

December 2019
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Chronicles & Capers

Issue 78 – December 2019

Inside this issue:

- President's Message
- Travel to the Canadian High Arctic
- Affinity - Travel to Antarctica
- Pensions Report
- 2019 - 2020 Meetings: Speakers' Program with dates, time & location
- Scholarship Committee Report
- Mentorship Program – A Collaborative Project with BCPVPA
- 2019-2020 Executive



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Ted St. Pierre, BCRPVPA President 2018-2019

Welcome To Our Newly Retired Principals & Vice-Principals:

We are privileged to welcome 22 new members who have dedicated their lives to promoting educational opportunities to our BC students. Retirement from education does not mean we retire from family expectations. Do enjoy your new role possibly as a grandparent babysitter, as a volunteer for a favourite association, or travelling to an exciting destination!

BC PRINCIPALS & VICE-PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION:

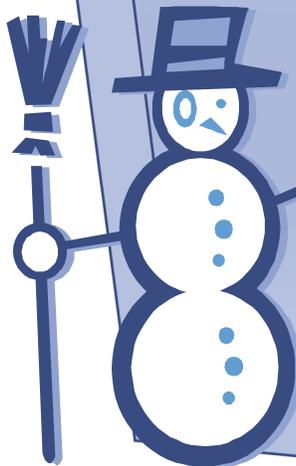
We have a very close partnership with the BCPVPA, such as support with our Association's financials; the membership list of 752 to date; scholarships of \$1,000 awarded to 5 BC students; the Mentorship program exceeding 44 members, & the province-wide Chapter Council.

BC RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION:

The BC RPVPA & the BC RTA work together with affinity benefits; pension updates; the Medoc insurance & Prestige coverage. Please refer to this newsletter for more detailed information on Pensions & travel opportunities.

THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM:

Now in its third year, the Mentorship Program was developed by the BCPVPA in conjunction with the BCRPVPA. The goal is to have retired Principals & current Principals, become mentors for newly appointed Principals & Vice-Principals throughout BC. Finances this year allowed Mentors & Mentees the opportunity to meet in person at the BCPVPA Board office. The mentorship program has received very positive feedback after its first two years.



December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

THE BCRPVPA WEBSITE:

Please refer to our website for further information about affinity, insurances, pensions, scholarships, & reports from committees, under the section "Meetings". A committee is currently updating our website.

The BC Retired Principals' & Vice-Principals' Executive wishes all BCRPVPA Members a super year of health & restful days.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

James Cameron School is a small school of 40 students, located on the borders of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, specializing in educating elementary school-aged children with learning disorders (primary dyslexia). They are hiring a new Principal for the 2020-2021 school year. Please contact Barbara Gillies at 604-777-0841 for further details.



TRAVEL TO the CANADIAN HIGH ARCTIC and GREENLAND . . .

Almost Nobody But Us

written by Christine Johnson



Beautiful in its absolute vastness, the Canadian High Arctic, much of it devoid of all but those who call the Arctic home, remains as it was many years ago. Devon Island, at 50,000 square kilometres is the largest uninhabited island on Earth and except for a herd of Muskoxen and numerous Arctic Hare (all hiding from us), it is an astounding feeling to be among the only 160 people there.

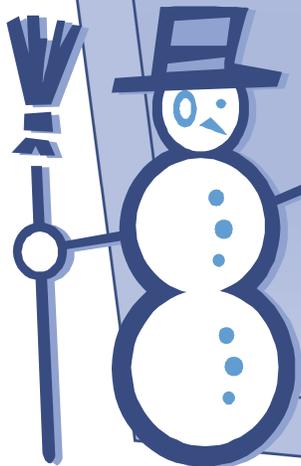


December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca



On a trip with Adventure Canada on board the Ocean Endeavour we sailed to each shore via Zodiac – ten people in each one - and were treated to stunning geology, flat-topped mountains, and ice caps. On Beechey Island we saw the graves of two sailors from the ill-fated Franklin Expedition and an additional one which holds the remains of Thomas Morgan, a sailor from yet another unfortunate expedition sent in search of Franklin and his crew. These remains were brought from elsewhere.

