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THE VICTORIA HUMAN EXCHANGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Edition 78

July – September 2008

Dedicated members of the VHES Board

Margaret Pring at AGM chatting with Patrick.
In centre: Judith Arnold, treasurer



Thanks to **Margaret Pring** of Salt Spring Island and **Carole Poy** of Victoria for innumerable hours of service and for promising to remain active as volunteers and supporters.

We sincerely thank **Judith Arnold** for yet another year of service as meticulous treasurer. Judith has wanted to retire for many years but is so far totally irreplaceable as we have not found anyone to do the job she does with such dedication.



Linda Mayo, newly elected Chairperson.

Your current members of the Board are:

Linda Mayo, Chairperson;

Don Williams, Co-Chair;

Patricia Fitzgerald, Secretary;

Judith Arnold, Treasurer; and Directors:

Lois Marcoux;

Patrick Schnerch;

George McIntyre;

Jeremy Garner.



Lois (above) has served for many years and was once our Treasurer. Thank you Lois!

If you have any ideas or observations you wish to convey to these representatives, please contact them through the Society pager: 361-2762 in greater Victoria and 1-800-691-9366 outside Victoria.

As we begin our 17th year of service to homeless persons, we would like to acknowledge our beginnings:

LARRY BAKER, was a homeless person whose death from exposure in Victoria during the cold Winter of '91 -'92 prompted a call for action.

Larry's gentle spirit of respect guided us through our first gathering in the Fernwood Community Gardens from which grew: **The Human Exchange Society**

FIRST DIRECTORS

Stephen Glanville -- Chairperson

Patricia Fitzgerald -- Vice- Chair

Linda Jim -- Secretary

Kenneth Barnett - Treasurer

Mary Gordon - Director

Arthur Rosette - Director

Pauline Stiles - Director

Catherine Chisholm - Director

Helen Mackay - Director

Our membership has grown to hundreds; the only requirement to be a member is the willingness to share your gifts with others.

Hello VHES



I hope you are all enjoyed the beautiful summer we are had. I want to thank VHES for putting their confidence in me for putting together the newsletter. It is an enormous honor to serve among such wonderful people working hard to help others in need.

I would like you all to direct your photos, reports and articles to me well before the deadline so that I can put the newsletter together. I would like to see this newsletter continue to have the same professionalism as before and be a concrete medium to communicate with members, volunteers and others.

As mentioned before at the board meeting. I am writing a book series of which I am over half way through with the first increment. The first book should be out early spring of 2009. All profits from the first year sales of each book in the series will be donated to VHES.

The series is about how mental illness, addiction and homelessness affect Victoria and what the city is doing to correct the problem. The series will cover each year of the Mayor's plan to house and support 1,550 homeless people. This is a five year plan in which each book in the series will cover one year of real time documenting related activities.

There has been tremendous feedback about this book series and many are anticipating its first release. Many of you remember Rhoda. She is editing the book for me and is doing an exceptional job. This book is causing a frenzy in which this is exactly what an author wants to happen.

I hope to see all of you soon. Take care...*Patrick*

Thanks to Herb of Sidney Tire

The facilitator of our men's house in Sidney was doing a good deed--transporting goods to another house in Victoria when the tire on his vehicle blew. He asked for help at Sidney Tire explaining the situation and that he had no more than \$45.00 on his person. The Sidney Tire manager agreed to install another tire; rotate the passenger tires and balance the wheels *at no charge*. He simply charged \$40.00 for the tire itself. *Orchids to Sidney Tire manager, Herb. Sidney Tire deserves your patronage!*

THINGS WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE

Towels, Chests of Drawers; cleaning supplies; bus passes; phone cards.

Poetry Corner

Spring always follows Winter

I love you for the winter winds
Demolishing the summer fronds
That kill our dreams the way they do
'Til come the spring, we start anew.

To daffodils that bloom so brave
The winter winds become a slave
For God protects the mighty flower
That gives us pleasure by the hour.

I'm going to blossom -- open wide --
The day I reach the other side.
My loving Lord will bring me home.
No more the stress of earth to roam.

I spoke to crow in yonder tree
She flew and took some food from me.
These winter winds won't let me down,
For I am God's and wear a crown.

