

vhes



Welcome to our world.

A World of Friendship.
Every meeting of persons can
be an exchange of life's gifts

- A Human Exchange

Edition 73

April to June
2007

Annual General Meeting

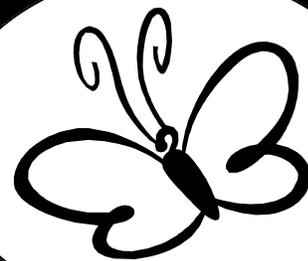


HAPPY
15th
BIRTHDAY,
VICTORIA
HUMAN
EXCHANGE
SOCIETY!

(Linda, facilitator of our
new Edith Gulland
House, cutting the cake
at the AGM)

*"People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you
did, but people will never for-
get how you made them feel."*

~ Maya Angelou ~



Welcome to our celebration of 15 years of sharing life's gifts in Victoria and the Gulf Islands. And a special welcome to those of you who have been part of our family of friends since the very beginning, and close to the beginning. That was in the time of Mayor David Turner and Councilor Helen Hughes and others who were seeking ways of dealing with the homelessness issue then. The Press had coined the title "Apple Tree Club" for a group of homeless persons meeting at an apple tree under the Johnson St Bridge. And since we are close to that spot today, let us reminisce a little. We came to know the members of the Apple Tree Club by name: Arthur Rosette, (now deceased) a brilliant First Nations man had worked with Rev. Lawrence Moon to spearhead the Open Door Drop-In at the United Church on Quadra. Art named the Apple Seed Houses which were our first attempt at transitional housing in Victoria. Both Art and Lawrence Moon were founding members of the Human Exchange and Art's vision gave rise to our Logo and its explanation.

Linda Jim, known as the mother of the street people, and also now deceased, became another founding member and lived in our first Apple Seed House for 2 years until M'Akola Housing created the Tonto-Rosette House on North Park to give permanent housing to First Nations people. We have honored Linda's memory in the Linda Jim House also by coincidence on North Park St. Another First Nations woman, Judy Thomas is honored in our women's house in Sidney. Her daughter was on the streets of Vancouver and Judy begged us to bring her to live in the second Apple Seed House with her. This lass is now married and her children are in private schools; so Judy's love broke the cycle for that family.

On Valentine's Day in 1992, a Memorial for a person who died on the street was convened by Stephen Glanville in the Fernwood Community Gardens. It brought together people from City Hall; people from under the bridge; from different agencies; and neighbors...people from different circumstances of life making connections and seeking solutions in solidarity. Out of this gathering in a garden grew the Human Exchange. Our name and motto are taken from a writing of Thomas Merton: "Every meeting of persons is an exchange of life's gifts"--given to us by Founding Director Mary Gordon. Those who initiated this movement wished to move away from the bene-

factor-needy model of dealing with human need which leaves some people powerless and hopeless. Instead they wanted to listen to and support people who had good ideas on how to solve their own problems; to include on the Board of Directors the persons who knew best what the problems were; to create a truly grass-roots Society.

People who are poor are often labeled and segregated from the rest of the community--their gifts are lost. The VHES develops gifts in the belief that "people known by their gifts flourish; people known by their weaknesses languish." Our quarterly newsletter is meant to be a forum for the poetry, art, and writings of those who might not otherwise have their works published. Marilyn Guille, who has much expertise in the area, has taken over the publishing of this newsletter. Thank you Marilyn for saving us postage by sending out copies by email. Thanks to Marilyn also for this space we are meeting in today. Thanks to Patrick Schnerch and Gillian Shirreff who have given a portion of the profits from their books to the Human Exchange. You can read about these authors in the newsletter. As well as celebrating gifts in the newsletter, at the turn of the Millennium we put together a booklet of the poetry and art work of those we met in our early days with the Apple Tree Club. Today we wish to present these booklets to our newest members and supporters.

