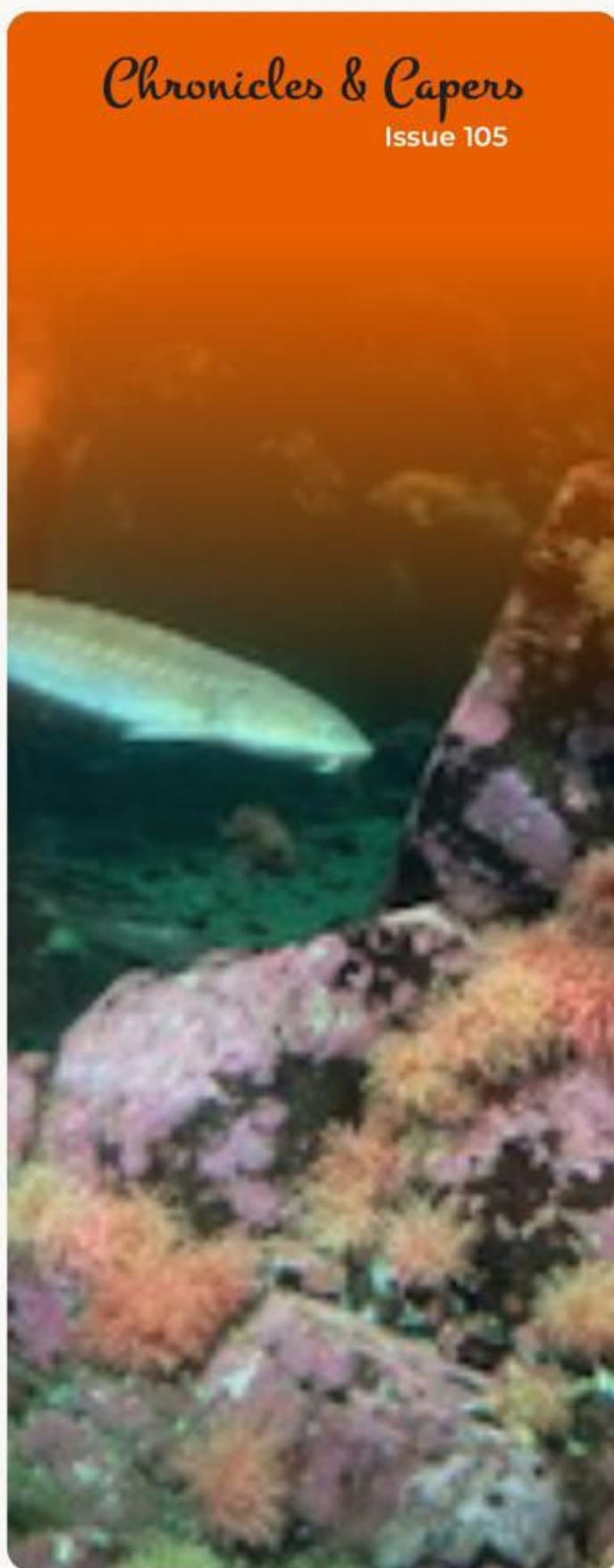


Chronicles & Capers

Issue 105



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April 2026

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is wonderful to feel the warmth returning as spring takes hold here on the West Coast.

Guest Speakers

Our Guest speaker for our March meeting was Yolande Martinello. Yolande is also a member of our executive and keeps the scholarship and bursary applications organized and flowing to all members of the committee.

Her hands on workshop provided everyone with an opportunity to experience water colour painting. This is something simple and easy to continue when you are on your next excursion or holiday experience! A recording of the workshop is available on our website at: <https://bcrpvpa.ca/speakers-presentations/>

You will also find other meeting presentations on the same site. This year we also heard from Gerald Soon: Uncovering the Historical Records of Immigration and Mrs. Cheese from the Cheese Man in North Vancouver. At the AGM meeting on May 21, we will have a representative from Hearing Life. I understand that many of us do not consider getting our hearing tested until we have started to lose it. Completing just an initial hearing screening can ensure that you have some baseline information, should you begin to notice that you are missing parts of a conversation.

Tumbler Ridge

Although the exact date may be fading from our memory, that fateful day in Tumbler Ridge will be forever etched in our minds and in our hearts. The terrible tragedy that occurred to the students, staff and community shall never be forgotten. We are very thankful to Judy Harrison, a retired administrator from Victoria, who is connected to the principal of Tumbler Ridge Secondary school. They met through the mentorship program that occurred between the BCPVPA and BCRPVPA a number of years ago. Judy has continued to connect over the years and provided some real time personal and professional support to her colleague. You will find an article about Judy's close connection to this tragedy and her request for our individual support, within this edition of Chronicles and Capers. You are encouraged to follow through on this request with your local MP.

Elections

Coming up quickly is our annual general meeting on May 21 at 10:00 a.m. Everyone is always encouraged to attend in person or on zoom.

We have a proposed addition to our constitution for our AGM on May 21, 2026. This item has been discussed at two previous executive meetings and two general meetings this year.

This will be placed under Article 11: Association expenses

11.3 With receipts, all Executive Committee Members can be reimbursed up to \$200.00 per month for travel expenses, including mileage, if they travel more than 2 hours in one direction to the onsite executive or general meetings. The total amount reimbursed is not to exceed \$1000.00 per executive member, per fiscal year. Parking fees are excluded from this reimbursement.

Rationale:

The addition of this clause will provide some compensation for executive members who travel two hours or more, in each direction, to get to our general or executive meetings. Our hope is to encourage other members of the BCRPVPA, who live just outside the lower mainland, to join our executive. At present we have one executive member coming from Nanaimo and one executive member coming from the Gulf Islands. We want all of our members to understand that executive membership is possible, if you live outside the lower mainland. We do have another member who lives in Smithers who connects with us via zoom and email. Please consider joining our executive. We are still looking for a secretary along with other executive members.

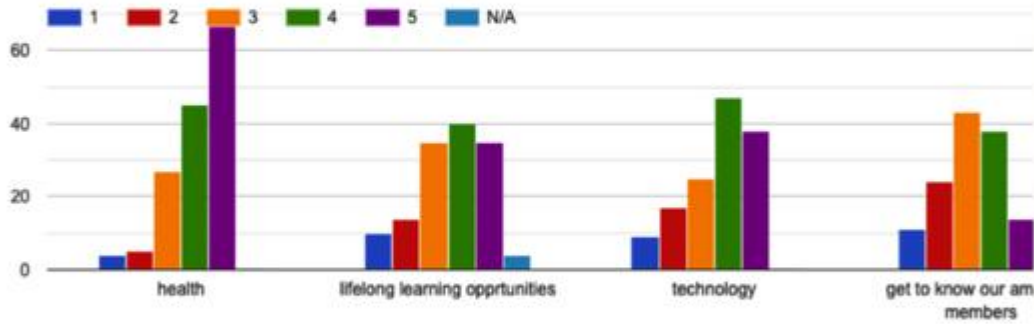
Annual review of this particular expense will occur.

Survey results

Thanks to everyone who responded to our survey questions. Over 18% of our total membership replied. That is amazing! We are considering the next focus for our survey. We encourage you to send us your thoughts about 'next topic to survey' to info@bcrcpvpa.ca

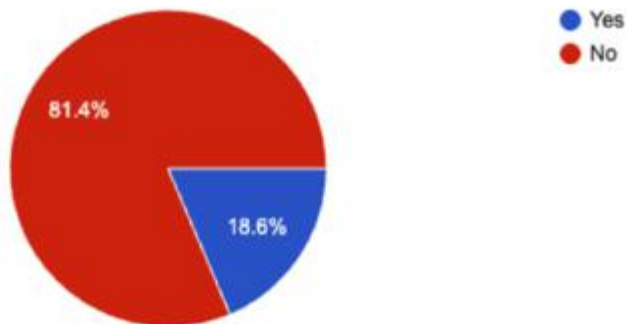
Which sections of our newsletter are you most interested in reading?

Select all those that apply.