Gillian Shirreff



Gillian and Linda at AGM

And this one was sent by one of our Founding Directors, Stephen Glanville: [The Guest House](#)

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

-- Jelaluddin Rumi,
translation by Coleman Barks



Our thanks to **Carole Poy**, for this elegant 16th Anniversary Cake that we enjoyed at the AGM

HUMOUR CORNER: ~Submitted by George~

Dear Revenue Canada, or whatever your current name may be:
 Enclosed and/or attached, you will find my 2007 tax return showing that I owe \$3,407.00 in taxes. Please note the attached article from the *Toronto Globe and Mail*; dated 12 November 2007, wherein you will see that the Canadian Department of National Defense paid \$171.50 per hammer and Fisheries and Oceans Canada paid \$600.00 per toilet seat for its icebreakers.
 As payment, I am enclosing four (4) toilet seats (valued @ \$2,400) and six (6) hammers (valued @ \$1,029), which I secured at Canadian Tire, bringing my total remittance to \$3,429.00. Please apply the overpayment of \$22.00 to the 'Help Stephan Dion Election Fund,' as noted on my return.
 You can do this inexpensively by sending them one (1) 1.5' Phillips Head screw (see aforementioned article from The Globe and Mail detailing how the Department of Public Works paid \$22.00 each for 1.5' Phillips Head Screws). One Philips screw is enclosed for your convenience. It has been a pleasure to pay my tax bill this year, and I look forward to paying it again next year. God Bless Canada !

REPORTS FROM THE HOUSES

The women's houses in Victoria have only one vacancy plus a small room kept for emergencies at **Linda Jim House**. The fifteen women housed are all following programs that will give them the skills they need to move on in their lives. One woman who comes from outside Victoria has a work contract in Victoria for a short time and so needed accommodation at **Esther's House**. Linda at **Edith Gulland House** reports that many donations and she thanks the donors.

The men's houses in the Greater Victoria area have enjoyed one of our best years ever. We have had full houses for about 90% of this past year with many successful transitions taking place. We had two facilitators whose valuable experience and volunteer contributions have been a reason why we have seen such success. They have both deserved this transition to independent living after contributing to many men's life changing experiences.

Although we saw four men struggle with their personal substance use issues we have also witnessed over fourteen men move forward, finding employment and the opportunity to find independent living. All are still in contact with their past houses and remain focused as they become a part of their community.

It is through the gifts of affordable housing and support which we as a society try to give freely that makes possible all these men's transition through difficult times to a more fulfilling and gratifying change.

As a part of the Society Board it has been a great experience to see such life changing opportunity as a result of the unconditional love that is so freely give by all Board and volunteers efforts. I know that there are great people involved and committed to our purpose and hope we can not only continue but expand on these gifts that we have witnessed this past year. I would like to personally thank all those individuals and community supports for making my past year so rewarding and I look forward to continue over this up-coming year with similar result.

~Don Williams~

In Sidney, our very generous landlords keep the two houses in excellent condition. Thank you Sandy for the wonderful new deck at **Judy Thomas House**. The women can now safely venture out to hang clothes on the back yard line instead of using the dryer—one way to keep costs down.

George at **Frances Thibeau House** reports that the house is full and all doing well. The rugs are due for a clean and a 'dump run' will be arranged to dispose of non functional items from both Sidney Houses. Thanks to Holy Trinity Anglican Church, the Town of Sidney, and several businesses for their ongoing support.

We are still looking for another House in Victoria. We ask your help as the search continues. *If you know of a 5 to 6 bedroom house whose rent is under \$2000., we would be grateful to hear from you*

Sincere thanks to:

All new and retiring members of the VHES Board of Directors (See Page 1.)

Patrick S. for taking on the editing and publishing of this newsletter. We look forward to your book on homelessness Patrick. Thanks **Rhoda** for proof reading and editing the text.

Financial Gifts: Patrick L., Mark S. and Lois M. for monthly post dated cheques; **Knights of Columbus Councils** for further regular funding to the **Father Michael J. McGivney House** in Victoria and for the two Sidney Houses.

Holy Trinity Church in Saanich for a large donation from church members for Sidney Houses.

George for carting items/ donations to the houses in Victoria. **Herb of Sidney Tire** for his generous assistance to George (**see Page 2**)

Deborah for so much work at Judy Thomas House and for filling in for Anna when she was away.

Derrick for still volunteering his services in many ways, especially by designing a gift for the PECSF, seeking sources of funds and supplying letters of support..

Provincial Employees Community Services Fund for further funding in this financial year. Regular donations are made to the Fund from the pay packages of PECSF members

The St. Vincent de Paul Conferences, for reviewing the need for monthly vouchers for each of our houses and continuing them.

The Sisters of St. Ann through the **Esther's Dream Foundation** for continued encouragement and support for Esther's House.

Thrifty Foods and all those who use the Smile Cards for the monthly dividend for the Society.

Mustard Seed for continued deliveries which are divided amongst the 3 women's Houses.

Beacon Community Services for a monthly food box (fruits and veggies); **Sidney Lions Club Food Bank** for all the support to our Sidney residents.

All our **Facilitators and occupants** for taking good care of the Houses.

Our good Landlords for their patience and support for our society and all the many occupants. Special thanks to the Sidney Owners for recent work at the houses.

DONATIONS to support the **Victoria Human Exchange Society** may be sent to

Box 8534 - Victoria BC - V8W 3S1

Pager # **GREATER VICTORIA : 361-2762** **Cell phone: 920-5056** **FAX: 656-6242**

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

Web-site: www.humanx.org