

THE GOOD LIFE

The Newsletter of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Retired Teachers' Association

April 2013

President's Message

The N-LRTA has had an interesting year to date. Our numbers have increased and we have had an active and committed Executive. The Branch's Annual General Meeting was held last June and the existing Executive remained in their positions. This year, however, various members of the Executive have indicated a desire to change position, or, to move on to other activities and commitments.

We have continued to support the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation by working on special projects (Stock the Lockers, etc.) and events (Mini-O) and presenting our yearly awards to District students. Last June we presented three awards of \$500 each, two to students in Nanaimo and, one to a Ladysmith student. This year however, we have chosen to revise our Awards criteria and open them to all District students rather than separating them. Although we hope to increase our awards either in number or amount, this year we will be presenting two: one for a student who will be studying at a university and one for a student who is pursuing post-secondary studies in a trade. We also decided to form a committee to choose the students to whom our awards would be going rather than leaving the decision to the Foundation's Awards Committee.

As part of the N-LRTA's commitment to community outreach, two of our Executive attended the local Superannuation presentations (morning and afternoon) in February to hand out information brochures and answer questions. We have done this in the past and as before it was worthwhile for both the participants and our representatives. Last June two members also attended the local teachers' retirement dinner at the Coast Bastion as guests of the local (NDTA) association. This is when we take the opportunity to present the new retirees with what we refer to as 'pink slip' packages that contain information about the BCRTA and various insurance options. As in previous years the idea and information was well received by the recipients.

Our Branch's bi-monthly lunches are continuing despite encountering some difficulties. As you know our long time caterers quit and the replacement choices have met with mixed reviews. For a variety of reasons and to our collective dismay there has been a significant drop in the attendance. We have had this problem before and as then, we hope to rectify it and return to our usual number of attendees by 'thinking outside the box'. To do this we need your input, so please think let someone on the Executive know of any ideas you may have, so that they can be discussed at the May meeting. As well, the Executive has voted to divide the responsibilities of the Social Committee and create two separate positions - one for catering and one for programming. It was also decided that it would provide more effective communication coverage if the Membership Chair's responsibilities included the luncheon reminder phone tree and e-mails.

This year the Heritage Committee received funds from the BCRTA Heritage Committee and these were used to continue to work towards the Committee's goal of developing an

outreach program. Achieving this goal was helped significantly by a project devised through the hard work and foresight of Deryck Cowling and Committee Chair, Vicki Harrison.

The N-LRTA also applied for and received funds from the BCRTA to bring issues of importance to the attention of our members and the public during the upcoming election. The consensus of the Executive was that poverty was an issue that, as former educators and seniors, we could universally support.

Recently the Executive decided to approach a travel local company with an idea that will hopefully benefit our association's coffers and our members' lives. While still in the early stages of development we have had a productive and positive meeting with the owner and would appreciate any ideas for 'exotic' or 'different' trips that you think might have interest among the membership.

Aside from these various activities and concerns our members deserve a 'pat on the back' for the time they give as volunteers for a number of interesting and diverse groups that help both our local community and needy ones overseas.

I have been honoured to be the President of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith RTA and have appreciated your support throughout the past year. Thank you.

I hope you all have a safe, enjoyable summer and I look forward to seeing you in the fall!

Carol Baird-Krul, President

AGM Elections

Our June luncheon is also time for the N-LRTA's AGM and all executive positions for next year are up for election. The N-LRTA Nominations Committee is open for candidates for all positions. Positions available include: President, 1st and 2nd Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership, Social Chair, Sunshine Fund, Heritage Chair, News Distribution, Media Co-Ordinator, Health and Housing, and 2 Directors-at-Large. If you wish to stand for a position on the executive please contact Linda Willis (250) 729-2795 lannewillis@hotmail.ca or Lynn Patterson (250)753-8958 lpaterson@shaw.ca . Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the AGM on June 4, 2013. Hope to see you there.

