

vhes



THE VICTORIA HUMAN EXCHANGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our world, a world of
Friendship, where every
meeting of persons can be
an exchange of life's gifts -
a Human Exchange

Edition 86

July-September 2010

AGM of the VICTORIA HUMAN EXCHANGE SOCIETY

Chairperson, Linda Mayo, welcomed everyone and thanked Reverend Alanna Menu for the use of the Centennial United Church. She then introduced 'Rose of Homeless Nation', Rose Henry, who spoke of the homeless Aboriginal people of the area reminding us that we are all guests on un-ceded Coast Salish land. Rose was later presented with a cheque to assist with the expenses of her trip to Chicago where she is invited as an advocate and activist for a Conference on Homelessness.

Patrick Schnerch then told us about his series of books on homelessness in Victoria. He offered copies of his first book, "City Of Gardens-the other side of the fence" as gifts on the gift table today. His second book "The Invisible Society" will be printed soon.

In her Chairperson's Report: Linda Mayo quoted Margaret Mead:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

Linda spoke of the difference made in so many people's lives through belonging to the "Family of Friends" that we call the Human Exchange. She emphasized that in choosing the Directors for the coming year it was important to choose some people *whose life experiences fitted them to know the challenges of being marginalized by poverty and homelessness*. It was also important to choose those who have the gifts to develop the policies and guidelines for the future success of the society's activities.

The Financial Report: Statements compiled by Lina Beaudet for 2009--2010 fiscal year were presented by Patricia Fitzgerald, treasurer, who drew attention to the lists of donors in the AGM booklet and praised the 'little people' who give constantly, some through post-dated monthly cheques so we always have something to rely on at the beginning of the month when landlords' rents are due.

Elections:

Elected for another year of service: Patricia Fitzgerald; Linda Mayo; Reine deGagne, Wilfred (Wes) Mellors, Patrick Schnerch. New Directors: Cam Ballantyne, Laurie O'Neill, Lori Campbell, Erin Burden, Cathy Christopher, Dennis Nickel, David Croft, Terry Dares, Leona Vaast, Jenni Campbell, Jo-Anne Layton.

Cutting of eighteenth birthday cake:



Wes Mellors was thanked for arranging for the Cake which was decorated at Thrifty Foods, Broadmead, to celebrate the Apple Tree Club whose members were the first people housed in our first Apple Seed Houses of 1992--1994.

Linda invited people to share the gifts from the gift table. She again thanked Rev Alanna & Centennial United Church for their warm hospitality.

**"NEVER GIVE UP"
MAYO, Edward Clarence
August 12, 1926 - June 14, 2010**

We lost our beloved Father, Husband, Papa & Friend recently; but, although he may have passed on in body - this gentle man's spirit will forever live on.

He was a devoted Husband to Laura, for 64 years; the best Father a child could have to daughters: Linda, Brenda, Allyson & Judy; the most understanding & fun "Papa" to his 6 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren; & Friend to everyone who ever knew him.

My Father was well known for his wise (and sometimes wisecrack) sayings; and, our upbringing was liberally sprinkled with thought provoking quotes. I would like to share one of these with you now.

"Life is going to present you with many problems and hurdles; and, when it does - I want you to remember this: Never give up! You can Go Over...Go Under...Go Around...or Go Thru; but, you Never Give Up!

He always had something to say, whether it be serious or humorous; and, when he spoke, people listened - because it was always worth listening too!

I miss my Dad; and, would like to "*Thank everyone*" who sent their condolences to my Mother, my family, and I during this difficult time.

