

# THE GOOD LIFE

The Newsletter of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Retired Teachers' Association

June 2014

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## 2014-2015 Nanaimo-Ladysmith Retired Teachers Executive

### **President**

Carol Baird-Krul

### **Vice-President**

Les Ellis

### **Past President and Treasurer**

Linda Willis 2

### **Secretary**

Colleen Dempsey

### **Director-at-Large**

Jim Young

### **Catering**

Tricia Barnes

### **Health & Housing**

Leah Bradford

### **Media**

Deryck Cowling

### **Membership/Member Contact**

Nelson Allen

### **Newsletter & Email**

Les Ellis

### **Sunshine Program**

Cheryle Sosnowski

## **President's Message**

First of all thank you for giving me the privilege of continuing as your President for another year. I will do my best, with the help of our newsletter Editor and List Serve manager Les Ellis, to make sure that you are kept informed of important, interesting and pertinent news about the Association, our pensions and other members.

At our recent AGM changes to our Executive took place. Pat Hogue and Lynn Paterson who made the decision to leave at the end of their current terms deserve our thanks for the time and effort they have given to our Branch over their long years of service. Les Ellis has been elected to the position of Vice President and we welcome Nelson Allen as our new Membership Chair. Les will continue to compile our newsletter and manage the

List Serve. At our AGM we also voted to remove the position of 2nd Vice President which had been empty since Marianne Clarkson had to resign several months ago. Late last year we were informed that the School District Senior Administration that we would have to find a new location to house the Skipsey Educational Heritage Collection. Re-organization and a move towards greater centralization meant that they would require the Collection's current room in NDSS. After some intense discussions and lobbying we have been given an option on a portable that we hope will prove to be a good home for our unique collection of historic educational materials. Many, many thanks must be given to the outgoing Heritage Chair, Vicki Harrison, who along with Pat Parkin organized the packing up of the texts and other precious materials in readiness for the move. Deryck Cowling, Leah Bradford, Marv Worden, Frank Garnish, Melba Harding, Deidre Steenman, Haazel Steenman and Pat Foley all deserve a pat on the back for the time they gave to pack up the Collection. We would not have this special collection without the foresight and hard work of Les and Mary Skipsey, Leigh Wharton, Bernice Ward and Marjorie Stupich; however, we are now in dire need of someone to take on the position of Heritage Chair and to set a new direction for this important group. I hope to see you at the To Hell with the Bell event when we welcome and celebrate with our newly retired colleagues; as well as, throughout the coming year at our lunches. Have wonderful summer whether near or far.

Carol Baird-Krul – President

### **Don't Be Left Out**

We are concerned that we have lost contact with some NLRTA members whose email/mail has been returned to us. Please contact Colleen Dempsey, Secretary, at [askier@telus.net](mailto:askier@telus.net) or 250-390-4222, if you know of a member who is not receiving list serve messages or a newsletter by mail.

### **Health and Housing**

If you are a caregiver and need some help or advice we have a free book from the Health Council of Canada called Seniors in Need, Caregivers in Distress. Please call or email Leah Bradford to get your copy.(see Executive list above)

There is a website called BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support. Check it out.

When you are in need of some non-emergency medical help, call 811 to access Health Link BC (the old BC nurse line). They will be available 24 hours a day. If they can't answer your health question, they will give you the phone number of who to call to get your answers.

Isobel Mackenzie is BC's first Seniors' Advocate. The Council of Senior Citizens Organization (COSCO) will work with her to address such topics as: home care; affordable, safe seniors' housing; affordable medications; transportation; and elder abuse.

Leah Bradford, Chair

**Q:** Is it common for 60-plus year olds to have problems with short term memory storage?

**A:** Storing memory is not a problem, Retrieving it is the problem.

### **Luncheons**

Master's Touch Catering with Lisa at the helm has certainly done us proud this year. We have enjoyed 4 themed lunches at Cavalotti Lodge: October Fest, Christmas cheer with carols, a New Orleans menu accompanied by the Wellington School Jazz band and finishing with a memorable spring picnic. Lisa prepares delicious, tasty food befitting the occasion for the very reasonable price of \$20.00. Please let us know if you have any other themes we might explore.

