

# PostScript

SUMMER 2025



THE MAGAZINE FOR RETIRED EDUCATORS

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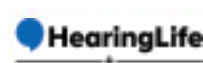
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BC Retired Teachers' Association

# PostScript

SUMMER 2025



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**Submission guidelines at [bcrt.ca/postscript-submissions](http://bcrt.ca/postscript-submissions)**

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Summertime never arrives too soon, and it never leaves too late. Even after our school obligations are in the past, there is something special about the season. As you sit poolside or spend an afternoon at the beach, this issue of PostScript will give you some good summer reading.

Settle in for a thoughtful reflection from **Helene McGall** on the way revelations about her mother's life helped her understand her family past as well as shaped her own choices for the future. You might identify with the grandparent experiences of **Ruth Stewart** as she takes grandchildren to a local flight museum. The irrepressible **Ralph Martin** does a cannonball in the deep end with his aptly-named piece, "Summer Splash."

Travelling further abroad, we at PostScript are inspired by **Bonnie Sutherland's** story of encountering schools in Africa and how her simple response created a wave of goodwill that changed the lives of many. **Doreen Berg** continues her odyssey through the "Stans" with several days in spectacular Uzbekistan, where she comes into contact with exotic history and new friends.

Rounding out this issue are some health insights and other thought-provoking columns, and another "Games Lady" column from **Pat Thiesen**, with entertainments and diversions suitable for the picnic table or campsite.

Finally, as you consider future getaways, you might want to check out two of the latest BCRTA Group Departures on pages 34 and 35. Interested in cycling the low countries? Bike and Barge might be for you. If you are looking for a warm longstay trip, then have a look at Belize because, as wonderful as it is, our Canadian summer won't last forever.

Enjoy the season!

*The Editor*

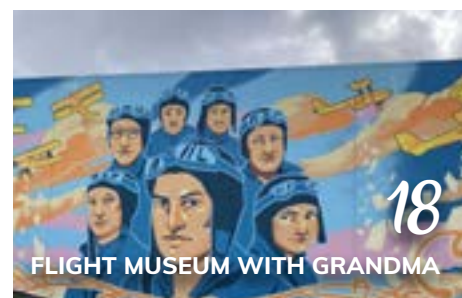
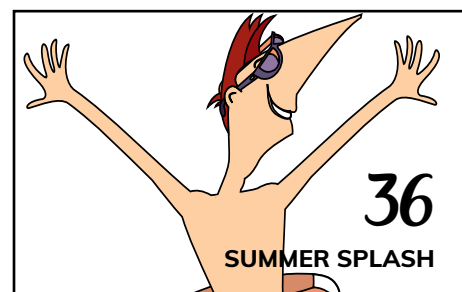
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## OUR SUMMERS PAST AND PRESENT

Summer in beautiful BC! Before retirement, that meant packing up our classrooms and saying goodbye to colleagues and students. For many of us, it signalled a return to course work or to summer school teaching. Those sunny weeks between June and September also marked opportunities to catch up with household tasks and gardening, and to travel. Taking a break from the regular school year meant we could pause, reflect and reconnect with ourselves and others. Shuffling through crowded, noisy, hallways gave way to bare feet on the grass. We didn't have to be somewhere because of a school schedule; we could just enjoy the summer breeze and that good book.

This year, as we moved through our glorious cherry-blossomed spring towards the long bright days of summer, I thought of the transitions we experience as retired educators. Retirement invites

us to savour our memories while opening the door to new opportunities to connect, contribute and reflect.

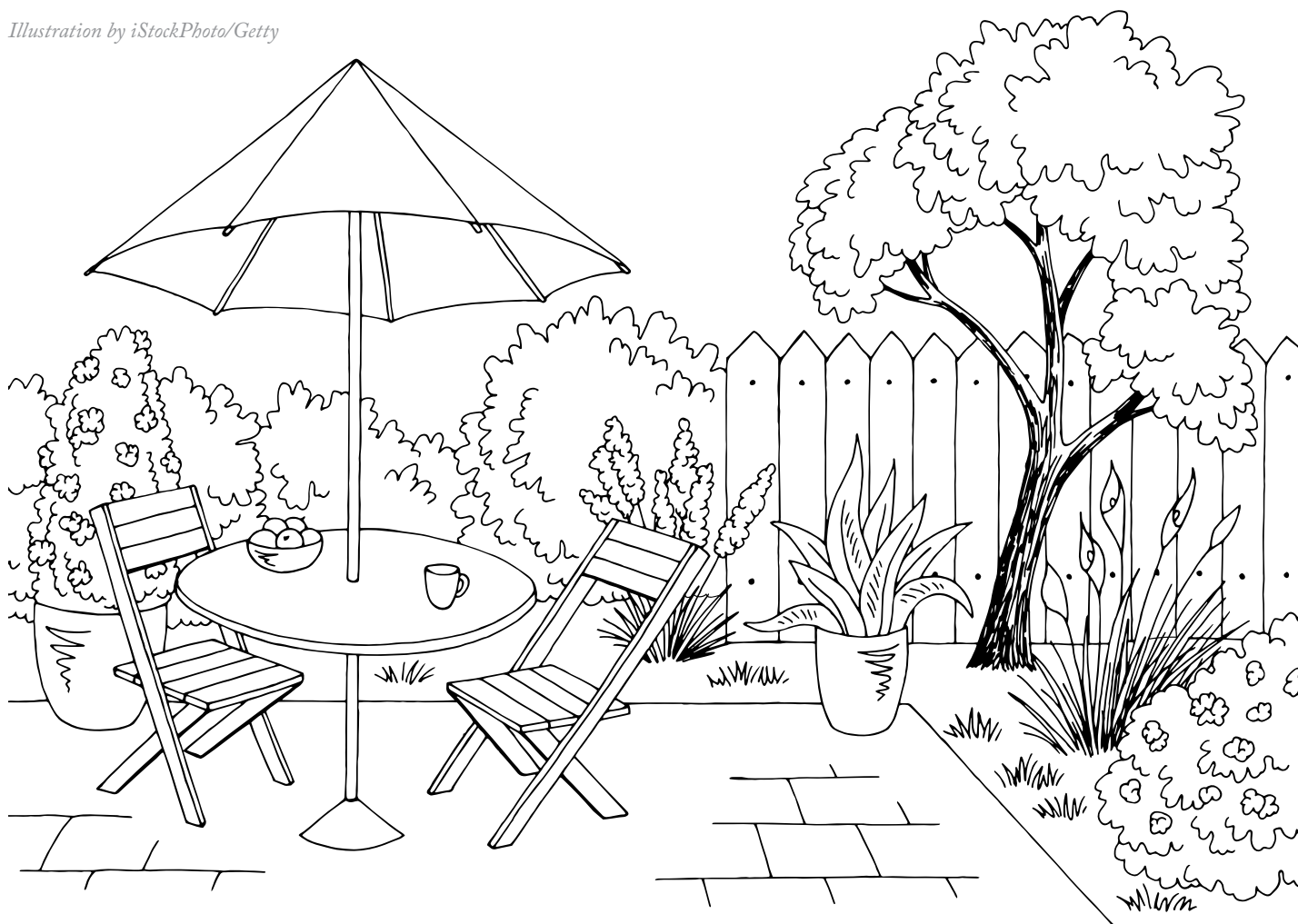
We each do that in our own way. Some retirees plunge into a frenzy of new activities – you might have heard them say, “I’ve never been so busy!” Most of us don’t want to achieve that milestone!

A reality that can also sneak up on us in retirement is a growing isolation due to the falling away of life connections. Certainly in the first year of retirement we experience a sharp change as we are no longer part of a team at school. Isolation can also increase gradually as longtime friends and neighbours move away or pass on. For some, it becomes a quiet crisis. Continuous social isolation has been linked to various health issues, including increased risks of cardiovascular disease, depression, cognitive decline, and premature mortality.

One of the things I love about BCRTA is that involvement in our association gives a positive outlet for our instincts to be involved and make a difference. But we are a retiree organization – it isn’t 100% full-on every day, like teaching was. (Except if you are President!) It is always great to be part of a team of colleagues in pursuit of meaningful goals. Through our local branches and provincial activities, BCRTA nurtures a sense of community, purpose, and connection.

As President, I have had the enormous privilege of connecting in person with members at Zone and Branch meetings across BC. Invitations took me to Vancouver and Coquitlam, Parksville-Qualicum and Gibson’s, Kamloops and Merritt, Prince George and Creston. At each location, I heard stories from members who serve on their Branch Executives, who sit on provincial committees, who promote seniors’ well-being, who facilitate literacy programs, who mentor new teachers, who provide

*As President, I have had the enormous privilege of connecting in person with members at Zone and Branch meetings across BC...*



fun music lessons, who enjoy Branch book clubs, and, importantly, who show up for one another at Branch events – the list of connections is endlessly inspiring. Our impact as educators doesn't end with retirement. While we may no longer stand before a class, our presence still makes a difference. Across our province, from the Island to the Interior, from the North to the Lower Mainland, member involvement keeps our BCRTA community strong and responsive. In retirement, we can give and receive the gift of in-person connection through participation in our Association.

I hope the summer of 2025 brings you time for the things you enjoy: travel, gardening, family gatherings, or relaxing with a good book at the beach. In July and August, the Board

will conduct BCRTA business as needed. We will connect with new members throughout the summer as retirees join us. Preparations for our Conference and AGM will continue as September approaches. Our office is open weekdays through the summer and our staff are there to answer questions and provide support. I also encourage you to check in with your local Branch for news on events and opportunities coming in the fall and be sure to save the date for your Branch's No Bell event early in the new school year. Those gatherings are always fun, as we celebrate not having to answer that school bell, but also celebrate our continued connections as colleagues; it's terrific to be part of a team of people, doing meaningful things.

Happy summer, everyone!

**CAROLINE MALM** is President of BCRTA



# PostScript Letters

## When You Can Do It, Say Yes

Karen Cooper's captivating odyssey *Swimming With The Elders* (Spring 2025 PostScript) is an inspiration to all us seniors. Beginning as a sprightly 67-year-old, her message is clear: age is never a barrier.

Karen was too gracious to allude to her qualifying for the prestigious World Aquatic Masters Championships to be held in Singapore this year.

At the much younger age of 50 I had struggled through several marathons, yet I felt compelled to compete in an Ironman Triathlon. The only major problem was that I could not swim. Not even a single stroke. My struggles are chronicled in my fitness blog *Floundering In The Deep End* at my site [Over50andfit.ca](http://Over50andfit.ca).

Karen has opened a new reality for us, helping us to age even more gracefully.

We may not wish to aspire to open water swimming, but there are other physical challenges: pickle ball, racquet sports, lawn bowling, cycling, jogging, strength training, speed walking, water aerobics, climbing, hiking, yoga, dancing, tai chi, stretching, gardening, and let's not forget good old-fashioned walking.

Karen, thank you for challenging us.

Barrie Street

## PostScript Partners

Once again, thanks for this experience. Enjoy reading PostScript each season. Keep up the great work!

Rosemary McDowell

I think the puzzles have the perfect degree of difficulty. Thanks.

Marj MacKenzie

I absolutely love your Sudoku puzzles. Keep them coming – thank you!

Ilona Eberle

Thank you for the great work you do on the magazine. I look forward to it coming every term.

Hoshiar Dhaliwal

## Keep Up With Our Events and News

*Branch Happenings*  
*Pension and Tax Updates*  
*Inspiration and Ideas*

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**Miss Pelton Please Report to the Office for an Important Message: Part Two**

*Editor's Note:* PostScript Readers will be glad to hear that our appeal to Miss Pelton was heard, and she has received the message of gratitude from her former student.

**Write us at [postscript@bcrt.ca](mailto:postscript@bcrt.ca)**



# Awards

**VAL WINDSOR** - BCRTA member was recently awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal. Val has devoted more than 50 years as a teacher, serving as Delta Teachers' Association President for many years and, currently, as school board chair in Delta. Her remarkable and visionary advocacy work includes improving graduation rates for Indigenous students and building Delta Community College. Congratulations, Val!



