



Prime Time

Post Secondary Educators
Branch 95 Newsletter



2014
Summer
Edition



President's Report Summer 2014

This is the last column I will write as President of Branch 95 of the Retired Teachers' Association. As those of you who have been following the updates in *Prime Time* know, the last year or so has been a very interesting one in the development of our organization.

One of the highlights of our year was our first formal AGM in a long time and we are very grateful to the BCGEU who gave us space in their Lower Mainland Office for our meeting in May. It was really good to have two of the founder members of our group Dick Schultz, who came all the way from The Kootenays, and Sam Lewindon at the meeting. Before the Business part of our meeting began, we were fortunate to hear a very informative and optimistic report about our Pension Plan from Bruce Kennedy, Executive Director of the College, Public Service, and Teachers' Boards of Trustees.

As well as electing a new executive (see page 2), our members unanimously agreed that we should form a group independent of the Retired Teachers' Association. To that end, we also approved our own Constitution and Bylaws.

During May, our new Secretary Norah Andrew requested approval under the Society Act of a name for our organization. We have been given permission to become The Association of British Columbia College Pension Plan Retirees. It is a little bit of a mouthful and not our first choice, but it is a beginning. Later this summer, we will be filing the formal registration papers. At its September AGM, the RTA Board will present changes to its Constitution and Bylaws to remove post-secondary members from the RTA. Some of you belong to local RTA branches as well as to Branch 95, and the bylaw changes include a provision for you to remain as members of those branches if you want to do so. Full details are given on pages 4 and 5.

Of importance to some of you, I know, is the Medoc travel insurance that we have been able to access through the RTA. We have already received our renewals for the year August 2014-2015. We will remain covered under the RTA plan for the upcoming year because we will still be part of the RTA until the fall. Maureen Shaw and Dennis Anderson are already investigating our options for subsequent years and are confident that we will be able to access a Travel Medical Plan as good or even better than Medoc.

The members at the AGM and your executive are enthusiastic about the future. We believe an independent organization will be better able to advocate with the Pension Partners and the Pension Corporation on behalf of all

In This Edition

Article	Page
President's Report	1-2
New Executive	2
Our Finances	3
The New Organization ABC CPPR	4-5
Notes from. . .	6
AirB&B	8

PRIME TIME is published twice a year. If you would like to contribute an article or images, please contact Mary L. Griffin marylgriffin@telus.net or Al Valleau al.valleau@shaw.ca. **ALSO, in order to keep our costs low, we need your email address, so that we may send you Prime Time via email. If we do not have your email, please send it to Mary or Al. A new email address for the new organization will be available shortly.**

President's Report continued

Retired College Pension Plan members. We are extremely grateful to FPSE for providing us with an official address and meeting space. We are also extremely grateful to the Retired Teachers' Association who helped our organization get started over ten years ago and for providing us a home until we were ready to become independent. We are sure that we will stay in touch with them on issues of shared interest. Once we are independent, we will be affiliating with COSCO and investigating relationships with other national seniors' groups.

The future of our organization takes up quite a lot of this issue of *Prime Time*, but we do have an article from Dennis on Travel and our "Notes From . . . " section. We are always asking for more contributors so please consider writing an article for *Prime Time* or keeping us up to date with your area by writing some "Notes from . . . "

On that "note," I shall sign off for now and let you get on with this issue.

Mary L. Griffin

The New Executive

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Thoughts on the finances of our New Association

It has been a very eventful year with our move from being a BCRTA to being an independent association. As a branch of the budget of \$1,350 from our branch membership fee of \$5, a operating grant from the RTA, and the last year of a 5 year of \$2,000 a year from FPSE, we have been not able to do much informal association for our members, one that had little ability present pre-retirement seminars to those who were about to retire and send out a modest newsletter twice a year. With the advent of higher postage rates, even that newsletter, given our budget as a branch of the RTA, would become more difficult to undertake.



branch of the BCRTA, with a \$600 branch operating grant other than be an to do more than

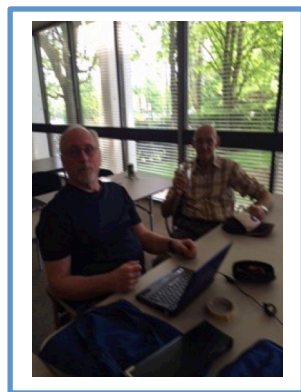
With roughly 530 post-secondary members of the BCRTA moving into our new association at the end of September, the \$40 membership that we will garner from the shift to being independent will give us an operating budget of just over \$21,000. This budget will help us have a clear, strong voice on our pension, communicate through a newsletter and a web site, and supply our members with access to comprehensive group travel insurance. As well, our new budget ought to help us reach out to the different regions of the province and become more fully aware of our membership's concerns.

