



CHRONICLES & CAPERS

BC Retired Principals' &
Vice-Principals' Association

Issue 57 • October 2013

Musings from the President by Gerald Soon



Remembering Septembers!

Ah September! **S**eptember always meant new beginnings for me. As a student, there was the excitement of meeting your new teacher and discovering who was in your class. As a teacher, it always represented another chance to work, to try new techniques, to

form new relationships with another group of young minds. As an administrator, September represented something else for me: the opportunity to partner with a community of learners once again . . . students, staff, and parents.

Our work as school administrators represented far more than the academic and social growth of our young people. It was an opportunity to challenge and assist our staffs to better understand their role as educators and mentors, and communicate and educate our parent community on how they could partner with us in educating their children.

Reflecting on the Septembers of my own career, I think of professional growth over the years. Driving to school my first day as a “real teacher,” I asked myself, “What have I gotten into? No one TOLD me what to do the first day!” I wish I had that daybook from day one. No, discussing your classroom expectations is not going to take until recess – that I very quickly discovered!

Driving to school on the first day, the last year I was a principal, I had very different thoughts!

As a classroom teacher I wanted to learn more about my students on that first day, so I would ask about their aspirations – what did they want to be when they grew up? There were police officers, doctors, teachers, and quite often a long repeat of “I don’t know.” I know that some of my students actually did enter the professions that they dreamt about. I did; from Grade 5 on I knew that I wanted to teach. And that career choice indeed was both rewarding and challenging.

Would I have changed anything? The way I taught some things, most certainly. But, that was the beautiful thing about Septembers! It was a chance to try again! And for that I will always be grateful.

Each Labour Day evening before school started, was always a fitful sleep for me. Perhaps it was the excitement and thrill of new beginnings, or the realization of the awesomeness of the task ahead. It didn’t matter if I was student, teacher, or administrator. It was always the same.

What about these days? I sleep well knowing I did my best. But now there is a new excitement . . . what will I do to contribute this year? Help my grandchildren learn? Volunteer? Mentor? The opportunities are endless.

May you sleep well, and reflect and appreciate that life’s opportunities are calling! Have an awesome year! If you are newly retired, welcome to our association, and your new “September of Life!” 🐼

Goin' to Goa? by Chris Harker

The person who proclaimed that “getting there is half the fun” obviously hasn’t been to Goa. It’s half way round the world from Western Canada so a jaunt there involves several lengthy flights and inconvenient departure and arrival times. Nor is returning any better as one has to be prepared for the experience of Mumbai airport. This is not the place to head for if you need a quick one-week break on the beach. When there, however, and if you’re prepared to spend 3 or 4 weeks, you’re in for a novel, memorable, and delightful holiday.

Once a Portugese colony, Goa became part of India more than 50 years ago. This enclave on the west coast of India is divided into North, Central, and Southern regions. My month long visit there beginning just before Christmas last year was to the South, a destination targeted mainly by Brits, Russians, and assorted Europeans with a penchant for yoga, incredible beaches, balmy water, plus inexpensive food and lodging.

There’s a strange and inexplicable rule in Southern Goa; no permanent structure is permitted within 500 meters of the ocean. This means that waterfront accommodation and restaurants are hastily erected for “the season” (December to May) but then must be dismantled. The result is an interesting array of creatively tacky structures that contain some outstanding restaurants and Spartan bedrooms



with first class beds and nice bathrooms. Those who desire the ostentatious luxury of cruising might be jolted by Southern Goa (for that, visit the North); those who enjoy taking the time to relax in a friendly but very different culture will revel in the experience.

Goa is distant from the Taj Mahal, Jaipur, and the Red Fort. Although nothing is inaccessible these days, there is lots to see nearby and numerous agencies



anxious to make arrangements for you. Our family which included kids and grandkids, limited ourselves to the spectacular Palolem beach area. We rose each morning and made our way to our headquarters on the beach – a restaurant where we set up camp for the day - ordering drinks and meals between swims, sandcastling, walks, conversation, and reading. We returned “home” late in the afternoon, showered, enjoyed a drink together, and then sallied forth – sometimes in a tuk tuk – to a lovely meal. Often it was Indian but Western, Mexican, Greek, and Italian fare were all available. After dinner we explored the numerous shops where anything from saris to saffron could be purchased after a spate of friendly bargaining.

