



Saanich Volunteer Services Society

The Friendly Visitor

Spring 2004

McRae House 1445 Ocean View Road Victoria V8P 1J8 595-8008

The Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)

On January 1, 2004 the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) came into force. This provincial legislation is intended to regulate the way private sector organizations collect, use, keep and disclose personal information.

- Personal information is any information that can be used to distinguish, identify or contact a specific individual. At SVSS we are committed to protecting the privacy of the personal information of our donors, clients, volunteers and employees. We have always been sensitive to the confidentiality of the information we gather in order to achieve our mandate of providing one-to-one direct volunteer services for our Saanich residents. We respect your privacy, and assure you that personal information is and will be shared

only with your permission, and as needed to fulfill our mandate to provide service.

- PIPA provides you with the right to access your file. You may call the office to arrange to come in and view your records.
- Donors, Volunteers and Clients have the right to request removal from our mailing, phoning or e-mail lists.
- To be removed from any of these lists, please call the office.

If you have any questions or concerns about SVSS use of your information, please call our Privacy Officer, Susan Zerb, at 595-8008, or e-mail susan@saanichvolunteers.org

Additional information about PIPA is available at www.mser.gov.bc.ca/foi_pop/Privacy

SVSS Financial Update

Our financial year is drawing to a close. We want to let you know that we anticipate a small year-end deficit. Thanks to everyone who made donations, helped with our fundraisers, and donated mileage costs! Staff did a superb job containing costs, and together with the core operating funds provided by the Municipality of Saanich, VIHA, the provincial government Gaming, and Provincial Employees Community Fund, we managed to finish the year with a much smaller deficit than we expected. Demand for our services continues to increase, and there is no doubt that our finances will need the same tight management and injections of new revenue if we are to meet the needs of the community.

IT'S A DATE!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

The Saanich Volunteer Services Society Annual General Meeting will be held from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. June 5 at McRae House. Guest speaker to be announced.

A Big Thank-You to Our Raffle and Silent Auction Supporters

SVSS gratefully thanks the many businesses and private donors who supported our recent raffle and silent auction. Please support these community businesses:

Angel Foods Management (5th Street Bar and Grill)
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Off the Beaten Path

by Barbara Baldwin

There are times when listening to the news of the world that an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and dismay comes over me. I feel like there is nothing I can do to change what is happening because I'm just one human among billions.



This is when I have to remind myself to make an attitude adjustment and remember that "little by little one travels far," J.R.R. Tolkien. It is the small things in life that make a difference in the world around us. We are responsible for our actions and nobody else's. I feel the reason people step forward and volunteer within many different agencies, serving diverse needs in the community, is this need to make a difference and find a deeper meaning to their lives.

When I think of all the people devoting time and energy to helping others, I feel encouraged. My small contribution may not seem like much in the bigger world, but when I add it to the efforts of many others, it becomes a vital force for change.

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January Happens! or: *My Life As a Popsicle*

The Latest Bulletin From Past President Theresa Vogel

Dear Friends,

This is the month that may cause me to question the state of my sanity when making the decision to have adventures in the northern part of Canada! Prior to Christmas week, the weather here was positively balmy (for these parts); with temperatures nearing zero each day, and very little snow. Well, since that time, the true northern clime has begun to assert itself. What I consider amazing is that those persons who suffered through a snowy spell in Victoria in early January actually commiserated with me, when I was trying to commiserate with them! As you may know, up here we have grizzly vehicles, layers of winter clothes, and lots of makin's for rum toddies. And there's a world of difference between what a real Manitoban's *Jeep* looks like and a *Jeep* owned by a B.C. transplant!

Of course, I get hassle about what a pansy my own *Jennifer Jeep* is, what with her huddling in the garage, getting plugged in at all times, covered with blankets and her sipping de-icer. Some people just need to get their priorities straight. Over the next two months, I will rely on *Jennifer* to travel all over the territory, as the "winter roads" open up possibilities for driving into communities that were previously accessible only by plane or boat. Consequently, I will be traveling almost steadily. Right now, that is a great adventure looming, but we'll see how I feel at Easter time!

I have been appointed the diocesan representative to the Western Conference on Ecumenism (all those years slinging sandwiches at Christ Church Cathedral, and canvassing for the Salvation Army have paid off?), so will be spending

two weeks in the "big city" of Edmonton at the first of February. Soon after that, the Lenten season will be upon us, and I am going to some charming little places (Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake, Snow Lake, uh-huh) for retreats with parish pastoral councils, lay presiders, and other groups of interested and dedicated people.

