

# Chronicles & Capers

Issue 74 • february 2018



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# CHRONICLES & CAPERS

BC Retired Principals' &  
Vice-Principals' Association

Issue 74 • February 2018

## Dear BCRPVPA Members by Eileen Phillips



I am writing this just after Valentine's Day, 2018, and I have been recalling how much fun it used to be at school - wearing red, sending Valentine-shaped cards, making Friendship Salad, and enjoying all the kind gestures that set the tone. But, this year, right now, in schools, there is even more of an activity flurry - not only is it St. Valentine's Day but the Winter Olympics are happening and the Lunar New Year is on Friday. And, some teachers are also writing report cards which means that our active administrator friends are reading them. Remembering can be so much more fun than actually doing! Especially on a day when one wakes to freshly fallen snow, like we had in the Lower Mainland today. And, yes, the yellow crocuses were persistently poking through.

How have you been spending the last few months? Please consider writing an article for the newsletter about your travels, hobbies, or adventures. We know our members love to hear what others are doing in retirement. Graham is always grateful for submissions.

Have you joined Yammer yet? You can join by clicking the link on our website [www.bcrpvpa.ca](http://www.bcrpvpa.ca) or by sending me a note asking for an invite. As long as you are a member, you can sign on. If you are not a mem-

ber, please download the application from the website and mail it in. All the information is on the form. Remember to check the website often - especially for opportunities to volunteer. In all website headings, new information is added as it comes to us. Also, videos of our speaker presentations are uploaded - almost like being there! Thanks to Graham for all his excellent work here. Also thanks to Jeff, who is on our executive, for stepping in to learn some of the technological skills needed to give Graham a hand.

At each General Meeting and the AGM we draw names for 2 Chapter's/Indigo Gift Cards. Our winners from the October meeting were: Fred Nienaber of Maple Ridge and Joseph Varro from Port Coquitlam. We have successfully contacted one winner from the January draw and that is John McLellan of Kamloops. We are still waiting to hear back from our second winner from that draw. Perhaps Steve (you will know who you are because email and voice messages have been left for you) is travelling? Please contact us so we can confirm your address.

Our next General Meeting will be on March 13. The start time for the social is 9:30 a.m., followed by the meeting from 9:45 to 10:45. Then, after a break, the speaker presentation begins at 11:00. The topic this time will be about Health and Travel insurance plans available to us: e.g., Medoc, Prestige, Green Shield. A no-host lunch follows at a local restaurant for those who have the time to attend. This will be a good meeting to speak to our past president, Vivian, if you are interested in running for a position on the executive. If you cannot attend, contact us at [info@bcrpvpa.ca](mailto:info@bcrpvpa.ca) and mention what position(s) might be of interest.

The AGM will be on May 3 and Dennis Ducklow,

one of our members who is also a professional photographer, will be presenting a workshop: Taking Effective Travel Photos. We are offering this event free to our members. Lunch will be provided at the AGM. Please try to attend. Also at this meeting we will be electing the 2018 - 19 Executive slate. If you are interested in being on our executive, please contact me to have your name put forward.

Speaking of travel, have you heard about our newest affinity program? Please look at [bcrpvpa.mytravel-benefit.com](http://bcrpvpa.mytravel-benefit.com) and subscribe to the newsletter. Thanks to Gerald for setting this up and to Travel Agency Tribes for partnering with us.

Each year we run a used education BOOK SALE at Short Course, held at UBC in early July. Funds raised from this sale are used to supplement our Scholarship Fund. (We now give up to 5 scholarships of \$1000 each, every autumn, to students attending a tertiary Canadian institution.) If you have finished with your leadership/education books, please consider donating them to us. They can be dropped at, or mailed to, the BCPVPA office during the months of May and June. The address is #200 - 525 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1K9.

Smile often, stay healthy, and keep learning. Retirement is what you make it! Best wishes to you and do stay in touch.