Nothing was expensive in Goa though how long this attraction will exist is unknown. Accommodation ranged from \$50 to \$90 a night and beer was about \$1. Meals, as always, varied but tended to range from \$2 to \$7.

If you’re looking for something “completely different”, consider goin’ to Goa. 🐾

How Would You Like to Prepare a Meal for 210,000!

by Gerald Soon

Do you want to be involved in the process of making something that will actually make a difference? Consider volunteering with the Fraser Valley Gleaners located in Abbotsford, BC.

The Fraser Valley Gleaners Society was established in 1999, modelled after the Okanagan Gleaners. This registered charity is a volunteer run and donor driven organization, and every day one can find volunteers from all walks of life give their time and energy to slice, dice, scrape, and mix. The oldest volunteer is 94, and while we were volunteering, some high school students came in to assist for service credits. Volunteers can even camp there as they have washrooms, showers, and a kitchen.

In biblical times, gleaning meant to look for left-over or missed produce. A landowner was required by law at the time, to ensure that sufficient unharvested food was available to feed the poor, migrant, and orphaned so they could survive. In this spirit, the Fraser Valley Gleaners operates. There are six gleaner organizations in Canada and the US.

During the year, fresh and frozen vegetable produce and apples are donated by produce partners who receive a receipt that can be used for taxation purposes. Perfectly good edible foods that the consumer market would reject because the items are too small or have imperfections in appearance are trimmed, washed, chopped, dehydrated, and stored to make a dried soup mix. Apples are prepared the same way for a dried apple package that can be eaten as a snack, or rehydrated and cooked into an apple sauce.

The morning I went to volunteer, I trimmed carrots from 8:30 am to coffee break. Then the volunteers

were shifted to the back area of the plant where large vats of dried vegetables and donated lentils and dried beans were organized in assembly line fashion. Each person was assigned a station where they measured lentils, dried onions, dried brussel sprouts, and other dried vegetables into a bucket which was then pushed repeatedly to the right until it reached the final station where salt was added. My job in this part was to take two buckets over to the packaging station. The bucket was dumped into a funnel type of affair where there was a plastic bag being held close to the mouth. (Hint!

Wait until the volunteer says “OK” before dumping . . . believe me, I learned by experience!) Another volunteer heat seals the bag, which is then put into a box which holds 12 of the large bags. Each bag holds enough mix to make 100 servings of soup. Recipients add their own spices to make the soup appealing for their own cultural tastes. By noon, we were done and cleaned up. The volunteers that day packaged enough for 210,000 servings and certainly left with a sense of fulfillment.

Fraser Valley Gleaner Soup Mix and Fraser Valley Gleaner Apple Snacks are distributed throughout the developing world. In order to ensure that their products are distributed into the hands of those in greatest need, the organization works with a variety of distribution

networks: reputable relief and development agencies, individual missionaries, and short term outreach teams. In 2012, over 12 million servings of soup were packaged. The following countries received soup mix: Paraguay, Ukraine, Haiti, Philippines, Somalia, Kenya, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, Burkino Faso, Cambodia, Uganda, Balkans, Nicaragua, and South Africa.

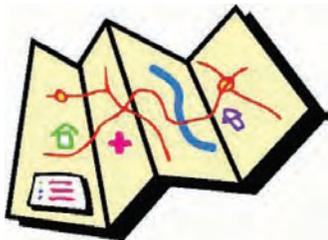
The Fraser Valley Gleaners is located at 85 Winson Road in Abbotsford. Check out their website at www.fvgleaners.org. Better yet, call (604) 870-9272 and volunteer. Preparing a meal for 210,000 is a fun, fulfilling activity! 🍲



Travel Plans for 2013-2014

I have been in many places, but I've never been in Cahoots. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in Cahoots with someone. I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there.

I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my children, friends, family, and work.



I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much

on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often.

I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

Sometimes I'm in Capable, and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favorite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get!