Being a branch of the BCRTA was a great way for our organization to get its feet on the ground, but when you consider that of the \$21,000 that was collected in provincial memberships this past year from the 530 post-secondary members of the BCRTA, the \$600 branch grant, access to group travel insurance and copies of *Postscript* and *Liaison Priorities* were a small return from an organization that could not represent us in pension matters and was not focussed on any the concerns of retirees from post-secondary institutions connected to the College Pension Plan.

Rightly, the BCRTA were focussed on retirees from the K to 12 system and on the concerns their members had for the system they had worked in. They did us a favour ten years ago when we needed an organization to get our retiree organization started. Now, however, it is time for us to grow our own association and focus on our priorities.

Al Valteau

From the AGM



Al Valteau and Dick Schultz



Bruce Kennedy

Jack Finnogason Signing Members into the Meeting

The Association of British Columbia College Pension Plan Retirees (ABC CPPR)

In May, members attending the AGM of Branch 95 of the BC Retired Teachers' Association passed unanimously the following motions:

MOVED that BCRTA Branch 95 representing the members of the post-secondary retirees in receipt of a pension from the College Pension Plan be converted to a new association to be called The BC College Pension Plan Retirees' Association (BC CPPRA)

MOVED that the draft constitution and bylaws for the association submitted to the membership at this AGM be approved,

MOVED that the BCRTA be urged to change the BCRTA constitution to reflect the fact that post-secondary members now have their own association

MOVED that we apply to become a registered society under the BC Society's Act.

MOVED that we communicate to all retired members of the College Pension Plan the changes to our organization.

As a result of these decisions,

our secretary has applied for approval of our name, which, as is noted in Mary's President's Report, has been granted subject to some modification.

members of the executive will file the appropriate documents for registration under the Society Act

the RTA Board has passed the following motion

That the Board of Directors recommend the following to the 2014 AGM:

That the following BCRTA Bylaws be amended by deleting the struck through words, and by adding the words shown in bold italic script, as shown:

1.3 Affiliate Membership

1.3.1 Affiliate Membership shall be available, on the basis of individual application, to:

- ~~(a) post-secondary educators who draw a pension from the College Pension Plan of British Columbia;~~
- ~~(b) post-secondary educators who draw a pension from a plan other than the College Pension Plan of British Columbia; and~~
- (a) **other** retired public system educators who draw their pension from a jurisdiction outside British Columbia.

1.4 Associate Membership

1.4.1 Associate Membership shall be available on the basis of individual application to:

- (a) persons who retired from staff positions with BCTF, BCTF Locals, BCSSA, BCP&VPA, ~~FPSE~~, TQS, ~~the College of Teachers~~, and the BCRTA;

Branches

2.1 Constitution of Branches

- (a) The Association may establish Branches in British Columbia.
- (b) Membership in a Branch shall be granted only to members of the Association, ***except that retired post-secondary educators who were BCRTA members until the creation of their own provincial organization may, with the consent of the branches to which they belonged, remain as non-voting, non-office-holding, associate members of those branches.***

Implementing the Changes and what they will mean for us as members

By October, Branch 95 of the RTA will cease to exist and all current members of the RTA who draw pensions from the College Pension Plan will automatically become members of the CPPR.

Those of us who belonged to RTA Local Branches as well as to Branch 95 or instead of Branch 95 will be **able to remain as *associate members*** of those branches upon payment of the branch fee, which will already have been deducted for 2014-2015.

What will Happen Next?

The RTA will forward to the CPPR membership dues already deducted from our September 2014 Pension cheques.

