

North Island Retired Teachers Association

Spring 2016 Newsletter

This is our third newsletter and the time is going so quickly. Much has happened since the fall. We have a new government (with no Ministry for seniors) but things are looking much more hopeful and the doors are open for a more fruitful discussion about our needs as an association.

We had a very positive luncheon meeting on November 18th. I was surprised to receive a bill for the room rental. The Port Hardy Inn is now charging a rental fee. This is new as we have not been charged in the past. Denny was good enough to waive the \$100 dollar fee but will charge us \$40 dollars for the next meeting we hold there. I am presently searching for other venues for our meetings. I am sure there are other (free) places to meet. The speakers receive a free lunch which gives them time to meet and discuss questions with members.

Mr. Martin Pariseau spoke on the topic of Driving after Retirement. He is knowledgeable and answered all questions that were asked of him. He is a very interesting speaker and I thank him for coming to our meeting.

I am searching for a list of available speakers for future meetings. If you have someone in mind please let me know. My intent is to keep the business portion of our meetings to a half hour to give time for the speaker's presentations.

We have two new members and there are four others that could not make this meeting. We are slowly growing in numbers, not a mean feat as our FTE ratio is now 80.1 teachers in our district. If we get two more members we can win a bottle of champagne at the next AGM. I will gladly share this with you at a following meeting.

We have been using NIRTA for our local chapter. It works, I suppose, but can anyone think of a different way to identify our north island chapter? I'd like to have a logo also. Would some of you artistic people like to give it a try?

Our door prize was won by Sue Shelley and Anne Lebeau. We still have a 454g jar of Tim Horton's English Toffee Cappuccino, along with several other prizes to be won at the next meeting so please come along and join us.

The newsletters are available for electronic downloading at the VINTA office website. Go to **resources** and pick the issue that you want.

To get an electronic copy of Liaison Priorities sent to you please contact laurie@bcrrta.com. I will bring printed copies to the meetings.

Just a note that all of the links in this newsletter are live, if you download it from the VINTA website. Go to www.vinta-bctf.ca to get a free copy. Many thanks to Marc for putting this on the site.

The next meeting is at the Sportsman Restaurant, in Port McNeill on February 19th, at 12 noon. We will order from the menu at your discretion. I am searching Port McNeill, as well, for new venues to meet.

BCRTA Members Survey 2015

The survey is available on the bcrta website. It covers pretty much all of the things that affect our members. It was interesting for me to see how others see the organization and what they want from it.

I also have a 22 page printed copy if you want to look at it.

This newsletter is available, as an electronic version, from the North Island Teachers Association. Go to www.vinta-bctf.ca. If you download the electronic version, all of the links are active and you just need to click on them to get to the site. Much easier to deal with. Why not let the computer do the work for you?

Go to resources and click on the Retired Teachers' Newsletter.

Blue Cross 35 Day Supply List

I received this bulletin from Blue Cross and understand the effort to control narcotics and high priced drugs but they do not list which drugs, exactly, are covered under this bulletin. A local pharmacy says not to worry as the high priced drugs are those that cost hundreds or thousands of dollars.

I have made it my policy to get a three month prescription all at once which avoids the pharmacy charging two extra dispensing fees per prescription. At \$10.99 per dispensing fee we are being charged a lot in the North Island. COSTCO (the store) charges a \$4.00 dispensing fee and you do not need a membership to visit the pharmacy only. Just walk in and get it.

My own medications give me a savings of \$42 by going to COSTCO. It's worth a trip down island if you have the time. It is also legal to transfer prescriptions to another pharmacy and get someone to pick them up for you so, if you know someone travelling down island, you might get them to pick it up for you.

Liaison Priorities Asking for Articles

Liaison Priorities newsletter is asking people to send in articles for the newsletter. They are looking for people to share findings, ideas and comments. If you feel like writing give it try. The email address is kenkuhn@shaw.ca.

Gold Star Awards

This is your last chance to get involved with the Gold Star Awards. A teacher that uses a senior citizen in their classroom project can apply to the RTA for a thousand dollar award. This is a no brainer for me. The deadline is the middle of April.