I may have been in Continent, and I don't remember what country I was in. It's an age thing. They tell me it is very wet and damp there.

Life is too short for negative drama and petty things. So laugh insanely, love truly, and forgive quickly. And enjoy your travels wherever they may take you! 🐾

An Offer from an Affinity Partner

As an affinity partner, Johnson is pleased to provide service from dedicated insurance professionals, 24/7 claims service, and the knowledge that they are behind you, every step of the way. They take pride in the personalized service they provide, and are offering their customers a chance for a spectacular personalized prize worth \$50,000!

Call for a home insurance quote between September 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014 and you'll be entered into a draw for a personalized prize worth \$50,000. Get a MEDOC travel insurance quote for an additional chance to win. You can customize your prize by choosing from a list of exciting rewards including vehicles, vacations, shopping sprees, spa packages, and more.

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5 Health Tips for Seniors

Incorporating the following five tips into your daily routine can help you maintain a healthier lifestyle and keep your body strong and in good physical shape.

1. **Drink Water:** your body needs water to function properly. Staying hydrated helps regulate your body temperature and helps remove waste from the body.
2. **Exercise:** this doesn't mean that you need to do tons of push-ups or sit-ups each day. Taking a walk or riding a bike three or four times a week will help keep your body strong and healthy.
3. **Don't Skip Breakfast:** starting your day off with a healthy breakfast will help fuel your body for the start of the day and helps your body maintain healthy blood sugar levels.
4. **Calcium:** osteoporosis is a common problem for both senior men and women. Dairy products can help you get the calcium and Vitamin D needed to keep your bones strong as you age.
5. **Vitamins and Supplements:** as we age we often need to take a supplement in order to get the amount of vitamins that our body needs. Some of the vitamins that seniors need are Vitamin A, C, D, E, and calcium. 🐾

What I Did On My Summer Holidays by Vivian Rygnestad

Dear Teacher: Here is my story that you ask me to write every September. I didn't do much it seems, but since you're always checking on what I learned, I decided to write about that.



I learned that backyard birds like green birdfeeders – not red – only green. For years we've had two plastic cylindrical

feeders with green lids and green perches. A few months ago, one broke, so I bought an identical one, except the new one was red. Then I noticed that birds only ate from the green feeder. So I switched locations. No matter where the feeders were, the birds only ate from the green feeder. Finally I checked the internet and learned that birds have a keen sense of colour. Birds with bright plumage prefer bright colours, and camouflage coloured birds like . . . well, camouflage colours. Mystery solved? But what about hummingbirds?

I learned that long hot summers make me yearn for rain. The gardens need rain, the lawns need rain, cars get dusty, and I get cranky when it doesn't rain for weeks.

I read – lots – as all good students do. With my library card I read books, newspapers, and magazines. Paper or on-line. I loved Canadian author Lawrence Hill's "The Book of Negroes" and recommend it to everyone. I also recommend "Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish's "I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey". Now I've started "The 100-Year-Old Man who Climbed out the Window and Disappeared" by Jonas Jonasson, which I borrowed from another retired principal-friend who loved the subtitle "It's Never too Late to Start Over". I also took out lots of cookbooks. But once again, I realized that I like looking at the pictures and dreaming of . . . eating at restaurants or hiring a cook.

I learned that working on community projects is not always easy. Differing opinions and priorities abound – often quite vigorously. I learned that community consultations can be held, but there's always someone or another group that feels they've been ignored. I re-read a favourite book "The Opposable Mind: Winning Through Integrative Thinking", but it got so I couldn't even integrate what was going through my own mind. I consulted more of my books such as "Difficult/Tough/Crucial Conversations" and realized that the more I read, the more confused I became. There should be a book called "Trust your Gut . . . Instinct".

I learned that a two year old can talk non-stop and in the flood of words (that I don't always understand), I sometimes wonder what I've agreed to. I've learned to enjoy gardens through his eyes. Raspberries, peas, strawberries, baby carrots, radishes, lettuce, and the delight of sitting inside a tepee made of bean plants and munching on the walls. I've learned that popsicles made of fresh fruit are a snack and frozen bananas can pass as ice cream.

