

Canadian Coast Guard Association

Winter 2008 Newsletter



CCGS Provo Wallis at Bamfield Lifeboat Station - photo by Phil Dauphinee

Contributions to our Newsletter are welcomed and encouraged. Many thanks to all who contributed material for this edition. Please pass all input to: Phil Dauphinee, Editor, 3621 Crestview Road Victoria BC V8P 5C5 250-595-2335 E-mail: pdauphinee@shaw.ca The number of photographs printed in the Newsletter has been kept to a minimum, in order to avoid unnecessary printing costs. Members with access to the Internet should bookmark the Coast Guard Association website at www.ccgawest.ca Members are encouraged to forward pictures to the Editor for publication on the website. The Newsletter is also available on the Coast Guard Alumni website at <http://ccgalumnimaritimes.com/>.

Short history of the Canadian Coast Guard Association

"An informal group of 12 Retired Coast Guard Officers met for a Christmas Lunch at the Princess Mary in 1988 and the number increased to 96 by 1995, due largely to the dedication and hard work of Migs Turner. A Canadian Coast Guard Retired Officer's Association Steering Committee was formed in March 1995 to determine the future of the Association. It was agreed that Art Mountain would chair a small

working group to look into incorporating under the Societies Act of B.C. On June 20, 1996, Art was elected President of the newly formed Canadian Coast Guard Association and began the process of incorporation, which was completed on July 17, 1996. We now have over 150 members."

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1. Greetings from the President.

As we approach the end of another year we can reflect on the many changes that have happened throughout 2008, and be thankful for the wonderful country we live in.

I would like to give a special thanks to the Executive, our Web Page organizer, and the Newsletter Editors. Also those who phone and provide advice throughout the year helping to keep the CGA functioning.

We need to continue to bring in new members, and our Winter luncheon would be a great opportunity to do this.

I would encourage members to bring your spouse/partner and invite friends from CCG, retired or active to attend our Winter luncheon on December 4, 2008.

This is the time of the year when we all like to focus on spending time with family and friends. I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas season also, health and much happiness in the New Year. Terry Weber

2. Membership Dues and Updates

Treasurer, **Bill McKechnie**, wishes to remind of members that 2009 membership dues may be paid at the December Luncheon. Annual dues will remain at \$5.00 for the year 2009. Please note that the spouses of deceased members are most welcome to continue as associate members of the CCGA (annual dues remain at \$5.00 per year to cover costs.)

Secretary **Bob Manning** reminds members to keep us informed of any changes to telephone numbers, mailing addresses and/or email addresses. Changes should be emailed to **Frank Statham** fstatham@telus.net or **Bob Manning** at rlert@telus.net, or by regular mail to Robert Manning, 580 Palisade Drive, North Vancouver, BC V7R 2J1.

Remember to keep our Service Committee informed about how our members are doing. Anyone knowing of a member (or member's spouse) who is ill, or who has suffered a family bereavement or problem and/or who may need a little help, comfort or recognition, please give **Sandy Kelley, Joan Scharf or Bill Dancer** a call. We will be pleased to see if there is any way our organization can be of assistance, and to let fellow members who may be concerned know of the situation. Sandy can be reached at 382-2706. Joan Scharf can be reached at 477-1390 and Bill Dancer at 721-5273.

3. Winter 2009 Luncheon - Royal Victoria Yacht Club.

WHEN: Thursday December 04, 2008 11:30 -mingle; 12:00 luncheon starts at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, 3475 Ripon Road Victoria

AIM: To relax, yarn, enjoy the Luncheon Buffet and celebrate the coming Holiday Season with friends and colleagues in the dining room of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club (RVYC), 3475 Ripon Road, Victoria. **WHO:** Coast Guard Association members, Coast Guard Retirees, their Spouses and Guests and serving Coast Guarders are most welcome!

COST: \$20.00 per person, including gratuity. There will be the usual "No Host" Bar.

To facilitate catering, we need to give the Yacht Club staff firm numbers not later than Monday, December 1 and we are liable for the numbers reserved.

To avoid disappointment, please reserve your place(s)

Island: Bill Dancer 721-5273 w.dancer@telus.net or

Terry Weber terrytw@shaw.ca 250-383-6626

Mainland: Bob Manning 604-986-4638 Herb Adrian (Surrey) 604-596-9355

Cec Rempel (Chilliwack) 858-1983 Diana Miskell 319-8142.

