



The

**P E N**

**YOUR**

**NEWSLETTER**

FALL / WINTER 2022

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OUR  
MEMBERS  
INFORMED**



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Greetings!*

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Retired Employees  
Association

[www.bcgrea.ca](http://www.bcgrea.ca)





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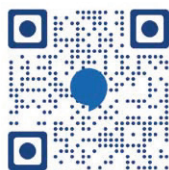


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\*A comprehensive hearing assessment is provided to adults ages 19 and older at no cost. The results of this assessment will be communicated verbally to you. If you request a copy of the Audiological Report, an administrative fee will apply. Child hearing tests are conducted at select locations for a fee, please contact us for more information. Offer not available in Quebec. Not applicable for industrial hearing tests. This promotion is valid for select hearing aid models and cannot be combined with more than 1 partner promotion or discount unless stated otherwise. \*\*The extra 10% will be applied to the remaining balance on hearing aids and accessories after all other discounts (if applicable). Offer expires 01/31/2023. Offer applies to private sales of select hearing aids and discount is applied after any Government funding has been deducted. Some conditions apply, see clinic for details. AIR MILES available only at participating locations. ® TM Please allow 45 days for Miles to be posted to your Collector Account. Reward Miles value is non-transferable and depends on select models purchased.

We're pleased to present you with your Fall / Winter edition of **The Pen**. This edition's topics include:

- Group Health Benefits - a reminder
- President's Report
- Retired Associations' Summit
- The Jay's Nest - member interest stories
- Committee Reports, R & R Report
- 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary speakers and prize winners
- Estate & Tax Planning Tips
- Tom Parkin - Disappearing Highway
- The Early Years concluded
- The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet
- In Memoriam - Kathleen Vera Hall
- Member Passing



## Your retirement group health benefits

### The grace period for tier 2 drugs ends on January 1st

The Public Service Pension Plan's drug plan was changed on January 1, 2022. Changes included modifying the drug plan by creating a tiered formulary based on BC PharmaCare coverage and providing a 12-month grace period for retired members taking a tier 2 drug for a chronic condition. Reimbursement remained at 70 percent during the grace period. The grace period for affected members taking a tier 2 drug ends on January 1, 2023. Members who choose to remain on their tier 2 drug will be covered for that drug at 60 percent.

There are no changes to drug coverage for members who live outside of BC.

Learn more about the changes by visiting <https://pspp.pensionsbc.ca/>

**The Pen**, Spring / Summer 2022 edition [www.bcgrea.ca](http://www.bcgrea.ca)

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Patrick Harkness  
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Bill Myers  
Laura Lam

**The Pen** is sent electronically and mailed to BCGREA members twice a year.

### HOW TO REACH US

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Nearly 3,000 fellow public service retirees have recently joined the BCGREA during our recent membership drive invitation (below).

The flyer features several key messages: BCGREA is recognized by the Pension Corporation and Board of Trustees as the official voice of public service plan retirees; for 75 years, they have advocated on behalf of retirees; they support healthy and inclusive communities for seniors; and they are entirely volunteer-run. It also lists benefits like exclusive access to discounts and promotions, and provides contact information (Tel: 250-751-9814, Email: info@bcgre.ca) and a QR code to join.

We represent retirees from over 80 separate employers. These include not just direct government employees but also:

- Emergency Health Services
- Bus Drivers
- Various Social Services agencies
- ICBC
- BC Ferries staff
- Legislative Assembly staff

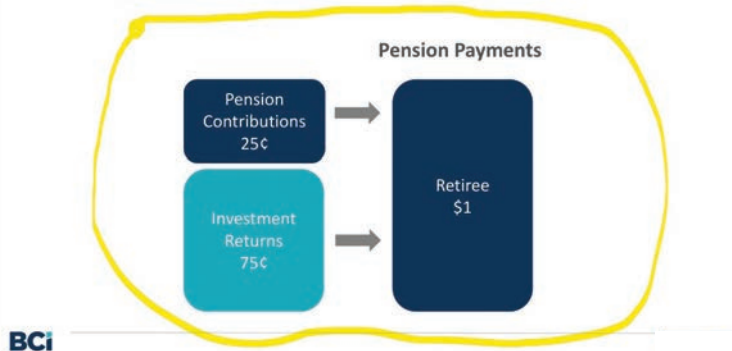
A full list of employers is available at <https://bcgre.ca/pension-plan-employers/>.

This diversity of membership can be one of our strengths as we move forward.

We have a position on the Pension Board of Trustees. Previously, the BCGREA president made the appointment. To make the selection process more open last year we held our first election by delegates for the position. Johanna Morrow, who was elected, started her three-year term in 2022. The BCGREA executive believes electing this position is what we should do on a permanent basis and is looking to have this included in our bylaws.