I had a good summer. I hope you did too. 🐼



Reverse Mortgages are Expensive

Over 90% of all reverse mortgage plans sold in Canada fall into the “simple reverse mortgage” category. It seems like a great idea because you can get your hands on your equity even as you remain in your home – you can stay there until you die or choose to sell at which point the reverse mortgage is repayable.

What is disturbing about these plans is the way in which interest is calculated. Even though we are experiencing the lowest interest rates in history, the rate they use to calculate the reverse mortgage is substantially higher than current rates, which causes the debt to compound faster.



If you take out \$200,000 in equity at age 65, by the time you turn 80 the reverse mortgage could have grown to \$600,000. You also can't lock in today's rates, as their rates float. If you change your mind about the reverse mortgage later, it may be quite costly to

break the reverse mortgage after the cooling off period in the contract.

It may make more sense to consider downsizing and investing the difference, or downsizing, renting and investing it all. 🏡

From Creed Wealth Management Group (CIPF Member)

Tax Tip

If you are between age 60 and 64 may want to apply earlier for CPP benefits. If you are a new retiree considering receiving early benefits under the CPP before you turn 65, you should consider applying for these benefits by the end of 2013. That's because changes to the CPP that started in 2012 could reduce the benefits you will receive. The penalty for taking early CPP benefits is gradually increasing from 0.5%/month to 0.6%/month by 2016. That penalty increased from 0.52 %/month in 2012 to 0.54%/month in 2013. Be sure to talk to your tax accountant about this before you decide whether to take your CPP benefits early. 🏡

The BCPVPA & the BCRPVPA by Shelley Green

Welcome to September. To those newly retired, I imagine it must be very strange to begin September without the pressures of start up and the excitement and promise of the new school year. However, I am sure that you eventually get used to the change in routine.

As we begin the 2013-14 year, excited about the many events that are on the horizon, it is an opportune time to reflect on a number of changes here at the BCPVPA. As many of you are aware our amazing Sharon Cutcliffe retired last year after many years of dedicated service. We are pleased that Don Boyd, a principal from Parksville/Qualicum, was the successful applicant and joins with Harold Krische on our Legal and Contracts team. Don has also assumed duties for Student Voice, which I know many of you will have had good experiences with over the years. Don started on August 1 and is a welcome addition to our staff.

I would also like to welcome Caroline Picard who has joined the Professional Learning team for a one-year secondment to support the Supervision for Learning initiative. Gaila Erickson, Manager, Professional Learning, and Caroline are excited to be working together on this innovative program that is currently full and has a lengthy waiting list.

The office is a beehive of activity as we prepare for our Connecting Leaders Conference (Beyond Innovation and Change, October 25–26, Richmond), Student Voice, ESAC, and Chapter Council. It is going to be a busy year.

From time to time I hear from many of the retired principals and vice-principals who I have worked with over the years. Though their schedule has changed, it is clear that they continue to be strong supporters of children and public education. They are involved in significant initiatives and offer incredible support to a variety of good causes. Their time and expertise are valuable assets. I hope that, if you are ever near the office in Vancouver, you will drop by and visit. I'd be delighted to hear about the wonderful things you are doing. 🏡

(Shelley Green is the current president of the BCPVPA)

The Downside of Downsizing by Vince Devries

Lately, Corine and I have talked about downsizing. It all started with the neighbours moving into a “home” and retired friends moving from a house into a condo. We live in a 2,900 sq. ft. home, set on 0.4 of an acre; a lot of house and a lot of garden to maintain. It has a beautiful view over the inlet leading into Ladysmith Harbour. Yachts, workboats, log booms; always something to look at. With so many family members and friends living in other parts of the country and the world, the four guestrooms made good sense when we bought the house. They certainly have been well used over the 13 years we have lived here since our retirement.

I have spent a great deal of time on the garden alone and it certainly helped me to stay trim and healthy. Being a long term diabetic, I can tell you that my sugar level is lower after 2 hours of hard work in the garden, as compared to a 2 hour hike in the hills around here, which Corine and I do two or three times per week. I credit the garden with enabling me to maintain reasonable sugar levels without any medications.

