



# VANCOUVER INTERLINE CLUB NEWSLETTER

Jan/Feb 2023



WACA

*WORLD TRAVELLERS*

## FOR AIRLINE EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES

*WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS*

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### JOIN US FOR AN ALASKA CRUISE

**Aboard the Crown Princess**

**MAY 5 - 12**

**See Poster for details**



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi Vancouver Interline Club members,

This is a happy and yet a sad report all at the same time. On behalf of the VIC Executive and Membership I would like to express our condolences to VIC member, Val Philbrook and her family, on the passing of her husband and a Past WACA President, Gerry Philbrook. We are happy that we had the honour of having two prestigious guests to our first VIC Executive meeting for 2023; WACA President, Maga Ramasamy and WACA Administration Manager, Keith Miller.

There have been some changes to the VIC Executive this year.

I would like to welcome Katrina Elliot as our new Club Secretary.

I would also like to welcome Patrick Finch as our new Tours and Information Officer.

Pat Parsons has changed her role as Club's Secretary to her new role as Co-Social Director working alongside with Sue Laufer.

I would also like to thank past Social Director, Ann Senko, for generously offering this her amenity room for this meeting.

Thank you Nigel Cole for your input and ideas throughout the year as President for 2021-2022. They have been inspirational to the VIC.

I have been in direct contact with AIM – Regional Coordinator, Yousef Suleiman, regarding the 54<sup>th</sup> AGA in Jordan as well as the pre tour in Egypt and the Nile Cruise. More details to be announced soon.

Exciting events are in the works this year. One of these is a cruise to Alaska. This is the first time that The Vancouver Interline Club has planned a cruise since the VIC hosted the WACA AGA in 1996. Our Tours and Information Officer, Patrick Finch, will provide more details in his report.

I look forward to working with the new Executive and connecting with existing Members and meeting all the new ones at our social events in 2023.

Stay safe.

Yours in Interlining,

Freddie Whiting

President, Vancouver Interline Club

# 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT	Freddie Whiting	604-307-1909
VICE PRESIDENT	Fred Buchi	604-581-5508
TREASURER ASSISTANT	Judith Guevara	604-603-1702
SECRETARY ASSISTANT	Katrina Elliot	778-227-9493
ENTERTAINMENT ASSISTANT	Pat Parsons Sue Laufer	604-679-8025 778-872-022
MEMBERSHIP ASSISTANT	Pat Lindeman	604-581-6643
PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT	Mark Glowacki Janet Glowacki	604-885-5236
TOURS & INFO ASSISTANT	Patrick Finch Claude Hewitt	604- 604-506-0072
PAST PRES	Nigel Cole	604-782-4762

## FROM THE EDITOR

### .Wishing You All the Best for the New Year!

Please do send us your articles, jokes and interesting items that you would like to be included in the newsletter. If you send a travel article, please include pictures.

Check out the new updated WACA website. [www.waca.org](http://www.waca.org)

Our new address is: Vancouver Interline Club,  
106-15153 98th Avenue

Surrey, B. C. V3R 9M8

or use the e-mail on our new  
<http://www.vancouverinterlineclub.ca> Our new email

is: [vancouver\\_ic@yahoo.com](mailto:vancouver_ic@yahoo.com)

To sign up for the e-mail

version of the newsletter, send your e-mail to  
[maxpat@telus.net](mailto:maxpat@telus.net)

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### **VIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023**

**Back :** Claude Hewitt, Patrick Finch, Nigel Cole, Maga Ramasamy (guest) Mark Glowacki , Janet Glowacki, Judith Guevara, Paul Tyrkus (guest) Katrina Elliot, Freddie Whiting  
**Front Row:** Keith Miller (guest) Sue Laufer, Ann Senko, Pat Lindeman, Pat Parsons



## CHRISTMAS BRUNCH DEC 18, 2022

Our last social event of 2022 came together very well considering many factors especially the weather. We saluted our dear Ann Senko for 41 years of amazing dedicated service to our club.

> Door prizes winners included Pat Lindeman, Lynda Davis, Claude Hewitt, Loretta Buchi, Paul Tyrkus, Janet Glowacki, Nigel Cole, Patrick Finch, Darlene Randall, Mark Glowacki, Lauraine Pomerleau, Judith Guevara & Patricia Baisi.

> Ugliest sweater prizes went to both Dorian & Patricia Baisi (1st & 2nd) & runners-up were Pat Parsons, Claude Hewitt & Pat Eveliegh.

Going forward as co-chairs for the Social Committee, Pat & I are keen to get some events going for the new year. Please bear with, as we settle in to our new roles & get some events up & planned.

Sue Laufer & Pat Parsons  
Entertainment



## VIC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb 16	TBA
Mar 16	Ohare's Pub
Apr	TBA
May	Fashion Show, McKee House, Ladner
June	TBA
Uly	Car Rally /picnic
Aug	Pitch & Putt
Sep	Walk Rally
Oct	Bowling & Spaghetti Factory
Nov 18	Silent Auction
Dec	Brunch

# VANCOUVER INTERLINE CLUB



Register by email to  
yvrinterlineclub@gmail.com

All we need is your name,  
date of birth, stateroom  
preference, phone number and email.

A Interline agent will contact you  
to set up your booking and  
answer your questions.

visit princess.com  
for more information  
including deck plans

## 7 Nights Alaska Cruise Round Trip from Vancouver Departs Friday May 5th, 2023

Interior	Oceanview	Balcony	Suite
<del>\$548</del>	<del>\$636</del>	<del>\$898</del>	<del>\$1,348</del>
\$301	\$350	\$494	\$741

All rates in US dollars. Rates may vary based on room selection and options.

