

The Tattler

Comox Valley Retired Teachers' Association Newsletter Fall 2009

Executive

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President's Message

Amy Yakimyshyn

Welcome to the 2009-2010 year of retirement! The first lunch was September 8 at the Kingfisher. We welcomed several new retirees. A suggestion of sharing funny or frightening experiences in our first years of teaching resulted in a great buzz of conversation and some hilarious stories. A second discussion led to the overwhelming choice to have hot lunches in the future. Cost will be \$20 to members and our association will cover any extras. We will receive tea and coffee upon arrival, soup, entrees, salads, decadent desserts and fresh fruit. The tax and tip are included. All in a beautiful venue with excellent service.

There are a few members participating in the executive to share tasks. We need a secretary assistant as Solweig has taken on some Olympic commitments. Would anyone like to volunteer? Only three or four meetings throughout the year, and plenty of laughs.

Hartley Rollins, Solweig Williams and I attended our AGM of the BCRTA which was held in Richmond on September 18 and 19. We were reassured that our monthly pension income is secure. The smaller account, the Inflation Adjustment Account (IAA) is reducing due to greater pharmaceutical costs, fewer practicing teachers making contributions, and lower investment returns. Teachers are retiring earlier and living longer (and aren't we blessed to be able to do so!) This IAA account covers our Cost of Living (COLA) increase each January (which to now has matched the Canada Price Index), and provides premiums for the Medical Services Plan for members, and portions of the Extended Health Benefits (EHB). Representatives of the BCTF are holding discussions in every district with practicing teachers to determine options and we retired members are also being asked to consider our priorities for this account. Should we maintain COLA as much as possible? Reduce the subsidy of MSP premiums? of EHB premiums? Decisions must be made as the status quo is not an option.

A second topic of conversation at the AGM was the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) Members are advised to note the impact the HST will have on their budgets and to voice concerns. Contacts with MLA's on issues have resulted in some adjustments to what is included in the HST. For example, apparently in response to people in colder areas of the province, heating costs have been removed from extra taxation. Our association will act on

our behalf if we want to use it.

Cliff Boldt was elected Second Vice President at the AGM. We congratulate him and look forward to his participation in our group as well as in the provincial RTA.

Sheila Pither, our BCRTA President, has accepted an invitation to attend our luncheon on Monday, November 16. We are looking forward to having her join us on that day.

North Island College has given us a framed Brian Scott print in appreciation of our contributions to the NIC Foundation. Comox Valley RTA members may take it home between lunch dates to enjoy. The first caretaker of the print is Norma Lockwood.

I hope to see many of you at our next lunch on Monday, November 16.

Websites for BCRTA Information

www.bcrrta.ca with options to Benefits and Pensions

www.bcrrta.ca/photographs.html A video produced by the provincial RTA on retirement is available on this website

Members in Assisted Living or Extended Care

The Comox Valley RTA does not want to lose touch with those members in assisted living or extended care. If you wish to attend our luncheons, or you know someone who would enjoy them, contact Wendy Irwin at 250-334-0607 ; she will gladly arrange transportation.

Bursary Report

Ron Black

Thanks to the generous donations of several RTA members, our bursary fund has grown from \$24,285 in August, 2008 to \$26,677 in October of 2009. Through matching grants by the North Island College Foundation, we award bursaries to a second year NIC student proceeding to a degree in education. This year's worthy recipient of our \$1150 bursary was Danielle Dufour, who wrote in her thank you letter that our award "will help (her) follow (her) dream of becoming a teacher."

We continue to encourage our members to contribute to our bursary both to enrich the current value and (eventually) to offer a second bursary. Our goal for this year is an increase of \$1500. We are all aware of the increasing costs of higher education and the difficulty of local students in pursuing their goals.

. Any member wishing to make an income tax deductible contribution to our bursary fund may do so by cheque to:

The North Island College Foundation
(Memo Line) Retired Teachers' Association Bursary
Komoux Hall, 2300 Ryan Road
Courtenay, BC V9N 8N6
Attention: Susan Auchterloine

Change of address?

Open to E-Mail Contact?

Don't forget to let Maimie Tomlinson know of address changes by calling her at 334-3737 or email mtomlin@shaw.ca . We could save mailing costs if you would accept an email newsletter. Thanks to the 120 people who have given us emails.

In Memoriam

In the past few months, we have learned of the passing of the following members of our

association that were not included in the spring newsletter In Memoriam column:

Jan Bush
Eileen Gibson
Cam Stewart
Constance Wyndham
Fred Johnston
Marie Faint
Wynn Davies

In their memory, our association has made donations to the R.R. Smith Fund Foundation
If you would like to make a donation in their memory, or in the memory of other friends
and colleagues, the address is:

100-550 W 6th Avenue
Vancouver V5Z 4P2

Our Luncheon Ticket Collectors:
Rickson's Menswear Blue Heron Books

231 Fifth Street 1775 Comox Ave.
Courtenay 334-3822 Comox 339-6111
Blaine Douglas Martina Polson

**Please support these community minded businesses, and please remember to put
the exact amount or a check in an envelope with your name on it.**

News from Israel
Cookie Chow July, 2009

“Found myself a smallish apt. in May. It has a huge balcony and a beautifully landscaped
common garden. I'm only renting at the moment. Have been going to language
school...brain like a sieve! I took a short “walk and talk” history/geography course of the
area around the Sea of Galilee...one can drown in history in this part of the world. I live
close to an outdoor market which is great...have access to many bus routes...transportation
is very reasonable, especially if you are a senior. Medicare is good. I pay about \$30 a
month and that covers doctors, tests, etc.once I get more language under my belt, I will
do more exploring. The difficulty here is that there are 102 languages spoken in Israel,
(and English is important) and everyone who doesn't speak it wants to learn it from you.
Please pass on my best regards....be well.”