Cover Photo

Father and son celebrate  
U23 victory  
Ho Chi Minh City,  
January 22, 2018

# BCRPVPA

## Presents

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Kuranda, Australia  
Burt Deeter

On a recent trip to Australia, my wife, Lana, and I flew to Cairns so we could visit the Great Barrier Reef. Our overnight stay on a catamaran on the outer edge of the reef was indeed a memorable experience, but an unexpected highlight occurred on a daytrip to Kuranda. When booking the reef experience, a day trip to Kuranda was also suggested as part of the package. It was a day of discovery.



We had an early pick-up from our hostel and were transported to the train station where we boarded the Kuranda Scenic Railway. This railway was completed in 1891 to service the mines and agricultural areas in the interior and is considered a major engineering accomplishment. The railway was built in three sections, with the first and third sections being constructed relatively quickly and easily. The second section through the Barron Valley gorge, however, proved to be a major challenge and included 15 tunnels, 93 curves and dozens of difficult bridges, all constructed by hand. The construction was extremely dangerous due to the steep grades, dense jungle and aboriginals defending their territory. A more detailed history of the railway's construction can be found [here](#).



Earlier in our trip, we had enjoyed another vintage railway excursion on the [Dunedin Railway](#) up the Taieri gorge to Middlemarch. With grand vistas and rolling hills, we could easily visualize Gandolf and his company being chased by Orcs in this setting. The Barron Valley gorge, however, was covered by a dense tropical rainforest, which reduced the views but still provided lots of interest. The train slowed or stopped at several strategic waterfalls or vistas where we could snap photos and take in the view.



We arrived at Kuranda and supported the local economy as we strolled through the small-town centre. After a buffet lunch at the [Rainforeststation Nature Park](#), Lana and I cuddled a Koala Bear (for a small fee!) and then we headed for the 'ducks'. The ducks are amphibious vehicles that were originally built to ferry troops to boats during WWII. They're now quite popular as a tourist experience in many cities. The expected life span for a duck was 3 years. These ones are still going strong with the original engines! The first part of the trip was down a dirt path where our driver gave us an 'up close and personal experience' with various plants and very large spiders hanging on webs in our path. Some plants were edible, some were poisonous, some were just interesting. Fortunately, the spiders kept to themselves.



After the duck ride, we were entertained by some male aboriginal dancers. The dances were snippets about their lives, only lasting a few minutes each. Next, boomerang throwing for all, followed by a demonstration of spear throwing. We finished our time at the Rainforest station with a guided walk through a small zoo containing kangaroos, alligators, snakes, a Tasmanian devil, dingoes, and a Cassowary bird.



The return trip to Cairns included the Sky Rail. This is a 7.5 km gondola that transports you above the tropical rain forest. It was a fascinating view to see the rain forest from above. We were surprised at how many of the plants and their relationships with each other that we could identify because of the knowledge that we'd been given earlier in the day. There were two landings on the way down that we stopped at to take a short boardwalk stroll through the forest. As this is a National Park, the interpretive signs and views were spectacular. Well worth our time. A bus met us at the bottom of the gondola for the return trip to Cairns. All in all, the day was informative, noteworthy and surprisingly unpredictable ... in a good way. It was a great little slice of life in the rainforest. The interdependency of so many plants was blatantly visible to us.



The next day, we headed to the reef. We enjoyed two days plus the night on the reef. If you're in the area, I highly recommend both experiences.

You can see more of Burt's photos by going to:  
<https://burtsphotobooks.shutterfly.com/>

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*Burt Deeter*

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## Euphoria in the Streets

This is a story of an improbable victory and the celebration that it ignited.

January 21, 2018

I heard the shouting out on the street from inside the apartment. “Jen, we have to go and find out what’s going on.” In moments we had slipped on our sandals and left the air-conditioned comfort of our Saigon apartment and made our way to the street corner. It was nightfall and the humid heat surrounded everything. The scooters and cars lined up at the intersecting streets waiting for the light as usual, but it was different. It seemed like every second bike had someone on the back holding a flag and shouting. My ears gradually picked out the chant from the roar Vietnam Vietnam Vietnam. What was it? The light changed and off they went and up the street another wave was coming, more flags, more roaring engines and shouting. Vietnam Vietnam Vietnam.

