O’CONNOR’S CORNER

GREETINGS!

After a wonderful summer it was great to see so many people at the To Hell With the Bell breakfast and hear about all your adventures and plans. It’s always wonderful to see the new retirees looking so relaxed and happy. The entertainment provided by the Bullfrogs was delightful.

This month, I have left most of the front page for what may be the most important meeting we have ever asked you to attend. I’ll have more O’Connor’s Corner in our winter newsletter.

YOUR PENSION MAY BE CHANGING!

Put the BCTF Pension Consultation coming up in Langley on November 9, 4-6 pm

Brookswood Secondary School

in your calendar right now. While our basic pension is secure, full indexing of our pension and health benefits may need to be changed drastically. Members of the BCTF Executive and the Pensions Committee will be present to explain possible changes and seek active and retired members’ input into options.

The Teachers’ Pension Board of Trustees will use your feedback when deciding on options that best meet the financial needs of both active and retired members of the pension plan.

If you are unable to attend the Pension Consultation in Langley you can view the schedule for surrounding districts on the BCTF website. You will also find a copy of the consultation presentation, supporting documents, and the online survey on this website. There is a link to these BCTF documents on our BCRTA website (bcrta.ca). The Fraser Valley Regional Library has computers with assistance available. Just bring your library card or ID with your current address. If necessary, contact me at 604 882 8203 for a paper copy of the survey.

DATES TO REMEMBER

LOCATION: NEWLANDS GOLF CLUBHOUSE

Nov 24: 11:30 Lunch and Silent Auction

January 26: 11:30 Lunch

March 30: 11:30 Lunch

May 18: 11:30 Lunch & AGM

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS: 10:00 AM

NOV 10, JAN 12, MAR 16, MAY 4
### Your Executive 2008 - 2010

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Annette O’Connor</td>
<td>604-882-8203</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Beverly Anderson</td>
<td>604-936-3598</td>
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<td>Past President</td>
<td>Judy DeVries</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Diane Earle</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Mary Jo Hall</td>
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<td>Activities/Adventures</td>
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<td>Membership &amp; Website</td>
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<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Jo Ann Lauber</td>
<td>Caroline Fitton</td>
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<td>Diana Cruchley</td>
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<td>Phoning</td>
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<td>Program</td>
<td>Christine Toth</td>
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<td>Scholarship</td>
<td>Maureen Pepin</td>
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<td>Social Concerns</td>
<td>Celia Moragne</td>
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<td>Sunshine</td>
<td>Gail Jones</td>
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Some wonderful adventures are planned for the Adventurers’ Gang during the 2009-2010 year. We hope everyone can join us for the fun, the learning experience, and the friendship!

**Looking Ahead**

**Christmas Carol Cruise**

Plans are underway for a Christmas Carol Cruise out of New Westminster, date and details to be announced soon.

**Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve**

**April 28, 2010**

The Blue Heron nature Reserve on the Vedder River in Chilliwack is home to more than 200 nesting Great Blue Herons. The site offers
- an Interpretive Centre
- bird blinds
- an observation tower
- 4 walking trails

**Chehalis River Eagle Walking Tour**

**Saturday, November 21**

This is an event in the Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival and offers eagle viewing and a conservation talk. Jim Hope (The Nature Trust of B.C.) and Dan Buffet (Biologist with Ducks Unlimited Canada) will lead a walking tour of the 500-hectare conservation area. The tour begins at the Sasquatch Inn (15 km west of Agassiz)

- visit Eagle Point Community Park to see eagles, spawning salmon and trumpeter swans (another event of the Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival).
- have lunch at the River’s Edge Restaurant, Sand Piper Golf Course

Everyone is responsible for his/her transportation; maps and times to follow.

At this time we are confirming numbers for both adventures. If you will be joining us for one or both, please let Mary Wright know. wrightwrock@yahoo.ca 604 538 1764

**Visit to Mountain View Game Reserve in Fort Langley**

**June 2, 2010**

**Mini Sharing Conference**

We are considering having a Sharing Mini-Conference with many short (45 min) workshops on topics members would think would be fun. Topics could include
- tips for making the perfect wine
- learning to play bridge
- painting pottery vases
- finding volunteer opportunities
- choosing the best cruises.

If you have an expertise or interest you would like to share or a topic you think would be popular, please talk to either Mary Wright, wrightwrock@yahoo.ca or JoAnn Lauber, jlauber@shaw.ca.
Lorrie Williams, a retired teacher and New Westminster City Councillor, created the Canadian Harambee Education Society in 1985. It provides sponsorships to African high school girls so that they can receive an education, today over 600 girls. Lorrie has asked us to support a Harambee student. It’s easy to do: vote for the student, Lorrie Mukirazi, on-line by Googling CLASSACT-CANADA to help her win a scholarship competition that will enable her to study in Canada. You can vote up to ten times a day. September 25 to October 16 is the most critical period. Right now, Miss Mukirazi is in second place. Please vote! - (photo: Lorrie Williams and a Harambee student)
Lunch "Shows" Needed

Do you have ideas for "programs" that would appeal to members who come to lunch at Newlands? Christine, our superb program organizer, would like to hear from you!

jjtoth@telus.net 604 530 5060.

