

Round Table Round Up
BCRTA Directors meeting,
October 29th 2008.

We opened our first meeting of the new year with the sad news of the deaths of Lorna Robb, a long time board member, and Doreen King, who had recently been recognized for designing our new membership form and the dogwood pin. We will miss both of these colleagues. Both Pat Brady and Sylvia MacLeay sent regrets as they were attending the AGM of the Canadian Pensioners Concerned held back east. We had a pretty full agenda with the introduction of new directors, new committee chairs and the mandates and policy statements from the committees, plus three timed items.

We discussed the issue of Colette Vacations and a statement will be forthcoming re BCRTA policy in this instance, but this does not preclude branches from working with Colette. All travel advertised in the Postscript must have a benefit for retired teachers. We had a Delegates' Day debriefing and the office administrator reported that the costs of the AGM were below budget estimates, and that requests for a continued casino evening had been heard!

President Sheila Pither noted that a new contract for office staff had been signed, and that she would be attending four Christmas lunches and visiting nine branches in her official capacity. The roster for directors assigned to the zones was ready and branches will be advised. The office is running two database systems until all glitches have been removed, and a baseboard heater will be installed to keep the staff and their feet

at room temperature through the winter months.

The financial statements were perused and everything seemed fine. Our advisor visited and talked about the state of our investments, and reinforced our conservative approach as being the one least impacted by the roller coaster ride on the stock market this week. Our own Ken Smith's most reassuring statement was 'get out and spend your money' to keep the economy going. An article in Postscript's winter issue reinforces the fact that we are fortunate to have the pension that we have, and there will be a COLA increase in January. Ken had also investigated the Society Act in regards to 'special resolutions'.

Advocacy reported on the zonal meetings planned for this first year's trial run, and urged branch presidents to contact each other and set up meetings. Attendance though is not compulsory. Those who do set up meetings will be asked for some feedback. The sheets circulated at the AGM regarding workshop topics for the Pension Committee indicated that the top issues were estate planning, wills and representation agreements. There is the possibility of working with COSCO on this topic and preparing a power point presentation.

Materials for the Pension Committee are being brought up to date, and will be sent out as a package to those throughout BC who took the training. We heard that the Kamloops trainees have already given a workshop, but the committee would like to hear of planned meetings as well. The Teacher has printed a paragraph on the BCRTA workshops which will also be advertised at the BCTF rep assembly. Post retirement

workshops are in the planning stage, but finding retirees who are floundering is not the easiest thing to do.

Health and Housing are looking for a representative in each branch and their meeting covered such topics as P3s, funding shortages for private partners, and the fact that the representation agreement still hasn't been enacted, and may become an election issue.

A bit of a discussion arose as to the number of members a committee might have – it was agreed that the three, five, seven make up, plus the chair was to be the limit. The President may attend any committee meeting ex-officio.

Our Webmaster Bill Thorpe visited and showed us the new set up, and listened to requests and suggestions. Cliff Boldt will handle all material planned for the website and there will be guidelines for content and links, which the board will vote on. Our finance committee had approved the purchase of the heater for the office and for a new label maker.

Heritage is working to identify heritage sites, and ACER/CART (Canadian Association of Retired Teachers) had an extensive report which mentioned the Elder Law Clinic which has opened at 411 Dunsmuir, and the plight of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. News of other provincial retiree associations filled this report.

I had no report for Postscript, but other committees have suggested that they put more articles in, which will save me twirling my lasso! R.R. Smith should be featured regularly as we are all members, and photographs of donations at work would be a great motivator for more.

A brief report on COSCO was given by board members and by those who attended the conference prior to our AGM. There are five more workshops in the planning stages and there will be an upgrade for training in the spring.

Our Membership committee is looking into a virtual branch on the internet for those who are isolated and cannot join a regular branch. It was decided that up to two individuals outside of branches could be brought to a zone meeting with expenses covered. Outreach to independent schools continues, and may be extended to University faculty retirees.

Excellence in Education has a new lease on life and will examine branch scholarship awards. Postscript has endeavoured to highlight an activity in each issue.

Sheila Pither had attended an international conference on aging in Montreal on September 4th -7th. She handed out her written report which covered a huge number of workshops and plenary sessions. Notice was given of workshops/conferences here in November. If committees have funds they could use them to send members.

The issue of Criminal Record checks has arisen. Retirees with certificates, whether teaching or not, are required to have criminal record checks. Those whose names start with A to E have been notified – but one of our directors in that category had heard nothing. The deadline is November 30th. The remainder will be phased in before 2012. You can relinquish your certificate if you plan not to have the check. If you refuse, and keep your certificate you will

be fined, have your certificate suspended and have a criminal record!

Dates for the year were established, and the AGM will run from Thursday to Saturday in 2009. We adjourned at 2.45pm.

Minutes of all meetings are available by calling the office and requesting them.

Sheila Gair, Editor.