**LORRAINE BARG** is another BCRTA member (Boundary branch) recently awarded a King Charles III Coronation medal for her contributions to Canada. Lorraine has been branch treasurer for many years as well as pianist for numerous community plays and productions. Congratulations, Lorraine!

**CHRIS MOSLIN** is a BCRTA member (Boundary branch) who served BDTA, City Council and the Boundary Trail Society. His service to his community was recognized by the presentation of a King Charles III Coronation Medal. Congratulations, Chris!

The King Charles III Coronation medal is awarded to persons who have made "a significant contribution to Canada or to a particular province, territory, region of, or community in, Canada."



# important dates

## CPP and OAS

### Payment Dates

- May 28, 2025
- June 26, 2025
- July 29, 2025
- August 27, 2025
- September 25, 2025
- October 29, 2025
- November 26, 2025
- December 22, 2025

## Teachers' Pension

### Payment Dates

- May 29, 2025
- June 27, 2025
- July 30, 2025
- August 28, 2025
- September 26, 2025
- October 30, 2025
- November 27, 2025
- December 23, 2025

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# Turning Points

LESSONS FROM MY MOTHER'S LIFE



BY HELENE MCGALL



I recently retired to Victoria, BC, where I was born and raised. Walking the streets of the city, I find myself remembering specific and significant events that happened in my early life. I live in Chinatown, and so many memories flood into my mind as I walk through Market Square. I remember my mother taking me there on Saturday mornings for the fresh vegetables and fruit grown and sold by the Chinese community.

I also remember the last November 11 Remembrance Day parade down Government Street we attended as a family. It was 1964. Mom, Dad, and I had taken the bus and we were a little late. My father was wearing his grey trousers and blue Royal Canadian Legion jacket, complete with all his medals. A World War II Navy veteran, he ran to join his colleagues in the parade, and Mom and I hurried to the Cenotaph in front of the Parliament buildings to await the arrival of the veterans and then the Memorial Day service.

I also remember my mother taking me to the Provincial Museum. When we visited the Indigenous section, she was extremely knowledgeable about all the exhibits, and talked to me at length about the totem poles, the Indigenous garb, and the Indigenous artifacts. At an exhibit where an Indigenous woman had a child strapped to her back, my mother explained that this allowed the woman to mind her child, while continuing to do the work for the family. We would often stop by the carving shed at Totem Park, where she would spend a long time talking to Mungo Martin, the famous carver from Fort Rupert, about his family and his work as a carver, while he was at work creating totem poles with his handmade adze.

Little did I know that my mother had introduced me to the fundamentals that would guide my life: first by supporting the unsupported by befriending the Chinese community, secondly by respecting and honoring service to country, and third by quietly



## *Little did I know that my mother had introduced me to the fundamentals that would guide my life...*

acknowledging something about her heritage in a way that would not bring attention to herself, but would bring understanding of Indigenous peoples to my brother and me.

My mother was born in Ituna, Saskatchewan, in 1914, and raised there. A small town of about three hundred people, Ituna was located on the main Canadian National Railroad (CN) line. Her father worked on the CN, as did all the men in her family. Their jobs had been secured in perpetuity by her grandfather, who had been a stockholder of the Grand Trunk Railroad. When the company went bankrupt, the only thing left to honor the stockholders was to grant their families guaranteed jobs with CN. All family members also got free passage on the train.

It was this benefit of a free ticket that enabled my mother to escape from tragic and horrific circumstances in her early life. She never told me details, but my father later indicated that she had been abused by a priest and had borne a child. So in 1931, at the age of sixteen, she got on the train and ran away from her family and the circle of a life she would not choose to endure.

Having always been a horse enthusiast, but never having the opportunity to ride, she got off the train in Kamloops and got a job on a ranch as a cowhand. She stayed there, enjoying her new life, until it was time to pursue further travel and new adventures on Vancouver Island. My mother had only a Grade 7 education, but she was an adaptive learner. Before long, she became a receptionist in a doctor's office, and a nanny to his children. By 1940, she wanted to experience city life, so she successfully applied for a live-in position as a maid at the Empress Hotel in Victoria.

My mother loved music and dancing. She met my father, a dashing young naval petty officer, at a tea dance held on the promenade at the Crystal Garden. What a surprise my father got when she announced that she lived at the Empress! The hotel's employment policy forced my mother to leave her job following their marriage in 1942. They moved in with my paternal grandparents. Soon, my grandfather purchased a family home for them on Foul Bay Road.



*Above and facing page: Scenes from Victoria.  
Images by iStock/Getty*

*My awakening  
came when we  
picked them up at  
the bus station...*



One day in 1962, she had a terrible headache. My 16-year-old brother was home, and he was aware enough to get her to the hospital. She had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. My father was frantic. Suddenly her family connections were on our minds. He sent word, via CJVI radio, and then CBC radio to Saskatchewan, to try to find her relatives.

The CBC broadcast went out, and a Maurice and Marian Richard from Saskatchewan contacted us. They were my mother's brother and sister-in-law. They came out immediately. My mother fortunately made a good recovery, so by the time her brother and sister-in-law arrived, she was already at home.

My awakening came when we picked them up at the bus station. Uncle Maurice was well over six feet tall, and very big and brown. Aunt Marion had grey hair, and she was also very dark. They were clearly Indigenous people. I had seen the other side of our family.

Up until that time, we knew nothing about my mother's family and background. We never thought anything about it. It was my mother's way of keeping secrets and protecting us from what she perceived to be dangerous repercussions of being labelled "Indians," and the negative stereotyping that went along with that label. We only knew our father's side of the family, including his mother, his brother, and his sister.

My mother's skin was an olive color, but I had never really thought anything about it. Her interest in Indigenous affairs, and concern for the welfare of children in need, were always of utmost importance to her, yet she never revealed anything about herself, her experiences, her culture, or her status as a Metis.

The next summer, Mom and I went to Saskatchewan on the train so that I could meet her seven siblings and their families. For the trip, my mother made me a wardrobe of new dresses, skirts, and blouses. She dressed me like a little princess.





When we arrived in the hot, windy, and dusty railway town of Watrous, I was shocked at the poverty I saw in the community, and even more stunned when we arrived at the little clapboard, one bedroom shack with eight beds in the living room, and the outhouse out back, where my relatives lived. Seeing my alarm, my mother told me that in life, we have choices. One choice was to accept the circumstances under which one lived; the other choice was to seek what possibilities there might be in the world.

This lesson haunted me for the rest of my life. I look at it now as a turning point. My mother had the same “aha” moment in her life, and she made the choice to become free. She escaped and made the best life that she could for herself with very limited opportunities. As a daughter, it helped me understand why a woman with only a Grade 7 education was adamant about providing the best education and opportunities she could for my brother and me. She did not want us to ever experience the nightmares she had endured: abuse, neglect, marginalization, racism, and fear.

My mother also opened up about her own lack of opportunities. As an Indigenous woman, every door was closed to her. Even though she could nearly pass as white, and was very smart, she was always mindful of her “place.” She warned me against ever having children because I might have a “throwback.” This meant that I could have a child with dark skin, even though I am white. Her fear was that such a child would face the negative stereotyping that was so prevalent in her generation, and would therefore lack opportunities to have a full, successful, and meaningful life.

We came home from that eye-opening trip, and I became the best that I could be in all that I participated in: piano, clarinet, highland dancing, ballet, brownies, Girl Guides, and academics.

My mother was always determined to not be dependent or idle. She never asked for help, she never complained, she was proud, and she was honourable. She always had a job, and even when we were small she cleaned offices and homes.



*She'd take me with her when she went to work, and perch me on a stool at the till to take orders...*

She took me with her to the office buildings, and I suppose it was something like that exhibit she had shown me, a mother at work, at the same time caring for her child. At one point, she had worked at a little restaurant near the Empress, a little one-person operation. She'd take me with her when she went to work, and perch me on a stool at the till to take orders. When my father's fishing boat operation went bankrupt in the early 50's, it was her work that fed us. She eventually returned to work at the Empress when their policies changed. Later she became a maid to a number of very wealthy families, including that of the Minister of Education.

*What was I going to do? No question!  
Teaching and education became my  
life's ambition...*

People liked my mom, and she was a good friend to so many. Dad's boat had a crew of ten, all of whom were fine when they were at sea, but when they were on land, they got into all kinds of trouble, and many would show up at our house. While my mom would never invite them in, she'd feed them and give them bus tickets.

Mom had had rheumatic fever as a child and was often in poor health, and in her 40's a pattern emerged: she was hospitalized nearly every winter around Christmas. By this point, my dad was working on tugboats and often away, so we would usually be sent to relatives, but one year, when they weren't available, my brother and I were sent to an orphanage. Sadly, the year after her first hemorrhage, she had a second, more serious, one, and this time she was not so lucky. She died at the age of fifty. I was just fifteen.

We were members of St. Matthias, a large church, and at her funeral, the church was at standing room only, with people outside and the parking lot entirely full. The minister for education attended as well.

For the rest of my life, I have been trying to live out the values that she instilled in me. My grandmother on my dad's side was a teacher until she turned eighty-two. What was I going to do? No question! Teaching and education became my life's ambition, though it wasn't easy to get there. My dad told me that if I'd stay home and take care of him, he'd pay for my education. I'd been taking care of everything since my Mom died—for example,

dinner had to be on the table at 5:10PM precisely—so I continued all of that until I attained my degree.

From the moment we saw my father march in that parade, I had felt a need to somehow honour the service he gave. He loved music, and he loved the military band. That was my inspiration, to learn music and to play in a band. I made a career of it, not only playing the clarinet, but singing, teaching, and administrating arts programs in BC. I also spent two years in administration in Aboriginal Education, in the Comox Valley.

My mother loved the Chinese people, and she befriended so many. She knew of their kindness, their love of family, and their passion for learning. When I had the opportunity to teach oral English at the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University, I took it and served there for 10 years. I only wish she could have been there with me.

As an Indigenous woman, she lived at a time when it was not safe or popular to identify as one on the outside. On the inside, however, she was proud, and wanted to know and live her heritage, even though she'd had such bad experiences. It was such a personal tragedy for her to live in two worlds. One, a secret place, where she could exist as who she was. The other, the life that she built outside of her indigenusness. She was running away her whole life, and I wish that she could have been here to share her story with the Truth and Reconciliation commission. Her story, like so many others, needed a place to be told so that she could stop running and be free.

With a role model like my mother, with her strong, determined approach to work, I was drawn to Inuvik, to try and be a role model for Indigenous students in the far North. Although I never had my own children, I had the children of the North.

In recent years, my brother took the lead in contacting the Metis Association to delve into our family history, and it is fascinating. We were able to trace our family tree back a long way, and to find out that we were Metis from the Red River Settlement, and before that we were French, Cree, Ojibwa, and Chippewa. It is an ancestry that I am learning about, and an ancestry that makes me proud as a real Canadian. •



**MARIE JOSEPHINE RICHARD ANDERSON**

1914-1964



**HELENE MCGALL**

Helene is a past recipient of the PostScript Excellence Award for her writing about her decade of teaching in China, and has contributed other articles about her experiences teaching in Canada's North in her seventies. Helene was also formerly a Director of BCRTA. She lives in Victoria.



# My Trip to the FLIGHT MUSEUM with Grandma

BY RUTH STEWART



Is my Grandma crazy?

As she drives me to the Canadian Museum of Flight in Langley, she tells me she has gone down the wrong road.

She asks me where she should turn.

How should I know? She's the grown-up.

She's supposed to know these things.

She can't find her credit card to buy the tickets.

She digs down into her purse.

She tips everything out of her purse on to the counter.

The credit card is nowhere to be seen.

In the end, she slowly counts out enough cash from her change purse to pay for the entry fees.

Outside we climb up the wooden steps to peer into an old aircraft.

She says there isn't much room in the cockpit for the pilot.

Of course not, it's old and small.

It's in a museum.

That's why we came to see them wasn't it?

I mean, does she think this plane is a 747?