We walked along the boulevard toward the big arterial street that runs down into the city centre. The crowds of bikes and roar of noise increasing as we approached the intersecting streets. Bikes everywhere with flags flying and riders and passengers and onlookers frantically waving arms and shouting Vietnam Vietnam Vietnam. “What’s going on?”, I asked a bystander. “We won! We won the championship!”

Well, it wasn’t quite like that. The football tournament was the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U23 Championship and Vietnam had just made it through to the final.

The next day, [in the snow](#). [These kids had never played in snow](#). They had never even seen snow, and they were up against the bigger, stronger, Uzbeks. They lost.

*The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U23 Championship China 2018 recorded a historic high in television viewership ratings and social media engagement in Vietnam as the nation took on Uzbekistan in the momentous final on January 27.*

*U23 Vietnam finished second at the tournament in China, losing 2-1 to Uzbekistan after extra time in the final.* (source: VietnamNet)

What happened here was incredible. Jen and I were on our 2-week ‘foodie tour’ of Vietnam. We had a cooking class lined up and a street food walking tour lined up. I had researched all the best-bites recommendations from food bloggers and dutifully pinned them into Google Maps. We did the food stuff (and enjoyed it) but the trip memory is dominated by that night in [Saigon](#) (Ho Chi Minh City) when the streets went wild. We moved on to [Hoi An](#) and it was the same there. Motorbikes and scooters and flags and shouting Vietnam Vietnam Vietnam! in the streets. The same in [Hanoi](#). Flags everywhere. The same in Surrey! When I went to HenLong, the Vietnamese grocery store in North Surrey I learned from another customer that no team, ever, from Vietnam, had won such a victory. It was euphoria.

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Graham Mulligan

The cover photo is taken on the streets of Saigon that night in Vietnam.  
Hint: click on the city links to see my Google Maps restaurant picks.

## Euphoria in the Streets



click [here](#) for a one minute video



Joining in the celebration.



Fuel to continue the celebration



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## New Affinity Benefit for BCRPVPA members: My Travel Benefit

One major benefit of retirement life is being able to travel! The BC Retired Principals & Vice-Principals Association is pleased to partner with Travel Agency Tribes to offer our members a new Affinity benefit.

The beauty of our new partnership with Travel Agency Tribes is that it is at no cost to members. It is up to members to register for the monthly newsletter if you want to be kept apprised of new travel benefits. The affinity benefit can be found at: [bcrpvpa.mytravelbenefit.com](http://bcrpvpa.mytravelbenefit.com). To register for the monthly newsletter, click on the box located at the bottom right of the website. Be assured that your personal information is not shared and you won't be inundated with unwanted emails!

Do you like cruising, adventure holidays, all-inclusive packages, traveling solo, or are you thinking of a multigenerational trip? These are some of the offerings on the initial website. You can also directly ask a question about what type of travel you would like to do, and you will receive a response in a timely manner. By the way, note that if you do take advantage of one of the offers being made to our association members, that accompanying folks on your trip receive the same benefit too – they don't have to be retired administrators!

To launch the benefit, Ryan McElvoy, the CEO of Travel Agency Tribes gave a presentation at the January 18, 2018 General Meeting held at the BCPVPA office. Attached to this newsletter is Ryan's presentation. Watch and enjoy... and start thinking about where in the world you would like to go!

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*By Gerald Soon*

You can click on the image beside now to watch a 7 minute video from our last General Meeting.

Don't miss any Travel News or Limited Time Offers! Get our Email Newsletter

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## Update on Bill C-27

On Fri, Feb 16, 2018 at 12:47 PM, Aline Burlone wrote:

Hi Gerry: I met with my MP Jonathan Wilkinson and his assistant Sarah on Friday, February 2. I have sent the information to Laurie Boyd about this but I was talking to another person who went to see her MP for the District of North Vancouver/Burnaby and we were wondering about the responses we both received.