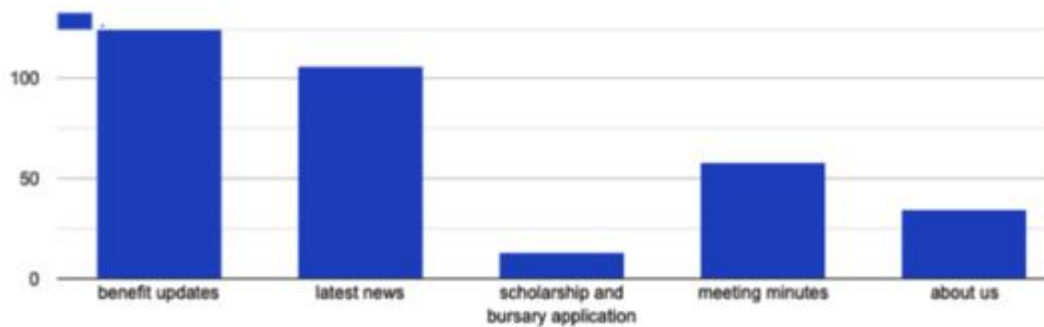
Do you regularly (more than two times a month) visit our website?

156 responses



Which sections of our website are you most interested in reading?

Select all those that apply.



COSCO affiliate membership

Not to be confused with the wholesale shopping experience – COSTCO!

COSCO is the Council of Senior Citizen's Organizations. The BCRPVPA is now an affiliate member. We have three votes at every regular meeting. COSCO is an umbrella organization that brings together older adults to work on common issues. There are 65 affiliate groups including BCRPVPA, representing over 85,000 seniors. COSCO is affiliated with the 1,000,000-member National Pensioners Federation (NPF).

In short, the intent of this organization is to provide support for seniors around a variety of issues and challenges. They also provide workshops that are available to everyone in our Association. For more information and details check out their website: <https://coscobc.org/wp-content/uploads/formidable/4/26.03-COSCO-NEWS-Final-digital-copy.pdf>

Spring luncheon

WE ARE PLANNING ANOTHER LUNCHEON get-together this spring out in Fort Langley. This luncheon will occur INSTEAD of our May AGM luncheon. Sher and Bonnie have been scouting out options, as our first thoughts for a venue didn't allow for more than 12 people. I will send out the details as soon as we have them confirmed. Keep some opening towards the end of April, beginning of May. We hope to see you there! Moving forward, we would like to move luncheon possibilities around the lower mainland and Vancouver Island. If you are interested in hosting or helping plan a luncheon in your area, please reach out on the info line!

CPP presentation

How is my Canada Pension plan doing? Where are they investing the money? On June 16 we are invited to a zoom information session with a question period related to the Canada Pension. You will be provided with a clear understanding about how the pension plan is invested, to ensure that it is financially viable well into the future.

Welcome and Good-bye

As announced in our last newsletter, this edition of Chronicles and Capers welcomes new members to the Association, and we say good bye to those members who have passed on. Our hope is to provide you with another connection to people you may have worked with.

Best wishes! We hope to see you at our spring luncheon!

Deborah Luporini

IN THE NEWS – Thinking of Tumbler Ridge

Educators Know What's Needed: *Children's Online Safety for Canada*

On Tuesday, February 10th, we were horrified to learn about the tragedy in the Tumbler Ridge community and at the Tumbler Ridge Secondary School. During Covid, as a Retired Principal from District 61 (Greater Victoria), I mentored two new administrators, for two years, from District 59 (Peace River South), with one being the new Principal of Tumbler Ridge Secondary School. Naturally, this struck home and I have since reached out to them personally expressing my condolences and support if they need it.

Over the past week, I have written letters to three Ministers of the Parliament of Canada, to BC's Public Safety Representative and to the Liberal MP from Oak Bay-Gordon Head. The purpose of my letters is to raise a deep concern that Canada does not currently have legislation in place that protects children from online harms on the Internet. While this has been discussed at various levels in government, both provincially and federally, no legislation has been passed to date and, due to recent events last month in BC, it's time. Of interest, three westernized governments have taken bold steps to protect its children, including:

- *Australia in 2024/25 (Online Safety Act)*
- *the European Union in 2018 & 2022 (Digital Services Act & Better Internet for Kids);*
- and*
- *the United Kingdom in 2023 (The Online Safety Act)*

With time being limited, Canada's legislators should be encouraged to utilize some of the blueprints that already exist (as per above) to write and pass our own legislation to be in place for the start of the new school year, in September 2026.

If you think this is important and timely too, please consider writing your local Member of Parliament to ask that Legislation for Children's Online Safety in Canada be passed before school reopens in September, 2026."

To write your Canadian Member of Parliament (MP), find them by postal code on the House of Commons website, then send a polite, concise email or postage-free letter. Focus on one issue, include your address, and request a specific action, using the "EPIC" format (Engage, Problem, Inform, Call to action)

How to Structure Your Message

- Introduction: State your name, address, and that you are a constituent.

- The Issue (EPIC): Explain the problem clearly, why it matters to your community, and suggest solutions.
- Action: Ask for a specific action (e.g., voting for a bill) and a response.
- Keep it Brief: Aim for 1–1.5 pages maximum.

How to Send It

- Email: Use the contact form or email address provided on the Our Commons website. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en>
- Mail (No Postage Required): Mail letters to:

Name of Member of Parliament
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

Submitted by: Judy Harrison, member of BCRPVPA, Retired Principal, SD 61

The World of “Ish”



After having lived for more than twenty-five years in a tightly scheduled world governed by clocks, since retirement, I have lived in the world of “ish”, a world governed more by whims than clocks. Instead of “Class begins at 1:35”, I now live in “I’ll see you around 5ish”. The joy of “ish” is that it leaves room for the vagaries of the unpredictable and the uncontrollable.

When I retired, I gave away my alarm clock. An astonished friend asked, “How will you wake up?” “When I want to,” I replied—and now it doesn’t really matter if I wake at 6:00 or 8:00 a.m. I find living in “ish” time an interesting place to be after years of being tied very tightly to a clock driven schedule. I am no longer bound to a mechanical or electronic device to run my days.

The simplest of acts—sleeping, for examples takes on a new feel. I don’t have to go to bed when the clock says 11:00 p.m. I no longer have to drag myself out of bed when the alarm rings at 6:00 a.m. Mornings are no longer a mad rush. My days begin when they begin often with reading and a coffee. Freed from clock time and agendas, I enter event time and the notion of flow. And with this, gone are my anxieties of having to accomplish tasks in a certain order and at a given time. Instead of 10:00 a.m. being a fifteen-minute break time, now, there is coffee time which begins and ends rather whimsically. Instead of rigidity there is fluidity. My daily life becomes a series of “ishes”. Let’s meet around 2:00ish and go for a walk. Or dinner will be 6:00ish. My events are now self-chosen, not imposed and I can choose whether to attend or not.

While I love my daily life in the land of “ish”, I recognize that there are times when clock time is essential. Businesses need to be efficient, and clock time is crucial in any area of transportation. I can’t see any international carrier declaring that the enormous 747 will leave at 5ish or so. No city planner would permit traffic lights to operate

whimsically—maybe they will be red today and green tomorrow. There is a time and a place for clock time. Lives depend upon it.

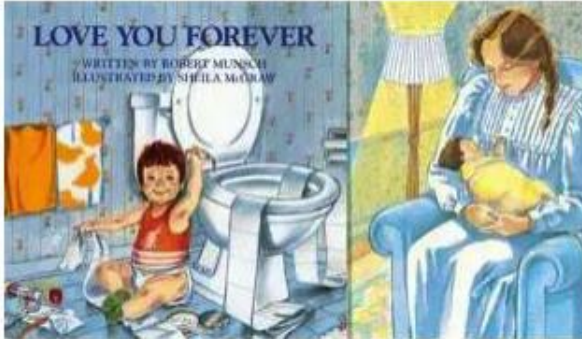
But a different type of life depends upon the fluidity of the moment which I can embrace in retirement. A distraught friend for example needs the world of “ish” not the world as defined by a clock. You really can’t say something like “I’ll stay with you for exactly twenty-two minutes and then I have to leave.”

Adjustment to this “ish” timed life has been far easier than I anticipated. With the clock no longer my master, I find events ebb and flow and that I can give myself wholly to an event as there is no scimitar of time hanging over my head ready to cut the event short because “I have to go to work/get up” in the morning. I find this freedom exhilarating.

Our sincere thanks to Brenda McNeill, world traveller and retired English teacher, for sharing her take on the “ishness” of retirement.

Teaching Memories

Tears of Love



As a teacher of grade 11 & 12 French Immersion, I realized that young people liked being read to as much as their much younger peers.