If you know a teacher who could apply, please mention this to them. I bring this up at every executive and Health and Safety meeting. I would love to give a thousand dollars to a local teacher. Get more information at the RTA website.

Tip: Cockroaches hate catnip, ants hate cucumber and flies hate mint. These are natural ways to keep bugs away from places you don't want them. Google **natural pesticides** if you want to read more. Natural products avoid the chemical pesticides that have questionable health effects for humans.

Carp travel catalogue for 2016

As a CARP member, I received the latest travel catalogue which lists, month by month, the travel groups available for seniors. The list goes on and on. Please download it at the CARP website. It is published by Maxima Travel. Lots of fun to look at.

Seniors Using the IPAD

The Seniors' Center in Port Hardy has begun a program, presented by SAGE, that takes you through the steps in using an IPAD. The first meeting was on January 25th at the Seniors' Center.

The presenters will give you an IPAD to use for the course. It should take a few sessions to complete.

If you are interested, please contact Donna Gault at donnag@cablerocket.com. She will send you more information about session dates and times.

Ministry of Mental Health

There is encouraging information coming from our provincial government in the possible creation of a new Ministry of Mental Health.

It is extremely satisfying to see attention being paid to this area. Depression, Alzheimers, substance abuse and social issues are all relevant to seniors and need closer attention to support services.

I'll keep track of this unfolding story.

Seniors' Insomnia

Teachers are notorious for having insomnia. There is new research that confirms ways to treat this condition that do not require chemical interventions.

The pineal gland produces melatonin that helps us to get to sleep. A room that produces light interference slows the production of melatonin thus making it more difficult to sleep.

You can now buy a “sleeping light” that goes on your bed stand and produces light waves that promote sleep. It’s just a bulb that fits into your existing light stand.

There are several other things we can do to help induce a good nights sleep.

1. Darken the room as much as possible. A sleep mask can also work.
2. Cover clock displays so they do not shine in your face all night.
3. Move wireless telephones away from you when you sleep. This includes cell phones which are on all night waiting for a call. If you need to have a telephone, plug one in to a phone jack.
4. Some of us use CPAP machines at night. The new machines are extremely quiet and do not produce noise interference.
5. Use relaxation techniques and, above all, turn off radios or music. Our goal is to get to deep REM sleep and stay there.

Overdose kits

There are some new statistics that are disturbing about overdoses. Many of us have a drug regime every day that includes blood pressure medication, cholesterol medication and various chemicals designed to help us live more comfortably on a daily basis.

“Recreational” drugs, including health supplements, can combine in some unfortunate ways to produce effects that are not intended.

There is a growing trend with opiates (Oxycodon), sleeping pills (Fentanyl) and other self-medications (like alcohol) that are resulting in more deaths from overdoses.

Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo is now handing out overdose kits that include Naloxone, an agent to counter the effects of an overdose. There have been fourteen deaths, from Fentanyl alone, in Nanaimo recently.

Please take time to discuss side effects of medications with your doctor and share any supplements that you are also taking to ensure that you don't create an unfortunate mixture.

Rental Assistance for Seniors

I am presently compiling a list of rental accommodations that give seniors a discount. These are not senior's homes but apartments that include extra services. Some places assess the rent as a percentage of yearly income, others are subsidized by government grants, others are simply a good value.

Some places include laundry and heat. Others (down island) will include a meal a day or changing linens on a regular basis.

These places offer an in-between place to live that offer extra services but Are not a full-care facility. It allows you to be more self-sufficient while still receiving extra services that make our life easier to cope with.

“A Place for Mom and Dad” is a company that has just started in Canada. Phone them and they will help you find the best accommodation anywhere. Phone 1-800-217-1593.

Meals on Wheels

In Port Hardy we have a program that delivers meals to immobile seniors at home. To qualify for this service you need to be a senior. The meals are available seven days a week. A half meal is \$6.00 and a full meal is \$10.00 (a meal plus a sandwich).