She begins to talk of her one cousin who flew in these airplanes in WW2 but hasn't been in a plane since.

He drives a car OK though, she says.

She says he was a rear gunner during the war.

She says imagine his position in the aircraft.

She says the life expectancy of a rear gunner in the war was three flights.

She says it was lucky the war ended before her cousin went up three times.

She's glad she had him around as she grew up.

We are both quiet for a bit then.

She tells me her sister's husband's father was in the Flying Corps. That's what it was called in those days before it was called the Air Force.

The propellers are gigantic. The jet planes today are sleek looking.

She says these old planes look like hornets.

After seeing all the cool exhibits, we go back to the car.

There is her credit card.

On the back seat.

Then she remembers, she must have left it there when she paid for gas at the pump yesterday.

Yesterday.

It's been there since yesterday.

Grandma can remember about her cousin being a rear gunner in the Second World War, but she can't remember where she put her credit card.

That's Grandma for you. •

**RUTH STEWART** is a BCRTA member whose poetry and memoir have previously appeared in PostScript. She taught in London, England, Vancouver and Langley SD 35.

**CANADIAN MUSEUM OF FLIGHT IN LANGLEY** is planning to move to Pitt Meadows to a larger facility to house its large and growing collections of exhibits. Currently the museum is located on 216th Street in Langley, at the Langley Airport.

Learn more about the museum, its exhibits, and Canadian Aviation history at their website:

[canadianmuseumofflight.ca](http://canadianmuseumofflight.ca)

*Right: Canadian Museum of Flight. Photo by iStock/Getty.*

*Below: Mural at Langley Airport. Photo by Ruth Stewart.*



# THE SILK ROAD: UZBEKISTAN

BY MARY DOREEN MILDRED BERG

WITH JOHN BERG







*Above: TV tower at Tashkent. Facing page: Zindan building in city of Khiva. Photos by iStock/Getty.*

## SEPTEMBER 24

Today we crossed the border into Uzbekistan. We each paid \$17.00 US to expedite a faster crossing, after four check points and dragging our luggage past many trucks waiting to cross we ultimately got through the border. We loaded onto a large bus and were on our way.

The countryside was fields of cotton, corn, potatoes, and other crops we didn't recognize. Uzbekistan has more arable land and is less nomadic than the other Stans, though they may have future water scarcity problems since they are presently planning to dam one river for hydroelectric power and the Aral Sea is already drying up. Many workers in the cotton fields were bending over to pick the cotton balls. Marifat, our guide, told us that when she was a young child, she too picked cotton. The cotton workers put the cotton balls

into wire-caged wagons which are then pulled by tractors onto the highways.

In the capital city of Tashkent, we noticed many Soviet-style multi-story buildings being removed and replaced by modern buildings. Alpha Plaza Hotel and Spa was our accommodation for two nights. After a short rest we went for a walk and saw a number of beautiful buildings, including Hyundai Engineering. Chevrolet also has a plant here and we saw hundreds of Chevrolets, but only in black or white. According to our tour guide Marifat, the government has removed all taxes from electric cars.

Later we took the elevator to the 16th floor of Hotel Uzbekistan to take panoramic photos of the city, then walked to an upscale restaurant to have an elaborate meal which cost 324,300.00 cym, about \$30.00 US.



*Tamerlane. Photo by iStock/Getty.*

## **SEPTEMBER 25**

Today was a free day in Tashkent to explore its wonders on our own. The temperature was very warm, in the 30's. John and I took a two-hour city bus tour, using earphones for English translation. We had two major stops, the first at the Hazrat Imam Complex, a huge ensemble of madrassas, mosques, and museums spread over several acres. Located at the grave of one of the first imams of Tashkent, Hazrat Imam Hussain, this complex is the religious heart of Tashkent, where pilgrims come.

A second stop was at the monument of Amir Temur (also known as Tamerlane), the rampaging, undefeated Turco-Mongol conqueror of the 1300's, known throughout the Asian continent for his military leadership, barbarity, and cultural achievements. The surrounding square and park were originally developed by the Soviets. A former president, Karimov, removed the Soviet sculpture honouring Karl Marx and redeveloped the square to honour Tamerlane, and by inference Uzbek culture and history. Unfortunately, he also cut down all the

chinar trees in the park that had given shade for chess players and strollers in the park.

The TV tower, a massive 375 metres tall, was built by the Russians and can be seen from all over the city.

## **SEPTEMBER 26**

Faced with a long day of driving to Samarkand, we ate breakfast at 7:00 and departed promptly at 8:00. Before leaving Tashkent, we shopped at a huge



*John in the market bazaar at Tashkent. Photo by author.*





*Animal heads for sale in the bazaar. Photo by author.*

bazaar near the Hazrat Imam Complex that sells everything, and bought fruit, nuts, and fresh bread for later in the day.

Samarkand, an ancient city on the Silk Road known for elaborate and beautiful mosques and mausoleums, is the third-largest city of Uzbekistan. Many mosaic murals decorate the walls coming into the city. We were soon at Hotel Zarina, an older but comfortable hotel. We went to dinner at Loridor Restaurant, where Marifat had reserved a table for us on the top floor. There we enjoyed a favourite meal of lamb kebobs and dumplings.

We spent two nights in Samarkand, visiting many sites which included Ulugbek Observatory (a centre of scientific discovery in the 1400's), Shaki Zinda Complex, Siyob Bazaar, and Registan Square. The square has four madrassas (Muslim schools), some of which date back as far as the 1400's. Blue mosaics adorn the sides of the tall buildings with wide arches with pointed apexes. Once one of the largest and most magnificent mosques of the Muslim world, Bibi-Khanym ("Senior Princess"), has a cupola which is 41 metres high and the entrance portal is 38 metres high. Built between 1399 and 1404, with ninety-five elephants used to transport the materials, it commemorates Timur's wife, who commissioned the mosque, though Temur oversaw its construction.

At 5:30 we enjoyed a musical dance with performers dressed in beautiful costumes. Later

"We shopped at a huge bazaar near the Hazrat Imam Complex that sells everything..."

we had a dinner of lentil soup, bread, and baklava for dessert. Another full and enjoyable day in Uzbekistan.

## SEPTEMBER 28

Travelled through the desert to the village of Nurota, where Alexander the Great built a huge fortress in the 4th century BC. The ruins are still there, and we climbed the hills to view the area from a high vantage point. The spring water in a canal on the hill was believed to heal diseases. This part of Alexander's waterworks system is still in use.



*Dance presentation at Samarkand. Photo by author.*



*Wading in Aydarkul Lake. Photo by author.*

We continued our journey to the brackish, man-made Aydarkul Lake. Several of our group swam in the tepid waters. John and I had left our bathing suits behind in our suitcases tightly packed in the back of the van, so we took off our shoes, rolled up our pants, and waded. Afterwards, we drove about 1½ hours to our camp where we shared a yurt with another couple. The yurts were situated in a depression, with sand dunes all around to keep the wind at bay and were cleverly constructed with beds around the curved outer walls. After supper, some of us went for a camel ride. Later we sat around a firepit where a couple of the local men played instruments, including a three stringed tanbur and a guitar.

## **SEPTEMBER 29**

We set out for Bukhara, one of the most charming cities in the country, and one of the oldest areas to visit on the Silk Road. We drove through the desert, stopping a couple of times. At one stop, we

bought two delectable samosas filled with potato. At Hotel As-Salam we were assigned a lovely room with a king bed and an ensuite. We had our laundry done in this hotel which cost \$5.00 for one kilogram.

## **SEPTEMBER 30**

Today we toured Bukhara, visiting restored mosques, madrassas, and covered markets. Between the 9th and 16th centuries, Bukhara was the largest centre for Muslim theology in the Near East, with over two hundred mosques and more than a hundred madrassas. Today, Bukhara is a center for pottery, cloth, and carpets. It was, and is, an oasis for travellers. At lunch across the street from our hotel, we ordered a pizza and a ginger tea made with lemons, oranges, cinnamon stick, mint, and honey in a large glass tea pot. We ordered this soothing and satisfying tea many times in the days to come.

In the early evening, our group visited a very small synagogue. The rabbi invited us into the synagogue of which he was very proud. Only 200 Jewish people live in Bukhara. Many have left for Israel or America. He showed us their Torah, over 500 years old, first a model of it and then the real one behind glass in a locked cupboard. Written on calfskin, it had originally come from Iraq, then through Iran, Palestine and other countries, and finally to Bukhara.

The two of us set out for supper at Lyabi Hauz Restaurant, which has a large seating area around a



*The yurts in sand dunes. Photo by author.*





*The walls of Itchan Kala. Photo by iStock/Getty.*

small pond, very welcoming for patrons. We spotted our leader Marifat, dancing, and because I love to dance, I immediately got up and danced too. Great fun.

#### **OCTOBER 1**

A long drive through the desert today from Bukhara to Khiva, which our guide Marifat told us is her home town. This town formed around the last oasis on the Silk Road before travellers crossed the dessert to Iran. We reached the town about mid-afternoon booking into Hotel Malika Khorezm.

At six o'clock we joined Marifat for a tour inside the district of Itchan Kala, the ancient walled city inside Khiva. Itchan Kala is a UNESCO Heritage Site. We entered through the historic north gate. Many vendors were selling souvenirs, hats, scarves, robes, dresses, and everything else imaginable. For dinner, we walked to the top of the wall to a



*Camel ride. Photo by author.*

charming restaurant where they provided blankets for us in the cool evening. Clarinet music filled the air as we enjoyed soup, meat dumplings, and fresh bread, accompanied by our favourite ginger tea.

## OCTOBER 2

Marifat took us on another tour into the inner walls of Itchan Kala, where she showed us madrassas, blue mosaic domes, and the towering minarets.

After several hours we stopped for a lunch of aubergine filled with crabmeat and cheese, plus, of course, ginger tea. We then went to the West Gate where ATMs were available, and John withdrew \$500.00 or 500,000 cym. One always took advantage to withdraw money when machines were available, and funds were low.

At 5:00 we went to the Rope Gymnasium where two men performed flawlessly on tightropes, walking with poles for balance, first separately and then together. They even did it blind-folded and then with a small child on top of the shoulders of the top performer to make a totem-like shape. It was amazing! They were proud to tell us that they had been filmed and had appeared on television.

This was the last full day with our leader, Marifat, in Uzbekistan. This was Marifat's first trip with G Adventures and she did an excellent job. Our group gave her a gratuity which she richly



*Tour group. Photo by author.*

deserved, had a wonderful farewell dinner for her, and gave her a Canadian fan. She was thrilled.

Tourism is rapidly becoming a major industry in Uzbekistan. With its renowned ancient heritage, grand bazaars, and delicious food, Uzbekistan was our favourite Stan.

It was time to say goodbye; the next day we'd be crossing into Turkmenistan, often considered the least popular of the Stans, but we were ready for the next step in our adventure. •



*Guide Marifat with Canadian fans. Photo by author.*

**DOREEN BERG** and her husband John live in Powell River. In the Winter 2024 issue of *PostScript* she shared the story of their adventures in Kyrgystan, which was the first leg of their epic Silk Road trip to five of "The Stans".



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# SMALL DECISIONS, BIG EFFECTS

CELEBRATING 33 YEARS OF AFRETECH



BY BONNIE SUTHERLAND

**I**t seemed an insignificant decision at the time. It was 1992, and my husband and I were standing in a partially built school in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, looking at a near-empty bookshelf.

As a result of that decision 33 years ago, I estimate that we have touched, and been touched by, more than one million lives. The projects put into motion since that day include the distribution of schoolbooks, the building of school and community libraries, provision of eye care clinics and medical equipment for hospitals and clinics, installing computers, and engineering and rolling out ARES, our African/Asian Ruggedized Computer Solution.

In that little school in Victoria Falls, we noted the paucity of resources: one small shelf with 30 or so books, the latest having a publication date of 1965. While waiting for elephants to clear the courtyard,

we decided, as so many do, to help by collecting and sending books that had been withdrawn from Canadian school libraries.