We were both told that the changes under bill C-27 only apply to Crown Corporation and federally regulated private companies. And that BC already has legislation enabling Target Benefits plans. – Should we be concerned about the provincial change?

They also told us that even if the majority of people opt for the TBP those who choose to stay on the DBP would retain it and nothing would be changed. They also said that for unionized workplaces changes would have to be done through collective bargaining.

So we were wondering: if this is correct, it seems that all is well unless we have totally missed or misinterpreted something. Is there something else we should be aware of? Do you know if the information we were given is correct or not?

Thanks! Aline Burlone

On 2018-02-17, at 11:09 AM, Gerry Tiede wrote:

Thanks for talking with your MP and for your report. It's clear that the MPs you talked to are Liberal members because that is the speaking notes they have been supplied with. It's true that a strict reading of Bill C-27 applies to only federally regulated companies. And it is also true that many provinces already allow some form of Target Benefit (TB) pensions plans. Our Cost-of-living arrangements are a target benefit plan in that they are not a guarantee - the goal is to pay full cost of living if the payments are sustainable. And they are sustainable, in our case.

We would support Target Benefit Plans if they were

newly set up plans. We think having a TB plan is better for someone than having no pension plan.

The problem is that the legislation allows the surrender of Defined Benefit Plans (Like our pension plan where the benefits are guaranteed) to a TP plan where the benefits are not guaranteed. And since this legislation has been introduced, some provinces have jumped on the bandwagon and are considering similar legislation for provincial plans. For example, Manitoba has started a consultation about implementing TB plans. Manitoba teachers might be impacted if this goes ahead. Nova Scotia is in the same position. New Brunswick has already implemented TB plans and they have reduced the pension promises for both active and retired teachers.

Our concern is that as this gains acceptance, it will become even more wide-spread. Our teachers' plan looks safe now, but if the investment returns turned really bad, perhaps a future government might decide to solve the problem by introducing TB plans here. In New Brunswick, I understand that the government threatened to close the plan if the parties didn't accept the TB plans. So while they say that people will only be moved into TB plans if they agree to it, there can be some very strong pressures to agree to it.

Here's another concern: If we could imagine that the active teachers in BC got moved (forced) into a TB plan and the retired teachers stayed in the DB plan. What would happen to the retired teachers group if there was a shortfall of funding? Would the government make up the shortfall? I don't think they will and that means that our pensions would be reduced. I don't think that this is likely to happen in BC in the foreseeable future, but if that started to become normal practice in other provinces, the pressure would eventually come here too.

If this doesn't make sense, we should talk on the phone. Let me know if you would like that.

Gerry

## Portugal snapshot By Gerald Soon



Have you ever been to Portugal? This beautiful country was a destination that my wife and I knew we wanted to visit and so we decided to visit Lisbon and spend some time in the Algarve.



We chose to explore Lisbon first. We chose not to have a car there so we could explore the city on foot using public transportation.

Do your research first and decide which area you would like to stay in. We chose a hotel near a Metro line for convenience. We thought we would be able to take public transit as it was inexpensive and would stop relatively near our hotel. Little did we know that the sidewalks all over Lisbon (and in most places in Portugal we discovered) were made of squares of marble cobblestone! Walking with large suitcases on wheels was a bit of a challenge! I would opt for a taxi from the airport as I think it would be worth the cost. Lisbon is such a beautiful city, but all the walking areas are marble cobblestones with beautiful mosaic patterns – wear sensible comfortable shoes!



One tip: if you book your own hotel room using a credit card, and you plan in advance like my wife and I do, make sure that your card will still be current when you arrive in Portugal. Unfortunately, our card had changed and so when we arrived at the hotel, we were required to make payment again. Although the hotel clerk said we would be reimbursed in the next few days, in reality I had to contact the booking site we used, and provide proof that we had paid for the same hotel TWICE, once before the trip, and then once when we were there. It was only then that our refund was forthcoming.