David Morhart from BC Investments (BCI) was our keynote speaker at our recent AGM. BCI handles the funds of the major BC public sector pension plans as well as investing ICBC premiums. Their investment portfolio of \$211 billion directly affects your pension by buffering us from economic shock and contributing the lion's share of the value as shown here:

### Delivering Value to Members



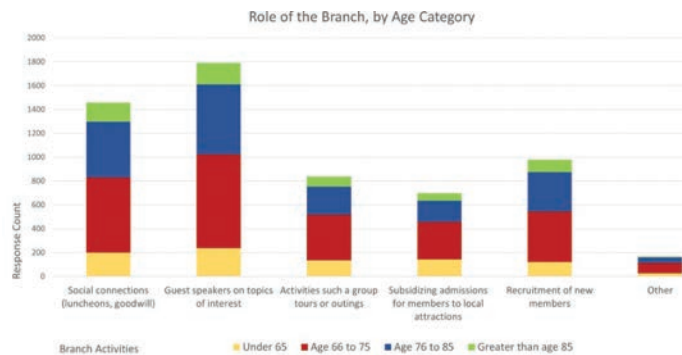
David's full presentation, "How Secure is Your Pension" can be found on the front page of our website by visiting: <https://bcgre.ca>. (large blue box)

We support all BC seniors as a key member of the Council of Seniors Organizations of BC (COSCO) <https://coscobc.org/> which advocates on behalf of seniors and offers a variety of seminars and workshops accessible through our branches. We belong to the National Pensioners Federation which looks at federal matters like National Pharmacare.

We're grateful to our volunteers who contact members who are isolated or live in care settings without easy email access and limited social contact. A phone call is often the highlight of their day. Branches have lists of these folks. It doesn't take much of your time, and the rewards exceed the effort. Please consider this volunteer role.

What we can do depends on people stepping up to contribute. We're entirely volunteer-run. No one receives a salary. The same applies to local branch officials. Many of these folks have volunteered for more than a decade. They're looking forward to passing the torch and welcoming new volunteers. Like you, they're all retired and have other parts to their lives.

Provincially, we're streamlining our processes, automating membership functions, and using a robust email program to help reduce the administrative burden for branches. This can shift the focus to membership wants such as guest speakers and socialization (see chart below):



COVID stressed all of our **social connections**. As we move forward, *talking to* and *interacting with people*, whether you know them or not, is a fun and easy way to enhance both physical and mental health. I encourage you to reach out to your local branch to see what can be done. For example, send an email to set up an informal coffee get-together or set up a chat on a topic of interest for like-minded folks. You'll be welcomed and appreciated. Branch email addresses are on our website under the branch listings tab.

We know many people join us in large part because of our affinity partnership offers. That's fine, we all enjoy a good deal.

We're committed to improving and expanding our offerings. This November a summit meeting of the four largest public sector retiree associations was held. The other three are retired teachers, college instructors, and municipal employees. Overall, our aim is that our over 40,000 members can work together to achieve better offers from our various affinity partners. Stay tuned.

We have done a lot this year in our renewal journey and I would like to thank my fellow table officers and all of our local officers for their hard work and diligence. May the coming New Year bring you comfort, peace, and joy. I welcome your comments and participation.

**Brian Green**, President  
[president@bcgre.ca](mailto:president@bcgre.ca)

## RETIRED ASSOCIATIONS' SUMMIT



The four major pension associations met face-to-face on November 4th in Vancouver to learn more about their commonalities and differences. The event was hosted by the BCRTA.



(L-R): [Tim Anderson](#) (Executive Director, BCRTA), [Patrick Harkness](#) (Communications, BCGREA), [Al Barclay](#) (Membership, BCGREA), [Arnie Lambert](#) (President, BCRTA), [Gerry Tiede](#) (Benefits, BCRTA), [Brian Green](#) (President, BCGREA), [Mary Griffin](#) (President, CPPR), [Howard Brown](#) (Communications, MPRA), [Terry Erskine](#) (President, MPRA), [George Davison](#) (Secretary, CPPR), [Grace Wilson](#) (Past President, BCRTA), [Vincent Sherry](#) (1st Vice-President, BCGREA), [Mark Costales](#) (Johnson Insurance), [Lisa Hansen](#) (Johnson)

## Tell Us About Yourself: Ann Barry

Victoria (Branch 1200)

My most stressful assignment was working in the federal government. Everything had to be timed (to the second) for Minister David Anderson during the Commonwealth Games accompanying Her Majesty.

Prior to this, I spent three years working for the British Geriatrics Society in the United Kingdom. I also worked in the legal services branch of the Ministry of Justice after returning to Victoria and for two years as senior special assistant to the Minister of Revenue.