That first pallet of books we collected faced all the challenges of shipping: finding suitable content, the related costs and duties, and it took a full year to arrive. However, when we visited again some three years later, those BC math books were in use on every desk while our reading books were proudly displayed in their little library. Over those three years we had also developed a system for our project, and had recruited volunteer helpers and many donors. Book pick-ups became routine and shipping gradually became easier.

Road bumps did occur. On one occasion, I had 47 cartons of books stuck in customs during the Education International Conference in Harare,



*Photos provided by the author.*

Zimbabwe. Following the conference keynote, there was a VIP reception to which I was definitely NOT invited, but I crashed it anyway. It turns out that President Robert Mugabe was a former English teacher, so we had something in common. After the necessary small talk, I got to the point: getting my books released. Immediately after our chat, the books were on their way.

Zimbabwe was our destination for the next five years: shipments of school library books went to all parts of the country. However, by 2002, the political landscape forced us to shift. Lorrie Williams, founder of the Canadian Harambee Education Society (CHES), persuaded us to consider Kenya.

One of our goals was to install a library at Endana Primary School, a remote, desolate school with few amenities in Laikipia, one of the poorest areas in the country. Goats and sheep wandered the dusty schoolyard and the occasional camel walked past.

First, all the books – both fiction and non-fiction – had to be processed which meant adding spine labels using the Dewey Decimal System. Once we had finished that chore, we set off with 100 boxes (4,000+ books), enough to really make a difference.

Driving to our destination, the uneven road faded and sometimes disappeared altogether, but we did eventually find the place. We unloaded and began the task of systematically filling the shelves. Only then did we notice a young boy of about nine watching attentively at the window.

A little later, we realized he had sidled in and was hunched in a corner. The next time we checked he was under a table, absorbed in a book. Needing help, we coaxed him out and taught him how to file, a chore he took to immediately. He stayed the entire day and at the end we asked him to choose a book for himself. By then his friend had come to fetch him, and we watched the two of them pore over their new and precious possession as they headed home.

We chose the name Afretech AID Society (Africa's Future Through Education and Technology) and acquired Canadian and US charitable status with the ability to issue tax receipts. We also developed a much broader







mandate. Now, shipments included computers in addition to library books and we began supporting clinics and health projects - anything to do with children. One of our first projects in Kenya outfitted a county hospital with its first-ever operating rooms. The World Health Organization (WHO) had built the theatre but expected the locals to outfit it. That just wasn't going to happen without donated equipment.

Slowly, we added mixed shipments of educational and medical equipment to Ghana and the Philippines as well as Kenya. There were also the eye care clinics that Afretech, along with Rotary International, organized in Kenya and Zanzibar: five doctors, 10,000 pairs of glasses, and fifteen lay volunteers processed thousands of eye exams - doing the initial assessments, paperwork, and fittings. Cataract surgeries were also arranged.

All the while, educational projects were increasing. My library teams travelled to remote county areas around Kenya to set up school and district libraries and train teachers and staff. The





process is quite straightforward. First, the school must have a suitable, secure room and want the resource. About 4,000 books are needed, a combination of fiction and non-fiction refitted with spine labels. Afretech then buys proper metal library shelving in-country and contracts locally for three tables and six benches, all with metal frames to thwart termites. Installation day involves sorting and shelving the books, and training, which is an important and necessary component. Finally, we buy books by local authors to reflect African culture.

Computer lab installations call for a different set of requirements: a secure room, appropriate electrical wiring, tables, or narrow shelves, and seating. Often our IT volunteers find themselves putting in the first school and district library for an entire county. However, we began to notice major issues with computers. Returning a year after the initial installation, we would find computers broken, stripped of sellable parts, and generally in a state of disrepair. Not all, of course, but far too many to ignore.

Rather than admit defeat, our team came up with ARES (the African Ruggedized Education Solution). This is an offline server that runs 8 hours on a battery and is fully loaded with literally everything a school needs. It connects via Wi-Fi with up to 50 devices (laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.). Some of the content offered comes

from the open source on the Internet; other items we have licenses for. Content includes Khan Academy, TED Talks, PNET, over 45,000 downloadable books, and 30,000 videos. But that is only the start as ARES offers vocational information, agricultural guides, and medical reference material as well. Furthermore, teachers have the option of adding material they source to the ARES unit.

The Internet is messy, not to mention dangerous and time-consuming. ARES has eliminated those negatives while helping kids develop the digital literacy they so badly need. No viruses, no social media, and no predators. Moreover, ARES content is free while the Internet is costly and reliant on power which is intermittent at best. Lastly, ARES has its own Search Engine to make finding topics easy, efficient, and safe.

Afretech has been installing ARES along with notebooks, projectors, and mesh networks (wireless local area networks) in Kenyan schools for eight years. Now we have close to 100 schools using these resources. Seven years of data suggest that ARES is making a real difference.

No one organization could do this work alone. Volunteers, partners, and the involvement of local people have made this journey special. Rotary World Help (a consortium of 40 clubs in BC) has been an important and valued partner, helping transport medical and educational resources to our project destinations. Moreover, Afretech projects in recipient countries have







been supported by individual donors, some R. R. Smith grants, and numerous volunteers. All foreign volunteers pay their own expenses when travelling. Rotary International has been a major supporter, partially funding many projects and providing help in gathering and preparing resources for shipment around the world.

So here I am, looking back over all we have done after so many years, and I wouldn't trade a single day. I have been chased by elephants, fed a baby rhino, kissed more than one giraffe, and walked with half-grown lion cubs. Dust and diesel are now in my blood. I am still picking up good children's library books in my trusty 17-year-old Honda Odyssey, putting together shipments for Africa and Asia. Like my van, I, too, am a lot older and sometimes I wonder what keeps me going.

But I see the children's faces when they open a beautifully illustrated book for the first time or timidly press the "On" button on the mysterious laptop. Then I watch their world change and know it has all been worth it. •

**BONNIE SUTHERLAND** is President of Afretech Aid Society, and Past President of Rotary World Help and North Delta Rotary. She retired from SD 37 and lives in Delta.

## AFRETECH: Current Goals

- ✓ To continue providing ARES resources and libraries to schools in marginal communities in Kenya where power is unreliable, and Internet access limited. This model can be replicated eventually in other African countries.
- ✓ To develop a similar program for isolated schools in the remote islands of the Philippines.
- ✓ To withdraw, as Education Ministries take over ARES programs and students have the resources they need.

### WANT TO HELP?

**Donate:** Afretech has been a registered recipient of donations through CanadaHelps for more than 20 years. Our programs include elementary school library installations, three levels of adopt-a-school ARES programs, and general need donations such as school uniforms and school supplies. All donations of \$20 or more receive a tax receipt.

[www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/afretech-aid-society/](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/afretech-aid-society/)

**Write2read** is a local BC Rotary initiative that works with Afretech volunteers.

A current goal is to install libraries on First Nations reserves in BC. To date the team has equipped 28 libraries.

For information on this program, please visit

[www.afretech.com](http://www.afretech.com)

[www.rotaryworldhelp.com/](http://www.rotaryworldhelp.com/)

BCRTA EXCLUSIVE GROUP DEPARTURE

# Belize Combo Stay

January 3<sup>rd</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026

15 Days/14 Nights

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\*\$3,999 CAD per person, based on double occupancy. Rates are inclusive of all taxes and gratuities. Airfare is additional. Exact dates to be confirmed. Contact Trip Merchant for details.

\*Host Kerry McNeill started her elementary teaching career in the gold mining town of Wells, BC. Since retiring Kerry has been travelling with adventures to Tanzania, Egypt, Eastern Europe, Iceland, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the South Pacific, and Morocco. This departure will be her eighth journey with Trip Merchant!

This journey offers a perfect introduction to the diverse beauty of Belize, with visits to three unique destinations across the country. February is the ideal time to travel to Belize—escape the cold Canadian winter and enjoy the warmth, culture, and adventure of this tropical paradise while making new friends, and sunshine.

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- 7 Nights: Hopkins Bay | Hopkins Bay Beach Resort (One Bedroom Beach View Villa with a Kitchenette)
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- Land Transfer: Belize City Airport to Sweet Songs Jungle Lodge
- Land Transfer: Sweet Songs Jungle Lodge to Hopkins Bay Resort
- Land Transfer: Hopkins Bay Resort to Belize City International Airport
- All Taxes

**INCLUDES:** Accommodation, air-conditioned motorcoach, English-speaking tour guides, all entrance fees mentioned in the itinerary, all gratuities and taxes. \*\* \*\*Contact Judy at Trip Merchant for the detailed itinerary.

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# BCRTA EXCLUSIVE GROUP DEPARTURE

# Bike and Barge

## Netherlands and Belgium

## June 9<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

10 Days/9 Nights

**FROM \$5,499 PP\***

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\*\$5,499 CAD per person, based on double occupancy. Rates are inclusive of all taxes and gratuities. Airfare is additional. Exact tour dates to be confirmed. Contact Trip Merchant for details.

\*Host Devon de Putter lives in the beautiful Comox Valley where she taught for 22 years. Traveling has always been important to her. Some of the countries she has visited since retiring are: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Germany, France, Netherlands, England, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, China, Vietnam, Thailand and many more. During this time, she developed a love of cycling, especially riding an electric bike!

Through the Green Heart of Holland, the cradle of the Republic of the 7 Provinces (Dordrecht), fortress Willemstad and the Zeeland Islands to the Flemish medieval cities of Ghent and Bruges. Cycle along small and large rivers, over dikes and mighty waterworks but also through lovely farmland and in centuries-old port towns.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- 2 pre-nights in Amsterdam
- 7 Night Barge Cruise from Amsterdam to Bruges
- Gouda - city of Cheese, 19 Windmills of Kinderdijk, Delta Works
- Flemish towns Ghent and Bruges
- 24 Speed Bicycle | Upgrade to an E-Bike \$175 CAD additional pp for the week

Activity Level: Distance: 35 - 50 km on average per day Elevation: 0 - 100 hm (height in metres) average per day  
The lightest cycling holiday; over largely flat terrain, with not too long daily distances (average 50 km). Short steep slopes with height differences of up to  $\pm$  100 meters occur.

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# A SUMMER SPLASH



BY RALPH MARTIN

I recently saw a movie about the imprisoned Count of Monte Cristo. I, too, was once in a dungeon.

'The Dungeon' was my name for a cheap basement suite I had rented while I attended summer school for six weeks. There were only two tiny ground-level windows. They provided so little natural light that the rooms were dismal even on summer days. The windows only tipped open a few inches; the lack of ventilation gave the rooms a stale, musty odour, and even in July it was chilly six feet down there in the earth. A few rusty chains bolted to the wall, some filthy straw on the floor, and maybe a diseased rat or two would not have been out of place. You get what you pay for.

But summer school turned out to be quite a treat and I spent very little time in the dungeon anyway. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings I was in classes. Friday late afternoon and early Monday morning I made the two-and-a-half-hour drive so I could spend some time at home. Tuesdays and Thursdays I had time to read and to follow a new pursuit.

I thoroughly enjoyed my classes. Being the student rather than the teacher was almost like holidaying. The classes were small. The instructors were witty and entertaining as well as very knowledgeable about their subjects. And none of my classmates misbehaved!

An unlooked-for bonus opened a new door for me. On the first day of classes I was given a handout covering campus services. Included were free swimming lessons for summer students. Swimming has never come easy to me. While my siblings could glide across the water like swans, I thrashed and sputtered like a chicken in a water trough. I decided this might be a great opportunity to learn to swim.

I was glad of the chance to learn to glide around in the water without swallowing down or coughing up too much of the contents of the pool. And here at summer school, I could swim using my panicky dog paddle without being observed by friends or family, so Tuesday and Thursday mornings I went to the pool. It turned out to be tons of fun.

On my first day at the pool, I was greeted by a young woman who introduced herself as Gayle,

*I thrashed and sputtered  
like a chicken in a water  
trough...*

the beginners' swimming instructor. She asked if I could swim at all, and I confessed that I'd had a nasty scare in the river when I was ten and had steered clear of deep water ever since. She assured me this class was not going to be scary in the least.

