

THE GOOD LIFE

The Newsletter of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Retired Teachers' Association

April 2012

President's Report

It has been an interesting and upsetting few months for all of us and our colleagues in the BCTF. The BCTF Executive has recently informed us that it is hoping to get the Minister of Education to reconsider Bill 12 and the lack of a certified non-practicing category. This is an issue that aside from affecting our members, it also affects people who are currently considering retirement. Many of our members have taken the time to personally write to the Minister and our MLA's to express their distress and dismay at how the Government is treating teachers, past and present. It may not change the situation, but at the very least the Government has been reminded that they are in place at the public's behest.

We have, aside from the foregoing, had a good year. We now have over five hundred members and we continue to be one of the most active branches. Our lunches have been well attended and the Heritage Committee hope to have a school and community outreach program in place by the beginning of the next school year. Your Executive have met regularly and have, after much thought and deliberation, decided that it is now necessary to ask the Membership to approve an increase in our yearly fee from five dollars to ten dollars. The vote on this Motion will be held during our AGM in June, as will the vote on our new slate of officers and committee

chairs. If you decide that you would like to run for a position on the Executive please contact the Nominating Chair, Linda Willis at lannewillis@hotmail.com or at 250-729-2795. Finally, with the help of Deryck Cowling, our Executive media man, we have found a creative and knowledgeable Grade 12 NDSS student to create a website for our branch. Once it is in place the website will allow people to find our contact information more easily. As well the members will be able to read the many updates from the BCRTA regarding various matters. We are excited about this prospect and think it will be a good addition to our communication system.

I hope you enjoy the longer and hopefully warmer days. Please don't hesitate to call or e-mail me if you have any questions or concerns.

Supporting Our Colleagues

One of the real "joys" of retirement is to not have to deal with the daily stresses of "office politics" and this is especially true for retired teachers given the current climate surrounding public education lately. Nevertheless many retired teachers remain deeply committed to supporting public education and their former colleagues who are still in the trenches. During a recent conversation with Kip Wood, Past President of the NDTA, he noted that Bill 22 (which is touted as providing an opportunity for

mediation and a “cooling off” period in current teacher negotiations) is neither, but in reality, is an imposed contract settlement. Our colleagues are on the front lines of a very difficult and challenging debate over the future of public education in BC.

Many of you have asked your executive, what can we do to support teachers? Kip points out that NDTA members really appreciate any support that they get from retired teachers and we, as your Executive, are working to keep the communication lines “open” between our two organizations. Some of us have already shared our experience gained over long years of advocating for teachers and public education with the NDTA, others have written letters of support, and some have even joined in on picket lines and at demonstrations.

One of the most effective ways to support teachers is to talk to family, friends and neighbours to counter public misconceptions about the role of Bill 22 and the realities of teaching in today's classrooms. Letter writing is also a very effective method of advocating and is easily done with the internet. They should also be copied to as many involved stakeholders as possible: local papers, your MLA, Minister of Education, opposition critic for education, Chair of local school board, NDTA, etc. Letters such as to the editor should be fairly brief and focused to be effective. Sometimes just the sheer volume of communication influences policy and decision making. The important thing is to share what you feel.

The Provincial RTA and our local branch will continue to follow the current situation closely and, from time

to time, pass on information to you. It is in our own self-interest to do so, as the health of our pension plans depends heavily on the contributions of working teachers and features of our plans such as annual increases in our pensions to cover inflationary costs are negotiable in current teacher contracts. Fewer teachers earning fewer dollars does not build a strong foundation for future pensions for them or us. So, take a little time over a cup of coffee with friends or family, to speak out for yourselves, for our working colleagues and for the future of public education in our province.