Next year's luncheon dates:

To Hell With the Bell – Tuesday, September 2

Tuesday, October 7

Tuesday, December 2

Tuesday, February 3

Tuesday, April 7

Tuesday, June 2 – also AGM

Tricia Barnes, Catering Chair

### **The Role of the Sunshine Person for the N-LRTA**

I am your Sunshine person on the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Retired Teachers executive. This doesn't mean that the only task I have is to sell you tickets for the fifty-fifty draw, or run the "Take a book, Bring a book" exchange. I am also responsible for sending get well regards, thinking of you when you are going through personal troubles, or when a teacher passes away, we send a note of condolence to the family. My job is not onerous, but I need a little help from my fellow retired teachers like you. Please let me know if you know of anyone who needs some cheering up, or has deceased. Many times we don't know if a colleague has passed unless the family notifies us. Sometimes they are in a great deal of grief, and they need someone else to notify our organization. Please lend a hand, and email me or give me a call to keep us up to date about our members. My email is [cherylesosnowski@gmail.com](mailto:cherylesosnowski@gmail.com) or phone 250-390-5083.

Many thanks in advance.

Cheryle Sosnowski

### **From the Provincial RTA**

The BCRTA Membership Committee would like to encourage members to use their membership cards to enquire about retail discounts for current and retired educators. Several members are currently finding benefits from presentation of their BCRTA membership card at various kinds of businesses. A simple "do you offer discounts to current or retired teachers?" is often all it takes.

If you have misplaced your BCRTA membership card, a new one can be requested from Kristi at the BCRTA office. ([kristi@bcrt.com](mailto:kristi@bcrt.com))

### **Motions Passed at the BCRTA**

1. That the BCRTA continue to work with COSCO, and other seniors' organizations and individuals in using all democratic means to ensure that the federal and provincial governments negotiate a new, comprehensive, national health accord, that: protects, transforms and strengthens our national health care system; provides human and financial resources, including a 6% escalator; includes a national seniors' health care plan; and establishes and maintains a national pharmaceutical strategy that will improve health outcomes for all Canadians.

2. That the BCRTA adopt the following, as BCRTA policy, concerning "Health and Support for Seniors":

Home Support for Seniors: That the Federal Government should work with provincial and territorial health ministers to increase the span of home care for seniors, so that they may remain in their homes, as long as possible, in order to improve seniors' quality of life, and to contribute towards a reduction in health care costs through lessening dependency on institutional care.

National Health Accord: That the Federal Government should meet with the provinces/territories, to re-negotiate and improve upon the 2004 National Health Accord.

Transportation: That the Federal Government should work with provincial and territorial government bodies to ensure that transportation is readily accessible to Canadian seniors who have mobility issues.

National Formulary: That the Federal Government should establish a national pharmaceutical formulary to help keep the cost of medications manageable for seniors.

Guaranteed Income Supplement Review: That the Federal Government should review the Guaranteed Income Supplement, with the aim of simplifying the requirements for and administration of the application process.

Computer Literacy: That the Federal Government should institute a plan designed to encourage and help seniors to become computer literate.

End-of-Life Care: That the Federal Government should establish a cross-Canada Palliative and End-of-life care model of palliative care that: (a) takes into account the geographic, regional, and cultural diversity of urban and rural Canada; (b) respects the cultural, spiritual and familial needs of Canada's First Nation people; and (c) has the goals of: (i) ensuring all Canadians have access to high quality home-based and hospice palliative end-of-life care, (ii) providing more support for caregivers, (iii) improving the quality and consistency of home and hospice palliative end-of-life care in BC and the rest of Canada, (iv) encouraging Canadians to discuss and plan for end-of-life care.

Old Age Security: That the age eligibility should be changed back to 65 years from the current 67 years of age.

Canada Pension Plan: That CPP contribution requirements should be adjusted upwards, to ensure adequate income, for working Canadians, upon retirement.

Pensions Plans as Secured Creditors: That legislation that protects pension plans as secured creditors should be developed and should be passed in a timely manner.