My lawyers and I were thrilled when the amendment to the Human Rights Act removed the retirement age of 65 on January 1, 2008. I turned 65 on January 4. This meant I didn't have to retire, and secondly - it gave me a chance to build up my pension.

I taught fitness classes (all kinds of formats) in Victoria and attended fitness conferences in Toronto and Vancouver each year. I presented workshops in Victoria and Toronto and became a Trainer of Fitness Leaders. Retirement came in 2019.

During the first year of the pandemic, I simply renewed my qualifications virtually. In the second year, I took workshops and became an aquafit instructor. I've taken a few classes at The Makehouse learning to make my own bathing suits and how to fit patterns. So far nothing has worked out, but I keep trying.

I sing in the community choir at the Anglican Church of St. John the Divine. Prior to that, I sang in two parishes in Esquimalt. Now I'm quite happy to go to church on Zoom ... in my pajamas.

## Tell Us About Yourself: Diane Moran

Mt. Arrowsmith (Parksville/Qualicum)  
(Branch 2300)

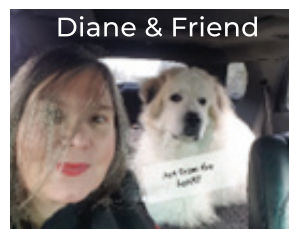
After working at Cameron Community Center for 22 years, where I managed the City of Burnaby portfolio for preschool and youth programs, my husband and I made a big life change. We sold our house, quit our jobs, and moved to a remote fishing village (population 146) on Vancouver Island.

In Port Renfrew, we ran a cabin rental business called Remote Renfrew Riverside Retreat. Our adventures into semi-retirement were wonderful. Running our own business was a great way to live a simple, fulfilling life; however, taking care of two cabin rentals and a log home on a seven-acre property was not semi-retirement. It was a FULL-TIME job albeit only six months of the year.

In 2021 we sold our property and moved to Qualicum Beach. Closer to friends and family, we're now 100% retired at 58. Life is great.

Always active, I am busy with community projects and art initiatives. I am the Fire Smart ADP Committee chair for our area. I'm on the board of the Meadowood Residents Community Association where I hope to help with our new community hall. I also enjoy gardening, cooking, spending time in nature, and photography.

If others can afford early retirement at 55, I highly recommend it. You won't look back. If you are keen to be involved with some of the arts outreach that I do for those impacted by natural disasters, please reach out



via email at: [moraninthemoon@gmail.com](mailto:moraninthemoon@gmail.com).

## **Tell Us About Yourself: Michael Hanson**

Peninsula & Gulf Islands (Branch 2500)

When the government advertised the first 'consumer' position I felt that my arbitration and problem-solving experience would be of assistance. So, I traveled to Victoria for the interview.

The personnel officer took me into an office where four individuals were waiting. The first question I was asked was: "Why should you have this job instead of the bright, young lawyer who has just left?"

I gave several reasons, such as lawyers were used to taking one side or the other - guilty or not guilty - when something mutually acceptable was required. I went on to provide similar comments which weren't very complimentary to lawyers.

When I was led out into the hallway, the personnel officer doubled up with laughter. Finding this rather odd, I asked: 'What the hell is so funny?' He said, "everyone but me in there is a lawyer."

Despite my unflattering comments about lawyers, I did become the province's first consumer affairs officer.

## **Tell Us About Yourself: Gilbert Gordon Soellner**

Peninsula & Gulf Islands (Branch 2500)

Born on April 4, 1936, I attended Ryerson Institute in Toronto majoring in public health. Moving to the west coast, I enrolled in the University of Victoria and earned my Bachelor of Science (Geography).

My first job lasted five years as an aircrew with the Royal Canadian Air Force. I moved to Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories to work at Eldorado Mining for two years.

The uranium for the first atomic bomb was mined here.

Kamloops was my next relocation where I worked in public health for two years, followed by 32 years in waste management at Victoria's head office.

## **Tell Us About Yourself: Michael Robertson Sampson**

Victoria (Branch 1200)

I was twelve when my family moved from Sussex, England to Vancouver and then Victoria in fall of 1953. I attended Oak Bay High School and found summer work with the Ministry of Lands and Forests.



From 1960 to 1964, I joined the legal surveys division and worked as "chainman" through to "instrument man" on surveys from Vanderhoof to New Hazelton. For the next four years I valued land and improvements for property tax purposes and was the senior property negotiator in Vancouver purchasing property for highway right-of-way purposes throughout the province including the Knight Street Bridge.

My career in property negotiation and as a real estate analyst concluded in 1996, after serving the province of BC for nearly 36 years. While working, I was involved in the Oak Bay Squadron boating activities including power, sail, and kayaking. Today I remain active on the bridge currently as an environmental officer.