Carol Baird-Krul - President

MSP Premiums

The BCRTA has been campaigning on behalf of all seniors to eliminate MSP premiums. As you are aware a motion to this effect passed at the meeting of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) last fall. The UBCM presented its MSP resolution to the government and the government came back with the answer that to eliminate the MSP premium the government would have to find \$1.2B somewhere else and it was not going to do that. Minister Chong was the contact, not the Ministry of Health. (Just an established process.) The UBCM will keep the MSP premium reduction issue on its books, but does not see any success in the near future

Treasurer's Report

Nanaimo/Ladysmith Retired
Teachers' Association Finances

Amount in bank is
\$2,107.46

Outstanding amounts

Cheque for \$50 for Scholarship

50.00

Cheque for office supplies

33.53

RTA

200.00

2 pre-paid luncheons

40.00

Cheque for Sunshine

41.93

Cheque for Web page

450.00

815.46

1,292.00

Possible income:

1 no-show

20.00

2 times 50/50 draw

approx. 75.00

Total

95.00

1,197.00

Future expenses:

Newsletter supplies and stamps

To Hell with the Bell

Heritage postponed \$300.00

July Homestay

Chinada Consulting is looking for retired teachers interested in providing a homestay for a period of three weeks in July.

- students are high school age
- they come from Peoples Republic of China
- 2 students per family
- \$25/student/day
- students will be away camping for several days during this time
- Required:
 - one bed per student (both students can be in the same room)
 - ride to and from school
 - Three meals a day on non camping days

If you are interested or want further information please contact one of the following:

1. Janet Watt – 250-667-9585 or

algae2@shaw.ca

2. Linda Willis – 250-7592795 or

lannewillis@hotmail.com

June AGM Executive Nominations

The Nanaimo/Ladysmith Retired Teachers' Association is looking for nominations for the following positions for the AGM on June 5, 2012:

President

Past President

Vice-President

Second Vice-President

Secretary

Treasurer

Heritage Chair

Health and Housing

Media Coordinator

Membership

Newsletter Editor
Social
Sunshine and 50/50
Director-at-large

If you are willing to let your name stand,
please contact;

Linda Willis at lannewillis@yahoo.ca
(250) 729-2795 OR
Vi Brzovic at marfanbc2000@yahoo.ca
(250) 758-0951

Volunteers and the BCRTA

April 15 to 21 was National Volunteer Week, a time to celebrate the many Canadian volunteers who make life better for citizens in their communities and beyond.

Last year, in March and April 2011, the British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association (BCRTA) conducted a survey to investigate both the volunteer role of educators who had retired and the impact of their work on communities in the province. This study found that BC's retired teachers give of themselves to a remarkable degree all year round.

The comprehensive survey of retired teachers across BC reveals a deep commitment to volunteerism, which creates an economic benefit equivalent to \$110 million, if the retirees' time is calculated at a minimum wage of just \$10 per hour. The study found that retired teachers in BC devote an average of 31 hours per month to volunteer work: more than double the amount of time contributed by Canadians described as "top volunteers" in a survey done by Statistics Canada in 2007.

Based on the number of responses to the survey (1036), the results were declared statistically valid. Respondents, in addition to providing quantitative data, made 1282 written comments. The survey found that thousands of retired teachers are actively contributing to society by volunteering in communities all across the province where they taught and built connections, and where they still reside. Their volunteer work is rich in scope and diversity, and significant in terms of contribution.

In volunteering, retired teachers, even into their 80's and beyond, touch the lives of people in all age groups from children to the elderly.

The largest number of BCRTA volunteers work in community, provincial, and international organizations and events -- more than half (681) of the survey respondents thus indicating active participation in social and civic affairs.

One survey respondent described this participation: "Retired teachers are significant in the leadership and organization skills in our town in almost every area"; and another, in support of this finding, wrote, "In my experience, retired teachers are highly valued as volunteers by organizations because of the skills developed over a teaching career—planning, organizing, implementing plans, and working well with others—and are often actively recruited."

Retired educators were asked to indicate the number of hours volunteered per month during the previous year and also to indicate the amount of time volunteered in each focus area. The

graph below illustrates their responses. Respondents indicated that they gave the greatest amount of time per month (about 5,000 hours) to each of the categories of Caregiving and Community Organizations/Events and almost 4000 hours to volunteer activities that fit into the category of “Education”. The numbers here are significant, illustrating a huge contribution in terms of educating, and in the leadership, organization, and implementation of community activities.

The survey found also that the largest number of hours of volunteering per person per month, far greater than for any other category was in caregiving. Adding to the data shown in the graph, many respondents commented that they were also administering necessary caregiving in their homes; thus, many hours in addition to those cited on the survey, are devoted to caregiving. This contribution, in the form of caregiving assistance, constitutes a huge social and financial benefit to our health and childcare systems.