Plus additional tax of \$225.00 USD applied to all rates

Rates are per person based on double occupancy

An optional Princess Plus Package is available

- o Plus beverage package (included tips): \$70.79
- o unlimited wi-fi: \$9.99
- o gratuities: \$14.50

Total value per day: \$95.28

*But you can have the Princess Plus package for \$60 per person per night!*

Ask your PERX Vacation Consultant  
about adding this Princess Plus package when  
booking your cruise,  
1-888-737-9266

VIC Meet & Greet, Dinners & More  
Gather with family & friends for shows,  
excursions and events

Juneau



Skagway



Endicott Arm &  
Dawes Glacier



Ketchikan



Vancouver Interline Club members  
must meet eligibility requirements.

# Sky Burial!

I had the occasion recently to attend a “western-style” funeral, a ritual too-well-known to many of us. The deceased was lying peacefully, appearing asleep, surrounded by flowers and also by grieving friends and relatives, who were slowly coming to grips with the reality of the situation. As I stood viewing the body, with organ music playing in the background, I pondered some of the fundamental mysteries of life – what now? Where are we going next?

I remember doing a research paper in university on “Suicide”, and I remember writing that in some Inuit communities, rather than causing a burden to their families, when the time comes, an older member of the family will just walk out into the snow, and disappear. I don’t know the frequency with which this happens, but the family is not burdened with disposing of the body.

In most cultures, however, death, and disposing of the body, is a religious ritual. Being an airline employee, and a single individual within the great number of people who love to travel, and therefore who are interested in cultures of different areas of the world, I became interested in the ritual of “sky burial” as our small group on an Interline tour led by Julian Chau 2-3 years ago, approached an area in Tibet where this practice was carried out. We were not allowed to stop, or visit, but I am in close contact with someone who was allowed to witness this unique event. I will share with you what I have learned.

Rather than feeling squeamish about the whole thing, please be aware that many religions teach that the body is simply a temporary place in which the soul resides, before it moves on. Most Tibetans are Buddhists, and therefore believe in “*bhava*”, loosely-translated as “rebirth”. Once the spirit has left the body, the previous “temple”, now old and worn-out, has served its purpose. In some cases around the world, the body is actually “preserved”, and we are all familiar with the elaborate embalming procedures carried out in ancient Egypt, but most-often it is deliberately, but respectfully, discarded. In many cultures, including our own, the body is simply buried, but increasingly here, and common elsewhere, it is ceremoniously cremated – it serves no more purpose.

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In Tibet, firewood is scarce (most of Tibet is above the tree line), so cremation was never a practical choice. The countryside is rocky, and in many cases is solidified with permafrost, so digging a proper grave has also not been an option. Whereas potentially covering the body with rocks might have been chosen as a solution, and this is actually the choice deployed elsewhere, the Tibetans chose a different approach, “sky burial” - feeding the body to the birds. This practice, called “*jhator*” (literally “giving alms to the birds”), is seen as an act of generosity on behalf of the deceased, providing food to other living creatures, who also possess souls.

Here’s what I was told, from someone who was allowed to witness this ceremony first-hand - the ritual actually starts the day before, with chants, religious readings, and visits by friends and family. The *jhator* itself, a solemn and respectful operation, occurs the next morning, as the sun rises, and is attended only by immediate family – foreigners are not allowed to witness the proceedings. The ritual is conducted by a lama (i.e. monk), who is aided by *rogyapas*, one or two men (rarely women) who actually dismember the body. The burning of juniper incense and chanting draws the birds (mostly Griffon Vultures, *Gyps fulvus*, but also a few hawks and ravens), which assemble on the rocks nearby, waiting to be summoned. The vultures are considered to be *dakinis*, present in both the Buddhist and Hindu religions, and called “valkyries” in ancient Norse mythology, basically highly-revered female figures at an advanced stage of enlightenment. If the more-hungry vultures approach too closely, they are driven off by sticks, until their time comes.

The *rogyapas* go about their business according to a procedure defined in a 12th century Buddhist document, *Bardo Thondol*, referred to as “The Book of The Dead”. This involves placing the body on a large flat rock, unwrapping it from its white linens, and cutting it into its respective components. “Sky burial” is sometimes referred to as “ritual dissection”. To Westerners, details of the *jhator* (not given here) may seem gruesome, as are details of the Egyptian embalming procedures (the brain is extracted through the nose and the entrails are saved in a jar – remember?), but apparently it is carried out with solemn reverence. The family often sits nearby, but not usually in sight of the body. Not surprisingly, photographs are considered offensive, even exploitive, and are (normally) forbidden.



he pieces are then placed in a central area for the vultures, which voraciously fight for food, just as we see in pictures from Africa.

When the birds have stripped the bones, these in turn are then smashed into pulp using a stone mallet, mixed with barley meal, and left for the smaller birds. At the end of the day, nothing is left.

It should be noted that the ritual itself is elaborate and expensive, and many commoners have no choice but to leave the body whole, intact, to be eaten as-is, without the ritual (as the Zoroastrians do), but the whole concept is still considered honourable and "correct".

As human beings, facing our own transient mortality is difficult. But as travellers we are fortunate to have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, other beliefs, and day-to-day life (and death) of other human beings. Travel provides unparalleled opportunities to learn. "Sky burial" may not be a topic to discuss with your grandchildren around the dinner table, but you have to admit it certainly is another interesting facet of this fascinating world we live in.

Steve Charlton

VIC Member from Montreal