The CPPR Executive will ask the pension partners (PSEA, BCGEU, and FPSE) to request that the pension Corporation deduct our membership dues from our September cheques beginning in September **2015**. (There will be only one deduction of dues this year).

Our Executive will request affiliation with COSCO and investigate other appropriate relationships.

Our Executive will research a travel medical plan comparable with and perhaps even better than the one offered through the RTA. This plan should be in place in time for next year when our current Medoc coverage will end.

We will ultimately receive new membership cards showing our membership in the CPPR.

We will no longer receive *Postscript*, but all members will receive *Prime Time* including members who paid only the \$40 provincial RTA membership fee and were not on Branch 95's membership list and so did not receive any mailings or the newsletter

The Future

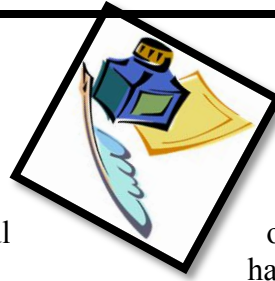
Being an independent organization will give us full control over the entirety of our dues. This autonomy will increase our budget to about \$20,000 per annum rather than the \$1950 we've received from the RTA in the past. (See Al's more detailed article on page 3. Perhaps, in the long run, more important, being an independent organization will allow us to advocate on our own behalf with the Pension Plan and Pension Partners on behalf of our members and on behalf of other retirees. Our voice will be an independent voice.

The Executive will meet in October to develop a strategic plan for our new organization.

Notes From . . .

NOTES FROM THE SUNSHINE COAST.

Summer is here on the Sunshine Coast, and we had one of that I can remember. Life is rich and full with many wonderful just lazing around. Almost every weekend there is something Saturday Farmers Market in Sechelt to music in the park events and of weekend garage sales. We have the Annual Festival of the Written Arts August 14-17, the 32nd year for this event which features Canadian writers from the newly published to seasoned authors. Check out the website www.writersfestival.ca.



the warmest Junes options for activity or happening from the course, the ever popular

Another almost famous event is the Pender Harbour Jazz festival now into its 18th year, September 19 to September 21. www.phjazz.ca. Our Botanical Garden is becoming quite a show piece, and we have numerous outdoor adventures just waiting to be discovered.

There are many joys to living in a smaller community, and one is getting to know your neighbours and volunteering in one of the many worthwhile organizations. A person can be busy every day. Our one major challenge continues to be the BC Ferry system; travel costs continue to escalate and service is being reduced. Aside from that, life is pretty darn good.



*Howe Sound
on the Way to the Sunshine Coast*

Judy Wilbee

NOTES FROM THE SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS

- Tapovan Sri Chinmoy Peace Park <<http://tapovan.ca/>> is now open on Galiano Island, adding to the many trails and beautiful places of rest on the Southern Gulf Islands.
- Farmers markets on all the islands are outstanding this year, with tables groaning with potatoes, cucumbers, beets, turnips, garlic, fava beans – and the tomatoes will be arriving soon! Not to mention the beautiful crafts, delicious food and music filling the air...
- Tourists, families and visitors (bless their hearts) are starting to arrive, along with the hot, dry weather, which facilitates wild fires and interface fires – please be careful!

Finally, no matter how hard BC Ferries tries to isolate us from each other—the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island—by raising fares and reducing sailings, people on the Southern Gulf Islands continue to work together to establish marine links like those which existed pre-BC Ferries ‘service’ which will enable us to travel easily from one island to work, go to medical appointments and shop for things we can’t buy locally.

Christina Stechishin

From Bennett Bay, Mayne Island



NOTES FROM THE LOWER MAINLAND

Now that summer and the hot weather are finally here, Lower Mainlanders can enjoy our gardens, private and public, and all the events held to celebrate this too short season.