Each Mothers' Day I read to them "Je T'Aimerai Toujours (The French version of Love You Forever) by Robert Munsch.

I used to warn them that I might be quite tearful when reading it to them. My tears were usually accompanied by theirs.

I have met quite a few of my former students and they remember that book and read it to their own children.

I feel quite tearful once again!

Contributed by:

Christine Johnson, past president of BCRPVA, Delta Principal and proud French teacher.

Pulling One Over on my ESL Students



Arriving back one morning from a short but intense bout of the flu, I scanned the lengthy note left by my substitute teacher and read with dismay the last few lines. It informed me that he had taken the class out to play soccer the afternoon before. "Cripes," I thought, "That group will expect something just as exciting from me!"

I decided, 'The best defence is an offence', and when the students bounded in, I calmly said, "So! I see you guys pulled one over on Mr. Lau!"

A quick lesson on the idiom 'pulled one over' produced grins and beaming faces, especially from the boys. As I congratulated them on their coup, one curious student asked, "Have you ever played football, Mrs. Seesahai?"

The chuckling stopped promptly when I said, "Of course, lots of times. I was just waiting for you to invite me to join you!"

Thinking they would realize I was trying to 'pull one over' on them in turn, I was abruptly outsmarted when someone said, "Great, Mrs. Seesahai! Can we go today?"

Their mood started shifting when I replied, "Oh, well, today, I mean..." so my fate was sealed.

I had organized a walking club a couple of months before, and my running shoes and tee-shirt were at hand. This class was mostly Vietnamese boys, and they were clearly delighted at the idea they might play their favourite sport. "Well," I said lamely, "if you promise to catch up on your work tomorrow..."

To spontaneous cheers, we began changing our shoes. I hadn't the slightest clue how to play soccer, except that I knew you weren't supposed to touch the ball with your hands, and you were supposed to kick it into the other side's net.

I gave myself a pep talk, having at least seen a game or two, and walked with as confident an air as I could muster out onto the field with my boys. The few girls in that high school class had decided to cheer from the sidelines. A heated discussion in spoken Vietnamese ensued, while the few boys who spoke a different language stood with me in the middle of the field and patiently watched. "OK, you're on this side, Mrs. Seesahai," Phan said.

They divided into two teams and the game began. After about five minutes of me running all over the field and kicking the ball once, in roughly the right direction, and ignoring the calls from my team-mates, I heard the boys call time. Another earnest discussion in Vietnamese, with pointing and headshaking, until finally, one said, "OK"!

The chosen one approached me and said, politely, but firmly, "Mrs. S., you be the goalie, OK?"

And with relief, I trotted over in front of the net, stoically accepting the fact that I still had no clue how to play soccer and that I certainly had no ability to 'pull one over' on this class!

Contributed by:

Maureen Seeshai, retired Burnaby ESL teacher and founding President of the ESL PSA

Do you have a teaching anecdote you wish to share?

We'd love to hear about your experiences.

Please send to info@bcprvpa.ca

Get to Know Our Amazing Member



Spotlight on Mary O’Neill

Mary has called Coquitlam home for more than forty-five years, raising her two children, and cherishing her deep roots in the community. Throughout a distinguished career in School District 43, she has served as a teacher, counsellor, vice-principal, principal and faculty associate, always guided by a passion for supporting young people and their families—especially those facing challenges.

Mary’s work has been shaped by collaboration with dedicated colleagues and her involvement with the district’s Critical Response Team, where she witnessed profound strength and dignity during difficult times. These experiences inspired her to contribute to restorative justice initiatives, advocating for healing, accountability and community well-being. Her commitment to believing in people and fostering positive change continues to make a lasting impact on Coquitlam and in other facets of the social justice network.

Last month Mary was honored as a Freedom of the City recipient for her distinguished service to the community. This civic honour recognized her lasting contributions to public service, education, social justice and community well-being.

Mary graciously provided me with her acceptance speech and after rereading it several times, I concluded that sharing this uplifting speech is the very best way for you to get to know Mary, who she is and what she stands for. In her own words -

“Mayor, Councillors, honoured guests, friends, and neighbours—thank you.

I am deeply moved to receive the Freedom of the City of Coquitlam. This is an honour I never imagined receiving—and certainly not one I accept alone.

For more than forty-five years, Coquitlam has been my family’s home. It’s where our children grew up.

Where friendships took root.

And where I was shaped—again and again—by the people I had the privilege to work alongside.

So tonight, my first feeling is gratitude.

Gratitude for a community that has given me far more than I have ever given it.

My career in School District 43 was a privilege from beginning to end. I worked with extraordinary teachers, counsellors, support workers, CUPE staff, and administrators—people who showed up every day with compassion and courage. Whatever contributions I may have made—as a teacher, counsellor, vice-principal, or principal—were possible only because I was surrounded by colleagues who believed deeply in young people, especially those who were struggling. I thank them for their partnership, their humour, and their unwavering commitment to students.

I am also grateful to the members of the district's Critical Response Team. Together, we walked with students, staff and families through some of their hardest days.

The strength and dignity I witnessed in those moments taught me more about community than any textbook ever could. I share this recognition with every one of you who answered those calls—often quietly, and without fanfare.

That same belief—that people are more than their worst moment—led me beyond the school system and into restorative justice.

My interest in this field began with a small group of people, who believed that healing and accountability could coexist. That early initiative grew into what is now CERA - Communities Embracing Restorative Action—.

I want to acknowledge the volunteers, (including Freedom of the City recipient, Sandy Burpee, who is here tonight) the facilitators, and community partners who built that program from the ground up. You showed our city what it means to repair harm—with humanity.

And of course, my heart is **now** with the Talitha Koum Society.

Serving as Board President has been one of the great blessings of my life. The women of Talitha Koum—women rebuilding their lives with courage, honesty, and hope—are the true heroes of this story.

I also want to honour past and present staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners including the City of Coquitlam, who make it possible for the women, mothers and children to heal together.

The phrase *Talitha Koum* means “little girl, rise up.” And I have seen that rising—

in women reclaiming their dignity, in children finding safety, and in families discovering new beginnings.

This award belongs to them as much as to anyone.

You know “Looking back, over the years, I realize that my approach has always been quite simple:

Love and trust God

Be kind, and

Never be **indifferent** to the needs and pain of others.

Whether in a classroom, a crisis, or a community circle, the belief—that all people matter—has guided everything I’ve tried to do.”

I can’t really speak about any of this without speaking about family.

Recalling these memories makes me more than a little emotional, because it opens the door to growing up in a large, boisterous family of four girls and four boys—led with laughter and love by my mother and father. I wouldn’t be standing here tonight if it weren’t for their strong faith and limitless love. Here’s to the McKinnon clan. Thank you.

That same foundation has carried me forward with my O’Neill family, including my late parents-in-law and all my wonderful in-laws. My husband Terry and our sons have been my anchor from the very beginning. They have supported every late meeting, every late-night phone call, and every new project I said yes to. Their love has been the quiet, steady foundation beneath all this work. Today, that love has only multiplied with the addition of two daughters-in-law and four grandchildren. I love you all.

Finally, I want to thank the City of Coquitlam.

This honour reflects something I have seen time after time:

that when people choose compassion over judgment, and community over isolation, remarkable things can happen.

So tonight, I accept this recognition with deep humility and profound gratitude.

I accept it on behalf of the educators, counsellors, volunteers, and community members who have walked this journey with me.

And I accept it with hope—

hope that our city will always be a place where no one is invisible,
where every person is supported,
and where everyone is invited to rise.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.” Mary O’Neill

collette Virtual Zoom Event

Learn more about Collette Travel during a 45-minute BCRPVPA virtual **Zoom event on Tuesday, April 28th @ 10:30 AM PST.** Please join us and invite your friends and family to use this link, too. The more the merrier!

<https://collette.zoom.us/j/81468557046?pwd=YOutDGHsa5tDe9rM84VzwHNI5aXJB7.1>



For information [Collette: Vacations, Guided Tour Operator, Travel Packages](#), www.gocollette.com/bcrpvpa or under the Heading TRAVEL in this newsletter.

Life Long Learning



There are still online 50–60-minute Cyber safety workshops available to seniors in April.

You don't have to be a BCRPVPA member to sign up for these workshops so feel free to share with your friends.

