



CHRONICLES & CAPERS

BC Retired Principals' &
Vice-Principals' Association

Issue 65 • September 2015

Musings from the President by Vivian Rognestad



Autumn once again and with it a new year of changes. I give thanks to Joy, Rick, Olga, and Mike for their contributions to our association: Mike for his secretarial and technology skills and Olga for her energy and "can-do" attitude. I thank Rick for his many years on the executive including president

(2010-2012), his knowledge of BCRPVPA history, and the incorporation of more technology into our association work. I thank Joy for her many years on the executive including president (2008-2010), mentor to many, and newsletter editor extraordinaire. All four gave freely of their time and knowledge with enthusiasm and dedication. Thank you!

At the May 2015 AGM, our revised Bylaws were passed. Among them was the category of "Associate Membership". *Any person who is not eligible for Active membership may apply to the Executive Committee for Associate membership and on acceptance and on payment of annual membership dues, shall become an Associate member of the Association entitled to all benefits but without voting rights. a) Upon the death of that Active or Honourary Life Member, the spouse shall be eligible to apply for Associate*

Autumn once again

membership." If you know of anyone who is in this situation, please advise him/her of this membership category.

This year will once again see changes in our newsletters. For the past year, significant savings were realized when paper copies were sent by request only. (note: we will continue to send paper copies to those who received them last year. If you change your mind, let us know.) Others will continue to receive newsletters by email. Due to increased professional printing costs and postage, mailed copies will now be colour photocopies, thus reducing the cost of each mailed newsletter to slightly over \$1.00. What are your suggestions for the money saved?

2016 marks the 20th anniversary of the BCRPVPA. We have grown from 14 to over 700 members. To mark this occasion, we will be having a special presentation at the AGM on May 4, 2016. You will also find association highlights from the past in our upcoming newsletters. We encourage everyone from our beginnings in 1996 to our newest members to attend, to reconnect, and/or meet new colleagues. If you have special memories from past years of our association, please send them to me at bcrpvpa@gmail.com.

Thank you for your patience with our BCRPVPA website. It is being updated and should be current by the end of this month. I hope your summer has gone well and like me, are looking forward to new adventures in the new year.

Congratulations Vivian!

In conjunction with UBC's Centennial, Vivian has been chosen as one of the UBC Faculty of Education's "100 Outstanding Alumni" for her dedication, expertise, and impact as an educator, leader, and social justice work within the Japanese-Canadian community.

You Have to Love Travelling - Joy Ruffeski

I love to travel and usually do so without many problems. However, this summer my travel reminded me of what it was like as an administrator and dealing with constant changes sent out by the Ministry of Education. Relax, be flexible, look for alternatives, think positively, move quickly, demonstrate patience, show good communication skills, and keep smiling!

It all started when I arrived at YVR airport over 2 1/2 hours before the first leg of my journey. Air Canada informed me that my flight was delayed an hour – this meant that I wouldn't be able to connect with my flight to Dubai as there wouldn't be enough time to transfer to a different terminal in Seattle and board the flight before the gate closed. Activate administrative skills – *look for alternatives!* With another flight leaving in 40 minutes with the same airline, I requested that I be put on that one instead as there were seats left. “No, that’s not possible; the gate is closed” I was told. “All right, what about Alaska Airlines as that is the airline I am usually booked on as they are the partner airlines for Emirates,” I said. After much paperwork and no added cost, I was put on an Alaska Airlines flight that got me there just in time to make my connections.

