This is not a publication of the BCAS 10-7 Association. The content and opinions are those of the editor and contributors so any blame must be directed appropriately.

Comments and contributions are cheerfully received and read. Some may be printed in future issues. Or you may even want to unsubscribe! Please submit all correspondence to: The Editor

An ice climber lays down a slender ladder and carefully crosses a deep crevasse. It is a brief moment fraught with peril yet it can be accomplished with the right elements in place: equipment, training and attitude ensuring success. That a thin ladder can achieve this is a marvel but all of the pieces must be equally strong and in harmony. And so it is in the service that we were a part of. Each generation of paramedics supports the ambulance system for a while. Then, having served our purpose, we are left bereft of utility. But what if the now-useless rungs were to simply disappear? The integrity of the ladder would be compromised. So, in that light, it’s useful to survey our world of retirement and see what uses we yet have.

No longer active, we still remain a resource for our immediate community. Family and friends seek advice and benefit from our insight into the workings of the medical system. We continue to have opinions about health procedures, practitioners and institutions. We may even have insight into where credible medical care ends and the hype of Big Pharma begins.

Part of our legacy is the influence we had on individuals’ careers choices and the robust agency that is BCAS today. Grainy pictures kept in ambulance stations throughout BC, together with collections of newspaper clippings attest to our many contributions. For some, their histories will even make it into print as projects now underway to preserve their stories mature. And don’t forget that we have now become models for colleagues close to or just starting retirement. So, all in all, there is much fuel to stoke the fire of our self esteem and even make an argument for altruism.

A large measure of the satisfaction of having served as paramedics is the knowledge that we put in a good effort when others entrusted their lives to us. This is reflected in the respect shown by colleagues when opportunities arise to gather. Sadly, such opportunities are often the funerals of old friends, but the 10-7 club is here to offer a more animated setting in which to share companionship. Maybe the club too is like the ladder; one upon which paramedics can rely as we traverse the perilous chasm of old age.

Too much talk of aging and dying? Remember that the 10-7 was created following the loss to suicide of a respected elder who died too soon after he retired. But our club is not about assistance programs which are best left to agencies who can deliver them with expertise and professionalism. What we are is a group with a common background that share a common expectation: the enjoyment of the rest of our allotted time on planet earth. Retirement is not the last rung on the ladder, my friends, and as we begin a new year let us confidently take the next step into the future while enjoying our long walk in the sun.

John Verde
Spotlight on Rick Stanger

When Rick Stanger transferred into Vancouver Post in 1981, he found the dynamics there suited him well. Partnered with Jim Sutherland at G9, Surrey, he felt totally fulfilled doing 12-18 runs in the day and 18-24 on nights. [There were no hospital waits then] “I was actually in a bad mood if morning came and I had a quiet shift” he says. That segment of his life lasted 10 years during which time he met his wife, Deb, an RN at RCH ER. “I lucked out with her,” he says, “we were and are best friends.”

Rick had started his ambulance career in private service before becoming the first hire in Victoria on July 3, 1974. His time with BCAS was not without its frustrations and disillusionment so that by 1992 he was making changes in his career path. Because the Stangers had been vacationing in the southern states for some time and saw opportunities, they made for the greener pastures on the other side of the “fence.” In Bellingham, Rick challenged and passed the EMT and the Firefighter 2 exams.

Their first move was to Port Charlotte, Florida where they bought a gorgeous house on the water complete with a big pool. By 1993 both Rick and Deb had dual citizenship. Rick wrote the Florida Realtor’s exam and sold real-estate on days off from work as a Fire-based EMT. That system was so different (when compared to BCAS) that he found it hard to enjoy so he sought certification to the ALS level as well as a Heart Cath Tech/Paramedic. Meantime, Deb was continuing her nursing career and pulling in three times what she had earned at the Columbian. Eventually, there was a loss of interest as it became clear to Rick that there was not much possibility of climbing the ranks. He was considered too old by then, but concedes that there might have been attitudinal reasons for being passed over as well.

Their next move was to the Keys and an ocean-side home. It was a two story concrete house with in-law suite. A 40 foot sport fishing boat rounded off the lifestyle. “For 10 years we fished our asses off, but, a year ago, skin cancer and creeping age put a stop to further sun exposure” he says. “We still dive every weekend for lobster and get tons to give away, as I don’t like them.”

