

Dear Retired Colleagues,

We hope you are all doing well and enjoying this New Year. As we have no email address for you, we are sending this printed copy of the BCRTA AGM notes composed by our NLRTA delegates to the Fall AGM. We would like to keep you informed in some small way as to what has been happening at the provincial level of our BCRTA. If you would like to hear more about what is happening at our local level, please contact us by phone or post mail and we will endeavour to keep you updated as to local events.

Our luncheons are our main way of endeavouring to keep our colleagues connected in person.

The next NLRTA luncheon will be held at Cavalotti Lodge, on March 7th Doors open at 11:30. Lunch is at noon. This luncheon will feature our BCRTA President as guest speaker.

Our June luncheon to be held on June 6th at Cavalotti Hall, at 11:30 is also our NLRTA AGM. We would love to see you there.

If you would like to attend either or both of the luncheons please contact any member of the executive by phone and we will be happy to include you.

Ellen Ellis (membership chair and luncheon coordinator) can be reached at: 778 269 1242 After February 20th, 2023

Sylvia Malthouse (Secretary NLRTA) can be reached at: 250 816 2702.

If you have access to the Internet, the BCRTA has a link to our NLRTA local website. Our local news is shared there as well. Videos of Interviews with several of our retired colleagues have been posted to our website as well. You might enjoy hearing their stories.

Thank you for being a part of the Nanaimo Ladysmith Retired Teacher's Association,

Best regards,

The Executive Members of the NLRTA

This year the provincial AGM was attended by our local delegates, Carol Baird-Krul, Mike Ireland, Cheryle Sosnowski and Sylvia Malthouse. The meeting was quite busy with 3 guest speakers, several award presentations, announcements of

changes to Jonson Insurance policies, the election of the provincial executive for the coming year and the passing new policies which will affect every member.

The following is a summary of your delegates' experiences.

The first keynote speaker was Shishona Austin from the Burnaby School District who discussed the indigenous perspective in the classroom. She spoke about her personal journey to understand Truth and Reconciliation.

Of indigenous ancestry she was adopted, as a baby, and as she stressed it was by a loving non-indigenous family. This young teacher creatively and sensitively told the story about her personal journey to understanding her heritage and why Truth and Reconciliation for all was important.

Shishona's parents made no secret of the fact that she was adopted and wanted. Due, in part to her home life, she didn't really begin her journey of exploration until she began work as a Kindergarten teacher and learned about indigenous identity and the intergenerational trauma along with her students. During this time one of her cousins who, with his wife, were working as teachers on Denny Island invited her to visit their one room school. All but one of the students travelled to school by boat and the instructional methodology, with an accent on outdoor activities, was an eye opener to her and so her journey of Truth and Reconciliation began.

The time that she spent on Denny Island showed Shishona, among other things, that there was a need to add an indigenous perspective and principle of learning to a classroom with a large population of indigenous students. She also learned and came to believe that it was important to listen and open pathways to all people who are a minority who suffer discrimination and injustice in the school system. As well, she stated she believes that Reconciliation means, as she learned on Denny Island, 'Walking Well Together'. It is complex but it can be done by educating oneself by listening, learning, being patient and learning about the language of the indigenous people who live in the area where you live.

Regardless of whether a person thinks these ideas are valid, it was a very touching presentation that combined words and visuals that made the listener/observer think.

The second event was Sue Lantz who discussed five practical strategies for healthy aging. The strategies were: 1) Health, 2) Housing 3) Social Network 4) Caregiver team 5) Resources. The objective is to feel happy, thrive, and enjoy independent aging. This might be an idea for a speaker for our retirement group. Carol suggested this.

The first speaker, Shishona Austin, told delegates her own story. Noel Bentley, the third person who spoke, expanded on taking a chance to tell your own story. The idea is that it helps others to understand their own story as well. He gave personal examples, including that he had experienced depression and then by telling his story it helped him come to understand his condition and it helped others to help him. His presentation included:

1) What stories are part of you?

2) Power and Purpose of storytelling

- Brain health – memory
- Work through trauma: front line, fire, floods, dandelions
- Persuasion
- Educate and help others
- Gratitude and honouring others
- Passing along information and traditions
- Encouraging listening

3) Why don't we share our stories

- Don't have time
- Don't want to tell anyone
- Don't have any good stories
- I am a terrible storyteller
- No one wants to hear my stories

4) It's all in the details – “Great stories are like sculptures”

5) Create a sensory experience – “Walk with your audience”

6) Intensity and rest – “Emotional workout”

7) 3 Minute Mash - Heading/topic

- Just start writing until the end of 3 minutes; look at what you wrote; choose next topic from this; keep repeating.

“The person that needs to hear your story is YOU”

Noel.bentley@powerof3speaking.com

Lisa Hansen from Johnson Insurance announced several plan changes.

Vaccine coverage under Prestige \$100 per year

In-province trip cancelation, interruption, delay benefit

Home insurance – BCRTA and Prestige discount

Executive Elections

President – Arnie Lambert

1 st Vice- President – Caroline Malm

2 nd Vice-President – Dave Scott

Directors (L. Mainland/Fraser Valley) Barb Mikulec (2 yr.), Linda Watson (2 yr.), Rosalind Kellett (1 yr.)

Directors (outside LM/FV) David Denyer (2 yr.), Stephanie Koropatnick (2 yr.), Charlene Hodgson (1 yr.)

Margaret Sutton (1 yr.)

Motions

PASSED – That the pension trustee continue to work with the BCRTA Executive to apprise the pension corporation of the need to use an ethical lens when choosing investment opportunities.

PASSED – That the BCRTA be encouraged to join with other groups to lobby for an increase to the old age pension.

After a great deal of discussion Delegates voted for a \$10 fee increase for 2023 rather than the initially proposed \$3.00 fee increase. This means that BCRTA dues next September will be \$52 plus our local dues. Delegates were very aware of the impact of rising inflation on members but also the need to support our organization that does so much to advocate for and safeguard the rights and needs of retired teachers and seniors in general. This increase reflects rising costs due to inflation, and is an attempt to make up for many years of no increases. The group was divided but the vast majority were in favour of the larger increase and of the clause that for the following years the fee will be raised equal to the TPP COLA each

year.

Although it looks like a large increase, as it does not happen until 2023 it is well below current inflation and is still a year away.

It's also important for members to be aware of how our funding model is based on member's fees rather than on primarily the revenue gained by administering extended health options that are available to all retired teachers in BC not just teachers who are members of their respective RTA's as in other provinces.

With more than 17,000 members, it is amazing to learn that the BCRTA has only 3 full time employees managing all the work of this large, province wide organization. We are extremely lucky to have very dedicated and hardworking employees.

The association has numerous committees focussed on various issues of importance to retired teachers including: Advocacy, Communications, Excellence in Public Education, Heritage, Member Well-Being, Membership, Pensions and Benefits and Personnel. It's gratifying to know that our interests are being attended to by so many willing volunteers on each committee and on the Provincial Executive.

Our outgoing president spoke passionately about many issues but especially urged us all to write a letter to the BCRTA Advocacy committee supporting the need to advocate for improved health care for seniors, and for the need for more medical professionals in BC, particularly family doctors, nurses and specialists. (Wait times and long term care conditions remain unacceptable, as does the extreme shortage of family doctors and primary health care providers in general.) There is also a shortage of walk-in clinics. For example, Nanaimo has only one, as the others were shut down due to lack of funding.