Concerned about my physical well-being, I started a home-based business in health and wellness. Table tennis continues to be a passion of mine and I've also taken up a form of Tai Chi called Qi-gong. This has given me the flexibility to improve my table tennis skills as well as enhance my life.

## Tell Us About Yourself: Minoo K. Engineer

Langley/Surrey (Branch 2100)

When I informed my family and colleagues that I was immigrating to Canada, they said: "You must be crazy. Canadians live in igloos. You will never survive there." Little did they know how wrong they were.

I came to Canada in 1967 and worked in Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. After various jobs and employers, I settled in BC working for the BC Buildings Corporation, and joined the BCGEU. Retired in 1996, I joined BCGREA and have had fun, and challenges, and made lots of friends.

I love Canada. I've lived more in Canada than in India. I'm a member of the Newton Senior Centre and Newton Senior Centre Computer Club. Over the years, I've volunteered and helped others in need.

For 26 years I've been a BCGREA member. When BCGREA was formed in 1947, I was seven years old. Little did I know what was in store for me!



**Minoo Engineer**

## An Unforgettable Cycling Expedition: Peter Ferris

Victoria (Branch 1200)

Having worked in the Ministry of Finance, I retired in 2016 to focus on family life, fitness, and cycling. I've cycled and camped throughout Canada, China, Mongolia, Russia (long before the war), New Zealand, England, and Wales.

This year I joined a supported cycling expedition ride from Tuktoyaktuk, NWT to Banff, AB, and then rode (more or less) solo from Banff to Wakaw Lake, SK.

When I paddled in the Arctic Ocean at Tuktoyaktuk, I was surprised that the ocean was warmer than it is in Victoria. At night there was a column of mosquitoes above the tent eager to join me. Progressing southward each mountain range seemed to get more and more beautiful until I reached the Icefields Parkway where the views were stunning.

I thoroughly enjoyed cycling the Icefields Parkway, which is one of the world's top-rated cycle rides.

CONT'D PAGE 9

**Travel**

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## An Unforgettable Cycling Expedition Cont'd

I camped five out of seven nights on my supported bike journey and spent the other two nights in a hotel.

On camping days, meals were provided and all my bags were carried. I had only to carry enough stuff on my bike to support me for the day. I carried clothing, food, water, spares, sunscreen, and bear spray (which was unused). The spares were well used as the rough gravel Dempster Highway caused a puncture in my rear tire.

From Banff I continued cycling alone, carrying everything I needed in bike panniers for a two-week holiday. I spent every night from Banff to Wakaw Lake in a hotel. I rode solo to the Battlefords where I met up with my wife and daughter. Altogether I rode 3,200 kilometres; a cycling vacation that will live long in my memory.

## Tell Us About Yourself: Zarina Sajoo

Vancouver (Branch 1100)

Zarina moved from Mombasa, Kenya to

London, England, and trained to be a nurse, midwife, and health visitor. She recalls conditions like in the television show, *Call the Midwife* having learned to ride a bike in the rain and getting lost in pea-soup fog.

She craved her mum's curries and resolved to care for others as her own mother passed away very young. Zarina returned to East Africa to work. She got married and had her children. Before emigrating to Vancouver, her family stayed in London for Zarina to achieve the Canadian Registered Nurse qualification.

A nurse for 40 years, Zarina worked in the operating theatre, correction, Central City Mission, and in elderly and palliative care. Soon after retirement (at age 78), she joined the Vancouver Coastal Health Community Engagement Advisory Network to be involved in the reimagining of the operating theatre and how patients' families were communicated with. She continued to volunteer her time to improve patient services as well as suggest ways to reduce waste (plastic packaging, straws, carrier bags) in healthcare.

Submitted by

**Anaar and Feisal Sajoo** (Zarina's children)

 **Manulife**



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## New Westminster & District Picnic By:

**Bonnie Billinton**, Chair

New Westminster (Branch 800)

In celebration of BCGREA's 75th Anniversary, Branch 800 held a picnic. A total of 70 members and guests attended the September 7 event in Queens Park, New Westminster.

The 'Tam O'Shanters' Scottish Country Dancers



'Tam O'Shanters' Scottish Country Dancers. Thank you to Donna Main who sponsored the dancers and participated as a member of this group.

began the event with a lively display of their traditional dance steps beside the picnic shelter, making do with a park pathway for a dance floor.



A picnic is not complete without cake!

After a sandwich lunch, special guest provincial BCGREA president Brian Green addressed the event, highlighting the benefits of membership. Following the cake, there were draws for cash prizes and BCGREA swag.



Bonnie Billinton (R & R Co-chair) and president Brian Green.

## We Have A New Branch, Our First in 15 Years

The creation of Branch 2700 - Western Communities, helps celebrate the BCGREA's 75th anniversary. This is significant as our association has experienced the closing of a few branches in the last two decades.