Retired educators contribute in diverse and significant ways to the well being and sustainability of the communities of our province. During their lives as educators, BC teachers were devoted to their charges—the school children in their communities; perhaps it is not surprising that their altruistic and compassionate spirit of involvement and caring carries on to become their passionate preoccupation in retirement.

In fact, this spirit of caring and giving pervaded the comments of the survey respondents. Wrote one retired educator, “Volunteering is wonderful, keeps us

young, keeps brain cells dancing, and makes us realize just how many skills have been attained throughout a teaching career. Volunteering not only fills the hours but provides an opportunity to serve others in a meaningful way, to make community stronger, to give back to society the benefit we get from living in a democratic country.”

The authors of this report conclude that retired teacher volunteers in every region make this province a better place. They hope that the results of this study will enable informed discussion about retiree volunteering in British Columbia and encourage the provincial and federal governments to consider what they might do to support the selfless work of volunteers.

The full results and implications of this revealing study can be found on the website: bcрта.ca

From: JoAnn Lauber, BC Retired Teachers' Association

Luncheons

We've been advised by our caterers, The Good Cooking Guys, that we'll be able to remain at the Cavallotti Lodge on East Wellington Rd, at least until the end of 2012. Costs for lunches will remain at the current price of \$20.00 also. It appears, from the feedback we get, that members feel a high level of satisfaction with the food, service, location and the price being charged. There's always plenty of delicious, nutritious food very attractively presented. The service is impeccable and every effort is being made to make the venue attractive.

Members are reminded once again, that if they reserve a spot for lunch and then have to cancel on the weekend, Monday before the lunch or don't show up for their reservation,

it is appreciated if a cheque for \$20.00 is forwarded to the RTA c/o the NDTA office at 3137 Barons Rd. Nanaimo, B.C. V9T 5W5.

Cancellations before the weekend can be phoned to the current executive members Pat Hogue at 250-753-5971 or Carol Baird-Krul at 250-247-0047.

If you know of a retired teacher or administrator who would like to attend one of our lunches and possibly join our membership, invite them to make a reservation and come along. Please make them aware of the above cancellation guidelines if they'd like to attend.

Pat Hogue - Social Chair

Driver's Tests By Computer

In the past year, the Province of BC introduced the DriveABLE program which tests drivers with a computer touch screen and has resulted in people having their drivers' licence cancelled. We believe recent efforts to improve the DriveABLE program's image and accessibility are simply wrongheaded. The program is not "misunderstood" – it is simply wrong: poorly conceived, unsupported by current science, a violation of our charter rights and tainted by conflict of interest. Improved access will only bring more harm.

BC Motor Vehicles Fitness to Drive

A member's bitter experience led us to look into the DriveABLE program. His wife's driving license was revoked after failing a computer-based test. We did some digging and "put out the word". Our members and others are really angry. Rather than a scientific breakthrough in public safety, we have a program based on out of date research. We have privatized public policy developed by consultants, delegated to clerks and computers and outsourced to independent contractors.

Recent Developments

On March 19, Shirley Bond, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, announced changes to the DriveABLE program:

"... a decision regarding a person's ability to continue driving will not be made solely from an in-office computer assessment. People who fail the computer assessment will be offered a DriveABLE road assessment. The results of the in-office assessment combined with the on-road evaluation and medical information will ensure license decisions are made in the fairest manner possible. The Province will pay for the cost of both assessments."

Our efforts, and those of others advocating for seniors have had some impact. Drivers' licences will no longer be suspended "on the spot" as a result of a screening test.

Are we there, yet? No.

We believe that efforts to improve the program's PR and accessibility are simply wrongheaded. The program is not

"misunderstood" – it is wrong. It should be cancelled. Improving access will only result in more people's lives being damaged.

Background

Two programs that affect seniors' driving are under the Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles (OSMV): the 80+ medical assessment and DriveABLE.

1. After the age of 80, accident free or not, drivers are required to get a doctor's assessment of their medical fitness to drive. While most receive a positive report, others may be referred for further assessment and, possibly, a DriveABLE road test.
2. Under the DriveABLE program, a report from the police, a health care provider or a "concerned citizen" may result in having to take a DriveABLE test. The purpose of the test is to assess cognitive fitness.