Many of the Inuit who live at Pond's Inlet and other parts of North Baffin Island and Resolute Bay still hunt to supplement their diet since ships carrying fuel and provisions are only able to reach them twice a year. The same is true of the parts of Greenland, which we visited. In a "supermarket" which we found in Pond's Inlet, four frozen chicken breasts could be bought for \$130 (yes, one hundred and thirty dollars) and cold, dark winters mean no gardens. August is the best time for visitors to the Arctic since twenty-four hours of daylight is not hard to take and sailing in a Zodiac at 10.00.p.m. to visit a migratory bird colony on Prince Leopold Island makes it very worthwhile.



December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

Could the same be said for twenty-four hours of darkness and several feet of snow? Many Inuit call the Arctic home, as do many others who feel an affinity with the land around them. Sailing by Zodiac around Crocker Bay allowed us to gaze at ice floes, a family of Walruses, a Polar Bear, and a seal.



Sailing up the Davis Strait to Greenland means being witness to what look like palaces made of ice and imagine our awe when the one female walrus on an ice floe turned around to allow us to see the baby with her.

In Ilulissat in Greenland, UNESCO has given its protection to an Iceberg Field whose icebergs can be up to 3.5kilometres thick. Going by Zodiac around these bergs made for two hours of being very cold.



December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

Talking of which, Climate Change is the biggest threat facing this area and our days in the Arctic and Greenland went from -3C to 11C. Thawing permafrost makes for many problems as does seal meat, which has been contaminated by pesticides having been thrown into water thousands of kilometres away. Birds are dying of hunger because the heat is making insects, their food source, breed too soon and then fly off.

Yes, it is one big cycle and the time has come to get off the bike. Let The Arctic stay intact for those who live there and those who would love to see it for the first (or second) time

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES – Affinity Partnership

Have we peaked your travel interest? Will you consider the opposite pole and Antarctica as one of your travel destinations in the coming year? If so, read this message from Quark Expeditions for our affinity partner, **Trip Merchant**:

“I thought I would share with you an Antarctic sale for our 2019/2020 season that cannot be shared or marketed in public channels. I thought this private sale would be perfect for you with your closed and private channels with the membership groups you have.

We are offering up to 50% off on selected Antarctica 2019/2020 departures. For instance, our 12 day Antarctic Explorer December 7th to December 18th, 2019 departure is regularly \$15,195USD for the Veranda and Infinity suites on World Explorer, but after the 50% off private sale, the price would be reduced to \$7,597.50USD per person.”

If interested, please contact Tom MacLean, Co-Founder/ Director of Sales and Marketing, tom@tripmerchant.com or visit the website, www.tripmerchant.com

REPORT ON PENSION PLAN and BILL C-27

*With sincere appreciation of this summary submission
By our guest writer, Gerald Soon*

At the BCRPVPA General Meeting held on October 17, 2019, Gerry Tiede, BCRTA President, BCRPVPA member, and Pensions rep., gave an informative report. The following are some notes taken from his presentation.

BC Pension Plan - The BC Teachers' Pension Plan has assets of \$28.4 billion with a 2.3% annual rate of return in 2018. The more important 5-year annualized rate was 8.2%.

\$1.2 billion in benefits were paid out to 38,465 pensioners.

The assumed rate of return is now 6% - it was 6.5%. This change reflects the reality that the investment returns will likely be lower in the future and this reduces the possibility of another contribution increase.

Gerry mentioned that market analysts believe there is a high chance of a recession occurring; a correction to the market place is overdue.

The average BC Teacher Pension is \$31,500. The January 2019 Cost of Living adjustment, added to the base pension amount when you retired, was 2.2% this year. \$183 million was transferred from the Inflation Adjustment account to the Basic Account to pay for this increase. Remember that whatever

adjustments are made to your pension become part of your guaranteed pension. It is anticipated that there will be an additional Cost of Living adjustment that will be announced in January 2020.

Where are Pension dollars invested?