The office is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 4:30. The food can be picked up by the family or delivered. They are presently looking for delivery drivers.

Call 1-855-902-6046 and ask for Irene Nicholson. The Mount Waddington head is Alison Mitchell at 250-956-4461 ext 66257.

At the present time, the group is limited to five people a week. Seniors who are mobile can go into the hospital and purchase their food. Order by 8am and your lunch will be ready at 12 noon.

Senior Transportation Services

At our last meeting we had a discussion about transportation services available to seniors who need to get to medical appointments down island.

There was some concern that these services were being discontinued. It is my pleasure to report that they are still available and will be for some time to come.

Angel Flight is available through the Port McNeill Flying Club. They will fly people to medical appointments, for free, anywhere on the island and some lower mainland locations. You need to be able to climb into the aircraft.

Phone –Jeff Morris at 250-818- 0288 (Victoria) and he will check his roster of available pilots, weather permitting.

There is a van available to take people that have a specialist appointment down to Campbell River. They run from Monday to Friday and are going to add another van soon.

Phone 250-338-0196 to make an appointment. Check out the website at www.wheelsforwellness.com.

Supplements Ordered from the U.S.A.

Canadians have been ordering health supplements from the USA for years. Items are pharmaceutical grade (just like here) and much cheaper than we can get them in Canada. About a year ago that door was slammed shut as Canada Customs says we are not allowed to get items any more but must pay CANADIAN PRICES for them.

Supplement prices, in Canada, are about five times as expensive as the US. An item that I was getting for five dollars now costs twenty-five dollars at your local pharmacy.

Please talk to your pharmacist, your doctor and your MP. Seniors on a fixed income should not have to bear the weight of the continual increases on their health care costs.

North Island RTA Library

As a member of the RTA I have the organization in the back of my mind when I go shopping. I have recently obtained several items that would fit well into a local NIRTA library. One of these is a DVD "Kidney Care in BC" (Oh Boy!) still in the wrapper, which is relevant to the North Island Health Authority. I will also include the RTA Membership Survey 2015 (a 24 page printout) and copies of COSCO News and Liaison Priorities.

If you run into items that you think would be valuable for a library (videos, games, books etc.) please bring them along to meetings or forward them to me. 😊

Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors Issues

This 17 member council was established in 2005 with the purpose of supporting senior participation, health and wellness of older people in BC.

You can download a pdf called "Aging Well in in BC". There are also many other areas to look at including what other groups are doing in the province. Go to www.gov.bc.ca.

Put your candles in the freezer for 24 hours. The freezing hardens the wax and the candles burn longer. I've tried this and it works. Who knew.....

Increase in Your Costs for Health Care

The pension statement sent at Christmas time informed me that the costs for our health care plan have increased, again. Your MSP premiums have increased 4%. My calculations indicate that, if these increases continue, our plan may cost double within the next ten to twelve years.

With the TPP trade plan, prescription costs could also increase as the manufacturers will have a free reign by having the ownership rights to their copyrights. This shuts out generic producers of the products.

COSCO is the arm of our RTA organization that can keep up the fight to have a universal drug plan for Canadians. You can also

contact the Council for Seniors and the Senior's Advocate office to share your concerns.

As we do not now have a federal MP for seniors you can also contact various health agencies and your local MP. A short note takes a few minutes. You also do not need a stamp on the letter. Mailing to your MP in Ottawa is free. Just drop it in the mail. 😊

The Little Black Book of Scams

While I was in Edmonton for Christmas with my family, I picked up a book by the Seniors group in Edmonton. This free publication is available at MySage.com.

They have an extensive section on frauds perpetrated on seniors. Fake lotteries, sweepstakes, internet frauds, get-rich-quick schemes and miracle health cures are some of the favourite ways to separate the unwary from their money.

Handy hints to protect yourself are:

Protect your identity – only give out personal information to people you trust.

Money Matters – never send money to people you don't know and never pay a fee for any kind of money winnings.

Face-to-Face Approach – ask for identification from people that come to your door.