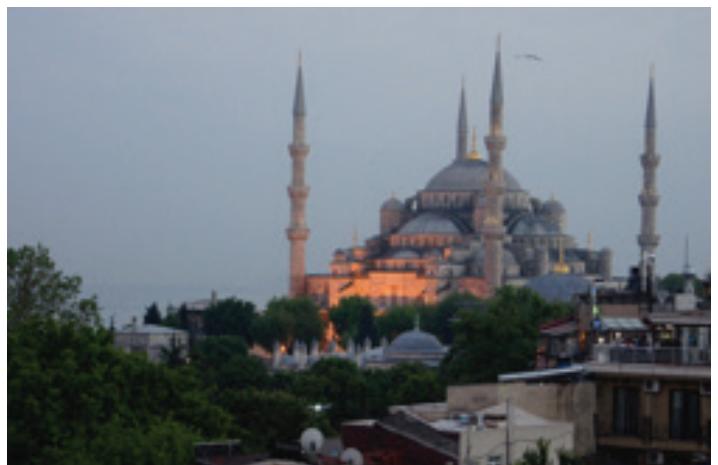
Next leg of the journey was just a short 4 1/2 hour flight from Dubai to Istanbul. The flight was wonderful but as there were thunderstorms over Istanbul, the plane circled for an hour before being able to land. Waiting for luggage after clearing immigration is never fun but when the baggage area is small, crowded, and the wait stretches for 2 hours, it can be a little tiresome. Just *relax* I thought and as my travel colleague was waiting for me, I was able to leave my carry-on baggage with her while I searched out the currency exchange and washroom.

Travel in and around Istanbul was uneventful but when we were motoring down the coast from Troy to Pergamon, the tour van had a flat tire. No BCAA in Turkey and after repeated frantic calls by our driver, 1 1/2 hours in the hot sun along a busy road, a mechanic arrived and changed the tire. We weren’t worried; we had bottled water and power bars to keep us hydrated and fed – it was just like a day at school when you ate on the run.

A few days later, we left Hieropolis for the Denizli airport in an absolutely torrential downpour and spectacular lightning storm. The highway was flooded in places;

rivers flowed down many of the roads. *Think positively* was the motto that morning and sure enough our driver was very skilled and we got through safely. Our plane departed an hour late and consequently we only had 20 minutes to make our connection in Istanbul for Kayseri airport. *Move quickly* was the next skill employed and as the domestic terminal gates were close to each other we made it just as the gates closed.

Arriving back in Istanbul after our visit in Cappadocia, we returned to the small boutique hotel we stayed at previously. They had kept our larger suitcases while we toured so we asked for our stored suitcases but somehow the manager got tied up, disappeared, and the bags didn’t come up. After some time, I went to reception and the bellman was there so I requested our stored bags. We waited and 15 minutes transpired so down again to see what was happening. He said, “Just 2 minutes”. We waited another 10 minutes, still no bags, so down I went again. He said, “Right away,” and about 5 minutes later



he appeared with an old decrepit looking wheelchair! Okay, we were both retirees but definitely not needing a wheelchair. Using *good communication skills*, I explained again – suitcases. He appeared 5 minutes later with two gigantic bags. No, I explained those weren’t our bags and perhaps I should come down with him to get them. “No, no,” he said, “I will find them”. He reappeared 5 minutes later with my bag but not that of my friend. I explained, “Still one other bag,” and he laughed and pulled it from around the corner of the hallway. Yes, *keep smiling* – another administrative skill!

Next leg of our journey involved travelling from Turkey through Dubai. When you have a more than 8-hour connection with Emirates Air, you receive a free hotel

room. Arriving at the hotel, there was a challenging check-in as my friend's tickets were somehow separated on the booking and she did not "qualify" for the overnight free hotel voucher. However, I had talked with an Emirates agent about this before leaving Canada and he said it was not a problem, as she would be sharing my room. The woman at the hotel was less than the polite but finally checked us into an unmade room. When we returned to the desk she didn't believe us and sent someone up to the room to check if it really had not been cleaned! Ah, yes, *patience* was needed. After speaking to the night manager, we were placed in a clean suite and had a good night's sleep before we flew onward to East Africa.