We stayed in Lisbon for 8 days – originally choosing seven but extended by one day as our initial travel day on the seventh fell on a national holiday – we couldn't find any information online about services on their national day. In reality it was pretty much a regular day.



The advantage of staying that long in one place was that we could take our time and really explore the city. The rapid transit was easy to use, and there were attendants at most stations.

Beware of pickpockets! Keep your valuables close to you and be aware. We had read this warning before in a travel guide, and when we were initially on the old tram, I thought to myself that it seemed quite safe when we started. Partway along, as more and more people climbed aboard, a Portuguese man advised my wife to watch her purse. A local person near us then was agitated and then left the tram. The man who warned us said, that that was a pickpocket who had at-



tempted to rob us.

We took travel guides for Lisbon with us, and chose to explore one area at a time. The food did not disappoint us at all! We fell in love with the local pastry delicacy, the Pastéis de Belem, and had to make sure we stopped each day for our daily treat of them!

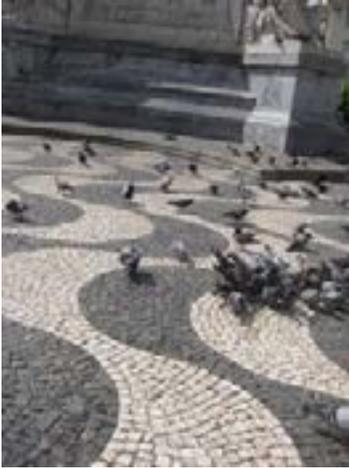


We chose to also visit the Algarve, and had arranged to have a car rental with GPS for our last week in Portugal. One thing I noticed when we arrived at the car rental office was that their documentation required an International Driver's License. I did not have one, however, but that didn't seem to be an issue. However – if you have one, bring it along!



The GPS was built into our car which was fairly new. Unfortunately, it wasn't totally up to date, and so we were sent along some sketchy roads. One in particular was like a narrow laneway, which I thought was one way, until I saw a bus approaching us in that same narrow laneway! By the way, the option for total insurance coverage, just in case anything goes wrong, was well worth it!

We saw some wonderful scenery, and loved exploring some of the little towns . We even encountered a beautiful concert in a little church as one of the performing artists at an upcoming concert in the church just happened to be practicing that day! ("[Serendipity in the Algarve](#)")



I hope that if you visit, you too will encounter the charm and beauty of our small taste of Portugal .

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*Gerald Soon*

Click to see 'How to post a photo into Yammer'



Have you joined our members-only network yet?

[Click here to request an invitation.](#)

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# 2017-18 Executive Committee

**President**  
Eileen Phillips [email](#)

**Vice-President**  
Ted St. Pierre

**Past President**  
Vivian Rygnestad

**Secretary**  
Celina Mau

**Treasurer/Social**  
Lanny Young

## Members-at-Large

Membership/Sunshine  
Leanna Garner

Program/Speakers  
Executive

Scholarships  
Ted St. Pierre (ex officio)  
Christine Johnson  
Jeff Larcombe  
Allan Buggie

Communications/Technology  
Graham Mulligan [email](#)

Affinity/Pensions  
shared position  
Gerald Soon  
Gerry Tiede

Observers at BCPVPA  
Chapter Council  
Eileen Phillips  
Ted St. Pierre

Refreshments for Meetings  
Lanny Young

## History Committee

Nick Parker-Jervis  
Gord Wallington  
Joy Ruffeski  
Vivian Rygnestad  
Graham Mulligan  
Rod Giles

### General Meetings

Tue. Oct. 24, 2017

Thurs. Jan. 18, 2018

Tue. March. 13, 2018

#### **AGM**

Thurs. May 3, 2018

Please mark meeting dates in your planners.

Social: 9:30 a.m.; Meeting: 9:45 a.m.;

Program/Speaker: 11:00 a.m.

No-host lunch to follow at a local  
restaurant. Meetings are held at the  
BCPVPA Office unless otherwise noted.