Before Easter (around the time of Christ Mass here), Father Paul Bringleson (rector of the cathedral) and I are going to have some "bed and breakfast" retreats for people from isolated communities (ah, winter roads) and one youth gathering. We have decided to try and stuff 15-20 teens in the bishop's house (hopefully the bishop will steel himself, though he does like to challenge the spiritual health of each new generation) and post one of us at each door to keep the youth incarcerated, except when we turn them loose to go to the church, gym, swimming pool, etc. Fr. Paul is practicing his parenting on Kismet, the dog. Our theory is that an all-night vigil with teens will be good "wake up" training for the solemn Easter vigil.

I will miss the Easter services at the Victoria cathedral, but will do my best to re-create the atmosphere at The Pas' cathedral. Christmas was truly festive at this cathedral, and here when women wore their fur coats to Midnight Mass, it was because they really needed them! Fur coats at Christmas in Victoria used to make me giggle a bit. Christmas and Midnight Mass(es) here are a bit of a road show, because they involve importing every available (walking and breathing are good) priest and dispatching them to some nice outpost for the Christmas liturgies. This involves picking up a variety of dazed and frozen clerics at the airport, taking them back to the bishop's house, and shoving them in a room full of parkas, scarves, mitts, boots, hats, etc., etc. After they are all rolled up in layers of woollies, we start packing up a cooler (cooler is kind of moot - most of them get cardboard boxes, and try to keep the bananas from freezing) full of groceries for the week, taking into account the varying culinary skills of these fellows. Some get a lot of *Campbell's*, and some get their own little turkeys or chickens. Then, tape up the boxes with duct tape (everything



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else freezes and falls right off), and back to the bush plane strip or the road for the next leg of the journey. Most of them get off the plane or back into the truck with a crazed look in their eyes, and are desperate to get back to their desks at the diocesan offices in Winnipeg, or St. Boniface, or Prince Albert, etc., by the time the week is up. To complicate matters this year, the winter roads were not open at Christmas because it was too warm (all things are relative, remember), and many of them had to choose between their laptop computers and groceries for a week on the bush plane. Can't eat **that** mouse, boys!

Even I managed to have a couple of road trips for Christmas and New Year's, and drove throughout the countryside with Fr. Paul, the dog, and the local undertaker (who serves as acolyte and driver). Some tiny communities, mostly aboriginal peoples, had very tuneful services. Actually, we ended up having an "all nighter" at Christmas, as we stopped to help some people who were stranded on the road with car breakdown. Look on the bright side – at least we weren't driving the hearse!

We traveled in the limousine, which up here is a big 4x4 passenger van painted tastefully grey, and with whirling purple lights on top, to steer through a snowstorm. I have found that whirling lights on top are *de rigueur* here for snowstorms. School buses have them, safety vehicles have them, etc. I must get me one. And speaking of snowstorms, I can tell you that snow is piling up here, at least to the extent that the tractors have been called in!

This missive is getting to be a bit long once again, so I must draw it to a close. To the extent that my brain is not frozen and incapable of doing so, I think of you often and have many **warm** memories! Stay well, all, and look after **you!**

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Bulletin Board



Happy National Volunteer Week ...

April 18 – 24, 2004: Heartfelt thanks go out to our 250 fabulous and dedicated Volunteers. We value and appreciate your commitment to our agency and to our clients. Thank you!

Prospective Board Members Wanted!

Do you have fundraising expertise, community connections, and time to commit to your neighbourhood? Call Susan Zerb at 595-8008 to learn more about helping SVSS succeed.



Tax Time Again ...

It's not too late to have one of our trained volunteers prepare your simple 2003 tax return. Call Kathryn to determine whether you qualify for this service. Donations gratefully received.



Help Wanted: We are in need of a Volunteer Receptionist at McRae House. Can you manage a multi-line telephone? Are accuracy and attention to detail your middle names? Do you remain calm under pressure? Can you communicate easily with many different people? If so, then give the office a call at 595-8008 to arrange an interview. We'd enjoy welcoming you to our team of fantastic receptionists. Training is provided.



For Sale — A new six-piece patio set – four chairs, glass-top table & umbrella. This was the third prize in our recent raffle and the winner decided to donate it to SVSS. Call Shirley at 598-8828 for more details.



“In Memoriam Donations” are gratefully accepted by SVSS. Call the office to inquire how you can make a lasting gift.