Travel to Tanzania from Dubai involves a connecting flight from Nairobi to Kilimanjaro airport. When one arrives at Nairobi airport, even when bags are tagged through to another airport, you must check in with the airline, give your baggage tag numbers, and an airline employee goes and physically gets your bags and puts them on the next flight. My friend's bags were only tagged to Nairobi (error on the part of the agent checking her in in Dubai) so it meant that the agent needed to not only pick them up but also retag them for Kilimanjaro. Arriving in Tanzania, my bags were on the plane but hers were not. A baggage claim and assurances ensued that they would be on the late night flight. They did arrive and she had them before we left by Land Rover for the middle of nowhere where we were to teach English to secondary school girls on scholarship with CHES.

After several weeks of teaching, we were exhausted and ready to leave for home. We arrived early at airport and said farewell to our driver. Upon attempting to enter the terminal, we were sent to the Precision Air office as our 6:20 pm flight (code share with Kenyan Air) was cancelled. The clerk at Precision Air would not book us on the 9 pm flight as our Emirates flight left at 10:50 pm and she said it would not give us time for connections even though the flight from Kilimanjaro to Nairobi is only 40 minutes. The only option she gave us was to stay in Arusha and take the 9 am flight the next morning. That meant spending the whole day in the Nairobi airport – not a place you want to spend even 30 minutes in, let alone 18 hours! We found a fabulous Kenyan Air fellow who was not successful in contacting anyone at an Emirates office in Tanzania or being able to get online to let them know we would not be on the flight and to change our Emirates flight to

the next day. Ah yes, *patience, flexibility, positive thinking* were necessary. Eventually he suggested that we take a small carry-on bag for the next day, secured us seats on the 9 pm flight, and said he believed we would make our connection – even if our checked bags didn't. He assured us that our luggage would be on the next day's flight if it didn't arrive with us in Dubai. Arriving in Nairobi, there was no attendant to extend the jetway to connect the plane to the terminal. We finally were able to deplane after a 15-minute wait and ran to the other end of the airport where the gate was just closing for our Emirates flight to Dubai.

We arrived in Dubai at 5 am but, of course, our checked luggage did not. After spending time with the lost



baggage official we were off to our hotel. Oops – it was Ramadan and as an Islamic country there is no eating or drinking in public; coffee shops and restaurants even in the many malls are closed until sundown. The few places open are behind closed doors and you can't even carry and drink a bottle of water in public. That certainly put a damper on the two days we were to spend there relaxing. Administrative skills into play again and as our luggage didn't arrive and we only had the clothes we had worn since leaving Tanzania, *look for alternatives* was the only option. The hotel did have a restaurant that was open, it was only 30 degrees outside with a nice breeze, and the hotel had a roof top swimming pool with lots of lounges and sun umbrellas so we spent the two days lounging around in the hotel. Our luggage did arrive just 3 hours before we left for Canada so at least we had clean clothes to travel home in.

Yes, you really have to love travelling and use all those skills and attitudes you acquired as an administrator when going on vacation. Happy touring! ☺

**Interested in BCRPVPA's constitution
and bylaws? Check out our website
www.bcrpvpa.ca for the updated
version as approved at the
May 2015 AGM**

Climbing Battle Mountain - Graham Mulligan



The alpine wilderness of Wells Gray Provincial Park attracts outdoor enthusiasts from around the world. The southern portion of the park holds some of the most dramatic opportunities for hiking (and winter skiing) adventurers. Three mountain chalets provide welcome shelter and further opportunities to explore the magnificent peaks while staying two nights in each one.

Our group of ten retired and semi-retired friends set out for Clearwater, B.C. in August to experience this 84-kilometer hike, lasting seven days and six nights. We all hike locally near Vancouver with the White Rock Leisure Society. Our host and guide was from Wells Gray Adventures, a private backcountry tour operator since 1988. Their low-impact philosophy is built around rigorous waste, water and energy systems that operate in each of the three ‘huts’. In fact, it was partly through the efforts of Wells Gray Adventures that the Trophy Mountains region was added to the park in 1995 and a portion of their revenue goes to maintaining trails and facilities and other park stewardship projects.