Digital Safety Tools: Building Your Personal Cyber Security Toolkit (Supported by RBC) **Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 10:30am PST** - [Click here](#) to register

Digital Safety Tools: Building Your Personal Cyber Security Toolkit (Supported by RBC) **Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 10:00 am PST** - [Click here](#) to register

Financial Scam Prevention & Identity Theft Protection (Supported by RBC) **Thursday, April 9, 2026, 10:30 am PST** - [Click here](#) to register

Financial Scam Prevention & Identity Theft Protection (Supported by RBC) **Tuesday, April 21, 2026, 10:30 am PST** - [Click here](#) to register

ABOUT CONNECTED CANADIANS

Connected Canadians is the nation's leading digital inclusion charity providing technology training and support to Canadian seniors, fostering digital literacy skills and reducing isolation and loneliness. Through partnerships with senior communities and other senior serving organizations, we provide virtual and in-person workshops and volunteer training sessions.

To book a free one-on-one training or help session, to learn how Connected Canadians can support you and other seniors, or to book a session for a group of seniors visit [Connected Canadians / Canadiens Branchés](#) or contact us at -

Phone: 1-877-304-5813 (Toll-free) email: info@connectedcanadians.ca

SENIORS ADVOCACY

SURVEY- Human Rights Principles That Matter to Older Persons

Shared by the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC – COSCO our new BCRPVPA partner. Their newsletter was shared in the last eblast. See links to find out more below.

Your Voice Matters!

We have international treaties that uphold and protect the rights of children, women, and individuals with diverse abilities. Yet we do not have one for the human rights of older people. A joint future for all of us – if we are fortunate to be an old person one day.

Work is starting at the United Nations to draft such a treaty, a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The first step is understanding the human rights principles that matter to Older Persons.

Age Knowble, a Canadian Social Enterprise, convened a virtual global rally in February 2026. It focused on the human rights principles that matter to older persons with dementia. Through insights and exchanges among cross-region, cross-sector panelists and 140 participants, some principles and themes emerged.

There is now the opportunity for people of all ages, across the generations, to share their perspectives through an online consultation. Input will be analysed for submission to the next UN session in July. Diverse voices are needed, and we want a strong Canadian voice in the response.

We hope you will participate and spread the word. The following material provides access to more information on how to participate:

Event highlight: [Showreel: Who Decides? Human Rights Principles That Matter to Older Persons with Dementia](#)

Online Consultation (15 to 20 minutes): [Human Rights Principles That Matter to Older Persons | SurveyPlanet](#)

Consultation open till: **15 April 2026**

Consultation Brief (optional reading for taking the survey): [humanrightsprinciples-olderpersons-consultation-2026.pdf](#)

When completing the survey, please write "**COSCO**" on the final page when asked how you heard about the consultation. Together, we can ensure Canada's voice is heard in the July IGWG discussions.



Responding to BC Budget 2026

In response to the BC budget, COSCO BC, of which BCRPVPA is now an associate member, has issued a [press release](#) in which President Leslie Gaudette noted, "We are truly dismayed that the 2026 budget does little to assist seniors in their day to day lives. And there is even less for the community organizations and seniors' centres which provide programs and information that enable older adults to live healthy lives and reduce demand on our over-stretched health care system."

Leslie was also quoted in several news articles about the budget:

- [CTV News](#)
- [The Tyee](#)
- [MyPrinceGeorgeNow](#)

COSCO BC will continue speaking out about the impacts of the budget for older adults.

Message from Secretary of State Stephanie McLean

In her most recent [message to seniors](#), Stephanie McLean, Secretary of State for Seniors, offers resources for tax season and tips for improving heart health and avoiding relationship and romance fraud.

Home Support Campaign

Long-term care waitlists in BC have grown by more than 200% since 2016, as part of a systemic failure to address the needs of an aging population. COSCO and partners are calling for the [removal of co-payments for publicly funded home support services](#), to allow older adults to remain in their homes rather than turn to long-term care.

Home support is essential to our health care system. It reduces ER overcrowding, shortens surgical wait times, and much more.

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO BC) www.coscobc.org
P.O. Box 228 - Mountain View Plaza Unit 505 - 8840 210 Street Langley, BC V1M 2Y2 CA

HEALTH



New Video Posts: Our video posts feature McMaster experts discussing a wide range of topics related to healthy aging.



Click on: [Is love good for your heart?](#)

Strong relationships don't just feel good; they're linked with longevity and having better heart health. People with strong social ties have a 50% greater chance of living longer, while loneliness is associated with a noticeably higher risk of heart disease and stroke. Learn how stress, connection, and relationship quality all interact to affect your cardiovascular health.

New Hitting the Headlines:

Click on: [Nutrition Month: Small changes, big impact after 55](#)

March is Nutrition Month—a perfect time to reflect on how the foods we eat support healthy aging. While there's no single "superfood" that guarantees good health, consistent, balanced eating habits can make a meaningful difference in how we feel today and, in the years, ahead.

New Evidence Summaries: We summarize - in plain language - the key messages from recent high-quality research evidence. Click on link below:

[Medical Nutrition therapy can improve blood sugar levels in adults living with prediabetes](#)

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (2023)



Lesson of the Week Are you cannabis curious? Many older adults are turning to cannabis for recreational use and to treat pain, sleep and more, but is it safe? Learn more about how it affects older adults, the risks, and how to talk to your healthcare provider. [Read more](#) or [start lesson](#).

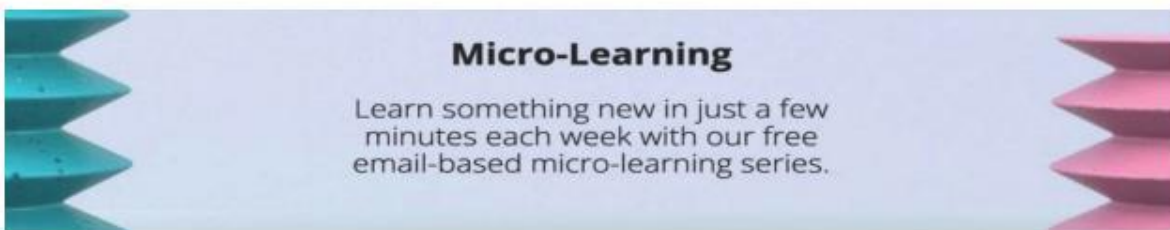
Do you have a lifelong learning mindset? If so, explore our collection of lessons on [mental health](#), [exercise and mobility](#), [brain health](#), and [medications and substances](#). Most can be completed in 15 minutes, and your progress is saved, so you can return to where you left off if you're short on time.



[Minding our mouth health: 3 oral hygiene-related strategies](#)

Research points to strategies that aim to improve our oral hygiene and other aspects of our health.

In Case You Missed It Understanding acid reflux and GERD: If heartburn is more than an occasional nuisance, it may signal a condition called gastro-esophageal reflux disease or GERD. Learn what causes acid reflux, how to recognize warning signs, risk factors for older adults, and practical steps to reduce symptoms. [Read post](#).



Bite-sized lessons. Big impact on knowledge. Topics include delirium, mild cognitive impairment, dementia, dementia risk reduction, anxiety disorders, depression, and our newest series about **polypharmacy**. [Get started!](#)

Looking for something specific? [Search](#) or [Browse](#) our content.

TECHNOLOGY – Digital Safety Tools: Building Your Personal Cyber Security Toolkit



Digital Safety Tools: Building Your Personal Cyber Security Toolkit

Create Strong Passwords

Your password is the first line of defense. Never reuse the same password across sites.

WEAK – Easy to Crack	STRONG – Hard to Crack
✗ password123	✓ At least 12 characters long
✗ John1952	✓ Mix letters, numbers & symbols
✗ Fluffydog!	✓ No names, dates, or pet names
✗ qwerty	✓ Use a passphrase (4 random words)
✗ 123456	✓ Unique password for every site

💡 Try bitwarden.com/password-strength to test your password. A passphrase like "railcar shamrock routine crate" would take centuries to crack!

You can also use useapassphrase.com to generate a passphrase or test your password's strength.

Use a Password Manager

Think about your keychain. You have a key for your front door, your car, maybe your mailbox, maybe a storage locker. You do not memorize which key is which, you just grab the right one when you need it.

A password manager is exactly the same thing, but for your online accounts. It stores every password securely. You only need to remember one thing, your master password, and it handles the rest.