Alzheimer Disease and Dementia: That the Federal Government should have a policy that recognizes Alzheimer Disease and/or Dementia as a major public health challenge and develop a national action programme that provides support to Alzheimer Disease and/or dementia patients and their caregivers.

3. That the BCRTA adopt, as policy, and that the BCRTA write a letter to Premier Christy Clark, with copies to the Minister of Children and Families, the Opposition Leader and Children and Development Critic, seeking the development and enactment of legislation, improving protection for children in the workplace, in this legislative session, and that such improvements include: establishment of a minimum work-start age of 15, in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; imposition of restrictions on the occupations, tasks, and times of day that children can work.

## **Pensions**

There has been some concern that our teachers' pensions may be less sustainable due to deteriorating economic conditions and investment returns. Dale Lauber, a member of the BCRTA Pensions and Benefits Committee, responds.

The concern about pension investments following the financial crises of 2008 is justified. About 80% of our pensions are paid from investment income. The Teachers' Pension Plan is aware that the reliance on US and Canadian equity returns has some risks, and has gradually reduced the equity exposure from 65% down to approximately 50%. As well, the return on fixed income (bonds, mortgages) has been low and they have detracted from the objective of 6.5% return. This has led to a logical reduction in fixed income asset class from about 30% to about 20%.

The assets that have been added to replace these reductions are real estate and other direct ownership of real assets (eg. Canada Line, utilities, water distribution systems, pipelines, agricultural land and even timberland). As well there has been investment in some equities in emerging economies.

Should we panic? I do not think so as the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees through the investment agent, BC Investment Management Corporation, is extremely vigilant and committed to doing the best for the pension plan.

## **From the Vancouver Retired Teachers' Newsletter**

Jim Evans answers questions related to Finances at the VRTA luncheon, Feb.13, 2014, at the Langara Golf Course

Q. What is the difference between annuities, pensions, and mortgages?

None, they are the same in that they use an identical mathematical formula. Annuities are periodic payments of capital and interest over time. Only the interest is taxable. Pensions and Registered Retirement Savings Plans are tax deductible interest free loans, taxed when paid out. A mortgage is a conditional assignment of land and building as security for a loan. Until the "mid 1940s" banks couldn't do residential mortgages, which were all done by Life Insurance companies, which used the money it took in insurance premiums, and deferred annuity lump sums.

Q. How can I leave property and money to my kids and avoid paying taxes?

Provincially, Bill Bennett got rid of Succession Duties in 1976. In 1972, the Federal Gov't got rid of Estate Tax and brought in a Capital Gains Tax, payable upon your death, as the Gov't says that when you die you have sold everything you own. The one exception is your residence, on a maximum of one acre of land, which you can pass to anybody tax free. In the case of a second marriage, with his and her children, it is sometimes better to leave the house to your child, which would be tax free, and leave the pension to your spouse, who would qualify for the spousal rollover.

Q. How can I avoid probate fees?

Probate fees range from 0% to 1.4%, so it is better to focus on assets that could be considered capital gains. Capital assets would include "possessions having increasing value" such as; real estate, stocks and bonds. Art, jewelry, and certain other objects are called rights and things. A separate return can be filed on death for those assets. Assets that have not appreciated in value could be given to your kids, as well as your personal residence, and life insurance policies. For property that passes in kind, such as life insurance policies naming a beneficiary, there is no probate fee, but if the Estate is listed as the beneficiary, it is part of the Estate and is subject to Probate, and can be attacked by creditors.

Q. Joint tenancy.

The minute that property passes to a nonresident, it is not considered the primary residence, so the increase in value is subject to capital gains taxation purposes. Joint bank accounts will usually be frozen, until the bank receives a copy of the Will and the named Executor.

Q. What tax returns are needed?

Upon death, up to three tax returns can be filed. Only one is required. Life insurance policies will need a death certificate, and a form completed by the beneficiary, including the cause of death and names of doctors and hospitals where treatment was given.

Q. Which is better, Annuity or RRIF?

RRIFs are better in the short run. In the 70's the higher interest rates made them much better than today. Annuities are better in the long run. They offer life and fixed term periods, as well as joint annuities, which is the standard option for most pension plans.