Although my wife and I have done a fair amount of traveling in our lives, we had rarely ventured into countries where the English language was not at least one of the top three. Such was the case when we drove through Austria, Italy Switzerland, and Germany, where these citizens readily spoke each other's languages but English was further down the list. One gorgeous July day we set off from our home base in Scandicci (Florence), Italy, to explore some of the sites in the Tuscan hills, taste some wine and perhaps sample a pizza in Pisa.

We arrived at the piazza in Pisa and were instantly caught up in the thrill of being at this famous landmark. We watched as people of all backgrounds pulled out their Nikons and snapped endlessly creative shots of the Leaning Tower in all of its splendor and uniqueness. I asked my wife Sharon if she would take a shot of me holding up the Tower. The way we were standing was not conducive to capturing this optical illusion, so Sharon told me to get higher. I quickly scaled one of the nearby cement fence posts just like the teenager beside me. I never made it to the top of this two foot structure. Before you could say Buona fortuna!, I slipped off and fell head first onto the grass courtyard beside me. I reached out my arm to soften the landing, and I heard it snap. Within one minute I was surrounded by four carabinieri who questioned me and kept me immobile until the ambulance arrived less than five minutes later. They loaded me into the back and set off to the local hospital only a few blocks away.

Communication was indeed strained at this point. The attendant had a great deal of difficulty understanding anything I said, including my name. My quick-thinking wife translated my name into Italian…Michel Angelo. When the attendants realized who I was (or reported to be), I was immediately given the royal treatment. I was escorted to the front of the line in the triage room, by-passing pregnant women and men with blood running down their arms. They x-rayed and casted me with a custom plaster edifice that would have made my namesake proud. It is noteworthy to report that I was given no painkiller, and three male doctors/nurses held me down and twisted my arm to reset it. I was out of the emergency room and into the parking lot in less than forty-five minutes from the moment I fell. When I asked for the bill, the nurse scurried out of sight and returned with only my x-ray and a strict command to be re-x-rayed in Frankfurt in one week. She wouldn't accept any payment and sent me on my way.

One week later in Frankfurt the staff re-scanned my arm to make sure I didn't need to come home for an operation. Later, I appeared at the desk to pay. The attendant asked if I had European Union insurance. I replied I did not but I had my own from Canada. He sighed and muttered, “Too much paperwork” and dismissed me with a wave of his hand. Maybe it was just my name.

What's In a Name?

Mike Angell

Although my wife and I have done a fair amount of traveling in our lives, we had rarely ventured into countries where the English language was not at least one of the top three. Such was the case when we drove through Austria, Italy Switzerland, and Germany, where these citizens readily spoke each other's languages but English was further down the list. One gorgeous July day we set off from our home base in Scandicci (Florence), Italy, to explore some of the sites in the Tuscan hills, taste some wine and perhaps sample a pizza in Pisa.

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Open Road Likes Fresh Content

Open Road is your newsletter! We would dearly love to have your submissions. We welcome material for columns we envision: “Oh, the Places We’ve Been”, “Hot Reads for a Cool Evening”, “Food & Dining”, “Something to Sell”, “What We’re doing Now”, “A Touch of Humour.” See Mike Angell’s article above. We’re open to suggestions.

Adventurers’ Gang by E-Mail

The Adventurers’ Gang has an email box as well. At the moment, Mary & JoAnn are consolidating it for our committee. Thanks to Beverly Anderson, who collected your address at the last meeting and forwarded it to us. If you’re not receiving notices about our upcoming adventures, please email Mary at wrightwrock@yahoo.ca, or phone Beverly or JoAnn.

Lunch “Shows” Needed

Do you have ideas for “programs” that would appeal to members who come to lunch at Newlands? Christine, our superb program organizer, would like to hear from you! jjtoth@telus.net 604 530 5060.
Help Us Ring the Phones

The good news is we have 321 members (as of August 09). Every month, we contact every member by means of our “Telephone Tree”. This year, Helen, our phoning chairperson, needs three additional phoners to add to the list of the eighteen wonderful callers who talk to us whenever an important event such as a lunch meeting is coming up. Call Helen at 604 534 5883 (she needs you).

Free Long Distance Calls

Here's a number worth putting in your cell phone and your home phone speed dial: 1-800-GOOG-411. (a.k.a. 1-800-466-4411)

This is an awesome service from Google, and it's free and nation wide – great when you are on the road. Don't waste your money on information calls or long distance calls and don't waste your time manually dialing the number.

Read my example below and watch the short video at http://www.google.com/gog411/

I am driving along in my car and I need to call the golf course but I don't know the number.

I hit the speed dial that I have programmed in (1 800-GOOG-411) for information.

The voice at the other end says, 'Business name and city & province.'

