monies will fund Spanish books.
- 9. Days For Girls Port Moody Chapter: Teams of volunteers make washable menstrual kits for girls in poverty stricken countries, thus enabling consistent school attendance. Grant monies will fund kit materials.
- 10. Families for Children: FC supports orphans in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Many of the children require special care. Grant monies will fund books, games and teaching materials.
- **11. Gibsons Marine:** GM operates a marine education centre and aquarium in Gibsons, BC. Grant monies will help to fund a microscope, magnifying glasses, crab traps and waterproof notebooks.
- **12. Guatemala Stove Project:** GSP supports indigenous and other disadvantaged people in Guatemala. Grant monies will help to fund secondary school expenses for two rural Maya-Mam girls.
- 13. HEAL International: HEAL supports orphaned children living in rural Western Uganda. Grant monies will fund computer training for elementary and secondary students.

78 POSTSCRIPT RR SMITH FOUNDATION

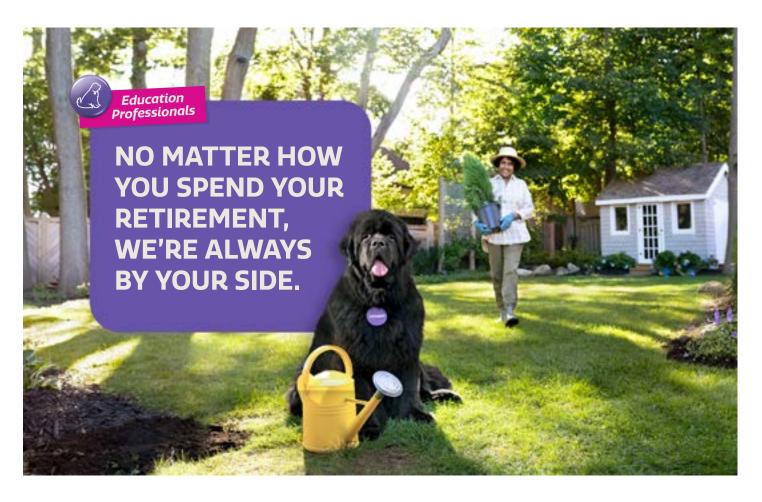
- **14. Innovative Communities:** ICO supports local initiatives to relieve poverty and advance education in Tanzania. Grant monies will fund text books and library books for the Nashipay Maasai school.
- **15. Into All the World:** IAW in Uganda provides a home and education for street boys and has expanded by opening a local primary school. Grant monies will fund educational supplies and books for students.
- **16. Kenya Education Endowment Fund:** KEEF provides scholarships to secondary and post-secondary students in Kakamega County Kenya. Grant monies will fund tuition fees and library books.
- 17. **Learning for Humanity:** LFH works to disrupt poverty through education in global southern Africa. Grant monies will fund the purchase of three lap tops for teachers in the DR Congo.
- 18. Light and Salt Ministry: LSM works to support women, seniors and underprivileged boys in Nicaragua. Grant monies will fund library books for boys' formation classes.
- **19. Love Guatemala:** LG works to alleviate poverty in six towns in Guatemala. Grant monies will be used to purchase English books for students ranging from primary to grade six levels.
- 20. One Girl Can: OGC educates, trains and mentors impoverished yet academically deserving girls in Kenya. Grant monies will help to fund a scholarship for one girl to attend university.
- 21. Planting Seeds: PS provides comprehensive education for low income families and children in Guatemala. Grant monies will provide pre-school book kits for the lending library.
- **22. Step International:** SI supports schools for destitute children in Northern India. Grant monies will buy books, digital content, and other learning resources for two school libraries in Assam and Manipur States.

- **23. Tumaini Fund:** TF supports HIV/AIDS orphans in Tanzania. Monies will purchase treadle sewing machines for young women to take home after a tailoring course to set up a home business.
- **24. Umoja:** U provides scholarships and bursaries to students in Uganda. Monies will be used for textbooks to assist students in preparing for final exams leading to admission to secondary school in Uganda.
- **25. Vancouver Opera Guild:** VOG provides a Vancouver Opera in Schools program consisting of professional English opera that is relevant to youth. Grant monies will be used to purchase scores.
- **26. Victoria Taiama:** V-T educates girls in Sierra Leone to promote both their financial independence and resistance to pressure to marry early. Grant monies will provide vocational training tuition for four girls.
- **27. Wonderful World of Books:** WWB promotes literacy by giving a book a month to 3 and 4 year olds in the Qualicum BC area. Grant monies will be used to purchase books that volunteers will deliver to children's homes.



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Learn more at www.rrsmith.ca



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