I joined a small group of a half dozen other aqua-panickers. We were all afraid of deep water. Gayle was very patient, calm, and kind. She assured us she would not let us drown. Bit by bit I learned to put my face in the water, blow bubbles, and eventually



to let go of the rim of the pool. Each visit I gasped and panicked less and less. Gayle proudly informed us we had progressed from tadpoles to frogs to turtles! As a bonus, I got to know my new pool buddies: Yuki and Masaki were visiting from Japan, Nigel was from England, and Lazlo and Eva were a couple from Hungary.

What we learned about Gayle was that she was studying community recreation and teaching us beginners was part of her practical training.

After pool time and a bit of lunch, I was glad to have a chance to drive over a couple times a week to devote some time to my ageing Aunt Polly and Uncle Ted, who had moved to a care home. We'd visit, drink some tea, and eat some biscuits. We chatted about family and reminisced about happy summer-day memories I had gathered as a boy visiting them in Victoria.

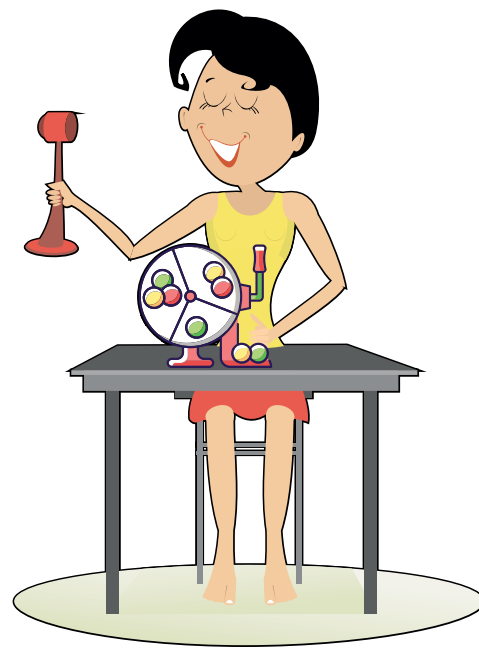
Time flies when you are busy studying and swimming and having tea and biscuits. It was soon my last week and I was busy finishing assignments. There was one last paper about Robert Frost's poem 'Apple Picking' and a presentation about picture books for reluctant readers, and I was done. Thursday after swimming lesson I had to do a bit of extra research at the library before going to see my aunt and uncle for the last time that summer.

The library visit took a bit longer than planned and I arrived at the care facility after tea time. I went looking for my aunt and uncle, but they were not in their room. I asked a passing attendant where they might be found. "Everybody loves to go to the bingo. They're all down the hall in the dining room."

Sure enough, everybody was there. I peered around and spotted my uncle and aunt at a table near the raised platform where the bingo machine stood.

I walked over and greeted them. Uncle Ted told me to grab an empty chair and sit at the end of their table. I was introduced to their bingo companions and given a card and a dauber. We chatted for a few minutes before the caller started

# BINGO



readying for the game. With a bit of clatter and squawk, the bingo caller got her microphone set up, and everybody got their cards lined up in front of them, and their ink-filled daubers at the ready.

"Hi folks. Bingo starts in two minutes."

I thought the caller's voice sounded rather familiar so I looked up at the platform to see who it might be. It was Gayle from swimming! Evidently running the bingo was part of her community practical training. I called, "Hi Gayle!" and waved.

She turned and looked down at me, a little puzzled. Then a smile of recognition lit up her face. Forgetting that the microphone was now on, she surprised the room when she waved back and spoke.

"Oh! Hi Ralph!" she said, and all the bingo players turned to see who she was addressing.

"I didn't recognize you with your clothes on!" •



**RALPH MARTIN** is a BCRTA member whose writing has previously appeared in PostScript.



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DRUG PLAN FORMULARIES VARY. REVIEW YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS AND  
COVERAGE NEEDS TO SEE WHICH PLAN IS BETTER FOR YOU.

Visit [bcrt.johnson.ca](https://bcrt.johnson.ca) or call 1.877.989.2600

# PAIN IS INEVITABLE,



# SUFFERING IS OPTIONAL

## THOUGHTS ON LIVING WITH CHRONIC PAIN

BY BARRIE STREET

In 2020, I was walking my daily 10 km when a speeding car reversed downhill from the side of a house, hitting me with full force, knocking me unconscious and breaking twelve bones. Since then, a compressed vertebra has generated chronic back pain. Prior to the collision, I had completed the Grouse Grind 2,400 times, but I have not been able to climb since.

I've had a lot of time to think about pain.

Here's a question for you: Are there methods of managing chronic physical pain and its impacts besides taking medication? Answer: Unequivocally yes.

My purpose in this article is to document some of the methods available for managing pain with the most comfort possible. As my title—an ancient Buddhist proverb—claims, “Suffering is Optional”.

In Buddhist thought, pain is physiological, while suffering is mental and emotional. Pain is therefore an inevitable part of life, with many causes. Suffering, however, is something we foster by focusing on or directly fighting the pain.

As an active person, the accident changed my life for a time. However, I plan to return to the Grouse Grind next year at the age of 90.

### MIND-BODY INTERACTION

When people think of responding to chronic pain, many focus exclusively on medication. However, there are numerous alternative techniques available to help us alleviate pain and its impact on our lives. When considering

**NOTE: THIS IS A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE COLUMN, NOT MEDICAL ADVICE.**

pain-management methods, it's important to acknowledge the mind-body connection, because mental and physical health interact; the mind and body are in constant communication.

I'll begin with the techniques which are most benefitting my recovery.

## THE POWER OF OPTIMISM

What if I told you that you can reconstruct the way you think, and that despite circumstances you can create a more positive mindset? You already possess the tools you need, because it is the words you use that create your mindset. Language has a powerful ability to influence the way you think. Research is ongoing in this area and the results are suggestive. For example, the language of optimism, which can be fostered and learned, can help mitigate the negative effects of chronic pain. For me, positive thinking is a crucial part of effective pain management. Affirmations on my fridge serve to keep me focussed: "Believe", "Persevere", "Yes I can", and "Whatever it takes".

## MEDITATION – A PLETHORA OF BENEFITS

Meditation is the process of training your mind to focus and redirect your thoughts. What helps me most is focussing on a tranquil scene – I choose a trickling stream in a natural setting – as this enables me to shift my focus from pain. Meditation can produce a deep state of relaxation. Even a few minutes each day can help. I find that deep breathing is a powerful tool for managing pain. There is a plethora of videos available online, from courses for complete beginners to those for people who are more advanced in this practice.

## THE PRACTICE OF YOGA

A provider of many benefits, yoga enhances meditation, mental discipline, breathing, and improves well-being. What has helped me most in controlling my pain is the harmony of mind-body relaxation which yoga has given me. Terecita Blair, a former Yoga Instructor of the Year, has an



extensive online collection of videos for beginners, advanced, and seniors.

## DEEP BREATHING

The benefits of deep breathing (or diaphragmatic breathing) are often underestimated. This technique allows your body to fully exchange incoming oxygen with outgoing carbon dioxide.

Try this for a few minutes: Sit or lie in a relaxed position. Begin breathing deeply through your nose, allowing your chest and lower belly to rise as you fill your lungs. Hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly and fully through your mouth (or your nose if that feels more comfortable). I make this technique a regular daily practice, in cafes, in my car, when walking, or whenever I can. You may wish to try the 4-7-8 technique.

## OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE

Working with professionals in the field can have a huge impact on managing pain, and also in performing exercises correctly. I have benefitted from these methods: massage therapy, physiotherapy, acupuncture, chiropractic treatment, and aromatherapy. Also popular are: Self



Myofascial Release (SMR), hypnotherapy, Reiki treatment, and Intramuscular Stimulation (IMS).

## **PAIN DIARY: THE WRITE WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR PAIN MANAGEMENT**

Michelle Beauclair, a freelance writer, discusses the immense benefits of keeping a journal to document your journey of chronic pain. She recommends what to record, gives a sample pain log, and lists several apps which can help you track and manage your pain.

## **SOME RECENT SCIENTIFIC STUDIES**

If you want to study more recent scientific psycho-social methods, these have been clinically proven to be effective: Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Pain Reprocessing Therapy (PRT), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

## **BE KIND TO YOURSELF**

None of these suggestions mean that you should never take medication for your chronic pain, and your family doctor might, for example, choose to refer you to one of several clinics which help to assess and manage chronic pain, often using some of the techniques mentioned above.

Establish realistic expectations and recognize that you don't have to be perfect to be happy. Allowing your body to relax and release tension, may also reduce pain. We cannot generally choose the challenges which confront us, but we can choose how we face them and with chronic pain, the expectations and a degree of acceptance are often the difference between pain and suffering.

Yes, living with pain can be a grind. But never underestimate the power of the human spirit. •

**BARRIE STREET** taught at Burnaby North Secondary School and is a regular contributor to PostScript on themes of well-being and health. Visit his website at [www.over50andfit.ca](http://www.over50andfit.ca).

## **ONLINE RESOURCES ABOUT MANAGING PAIN**

**Video: Mayo Clinic Minute: Helping older adults manage chronic pain** (search Mayo Clinic chronic pain older): <https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-clinic-minute-helping-older-adults-manage-chronic-pain/>

**Mindfulness Meditation to Control Pain** (search on Harvard Health Meditation Pain): <https://www.health.harvard.edu/pain/mindfulness-meditation-to-control-pain>

**Terecita Blair Yoga for Seniors** (search on YouTube SilverSneakers yoga seniors): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDLad2vOHkU>

**The 4-7-8 Breath Practice** (search on Youtube Ohio 4-7-8 practice) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H600xX8jj1E>

**Shifting the perspective: how positive thinking can help diminish the negative effects of pain** (search on PubMed Positive Thinking Pain): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36803855/>

**Incorporating personal narratives in positive psychology interventions to manage chronic pain** (search on PubMed narratives chronic pain): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10588179/>

# IRIS

## BCRTA members and your family members

Your organization is a member of the IRIS Advantage program and that means you are entitled to exclusive eye care benefits at IRIS. There's no cost to you, it's easy to register and you'll get to enjoy all the advantages IRIS offers like direct billing to your insurance, interest-free financing, IRIS's exclusive No Matter What Guarantee and more.



### HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF YOUR EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

#### **PRESCRIPTION EYEWEAR SAVE \$150**

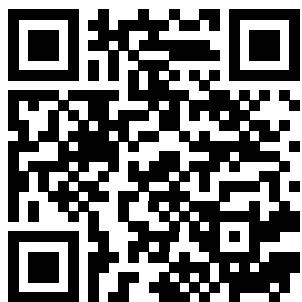
When you purchase any frame with fully coated prescription lenses (lenses valued at \$250 or more).\*

#### **PRESCRIPTION SUNGLASSES SAVE \$150**

When you purchase prescription sunglasses.\*

#### **CONTACT LENSES SAVE \$50**

When you purchase an annual supply of contact lenses.\*



### START ENJOYING YOUR BENEFITS TODAY

- 1 — **Scan the QR code** or visit [iris.ca/advantage](https://iris.ca/advantage)
- 2 — Register with Access Code: **BCRTA**
- 3 — Visit any IRIS location to access your savings!

We're here to help with registration or accessing your benefits.  
Contact us at [advantage@iris.ca](mailto:advantage@iris.ca) or 1.800.663.3937 ext 224

\*Only registered Advantage Members may redeem Advantage offers. Advantage must be presented at the time of purchase. Only one IRIS Advantage offer can be applied to each transaction. The purchase must be for the same customer with the same prescription and for the same brand of contact lenses. Cannot be combined with any other IRIS offer, Instant Rebate, IRIS Card, IRIS Certificate, In-Store offer or promotion. Not applicable on safety eyewear or sport safety glasses. Excludes all packages. Other conditions may apply, ask in store for details.