The creation of the new branch was proposed by Al Cocola on becoming the Recruitment and Retention (R & R) committee chair in 2021. The committee felt it would be more convenient and provide greater accessibility for our members and therefore encourage more participation.

The new branch covers an area west and north of Victoria and includes View Royal, Colwood, Metchosin, Langford, Sooke, and Duncan.

After addressing concerns that neighbouring branches would not unduly suffer, an initial email went out asking for members to join, based on their postal codes. More than the required 25 members replied, and the branch was officially acknowledged at the 2022 Annual General Meeting.

The Western Communities Branch currently has more than 80 members, and the interim executive has had several planning meetings and hosted their first official branch meeting in Langford.

For more information on the branch and executive, visit:

[www.bcgrea.ca/branches/western-communities-branch-2700](http://www.bcgrea.ca/branches/western-communities-branch-2700)



In celebration of BCGREA's 75th Anniversary, The R & R committee welcomes Bonnie Billington and Edna Park as co-chairs as Al Cocco steps down to focus on Branch 2700.

Thank you to Al for all his hard work as the former chair and for his ongoing involvement with the merchandising subcommittee. We would also like to thank Dave Dyke for his years of participation as he steps down.

Throughout this year various members of your R & R committee have been actively involved in:

- Developing the membership survey.
- Updating the R & R webpage.
- Helping rejuvenate Branch 1000.
- Aiding in the creation of Branch 2700; the first new branch started in 15 years.
- Assisting in creating the 75th anniversary calendar.

- Marketing BCGREA branded items.

**View the merchandise page on our website;**  
<https://bcgre.ca/bcgre-merchandise/>

Four branches have successfully applied to the **Recruitment Funding Program** wherein the provincial body will cover 50% of the costs for a recruitment event (up to a maximum of \$500). For more information visit, <https://bcgre.ca/recruitment-and-retention/>

R & R is an important part of our association, but it requires an influx of people to put forward new ideas and to keep up with changing times. If you know of anyone willing to help, please forward their name to any R & R committee member.

Submitted by  
**Bonnie Billington**



collette

## TRAVEL WITH BCGREA MEMBERS

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Travel Industry Council of Ontario Reg. #3206405; B.C. Reg. #23337



**HAWAIIAN ADVENTURE  
WITH BCGREA MEMBERS**  
May 18 - 30, 2023  
**Highlights:** Honolulu, Waikiki, Kona, Maui, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Honaunau Bay



**WESTERN CANADA'S ROCKIES,  
LAKE AND WINE COUNTRY  
WITH BCGREA MEMBERS**  
October 6 - 14, 2023  
**Highlights:** Calgary, Banff, Lake Louise, Revelstoke, Kelowna, Vancouver

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TRAVEL  
PROFESSIONAL,  
CALL COLLETTE AT 800.770.6740 OR  
VISIT [GOCOLLETTE.COM/BCGREA](https://GOCOLLETTE.COM/BCGREA)**

**David Morhart**, Executive VP, Corporate & Investor Relations, BC Investment Corp. (BCI) was the **keynote speaker** at our 75th Anniversary banquet.



**Cheryl Anderson** brought greetings from Hearing Life Canada, spoke on the “gift of hearing” and the advancements in hearing aids in recent years.



## Speakers and Others at our AGM



**Leslie Gaudette**, President of the Council of Senior Citizen Organizations (COSCO) brought greetings, and well wishes, and recognized the ongoing support provided by the BCGREA to COSCO.

**Gerry Gosling**, on behalf of the BC Old Age Pensioners Organization, congratulated the achievement of 75 years by the BCGREA.



**Mark Costales** (and Lisa Hansen) brought greetings from Johnson Inc. and spoke briefly on the work of their company – home insurance, Medoc travel plan, and Prestige health and travel plan.

**Terry Erskine** – President of the Retired Municipal Pension Retirees Association (MPRA), spoke on tips and tricks of Zoom.

**Tom Vincent**, Chair of the Public Service Pension Board of Trustees emailed congratulations to the BCGREA.

**Sam Weise**, President of the BC Federation of Union Members (BC FORUM) brought congratulations and good wishes.



**Tom Martell**, Manulife, spoke on various aspects of insurance coverage including options for financial management to reduce costs to the execution of your will.

## AGM Prize Winners



**Vincent Sherry**, 2nd Vice-president won a Manulife Gift Basket. (Earlier he had told Tom to pick his number – oh my.)

**Janis Katzell**, Nanaimo-Mid Island Br 600 won an iPad from Johnson.



## 2022 AGM Cake



Joellen Burgess, Prince George Br 1600 won special earplugs from Hearing Life



Those who came for dinner . . .



Colleen Coccola, Western Communities Br 2700 won a set of external batteries for cell phones from Johnson.



