

Coquitlam Retired Teachers' Association
c/o Unit 208 - 2502 St. Johns Street, Port Moody, BC, V3H 2B4

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Officers					
President	Jennifer Blenkinsop	604.461.4088			
Vice-President	Lionel Daneault	604.465.4180			
Secretary	Joy Silver	604.936.1120			
Treasurer	Howard Spence	604.936.8320			
Directors					
Tony Eades	Bursary	604.464.0553	Lynda Parsons	Luncheons	604.939.9897
Eunice Hodge	Door prizes; Gifts	604.464.0004	John Pope	Newsletter; Emails	604.461.7355
Darragh Hodson	Newsletter	604.522.2595	Lynn Sowerby	Phoning	604.939.5239
Dale Linton	Welcoming	604.937.5113	Vicki Stacey	Welcoming	604.936.9040
Pat Lomax	Societal Concerns	604.931.4285	Joan Wilby	Sunshine	604.936.4521
Ray McNabb	Membership	604.687.1981	Margrete Wylie	Luncheons	604.464.1788

Christmas Luncheon

Wednesday, December 9 at the Executive Plaza Hotel
See the accompanying flyer for details.

Back to School Luncheon

The weather cooperated on Tuesday September 8 for the annual Back to School luncheon with 153 members attending at Meadow Gardens Golf and Country Club in Pitt Meadows. A good time was had by all with lots of catching up news being shared over coffee, tea, beers and wine. At noon president Jennifer Blenkinsop rang the old school bell to bring class to attention.

Two executive members leaving the executive were presented with gifts. Howard Spence presented the gift to Fran Mitchell and mentioned that Fran's work as secretary will be hard to follow. Ray McNabb presented Vivien Yee with her gift. He reported that Vivien had served on the executive and was in charge of the phoning committee for nine years, serving under four different presidents. Something of a record here!

Those 2009 retirees attending were called up to the front of the room and welcomed by Jennifer. They all received a good round of applause.

The 2009-2010 CRTA executive was introduced and thanks was given to Tony Eades who has been in charge of our bursary committee for many years. Tony and his wife have sold their Coquitlam home and are moving to 100 Mile House.

The toast to the working educators was given this year by Gary Conley. He said that the teachers present at the luncheon had worked in Coquitlam's education golden years. But, he added, the new educators are enthusiastic and dedicated and willing to face the new challenges before them.

At this point lunch was served. (Some enthusiasts actually went back for seconds!)

The door prizes were won by Phyllis Slinger and Eunice Hodge. The 50/50 draw (almost \$200) was won by Ann Bishop.

October CRTA Meeting

Guest speaker at the October 14 CRTA meeting at Winslow Gallery Room was Ken Smith from the Pensions Committee. He announced a November 18 meeting for SD 43 active, retired teachers, administrators and school board administrative staff. This meeting is to get feedback regarding the Inflation Adjustment Account which is in difficulty. This is the account which provides for our annual cost of living adjustment each January and our Extended Health Benefits cost. Please refer to the website <http://bctf.ca> and look for pensions. Information will also be included in the BCRTA Postscript magazine. A large crowd had many questions for Ken who answered them all with knowledge and understanding. Howard Spence thanked Ken and presented him with some BC wine as a token of our appreciation.

The door prizes were won by Margaret Taylor and Marilyn Anderson. The 50/50 draw was won by Ray McNabb.

Executive Meetings

The September 30 CRTA executive meeting was chaired by Howard Spence as president Jennifer Blenkinsop was recuperating from knee replacement surgery. A slightly revised CRTA calendar was presented and approved. A change was necessary for our Spring newsletter as the original date fell within the new Spring Break dates for SD 43. The newsletter will now be mailed on April 7. Linda Parsons reported on arrangements for the December 9 Christmas luncheon. She also reported that the Back to School luncheon was very favorably received and that the venue will be booked for next September. Several speakers for future meetings were recommended and various executive members will contact the individuals to see if they are available for any of our meetings.

The November 4 executive meeting heard from Lynda Parsons and Margrete Wylie about the final arrangements for the Christmas luncheon. It will be at the Executive Plaza Hotel on Wednesday, December 9. It was emphasized that return cheques and forms should be mailed by Friday, November 27 in order to reach Howard Spence by the December 2 deadline. Once again items for the Christmas SHARE food bank drive will be collected at the luncheon. Much discussion centered on the November 16 pension meeting. Members will have received information on this from the BCRTA and the Pension Corporation. BCRTA pins, recently redesigned are available from the BCRTA office 604-871-2260.

In Memoriam

Flaherty, Jean - Jean passed away September 21 in Langley. She is survived by her husband Fred, son Mike (Julie), and grandchildren Mitchell, Bradley and Scotty. Jean began teaching in 1947 in the one-room Colebrook School in Surrey. She then taught in Vancouver and retired from teaching from College Park Elementary in Port Moody. After retiring she volunteered as a special needs tutor. Donations to Langley Hospice Society.

