



REPORT TO THE ACER-CART 2010 AGM

1. Name and coordinates of the member organization

Name: The British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association (BCRTA)
Address: 100-550 West 6th Ave. Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2
Telephone: 1-877-663-2243 or local 604-871-2260/62
Fax: 604-871-2265
Email: pat@bcрта.com or kristi@bcрта.com
Website: <http://www.bcрта.ca/>

1. Names and coordinates of the Director and Alternate Director:

Director:

Name: JoAnn D. Lauber
Address: 1703 - 8 Laguna Court New Westminster, BC V3M 6M6
Telephone: 604-523-1653 fax: 604-523-9833
Email: jlauber@shaw.ca
Term: 2 years (Sept 08 – Sept 10)

Alternate:

Name: Sheila Pither, President, BCRTA
Address: 1908 – 1330 Harwood St. Vancouver, BC V6E 1S8
Telephone: 604-684-9720
Email: pither470@shaw.ca

Observer:

Name: Cliff Boldt, Second Vice-President
Address: 2842 Muir Road Courtenay, BC V9N 6A1
Telephone: 250-334-1580
Email: mcboldt@telus.net

2. **Membership as of April 12, 2010:** 14,010 (1305 are non fee-paying life members)

3. Newsletter Editor and coordinates:

Name: Sheila Gair
Address: (Same as member organization)
Email: sscribe@telus.net

5. Webmaster:

Name: Kristi Josephson
Address: (Same as member organization)
Email: Kristi@bcрта.com

6. Dates of AGM, Executive/Board meetings, newsletters:

AGM: 2010: September 18th (Delegates' Day, September 17th)

Executive/Board meetings 2010-2011: TBA

Newsletter Submission Deadlines: October 31, January 31, April 30, and July 15

7. Major concerns:

Federal Level:

- a. *Funding cuts to "Lest We forget" programme:* BCRTA recommends that ACER-CART urge the Federal Government to restore funding to this program.
- b. *Charitable donations:* BCRTA recommends that ACER-CART approach the Federal government urging changes in tax legislation that would put charitable donations on the same footing as political party contribution in terms of deduction.

Provincial level:

- a. Introduction of Harmonized Sales Tax: the September AGM passed a motion to develop, in cooperation with other organizations as appropriate, a campaign designed to engage BCRTA members in seeking a political referendum on the HST.
- b. Cuts to social programs, education funding, increases in seniors' housing costs.

8. Main activities since ACER-CART's last AGM:

8.1 Benefits

As at Dec 31, 2009, the Plan provided pensions to 28,410 retired members. On January 1, 2010, no indexing of pensions was granted because the CPI for September 09/ the CPI for September 08 was -0.9%.

A group extended health benefits plan is currently provided to retirees, and retiree premiums are funded by a limited portion of employer contributions that would otherwise go to the IAA. But payment of the premiums is not guaranteed. A dental plan is available to members; premiums are paid by subscribers. In March 2010 the BCRTA Pensions & Benefits Committee asked Johnson Inc do an analysis of the cost of BCRTA's becoming a provider of health benefit plans for retired teachers, and to compare that to the BCRTA's becoming a part of the Alberta Retired

Teachers' Association's benefit plans. The Pension Corporation of BC, which now provides the benefit plans, is obligated to provide a benefit plan for all retired educators, not only BCRTA members. Deliberations are in progress.

The BCRTA participated actively in the BC Teachers' Federation province-wide pension consultation prompted by the challenges posed by diminishing funds in the Inflation adjustment Account, which provides indexing.

The Teachers' Pension Plan has made a decision to move to sustainable indexing, preparing to make adjustments to make that possible. The BC Teachers' Federation AGM agreed to contribute up to an additional 1% of salary to the Inflation Adjustment Account (IAA), and approved *consideration* of further adjustments to enable indexing: these adjustments may include removing the health benefit subsidy for retirees, beginning indexing at the age of 60 rather than earlier, capping indexing at a sustainable level, and redirecting 2% of future surpluses to the IAA.

8.2 External Relations/affiliations

- *BC Teachers' Federation*: The September AGM formalized a process for the election of BCRTA delegates to the AGM of the BC Teachers' Federation, assuring that our voices would be heard on pension-related matters.
- *National Pensioners and Senior Citizens' Federation*: Several BCRTA members attended the October AGM of the National Pensioners and Senior citizens' Federation. Resolutions were brought to that table urging support for single National Securities regulator, the establishment of a national pharmaceutical plan and formulary, and legislation that would help CPP recipients whose benefits had been miscalculated.
- *ACER-CART*: President Vaughn Wadelius was guest and keynote speaker at the September AGM of the BCRTA.

In support of last June's ACER-CART priorities, Branches were asked to contact their MLAs and MPs to urge the establishment of a national pharmacare plan and formulary. Sample letters and background information were provided. Many individuals and branches reported responses; in areas where MPs and MLAs had been former students of branch executive members responses superseded the "form letter" answers.