I say, "Eagle Rock Golf Course, Edmonton, Alberta"

He says, "Top Listing – Eagle Rock Golf Course – on 42 Ave, Southwest Edmonton. I'll connect you or say "More results."

If I say nothing and stay on the line, he says, "Connecting," and Eagle Rock answers the phone.

How great is that? Thank you, Christine Toth, for the tip.
Do you still attend those conferences where your identification is encased in a bit of plastic to hang around your neck? If you do, and you still have these hanging around (not around your neck, of course), Susan Preast, Membership Chairperson, would love to have them for the LRTA ID you currently pin on lapel when we meet for lunch.

“Scholar Dollars” Needed

Every year the Langley Retired Teachers provide a $600 scholarship for each of the 8 Langley High Schools - $4800 in total. (A province-wide survey last year revealed that across the province $58,400 was given in scholarships by retired teachers.)

We do that both to help students and to commemorate retired teachers who have passed way by presenting awards in their names. We use several ways to raise money— interest on our trust fund, 50/50 draws and $1.65 in change each time we come for lunch, donations in wills or in lieu of flowers, a donation box at the table on entry to lunch, and the sale of the book “History of Langley Schools.” However, even all that is not quite enough. We rely on your Direct Donation - we’re not keen on selling chickens or holding bake sales!

Below is a form that we hope you will bring to the next lunch meeting or mail to Maureen Pepin. A tax receipt will come in the mail.

BC Retired Teachers to Donate $1 Per Member to RR Smith Foundation

We’re proud! Last year, the LRTA donated a dollar per member to the R.R. Smith Foundation. As BCRTAers, we all automatically belong to this philanthropic organization, which supports worthy education projects in BC and abroad. Glen Pinch, Chairperson of the RR Smith Foundation, was deeply moved when the September AGM decided to donate the sum of a dollar per BCRTA member per year to support the work of the Foundation. No more annual cap in hand for Glen. Langley’s lead has borne fruit!

LANGLEY RETIRED TEACHERS’ SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Please make your cheque payable to the above and give it to Maureen Pepin, or mail to 25323 12th Ave., Aldergrove, BC, V4W 3N2

Donation Amount $______________
Name of Donor ____________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________

If applicable:
In memory of _______________________________________________
Send notification of donation to
Name ______________________________________________________
Address ___________________________________________________

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Note: If the donation is from someone other than that named on the cheque, please include the name/names desired on the notification.
This year’s BCRTA Annual General Meeting was held September 18 and 19. Langley, as always, was well represented by our elected delegates Bev Anderson and Olive Burns. Also attending were Annette O’Connor, Judy de Vries, Diane Gorton, Jo Ann Lauber, Glen Pinch and new retiree Pearl Wong. Congratulations to Pearl who was one of the winners of the $100 membership draw. The Langley Retired Teachers Association is the most active branch in the province.

PENSIONS ISSUES ADDRESSED
Annette O’Connor’s speech at the conference confirmed our fears - that changes to our benefits are imminent. Although decisions regarding the use of funds in the Inflation Adjustment Account rest ultimately with the Teachers’ Pension Plan Board of Trustees, the input of Plan members, both active and retired educators, is essential. BCTF consultations addressing the IAA and the benefits it affords us are pending, she said. BCRTA delegates and members were urged to attend these upcoming meetings of consultation and to make their views known. (See front page for your chance for critical input).

ADVOCATING FOR OUR RETIREES
Discussion revolved around three directions for action in advocating for our retirees:
• Contine to work with affiliate organizations such as COSCO (The Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations of BC), and ACER-CART (The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers) to add strength to our voice.
• Be strong advocates for all things related to seniors (benefits, pensions, housing, extended health, taxes),
• Be advocates for public education
• And, yes support those valued opportunities for our members to “have lunch” - to interact, to enjoy the spirit and support of our retired colleagues.

AGE FRIENDLY CITIES
Dr. Elaine Gallagher of the University of Victoria presented a provocative report on Age Friendly Cities. Piloting the implementation of this World Health Organization project at the present are three communities in BC: Saanich, Alert Bay, and Lumby. However, any community can move in a deliberate way to enhance structures and facilities to create an “Age-Friendly” environment.

The objectives of such an initiative would be to enable all members of a community to:
• enjoy the outdoors comfortably (benches and convenient washrooms, with good signage along trails, boardwalks, parks);
• access transportation readily (convenient frequent bus stops so you don’t have to walk too far, with frequent runs to places citizens go such as shopping, hospitals, clinics, banks, dentists);
• be able to live independently when elderly or disabled (bulding codes for wide hallways, lower counters, bathroom bars for mobility, funding to enable seniors to live at home and not in expensive care facilities);
• enjoy respect, social inclusion, and community participation (including planning so seniors can access community activities);
• enjoy the security of being prepared for an emergency (community plans to evacuate seniors as needed).

Dr. Gallagher cited website information that would helpful to organizers, but much can be found by simply searching the Internet. Perhaps we should form a committee in our own highly active branch to take this on for Langley.