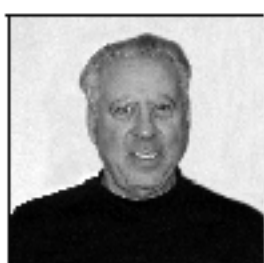
SVSS Veteran Volunteers Receive Long-Service Recognition

At our annual Volunteer Christmas Party on December 6, 2003, we proudly recognized 22 longtime volunteers:

Ten Year Awards were presented to Roy Small, Mary Joan Sharkey, Maxine Reed, Kathryn Bennett, Jessie Warrington, Elaine Brown and Dave Brown.

Five Year Awards were presented to Margaret Stewart, Carla Boe, Susan Robertson, Horst Rothfels, Sim Ko, Jock Lefebure, Barbara Leonard, Doug McHale, William Jackson, Willy Callister, Fran Rothman, Jean Hunter, Susan Weeks, Dorothy Tupper and Barbara McLean.

Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to each and every one!



Seven members received their 10-year service awards from Mayor Frank Leonard at the SVSS Christmas party: (above left) Kathryn Bennett, Maxine Reed, Mary Joan Sharkey, Jessie Warrington; (below left) Elaine Brown, Dave Brown, Roy Small



Five-year service award recipients (below left): Margaret Stewart, Fran Rothman, presenter Mayor Frank Leonard, Sim Ko



Five-year veterans (above left): William Jackson, Barbara McLean, Jean Hunter, (below left): Dorothy Tupper, Barbara Leonard, Doug McHale

Missing five-year recipients: Carla Boe, Susan Robertson, Horst Rothfels, Jock Lefebure, Willy Callister, Susan Weeks

The Silent Epidemic . . . Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

Sue McKinnon, the Executive Director of the Vancouver Island Head Injury Society, was the guest speaker at our February Volunteer Support Meeting. VIHIS offers support services to persons with acquired brain injury (ABI) and their families, partners, friends and communities in the South Vancouver Island region. Acquired Brain Injury is damage to the brain, which occurs after birth and is not related to a congenital disorder or a degenerative disease. The most common methods of acquired brain injury are due to trauma to the head, e.g., a motor vehicle crash, a fall, a violent assault or industrial accident. Other causes include stroke, brain aneurysm, brain tumors, certain viruses and substance abuse.

Did you know that Acquired Brain Injury happens to twice as many men as women? And that more than half of all persons with Acquired Brain Injury are under 30 years old? Car crashes cause more than half of all cases of adult ABI. Other causes are falls, sports and assaults. Any kind of violent jolt – a bike crash, a fall from a shopping cart, or a sports-related collision – can cause the brain to swell inside the skull. Even without a direct blow to the head, a person may still have changes to his/her thinking or behavior which are not seen right away.

Persons with ABI may experience difficulties with memory, depression and mood swings, fatigue/sleep disorder, language, following conversations, headaches, dizziness and balance, and social situations may be overwhelming.

It is helpful for Volunteer Drivers and Visitors to know that persons with ABI need quiet, that they should not be visually over-stimulated – meaning do not engage in hand-waving while talking, as the person is trying to filter the information. Perhaps at times we need to redirect conversations and recognize fatigue in the ABI person. And most important of all, when their behavior changes, do not take it personally.

To learn more about ABI or seek support, call the Vancouver Island Head Injury Society at 598-9339 or check out their web site at www.biasvi.org

Hear! Hear! Let's Hear it For . . .

A round of applause to the following friends of SVSS for their wonderful support and acts of generosity:

- We appreciate a donation received from Bob Russell, Saanich-Gulf Islands Liberal candidate in the next federal election. Bob recently shared the contributions he received at a community meeting.
- Rob Dunsmuir and Brad Lewis are volunteering their time and expertise in designing a new client volunteer database for the office, and we are extremely grateful for their donation.
- Thanks to Melinda Harris, Board Member and owner of Go West group, for designing our latest appeal for donations that is being delivered with the current Saanich water bill.
- We appreciate the lovely new chair in our reception area. It provides a comfortable space for visitors to McRae House. Thanks to Doug and Vi Ross.
- Gerrit Braaksma put rolling casters on our boardroom table. It will be a breeze (and a back saver) now to move this massive table when we need to rearrange the room. Thanks, Gerrit.
- Shirley Blunt and Natalie Shumka, Board Members, did a great job organizing and managing our pre-Christmas Silent Auction, Art Show and Raffle! Thanks to their efforts and the many, many helpers who sold tickets, called auction donors, etc., we raised a whopping \$5,532!
- Hearty appreciation to Saanich Kiwanis for

their continued support of our agency and commitment to our community. We have once again received a donation toward our mileage reimbursement program. Their contribution helps us to help others!