- *The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations (COSCO)*. COSCO is an important avenue for our Association to lobby governments on behalf of our members and on behalf of all seniors in BC. BCRTA executive officers and members basically fill the leadership roles in this organization that represents some 70,000 BC seniors.

BCRTA members serve as facilitators for the Council's 18 health promotion workshops, developed mainly on the initiative of Sheila Pither, with funding support from all levels of government and New Horizons. The workshops, which are available for the asking, free of charge, have taken author, presenters and facilitator trainers Sheila Pither and Sylvia MacLeay throughout the province and across the

country to promote the health, wellness, and independence of seniors. A list of the 18 workshops available can be found on the home page: <http://www.coscobic.ca/>. Contact Sheila Pither: pither470@shaw.ca

- *Coalition to Build a Better BC: The BCRTA has joined a consortium of diverse BC organizations opposed to the funding cuts to social services, students, education, and the arts, to name just a few of the groups hit by recent funding reductions. The Coalition is dedicated to working toward real solutions to build a better province. A daylong teach-in and a rally on the grounds of the Vancouver Art Gallery have already taken place.*

8.3 Communication:

- Communicated with Branches and members by means of the newsmagazine (*Postscript*), visits to Branches by Pensions and Benefits Committee members, and personal contact by individual Directors following each Board meeting. Standing committees have corresponding Branch contacts to convey issues to the local level;
- Continued to update the web site; it has become a rich source of information for current and prospective members: www.bcrta.ca/
- President Sheila Pither has continued in her splendid way this year to represent our Association through her efforts and many visits to branches. To date, she has attended two Zone meetings and nine Branch meetings throughout our vast province; other meetings such as these are planned for the next few months. Sheila has advocated on our behalf in many ways, and she has trained workshop facilitators here and across Canada.

8.4 Member Services

- Initiated a review of the organization to evaluate the structure and operation of the Association and report to the 2011 AGM;
- Presented pre-retirement workshops “There’s More to it Than Money” at various locations throughout the province;

The facilitators are 52 trained BCRTA members.

- Continue to urge an alternative to the current legislation that requires recurring criminal records checks on non-practising retirees who wish to retain their teaching credentials.

8.5 Advocacy

- Conducted a survey to ascertain the effect of the proposed HST on our members. (\$830 on average per year). Further it would have a huge impact on our Pension Plan, which contracts out administrative and investment services, currently exempt from PST & GST;

- Decided to work closely with COSCO and other members of the “Fight HST” campaign to collect the signatures of 10% of the voters in each riding. This initiative, if successful, would set the stage for a province-wide referendum on the HST. At the very least it would garner attention from the current governing party;
- For the second year, held meetings in 7 zones throughout the province to engage all 44 local presidents, improve communication, and foster inter-Branch exchange;
- Engaged the services of a professional lobbyist firm to assist the Association’s advocacy and government relations effectiveness on behalf of members;
- Created a policy paper recommending changes in the Canada pension system that would enhance security in retirement for all Canadians.

8.6 Membership and Recruitment

- Extended the Branch membership recruitment competition --to run from Sept 08 to Sept 09, and launched an incentive rewarding the recruitment efforts of individual members; As of April, 800+ new members have joined; our goal was 800. We thank Johnson Inc for their generous support of our Recruitment Reward program;
- Visited areas in the province that didn’t have branches. Since the first visit to the North by the President and Membership Chair, two new branches have been set up; it is hoped that more will be formed after another trip “beyond Hope” in April;
- Encouraged Branches to apply for special grants to support new recruitment activities;
- Established an electronic network to embrace members in distant and remote areas;
- Established 2 new branches, now 44 in total in the province.

8.7 Philanthropy

- Heritage: Encouraged the preservation of education heritage throughout the province by approving grants to Branches requesting funds for projects; urged districts to establish policies that would ensure the preservation of education heritage; undertook the work of updating the history of the BCRTA, and collecting the histories of past presidents of the BCRTA and BC educators who served as ACER-CART presidents;
- Advertised and received applications for the Golden Star Awards, which will recognize and reward school programs that involve the interaction of seniors and students;
- Approved the annual grant of \$1 per member to the philanthropic arm of the BCRTA, **The RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation**, (\$14,000 this first year.) to support education projects in BC and overseas;

- Through the Health and Housing Committee, continued to monitor the level of care accorded seniors in various facilities throughout the province.

9. Bouquets

1. We thank the Executive of ACER-CART for their efforts, for their policy papers, support, and communication with us. We thank President Vaughn Wadelius for his visit to our AGM.
2. We appreciate the timely and informative *Options* and the Quarterly Reports.
3. We thank ACER-CART member organizations for sending us their publications.
4. We thank the RTO for their assistance as we worked through our response to the impending HST legislation, and ARTA for their offer to have us join their current health benefit plans.
5. We thank Johnson Inc for their generous support of this conference and the BCRTA.

Respectfully submitted,
Jo-Ann Lauber, Director and
BCRTA Representative to ACER-CART