Luncheon Dates for 2009-2010
at The Kingfisher
Monday, November 16, 2009
Monday, February 15, 2010
(April 29,2010 Tri-District Powell River)
Monday, June 14, 2010
(Ticket cost of \$20 includes the meal, taxes, and gratuity)

A Legacy of War:
Childhood Reflections
Ron Black

As a child in Prince Rupert, I was made aware of the realities of World War II by my
parents, teachers, newspaper headlines, radio, and Warner Pathe News. I recall clearly such
events as Dunkirk, the London Blitz, Pearl Harbour, D-Day, Dresden, Hiroshima, and

Nagasaki.

Fear was the prominent emotion as we were marched out of elementary school one afternoon to the “security” of nearby woods and when our family made a hasty retreat to the basement following air raid warning signals. On the other hand, my friends and I benefited from the war efforts in my community. Early on, 1940 or '41, the street behind my home was developed to accommodate the workers who fabricated both above surface and underground tanks for marine and aviation fuel. Once these tasks were completed, the gutted buildings remained empty for the duration of the war. Being enterprising youngsters, we utilized two of these empty buildings, the former kitchen and dining areas, for floor hockey, and a bunk house for basketball. The wooden road servicing the tank site became useful for sleigh riding, even with a light frost.

Less than a block away was the Canadian Signals base. Behind our house was their storage area with huge (to us) spools of communication cable, several using lead to protect the insulated wires. Collecting the discarded pieces of this material, my brother and I were able to melt down the lead in an old bread pan and sell the resulting ingots to a used goods dealer for ten cents a pound.

This same area near the end of the war was mostly empty and became useful to us for games of pick-up softball where we were often joined by some of the men from the base.

This same base had a canteen where feature movies were shown to the personnel every Wednesday evening. Having spoken one afternoon to a probably adjutant, who in turn spoke to the base commander, we were admitted to these movies for free until, unfortunately, word got out beyond our neighbourhood and more children than signalers were turning up for the shows. The commander, reluctantly, had to end our entertainment.

Another part of our city, about three blocks from our home, became an area of barracks for American soldiers waiting to be shipped off to the Aleutians. Accompanying my brother, who sold the Vancouver Province to the servicemen there, I benefited from such unheard of gifts as Hershey bars, Rollos, and sometimes their loose change.

The American Army also had a USO to provide entertainment for their troops. As a member of our elementary school choir, I had the privilege of performing for the servicemen and on the local radio station there. When peace finally arrived in 1945, many facilities had disappeared, but some still remained.

An army maintenance depot, only two blocks away, became both a pick-up softball field and a basketball court for us neighbourhood children. The YMCA became our Civic Centre where as both pre teens and teens we enjoyed gymnastics, badminton, and basketball. A games room was also provided for us where I spent many hours playing table tennis and pool.

The military observation post and communications centre on the mountains behind our town was turned into accommodations for a burgeoning ski club. In my teens, with my best friend and several other friends, I spent many weekends there preparing for ski season, maintaining the buildings, and enjoying the hiking, skiing, and socializing with my peers.

Yes, the war years revealed to us the fear, terror, and horrors of that period, but at the same time we experienced the warmth and kindness of young men stationed in my home town and appreciated the facilities that this conflict brought to us.

Comox Valley and Campbell River Senior Games September 15-18, 2010

The Senior Games will be in our area next fall and we will be welcoming over 4000 participants to our valley and Campbell River. Over 1200 volunteers are required for the many events and support services. Watch for more information to be released in our local media next month. Local papers, radio and TV will have contact names and phone numbers identified in November, and will appreciate any help you can provide in a wide range of capacities.

Early Teaching Experiences

Heather Van Holderbeke

Kathy Askew shared an experience in her final practicum that has had a career long impact on her. “My final practicum was with one of two Grade 1 teachers who shared an open area with their two classes. Both classes took gym together and I appreciated the support of the experienced teacher who was somehow able to refocus the kids after I called out, “Now everyone- hold on to your balls!” The Grade 1’s fell over laughing hysterically. That put me off teaching gym for the rest of my career.”

Her anecdote brought to mind an experience of my own when I was earnestly trying to develop an appreciation of the elements of the short story by using nursery rhymes. “Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet eating her turds and whey,” I chanted. The Grade 10’s roared with laughter. It wouldn’t have been so bad, they said, if it hadn’t been HER turds!

Linda Safford tells us about preparing an art lesson for a Grade 4 class. “First thing I said was, ‘OK, on the table there are...’ (paper, paints, etc.) Before I could say another word, the whole class surged forward and I blurted out ‘GOD DAMMIT!’ There was a stunned silence. I broke it by saying, “Go back to your seats. Now when I say Move...’ I don’t know who was more shocked, me or the students!”

The two other stories I received were in another category. Amy Yakimyshyn reports that her teacher advisor at UBC enjoyed challenging the class with hypothetical questions. ““What should be done if a non-custodial parent comes to the school to collect his/her child?’ It happened! The secretary took the child out a different door to go home and someone kept the parent talking. Whew!”

LoResah Rollins submitted this one: “I was teaching Grade 1 and a mother wanted to see me. I was so scared! It was my first parent/teacher interview! I asked how I would know his mommy. He said with glowing exuberance, “She’s purdy!” When the mom came, she had a withered leg, and an ungainly gait. She looked tired and beaten by life. “See,” he said in triumph, “I told you she was purdy!” And she was.