🌐 www.connectedcanadians.ca
📍 78 George St #204,
Ottawa, ON K1N 5W1


📞 (613) 699-7896
✉ info@connectedcanadians.ca



Here is how it works:

- 1 You create ONE strong master password
- 2 The app generates a unique password for every site
- 3 It auto-fills your login whenever you visit that site
- 4 If one site is hacked – no other account is at risk


Some popular password managers are: Bitwarden, Google Password Manager, and Apple Passwords.

 Write your master password down and keep it somewhere safe at home. There is no recovery if you forget it.

Check If Your Data Was Leaked

Visit haveibeenpwned.com and enter your email address to see if it has appeared in a known data breach.

Result Types	
 Good News: "No pwnage found!" You're in the clear.	 Action Needed: "Oh no – pwned!" Change those passwords immediately.

 Sign up for free email alerts at haveibeenpwned.com so you know immediately if your data is compromised in future breaches.

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Spot Scams & Phishing

Scammers rely on **panic**. The moment you feel rushed, threatened, or confused is exactly when you need to slow down.

Use this three-step rule every time:

- **STOP.** Do not click, pay, or give any information. Hang up or close the browser. Scammers create fake deadlines ("Act in the next 10 minutes!") to stop you from thinking clearly.
- **BREATHE.** Ask yourself: Did I initiate this contact? Are they asking for something unusual like gift cards, a wire transfer, remote access to my computer? Would I be embarrassed to tell a family member? If anything feels off, trust your gut. It is almost always right.
- **CALL BACK.** Hang up and call the organization back using a number you find yourself, from their official website or the back of your bank card. Never use a number the caller provides. If it was a real agency, they will be there when you call back. If it was a scam, the number will not match.

No real government agency, bank, tech company, or utility will ever demand payment by gift card, cryptocurrency, or Interac e-Transfer, **ever**.

This payment method is the single biggest sign of a scam. **Once an e-Transfer or gift card number is sent, the money cannot be recovered.**

Four Red Flags	Top Canadian Scams
Urgency / Threats "Pay now or be arrested"	CRA Fake Calls Verify: 1-800-959-8281
Gift Cards or e-Transfer No gov't or bank ever demands these	Grandparent Scam Call the grandchild directly
Asks You to Click a Link Go to the website directly - never click!	Tech Support Scam Microsoft never calls you
Too Good to Be True You can't win a prize you never entered!	Romance / e-Transfer No fraud protection once sent

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Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) is an extra security step that helps protect your accounts, like email or online banking.

Normally, you sign in with **one thing: your password**.

With 2FA, you need **two things** to prove it's really you.

A helpful way to remember it is:

1. **Something you know**

This is your **password or PIN**. Only you should know it.

2. **Something you have**

This is usually **your phone or a special code sent to you**. For example, after entering your password, your bank might text you a **6-digit code** that you type in to finish signing in.

So even if someone guesses your password, they **still can't get into your account without your phone**.

You can think of it like **an ATM card and a PIN**:

- The **card** is something you have
- The **PIN** is something you know

You need **both** to access your money.

Why it helps:

It makes it much harder for scammers or hackers to access your accounts.

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Secure Your Devices

Step 1 - Check your screen lock

Open your Settings and make sure you have a PIN or biometric lock set up, such as a fingerprint or Face ID.

iPhone: Settings → Face ID & Passcode

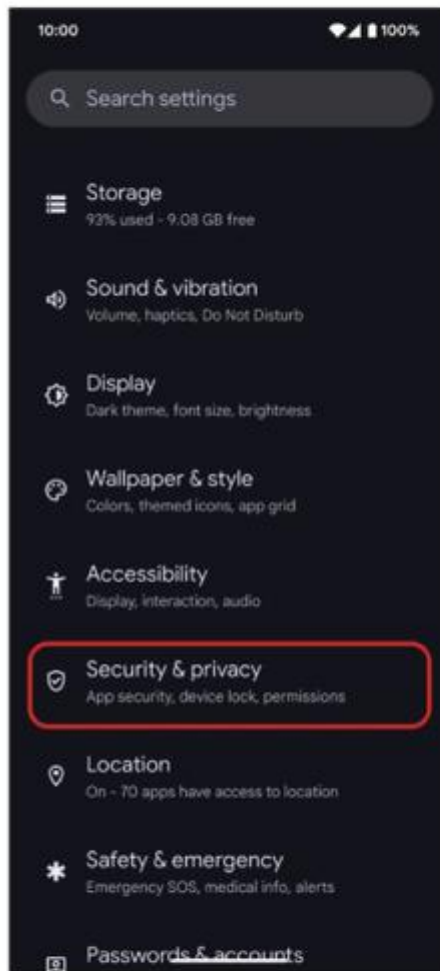
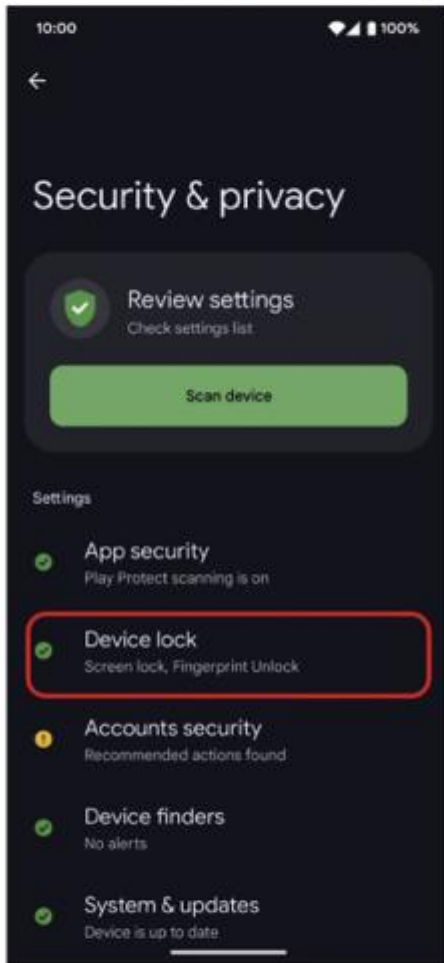


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Android: Settings → Security → Screen Lock



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Step 2 - Turn on app updates

Turning this on helps make sure your apps stay up to date with the latest security fixes without you having to remember to update them manually.

iPhone: Settings → App Store → App Updates ON



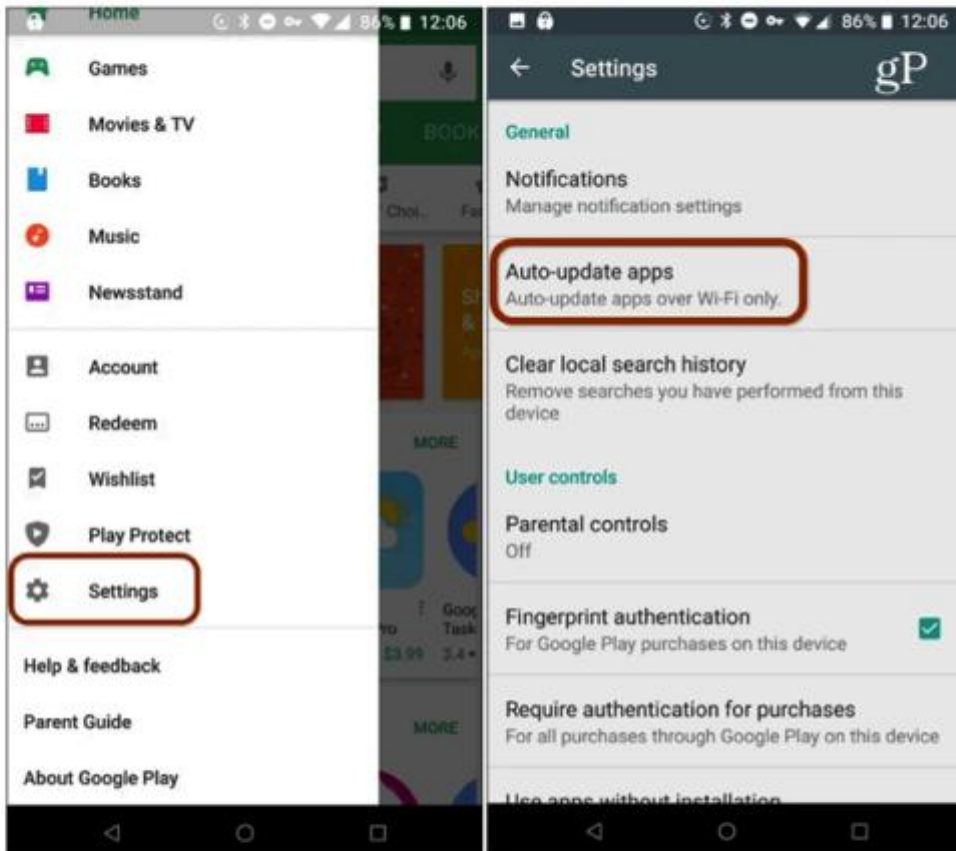
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Android: Play Store → Settings → Auto-update apps