RRSPs started in 1957, CPP in 1965, RRIFs in 1973/74. By the end of the year in which you turn 71, RRSPs must be converted into either an annuity or a RRIF. The advantage of setting up a joint annuity with your spouse is that it will maximize your incomes and guarantee an income as long as either lives.

Q. Advantages of a Trust vs. a Life Insurance Policy for passing on taxable property like the family cabin.

One option expressed was that it is better to buy a life insurance policy, as the premiums will probably cost less than keeping trusts up to date, as there will be no paper work once the life insurance policy is set up. When selling property, if there has been "capital cost allowance" taken, there will be recapture as well as and capital gains. Seek advice.

Q. Term Policies.

Have a fixed term (such as 10 years), and are guaranteed renewable up to age 75 or 80. Up to age 65 or 70, they are convertible to whole life, universal life, without a medical, but at a fixed premium, often double or triple the rates for a ten year term.

Jim Evans can be contacted at: rjeclu@telus.net , or, 604 682- 8393  
Submitted by Denis W. Ottewell

### **Medication Awareness for Seniors**

The term “medication” would include; prescribed and non-prescribed drugs, generic drugs, and placebos.

Prescribed drugs refer to Brand Name and Generic drugs.

Brand Name drugs are usually more expensive due to costs in research, development and advertising. They are covered by patents which usually last 20 to 25 years.

Generic drugs are available after patents have finished, so are cheaper. They usually have the same ingredients and quality.

Non-prescription drugs would include; pain relievers, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, dietary supplements, herbal products.

Managing one’s medication is vital. Make an up-to-date list and have copies available for emergencies or travel. Medicines should be kept in their original containers and stored in a cool, dry place. Small print-on labels may require using a magnifier, or getting a print-out. Weekly pill boxes or blister packs help in maintaining a daily schedule. Don’t “double-up” if you miss the regular time for your “med”. Don’t stop taking your “meds” before the prescribed period, or before consulting your doctor.

Unused or expired medications should be returned to a pharmacy for disposal.

It is important to share with your doctor any information that would assist in determining what treatment should be prescribed; a record of your symptoms, allergic reactions, live style of eating, exercise, previous health issues, other medication, alcohol, tobacco, and specific concerns. The doctor should answer the patient’s questions, collect and maintain detailed information provided by the patient, by specialists, and other health professionals. Treatment options, including benefits and risks should be made clear.

It is important that the patient receives the correct medication at the correct dosage from the pharmacist. The patient should be provided with clear and complete instructions both written and verbally. Sometimes a “translator” (family or friend) will be needed. Pharmacists, by keeping track of your “meds,” will be aware of interactions with other “meds”. Sometimes a generic drug shouldn’t be used to replace a brand name drug.

Medication misuses include, not understanding and following the prescribed dosages and times; unable to afford the drugs; using the wrong or expired drugs.

Facts: About 4,000 Canadians die annually due to “med-misuse”.

For people over 65 in hospitals, 50% are due to “med-problems”.

Remember that the proper use of drugs has made major improvements in our health.

Submitted by Denis W. Ottewell

## **In Conclusion**

A young lady confidently walked around the room with a raised glass of water, while explaining stress management to an audience. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, 'half empty or half full?'... She fooled them all. "How heavy is this glass of water?" she inquired with a smile.

Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz.

She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

She continued, "And that's the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on."

"As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden - holding stress longer and better each time practiced. So, as early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Don't carry them through the evening and into the night... Pick them up tomorrow."

- 1 \* Accept the fact that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue!
- 2 \* Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- 3 \* Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- 4 \* Drive carefully... It's not only cars that can be recalled by their Maker.
- 5 \* If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- 6 \* If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- 7 \* It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
- 8 \* Never buy a car you can't push.
- 9 \* Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on
- 10 \* Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- 11 \* Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- 12 \* The second mouse gets the cheese.
- 13 \* When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- 14 \* Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- 15 \* Some mistakes are too much fun to make only once.
- 16 \* We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names and all are different colours, but they all have to live in the same box.
- 17 \* A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
- 18 \* Have an awesome day and know that someone has thought about you today.
- 19 \* Save the earth..... It's the only planet with chocolate!