Telephone Business – Never give our personal information over the phone unless the phone call comes from a trusted source.

Email Offers – delete any suspicious emails without opening them. Financial institutions will never ask you for account details or passwords.

Internet Business – Install software that protects your computer from viruses and unwanted programs.

Great New Addresses to Look At

www.seniors.gc.ca - quite a comprehensive site. Easy to look at and loaded with senior's information from the government.

www.seniorscouncil.gc.ca – This is the national counterpart of our BC Seniors Advisory Council. It gives you more doors to open if you have questions.

www.esmobileapp.com/files/WelcomeBCRTA.pdf – This is the website for your smartphone app to load discounts and savings for RTA members right onto your phone. Once loaded go to esmobileapp.com and use the organization code bcrta. (es stands for “endless savings”) Have fun with this app!

www.frugalliving.com – This is a really fun site. There are many tips on saving money on prescriptions, products, lowering bills, free items in the mail, and extending household product life. I tried freezing my candles and it does make them burn longer....

www.seniordriving.caa.ca – a comprehensive site that gives lots of information on safe driving and saving money after retirement.

A Place for Mom and Dad – 1-800-217-1593 – they will find accommodation anywhere

www.carp.ca – the main site for CARP Canada

www.maximatours.com – you can download the entire 2016 travel catalog from this site.

Seniors' Advocate 1-877-952-3181

www2.gov.bc.ca – download the most recent (2012) copy of the BC Seniors Guide from this site.

www.gov.bc.ca – click on seniors in the top menu and find a lot of downloadable items to save money. There are lots of driver discounts here.

Retired@pensionsbc.ca a direct email to the pension office. If you need anything just email. It will send you an automatic reply that they have received your message. Have your pension number available.

www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca - BC Seniors Advisory Council – You can also download a copy of their first newsletter from this site.

www.rachelblaney.ndp.ca - Our local MP is Rachel Blaney
1-866-387-5100 c/o Claire Trevena's office.

www.wheelsforwellness.com – transportation available from the North Island to Campbell River for specialist medical appointments.

Ottawa office, House of Commons, Ottawa (613) 943-2185

www.vinta-bctf.ca – The main page for the Vancouver Island North Teachers Association.

www.MySage.com – Seniors Advocate Group of Edmonton –get a copy of their book for seniors.

www.competitionbureau.gc.ca – a government organization to help people who have been victims of a scam. Their phone number is 1-800-348-5358

www.claire.trevena.mla@leg.bc.ca – Claire Trevena, our MLA in Victoria for the North Island. 908 Island Highway, Campbell River, B.C. V9W 2C3 (250) 287-5100 Fax (250) 287-5105.

In Port Hardy Claire's office is room 7, Robert Scott School, Box 2479, V0P 2P0 Fax (250) 949-9473

NIRTA executive emails and phone numbers:

President: Greg Murray fbaggins@telus.net 250-949-7838

Vice-President: Anne Lebeau anne@cablerocket.com 250-949-7165

Treasurer: Bill McCormick mccormicwj@hotmail.com 250-956-2850

Secretary: Pat Wainwright pwain@explornet.com 250-902-7161

I leave you with the following item.

Super Granny Defender of Justice

An elderly Florida lady did her shopping and, upon returning to her car, found four males in the act of leaving with her vehicle. She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, proceeding to scream at them at the top of her voice, "I have a gun and I know how to use it! Get out of the car!"

The four men didn't wait for a second invitation, but got out and ran like mad, whereupon the lady, somewhat shaken, proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and get into the driver's seat. She was so shaken that she could not get her key into the ignition. She tried and tried and then it dawned on her why.

A few minutes later she found her own car parked four or five spaces farther down.

She loaded her bags into her car and drove to the police station. The sergeant, to whom she told the story, bellowed with laughter. He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four, pale, white males were reporting a carjacking by a mad elderly woman described as white, less than five feet tall, glasses, and curly white hair, carrying a large handgun.

No charges were filed.

The next newsletter will be September 2016. Please send me items that you think may be of interest to members.