



VAN-FRASER NEWS

Volume 17, Number 1
Jan/Feb 2026

VAN FRASER HERITAGE CLUB

JAN 9—FEB 19: ANTARTICA CRUISE ON THE OOSTERDAM

INSIDE THIS ISSUE ✨

- Antarctica Cruise..... 1
- Travel Page Update..... 5
- Mexican Riviera Cruise..... 6
- The Original Santa Letter.. 7
- Belairdirect MX/Cuba..... 12
- Belairdirect Contest..... 13
- Scholarship Program..... 14
- Important Information.... 15
- In Memoriam..... 16
- Spring Luncheon tickets... 17

Upcoming EVENTS

March 27:

- Spring Luncheon,
Cascades Casino, Delta

June 11:

- Summer Luncheon
(location TBA)

September 6 to 10:

- U-drive trip (your vehicle)

October 8:

- Gala Banquet, Continental
Seafood Restaurant

December 4:

- Christmas Luncheon with
Santa and New Toy Drive



Fred pointing out the **Italia Glacier** in Chile, one of several hanging glaciers descending from the Darwin Icefield toward the sea.



Viewing the Antarctic Peninsula from the Oosterdam deck.



Antarctica Cruise on the Oosterdam

Santiago, Chile to Buenos Aries & Return



Checking the Penguin's Post Office to ensure none of Santa's mail was misdirected to the South Pole! Port Lockroy is a historic British research base that sits on tiny Goudier island.



King Penguins with their newborns at Bluff Cove on Falkland Islands.



Both parents returning from the sea with fish, sharing the task of feeding their young.





Antarctica Cruise on the Oosterdam

Santiago, Chile to Buenos Aries & Return



Imaginative fun by crew members on the Oosterdam, creating a penguin sculpture out of snow collected from the deck!

A colony of **Gentoo penguins** resting on rocky terrain in Antarctica.





Antarctica Cruise on the Oosterdam



Santiago, Chile to Buenos Aires & Return



The Sea View pool is located at the back of the Oosterdam and is easily identifiable by its four Picasso-like figures at one end.

On the return trip, the Oosterdam traced Chile's rugged coast, exploring fjords, glaciers, and famed passages before another 4 extraordinary days cruising Antarctica. An overnight in Buenos Aires capped off the journey.





Mexican Cruise on the Zuiderdam



Feb 15 - Feb 26: Cruising the West Coast of Mexico



A small group of members flew to San Diego to join the Zuiderdam for a Mexico cruise. The cruise originated in San Diego return and visited Cabo San Lucas, La Pas, Loreto, Guaymas, Topolobampo, Mazatlán, Puerto Vallarta and Ensenada.

The highlight and a “bucket List“ item for all was the bus and train trip to the top of Copper Canyon while the ship was in Topolobampo, Mexico. For those who love the Grand Canyon, this is considered even more spectacular.



Spectacular view from top of Copper Canyon. Copper Canyon is four times bigger and two times deeper than Arizona’s Grand Canyon!

“We had perfect weather, and enjoyed the trip, although the 18 hour day was exhausting”. Needless to say, the group was happy to have a few sea days to relax and process all they had seen.





This article has been reprinted from the Nov-Dec 1963 issue of the Vancouver Postal Club's newsletter: **The Mail Bag**. The heartfelt story originated in 1948 and is about a young girl from Scotland who wrote the original letter to Santa Claus in Canada. What follows is the account of kind-hearted actions and generous people at Canada Post that helped make this young girl's belief in Santa come true.



IT ALL STARTED when the following letter, addressed in childish print, finally came to rest in Vancouver, after meandering across Canada for weeks. Here is the letter:

*To Santa Claus,
Rocky Mountains,
Canada*

DEAR SANTA CLAUS
 WHY DID YOU NOT BRING MY
 DOLLY DID YOU GET MY LETTER I
 SENT YOU. MY MUMMY IS POOR
 SHE HAS NOT MUCH MONEY
 TO BUY YOU BUT I LEFT
 6 PENNIES ON MANTLE
 PIECE FOR YOU
 AND YOU DIDNT COME
 AND PLEASE SANTA
 WHY
 IRIS

Then the workers in the Despatch Branch of the Main Office decided to find out whether it was just a gag or the genuine article. What did they discover? Just this. It was written by Iris Swinton, seven years old, whose mother was left a widow when her twin boys (two sets) were aged six and eleven, and Iris was an infant.