Stoffberg, Norm - Norm passed away October 4 at the age of 85. He had just recently been made an honorary member of the BCRTA and the CRTA. He is survived by his wife Mona, son Bob, daughter Joy and grandchildren Nicholas, Clinton, Marina, Francesca, Andrew and Jessica.

Willis, Elizabeth - An honorary member of the CRTA, Elizabeth passed away October 8. She was predeceased by husband Bill, sons Ted and Paul, and siblings Mildred, Joyce and George. She is survived by sons Bill (Robin), David (Lourdes), and Alex (Cindy). Betty began teaching in a one-room schoolhouse in Saskatchewan before moving to BC where she became one of the first ESL teachers.

Member News

Yvonne Beckett married Charles Gould on September 12. Mr. and Mrs. Gould have taken up residence in Courtney on Vancouver Island. Congratulations!

June retirees

Left off the list of educators retiring in June were Karin McSorley and Kerry Haywood. A belated welcome to retired life!

New Members

Joining the BCRTA and the CRTA since the last newsletter are: Roy Boss, Sharon Coleman, Maureen Luckhart, Jim Morris, and Louise Wunderlich.

Electronic newsletter update

The CRTA executive discussed the email newsletter responses and want to encourage many more members to request receiving the newsletter via email. It saves us so much money!

Thanks to all those who have already responded that they would like to receive the CRTA newsletter by email rather than by Canada Post. Up to this point 286 members responded affirmatively. This will save us considerable postage costs. If you wish an email newsletter instead of the mailed one and have not already requested it, please email rayvanbc@telus.net with "Newsletter" in the subject line. New retirees, in particular, are encouraged to send in their email addresses.

Port Moody Museum

The Port Moody Station Museum has newly developed education programs which teach members of the public about the rich history of Port Moody. Topics addressed include railway history and work, local industry history, First Nations history, BC history and Canadian culture from the past century. We are looking for volunteers to work with groups of 10-30 people to deliver these hands-on programs for ages 3 to 83. Most programs are 90 minutes in length and are offered weekdays in the morning or afternoon.

The Museum also has a large collection of artifacts representing local history. We are looking for volunteers to photograph artifacts and help maintain the database. Volunteers will be given training on how to use MS Access, our cataloguing system, and artifact handling procedures. Collection volunteers should have a good knowledge of computers, good organizational skills, and must be available at least one day Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

To learn more about the Museum and our programs visit www.vcn.bc.ca/pmmuseum. For more information please call Rebecca Clarke, Programs and Events Coordinator at 604-939-1648 or email pmmuseum@telus.net.

Volunteer as a Study Buddy Tutor!

Help a young girl learn to love school! Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland is seeking volunteer tutors for their Study Buddy Program. Volunteers must be female, age 19 or older, have a high school diploma, post-secondary education (completed or in-process), and experience helping others learn. Study Buddies spend one hour a week tutoring a Little Sister for a minimum of six months. Retired teachers have been very effective with this program. Contact Linda at 604-873-4525, Ext. 300 or email to info@bigsisters.bc.ca. The Big Sisters Association website is at:

www.bigsisters.bc.ca <<http://www.bigsisters.bc.ca/>>

Check out these Web sites

BCRTA : www.bcrta.ca

CRTA : www.bcrta.ca/coquitlam.html

Activity Groups

Physical and mental fitness with CRTA

Bridge: Barb Glancy @ 604.936.4976
John Pope @ 604.461.7355
Golf (Women): Christine Hough @ 604-460-1023
Walking: Louise Grimshaw @ 604-421-4833

BCRTA Review Commission

The BCRTA is establishing a Review Commission to examine the structure and operation of the Association. The first step in this process is to recruit seven BCRTA members to serve on the Commission. Application forms are available from the BCRTA office 604-871-2260.

The Commission will examine the present organization of the BCRTA, looking at committee structure, their number, and purpose; office procedures; directors' and officers' duties; communication methods; constitution and policies.

The Commission members will serve for two years and meet via email, teleconference and face-to-face meetings in Vancouver, but also meet with branches or zones and receive input from individual members. It is planned the commission will have a gender and geographical balance.

Strategic planning and analysis is essential to any organization, and the Commission will provide the means for logical growth and development.

Old Age, I decided, is a gift

I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be. Oh, not my body! I sometime despair over my body, the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt. And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror (who looks like my mother!), but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, and my loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend.

I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avante-garde on my patio. I am entitled to a treat, to be messy, to be extravagant.

I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 AM and sleep until noon?

I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 60's & 70's, and if, at the same time, I wish to weep over a lost love, I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, If I choose to, will dive into the waves with abandon, despite the pitying glances from the jet set.

They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And eventually I remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. And I shall eat dessert every single day. If I feel like it.

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Reporting - Ray McNabb

Production & e-mail distribution - John Pope

Canada Post mail-out - Darragh Hodson & Ethel Sears