

# RBC PENSIONERS' NETWORK

## BRITISH COLUMBIA CELL

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### EDITORIAL

We have learned that the Executive at Phantom Publications in Kelowna have, in a secret meeting, decided that when visiting Vancouver on business, they should have an appropriate place to stay. In the past these individuals rented rooms in the "Super 6 Motel" close to downtown.

The decision was made to buy a house in Vancouver for Executive use. The good news is that the down payment was only \$1,000. The bad news is the payments are \$25,000 per month. A picture of the house is shown below. This extravagance, as described by the union, is incomprehensible. The shareholders are also enraged, as earnings have not met expectations for the last few years. The reaction of the President to both the union and the shareholders has been one of complete indifference.

Charlie Merrick who, on invitation, has spent some time in the new digs believes that Executives at his level are entitled to a few perks. He also told this reporter the accommodation could be compared with Hugh Hefner's Playboy Mansion in Chicago. Charlie insists he didn't inhale. (There will be more to this story.)



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This is the new mystery signature. How many can get this one?



**RBC Lower Mainland Pensioners' Association Directors. L/R Jan Hayes, Doug Bell, Kay Jiles, Richard Fuller, Donald Graham, Roger Burnes, Joan Gemmell. Taken at the Christmas Luncheon. (Missing: Freda d'Souza)**

The Association held their Annual Christmas Luncheon at the Vancouver Four-Seasons Hotel on December 2, 2008- with over 280 in attendance. Kay Jiles has been the President for the past 13 years and will be stepping down after the Annual General Meeting in April 2009. Thank you for all your efforts over the years, Kay!!

A celebration of Don Morris's life was held at the Valley View Funeral Home in Surrey on Friday October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008. There was a very large turnout to remember Don, including many members of the Masonic Order. The following RBC Pensioners were in attendance:  
Reg Gant+, Lillian Pollack, Judy Nicolson, Barb Reynolds, Myrna Phillips, Bernie Smith+, Brian Dobson+, Don Steele, Jim Russell, Dave Jenks+, Dave Lattimer+ and Ruth Botham.

We have recently learned that Geri White passed away at Lions Gate Hospital on Sunday December 21<sup>st</sup>. Geri had suffered from declining health for the past couple of years. Geri was 74 and retired as Benefits Administrator in Human Resources in 1990. She is survived by her husband Greg. We do not have further details at this time.

## Kemano, B.C

By Walt Penner

It was in March 1953 when I was 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Accountant at Vancouver, Main & 8<sup>th</sup> that the Manager, Arnold Putnam, called me into his office. He informed me I had been transferred and that on the following Monday I was to report to Kemano branch for a six month assignment. Kemano is at the head of a mountain fiord, about 500 air miles from Vancouver in North Central Coastal British Columbia and at that time was one of the construction camps for Morrison Knudson, General Contractors at Kemano.

The word was there was a staff of seven. Manager Jack Hilts, five Tellers (all male) and a female Ledger Keeper/ Clerk/ Steno-whatever, who was married to an Alcan employee.

In any case that was where I was going and I was to be there in five days, this being Wednesday morning. I cannot say I was thrilled with this, but that had nothing to do with it. They needed to bring someone out because his time was up and which meant someone had to go in and that someone was me.

Arrangements had been made for me to fly into Kemano Monday morning. The float plane left Vancouver taking six other men who worked for Morrison Knudsen Co. After what seemed like an awful long trip, all of it through rain, cloud and wind, we landed in Kemano harbour and to say I was happy to get off that plane is an understatement. Into a Company bus and we were soon in camp. And what a camp it was. A huge area filled with what must have been hundreds of Quonset huts, each with about 20 double rooms and a large bathroom in the middle. The huts were used for sleeping as well as cook huts, laundry huts, administration hut, hospital huts, Post office hut, and also one hut with a sign "Royal Bank." Kemano at that time was a huge camp, about 3000 persons. About 99% were men. The women there were a few Nurses, the Post Mistress and very few Secretaries .

Kemano was a self-contained company town. It had its own security force and no one was allowed into or out of the town unless cleared by the Company. Everything was provided such as food, lodging, laundry, cleaning, emergency health and dental services. No private automobiles, restaurants, or stores of any kind. It ran like a well run prison and you can well see why.

Kemano was being built to service a hydroelectric power station, to provide energy for Alcan to smelt aluminum from its ore. The power was to be, and is now transmitted to Kitimat 82 km away, where Alcan now produces aluminum.