HealthLink BC

HealthLink BC is the gateway to access non-emergency health information and services in BC. It helps you learn about health topics, check your symptoms, and find health services and resources that you need for healthy living. You can call 8-1-1 to speak with a nurse, pharmacist or dietician, or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca for easy access to help. You will receive medically-approved information on more than 5,000 health topics and over 5,800 health services along with reliable information on prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Any time of the day or night, every day of the year, British Columbians have trusted health information at their fingertips, just a phone call away or a click away.

Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC homepage is <http://coscobc.ca>

Leah Bradford, Health and Housing Chair

What Do You Want?

At the May Executive Meeting we will be planning for next year: September 2013 to June 2014. With the rising cost of having a catered lunch and the number of members attending the lunches, it's time to examine, once again, how we are doing things. Currently we have a breakfast on the first day of school and five lunches throughout the year. This past year we have rented the Cavallotti Lodge, hired a caterer and brought in several people for entertaining or educational programs.

Perhaps it's time to do something very different. What type of event would you be willing to attend:

a breakfast buffet every two months?

coffee and donuts and a longer program?

three lunches only?

a Christmas lunch only?

would you like longer programs?

more serious programming?

light, musical entertainment?

more physically-active programs?

Would you be willing to be part of a committee to help plan the programs? the lunches?

What are your talents? How can you, as a member, contribute your talents to add to the successful organization of our branch?

Email your thoughts, (to be kept confidential) to Pat Hogue, Social Chair, or to any executive member or mail a response to the N-L RTA c/o the NDTA Office.

Patricia Hogue, Social Chair

Heritage Committee

The Heritage Committee has continued its work of collecting and cataloging materials donated to our collection. In September, the executive of the RTA met with Justin Green of the NDTA, and he expressed an interest for us to help celebrate education in our District. Deryck Cowling suggested that he would approach the Nanaimo Museum and Archives, with the idea of creating a museum display to promote the appreciation of Education, past and present, in the Central Island.

With the help of the Heritage Committee, the staff of the Museum and Archives, Deryck gathered research on the history of the District, and selected many wonderful photos from our collections. These were used to create posters, describing an overview of the Skipsey collection, early schools, early classrooms, and memorable teachers. The posters, as well as memorabilia, and a power point presentation of the photos were all part of a retrospective exhibit that opened on March 12, with many attending.

The exciting legacy is that the Museum has given our committee all of this back to our collection. It represents the beginning of developing new portable displays or classroom visits. With this renewed focus, we are looking for people who would like to help.

Vicki Harrison, Heritage Chair

Pictures from the Educational Heritage display at the Nanaimo Museum



Volunteering at the Nanaimo Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Store

Several years ago I joined the Nanaimo Hospital Auxiliary. My first job was weighing and measuring new babies at the Health Unit. When the Thrift Store opened, I signed up as a cashier even before it opened. It is a perfect job for a person used to dealing with the public. It has turned out to be so much fun and as a bonus, many new friendships and acquaintances.

The Thrift Store has no paid employees. This includes the manager and the accountants. All monies go to the hospital. Last year the store alone gave \$250,000.00 to the hospital. The auxiliary also has the Gift Store in the main lobby and sewers, knitters, quilters and bakers who help raise money. Volunteers also do many other things in the hospital including the patient inquiry desk.

But, I would like you to consider you paying your eight dollar a year fee and joining me at the Thrift Store. There are many, many men and women who give a little or a lot to the store. We have punched through to the former fish store and need about 20 more volunteers. There are jobs for everyone from sorting clothes, pricing, stocking the floor, cleaning, dusting and my favourite, cashiering. Have you ever wanted to be a Col. Peacock? You only need to give a minimum of 3 hours a week.

To join please contact Lynne Tourand at Volunteer Resources, NRGH (250-755-7637). Hope to see you there!