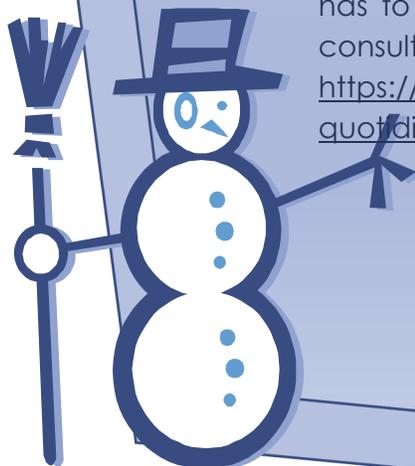
Allocation	% of Total	Rate of Return
Fixed Income	19.6%	1.9%
Public Equity Stocks	42.3%	(3.1%)
Real Estate	16.3%	6.7%
Private Equity	9.3%*	18.5%
IRRs	11.2%**	12.7%
Other	1.7%	

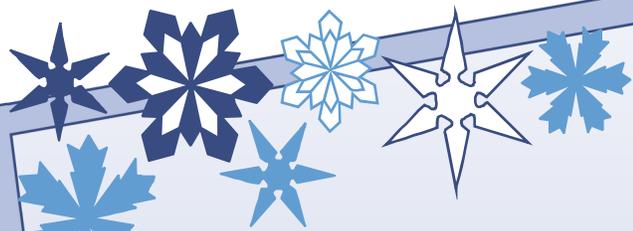
*(outright buying companies with Retired Pension Plan funds)

** (infrastructure - electrical companies, water companies. . . Regulated - guaranteed to make \$\$\$)

At the time of this newsletter going to press, Gerry Tiede asked our President, Ted St. Pierre to share with our members of the COLA update. There is an anticipation of a 1.9% increase in our pensions as the September CPI is 1.9%. According to Gerry, this has to be approved by the Trustees. Here is the website for consultation:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/191016/dg19106a-eng.htm>.





Bill C-27 Update - For members who may not be aware of Bill C-27, this was a Bill introduced in the last session of Parliament by the Liberal Government. It was tabled by Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, and entitled, 'An Act to Amend the Pension Benefit Standards Act (1985).

The intention of this Bill was to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985 to provide a framework for the establishment, administration and supervision of target benefit plans. It also amends the Act to permit pension plan administrators to purchase immediate or deferred life annuities for former members or survivors so as to satisfy an obligation to provide benefits if the obligation arises from a defined benefit provision.

The BC Teachers Pension Plan is a defined benefit plan, where members are guaranteed their pensions. The fear was that the enactment of this Bill would lead eventually to pensions such as ours possibly being changed to a target benefit plan, where pensions would be paid IF the investments of the plan had met targeted results.

ACER-CART (The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers) organized petitions defending pensions, and BC Retired Teachers were encouraged to contact MPs in this matter.

Gerry was privileged to be in the House of Commons when the ACER-CART (Canadian Association of Retired Teachers) petitions defending pensions was tabled. There had been an extraordinary number of petitions related to this issue read in the House, and the Speaker of the House took special note when this particular petition was read.



December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

Near the end of his presentation, Gerry encouraged people to Google "Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions". He fears that somehow elements of Bill C-27 had been slipped into regulations, by-passing the government's standard way of making laws. BC Retired Teachers are currently exploring to see if this is the case.

Readers interested to pursue this further can also go to BCRTA website to obtain detailed information and further updates.



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION UPDATE

Have you moved recently? Have you acquired a new active email address? Please send it to info@bcrpvpa.ca for database updates. Thank you!



December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

2019-2020 Speakers and Presentations

by Eileen Phillips

General Meeting and AGM Dates:

Thursday October 17, 2019

Wednesday January 22, 2020

Tuesday March 31, 2020

Wednesday May 13, 2020

October 17, 2019 General Meeting

Mark Costales who is a group benefits consultant at Johnson Inc. spoke to our members about options for travel and health insurance. This was a very timely and excellent presentation since so many of our members have voiced concerns about their current health care plan. Highlights of Mark's talk are posted in Yammer and on our website (www.bcrpvpa.ca/).

NEXT GENERAL MEETING - January 22, 2020

Location: #200-525 West 10th Ave., Vancouver, BC

Because this is a 3-hour presentation the Meeting Start Time and Speaker Presentation will be adjusted from our usual practice. Please hold the date and the morning open as we may be starting with the speaker as early as 9:00 a.m. This will be confirmed in January.

Graham Best will speak to us on 'Retaining the Power of Memory for Active Seniors'. This is a 3-hour presentation so our

December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

meeting time will be adjusted to accommodate this. Graham is a retired physics teacher and the author of a book titled "Your Complete Guide to Building a Memory Palace".