(Herb. Please co-ordinate with Bob, Cec and Diana and pass information to Terry Weber terrytw@shaw.ca Terry will co-ordinate with the Yacht Club re number of reservations. Thanks!)

Mark 11:30 Thursday, December 4th on your calendar and make your RESERVATIONS NOW!

For Vancouver/Mainland attendees: Usual ferry arrangements prevail. Please let Herb, Cec or Diana know by December 1. As usual, if you catch the 9 a.m. BC Ferry as a foot passenger from TSAWWASSEN (free if you are a senior) we will meet you in SWARTZ BAY. After lunch, we will aim to get you back to SWARTZ BAY in time for the 3 p.m. ferry.

Volunteer Drivers: We thank John Adams for being available as our "ferry pick up driver" for our last luncheon. (*Would anyone prepared to help out on December 4th please contact Terry Weber terrytw@shaw.ca 250-383-6626*)

4. Planning for our Summer 2008 Luncheon

Date and location for the Summer 2009 luncheon - June 4, 2009 at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club (RVYC), 3475 Ripon Road, Victoria.

5. West Coast Maritime Coast Station Centenary



3. W.J. Bowerman Collection For Personal Use Only. No Institutional or Commercial Use without written permission from Mr. Ian Haynes, Victoria, BC Collection Owner/Curator

The photo shows the Estevan Point wireless office and some of the associated masts. Photo was most likely taken in 1912. Photo credit - Mr. Ian Hayes of Victoria

It has been 100 years since the radio stations at Cape Lazo, Point Grey, Gonzales, Pachena and Estevan first came on the air. **Frank Statham** wrote this brief history of the beginnings.

As the 1800's turned into the 1900's it was becoming apparent the loss ships and lives along the west coast of Vancouver Island was becoming an embarrassment to both the commercial and federal marine authorities. The federal government was petitioned to do something to alleviate the suffering and on May 30 1907 Nanaimo MP Ralph Smith unveiled a comprehensive plan. Funds were being allocated to build a Life Saving Trail, a series of five wireless stations, manned lifeboats and more. In fact, some of the preparation was already well underway. The completion date for the wireless was set as December 15, 1907. Amazingly, considering the times, they missed the date by 15 days.

Contracts for the inside stations at Cape Lazo, Point Grey and Gonzales Hill were quickly let. Two sites up the west coast were required so Pachena and Estevan were checked out, found suitable and contracts let for those two sites. By December the bricks and mortar work was finished, the antennas up and the wireless apparatus installed at all the stations except Cape Lazo. Lazo was commissioned later in 1908.

Transmitters and receivers were very simple affairs, relying to a great extent on their long wire antennas for effectiveness. Ranges were not expected to exceed 100 miles and so spacing between the stations reflected that fact.

Tests now began to see what coverage was available. At the end of November 1907 Point Grey and Gonzales were in communication. Unfortunately Pachena to Gonzales could not link up until further tweaking of the equipment at either end. The Victoria Daily Colonist newspaper commented that Pachena was heard by a vessel in San Francisco but couldn't be heard in nearby Gonzales!

On Christmas Day in 1907 this message was received at Gonzales Hill, relayed by the SS Governor: "(To) Messers. Haughton and Hughes, Dominion government wireless station Gonzales Hill, Victoria. Messers Maddam (name unclear) and Thompson, Pachena wireless station, wish you both a very merry Christmas and failing something stronger, drink your health in rain water."

On December 29th the technical problems at Pachena had been rectified and solid communication established with Gonzales Hill. On New Years Day 1908 Canada had wireless coverage from Estevan Point to Point Grey.

On the American side, Port Townsend and Tatoosh Island had been in operation for a year or two previous to the Canadian installations. From the start these Canadian and American stations helped each other by relaying traffic and filling in coverage gaps.

Steamship fleets on the coast, realizing a safety conscious passenger would rather book a berth on a wireless equipped vessel, quickly outfitted their fleets. By the end of 1908 wireless was the rule, rather than the exception, on major vessels plying our coasts. Vessels still got into trouble, but at least the crew and

passengers had some comfort in knowing help was on the way.

6. George Thomas - CCG Santa Claus for many years passed away in September

David McMillan sent some photos taken during the Christmas visits to Bull Harbour from 1967 to 1971. David recalled that one year that Mr. Thomas injured himself so an acting flying Santa was sent in so Mr. Thomas may not have been behind the beard in all the photos. I wonder if that is George in the photo below. Those trips were so important to the children at remote locations.