Throughout the years, there have been many different jobs in Rick’s life and today he is a Reserve Deputy in the Sherriff’s Department. EMA, EMT, ALS Paramedic, Firefighter, Chimney sweep, taxi company owner, restaurant owner are all components of his resume. Real estate has proven to be most lucrative and 4 years ago they bought a 170 year old retired hospital in Jamestown, Ohio, where their daughter and grandkids live in a large home. The hospital hasn’t found a use yet but, bought for $25k, Rick now estimates its value has increased by 18 times.

“From a Navy stint in 1966 to the present Sherriff’s job, I’ve put in 48 continuous years in public service” says Rick. He hoped to go for 50 but can’t as he and Deb have just embarked on a project to create an animal refuge on 40 acres in Lake Lure, North Carolina. Animal lovers, the Stangers have identified a need for a foster ranch to support the animal rescue societies in that state. Although it is an old hunting lodge, Rick says he was never a hunter and that this parcel will be a haven for animals. The project includes the building of their dream log home for “retirement.”

Finally, Rick waxes philosophical and allows that some days he wakes up realizing that he feels his 66 years. “Would I, if I had a choice to do it all over again, move here?” And then he answers his own question: “No. Canada is a great country. Though we are probably 10 times wealthier by having moved, we could have done what we want to do in the Okanagan or the Cariboo, for example.” He knows that guys like Doug Fenton have taken up the ranching life and considers that he could have been happy doing the same.

I know y’all are reading this, Rick, and I can’t stop myself from reminding you of the -30 degree winters and snow up to the horses’ bellies. Thank you for giving us an insight into your life down where the sun always shines. May it shine upon a long and happy retirement for you and Deb!
Dear Colleagues

RE: Fallen Paramedics Memorial Monument Unveiling

On behalf of the Fallen Paramedics Memorial Committee I wish to inform you the Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of the Province of B.C and the Honorable Linda Reid, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of B.C. have announced Wednesday, May 6, 2015 as the date set for the unveiling of the above noted memorial.

The committee extends an invitation to you to join your colleagues of the paramedic profession, and help them as they pay tribute and honour to their fallen members. If you will be attending the official dedication it will commence at noon on the day of the ceremony. You should be on site by not later than 11:30 am. Dress will be casual attire. Please be aware parking in the immediate area will be very difficult to find.

I hope you can make this historical occasion

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Mr. Lynn B Klein
Chair, Fallen Paramedics Memorial Committee
Cc: committee members

The Next Lower Mainland Luncheon is on January 21, 1100 hrs. at Rusty’s Pub, Cloverdale

Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2015
This issue’s editorial makes reference to old age. Naturally, the topic of aging underlines the 10-7 club’s raison d’etre. But really, at 62 I am a junior member and feel inadequate to the task of contributing to the discussion. I can certainly get the conversation started, but it falls upon the readership to round out the topic with sage thoughts regarding the retirement experience. What are your experiences? Do they feature travel, hobbies, health, spirituality or family? Are you numbly ticking off Bucket List items before you run out of time or are you facing each new year of life as a blank page upon which to write more of your story?

There is a lot of wisdom out there and this newsletter wants to tap into it for the benefit and entertainment of our readers. You may recall that when the newsletter started, a concern was raised that, failing the contributions of its readers, this project would become imbalanced. Well folks, the unease grows. So please dig down and see what you can come up with that might be of interest to your second family. Thanks in advance for your effort in helping make 2015’s sNOOZE newsletters more interesting and more inclusive.

Just prior to its Christmas release, the movie The Interview was pulled due to threats of violence and the disclosure of embarrassing photos of Sony executives. The event prompted much discourse in media organizations worldwide including our modest publication. sNOOZE steers away from stories of political content but a pre-emptive policy vis-à-vis the North Korean regime appears to be necessary. It was resolved that, Kim Jong Un, will only be portrayed in the venerable manner that is owed the democratically-elected leader of a nation of 28 million people; a nation where today a thousand of its citizens can access the internet, any one of whom could presumably stumble upon Facebook. There’s a possibility that photographs may exist on Facebook that, if taken out of context, could bring embarrassment and disrepute upon the editor. The credibility of this newsletter could be placed in serious jeopardy.

For over a decade, small groups of Surrey paramedics have made their way to a therapeutic retreat. During such visits, stress reduction exercises are practiced which could appear bizarre if taken out of context. One such is pictured (ironically called the Pyongyang Process) and has the purpose of stopping dead in its tracks any attempt at mind control by agencies with sinister intent. It is, by the way, most effective when combined with yoga meditation or judicious doses of alcohol to disrupt thought processes enough for the “barrier” to be fully effective. Disclosure: To date, there has not yet been a yoga practitioner available at the retreat.