BIO: Graham's personal mission statement is: "To teach with passion things that matter!" He was a highly respected Physics teacher with the Vancouver School Board for over 39 years. When he discovered memory systems his life changed. He founded GB Memory Dynamics Inc., and began teaching memory systems to others. His clients have included the Institute of Chartered Accountants of B.C, the B. C. Real Estate

Association, Polygon Homes, the Union of Psychiatric Nurses of BC, and many others. He also works with undercover police officers, teaching them memory skills that can literally save their lives. He has appeared on national radio and television shows demonstrating these memory systems. On one popular show he memorized the names – and the telephone numbers – of the entire studio audience. Graham has two books on Amazon, "Your Complete Guide to Building a Memory Palace" and "The 12 Study Secrets All Students Need to Know". He is an avid guitar player and lives in a floating home community on the Fraser River.





Graham Best
• President of GB Memory Dynamics
• Retired physics teacher
• Guitar player
• Author

What People are Saying

"It feels like cheating because memorizing seems so easy." Reg

"I didn't know I was capable of so much." G.N.

"Empowering." B.P.

"One of the most valuable courses I've taken!" J.F.

"Totally engaging." D.S.

"This class is life changing for anyone who takes it!" J.B.

Book Graham Best Today:
Email: grahambest1@hotmail.com
Phone: (778) 839 - 7791

GRAHAM BEST

Retaining the Power of Memory for Active Seniors

You've heard it said, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks." This is not true.

Anyone can have a sharp mind and learn anything at almost any age!

In this 3-hour workshop you will learn practical skills to train your memory. You will learn to EASILY remember names of people. You learn to remember details from any article you read. You will learn to be attentive to the daily things of life and be sharper than you've ever been.

The course will encourage you to be a lifelong learner.

It sounds amazing! It is amazing!

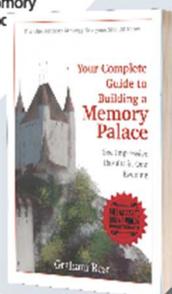
This course is designed exclusively for active seniors. You will be encouraged after taking this course and it will open up an entirely new future of possibilities. You will be able to do things you've never dreamed possible.

See how easily your memory can be trained!

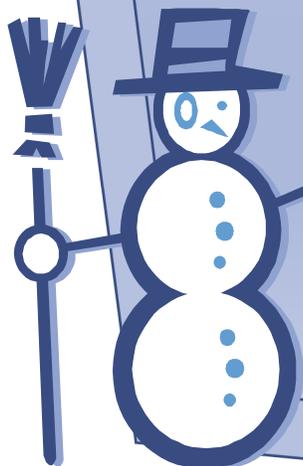
Graham Best has appeared on national radio and television shows demonstrating his memory systems. On one popular show he memorized the names— and the telephone numbers— of the entire studio audience.

And he can help empower you with the same skills in memory systems.

Graham is currently delivering a series of Memory Skills Workshops for Active Seniors through Langley School Board Continuing Education, receiving rave reviews.



Graham Best's new e-book, **Your Complete Guide to Building a Memory Palace** (including free access to online videos that accompany each chapter) is available at the seminar for a special introductory price



December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

UPCOMING SPRING 2020 MEETINGS & SPEAKERS

Social: 9:30 am **Start Time:** 9:45am **Speaker:** 11:00 am

Location: #200-525 West 10th Ave., Vancouver, BC

Tuesday, Mar 31, 2020 – Pearl Cicci will speak to us about 'Nutrition/Healthy Eating for Seniors'. Pearl is a dietician at Burnaby General Hospital and also has her own practice. Further information about this talk and speaker will be available closer to the presentation date.

AGM Wednesday, May 13, 2020 – 9:45 am - Patti Lefkos and Barry Hodgins, retired teachers/education administrators, will be speaking to us about travel-volunteering. Both are outdoors enthusiasts (skiing, paddling, hiking) who have traveled the world taking photographs and writing articles. They were involved in rebuilding a remote village school in Nepal after it had experienced a devastating earthquake. The title of their presentation is 'Nepal: One Day at a Time.'