Our first day was a big uphill hike to the Trophy Chalet on Trophy Mountain. We each carried about twenty pounds of our own stuff and some fresh food items that became part of the group meals cooked for us by our guide. Small jobs like washing dishes, cleaning the cabins and fetching water were shared amongst us. This contribution of effort helps everyone stay engaged in the experience and our participating helps keep costs low. Sleeping arrangements are in the loft with simple mats, a duvet and pillows provided. All we needed to

bring was a sleeping bag liner or bed sheet. We did, however, need to bring appropriate clothing for the changeable mountain weather.

On the second day at each chalet we were able to hike the nearby peaks and see the spectacular scenery. Wells Gray Park is in the Cariboo mountain range but we could see the Monashees (and distant Rockies on a clear day). On our second day at the last chalet we climbed Battle Mountain which stands at 7800 feet above Fight Meadow. The area is the historic sight where the Chilcotin and Shushwap Nations fought over Caribou hunting rights in 1875. Survey parties for the Canadian Pacific Railway explored the area between 1872 and 1881.

Visitors from all over the world come to British Columbia to experience our incredible natural environment and this destination is one of the best. You don't need to be a heavy-duty hiker to enjoy nature. There are outdoor adventures for every level. You can easily find a club on the Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) Outdoor Clubs Directory. ☺

Plan a Visit to Turkey - Joy Ruffeski

If you love history, Turkey is definitely the place to visit. From the moment we left the Ataturk airport we were aware of the past as we drove under an aqueduct, saw remains of ancient Roman walls along the roadside, passed beside the Marmara Sea, looked down the Bosphorus Strait, and could clearly see the Golden Horn. All those historical places taught in social studies courses came alive! If you plan to visit this area here are a few tips for a pleasant vacation there.

Stay in a boutique hotel located in the heart of old Istanbul on the European continent, not one of the international chains. Our hotel afforded us an excellent view of the sea and a few of the old timber houses as well as personalized and friendly service. It was an easy walk up to the Sultanahmet Mosque, Hagia Sophia Museum, Topkapi Palace, Basilica Cistern, and the Grand Bazaar – all sites one should visit when in Istanbul. Still in the European side of Turkey, the Dolmabahce Palace rivals other world palaces with its 14 tons of gold leaf on the ceilings and such innovations as toilets, electricity, a central heating system, and an elevator in spite of the

fact that it was built between 1843 and 1856. Although we saw many tourists wandering around by themselves and consulting guidebooks or with large tour groups, I recommend that you arrange for a private local guide as the cost is very inexpensive, it affords you special entry into the historical sites, and you learn about the history while enjoying viewing it rather than reading about it from a book. In the evenings you can explore on your own and find outstanding restaurants everywhere, easily walk to the Spice Market, have a luxurious Turkish bath, or take a boat ride down the Bosphorus.

Avoid making a day trip by ferry over to the Prince Islands and a sightseeing tour of the largest island; spending a day instead exploring Istanbul is time better spent. Although there are numerous attractive Ottoman era mansions on the Prince Islands, many of the wooden homes are in disrepair as the Turkish government considers them historic buildings and does not permit repairs or renovations. Other than emergency vehicles, no motorized vehicles are allowed so travel is by foot, bicycle, or horse-drawn carriage. The town on Buyukada is a typical tourist town, full of junky souvenir shops and eateries of questionable quality.

Travelling along the Dardenelles and into the Aegean Sea allows one to visit Gallipoli before an overnight stay in Canakkale and on to the archaeological sites of Troy and Pergamon. Once again, having a local personal guide is advisable as you can then ask as many questions as you wish and really absorb the historical significance of the various aspects of each site. If you have a love of architecture and construction techniques, the foundations of the temple and trajaneum at Pergamon will be of real interest.