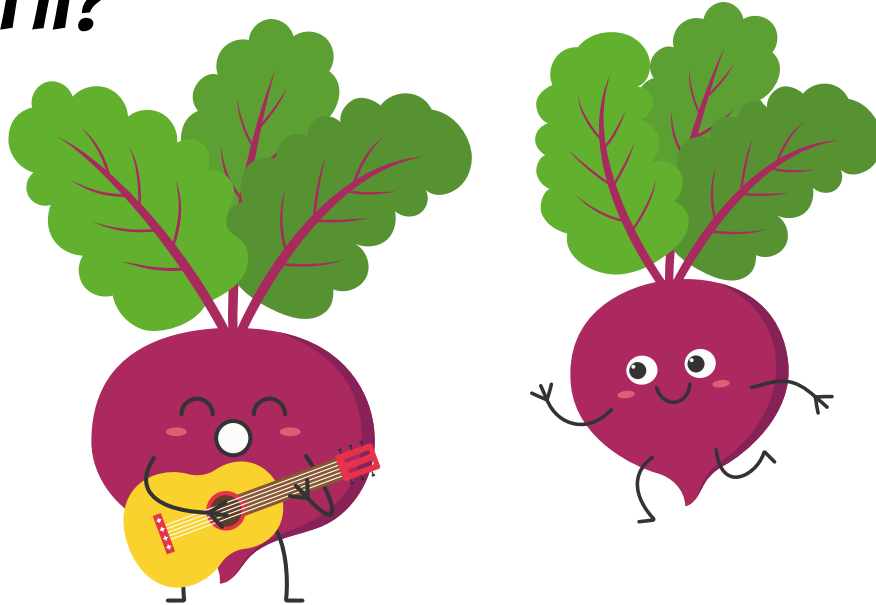
# ***DID YOU KNOW?***

## ***FASCINATING HEALTH FACTS***

**BY PAT THIESEN**

BCRTA WELL-BEING COMMITTEE

### ***CAN YOU BEET IT?***



People have rediscovered the lowly beetroot as a welcome addition to their diet. Why is this? Beetroot contains nutrients that may improve athletic performance, boost heart health, and manage glucose levels. For example, the nitrates in beets and beetroot juice may help improve blood flow.

Research from 2015 showed that a study group with very high blood pressure given 250 ml of beetroot juice significantly lowered their blood pressure after ingestion. Beets also contain alpha-lipoic acid, a compound which may help lower glucose levels and increase insulin sensitivity. The beetroot contains ample dietary fibre which is essential for good gut health. Certain compounds like betalain, an antioxidant and pigment that gives beets their red or yellow colour can disrupt the cancerous mutations of cells.

But beware of certain risks with this lowly veg. Drinking beetroot juice can lead to red, purple, or pink urine or stools, though is not a cause for medical concern. Those prone to oxalate-type (crystalline) kidney stones should be careful not to consume too many beet tops. Sufferers of irritable bowel syndrome could experience discomfort after drinking the juice.

#### **FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEETS**

[www.healthline.com/nutrition/foods/beetroot](http://www.healthline.com/nutrition/foods/beetroot)

[www.bbcgoodfood.com/health/nutrition/ingredient-focus-beetroot](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/health/nutrition/ingredient-focus-beetroot)



## LET THE CHICKEN JAYWALK

Maybe you heard, or better yet, told a good joke today that made you really laugh? If not, why not? Statisticians report children laugh about 400 times a day and adults about 15 times a day. Have you ever wondered why that is? And when did you drop the other 385 laughs?

Studies have shown that laughter is good for the heart, helps diminish insomnia, helps with pain, increases disease resistance, benefits your mental health including in the areas of depression and anxiety, helps with social connection and romance, and can help you feel younger.



[www.researchgate.net/publication/26891756\\_Laughter\\_prescription](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/26891756_Laughter_prescription)

[psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-possibility-paradigm/201106/youre-not-laughing-enough-and-thats-no-joke](http://psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-possibility-paradigm/201106/youre-not-laughing-enough-and-thats-no-joke)

## DEAR DIARY, YOU SAVED MY SANITY! THANK YOU!

### P.S. DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE WE PUT IT?

Keeping a journal is a habit many of us enjoy, helping us remember good times and events, or boosting our self-esteem and mindfulness by encouraging reflection. The positive impacts of expressive writing on many forms of physical and mental health are well documented in decades of research. Expressive writing has been shown to profoundly affect trauma recovery. Journaling for those suffering from cancer leads to better emotional well-being and fewer cancer-related visits for health care. Impacts have been documented in stress, depression, and anxiety reduction, and in many other areas of mental health.



Each person's journalling practice will vary but see below for some ideas for getting started.

**Benefits and methods for journalling:** search on "Healthline 6 Journaling Benefits and How to Start"

**Journaling and trauma:** search on "Cambridge Core Emotional and physical health benefits of expressive writing"

# books OF NOTE

## GRAMPY, WHERE IS YOUR MUSTACHE? by Ralph E.

A comical exploration of a child's encounter with his new, clean-shaven grandfather.

Where is Grampy's mustache? Did he eat it? Did it blow off? Did it come apart? Or is Grampy just making up funny stuff?

A great read-aloud to share with the kids! It's really silly!

*Available at [ralphsbooks.com](http://ralphsbooks.com)*



## MAPLE LEAVES IN MANGO TREES: FINDING HOME IN WEST AFRICA by Raymond G. Lemoine

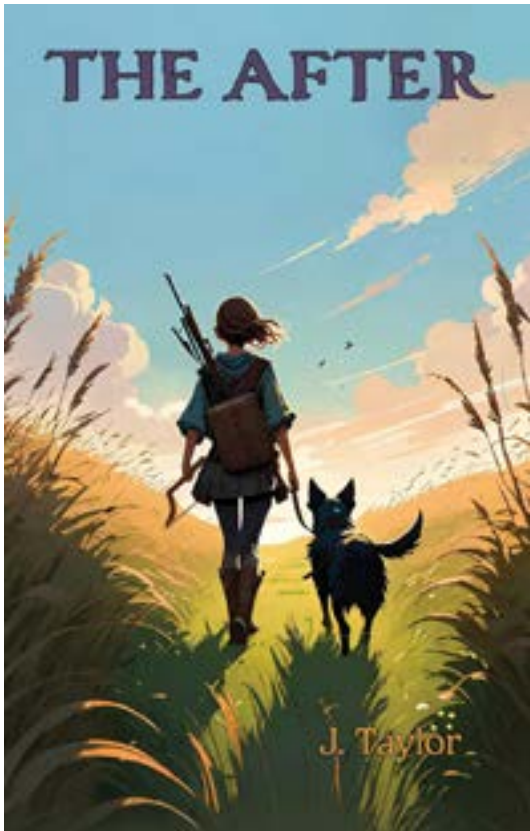
With retirement approaching and their children having flown the nest, lifelong nomad educators Raymond and his wife, Madeleine Mulaire, make the bold decision to uproot their lives and embark on an overseas posting to Guinea.

Under military rule following a coup, the West African nation-state is in a state of upheaval, proving challenging even for well-seasoned travellers like Raymond and Madeleine. Armed military personnel roam the streets, and outbreaks of political unrest—even violence—are not unusual.

Moved by their desire to make a difference in the lives of those they teach, Raymond and Madeleine will ultimately find themselves utterly transformed, with a clearer sense of purpose than they thought imaginable.

*Available at Chapters-Indigo, Amazon and other bookstores*

Books of Note features publications by BCRTA members.  
To have your book included, send the details to [postscript@bcrt.ca](mailto:postscript@bcrt.ca)

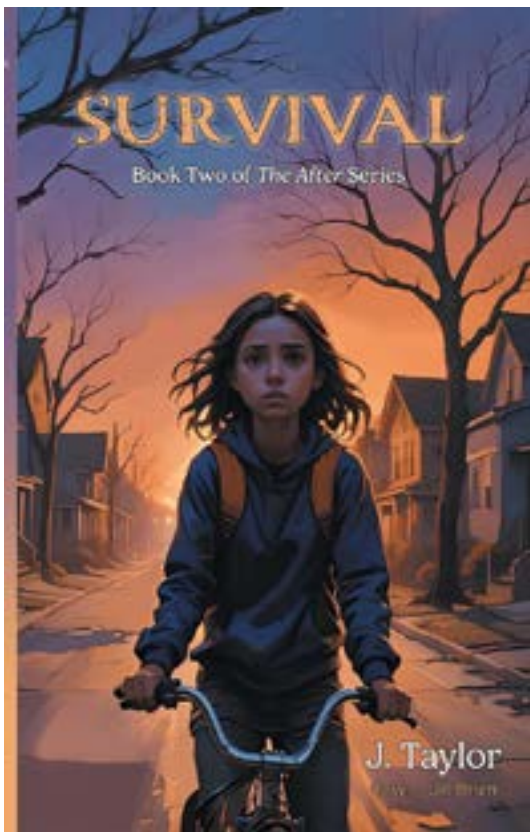


## THE AFTER: BOOK ONE

by J. Taylor

Despite the deadly virus that caused borders to close and governments to fall ten years earlier, fourteen-year-old Charlotte and her family have lived a challenging yet relatively peaceful life, isolated on their acreage in rural Nova Scotia. However, when Charlotte discovers that an interloper has infiltrated their property, she must decide between keeping the potential threat a secret or embracing the potential for companionship that the intrusion represents. As the chaotic world that lurks outside the fence surrounding her farm disrupts Charlotte's life even further, she must reach deep within herself and find the courage to become the mature young woman she claims to be—or risk losing everything that she and her family have worked so hard to build..

*"A riveting beginning to a promising new series."*  
— Kirkus Reviews



## SURVIVAL: BOOK TWO OF THE AFTER SERIES

by J. Taylor

In the wilderness of Nova Scotia, Charlotte and Anna confront the formidable challenges of survival such as finding food, building a shelter, and establishing a new life. Their bond is tested, however, when an unknown individual enters the scene, potentially driving a wedge between them. As tensions rise, a catastrophic event further complicates their situation, leading to a separation that leaves them struggling to reunite. Book Two of The After Series explores themes of resilience, friendship, and the harsh realities of survival, highlighting both the strength of Charlotte and Anna's connection and the obstacles that threaten to tear them apart.

*"A skillfully crafted tale of survival and the power of hope and connection."* — Kirkus Reviews

[www.jtaylorauthor.ca](http://www.jtaylorauthor.ca)

*Available from Amazon and your local bookstore*



# GAMES LADY

## ROUND III

BY PAT THIESEN

Planning a summer vacation? Some of the best times I've spent with my family and friends away from home were gathered around a Scrabble board. We didn't need a dictionary to check to see if someone had made up a word. Oh, no. The howls of protest were loud and immediate. If there was no room for Scrabble, a smaller Cribbage board and deck of cards could be packed away in the corner of Dad's suitcase. Here are easy-to-pack games that challenge both children and adults. The first two games have each won multiple awards.



### SLEEPING QUEENS

*Age:* 8+. *Players:* 2 to 5. *About* 20 min. *\$14*

**Gameplay:** The game originated from a dream by a 6-year-old and was developed with help from her family. Do not assume, however, that this is a simple game. There are 79 cards in the deck, including of Queens, Kings, Knights, Jesters, Sleeping Potions, Wands, Dragons and number cards, each with different functions and powers. The object of the game is to be the first player to collect Queen cards or points by following the rules established for each card type. This is a great game for those entertaining their grandchildren and friends.



### BANAGRAMS

*Age:* 7+.

*Players* 2-8. *Time per round:* 10-30 minutes.  
*Less than \$20 CAD*

**Gameplay:** The object of the game is to be the first to use all your letters in a completed grid. To begin, all 144 alphabet tiles are placed facedown in the centre of the table as the "BUNCH". Each player takes their starting tiles based on the number of players. A few banana-related words are used to signal actions: "SPLIT!" starts the game, "PEEL" means everyone takes a tile. and so on. Once there are fewer tiles in the BUNCH than there are

players, one of the players must complete their grid, and then call out “BANANAS”. If a “ROTTEN BANANA” is called (for a misspelled word or other proper noun, abbreviation or unacceptable), that player is out of the game. Have fun working to create your grid first while keeping an eye on your opponents’.