It transpired later that little Iris was not too strong, and had never had a visit from Santa before; hence her resolution to write him a personal letter.

“That’s done it,” the Despatch boys concluded. “We have kids of our own, and we’ve been kids ourselves, so we know that the days of childhood are all too short. Let’s not make them any shorter. So, seeing the letter is addressed to Santa Claus, and has failed to locate him due to insufficient address, here’s where we sub for good old Santa.”



Iris’s mother pictured with dolly, gifted to Iris in Scotland

The next step was to write to the mother and ask if she would accept a doll for her little girl. Having received a letter of acceptance from Mrs. Swinton, the boys clubbed up and sent Iris a dolly almost as big as her seven-year-old self. (See picture).

Now comes the happy ending, as expressed in the letters of Iris and her mother. These are faithful reproductions, even to the trivial grammatical faults, and further comment on our part is both unnecessary and uncalled for, except for this explanation. We would have liked very much to reproduce the actual letter of reply by little Iris, as we reproduce her first letter to Santa. But there has been such a demand for the story from so many quarters that the material has been out on loan almost continuously since it was received from Iris and her mother. So much so that we have only got re-possession recently, and you will have to be content with the full wording in ordinary print along with the photograph of Iris and her dolly “Snuggles.” Note the brave attempt at correct spelling.





9 Kingennie
Tce, Dundee
Scotland

7th April

My Dear Friends in Canada

Dolly arrived safely and she is the most beautiful dolly I have ever seen I got your very nice letter to and sorry to know Santa does not live in the Rockies any more But I will never need to write Santa again for a dolly for Snuggles is the bonniest wee girl in the world I call her Heather White to Mummy says she is such a pretty flower She goes walkies with me and goes to the shops with me and says her prayer's with me to and we say a very nice prayer for all of you kind friends in Canada. God bless all of you and thank all of you from the bottom of my very heart

I am the happiest little girl in Scotland now I never had a dolly before. I will take awfully good care of her. Santa never came to me before now I know why he does not stay in the Rockies now. I will love Snuggles all my life. I would like to say thank you all by sending you this photo of myself I had it taken with dolly just for all of you to see and hope you will like it. I will send you all more of them if you would like them.

So cheerio good luck and God bless all of you I will always call you all my dear Canadian friends. From a very happy we girl.

Iris Swinton

Good luck

Please write



Iris pictured with her dolly from Santa





Iris' mother writes as follows:

9 Kingennie Tce.,
Dundee,
Scotland.

7th April, 1948

Dear Sirs or Madam:

Your parcel arrived all in perfect condition and they said there was nothing to pay for it. I still have this £1 note in my possession and I was wondering if there has been some mistake, will the post office here call for it or maybe you could enlighten me what to do about it. Well friends, in the first place I want to say thank you to all for your kindness towards Iris. I never saw the likes of this doll in Scotland, what a beauty she is, and I know Iris will take good care a it, she is big enough to understand that. It has caused some sleepless nights what excited she has been. And no wonder, this doll has been the envy of many people in Dundee. We were going to have the photo taken, and gosh, we were almost mobbed with people, they all wanted to see it, really it was something new in Dundee. Well she has sent you this photograph of herself and the dolly, it is her way of really saying thank you to you all. I hope you will accept it from her as it is sent with a very happy little heart and you can see the excellent look she has in that photo. She was not keeping well lately but this. Dolly has made a great change in her. She is See and sings to it most of the day. There is a letter from her enclosed here and I don't know what is in it but I saw her twin brother's give her a help out here so its her secret she says but you may have to look over any mistakes there may be in it. Well, I cannot find words enough to thank you all but you will understand how very grateful I am. I know I will never repay you for the happiness you all have given my little girl. I can only say good luck to you all and many happy days to you. It all come about as a awful surprise to me. Gosh I never really knew she posted any letter to Santa Claus. I do remember she asked me for one stamp but I never give it a thought again until I got your letter. She has put you to a lot of trouble no doubt but it is something we will always remember for the rest of our lives. You have been good friends to her, I am so happy myself about it I can only say again God bless you friends.