The rumour I had heard in Vancouver as to everyone being a Teller was correct, but we were far more than that. We had to do whatever the request was and there were many requests from the long line of workers that greeted us every day. The line would be far beyond what we could see at the door and they were often wet and tired by the time they got to our wicket. They gave us their cheques and a good sized cheque it was, compared to what we earned. We noted the number on the cheque which matched the number on the helmet they wore and away we went. So much into the pass book, various mail payment orders to families in Italy or elsewhere, a money order to LCB in Vancouver and often a money order to a female in Vancouver. This, from those who had just been out on a short holiday and felt some obligations to a recent acquaintance in Vancouver who had seen them off and had sworn undying love and faithfulness. This feeling of obligation did not last

long especially as they compared beautiful memories with the next returning workers.

We completed all our own transactions. We posted our deposits, typed up mail payment orders, did our own telegraphic transfers, entered the money orders and travellers cheques and generally worked together to see that we finished the day's work, hours after we closed. We generally did not close until all our customers had been looked after, for if we had it would have likely precipitated a riot. The days were long, we often worked well after 10 pm. We would then usually go over to the cook-house and have a breakfast with the crew that was just going to work. So we often ate 4 meals a day. We worked all the time, every day of the week. When we were not sleeping, we were in the bank doing what had

been left the day before. Balancing all the records, looking for errors in posting, following up on mail payments which apparently had not arrived or whatever, and there were many whatever's. Once every week, two of us flew to Kildala, another camp about 50 miles away. We travelled by float plane (Beaver) from Kemano Bay and landed at Dala, on the Kildala Arm. We were trucked up to our office hut and opened for business as soon as we got settled. We provided banking services to everyone in that camp that was not on shift. We took cash, travellers cheques, savings ledger cards and did exactly what we did in Kemano, this usually took until midnight. We had to open

again in the morning to provide service to the men who had been on shift the night before, load up and fly back to Kemano to process the entries.

The branch was inspected by Brian Gregson and Reed Docker. Reed stayed to relieve Jack Hilts who was going out on vacation. They travelled up in a float plane that was socked- in at Alert Bay where they spent a couple of days before proceeding to Kemano. The staff while I was there were Ron Baker, Bob Matte, Geoff Wood, Morris Munro, Jim Lee, Matt Sherman, and Roy Palmer, with Manager Jack Hilts. A good group that worked well together because we all knew we wouldn't be there more that six months and there was nothing else to do anyway. We were able to save every dollar we earned. We didn't make enough money to spend time in the poker tent which was about the only entertainment. Further, the poker tent had its own code of ethics. You had to be very careful where you stood if you were watching the game. Stakes were high; often the entire week's cheque was thrown into the pot to bet on a hand. Cheating was very nearly a Capital Offence. In fact, one person was accused of cheating and disappeared that night, later found at the bottom of a cliff in the dead of winter. So we knew enough to stay away from there. The few ladies in town (Nurses) were as far removed from us as you can get. So other than send a weekly money order to the LCB in Vancouver for the odd bottle of rum delivered by the next boat, we spent our time in the Bank and saved our money. In October 1953, I was transferred as Assistant Accountant to Nelson, B.C. a beautiful spot and a great branch. Phil Hoskins was the Manager and Larry Urquhart the Accountant, and life went on, but that is another story.