The DriveABLE program is based on an out-of-date view of the world. Twenty years ago, there was what amounts to a moral panic about aging and driving: an apocalyptic vision of a "grey wave" of demented "wrinklies" careening down the roads. It was not hard to convince funding agencies and academic journals of the risks inherent in the rising tide of demented drivers. Clever entrepreneurs have used fear, uncertainty and doubt to promote their agenda and their products.

The real world, thank goodness, has not cooperated. Senior's accident and death rates have gone down, not up. Cooler heads have prevailed in the academic world. Where mass screening of drivers for cognitive fitness was sliced bread in

the '90's, a respected voice in health care now says, that "the available literature fails to demonstrate the benefit of driver assessment for either preserving transport mobility or reducing motor vehicle accidents." It was added that the cognitive test "that most strongly predicted future crashes would ...prevent six crashes per 1000 people over 65 screened, but at the price of stopping the driving of 121 people who would not have had a crash."

Attitudes about senior drivers are changing but we still have work to do. Too many conversations about aging drivers include words like these: "No one wants unsafe drivers on the road" thus justifying almost any level of heavy-handed intervention into seniors' lives.

This is unhelpful. We will always need to strike a balance between mobility and safety. The only way to have no unsafe drivers on the road is to have no drivers or close the roads. Drawing neat little lines in the sand isn't possible.

Continuing Concerns

The harm caused by the DriveABLE program far outweighs the benefits. The program casts too wide a net, damaging people's lives. We have seen little acknowledgement of the impact of driving cessation. We need a balanced, thoughtful review of this program with community input. The review must exclude those who have an institutional bias or business interest in the outcome

The driving record should be the "gold standard" not the DriveABLE road test.

The over 80 medical exam should be discontinued. In reviewing European experience, the UK Transport Research Laboratory stated: "There is no evidence that any license renewal procedure or requirement for a medical examination has an effect on the overall road safety of drivers aged 65+."

Since the fatal crash rate for 70-74 year olds, 75-79 year olds and 80+ year olds is now less than that of 35-54 year olds there is no justification for discriminating against seniors.

Retraining and remediation are absent from the OSMV's program. The belief seems to be that cognitive impairment is incurable, decline inevitable and remediation impossible. This doesn't square with modern science. One cognitive factor which modern research has found to be strongly predictive of crashes is the Useful Field of View - UFOV. Training is readily available which remedies UFOV problems and would undoubtedly reduce risks and promote independence. There are likely other remedial approaches. OSMV relies solely on driving cessation.

Our doctors have been misled into believing that they are liable for damages under case law if they don't report on those they believe unfit to drive. A professional development document for BC doctors cites a 1973 precedent that was overruled in 2003. A minor quibble, you say? Ask your doctor how she feels about being misled and bullied into reporting. We believe this program damages the doctor-patient relationship: patients becoming guarded about disclosing information to doctors; doctors reluctant to bring up the subject of driving. Medicine doesn't work on a

"don't ask, don't tell" basis. We support the Neurologists position: physicians should be free to report or not report based on their assessment of the needs of the individual, the family and the community.

If seniors must be screened and assessed, then individual and community needs must be taken into consideration. We believe that physicians - people we trust - should be the major players in the complicated decisions about driving restriction, retraining, remediation or cessation. We need the "meaningful and trusted consultation" that only our doctors can provide, not a heavy-handed approach with all of the decisions being made by clerks, computers and contractors.

If you or anyone you know has lost a drivers' license through taking a DriveABLE test, you should write to: Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles
Attn: Driver Fitness Unit
PO Box 9254 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9J2
and request a road test.

For the 2011/12 year the BCRTA Social Concerns Committee's objectives are:

1. To communicate with members re: ongoing and emerging issues
2. To keep our members current re: these issues
3. To provide information and relevancy re: these issues for members

BCRTA SOCIAL CONCERNS
COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Cameron
Cascon, Reg
Miller, Sylvia MacLeay, Tom Brunker,
and Diane Gorton, Chair
DW-40! Who Knew?

Does anybody know what the main ingredient of WD-40 is?