We have to admit that lately, all that work seems a bit more exhausting than it used to be and we are not as quick to invite people to stay over for a few nights. We are loath to leave this idyllic spot and even more so, everything that goes with downsizing such as forcing things that we consider heirlooms or valuable on our children, having garage sales, and making trips to the dump. What is more, where will we end up? A small townhouse, a condo with a view of another condo, a much smaller house, which due to its size may be situated in an older and possibly run down area? Will

the place fit our cherished 4-seater couch and what about our large paintings that require wall space?

So here we are sitting in our “sun room” overlooking the sparkling waters of the inlet and the sun drenched hills across the water, sipping our coffee, discussing this important subject. On the bright side, the much reduced overhead of a smaller home, and no big yard to worry about, would allow us to travel more. On the other hand, downsizing would mean that we are now at the beginning of the end, that part of one’s life that is filled with walking sticks, walkers, wheelchairs, and people who call you “dear”.

After much discussion, we decided that we will give this matter some serious further thought, but that for now we need to concentrate on our European home exchange next June. These people picked us because of our home and would be devastated if they ended up in a corner suite. By the time we get back from our home exchange we will need to address the garden, and the fall is not a good time to sell. It would appear that the next discussion will take place early in 2015. In the meantime, we will see what some of our peers have done, and look with a new interest at townhouses and condos for sale. We also promised each other that we would make a serious effort get rid of things with a view of making the eventual move somewhat easier.

Next time I will return to the problem of your disappearing savings. That is it for now, from the sunlit waters of Ladysmith.

The above does not constitute professional advice and is given strictly for information purposes. 🐱

CUBA – ‘Spanish Studies in Cuba’ (Havana),
\$2,500.00 Can. for 4 wks. Hotel with breakfast
and dinner, tuition fee. (Air fare not included).

250-478-0494 ssic@telus.net

BCRPVPA Bulletin Board

Please Let us Know

Please ensure that we have your current email address. eBulletins are sent out on an as-needed basis. Please make sure that you also add bcrpvpa@gmail.com and gersoon@telus.net to your address book so your internet provider accepts the e-mail and doesn't reject it as spam. Have you changed your mailing address? Please contact Jennifer at jennifer@bcpvpa.bc.ca so you can continue to receive newsletters and any other mailed items.

BCRPVPA Listserve

There are over 150 members on the BCRPVPA listserv and topics have been quite varied. However, any questions, concerns, or opinions are welcomed. If you have a vacation spot to rent out or are looking for one, or if you have something to sell this is the place for our members to do so at no cost. Many members have been able to re-connect with former colleagues through the listserv. If you have not signed up yet and are interested in being a member, contact Rick at rick.h.ashe@gmail.com. This site can only be accessed by our members who have signed up.

Help Spread the Sunshine

Remember when you were an Administrator and wanted to acknowledge the good things staff members did and recognize those for whom life wasn't going so well? The BCRPVPA wants to do the same for our members and their families. Consequently, we need your input to be able to do so. Please e-mail Christine Johnson at cjbarrett@eastlink.ca or phone her at 604-591-9794 to tell her of any congratulatory events, e.g. awards, new positions, or any news for which condolences are applicable. Thanks for your help.

Membership

New members are always welcome. Share this edition with your newly retired colleagues and have them join you. Check our web site www.bcrpvpa.ca for membership forms and more information.

Important Dates for 2013-2014

General Meetings

Tuesday, Oct. 22 - BCPVPA office

Wednesday, Jan. 22 - BCPVPA office

Tuesday, March 4 - location to be announced

Wednesday, May 7 - BCPVPA office

Live outside the Lower Mainland? Add these dates to your calendar so that you can plan any visits and appointments in Vancouver and take in a BCRPVPA meeting at the same time. All members are always welcome.

Newsletter Submission Deadlines.

However, articles are welcome at any time. Please send any articles to ruffeski@telus.net or vrygnestad@gmail.com

Saturday, Nov. 7

Tuesday, Feb. 25

Monday, May 12

JUST KIDDING