**Here's a riddle for you. What is:  
Greater than God.**

**More evil than the devil.**

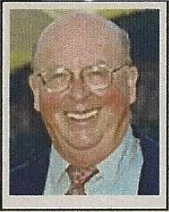
**The poor have it.**

**The rich need it.**

**If you eat it you'll die?**

**(not a trick answer)**





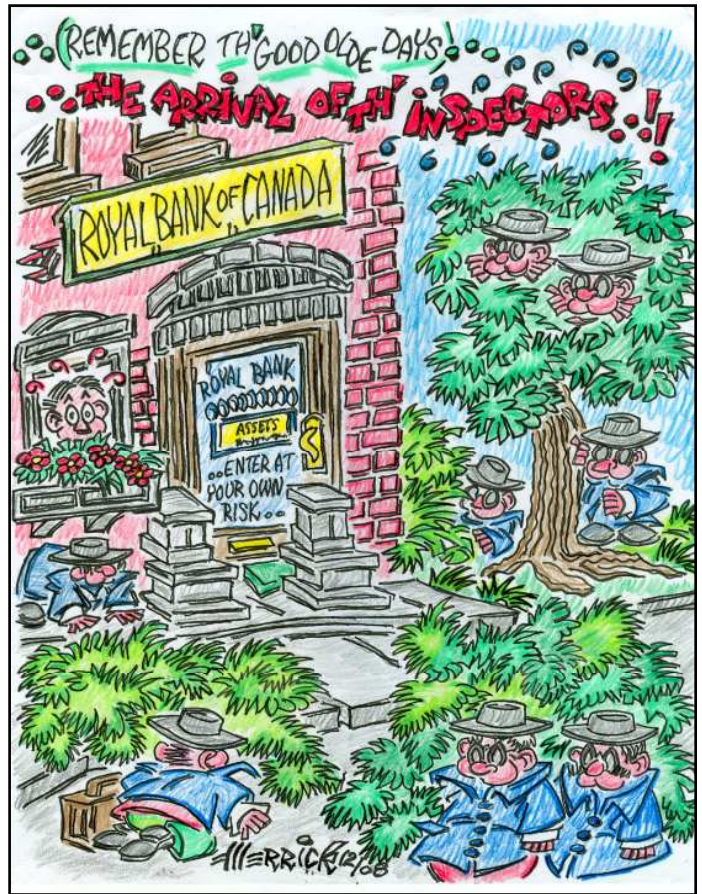
We regret to advise the passing of M.O.P. Morrison. Morrie died on May 28, 2008 in the intensive care unit in Salmon Arm, B.C. He had lived nearby in Blind Bay on Shuswap Lake. Morrie was 83 years old. He retired in Toronto in 1964 as a Senior Vice-President. Morrie will be remembered by many of our readers when he served on the B.C. Inspection Team.



**Howard Bauder**  
Both seen at the Pensioners' Luncheon in White Rock



**Jim Train**



**INTERIOR BC PENSIONERS' DINNER.**

Wayne Waters reports that the annual dinner was held on Thursday October 17<sup>th</sup> at the Kelowna Golf & Country Club. There was a record attendance of over 120 people for the dinner. Norm Meadows acted as Master of Ceremonies. The RBC Financial Group sponsored the event. Wayne has advised that if anyone wishes information on future Pensioners' events in the Interior of B.C., they should contact him at [wfwaters@shaw.ca](mailto:wfwaters@shaw.ca)

**SUNDRY INFORMATION**

We spoke to the Phantom Publications staff member who was cited for spousal abuse. He promised to respond as soon as his lawyer is released from prison.

The mystery branch was Kelowna. Very surprised no one made this identification.

Leo Fornari recognized the signature of David Malcolm Pollock and he had the full name.



**Who can identify the location of this branch (circa 1960)?**

**WHITE ROCK PENSIONERS' LUNCHEON**

On November 20<sup>th</sup> Don Steele, Charlie Merrick and Doug Bell attended the regular monthly Thursday luncheon at the Delrios Restaurant in White Rock. About 40 people sat down for lunch. We enjoyed the fellowship and met old friends and associates. Any Pensioners interested in attending this gathering should contact Richard Fuller at [refuller@hotmail.com](mailto:refuller@hotmail.com)

**WEST TO B.C**

The Royal Bank of Canada was incorporated in 1869 as "The Merchants Bank of Halifax." The name was changed by act of Parliament to The Royal Bank on January 1, 1901. The Head Office was transferred from Halifax to Montreal on March 2, 1907. The Merchants Bank of Halifax opened its first branch in B.C. in Rossland on August 23, 1897, followed by Nelson on November 26, 1897. The Vancouver office was opened on December 13, 1897. On April 2, 1898 Victoria branch was opened, followed by Vancouver, Main & Hastings on May 27, 1898.

## W.E. (BILL) MCKINNEY

After Vern Tompkins at BC District Headquarters said “You passed the physical and barely made it through the written exam” I was hired. 8:15 AM on November 5, 1968 I stood before the locked doors of Burnaby, Kingsway & Walker branch and, after several minutes of pounding, the doors were swung wide open by Barb Reynolds. She ushered me into THE MANAGER’S OFFICE, I was introduced to a Mr. Charles (“don’t call me Chuck”) Linton. Len Adamson put me in a safe deposit box cubicle for the next 5 days to memorize the Rule Book and the Books of Circular Letters. The foundation of my banking career was poured.

Bill Mills, District Training Officer, said I had a choice of where I wanted to go. (Yeah right) “Quesnel”. “I’ll take it”!! Only two questions, sir. “Where’s Quesnel and what was my second choice?” Williams Lake, he said. So I piled into my ’64 Plymouth Belvedere and loaded the 8 track with Leonard Cohen. And who should open the door at Quesnel but none other than Bob McKay. My luck was changing. Meet Mr. Jim Stevens, THE MANAGER.

