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B.E.S.T. May Newsletter

BEST AGM A Huge Success

The BEST Annual General Meeting on April 11 was an interesting and informative event, with lots of good food & drink! There was a draw for a beautiful commuter bike courtesy of our friends at [Bikes For All](#), and Manuel Zahariev gave a fascinating presentation on the interface between technology and sustainable transportation.

There were also some changes to the board of BEST. We bade a fond farewell to departing members Andrew Devlin and Jennifer Black, thanking them for their wonderful contributions. And we are pleased to welcome three new board members: Jody Addah, Blair Fontana, and Emily Willabee. Welcome aboard!



Left to right: Charissa Tehrani, Andrew Devlin (departing board member), Emily Willabee, Lauren Isaacson, Jodie Sui, Eriko Arai, Nicole Gordon, Jason Smith, Jody Addah, Blair Fontana.

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Sonia Ward, Senior Cyclist

By Elizabeth Godley



United Way
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Community Partner



Vancity



In 2001, Sonia Ward made her first major cycling trip, from Kamloops to Lake Louise and back. She was 61. "Something I had always wanted to do was cycle along the Columbia ice field," she recalls.



That year, encouraged by friends, she and her husband, Frank, had joined the Cross Canada Cycle Touring Society, a group composed mainly of bike riders over 60. Since then, she has participated in CCCTS tours to Montana, Holland and San Diego. Another tour took her through the Cascade Mountains, and another from Victoria to Port Hardy and then by ferry to Prince Rupert and Prince George. "It was just so perfect. We had only one day of rain until we got to Prince George."

Their two grandchildren live in the Kootenays with their parents, and Sonia recalls a wonderful ride from Kalso to New Denver that follows an old railway bed.

Last summer, the couple spent three weeks in the Maritimes with the CCCTS, touring Cape Breton and PEI as well as Halifax, and putting up at three different universities, where accommodations are a bargain when the students aren't there. It was on that trip that she and Frank rode 98 kms in one day, their record so far.

Sonia, 72, and Frank, 80, have always been active. "We were hikers and climbers, but gradually Frank's knees got bad and it was easier to cycle," she says.



The couple usually join the CCCTS for regular Sunday rides, starting at 22nd Street SkyTrain station in the morning and going over the Queensborough Bridge and on to Steveston. If the weather is wet, she and Frank will drive from their home in Deep Cove to New Westminster, but otherwise they will cycle all the way, a distance of about 74 kilometres.

Sonia has been riding a bike all her life, first as a child in the UK, and later as a midwife at Kings Hospital in London, before she came to Canada and raised a family. Recently, a bout with cancer slowed her down – but not for long.

This summer, she and Frank are looking at a trip to Croatia.

The couple enjoys cycling with others their own age. “As you grow older, you find you can’t keep up with the younger folks,” she says. “I try to listen to what my body is telling me. Some days you feel like you keep going for miles – other days, maybe not.”

Elizabeth Godley is a member of the STAR Seniors Advisory Committee. STAR (Seniors Transportation Access and Resources), a program of BEST, helps seniors stay healthy and age in place by providing services and programs that make transportation available, accessible, predictable, convenient and affordable. STAR encourages and celebrates active living for seniors. For more information please contact the BEST office at 604-669-2860; margaret@best.bc.ca.



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Welcome Bicycle Valet Volunteers

[The Bicycle Valet](#) held a successful volunteer information session on Thursday, April 19. We are very happy to welcome new and returning volunteers to our crew for the 2012 season.

For people who have not yet applied to volunteer for The Bicycle Valet all is not lost -- an [on-line form](#) is available at The Bicycle Valet website.

Planning is already underway for the first of our volunteer appreciation parties!

In April we also had our first winner of the season of the Bicycle Valet prize draw. **Bibbi Kujala** was the lucky winner of an Icebreaker merino wool toque, Ryder sunglasses, a copy of [Tommy Transit's Bus Tales](#) by Tom Tompkins and Michele Hall, and a BEST t-shirt. Patrons are encouraged to fill in their claims stubs so that they too will have the chance to win big in our twice-monthly draw for excellent swag.

We look forward to seeing Bicycle Valet patrons at many events in May, including the Whitecaps Games on May 5, 9 and 19, the VanCity AGM on May 8, and Epic Sustainable Living Expo on May 11-13 -- note that for Epic we will be set up in a new location at the east side of the new convention centre. Keep an eye on our website, as [new events](#) are being added all the time.



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BEST Commuter Challenge Registration Is Now Open!



The [BEST Commuter Challenge](#) is a great way to get your workplace involved in creating safe and sustainable communities.

From June 3-9, thousands of employees around BC will use sustainable transportation to commute to work. An easy on-line tracking system allows participants to check their progress. Based on these results, workplaces, individuals, and workplace coordinators can win fabulous prizes.

To participate, each workplace needs a coordinator. The Workplace Coordinator registers the workplace, promotes the Commuter Challenge, and makes sure employees register. You can find the Workplace Coordinator package on the BEST Commuter Challenge website at www.commuterchallengebc.ca. Check out this website for more information about how to participate and what you can win.

We already have over 65 workplaces registered representing a total employee base of over 45,000!! Please register your workplace at www.commuterchallenge.ca.

For more information please contact Michelle at michelle.drewitz@best.bc.ca or 604-669-2860 ext 211.



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MEC Club Night

The BEST Member Night at [Mountain Equipment Co-op](#), 130 West Broadway, is coming up on Tuesday, May 22 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

BEST members will receive 10% off all items purchased that evening – and 5% off boats. It's a great opportunity to come out and stock up on some fabulous MEC gear for the summer.

Not yet a member of BEST? Don't worry, you can become one on the evening! Offset the cost of your BEST membership with the savings you receive on your MEC purchases.

Participants must also be a member of Mountain Equipment Co-op in order to make a purchase. If you are not yet a member, you may purchase a \$5 membership that evening.

This offer applies to items that are in stock and purchased through the tills.

If you are interested in attending this event, **please RSVP margaret.miller@best.bc.ca by May 17**. We hope to see you there!

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Just Dance!

We are excited to announce that the folks at [Just Dance](#) have kindly offered to share the proceeds from dance events on June 8 and 22 with BEST.

For the uninitiated, Just Dance is a dance evening offering a selection of music from around the world – including African, Latin, Drumming, Celtic, Folk along with the modern sounds of Global Fusion, Trance, House, down tempo and many more. Held in a relaxed and unpretentious environment (the Russian Hall at 2114 West 4th), this innovative community event attracts dance lovers of all ages. The alcohol-free environment creates a warm community feeling and a natural high, unlike anything else in Vancouver.

Just Dance has been offering dance events for the past 19 years and donating proceeds to local charities. BEST is indeed fortunate to have this opportunity and we hope that on June 8 and 22 our supporters will get out and dance!

For more information visit the Just Dance website, www.justdance.ca, or call 604-716-9599.

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