I had a neighbor who bought a new pickup. I got up very early one Sunday morning and saw that someone had spray painted red all around the sides of this beige truck (for some unknown reason). I went over, woke him up, and told him the bad news. He was very upset and was trying to figure out what to do . . . probably nothing until Monday morning, since nothing was open. Another neighbor came out and told him to get his WD-40 and clean it off. It removed the unwanted paint beautifully and did not harm his paint job that was on the truck. I'm impressed!

“Water Displacement #40”

The product began from a search for a rust preventative solvent and degreaser to protect missile parts. WD-40 was created in 1953 by three technicians at the San Diego Rocket Chemical Company. Its name comes from the project that was to find a 'water displacement' compound. They were successful with the fortieth formulation, thus WD-40. The Convair Company bought it in bulk to protect their Atlas Missile parts.

Ken East (one of the original founders) says there is nothing in WD-40 that would hurt you . . . When you read the 'shower door' part, try it. It's the first thing that has ever cleaned that spotty shower door. If yours is plastic, it works just as well as glass. It's a miracle! Then try it on your stove top . . . Viola! It's now shinier than it's ever been.

WD-40 uses:

1. Protects silver from tarnishing
2. Removes road tar and grime from cars
3. Cleans and lubricates guitar strings
4. Gives floors that 'just-waxed' sheen without making them slippery
5. Keeps flies off cows
6. Restores and cleans chalkboards
7. Removes lipstick stains
8. Loosens stubborn zippers
9. Untangles jewelry chains
10. Removes stains from stainless steel sinks
11. Removes dirt and grime from the barbecue grill
12. Keeps ceramic/terra cotta garden pots from oxidizing
13. Removes tomato stains from clothing
14. Keeps glass shower doors free of water spots
15. Camouflages scratches in ceramic and marble floors
16. Keeps scissors working smoothly
17. Lubricates noisy door hinges on vehicles and doors in homes
18. It removes black scuff marks from the kitchen floor! Use WD-40 on those nasty tar and scuff marks on flooring. It doesn't seem to harm the finish and you won't have to scrub nearly as hard to get them off. Just remember to open some windows if you have a lot of marks.
19. Bug guts will eat away the finish on your car if not removed quickly! Use WD-40!
20. Gives a children's playground gym slide a shine for a super fast slide
21. Lubricates gear shift and mower deck lever for ease of handling on riding mowers
22. Rids kids rocking chairs and swings of squeaky noises
23. Lubricates tracks in sticking home windows and makes them easier to open
24. Spraying an umbrella stem makes it easier to open and close

25. Restores and cleans padded leather dashboards in vehicles, as well as vinyl bumpers
26. Restores and cleans roof racks on vehicles
27. Lubricates and stops squeaks in electric fans
28. Lubricates wheel sprockets on tricycles, wagons, and bicycles for easy handling
29. Lubricates fan belts on washers and dryers and keeps them running smoothly
30. Keeps rust from forming on saws and saw blades, and other tools
31. Removes splattered grease on stove
32. Keeps bathroom mirror from fogging
33. Lubricates prosthetic limbs
34. Keeps pigeons off the balcony (they hate the smell)
35. Removes all traces of duct tape
36. Folks even spray it on their arms, hands, and knees to relieve arthritis pain
37. Florida 's favorite use is: 'cleans and removes love bugs from grills and bumpers
38. WD-40 protects the Statue of Liberty from the elements
39. WD-40 attracts fish. Spray a little on live bait or lures and you will be catching the big one in no time. Also, it's a lot cheaper than the chemical attractants that are made for just that purpose. Keep in mind though, using some chemical laced baits or lures for fishing are not allowed in some provinces.
40. Use it for fire ant bites. It takes the sting away immediately and stops the itch.
41. WD-40 is great for removing crayon from walls. Spray on the mark and wipe with a clean rag.
42. Also, if you've discovered that your teenage daughter has washed and dried a tube of lipstick with a load of laundry,

saturate the lipstick spots with WD-40 and rewash. Presto! The lipstick is gone!
 43. If you sprayed WD-40 on the distributor cap, it would displace the moisture and allow the car to start

P. S. The basic ingredient of WD-40 is FISH OIL.

History

“Dapper Ed” Sandland with his grade 5-6 class taken at Chase River Elem. in 1958.