## HIT LIST

**Age:** 12+. **Players:** 4 or more (in teams or as individuals). **Duration** depends on how many rounds you wish to play.

**Gameplay:** Following setup, a reader flips an hourglass timer and gives the topic from one of the deck of cards. The other “active” team shouts out as many answers as possible. If an answer matches one on the card, the reader states HIT and turns over a token. If a pink item is shouted out, 2 tokens are revealed. If time runs out and the active team has not guessed all of the items on the card, the other team gets one chance to guess a remaining item and claim the token(s). The second (or third) team then plays their turn. At the end of the round, scores on tokens are totalled. The game ends after each team has been “active” twice. Highest score wins. This game shouldn’t be played in the library!



## FIFTY

**Age:** 6+. **Players:** 2 to 5. **About** 5-10 minutes

**Gameplay:** This is a game of rolling pairs. Alternating turns, roll the 2 dice to make a pair. Score 5 points for pairs of 1’s, 2’s, 4’s or 5’s. Score 25 points for rolling 6’s. But if you roll a pair of 3’s, you lose all your accumulated points. Play until someone has 50 points. No skill required!

*We don’t stop playing because we grow old;  
we grow old because we stop playing.*



A BCRTA director, **PAT THIESEN** is a frequent contributor to our magazine. As a Grade 6 teacher she loved to introduce her kids to Math Games Friday.

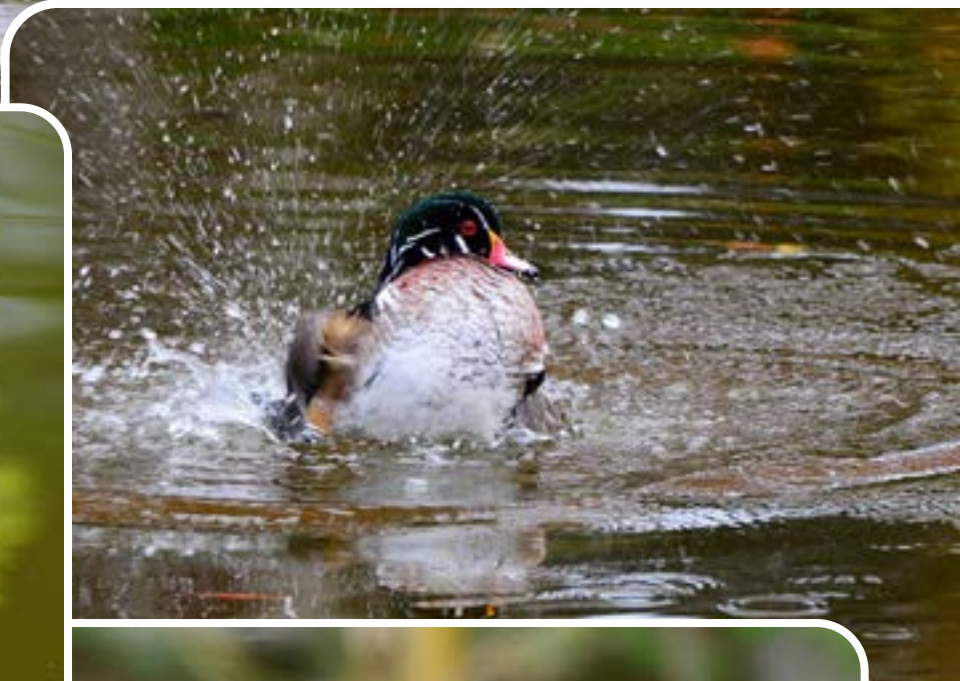
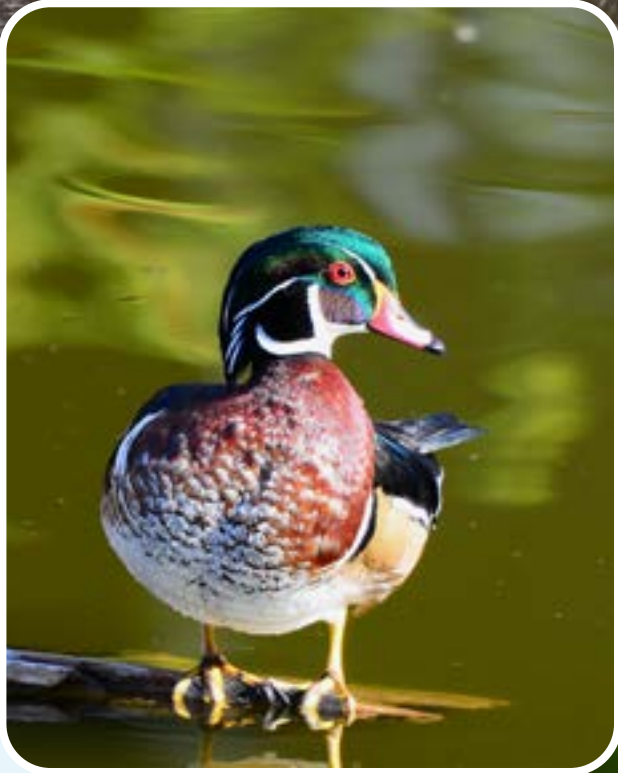
# The Wood Ducks

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY PAUL DESJARDINS

Spilling from minds keenly programmed to paint,  
Colours swish swash about with no thought of restraint.  
From Van Gogh to Monet, Gaugin, and Pollock,  
Not much could compete with these stars and their lot.  
Yet, the true source of all that is beautifully blessed  
Comes not from an easel but an artiste celeste.  
With angelic panache and a kiss of the divine,  
Mother Nature's bequeathed one such jewel so refined  
That it appears out of place 'mongst bullrushes and sloughs;  
Yet, what a wonder to view – wood ducks and their dos.  
Splendidly coiffed with colours florid and bright,  
The wood duck's Mother Nature's crown prince of delight.  
So next time midst a greeting, dispense with all shyness,  
Tip a hat and salute with a reverent 'Your Highness'.

**PAUL DESJARDINS** is a regular contributor to PostScript. He taught English and French for 34 years and retired in 2006.





## NOTICE OF 2025 AGM

**80th BCRTA Annual General Meeting (9:30AM)**  
called for Saturday, September 27, 2025

### *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

**Annual General Meeting of the RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation**  
(9:00AM) called for Saturday, September 27, 2025  
RR Smith Positions for Election  
8 Directors - 1 year terms

**This meeting will be held in person AND online.**

**Location: Hilton Vancouver Airport Hotel**  
**Details to follow.**

## SCENES FROM BCRTA BRANCHES



# NOMINATION FORM FOR 2025-2026 BCRTA DIRECTOR POSITIONS (SEPTEMBER 27, 2025 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.bcrt.ca](http://www.bcrt.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@bcrt.ca](mailto:kristi@bcrt.ca))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

We nominate (please print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

(Nominee must be an Active or Life BCRTA member in good standing)  
for the position of (circle):

President      1st Vice-President      2nd Vice-President

Director (Lower Mainland)      Director (outside Lower Mainland)      ACER-CART Representative

By signing here I affirm that I accept this nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee, please fill in the blanks below and **attach item #4** to this form.

1. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Branch membership (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
4. A curriculum vitae, preferably in item form - not to exceed 200 words - for publication in the Summary of Reports booklet (**publication submission deadline July 15th**).  
**Summarize** educator positions held, experience on executive and other committees, and why you would 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 delegates. There are not usually any candidates' speeches at the AGM.

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

## **Return this form by July 15th to:**

Arnie Lambert, 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@bcrt.ca>](mailto:kristi@bcrt.ca)

## NOMINATION AND ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES 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.bcrt.ca](http://www.bcrt.ca)

### Handbook Section B. Bylaws:

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

### Handbook Section C. Procedures:

- 4.6.2 Pre-AGM nomination procedures for Director positions
- 5. Duties of Directors

### Handbook Section E. Rules of Order:

- 8.4 Nominations from the floor
- 8.5.3 Voting in elections
- 8.5.4 Order of the elections
- 8.5.5 Balloting rules



## BCRTA DELEGATES TO THE 2026 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 elected as a BCRTA delegate to the BCTF AGM, you must be an **active or life member of the BCRTA, and a member or honorary 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 27, 2025. 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 2026 BCTF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOMINATION FORM

Must be in the hands of BCRTA staff by 5 p.m. on September 26, 2025.

Name (please print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by 2 BCRTA members (email notice of your nomination from nominator to kristi@bcrt.ca is also acceptable):

Nominator (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are applying see note above and outline your pensions experience through positions you have held and/or work you have done in the BCTF and/or BCRTA:

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

# 2025-2026 BCRTA COMMITTEES - APPLICATION FORM

DEADLINE for receipt of applications: September 27, 2025

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](http://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](http://www.bcrta.ca)), and look in "Section C–Procedures", parts 7 and 8.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch, if any: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominated by two BCRTA members in good standing:** (email notice from nominator to [kristi@bcrta.ca](mailto:kristi@bcrta.ca) is acceptable)

Nominator (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ 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**.)

WELL-BEING    [The FINANCE, ADVOCACY and PERSONNEL Committees are Directors only]

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you be a good choice for this committee? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Mail to BCRTA, 100 – 550 W 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4P2, or email to [kristi@bcrta.ca](mailto:kristi@bcrta.ca)

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Print Releaf sponsors reforestation and carbon storage projects around the world, including the BC's Cariboo, where they are currently reforesting areas with native species like Ponderosa Pine, Western Larch, Lodgepole Pine, Douglas Fir, and Spruce.





# CLASSIFIEDS

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- Mexico City
- Belize Combo Stay
- Europe Low Countries Bike and Barge

Visit [bcrtatripmerchant.com](http://bcrtatripmerchant.com) and click the register button to sign up for the Trip Merchant BCRTA newsletter and receive access to a site dedicated to BCRTA exclusive group departures.

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To get the ESM Mobile App on your smart phone, download from Apple App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android). You will be asked for the BCRTA "Organization Code". It is "bcrt".

## ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

asdfsdfadfad

CLASSIFIEDS

## ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

Rental: Maui Schooner in **Kihei**.

One week- 1 bed suite Feb 22 to March 1, 2026

One week - 1 bed suite suite March 1 to March 8, 2026

One week - 2 bed suite from March 1 to March 8, 2026

Please contact at [lavoiealine@shaw.ca](mailto:lavoiealine@shaw.ca) for more details.

Lovely 2 bedroom house in **Coldstream** (VERNON), BC available for January 1 to April 15 of 2026. Suitable for a retired couple who love to ski and enjoy the great outdoors in the Okanagan. Minimum rental is for two months. Please contact David at: [dmfehr@telus.net](mailto:dmfehr@telus.net) for photos and more information.