Linda Willis

BC Services Card

The new BC Services Card is part of government's plan to modernize BC's health care system. Each BC resident enrolled with the Medical Services Plan (MSP) is eligible for a BC Services Card with a unique lifetime identifier for health care called a personal health number. This number remains the same, regardless of any changes to personal status. It replaces your CareCard, can be combined with your driver's licence, and also acts as photo ID. It is supposed to be more convenient, more secure and will enable access to other government services in the future. Use your BC Services Card the same way you use your CareCard to access health services today. There's no additional fee, it's one less card to carry and getting yours is easy.

Most adult Medical Services Plan beneficiaries will have to renew enrolment by 2018 and apply for a BC Services Card at a driver licensing office (DLO).

You can renew enrolment in MSP and apply for a BC Services Card at the same time as you renew your driver's licence or BCID. If you don't drive or have a BCID, you will still need to enroll and apply for a BC Services Card at any DLO before 2018. Adults 75 and older are not required to renew enrolment in MSP, but may apply for a BC Services Card when they renew their BCID or driver's licence.

The magnetic stripe on the back contains only the information printed on the front of the card and your personal health number. This stripe on the back allows the BC Services Card or CareCard to be read electronically.

Vote Compass is coming for the B.C. Election

CBC News is partnering with Vote Compass for the B.C. provincial election this spring and they want to know which issues matter to you. Vote Compass is an interactive electoral literacy application developed by political scientists and run during election campaigns. It offers an accessible framework for learning about party platforms, stimulates discussion on a wide variety of election issues, and encourages democratic participation within the electorate. (Vote Compass)

What is Vote Compass?

Vote Compass is an interactive online tool run during election campaigns that allows voters to compare their own views on a number of key issues with the platforms of political parties. Vote Compass is an online educational tool that promotes electoral literacy and democratic engagement. It allows users to explore the positions of political parties or candidates for office during a given election. Vote Compass is designed to provide users with a personalized, immediate, and easy-to-understand assessment outlining how their individual opinions on a sampling of policy issues situate them within a two-dimensional ideological space and vis-à-vis the political parties running for office.

How does it work?

Vote Compass asks you a series of questions developed by political scientists based on key issues in a given election campaign. It then compares your answers with the official party platforms to show how your views position you in relation to each of the parties. This analysis is powered by an open database which contains a public record of each party's stand on the issues included in Vote Compass.

Using a Likert scale, users indicate their responses to a series of policy propositions crafted to reflect core distinctions between political parties on prominent issues relevant to the election. Each user is subsequently presented with an assessment of how their aggregated responses situate them in the political landscape and how their views compare with the party platforms. They are then offered the opportunity to explore the party platforms in detail, comparing their responses to each proposition with the party positions.

Who sets it up?

Vote Compass is a non-profit initiative operated by an independent, non-partisan network of academics from universities across Canada, including an advisory board comprised of several of the country's most distinguished scholars in the field of electoral politics.

Does Vote Compass tell me how to vote?

No. Every eligible voter decides for themselves which candidate is most appropriate to represent them. The purpose of Vote Compass is to generate interest in elections and to provide information on party platforms.

Has it been used before?

Yes, CBC has partnered with Vote Compass previously on the 2011 federal election and the recent provincial elections in Ontario, Alberta and Quebec. Vote Compass has also recently partnered with the Wall Street Journal during the last U.S. presidential election, and with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation for the upcoming Australian national election.

How does it know the top issues in the B.C. election?

Political scientists at UBC and SFU are working with CBC's newsroom in Vancouver to develop a database of key political issues, based on an analysis of the party platforms, leading news sources, social media and public input. And that's where you come in. They want to know what you think are the most important election issues.

How can I participate?

Let us know what you think by tweeting your top election issues to @votecompass or emailing feedback@votecompass.com.

Follow the conversation at #votecompass on Twitter.

Watch for the launch of the Vote Compass tool on April 15, 2013 on www.CBC.ca/BC.