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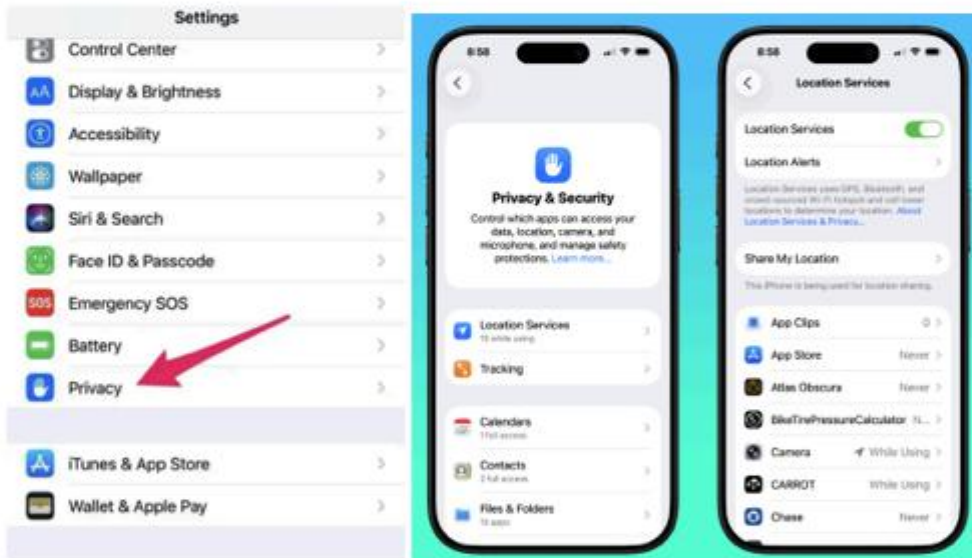


Step 3 - Review app access

Look through the list and ask yourself, does every app that has your location actually need it? Maps, yes. A flashlight app? No. Remove access from anything you do not recognize.

While you are there, look at who has access to your microphone and camera. Anything unexpected should be turned off.

iPhone: Settings → Privacy → Location Services



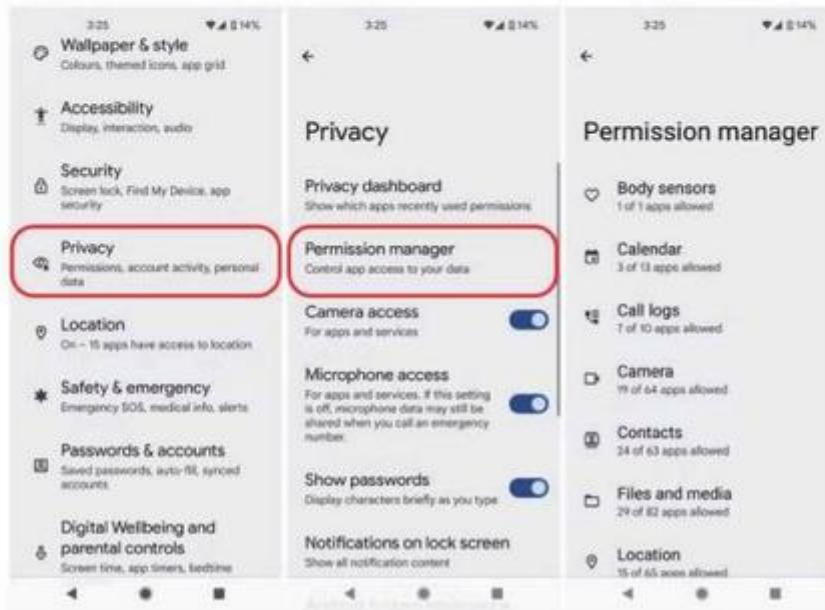
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Android: Settings → Privacy → Permission Manager



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Step 4 - Turn on Find My Device

Turning on Find My Device lets you locate, lock, or erase your device if it's lost or stolen, helping protect both the device and the personal information on it.

iPhone: Settings → Privacy → Location Services



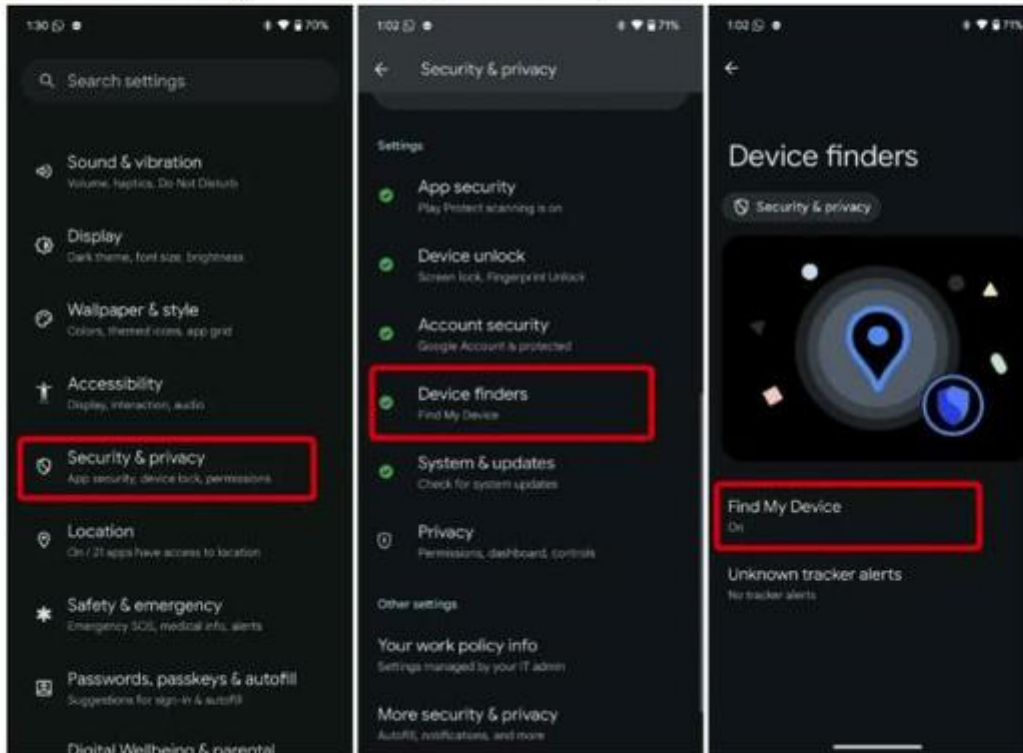
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Connected Canadians
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Android: Settings → Security → Find My Device



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Browse Safely

The Padlock

Look for a  padlock before entering passwords or card numbers

No padlock = do not enter your info

Note: A padlock does NOT guarantee the site is real.

Always check the web address spelling.

Click here



Private / Incognito Mode


Clears your history and logins when you close the window.


Use on shared or public computers. It doesn't hide you from your internet provider.


Press Ctrl+Shift+N (Windows) or Cmd+Shift+N (Mac).



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Browse Safely

- **Set Up Bank Alerts:** Ask your bank to text you whenever money moves. You'll know about fraud in seconds.
- **Interac e-Transfer Warning:** e-Transfer has NO fraud protection. Once sent, it's gone. Never send to someone you haven't met in person.
- **Free Fraud Alert:** Call Equifax Canada and TransUnion Canada to place a free fraud alert. Lenders must take extra steps before opening accounts in your name.
- **Use Credit, Not Debit Online:** Credit cards have stronger fraud protection. If fraud happens, the bank fights for you. With debit, your cash is gone while they investigate.

Back Up Your Data – The 3-2-1 Rule



A virus, theft, or dropped phone can erase everything. A backup is your safety net. The **3-2-1 backup rule** is a simple way to protect your data from loss.