BIO for Patti Lefkos and Barry Hodgins: Following rewarding careers as teachers and educational administrators in Vancouver and Richmond, British Columbia, Patti and Barry studied journalism and photography and then set out to pursue adventure travel. Whether canoeing the Yukon River, backcountry skiing in B.C.'s Monashee Mountains, hiking in Scotland's Outer Hebrides or trekking in Tibet and Nepal, they embrace the culture and environment of wilderness areas. When not travelling, they ski in the winter – downhill, nordic and backcountry – out of their home base at Silver Star Mountain Resort in the Okanagan Valley and paddle in summer – whitewater, canoeing and kayaking, river and lake tripping and stand-up paddle boarding.



SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

BACKGROUND HISTORY The BCRPVPA Scholarship Committee was established quite some years ago when a couple of scholarships, each worth \$500, were awarded to graduating secondary-school students.

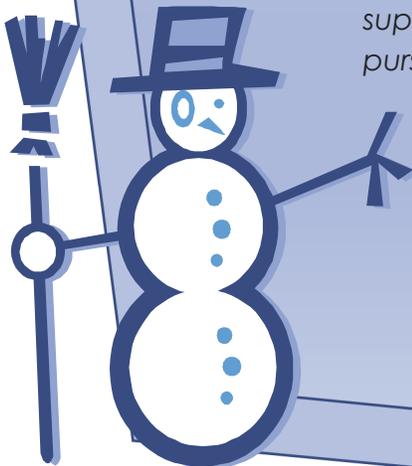
Over the years, we have tried to direct awards to students who not only achieved a high academic standing but who also demonstrated excellent service both in their school and in their community. Often such students also achieve very well in sports or music activities. The awards from the BCRPVPA are also available to students who may choose to enter the trades or other accredited tertiary programs, rather than attending university. In awarding the scholarships, the committee is also very aware of considering any students whose family is financially challenged.

In recent years, we have seen the number of annual scholarships awarded increased "up to 5 annually" and have also seen the amount awarded to students increased to \$1000.

The committee has been very pleased to see the number of students applying for scholarships increase year over year. This year we had a record 35 applications for scholarships, and it was extremely difficult to choose the most deserving students, knowing that so many of them were of such a high standard. In recognizing this, a motion was passed at the last Executive Meeting of the BCRPVPA, to request an increase of scholarships that may be awarded "up to 7". This request will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the BCRPVPA next May for final approval.

COMMENTS FROM OUR RECENTLY SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

- *Thank you so much for the amazing news! I am so grateful for the honour and support; the scholarship will help with the burden of finances this semester, which will be so helpful for my studies and volunteer endeavours.*
- *Thank you so much to the BCRPVPA Scholarship Committee and the association for bestowing a scholarship upon me.*
- *Thank you for this great news! I really appreciate your help in financing my education. At university one activity I'm really excited about is volunteering at Kaleidoscope (a program where university students devote one hour of their time per week to go to an elementary school and help at-risk kids through working with them one on one). Without scholarship, funding programs like these would be hard for me to participate in since I would have to devote more of my time to a part-time job and would have less time for volunteer work.*
- *Thank you very much for selecting me as a recipient of the BCRPVPA Scholarship this year! I am so grateful for the support and generosity of the BCRPVPA in helping me to pursue my goals.*



COMMITTEE MESSAGE TO THE UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

"Thank you for submitting your application for a BCRPVPA scholarship. The scholarship committee met recently and reviewed all the applications received.

We regret to inform you that your application was not selected. The competition for these scholarships was very strong and the application packages received were outstanding. We are humbled to know there are such worthy candidates - yourself included.

On behalf of the BCRPVPA, we wish to thank you for your interest, and to commend you on your achievements to date.

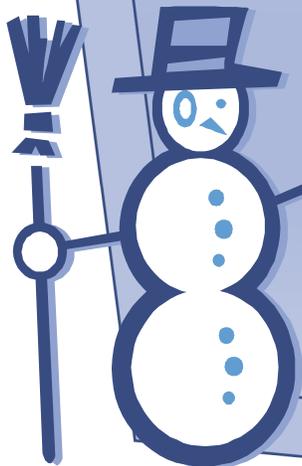
We wish you all the best for a successful future."

It was so heartwarming to receive the following note back from one of these unsuccessful applicants:

"I love that you are sending out positive words of encouragement to all the applicants. Keep it up!"