Many Mediterranean cruises make a stop at Kusadasi allowing passengers to spend a short time at the ancient city of Ephesus. However, to fully appreciate the phenomenal history of this area, it is recommended spending at least two days here. You should allow 3 to 4 hours minimum to visit Ephesus, walking from one end to the other, exploring all the little streets and buildings off of the main thoroughfare. Note the massage beds, the toilets, the underground tunnels from the library to the brothels, as well as the 25,000 seat amphitheatre as they clearly show aspects of the life of the wealthy. The small nearby town of Selcuk, the House of the Virgin Mary, and Pigeon Island are well worth visits while in this area.



Pamukkale and the ancient Roman city of Hieropolis are known for the stunning white travertine pools. Avoid swimming in the antique natural hot springs pool though; instead go wading in the warm travertine pool. All hotels in the nearby town are really very poor with respect to comfort, food, and service. It would be better to take a day trip to this area from Ephesus or stay overnight in nearly Denizli where the airport is located. In central Turkey, the Cappadocia region is definitely not to be missed. This may be the highlight of your visit to this country. If you love hiking, there are wonderful trails here to explore. The underground cities carved into the rocks and down six or more levels are amazing. The Goreme Open Air Museum is the most famous site in the area but there are many other places to view as well. Each of the myriad of fairy chimneys found in and around the small towns of the area are fascinating. Seeing the whirling dervishes in the actual ancient caravan site at Saruhan makes the experience much more authentic. You should stay in one of the cave hotels where your rooms are actually carved into the rock face; they are well worth the little extra cost and as they are cool in summer and warm in winter there is no need to worry about comfort.

When in Turkey, be sure to enjoy the food and specialty beverage. The cay (tea) and Turkish coffee are both outstanding. Raki is the favored alcoholic beverage but Efes Pilsen beer is wonderful after a busy day of touring. Mezes make for both appetizers and lighter meals. For a snack while walking around Istanbul, simit (sesame rings) offer a tasty treat. Kofte (meatballs of ground lamb or beef) are delicious as are all types of kebabs served with pilav (rice). For variety, try borek, a tasty treat of pastry and cheese. Taste doner (huge skewers of beef or lamb) slow roasted and thinly sliced off the skewer. For dessert the many varieties of baklava, dates, or dried apricots are most enjoyable. No visit to Turkey would be complete without tasting at least a dozen of the various types of Turkish delight – my favourite was the white marshmallow looking one that our hotel always had out in the lobby for its guests to enjoy. I sampled several pieces every time I passed through the lobby!

Plan a visit to Turkey – you won't regret it. With 15 sites in Turkey on the UNESCO World Heritage list, one could spend several months exploring them; we only visited seven of them so a future trip is needed. ☺

When We Retire - Leanna Garner

When we retire, we are asked to volunteer for many organizations, with differing roles and responsibilities. Of course, we apply, hopefully meeting the defined criteria.

In January 2015 I applied with a retired teacher colleague to be a volunteer at Sunfest 2015, a country and western music festival held in the beautiful Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island. Were we selected? We waited; we were to be informed at the end of April 2015.



We are selected, our roles and responsibilities involved directing traffic, which could have been most interesting, as we are both directionally challenged, I get lost in an elevator.

For some reason, I had missed an email communication my colleague had sent requesting 2 ten hour shifts instead of 3 eight hour shifts so when I made an inquiry as to when and where we were to volunteer, they had given us a new volunteer role. AND we believe that happened because we were carpooling daily to and from the festival. Carpooling, recycling and tidiness were strongly advocated by the festival organizers. They had prizes for the best decorated campsite, the neatest campsite.

Our new job? We were to seat and supervise people in a section close to the stage. We were over the moon! We went down a day early and secured a 3 day parking pass; picked up our festival t-shirts; our volunteer wrist bands; and found out where we were to do our job.