When you purchase a SCOOTER or WALKER before July 31, 2004, you're automatically entered to win your purchase price.*

656-5680

*Draw Tuesday Aug. 3 2004



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Volunteer Profile

by Bonnie Bacica

Willy Callister began volunteering at SVSS in January 1998. Originally he thought he would like to be involved with the visiting program, but soon discovered that it was too difficult getting in and out of people's homes



on his crutches. Willy uses crutches and a wheelchair because he was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis (similar to arthritis) in his late teens. He decided to switch to the reassuring phone calls program, and has found that to be a good move. He has several people he calls "his people," and enjoys the time he spends chatting with them, something he is good at!

Willy was born in Port Alberni but raised in Nanaimo, where his father ran a power-saw business. Eventually the family moved to a hobby farm where, at age 14 and with only his father's guidance, Willy built a barn to house nine horses. He comments, "What a great confidence builder this task was." He soon set up a business boarding other people's horses.

However at age 16, Willy developed pain in his legs and soon after was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis. Regardless, he attended high school and then trained to be a chef. He was happily employed at a restaurant in Parksville when he began to feel the effects of his condition, and he went to Mexico for treatment. Unfortunately, this worsened his condition, and on his return he was admitted for rehabilitation in Nanaimo. What followed for Willy was an ongoing series of surgeries – necessary to enable him to carry on with his goals and lifestyle.

Not one to let adversity get in his way, Willy entered college again, this time to learn accounting. In 1972, he wrote a provincial government exam and was offered a position as a clerk with Pharma-

care. Willy enjoyed his work, and his contributions to the department were soon rewarded with promotions. He eventually reached the position of administrative officer. Outside of his work, he lays claim to a life that involved lots of partying and dancing.

Not too many years ago, Willy started to lose the feeling in his foot, and upon seeing the neurosurgeon, it was discovered he had "egg shell bones" in his leg. He was beginning to find it difficult to concentrate at the workplace. However, he was not ready to quit. He was set up with an office in his home where he continued his work for Pharmacare until he took early retirement in 1997.

Willy believes that it is possible to have a disability and still be happy and have a full life. He is proud of the work he has done remodeling his condo to suit his needs. He drives an older converted van that he can get his wheelchair in and out of on his own. He used to love to garden, but when gardening was no longer possible, he found something to take its place – the art of clay sculpting. Although he has sold some of his work, he says that selling his creations takes away the enjoyment. He would rather observe his improvements with each piece he creates. If someone admires his work, he might give it away.

Willy enjoys his volunteer position with SVSS. He loves to talk to "his people," who let him know that they very much appreciate his calls. He feels good knowing that he is being useful. And, he adds, he feels fortunate to be Canadian, to live in a country where there is so much accessibility available for people living with disabilities. It is easy to see how Willy – with his very positive attitude – can help others feel better about their situation in life.

"Are we human beings on a spiritual journey, or spiritual beings on a human journey?"

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New Volunteer Training Program

Saanich Volunteer Services has introduced a new training program for volunteers. The purpose is to provide new volunteers with information and skills that will give them the confidence and knowledge to carry out their volunteer assignments.

An orientation was held on January 24th. Staff and board members were introduced, and they explained the philosophy and organization of Saanich Volunteer Services. Experienced volunteers spoke regarding their volunteer assignments.

A volunteer driver training session presented on February 4th included a video, and useful tips and discussion about driving clients with a variety of disabilities.

A series of six weekly two-hour sessions on Communication Skills were held in February and March. Designed to help visitors, volunteers making reassuring phone calls, gardeners, drivers, and other volunteers having regular communication with clients. These sessions covered such topics as listening skills, social isolation, values and attitudes, grief and spirituality, disabilities, and activities and suggestions to stimulate social interaction with clients. Volunteers attending these sessions engaged in lively discussion, and shared their experiences and ideas. Guest speakers provided information about dementia and the process of grieving.

All new volunteers are expected to attend these programs. The next training session begins in May 2004.

This training program has been developed and presented by Lynn Hanman, with assistance from volunteer Daphne Chazottes. Although designed for new volunteers, the training is available to all interested volunteers. Please phone Lynn at 595-8008 for more information.

Oops!

The gremlins were at work in our last edition of our newsletter. Many thanks to **Roy Thomas** for helping to move the new furniture into McRae House. Sorry we messed up your name, Roy.

People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.

—Elizabeth Kuebler-Ross



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The Saanich Volunteer Society Newsletter

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