So today we are celebrating fifteen years of building relationships / making connections--connections with our brothers and sisters who have "fallen on hard times"; connections with sympathetic landlords who allow their houses to be used to shelter those who come to our Society looking for help; connections with people from many different circumstances of life who work together to promote a healthier community where no-one feels unvalued or unwanted.

The biggest accomplishment of the past year has been the purchase for our Society of a new Grandma's House by the Salt Spring Island Land Bank Society--whose spokesperson is Neddy Harris. Many individuals and groups gave to this cause because they realized that Salt Spring must not be allowed to lose this valuable resource when the old Grandma's House was sold. Grants were received from the Vancouver Foundation; BC Housing; the CRD Regional Housing Trust Fund; the Real Estate Foundation and many groups and individuals. We thank them all!

We have made many connections recently in the area of Fund raising, thanks very much to Carole Poy for applying successfully to the Victoria Foundation who have awarded us money for 2 sets of heavy duty laundry machines and for furniture for our new women's

Message from the Chair, cont'd.

House. This newest Home opened its doors on May 1st and is named in honor of Edith Gulland, our revered Elder who has been active since the early 90s. Edith served on the Board until last year. We thank Linda Mayo for being responsible for Edith Gulland house and for her efforts at fundraising. And we heartily thank Gord and Barb Wolfe for renting the house to us.

The Sisters of St Ann continue to very generously support Esther's House and its Outreach; The Knights of Columbus offer regular support from all their Councils to our Father Michael J. Mc Givney House; The Provincial Employees Community Services Fund have supported the people in our Houses since we began; The Zonta Club and the Needs of Victorians Society (who work through the Langford Bingo Drop In) give annually, as does the Town of Sidney; Holy Trinity Church in Sidney; The Voice of the Faithful; St Dunstan's Gordon Head and Sacred Heart Christian Charities. Then there are many other Churches and Service clubs and other organizations listed under Major Donors in the back of this booklet. If you give to the United Way you can designate a portion for the Human Exchange. Both the Federal Superannuates and the Naden Maritime Band give this way...and the latter is thanks to Ken Gibson who is Owner of three of our Houses. To all our other Landlords, the Santarellis who own our 2 Sidney Houses; Colleen Bowen-Beaddie our Salt Spring women's house, and Eric and Andrew Law, owners of Esther's House we offer sincere thanks for taking part in the exchange and sharing of life's gifts.

We thank Derrick Nash, new Board member, for his work in this area of fundraising. He has reconnected with groups we already have worked with, such as the St Vincent de Paul, and he has discovered new groups who will provide much necessary assistance in the future, notably the Noorgard Foundation recommended to him by Maureen Brady of the Adennchase-Birchwood Foundation. Many thanks to Maureen for all her help over the years.

Monica Hogg of Mayne Island donated our newest website last year and is keeping it updated. Thank you Monica. We thank our Internet providers--Imagen on Salt Spring; Victoria Free Net; Islandnet and Shaw in Victoria. We are gifted with discounts because of our charitable status.

Our thanks to those who volunteer in our houses as Facilitators and those in the community who support them in this task. Special thanks in Sidney to Mona and friends who share with and support the men and women in the Sidney Houses. And I do want to give special mention to Anna who has taken on many tasks well beyond her own Judy Thomas House responsibilities. We say goodbye to four very valued Facilitators: Joan Vez-

ina, Karen Hayes; Connie Hawkes and Isabel Clutesi.

Joan and her friend Kay visited many of the Houses to assess the needs of occupants and Joan devised excellent forms and did invaluable work as Vice Chair of the Society. Karen served at Esther's House and Connie at Hope House. Both were extremely generous in giving. Isobel will be moving on at the end of June. We know how difficult it was for her to balance her own family's needs, her work; her commitments to First Nations activities, and her support for occupants in recovery. We are sad to see her go but know it is time.