Lovely **Victoria** home in the Mount Douglas area. Available December 1, 2025 - January 31, 2026. Suitable for retired couple, only \$2500 per month all in. Contact us for details and photos;

[slugedwards33@hotmail.com](mailto:slugedwards33@hotmail.com) or 250-721-2147

**Palm Springs** - A beautiful and very clean 3 bedroom & 3 bath house for rent in Tri Palms Resort from November 2025 until March 2026. Non smoking and no pets. Prefer a rental to 2 people only. Golf courses, swimming pools, recreation hall, tennis, pickle ball and much more. \$2500 US per month. Call or email for pictures. Tammy - 250 951 6722 - [tammy@frenchcreek.ca](mailto:tammy@frenchcreek.ca)

4 season, **Okanagan** 2 bedroom suite available in Vernon BC. 10 minute walk from OK Lake. 4 ski resorts within 2 hours drive and 24 golf courses. 5 day maximum. Contact Brent for photos and info: [igath4@gmail.com](mailto:igath4@gmail.com)

**SIDNEY** - 1 BDRM, 1 bath bright condo for rent July 11 to July 25. \$2,000 Quiet area one block from main street, Beacon Avenue. Nice view, ocean glimpse. Contact [morganjlin@gmail.com](mailto:morganjlin@gmail.com)

**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\$850 per week. [mano936@gmail.com](mailto:mano936@gmail.com)

# crossword

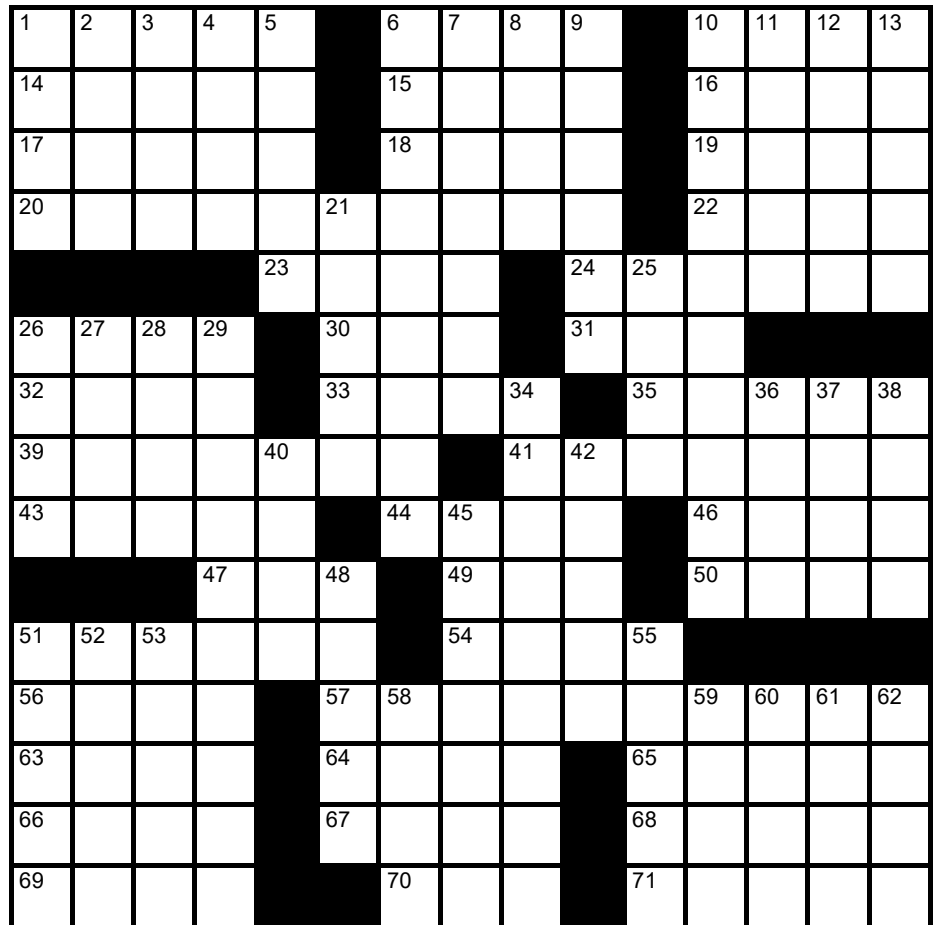
## The Great Outdoors

By Lynn Hembree

Email: crossword@bcrrta.ca

### ACROSS

1. Type of shooting
6. Bee \_\_\_\_
10. Camping gear
14. "Roger \_\_\_\_"
15. Amazon fruit usually called a berry
16. Common drain clog
17. Sunset shot, briefly (2 wds)
18. Some may have a double?
19. "Major" constellation
20. Summer activity
22. Call for
23. Beer buy
24. Boy in Glasgow
26. Opposite of severe
30. "\_\_\_\_ alive!"
31. "... \_\_\_\_ he drove out of sight"
32. One of the "Greats"
33. "Darn it all!"
35. Wear away
39. Summer activity
41. Kind of park
43. Ornamental hairnet
44. Some flight data, briefly
46. Warm, so to speak
47. The "p" in m.p.g.
49. Ltr. holder
50. Mercury and Mars
51. Type of center
54. BC party members, briefly
56. "Let's \_\_\_\_"
57. Getting rid of head lice?
63. \_\_\_\_ Minor
64. Antelope of Africa
65. Pester 66. "Schindler's \_\_\_\_"
67. Increase, with "up"
68. Kitchen utensil with perforated holes
69. Throw in your chips
70. "Act your \_\_\_\_!"
71. A kind of mate?



### DOWN

1. Cashless deal
2. Fruit or flightless bird
3. A util.
4. Business class, in brief
5. Issue
6. Behind the curtain
7. Hurting the most
8. Been (in bed)
9. Be sociable at a party
10. Extremely loud
11. Dog-\_\_\_\_
12. Japanese-American
13. Barter
21. \_\_\_\_ terrier
25. Sector
26. Shops where you find outdoor gear, abbr.
27. "\_\_\_\_ a marathon!" (2 wds)
28. Airport pickup
29. Lower overcrowding
34. Fire hose hookup
36. Margarine
37. Expired
38. Blows it
40. Alt. to ibid
42. Let a host know you are coming stag, for short?
45. 10-Across accessory
48. Lengthy responses!
51. Start of a refrain
52. It's used on a bow or string
53. Crème de la crème (2 wds)
55. Permanent marks
58. Bit
59. Opposite of "purl"
60. Former inhabitant of Machu Picchu
61. Name for a Christmas baby?
62. Coil or scroll

# Sudoku

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

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

## 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 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue,  
Vancouver BC V5Z 4P2

## FOR MORE ONLINE SUDOKU PUZZLES:

[www.websudoku.com/](http://www.websudoku.com/)

## DEADLINE FOR SUDOKU AND CROSSWORD SUBMISSION IS:

April 30, 2025

**Congratulations to last issue's puzzle winners. Your cheques are in the mail!**

## Crossword:

Sharon Clement, Castlegar  
Elaine Gordon, Coquitlam  
Karen Hasegawa, Comox

## Sudoku:

Debbie Korn, Fruitvale  
Veralyn Munson, Parksville  
Wendy Morton, Prince George

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## SPRING 2025 CROSSWORD SOLUTION

R	E	M			G	A	B	B	Y		B	L	O	W
A	V	O	W		A	D	O	R	E		L	I	N	E
C	I	A	O		S	I	S	A	L		I	O	T	A
E	L	T	O	N	J	O	H	N	L	E	N	N	O	N
					D	U	E	S			O	D	D	
T	A	L	E	N	T		K	I	W	I		C	B	S
E	N	I	D				C	A	R	E	T		H	I
L	I	Z			T	A	Y	L	O	R	S	W	I	F
C	O	Z			R	I	S	E	N			A	L	I
O	N	O			A	R	T	S			T	O	L	E
					H	I	S				Z	O	N	K
A	A	R	O	N	P	A	U	L	N	E	W	M	A	N
S	L	A	V		A	L	T	O	S		A	U	R	A
P	O	K	E		C	O	A	T	I		Y	O	G	A
S	E	E	R		E	T	H	Y	L			N	O	N



# Obituaries

Location listed is the area given as "last taught"



Abramson, Kenneth	Vancouver	Gleig, Donald R.	Burnaby
Armstrong, Carla	Peace River North	Gonsalvez, Betty	SE Kootenay
Bedier, S. Lorraine	Vancouver	Granewall, Carolyn D.	Greater Victoria
Bennison, Barry A.	Revelstoke	Haslop, Patricia S.	Surrey
Blystone, Ellen Vera	Surrey	Hayes, Robert M	Cent. Okanagan
Boyle, Sandra Ann	Coquitlam	Hinterberger, Carrie	Chilliwack
Bruce, David L.	Surrey	Hope, Marion	Armstrong-Spall.
Chappell, Peter W.	Vancouver	Howard-Dyer, Laurette	Alberni
Conway, Barbara A.	South Peace River	Hower, M. Roberta	West Vancouver
Cowden, Patricia Diane	Greater Victoria	Hutcheson, Paul	Greater Victoria
Craig, Patricia	Qualicum	Hrycaiko, Betty Jean	Surrey
Cummins, John	Delta	Jeraj, Mary H.	Revelstoke
Dempster, Melinda	Mission	Kaesmodel, M.Joan	Prince George
Dolman, Kathryn Anne	Central Okanagan	Kawase, Tamako	Fraser-Cascade
Forcier, Lloyd M.	Surrey	Kingsford, Judith Marie	Prince George
Fralick, Peter M.	Central Coast	Krygier, Marilyn	Richmond
Freer, Ethel G.	Vancouver	Lalonde, George	Campbell River
Froese, Chuck H.	Peace River North	Larmor, Ruth	Surrey
Gellard, John R.	Vancouver	Larson, Patricia	Kamloops

Laurillard, Frank G.	Fraser-Cascade	Richardson, Sheila Rose	Greater Victoria
Lawrence, William F.	M. Ridge/Pitt Mead.	Risk, Heather	Vancouver
Lewall, Kathleen	Peace River North	Rogers, Kenneth	Sunshine Coast
Lizee, Rod	Sunshine Coast	Rowe, Blaine	Prince George
Marini, Arlene	Chilliwack	Smith, Lillian	Vernon
Matthews , Allan	Cariboo-Chilcotin	Smith, Linda G.	Burnaby
McArthur, Millie	Nanaimo	Smith, M.L. Irene	Kamloops
McDonald, Jaqueline	Greater Victoria	Steinway, Monica	Coquitlam
McGauley, Elaine	Vancouver	Stroyan, Margaret	Nanaimo
McKinlay, D. Cynthia	Maple Ridge/Pitt M.	Temlett, Lorna D.	Burnaby
McPherson, James	Richmond	Temple, Jeffrey	Qualicum
Melendez- Duke, Rafael	Greater Victoria	Thompson, Richard W.	Surrey
Mills, Valerie	West Vancouver	Tucker, Edward John	Abbotsford
Morrison, Lois Mary	Kootenay Lake	Vaesen, Marta E.	Sooke
Nicholson, Lynda	N OK/Shuswap	Verigin, Fred	Penticton
Oliynyk, Marilyn Anne	Cranbrook	Walsh, Peter N.	Quesnel
Perkins, Darren J.	Langley	Weslowski, Gerald J.	Burnaby
Plante, Chere Pauline	OK-Similkameen	Wood, Tony	Burnaby
Richardson, John Fraser	Vancouver	Woods, Elaine	Shuswap

# Photo File



**ROBERT YORK** is member of the BCRTA with a unique take on photography. This forest view captures a spectrum of light we cannot see. Robert says, "Infrared light lies beyond the visible spectrum of the human eye and can not be detected unless filters are used to capture the shorter wave lengths ranging around 700 nanometers. Once captured by filters, the infrared waves can be seen in a distinctive creative and unique visual environment. Foliage can be become bright white leaves and often skies appear as deep blue in colour. Other distinctive colours can be captured using varied nanometer filter lengths."





R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation regularly receives wonderful news about how the grants we distribute are having positive effects for students around the world. Here is a recent update from The Victoria-Taiama Partnership, which works in Sierra Leone.

*Dear RR SMITH Committee*

*February 20, 2025*

*We are submitting our fourth application for a grant for vocational training for young women in Taiama, Sierra Leone. In June, 2024 I was able to visit the project and am happy to report that both the tailoring and the entrepreneurship programs are going well! All the young women are excited about their learning and express gratitude for this opportunity to learn a new skill! They all also report a more positive self image after participation in the program. They send you a big "Thank you" from Sierra Leone!*

*Of the students who participated in the ten-day business program, two are continuing sewing students, two are new sewing graduates who have now set up their own home businesses with a new sewing machine and sewing materials (with micro loans from Victoria-Taiama Partnership). Six others have started up their own marketing businesses: kitchen supplies, corner store, and soap production. They all report that they are doing well and that they are now able to pay for their family's food and school fees (most became single parent mothers at age 16 or 17). We hope to add four more students to our vocational program in cassava production.*

*Thank you again for making a huge difference in these young women's lives!*

*Warm regards,*

*Maurice Mark*



**Learn more at [www.rrsmith.ca](http://www.rrsmith.ca)**

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