Laura Lam, Victoria Br 1200 also won a set of external batteries for cell phones from Johnson.



## More From the AGM



Charles La Vertu, our photographer.



## The BCGREA Executive



(L-R): Ken Pendergast (Past President), Johanna Morrow (Treasurer & Trustee), Brian Green (President), Patrick Harkness (2nd VP), Kathy Torhjem (Secretary), Vincent Sherry (1st VP), Al Barclay (Membership)



...and for dessert

By **Thomas D. Martell**, CFP, CLU



## Protecting your nest egg after you are gone using an Annuity Settlement Option:

For those who prefer to transfer an inheritance gradually, the most common approach in the past has been to establish a trust. Trusts can be an effective vehicle but there are drawbacks, they are very costly and complex and there are concerns with ongoing management.

There is now another appealing wealth transfer option available to Canadians, which has considerable merit due to its simplicity and flexibility. The Annuity Settlement Option (only available through life insurance companies) can automatically transfer the proceeds of your Segregated Fund, GIC, or Life insurance policy upon your death into an annuity. The resulting annuity will then make gradual income payments to your beneficiaries as specified by you.

It is a simple, inexpensive, and effective means of wealth transfer. It provides the advantage of replacing a lump sum death benefit with smaller scheduled payments while providing savings of probate and estate fees, increased privacy, and potential creditor protection.

Unlike trusts which have expensive setup costs, annual trustee fees, and annual accounting fees, the annuity settlement option has no fees or ongoing management requirements.

An annuity settlement option gives you complete control over the specific terms of the annuity. Payouts can be over a certain period of time, say 10 years, or for the lifetime of the beneficiary.

If you decide to change the beneficiaries or the terms of the annuity, all you need to do is submit a new annuity settlement option form at no cost – instead of having to pay a lawyer to amend or redraft your trust agreement.

And if you have multiple beneficiaries, the annuity settlement option allows you to differentiate between beneficiaries, permitting some to receive a lump sum and others to receive an annuity based on the terms you select.

An annuity is an insurance contract where in exchange for a single lump-sum deposit, an insurer makes guaranteed regular income payments that contain both interest and a return of principle.



For more information on this, contact your life insurance advisor today.



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Finding a 1930 *Highway and Travel Map* showing an unnamed road as “among the scenic highways of BC,” recently piqued this writer’s interest. The road shown was a trans-provincial route, yet couldn’t be driven at the time. In reality, it hadn’t been built, and wouldn’t be—for another ten years!

It was 1923 when the Province of B.C. and the Dominion Government signed a cost-sharing agreement to construct a road between Revelstoke and Golden around the northernmost bend of the Columbia River. This “Big Bend” was a hairpin curve in that watercourse, flowing north past Golden, then south through Revelstoke. The road was to follow the river around the inside of its turn.

Growing up in Revelstoke, I traveled that road annually. Few parts were scenic—sad evergreens drooped pale with dust. Mostly I recall back seat monotony and feedings of Graval® for the 5–6-hour trip. Yes, the Big Bend Highway did exist, but oddly, you won’t find it on modern maps either. Over 140 kilometers of river and road were submerged in the reservoir of Mica dam in 1973. But by then, the Big Bend had fallen into disuse. It had been replaced by a truly spectacular short-cut across the mountains. This, today’s Trans-Canada Highway over Rogers Pass, officially opened in 1962. Those driving east no longer needed to grit teeth over 300 kilometers of washboard and S-curves.

The 1929/30 annual report of BC’s Department of Public Works tells how crews were working up a former pack trail from Revelstoke to Boat Encampment, and of the Feds building toward them from Golden. The senior government was participating because the road was viewed as a way to develop Banff, Yoho, and Kootenay National Parks. Work was expected to finish in a year or two, and that was why the route was shown on the map before it was complete.

Suddenly, the Depression came. Construction continued, but was now done by relief funding; a work-to-survive effort provided for “single

homeless men.” Public works camps were seen as a way of keeping unemployed men out of urban areas. Progress slowed. After several years the province bowed out, allowing the Department of National Defense to supervise the camps. Then came a diplomatic notation in the 1936 annual report:

*After some six year’s experience of carrying out work purely as a relief measure, though considerable progress was made, naturally from the point of view of “getting results,” this method is not so satisfactory as the normal way of letting the work by contract . . .*

Though continuing to provide 50 percent funding, the Feds gave the BC administration the job. Thus, the Big Bend Highway was joined four years later, primarily by professional constructors. The official opening was on June 29th, 1940. The late Peter Fuoco of Penticton was there at the time. He retired in 1975 from the then-Department of Highways. But in 1940, he was a timekeeper/first aid man on the Bend project:

“I was working at 80-mile, and returning to my tent one evening, when a stump on the right-of-way seemed to express facial features. So, I got this idea of emphasizing that with an axe. It was just a pass-time. It took me a day to make each ear. The hat was a sawed-off hollow log, with a brim of lumber. The whole thing stood close to 10 feet high. When the brass came from Banff for a pre-opening inspection, I thought they’d get rid of it, but instead, the engineer in charge gave instructions to move it to Boat Encampment for the opening ceremony.”