The 3 men's houses in Victoria have been overseen by Don Williams who also helps with cartage and picks up Cobs generously donated bread from their Oak Bay shop each Friday. We are losing one of the men's Houses this month. It is being sold by the Owners Rick and Pam Haere who deserve our heartfelt thanks for their generosity in renting this half duplex to us since 1998. During its history it was GAEA Recovery House, Hope House for Women, then finally it housed men. We hope to replace it as soon as another suitable house is found.

We face a year of tremendous financial challenge as we will have 10 houses to care for. We are thankful for a retreat place for our members at the Mayne Island Branch where those who choose can go to find refreshment in Day Retreats. So we now step forward with a new impetus and new friends we have met along the way towards the end of our second decade.

Finally, I would like to thank those who are eager to serve as Board members in the coming year. Special thanks to Judith Arnold who tried to step down last year but who is so irreplaceable that we are happy to say she is still with us.

Thanks to the Board of Governors at Chown Place for allowing us to use the Hall for regular Board meetings and thanks to each and everyone present for your support today and over all the years past and future.

~ Patricia Fitzgerald, VHES CHAIR, MAY/07 ~

REGRET CITY

I had not really planned on taking a trip this time of year, and yet I found myself packing rather hurriedly. This trip was going to be unpleasant and I knew in advance that no real good would come of it. This is my annual "Guilt Trip." I got tickets to fly there on "Wish-I-Had" airlines. It was an extremely short flight. I got my "baggage," which I could not check. I chose to carry it myself all the way. It was loaded down with a thousand memories of "what might have been."

No one greeted me as I entered the terminal to the Regret City International Airport. I say international because people from all over the world come to this dismal town. As I checked into the "Last Resort" Hotel, I noticed that they would be hosting the year's most important event; the annual "Pity Party."

I wasn't going to miss that great social occasion. Many of the towns leading citizens would be there. First, there would be the "Done" family; you know, "Should have," "Would Have" and "Could Have." Then came the "I Had" family. You probably know old "Wish"

and his clan. Of course, the "Opportunities" family; "Missed and lost," would be present. The biggest family there would be the "Yesterday's."

There are far too many of them to count, but each one would have a very sad story to share. Of course, "Shattered dreams" would surely make and appearance. "It's Their fault" family would regale us with stories (excuses) about how things had failed in their life. Each story would be loudly applauded by the "Don't blame me" and "I couldn't help it" committee.

To make a long story short, I went to this depressing party, knowing full well there would be no real benefit in doing so. And, as usual, I became very depressed. But as I thought about all of the stories of failures brought back from the past, it occurred to me that this trip and subsequent "pity parties" could be canceled by me!

I started to realize that I did not have to be there. And I didn't have to be depressed. One thing kept going through my mind, I can't change yesterday, But I do have the power to make today a wonderful day. I can be happy, joyous, fulfilled, encouraged, as well as being encouraging. Knowing this, I left Regret City immediately, and didn't leave a forwarding address. Am I sorry for mistakes I've made in the past? Yes! But there is no way to undo them. So, if you're planning a trip back to Regret City, please cancel all those reservations now. Instead, take a trip to a nice place called: "Starting Again." I like it so much that I made it my permanent residence. My neighbors, the "Been forgiven" and the "We're saved" are so very helpful. By the way, you don't have to carry around the heavy baggage anymore either.

That load is lifted from your shoulders upon arrival. Just thank God for salvation. If you need directions, just look into your heart, and enter by "Grace way." No taxes or other costs.

Author Unknown



LETTERBOX

I would like to thank everyone that is a part of VHES, including house facilitator Anna, Derrick, and Patricia.

Without these people and the strong support and helping me see a better life ahead ... I will be leaving the house within the next month, for the next phase of my self development, and I will really miss the house. I will always think of not only having a warm safe place to be, but after 10 months in Judy Thomas house, the road ahead looks much different.

I also have had the chance to look at what I have gained! Thanks to Patricia for being kind enough to give me the choice of being in Sidney with my mother and grandmother right here, and to be close but at the same time trying to help in different ways.