Scams on the Elderly

By Ken Kuhn

The older we get, the more attractive we become to fraudsters. Preying on the elderly is rampant across North America. Bank accounts are being depleted. The seniors may be lonely or hearing-impaired or any other impairments and are very susceptible to scammers. While dealing with my father's failing health in Nelson recently I saw numerous packages of mail similar to the one in the picture below. There were numerous elderly people in the one apartment block receiving several pieces of "scamming mail" each day from places like the Publishers Clearing House and postmarks from places all over the world like The Netherlands, Hong Kong, Zurich, Australia, and many of the eastern United States. On further investigation in other apartment blocks in the Lower Mainland and discussions with Post Office employees and supervisors, I found that this is a rampant problem facing seniors.

Here are some of the top scams that target seniors:

"You've Already Won..."

Official-looking documents designed to trick recipients into thinking they've won money are carefully worded so as to stay legal. These documents hide crucial information in italics or fine print. Following "instructions," recipients send cheques that they believe are processing fees to far-away post-office boxes. The amounts are small - from \$20 to \$60 - but they add up, given that individual scammers typically operate several fake-sweepstakes scams simultaneously. Addresses of those who send cheques are sold to other scammers and more sweepstakes letters pour in to the mailboxes of the elderly. Some of the elderly are receiving 10 to 20 pieces of this mail per day!

Talk to Me

The elderly are prime targets for sleazy telemarketers because they are usually home during the day. They are lonely so they want to talk to friendly-sounding strangers who call and ask questions about themselves and then tell them they've won prizes or offer "great deals" or non-existent merchandise, services, or financial plans. In order to claim these non-existent prizes or deals - and to cover alleged postage and handling or first-installment fees - victims divulge their credit card and bank account numbers. Many of these elderly are also victims to similar schemes where salespeople knock on their doors offering home repairs for non-existent problems or for merchandise that they really don't need.

Investment Start-ups

This is a telemarketing con that targets seniors who were or are businesspeople - scammers offer investment opportunities. "I've got a great deal for you; we can move on it really fast." They say, "If you had invested in Microsoft, think how rich you'd be now. Well, this is a similar opportunity, so let's get started" and they ask for amounts like \$50,000. Some fork it over; others ask for evidence. These people are sent authentic-looking materials detailing non-existent projects and companies. Many involve films. They promise that "you'll get to walk down the red carpet with big stars."

The Grandmother Scam

Criminals have set their sights on seniors with grandchildren using a particularly malicious trick known as the "grandparent scam". A senior will receive a phone call from someone who starts the conversation with, "Grandma? Do you know who this is?" The victim, thinking it's one of their grandchildren, will respond with, "Yes, I know it's you (name of grandchild)." The caller will then start using this name to gain credibility with the victim. The caller will claim to be in trouble and will request money right away. Often they'll say they were in a car accident with a rental car or they are under arrest and in jail in another city or country. The victim, wanting to help, will withdraw funds from their bank account and wire money to the "grandchild". The money will be sent through a money transfer service where the criminal can then pick it up at any location across the world.

These last three articles are printed courtesy of the Coquitlam Retired Teachers' Association and Ken Kuhn, kenkuhn@shaw.ca

Retirement Tea

A Retirement Tea for Elizabeth Pennell will be held June 20th 3:30 - 5:30 at the DRC (District Resource Centre 1111 Dufferin Cres.) .

The Aging Process

My name is Alice Smith. I was sitting in the waiting room for my first appointment with a new dentist when I noticed his dental diploma which bore his full name.

Suddenly I remembered a tall, handsome, dark-haired boy with the same name had been in my secondary school class some many odd years ago.

Could he be the same guy that I had a secret crush on way back then?

Upon meeting him, however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, grey-haired man with the deeply lined face was far too old to have been my classmate. After he had examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended Morgan Park Secondary School.

"Yes, I did. I'm a Morganner!" he beamed with pride.

"When did you leave to go to college?" I asked.

He answered, "In 1970. Why do you ask?"

"You were in my class!" I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely. Then the ugly, old, bald, wrinkled, grey-haired, decrepit, jerk asked, "What did you teach?"