We will also be alert to the various issues affecting our communities, our health and our futures. Some of the central concerns we face:

- Transportation: Will Translink ever sort out the serious funding issues to ensure we have a viable public transit system for the whole Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley? Will the cutbacks to HandyDart be addressed?
- Health: Will governments, provincial and federal, provide the funding to ensure a public, accessible healthcare system? Will the announced changes to Fraser Health authority make a difference, given the analysis that its hospitals are among the “worst in Canada”?
- Environment: Burnaby and Vancouver have gone on record opposing the tripling of the Kinder Morgan pipeline to Burnaby, which will tremendously increase oil tanker volume in and out of the Metro Vancouver port. Will the National Energy Board listen to the concerns of citizens, or “is the fix already in”? Will the American coal shipments by train through South Surrey and White Rock be increased and further endanger our health and the carbon load on our atmosphere?
- Education: Underfunding of K-12 and post secondary education has led to the protracted labour dispute between the BCTF and the government, and to cutbacks at our post secondary institutions, most notably the gutting of the ESL programs at Vancouver Community College, leading to more than 70 layoffs. Kwantlen Polytechnic University has endured the scrutiny of government and media because of excessive and unapproved administrative payoffs given while current Advanced Education Minister Amrik Virk was on the Board. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) is conducting an inquiry into Capilano University’s seizure of a Fine Arts professor’s sculpture, made partly to protest previously announced funding cutbacks.

We are all facing municipal elections in Fall 2014 and a federal election in 2015 (perhaps as early as next Spring.) We must ensure that the issues that concern us and our families are addressed, so make your voices heard, and make sure you vote! Take family and friends with you to the polls. Teach your grandchildren the value of civic engagement.

Maureen Shaw



West End Sunset, Vancouver,

AirB&B

I am thankful that I have had the opportunity to do a fair amount of travel over the years. I have always enjoyed off the beaten path experiences and am thankful for an early orientation to 'non-traditional' accommodation options. My parents provided their sons an early exposure to Hostelling International and using their facilities.



During the intervening years, I have had the privilege of staying in a castle in England, in the Bastille in Quebec city, in a farmstead in Norway, in cabooses in BC, in a ship in Stockholm harbour, in an ex WW 2 prisoner of war barracks in the Rockies, in one of the highest alpine huts in Canada, and in a school in New Zealand to name only a few of the interesting spots where I have managed to lay my head. My least favorite place to stay while on the road is in the square room with a bed or two and a TV etc. that one might find in a hotel/motel in any typical city in North America.

This being said, creature comforts are becoming a little bit more important to my wife's and my aging bodies. Hosteling too has evolved, thankfully! I am constantly surprised that we are not the oldest persons using the facilities (especially in Europe); most facilities now offer the option of a private room with bath; many are licenced; you can reserve ahead; bedding is now provided (as opposed to the old days of having to pack your sleeping sac); and of course they all offer the opportunity to prepare your own meals in onsite kitchen facilities, which can amount to very significant savings.

This past year we had the opportunity to try the new kid on the block: AirB&B. This is an internet based spot where folks can offer accommodation (bedrooms, chalets, apartments, boats, suites etc.). The places are described online with a goodly amount of detail and you deal directly with the owner. We had a wonderfully positive experience in a basement suite in Washington DC - in a residential neighborhood within walking distance of the Capitol. We also had a kitchen and laundry facilities. We ate two dinners out in the 9 days we spent in the DC area. At the end of our stay we were asked to rate the landlord and he was asked to rate us as guests! You do sign-up but we have not been plagued by any advertising etc. There is a booking fee but it only occurs after the match has been made and confirmed. The bottom line for us was that even with the booking fee, it was less than half the cost of a low to medium range (read Holiday Inn Express) hotel/motel option on a busy thoroughfare not nearly as conveniently located.

AirB&B claims to have accommodation options in over 30,000 cities and 190 countries. We have friends who also had a positive experience using this site for accommodation in Amsterdam. The next time you are planning a trip you might want to give this site a peek!

Dennis Anderson

USEFUL LINKS

RTA

<http://www.bcrt.ca>

OAS and CPP

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/home.shtml>

BC Pensions

<http://www.pensionsbc.ca>

B. C. Forum (Retired Unionists)

www.bcforum.ca

BC Ombudsman

<http://www.ombudsman.bc.ca/seniors>

Council of Senior Citizens of BC

<http://www.coscobc.ca>

National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation

<http://www.npscf.org>

Seniors' Advocate

seniorsadvocate@gov.bc.ca