I leave with good memories, and good friends, and a genuine kindness from all, showing me that there are people who care, and that's harder to find now more than ever... and with all the donations I will have the basics needed to make a home I will move on to a happier and healthy life because of it I can't thank you all enough!

Erin xo



Thank You!

We wish to express our gratitude for the generous support we have received through the Victoria Foundation. The funding we received from Victoria Foundation, the Woodsome Fund and an anonymous donor will be used to support furnishing our new housing AND we are able to purchase two sets of heavy duty, energy efficient washers and dryers! One will be placed at McGivney House for the men's Houses to share and the other will be located at Esther's house to be shared among the women's Houses.

Check out the Victoria Foundation at
<http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca>
Carole Poy, VHES Secretary

HOUSE REPORTS

WELCOME TO SUMMER 2007! As the season changes - so does the activity in 3 of our womens houses. Our pivotal house, "**Esthers**", supported so generously by the Sisters of St. Ann, remains our hub for the receipt and distribution of donations to benefit of all our houses.

A major reorganization at Esthers (both inside and outside) has resulted in extra space being made available for the much appreciated donations that arrive. We have recently received a grant from the Victoria Foundation to purchase a commercial washer and dryer, for Esthers house; and, we are now able to clean blankets, quilts, etc.; and, thereby save the expense of a laundromat or a drycleaner for larger items.

The residents at Esthers (Lesley, Ellie, Rebekah & Shelley) have been doing such a good job of maintaining the house and yard that the owners have agreed to put up a new fence, paint the exterior of the house; and, install new doors.

Good job girls - keep it up!



LINDA JIM house has seen some changes recently as well.

Our longtime facilitator, Isobel, has moved on; and, we thank her for all her efforts, during her time at Linda Jim's; and, wish her well with all her future endeavours. The residents (Diane, Sherry, Melanie & Lorelai) continue to maintain the Linda Jim house very nicely; and, with the arrival of a refurbished electric lawn mower - the yard will be easier to care for now. **Way to go ladies!**

Our newest women's house, named in honour of our elder, **EDITH GULLAND**, which opened on May 1st. is still experiencing some of the "move in" chaos that generally accompanies any move. But the residents (Linda, Gina, Melissa & Frankie) are working hard setting up the home and yard to

make our newest house a welcome residence for women requiring short term accommodation.

We will be all settled in and will be able to give you a complete update in our next newsletter.

Enjoy your summer! **Linda**

EDITH GULLAND HOUSE OPENS

In April 2007, we found a suitable house for women which we have named in honour of long time VHES member and Elder, **Edith Gulland** who is now in her late 90's.

The owners of this house, Gord and Barb Wolfe, are pleased to have the opportunity to work with our Society doing some good in the community.

The house opened its doors on May 1st. There are 4 bedrooms with plans for a fifth, and the Facilitator is Linda who previously lived and imbibed the spirit of our Society at Judy Thomas House in Sidney.

Many volunteers assisted with the financing and set-up of this house. Board member Carole Poy applied successfully for a Grant from the Victoria Foundation. Notable among those who assisted were Mona Millan and many of her friends.

Linda has applied for a Real Estate Grant to aid the new House and gifts of vouchers were sup-

plied by the Unitarian Church and the St Vincent de Paul Society at St Joseph the Worker Parish.

Our thanks to Anna who is screening applicants for housing and to Derrick and Erin for assisting with the hard work of loading and cartage.

The Saanich Knights of Columbus Garage Sale happened at just the right time to bring us items needed at the new House and at other houses. St Dunstan's Gordon Head also asked that we take what we want after their Garage Sale. St Vincent de Paul society is helping with grocery vouchers and the Unitarian church has also offered to assist.

Thank you all for taking part in the exchange of life's gifts!



THANK-YOU!