We arrived at 3 o'clock the next day, signed in, were warmly welcomed and met our volunteer cohort. Great

group of dedicated music enthusiasts. We volunteered for three days from 3:30 to 11:30 and saw some of the best country and western musicians. 'Chasin Crazy', five young men from Nashville, drove 52 hours to perform. On stage, one of the five, kept exclaiming, "We drove 52 hours straight to get here and we are on an island, we are on an island, an incredibly beautiful island. The mountain backdrop is the star of this festival!"

We met some memorable people in our section, all of them there to enjoy the music. Two ladies arrived every day at 3:30 with their walkers and canes, found their chairs, sat with their IPADS reading their novels until the music began. We, being the eager, helpful volunteers, asked if they needed help. Response—"No dears, we have been doing this for years!"

So what did we learn? That being timely, understanding our roles and responsibilities, being welcoming, that we were a member of a team, building community in a trusting, respectful environment and being totally engaged made for a great three days. Not unlike being an educator! ☺

Writers' Exchange



Would you like to volunteer as a literacy mentor with kids from inner-city schools? Our goal is to build a large team of dedicated volunteer literacy mentors to help us fulfill our mission: get inner-city kids excited about reading and writing!

Qualifications:

- Previous experience working with kids in grades 1 – 7 is great, but a strong desire to help creative, funny kids get excited about reading and writing is more important
- A love of reading, and writing, and the desire to share it
- The ability to commit to attend at least one program per week for a minimum of 6 months
- Curiosity, excitement about learning, and enthusiasm for trying out cool crafts and activities
- Willingness to complete a BC Criminal Records Check

Time Commitment: 2 hours once per week. During the school year, programs run both during the day in-school, and after school between 3pm – 5pm.

Interested in finding out more? Please visit www.vancouverwe.com/volunteer and fill out an application form.

Questions? Email our Volunteer Coordinator: sjhamilton@vancouverwe.com

BCRPVPA Bulletin Board

Help Spread the Sunshine

The BCRPVPA wants to acknowledge good things about our members and recognize when things are not going so well for them and their families. Consequently, we need your input to be able to do so. Please e-mail Leanna Garner at leannamgarner@gmail.com or 250-927-4812 (phone or text) to tell her of any congratulatory events, e.g. awards, new positions, or any news for which condolences are applicable. Thanks for your help.

Please Let us Know

Please ensure that we have your current email address. A reminder that as of July 1, 2014, members receive the Chronicles and Capers and the web link for it via email unless they have notified the BCRPVPA otherwise. eBulletins are sent out on an as-needed basis. Please make sure that you also add bcrpvpa@gmail.com and vrygnestad@gmail.com to your address book so your internet provider accepts the e-mail and doesn't reject it as spam.

If you have changed your mailing address please email jennifer@bcpvpa.bc.ca so you can continue to receive newsletters and any other mailed items.

Check out our Website

Don't forget to regularly check out our website for names and contact information for your executive, copies of our newsletter, membership forms, information on Affinity programs, minutes of meetings, scholarship application forms, and other such items. Information may be found at www.bcrpvpa.ca

The newsletter is only as good as your contributions

We ask you to consider writing an article for our newsletter. Please send your submissions to Graham Mulligan email: grahammul@gmail.com

You do not need to wait until the submission deadlines -- we accept them at any time and store them up for coming newsletters.

Dates for 2015-2016

General Meetings

Wed., Jan. 13 - BCPVPA office

Wed., March 9 - TBA

Tues., May 4 - BCPVPA office (AGM)

Live outside the Lower Mainland? Add these date 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 Submissions.

Articles are welcome at any time. The newsletter is only as good as what is contributed by the members so please send in your submissions. Deadline dates for upcoming newsletters are:

Monday, December 14

Monday, February 22

Friday, May 6

JUST KIDDING

EVEN THOUGH I SPENT MOST OF IT IN YOUR OFFICE, I THOUGHT THE DAY WENT QUITE WELL, DIDN'T YOU, MR. TOYNBEE?!