It means:

- keeping **3 copies of your data** (the original plus two backups),
- stored on **2 different types of storage** (for example, your computer and an external hard drive),
- with **1 copy stored off-site** (such as in cloud storage).

This way, if one device fails, is stolen, or infected by malware, you still have other copies safely available.

If you have questions or would like support with any of the topics discussed here, please reach out to Connected Canadians through our website: www.connectedcanadians.ca. Our helpful volunteers are ready to assist you and ensure you feel confident and supported in your digital journey.

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BENEFITS



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Save with hundreds of discounts available on your smartphone. These but some of the many savings.

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Cross Canada - Save an additional 25% off until [April 6, 2026](#).

Penningtons - Save an additional 10% off regular and sale prices in-store or online.

HelloFresh - Receive up to 25 free meals plus free sides for life plus free shipping on your first box.

TurboTax - Save up to 25%.

H&R Block - Save up to 20% filing your taxes online or in store with a tax expert until [April 14, 2026](#).

Expedia - Save 25% or more off your dream stay plus an additional 2%.

Choice Hotels - Save 15% with ES Preferred Rates at all Choice Hotels worldwide.

LensCrafters - Save an additional \$50 off a complete pair of glasses.

Stylevana Canada - Save an additional 24% off best selling K-Beauty Brands.

Tacvasen - Save an additional 20% off all items.

Zentein Nutrition - Save an additional 10% off all orders.

SilkSilky - Buy 1 and receive 40% off the 2nd item of equal or lesser value.

To get the **ES Mobile App** on your smartphone, the instructions are found at: [Endless Savings & More](#) After you download ES app, you will be asked for the

Endless Savings "Organization Code". It's BCRPVA

Mailing address: Endless Savings, 49 - 4750 228 St. Langley, BC
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Click on [Perkopolis - BCRPVPA](#) for instructions to register online or with the app. You will need to email info@bcrpvpa.ca for your one-time registration code specific only to Perkopolis.

Contest

Where in the World is Jessica Antosz?



This returning contest is a take off from the popular 1985 children's video game called, "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" It aims to teach geography and culture through thrilling detective adventures.

Our BCRPVPA membership coordinator, Jessica, who loves to travel has become our muse.

Jessica was just recently returned from Puerto Vallarta and three of the Hawaiian Islands, and wouldn't you know it she is off travelling once again. Jessica's husband, sister and many friends enjoy her adventuresome spirit. Nothing holds Jess back!

Congratulations to Mark Heidebrecht and Tracy Shaw who won the \$25 gifts for their correct guesses last issue.

Can you guess her next two destinations?

Clues:

- 1. Right now you would find Jessica sailing by secluded beaches, historic and cultural landmarks, volcanic peaks, coral reefs and perhaps even diving for pirate treasure. Where might she be?**
- 2. On her second trip, where legend be told that the King found inspiration watching a spider's determination to succeed, prompting him to return to battle despite overwhelming odds. The king's victory eventually led to his country's independence long ago. Where might she be going next?**

One correct guess, one entry into a draw. Two correct guesses, two entries.

How to Enter:

Send your entries to: communications@bcrpvpa.ca Only **two entries** per member.

Winners will be notified by email on May 1st, 2026. Good Luck!

A Follow Up from Last Time

Tracy Shaw was inspired to do some research when the second clue suggested that Jessica was visiting three islands in the Pacific. The intent was to make members think and we certainly succeeded. Maui, Kai and the Big Island of Hawaii were the answers, but any of the Hawaiian Islands would have been accepted for the draw.

Here's what Tracy shared:

Hawaii is actually comprised of 137 islands, only 8 of which considered the "main" Hawaiian Islands; I was looking for a Pacific "country" that only had 3 islands as a whole (ie: Fiji, New Zealand, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Chile, etc.) but every place in the Pacific I checked had dozens, if not hundreds, of small islands...couldn't find one with just three!

So your #2 question was kind of a trick question, but interestingly, I went down one rabbit hole and learned much about the Marshall Islands, (because there was three main islands in the area, so I thought that might be the correct answer, but apparently no one visits the Marshall Islands as a tourist, so I figured Jessica wouldn't be going there!).



One of the Marshall Islands in particular, Wake Island, had a very sad history of it being a POW camp in WWII, where Japanese held American soldiers, many of them massacred, mass buried, later dug up and re-buried in an effort to hide the evidence. As the war neared an end the Japanese living on the island were cut off from all supplies and many died of starvation and illnesses. For a small island there is a long, long history of occupation, re-occupation, airfield building, airfield bombing, and so on; a very interesting read, so thanks for offering a contest that had me doing some research into little known places!

BCRPVPA 2025/26 Bursary and Scholarship Recipients

The BCRPVPA is proud to award thirteen scholarships for the 2025/26 school year. The students that have been selected, are connected with five different post-secondary institutions in BC. This edition highlights five of our winners.

Zeyus Spenta from North Vancouver is one of the top students in his graduating class. Despite a heavy academic load, Zeyus has found many opportunities to support the school community through his role as student council rep. and his work with Student Leadership at the District level. As a Lifeguard and swim instructor, Zeyus clearly knows how to keep his head above water and manages to stay on top of his busy life successfully. Zeyus hopes to help advance biotechnologies, such as nanotech, which leave a lasting legacy. To do so, he is presently pursuing a Bachelor of Science.

Gayeon Kim, a Coquitlam Graduate, as stated by her school Counsellor is "a Renaissance woman." For her high school career, Gayeon achieved "Honours with Great Distinction" recognition every year. Beyond the academics, Gayeon is by all accounts an all-around student who puts forth 110% in all she does, and she does so many activities in and out of the school, far too much to share in this small accounting of her Secondary School Career. She aspires to one day become a dentist and we wish her all the best in her post-secondary journey.

Xauni de Figueiroa is an exceptional student consistently earning top grades while excelling in a wide range of extracurricular activities. She is graduating from Abbotsford School District where she is an avid outdoor enthusiast, environmentalist and artist. Despite her busy life and family challenges, Xauni manages her time amazingly well and always meets deadlines with work that is of a high standard. Xauni is working on a Bachelor of Science degree before going on to a degree in Medicine this year.

Flourish Aiwize attended the Coquitlam School district and has been a strong advocate for her community for many years. She finds ways to connect with others, going so far as to apply to the United Way for a grant to assist her in making presentations. She is a member of her school's basketball team, a member of a community dance team and a [Sunday](#) school teacher. Flourish accomplishes all of this while maintaining a high standard of academic success. She is now pursuing her goal of one day becoming a pediatrician.

Faik Ham graduated in Vancouver. In 2014 he and his family fled the Syrian civil war and spent 3 years in another country before arriving in Canada in 2017. He had already learned two languages in Syria and had to learn a third language while he waited the three years to be able to come to Canada. At the age of ten, he was now challenged to learn a fourth language in his new country.

In grade 10 Faik joined the community Marathon team. His coach said, "his efforts have been so inspiring, often leading to numerous young people finding the courage and strength needed to join themselves." At the RayCam Cooperative Centre, Faik also demonstrated "exceptional leadership, reliability, and a strong commitment to the community." Faik describes his life's journey so far as being, "shaped by resilience, responsibility, and a deep commitment to my community values." Faik's long-term goal is to become a dentist.

belairdirect Scholarships for 2026



Scholarships for 2026

This year, Belair Insurance Company Inc. ("belairdirect") is pleased to offer 50 scholarships worth \$1000. To apply, the student must be:

- a resident of a province or territory of Canada;
- completing high school in 2026;
- have a minimum cumulative average of 80% over the last three terms of available marks, and
- enrolled in an undergraduate program on a full-time basis for the 2026-2027 academic year at a recognized publicly funded Canadian post-secondary institution or CEGEP (if living in the province of Quebec).

Students must also fall into at least **one** of the following categories:

- Be a member of a belairdirect recognized group* (policy not required); OR
- Have a parent/guardian or grandparent who is a member of a belairdirect recognized group such as BCRPVPA, BCPVPA, BCRTA, BCTF or university alumni association * (**policy not required**).



Open: April 30th, 2026
Deadline: June 30th, 2026



To learn more visit
belairdirect.com/scholarship



Universities Canada Toll Free:
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TRAVEL

collette **Travel Opportunities**

Learn more about Collette Travel during an exclusive 45-minute BCRPVPA virtual **ZOOM event on April 28th** @ 10:30 AM PST. Invite your friends and family to join.