To conclude, it is so very rewarding to sit as a member of the Scholarship Committee, along with Christine Johnson and Allan Buggie!

Respectfully submitted, Jeff Larcombe



December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

Mentorship Program – A Collaborative Project with BCPVPA

A few years ago, the BCRPVPA executive was approached by Kevin Reimer, then the BCPVPA President, and now its Executive Director, to consider collaborating on a mentorship program. Kevin's vision was to match an experienced, retired principal/vice-principal as a mentor with a newly-appointed principal/vice-principal as a mentee. Eileen Phillips, then the BCRPVPA President and Ted St. Pierre, then the Vice-President, eagerly became involved in this worthwhile educational project. Since then, a team of BCPVPA & BCRPVPA executive members has met regularly to design, develop, and implement the Mentorship Program. Alison Davies was hired as the coordinator of the Mentorship program and continues to provide excellent training and leadership to date. From its inception in 2017, BCRPVPA executive members Allan Buggie, Celina Mau and Lanny Young have been mentors. This October, through the sheer perseverance of Kevin Reimer, BCPVPA was successful in receiving a small grant from the BC Ministry of Education. This grant has allowed the mentors and the mentees to meet at the commencement of their mentor-mentee relationship. Thank you, Kevin and Alison!

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Kevin Reimer at the BCPVPA kreimer@bcpvpa.bc.ca



A Mentor's Personal Experience

By Lanny Young

When I first heard about the mentoring program initiated by the BCPVPA in collaboration with the BCRPVPA, my thought was that I had been retired too many years to be involved in this pilot project. Having been retired for 5 years at that time, and having not consciously kept up with the changes within the educational system, I felt I could not possibly contribute to the mentorship program.

At subsequent BCRPVPA meetings, I again heard the call for more retired PVPs to join as mentors, and I am glad I decided to put in my application. I was paired with an excellent partner with whom I learned a lot over the year and a half we were together. My partner was a Principal in a rural area on Vancouver Island, in a secondary school with 50 students and 6 teachers/support staff. Aside from addressing administrative tasks and ministry requirements, we spent most of our weekly *FaceTime* sessions on "real" situations that my partner was experiencing, or ideas she had for promoting student attendance and improving student success. One of her major goals was to involve parents and the community in her students' learnings, by welcoming and encouraging parents and elders to be in the school, as well as promoting and preserving the cultural aspects of her students.

Throughout the mentorship program, I looked forward to our weekly *FaceTime* session, and have truly enjoyed listening to my



partner as she came up with innovative ideas, talked through aspects of the implementation process, and shared in her excitement and enthusiasm as she related the successes of each of these ideas and initiatives.

The year and a half flew by and we were both sad to end the formal part of this partnership. However, we are still keeping in touch, via occasional emails.

As of mid-October, I have a new partner for this school year, and we have begun to learn about each other and are establishing a relationship of trust in which we can feel safe to probe and expand on my new partner's long- and short-term goals. I look forward to learning about her implementation ideas and challenges as well as exploring her queries about building success for her students and school community.

I would like to encourage my retired colleagues to consider being a part of this program. All of us have a wealth of experience and an empathetic ear to lend to our active colleagues. I often heard from my first partner that she most appreciated having someone to hear her out in a confidential and non-judgmental way. All in all, I am glad I joined the mentoring group as I am learning from this experience and, at the same time, still feeling connected a profession of which I am proud to be a part.

CONSIDER BEING A MENTOR?

You may wish to become a mentor, please obtain more information from our website, www.bcrpvpa.ca, and click the drop-down heading "Mentorship".



December 2019
www.bcrpvpa.ca

2019 – 2020 BCRPVPA EXECUTIVE

President: Ted St. Pierre

Vice-President: Christine Johnson

Past President: Eileen Phillips

Treasurer: Lanny Young

Secretary: Celina Mau

Scholarships: Jeff Larcombe; Allan Buggie; Christine Johnson

Membership & Sunshine: Bonnie Deren

Pensions: Executive Committee with Gerry Tiede, as available

Technology / Communications: Executive Committee

Affinity & Benefits: Executive Committee

New Members-At-Large: Marsha Arnold & Geoff Straker



Wishing our members

HAPPY HOLIDAYS & BEST WISHES IN 2020!

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

By Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