Good luck from yours very sincerely —N Mrs. Swinton.

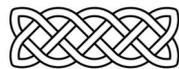




So, little Iris has her ‘Snuggles,’ Mrs. Swinton has her £1 note, and the Despatch boys have a warm glow deep inside that will last for a long time; which will be re-kindled every time they look at the board on the Letter Despatch floor in Vancouver Main Office depicting the whole episode, complete with the actual letters and pictures of their little mascot from Bonnie Dundee.

While this is not strictly a credit union story, the boys who subbed for Santa are, almost without exception, members of the Vancouver Federal Employees Credit Union, which, by the way, is now second largest in the Province, and at the present rate of progress will soon be the largest. Holding Charter Number 2, this union has always been prominent in its support of the League and all efforts of the movement at large, and has furnished a perpetual stream of officer material for the League and its component departmental activities.

Returning to Iris and her doll, the Customs waived all charges on the import of “Snuggles” and the British Taxation Department also waived the luxury? tax due, owing to the exceptional circumstances involved. So, by and large, it seems that these “hardboiled government guys” are just as defenseless against a little child as are most people.



Footnote:

This story is a reflection of the ongoing generosity of Canada Post employees, including Van-Fraser Members, who give so generously of their time, efforts, and donations to a variety of causes and activities, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year.





BELAIRDIRECT - MEXICO & CUBA

TRAVEL INSURANCE INFORMATION



Supporting members travelling to Mexico and Cuba

We recognize that the evolving situations in parts of Mexico and Cuba may be raising questions for travelers. Please be assured that we are closely monitoring developments and our teams are in place to support your members who may be travelling to or from these destinations.

How we're supporting members

We are currently experiencing a higher-than-normal volume of calls to both our service and claims contact centres. To help ensure members can continue to access support when they need it most, we've taken steps to increase our capacity, including:

- Ensuring our Emergency Assistance teams remain available 24/7 and ready to help members who may need medical support, guidance or help coordinating care while travelling
- Adding overtime across our support teams
- Shifting additional resources into key service areas to help meet increased demand
- Continuing to work closely with our global assistance partners to support members before and during their trips

Our comprehensive travel policy

Unexpected situations like these can be challenging for travelers to navigate on their own. Our belairdirect Travel policies include **Trip Cancellation** and **Trip Interruption** coverage, which may help with eligible expenses not covered by airlines or travel providers, such as:

- Prepaid travel arrangements
- Transportation
- Out-of-pocket expenses
- Pet return

Additional information for members

If members need to open a claim or require assistance during their trip, please direct them to the following channels:

	<p>belairdirect Travel Claims Centre</p>		<p>Canada/USA: 1 800 709.3420 Worldwide: 1 819 566.1002</p>
---	---	---	---

We also encourage members who are traveling abroad to follow guidance from local authorities and to stay informed by reviewing the latest travel advice from the Government of Canada:

[Travel advice and advisories for Mexico](#)

[Travel advice and advisories for Cuba](#)

Please don't hesitate to reach out should have any questions or require additional support.

We're here to help.

The **belairdirect** team





HERITAGE CLUB SPONSORS



Passport to prizes contest

Enter to win one of five **\$10,000 travel vouchers***.



belairdirect are giving Heritage Club members a chance to win one of five **\$10,000 travel vouchers***

It's so easy to enter! Simply visit belairdirect.com/ptpcontest



Complete the quick and easy entry form, and you're entered. Good luck!

*Certain conditions apply.

Save with Specsavers

Welcome to the Canada Post Heritage Club we're proud to partner with this organization to provide affordable, accessible eyecare and eyewear to all its members.

All our locations provide a great range of offers, glasses, and contact lenses, as well as online booking and direct billing.

Plus, as a valued Heritage Club member, you can also get **60% off lens upgrades*** to help you make the perfect glasses.