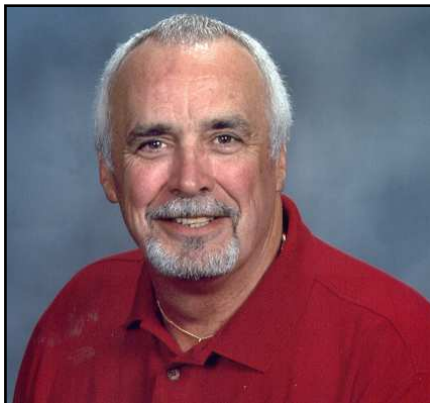
As a Junior Account Clerk, I quickly discovered that all my training was for naught as they had me start over and the Tellers quickly reminded me of my standing in the Bank. Apparently I worked for them and would do their bidding. Gerry Nakoneshny was my mentor and eventually my roommate. Glen Karran was our Account Manager. Met and married Holly in July 1970. Apparently you were supposed to ask the Bank for permission. I must have missed that rule in glancing through the Rule Book.

Off to 6<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> New Westminster that same year as a Junior Accountant. My career was skyrocketing until I ran into Kain Kangro, AMA and John Devlin, Sr. Accountant, only to discover once again that I hadn’t learned anything useful so far. Mr. Ed Bradish was THE MANAGER.

Somewhere in this timeframe I played in the RBCMMTFL. If you have to ask, you didn’t play. Going head- to- head with Bob Irlam was not a pleasant sight. Nor was stomping on the foot of the visually-impaired Referee. Some hard rock named “Charlie”.

I needed a change in pace and was asked (told) to report to Rutland and that Trevor Miller would resume my training program. That was fun for awhile but then he moved on and Al Westnedge took up the challenge.

Vancouver was calling and I moved down to take on an assignment within this little known group called Chargex. Hugh Atkinson was the Manager, Western Canada and I was some kind of clerk – in a cubicle with two women. Not sure of what we did but to balance the daily cardholder credits and debits. Then I had to explain in full detail to the Inspectors, what this all meant. They were as confused as we were. Someone yelled out (no e-mail or job postings yet) that there was a sales position open in Calgary.



Company car and expense account!! “I’ll go” and so began my education into sales.

Those 18 months were a blur but I wanted back into BC. So I asked one of the best left-fielders in the RBC fastball team, Brian Hartley, who was then in HR Calgary, to send me back to BC for retraining. I ended up at Burnaby, Main Branch where Ed Bradish was the Manager. “Crap – I hope he doesn’t remember me”.

There I sat at the foot of Larry Slipec, AMPL, who taught me how to lend it and collect it. He was the best teacher I had and saved my bacon on more than one occasion.

As a stop over until a PLO position opened, they sent me to Chargex to clean up a back-log of 3,000 applications. Charlie Chargex was now in charge. “Crap – I hope he doesn’t remember me”. After earning the name of “Trixie,” I was sent over to 5000 Kingsway, Burnaby with Bert Neff and Brian Williams. Now the ball was really rolling. Next up was Kingsgate Mall, Vancouver. This is where I earned my stripes. Unfortunately they were almost horizontal. With Ron Soley at the helm, Brian “Beefo” Bedford as 1<sup>st</sup> mate and Jim

McKelvie as AMA, I finally made it to AMPL. Those days are a bit fuzzy but I do have fond memories of Puccini’s and the Glass Onion.

September, ’77 Prince George, Main and Hugh Atkinson (“Why does this keep happening to me?”), then Don Rees, Lorrie Anderson, Barry Scott and seven of the best winters of my life. That included a stint at BC North Regional Office with John Weymss (who could never remember my name), Peter Marshak and Bob Walch.

Finally in ’84 the BIG SHOW in Retail Marketing, BC District Headquarters, Vancouver. It was a changing experience for me and the bank. Grey Panthers, Mortgage Specialists, the Bill & Bob Show, EXPO 86, Telemarketing Centre, Credit Scoring, CCRM and Royal Performance cruises. All under the leadership of Gerry Conly, Jim Wright, Kit Payne and then Ron Tomlin alongside a great team of Bob Thompson, Tracy Price, John McIntyre, Brian Hann, Jim Ranta, Don Wingfield, Angelo, Kevin, Shelley and more.

In ’93/’94 we were hit by the downsizing bug and I was sent over to Vancouver Island as the Greater Victoria Area Office’s Retail Marketing guy under the tutelage of Brian Reynolds. “Will the teaching never end?” Then they wanted me to become a Manager, Personal Banking (Victoria, Burnside & Tillicum) where I had to pass exams in Mutual Funds and other nasty stuff. But I learned because I had a great staff (including Myrna and Donna) that didn’t mind teaching me.

I then chose to go to Creston in ’97 as Manager and for the life of me I can’t remember why. I took early retirement in July 2000 and now live in Parksville, B.C.