- **The Victoria Foundation** for granting funds to buy heavy duty laundry machines. Board member **Carole P.** for writing the application and all those involved in purchasing.
- All those who assisted with the cartage and set-up of our new house for women—the *Edith Gulland House* in Saanich, especially **Mona and Daphne, their friends, Debbie, Peter and Diane L.**
- **Marilyn and Michael** for TV Console, chair and blankets. We sincerely thank **Marilyn** for publishing our newsletter and saving us postage through email delivery.
- **Erin B.** for use of her vehicle to transport people and items donated.
- **The United Way** for designated funds from the Naden Military Band (courtesy Ken Gibson)
- Much valued regular cheques received from the **Provincial Employees Community Services Fund.**
- **The Zonta Club** for funds to VHES. **The Needs of Victorians Society** working with the Langford Bingo Drop-In for annual funding.
- **The Knights of Columbus Saanich** for inviting us to take anything left from their Rummage Sale at St. Elizabeth's, Sidney.
- **St Dunstan's Gordon Head and the United Church Gordon Head** through **Sophia T.** for much support.
- **Knights of Columbus Councils** for regular funding to the **Father Michael J. McGivney House** in Victoria.
- **The Sisters of St. Ann** through **Sr. Frieda** for inviting us to submit our report on use of funds and an application for the New Year for Esther's House Outreach.
- Financial Gifts from **Helen D.; Eugene and Helene D.; Roger S.; Sophia and Jan T.; Roger S.; Corinne T. ; Ray P., John T., Michelle P.** for contributing to booklets.
- **Patrick L. and Lois M.** for monthly post-dated cheques that help with rents/expenses.
- **Sleep Country Canada** for much needed Queen size bed and for keeping us on their long list.
- Household supplies from **Mona; Daphne** and the **VOTF members.**
- **Cobs Bread** for excellent bread and baked goods donated by their Oak Bay store.
- **Don W. and other willing volunteers** for pick up and drop off of bread and baked goods .
- **Thea D.** for stereo and for networking to disperse donated bread to hungry families.
- **Marilyn G.,** for making the Sunset Room available for our 15th Birthday/AGM
- **Beacon Community Services** for a monthly food box (fruits and veggies)
- **Maureen Brady of the Birchwood/Adden Chase Foundations** for the TV for the Francis Thibeau House and a bus pass . **The Noorgard Foundation** for helping individuals.
- **The First Unitarian Church of Victoria** for food vouchers and damage deposit for one of our occupants.
- **St. Joseph's The Worker Conference of the St Vincent DePaul Society** and the **Sidney Conference of the St. Vincent DePaul Society** for food vouchers.
- **The Sidney Lions Club Food Bank** for all the support to our Sidney residents.
- **Thrifty Foods** for vouchers for food for different Houses. **Canada Safeway** for donating our 15th Birthday cake this year, through Gord W., manager of the Sidney Safeway bakery.
- **Derrick N.** for speaking to groups about VHES, soliciting funds for the new house and for other needs.
- **Doug Bateman of Mark's Work Wearhouse** in Sidney. Each year for the past six years you have generously assisted a person living in one of our Sidney houses by donating an article of good quality clothing or footwear. For this we are truly grateful to you. We do want to thank you and the people in your store. Doug's gesture is a perfect example of the sharing of life's gifts that enables people living in poverty to feel wanted and to regain their self-esteem.
- **Andrew B.** for white love-seat; lamp; leather chair; wicker basket; ceiling fans; and fleece-lined jacket.
- Thanks to all those who responded to the article in the Peninsula Review on the Sidney Houses. And thanks to reporter **Catherine G.** for the sensitive article.

TO CONTACT OR SEND DONATIONS TO SUPPORT THE VICTORIA HUMAN EXCHANGE SOCIETY

Box 8534, Victoria BC V8W 3S1

Pager numbers:

Greater Victoria and SIDNEY : 361-2762

From Gulf Islands and from anywhere else in North America: 1-800-691-9366

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