And don't forget, if you're eligible for provincial health care, your eye exam (including an OCT eye health scan) will be at no cost to you.**

Book an eye exam today at specsavers.ca

*Discount only available for Heritage Club members with proof of valid Heritage Club membership. Cannot be used for friends or family purchases. Offer details are subject to change. Other conditions and exclusions apply, for more details visit www.heritageclub.ca/membership/
**Costs of eye exams provided by independent optometrists are covered by provincial health care for eligible seniors.





CANADA POST HERITAGE CLUB SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



The **Canada Post Heritage Club** is proud to support the next generation of students by awarding three scholarships of \$2,000 each to children (including adopted children or stepchildren or wards in legal guardianship) or grandchildren of dues-paying Heritage Club members who are beginning their post-secondary education.

These scholarships are intended to recognize hard-working, well-rounded students who demonstrate determination, community involvement, leadership, and a strong potential for success — not solely on academic achievement.

Application timeline:

- Applications open: March 15, 2026
- Applications close: June 15, 2026
- Scholarship recipients announced: week of August 3, 2026

Eligible students are encouraged to apply and share their story, including academics, employment, volunteer work, extracurricular activities, and any challenges they have overcome along the way.

We look forward to reviewing applications and celebrating the achievements of our members' families.

Questions? Please send any questions via email to: vanfrasernews01@gmail.com .





IMPORTANT CONTACTS & NUMBERS



important PHONE NUMBERS

CPC Pension	1-877-480-9220
Superannuation	1-800-561-7930
CPP/OAS.....	1-800-277-9914
Belair direct	1-833-245-3999
Canada Life	1-866-716-1313
Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP).....	1-855-415-4414
Access HR.....	1-877-807-9090
CRA (Canada Revenue Agency)	1-800-959-8281
Employment Insurance	1-800-206-7218



Here are a few of the exclusive offerings you'll enjoy as a Heritage Club Member.

- Access to belairdirect Travel Insurance discounts (Previously MEDOC)
- Access to belairdirect Home Insurance
- GoodLife Fitness discounts (Gym)
- Hearing Life
- Specsavers
- Scholarships for children and grandchildren of members (Heritage Club and belairdirect and Van Fraser)
- Collette Tour discounts

<https://www.belairdirect.com/en/group-insurance/group-travel-insurance.html>

Editor's Note

Van-Fraser News is published by the Van-Fraser Heritage Club

Editor: Stu Magee

Mail submissions to: Van-Fraser News, Unit 160 - 5940 Ferguson Road, Richmond, BC , V7B 0B1

Email submissions to: vanfrasernews01@gmail.com

The editor reserves the right to edit any/all submissions.





IN MEMORY

VAN FRASER HERITAGE CLUB



Richard Meyer
Marion Ryan
Frederick Whitworth
Dennis Watt
David Northgraves
Donna Inwood
Diane Diotte
James Stevenson Sr.
Charles Haws
Nicholas Kvenich

Thank you for all the notices we receive from our members,
family and fiends. VFHC





VAN FRASER HERITAGE CLUB

SPRING LUNCHEON: FRIDAY, MARCH 27



Delta Cascades Casino Buffet

6005 Highway 17A, Delta
Just south of the tunnel.



Join your fellow members for a fun lunch
“It’s not just good food but all the chatting and catching up”
\$28.00 per person includes all taxes and gratuities.

Lots of free parking, room to mingle, door prizes, variety of salads,
fruit, entrees, desserts, coffee, tea and more.



If driving, offer to pick up others who live near you.

Check Transit for bus routes, and the bus stop within a short walk of the Casino.
Call your friends and colleagues to join you for lunch and conversation!



Van Fraser Heritage Club Spring Luncheon/Get-Together

Friday, March 27, 2026 , 11:30 am

Cascades Casino Buffet, Delta

Tickets: \$28.00 per person

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal code: _____ Phone: _____

Number of tickets: _____(Open seating)

Send your cheque payable to Van Fraser Heritage Club to: Van Fraser Heritage Club
5940 Ferguson Rd
Richmond, BC
V7B 0B1