Thus ‘Wooden head’ became a roadside attraction, and possibly BC’s earliest reminder to drive defensively. When the Mica Creek dam flooding began, ‘he’ was trucked to Revelstoke. Wooden head now sits on the bank of the Columbia beside the Trans-Canada Highway—one of the odder pieces of highway heritage in BC.



Research and writing on topics of western history

In 1968, our work with the GEMS Board was short-lived as the Medical Services Plan took over. And the Association's success in gaining pension increases every two years resulted in declining membership. Ironically, sufficient pensions discouraged new members! Regular presentations continued to be made to the government and the relationship with the Superannuation Commissioner remained strong, despite the change of government in 1972.

### Cost-of-Living Index Victory Secured in the 70s

In 1974 the Association succeeded in getting the government to provide an escalation clause in the superannuation legislation that, in effect, tied pension increases to rises in the cost-of-living index. This is thanks to BCGEU's representation on the government-appointed Superannuation Committee, and Provincial Secretary Ernie Hall's decision to introduce collective bargaining for public sector employees.

### Improving Extended Care Benefits

The Association successfully broadened the scope of benefits to include drugs and

medicines, ambulatory services, private nurses, and medical examinations at home. Dental care was broadened but subsequently scrapped after 16 months.

### Broadening the Association's Reach

From 1970 to 1980 membership increased across all branches thanks to the Membership Committee who were instrumental in arranging with the Superannuation Branch that notices and bulletins be sent to all retired government employees on the Association's behalf.

Spreading the Association's word helped garner new support, especially in the interior where it was decided to establish a new branch in Kamloops in 1980. By August 1992, the Association had 16 branches, with a total membership of 5,724. Membership has had a roller-coaster ride with some gains, up to 20 branches (9,500 members) in 1998, and some losses. In late October 2022, we had 22 branches (7,800 members). *Now we are ending this year with over **10,000 members**.*



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## Kathleen Vera Hall – a centenarian

Kathleen Vera Hall passed away on July 22, 2022, at the age of 105 years. Born in England, she came to Canada with her family in 1918. Her father was hired as the Head of the Occupational Therapy Department at Essondale/Riverview Hospital. The family lived in one of the staff-allocated cottages for several years, located on the hospital grounds, and eventually purchased a home in New Westminister. She was the firstborn of four sisters and two brothers. The four sisters would eventually live together in the family home in New Westminister.

Vera, her preferred name, worked for the BC provincial government for 40 years. During those years she was promoted to Deputy Registrar of Vital Statistics, retiring in 1974. She joined the BC Government Retired Employees Association Branch 800 in 1997 and remained a member for 25 years.

[Anna Tremere](#), Director  
New Westminister & District (Branch 800)



We've been advised that the following BCGREA members have passed since the 2021 AGM. To all the spouses, partners, friends, and families that they leave behind, we send our condolences. Dealing with the loss of someone you love, care about, and spent a lifetime with is never easy.

### Branch 100 – Fraser Valley (Abbotsford)

Carol M Beier  
Buzz Bussiere  
Eileen Bussiere  
James W Edge  
Ishbel M Elliot  
Elizabeth (Bessie) Heyes  
Stuart David Hood  
Tom Harry Hunter  
Gloria Lavery  
Margaret J Marcell  
Dorothy Miller  
Gordon Earl Mills  
Sandra Jean Pughe  
Connie P Schmid  
Avrill Schofield  
Ruth Van Iderstine  
Donald M Van Iderstine  
Herta L Wermuth  
Isabelle Mary Wickham

### Branch 200 – North Island (Comox)

Rudolf W (Rudy) Baerg  
Dianne M Campbell  
Lorna Duteau  
Gary Flath  
Wilma T Grant  
Robert John Hagman  
Carol P James  
Marilyn Johnson  
Larry T Johnston  
Carl Kolonsky  
Margaret L McCracken  
Anne E Meredith  
Leah Merrell  
Joe Cleo Peters  
Brian Hugh Saunderson  
Rose Jean Stevens

### Branch 300 – Rocky Mountain (Cranbrook)

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Alex Gredzuk  
Helen Gail Kriwokon  
Arlene J MacDonald  
Eugene L Nieminen  
Barbara Oddie  
Sandra J Rahal  
Sheila D Vinge