<https://collette.zoom.us/j/81468557046?pwd=YOutDGHsa5tDe9rM84VzwHNI5aXJB7.1>



Download the brochure: [BCRPVPA-Collette-Member-Benefit-Flyer](#)

Member Benefit & Travel Styles Video <https://youtu.be/tWJlcu0Wc9w>

Why Guided with Collette & Solo Travel Video <https://youtu.be/Cyf3cppaM3A>

BCRPVPA Member Savings

As of April 1, 2026, receive **\$200** off any Collette tour — combinable with our publicly available offers, which can provide savings of up to \$700 per person on select departures.

Simply reference BCRPVPA when booking with a Collette expert at 1-855-843-7569 or with your preferred travel professional like BRPVPA's Trip Merchant.

If you use Trip Merchant <https://tripmerchant.com/> as your travel agent, you will receive an additional \$100 off and also Trip Merchant dollars sent/ or e-transferred to you after your trip. You could even use these credits for booking more travel.

For more information email info@tripmerchant.com or 1 800-481-9739 ext. 0

Tom, Ryan and Anelisa are happy to help you. Both Tom and Ryan worked for Collette before they created their own affinity travel agency.

Worry-Free Travel

Your journey begins the moment you leave home. When you purchase air through Collette, enjoy roundtrip private sedan service between home and the airport (within 100 km of a major gateway). And with Collette's 24-hour emergency support services and cancel-for-any-reason Travel Protection Plan, you'll be able to relax and focus on what matters most.

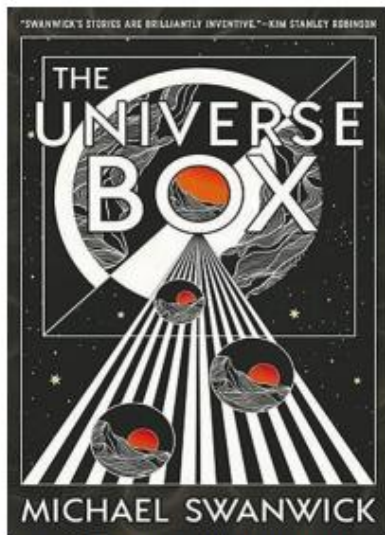
Unmatched Tour Design

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Many of Collette's trips featured in the monthly Trip Merchant Newsletter.

Sign up at [Trip Merchant | Register](#) and use the BCRPVPA organization code: **4324**

The Book Corner

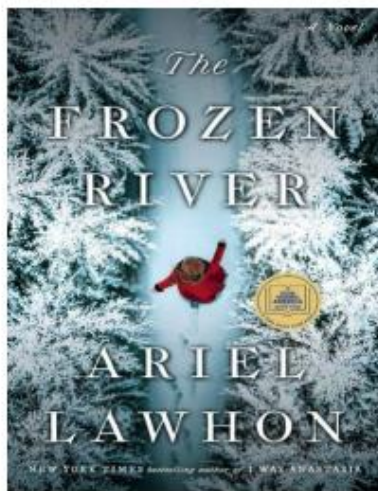


The Universe Box

In "The Universe Box" by Michael Swanwick, readers are invited into a dazzling blend of speculative fiction and philosophical inquiry. Swanwick crafts a world where the boundaries between science and imagination blur, offering a series of interconnected stories that revolve around the mysterious titular box—a device with the power to influence the very fabric of reality. The novel is marked by Swanwick's inventive storytelling and sharp wit, guiding readers through a labyrinth of paradoxes, ethical dilemmas, and the wonder of discovery.

The stories within "The Universe Box" challenge readers to contemplate the consequences of technological advancement and the nature of human curiosity. With vivid prose and a knack for the unexpected, Swanwick delivers a thought-provoking experience that lingers long after the final page—a testament to his skill as a master of speculative fiction.

The Frozen River

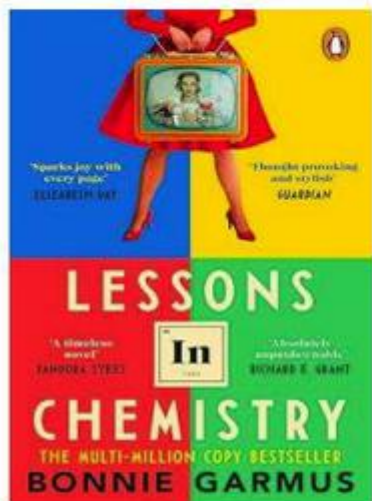


Ariel Lawhon's "The Frozen River" is a gripping historical novel set in late eighteenth-century Maine, where winter's icy grip forms the backdrop for a tale of justice, courage, and community. The story follows Martha Ballard, a midwife and healer, as she becomes embroiled in a murder investigation that exposes deep secrets and challenges the conventions of her time. Lawhon weaves meticulous period detail with suspenseful plotting, immersing readers in both the harsh realities of frontier life and the complexities of early American society.

The novel excels in its portrayal of Martha Ballard's determination and resourcefulness, painting her as a quietly heroic figure who confronts not only the brutality of the elements but also social prejudice and legal obstacles.

"The Frozen River" is ultimately a powerful meditation on resilience and the pursuit of truth, offering a fresh perspective on women's roles in history and the enduring impact of community.

Lessons in Chemistry



"Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus is a spirited, sharply witty novel that charts the journey of Elizabeth Zott, a brilliant chemist in the early 1960s who must navigate a world determined to keep her talents hidden.

Defying societal norms and rampant sexism, Elizabeth's intellect and integrity set her apart, even as she faces setbacks that would have discouraged a lesser spirit. Through her unexpected role as a television cooking show host, she turns conventional wisdom on its head, teaching housewives—and the world at large—that real chemistry happens when we refuse to react as expected.

Garmus's writing brims with heart and irreverence, painting an inspiring portrait of ambition, resilience, and the quiet revolution sparked by a woman who refuses to settle for less than what she deserves.

"Lessons in Chemistry" is a tribute to perseverance and an uplifting reminder that change often begins with the courage to stand alone.

Many thanks to the 'Book Club' – Jane, Helen, Marina, Penny, Deborah, Denise, Joan, Lyndsay, Sue, Saskia, Gerri and Joann.

HUMOR

Tickling Your Funny Bone



"You'll have to get behind me and push."

Dad Jokes thoughtfully contributed by Robert Whyte

Why did the chicken cross the playground? To get to the other slide.

Why do cows wear bells? Because their horns don't work!

Why did the belt get arrested? It held up a pair of pants.

Did you hear about the guy who drank invisible ink? He's at the hospital waiting to be seen.

My horse will only come out of her stable after dark. She's becoming a nightmare.

Why did the Energizer Bunny go to jail? He was charged with battery.

What do French hedgehogs see on Groundhog Day? Their chateau.

What do you get when you cross a fish with an elephant? Swimming trunks.

Fun fact: Koi fish always travel in group of 4. If attacked the Koi A, B, C groups will scatter leaving behind the D Koi.

I trained to walk like an Egyptian, but now I need to see a Cairo Practor.

I asked my Dad why he was wearing two jackets whilst painting the house. He told me the instructions on the can said to put on two coats.

Did you hear about the busload of Elvis impersonators that crashed on their way to Las Vegas? They were All Shook Up!



Why don't scientists trust atoms? Because they make up everything!

What do you call a can opener that doesn't work? A can't opener.

Why did the scarecrow win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field!

What do you call fake spaghetti? An impasta.

Why did the tomato turn red? Because it saw the salad dressing!

Why don't eggs tell jokes? Because they might crack up!

What do you call cheese that isn't yours? Nacho cheese!

Why did the golfer bring two pairs of pants? In case he got a hole in one!

Did you hear about the cheese factory that exploded in France? Apparently, da brie is everywhere.

How does a penguin build its house? Igloos it together!

What makes a dad joke? The punch lines are obvious or a play on words.

Welcome and Good-bye

BCRPVPA

RECOGNIZES

BCRPVPA welcomes:

...since February 1, 2026

Rick Hall

Dave Hunt

Mary O'Neill

Debra Stoutley

Jacquie Taylor

Tom Watkinson



BCRPVPA says good-bye to:

John Anderson

Chris Beaton

Margaret Begg

Adele Clarke

Michael Marshall

John Roberts

Brian Rothwell

Ray Towers



We appreciate the tireless service these members provided to the profession.