

Round Table Roundup – December.

It was pretty chilly on December 10th when we met at the BCTF building for our directors meeting. After the usual call to order, announcements and the time allowed for reading, we got down to business. The HST was front and centre and our meeting with COSCO and Seniors on Guard for Medicare representatives was to get some direction. The survey devised by this committee had gone out as an insert with the Postscript, and since that time COSCO has duplicated the survey which has gone out inside the COSCO news. The purpose of the survey was to get some factual examples from seniors as to what impact the HST will have on their budgets and expenditures in the coming year. We need to know which other groups are working on this topic within the Province, and which groups are working towards a referendum. A rally is planned for March 6th and will likely be in Vancouver as the legislature is not in session on that day, and commuting to the island is costly. All COSCO affiliates are asked to find fifty people to attend and took home sign up sheets from the December COSCO meeting. At our last meeting the membership of a review commission was discussed, and only three retirees had filled out an application form. A proposal was put to the board to expand the working commission to fourteen members, two sub-committees and to plan for several meetings over two years with a budget of \$49,000. The alternate proposal of a three man ad hoc committee to plan for a less expensive method of review was accepted! Whew! They will start by surveying membership to see which parts of our organization need an overhaul.

President Sheila Pither had a written report(* all reports mentioned are available at the office) and mentioned continued discussions with the College over the criminal record checks. Kit Kreiger will write an article for the Postscript on this issue. The delegates to the BCTF AGM will meet in January. The office administrator now books the pension workshops, and will hand over her current laptop to work with the LCD projector as the office has a new one. The office will be closed from December 24th to January 4th. Our ACCES database continues to act up and we are trying to find an expert to fix it. The deadline for branches to send in their financial statements has been extended to July 31st. Branch cards will be available at the next AGM – for use by presidents to thank/communicate with people. Medoc has cancelled the \$10 donation to the R R Smith fund for every request of a home insurance estimate. We have 7,232 policies in force covering 14,000+ members.

A large number of people filled in the survey on the BCTF website or attended one of the local meetings re possible changes to the pension plan. TPP is currently looking at health benefit plans.

COSCO is looking for facilitators for its many workshops, and will hold a training session at the Compass Point Inn in Surrey for those willing to train. Contact Sheila Pither if interested. This will be from January 18th to 22nd 2010. The Heritage Committee has joined the BC Historical Federation and gave a grant to Kimberley. They plan to update the history of the BCRTA.

Advocacy is interested in learning about lobbying and will meet with a representative from Counterpoint Communications and report back to the

January meeting. The committee will also look into exemptions from the HST. The Excellence in Public Education had its poster as the back cover of Postscript and has already received an enquiry about the award. There is an interest in finding out about volunteers and their work, but a survey at this time might be inappropriate. It is planned to put together biographies of past presidents – those still alive and well. (*Guess I had better look to my laurels! Ed.*)

Social Concerns is looking for an exemption from HST for TPP pension benefit management and administrative services and would like the BCTF committee working on the TTOC task force to come and speak to the BCRTA board.

The ACER CART report contained information on retirees in the Yukon, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. It also stressed continual lobbying for a universal Pharmacare plan, a national prescription drug strategy and the elimination of the renewal of the protection of drug patents.

The retirement workshop committee will be updating their material on an annual basis and plan to advertise in Teacher and in the Postscript.

Pat Brady has taken on the finances and presented the statements. We will add money to help form new branches and the \$1 per member will be sent to the R R Smith Memorial fund as directed by the AGM. Membership had given fourteen branches funds to help with a membership drive, and Mission will form a new branch. We approved a membership application for a former BC teacher.

Branch contacts for all directors were assigned, and we had a report from COSCO.

Health and Housing needed clarification on BCRTA/COSCO goals re the HST, and whether exemptions would be sought. Short reports came from the health regions where

worker/management relations were not great and unsanitary conditions and super bugs were evident. Fraser Valley is cutting \$140 million – are there agencies that can help? Branch presidents were to be asked about Long Term Care rates and financial hardship on those in care. Postscript had no report, and neither did Zone meeting contacts and an affinity program.

Under new business Langley requested funding for a banner.

We finished early, around one thirty.

Sheila Gair, Editor.