### Branch 400 – Grand Forks

Marjorie Goodwin  
Bernice Marshall  
Marlene Nichols  
Cecile Reed

## Branch 500 – Kamloops

Boy Pratt Bigham  
Charles F Boorse  
C Roy Casley  
Bryan Ernest Cleaver  
Robert Andrew Cochlan  
Bertha M Collins  
Sarah Dueck  
Deanna Belle Duggan  
Phil Paul Froment  
Michel Andre Grandbois  
Karen Lily Marie Hopkins  
Gilbert C N Labelle  
Hugh Alan MacDonald  
William MacFarlane  
Gerald Edward (Gerry) Miller  
Inger Annie Ross  
Kenneth Rutter  
Brian Ernest Thompson  
Russ D Toombs  
Myron T (Tom) Wallace  
Melvin J Wilcock

## Branch 600 – Nanaimo / Mid-Island

Roderick Keith Brown  
Thomas W L David  
Winfred A Foster  
Norah E Fuller  
Melvin Patrick Gow  
Bodil Hallenbeag Hansen  
W Bruce Holloway  
Arthur Ernest Horsley  
William Frederick Marshall  
Dorothy Patterson  
Gloria A Peachey  
Margaree J Porteous  
Trevor James Price  
Ronald James Reeves  
Pamela Reynolds  
Doreen E Wallace  
Ralph S White  
Gerard Michael Willcox

## Branch 700 – Kootenays (Nelson)

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Margaret Sylvia Browne  
John H Dyck  
L Gayle Edwards  
Allen Vincent Heighton  
Alvin R Hutchinson  
Dianne Kanigan  
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Mary Pozdnekoff  
Peter Robinson  
Patricia Rogers  
Earl L Sept  
Catherine M Symonds

## Branch 800 – New Westminster

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Werner Erwin (Joe) Berger  
Donna Julia Bird  
Mary Christina Brown  
Garfield William Cooper  
Marion F Craig  
Thomas George (Geo) Dodsworth  
Patricia J Fingarson  
Marie Anna Forsyth  
Vivian Ruth Friesen  
Kathleen Vera Hall  
Douglas J Horan  
Barry John Jackson  
Diane Patricia Laughlin  
James (Jim) Frank Law  
Caryl Linette Leflar  
Judy Anne Marsh  
Michael J Orason  
Suzanne Stewart  
Marie Ellen Towill  
Lucille Vachon  
Marie Antoinette Pauline (Paula) Wardle  
June Irene Williams

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Patricia (Pat) Huff  
William M Kelley  
Don James Kidd  
Greg B McGowan  
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Raymond (Ray) Alfred Nuttall  
Wayne Rose  
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Rachel Gibson  
Beatrice M Herzog  
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Maria McCallum  
Margaret Patricia Park  
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Jean Sime  
Lillian C Walker  
Barton K. Wick  
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John Austin  
H Peter Bayerthal  
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Ian K Buck  
Richard James Carter  
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Rev. Michael C Forshaw  
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Dianne Beth Grehan  
Ian Brian Hall  
Jean T Hannon  
Jacqueline H Johnson  
Leslie Joyce  
Norman Gok Min Jung  
Forest Howard Keller  
Geraldine M W Kilby  
Laszlo Kiss  
Agnes Macaulay Marshall  
David E Milliken  
Gillian M Neumann  
Erick Nissen  
Mario A Parente  
Marjorie Park  
William Donald Rawlyk  
Winfried Rompf  
Ruth Scott  
Helen J Suttie  
Patrick Hallman Thomas  
Hans J. Wantke  
Beverley Marie

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Arthur Antrobus  
Joanne Ash  
Linda L Avram  
Alexander Beattie  
Violet E Berrisford  
Jenny Bondesen  
Edna May Boyle  
Diane E Brady  
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Carol Ann Carter  
Gladys M Collings  
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Doreen E Crawley  
Colin C Creighton  
Brian R De Montmorency  
John L Evans  
Lynne Ewing  
Beatrice E Fenn  
Andrea Marie Fulton  
Donald Murray Galbraith  
Laurie Wayne Geddes

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Mike Gregory George  
Dianne Gilmour  
Elizabeth H Gonnason  
Mildred Anne Gracie  
Gloria D. Grant  
Raymond F Guilhamoulie  
Norman G K Gustafson  
George W Harper  
Joyce Edith Hildebrandt  
Brendan J Holden  
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Rick T Morgan  
Vernon A H Murison  
Joan C Murray  
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Priscilla B Preston  
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Doreen Janet Renton  
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Irene Elizabeth Stewart  
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Crystal Helen MacLean  
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Maurice Guilbault  
Berthe Marguerite Parent  
James Richardson  
Henry A Skrypnek  
Donald B Telford  
Estelle Pamela (Pam) Temple  
Charles Ernest Atkinson  
Lewelyn Archer Chater  
Maurice Guilbault

Berthe Marguerite Parent  
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