Linda (Edith Gulland house)

Birth of a universe - who is its mother_

I did not put one star in the sky

I did not plant one tree

I did not carve the grand canyon

Yet I am called mother

I am only the beneficiary of that title

For the universe is the creator of that image

Mother person of inner beauty unselfish and giving

The reason someone else is living

Like the universe all around me

Takes nothing and gives everything

I am part of the intimate design by nature

Who then put me in this universe

Like so many stars that shine brightly

I am a simple reflection of my true mother

by Diane Dillon -May 9th Mothers Day -- 2010

TURNING AGE 65

For 65 years I like me a lot

For 65 years, I still don't smoke pot

For 65 years I've lost and I've won

For 65 years my heartaches are done

For 65 years, I've put inches on belly

For 65 years-like Santa it jiggles like jelly

For 65 years write songs that do rhyme

For 65 years fast, fast goes the time

For 65 years, in my long mirror I look

For 65 years, I love to eat what I cook.

For my next decade, I'll be wise with my money

_____ Hopefully in time, I'll meet that sweet honey
each day will be sunny.

by Louise Best

On June 5th, 2010, VHES had its annual general meeting. It was also a celebration of the society's 18th birthday. There were speakers, food and a gift table. It was very successful.

The annual election was exciting because this year we had a lot of new members join us, both as volunteers and board members. We have a new and vibrant chairperson. The new members (through Volunteer Victoria) are intelligent, dedicated and loyal to the cause. Currently there are committees and timelines being set up. Public relations, administration, housing, and fundraising are the priorities.

We had a very successful television piece on Shaw Cable touring one of our women's houses and demonstrating the inner workings of our organization. Near the end, we had one of our board members explain why such a service is necessary and what are our goals. The television coverage was excellent and activated a flow of donations. Bakeries are donating bread to our houses every week for which I like to thank them publicly. Cob's Bakery and another bakery in Sidney, BC, have generously supplied our houses with very tasty bread. Our tenants deeply appreciate this gift of kindness and so do we.

Providing temporary shelter is much harder than one could ever realize, especially with limited resources. Food, clothing, and sundries are in constant demand. Furniture, second hand electronics such as for entertainment like TV's, radios and computers make these homes more livable. The occupants may get some food and sundry donations from time to time; otherwise they have to purchase these from their all too meagre welfare cheques. Bus money is not always available and mobility suffers especially when the occupant needs to go to the doctor, counselling or meetings as part of their treatment plan.

These are all things we take for granted. Many of us could buy a new pair of shoes at will; not everyone. Although times are a little hard for them, at least they are moving ahead in their recovery and new life. They are grateful that VHES is there to lend them a strong shoulder to lean on when they need it. There are a couple of special points to note about VHES. Not one single member, not even the Facilitators and Board Members are paid any money. Secondly, they do not receive any government funding for the operation of these houses. The unselfish and caring landlords keep the rents of these homes as low as possible so that they usually only receive a small profit or none at all. Many of them upkeep the properties and are on top of the necessary repairs at no cost to VHES or the occupants.

Some businesses, churches, and individuals help VHES in many different ways such as donations, free labour or volunteering time. All of this brings our communities closer together. We are family. This is a true grassroots operation built on compassion and humanity.

The people we serve would otherwise be homeless. It is impossible to live in a clean and safe environment that is affordable with a welfare cheque. They are treated with dignity and respect as we also expect from them. We are helping them to help themselves.

There are no freebees and handouts. The men and women are expected to be clean of drugs or alcohol for three months before being eligible for housing. They must maintain sobriety through being active in a recovery plan. No exceptions, and there is no smoking in the houses. There are rules and they are strictly adhered to. To live in one of our houses, they have to work for it, sharing gardening, housework and cooking as well as other chores that need to be done.

It is necessary for the public to be aware that most homeless people are not hoodlums or criminals, they are survivors. VHES is highly respected throughout the city for all members are volunteers and do it from the heart. Many are amazed as to how much work is done with no monetary payments at all.

It is a registered, highly efficient and organized non-profit organization. It adheres to all provincial and federal policies, laws and regulations. They are a group of gifted individuals working together for the sake of being human, thus the name, 典 he Victoria Human Exchange Society It is the exchange of a human gift that brings us all together.

~ Patrick J. Schnerch ~

SINCERE THANKS TO:

- **All who donated time to make the AGM such a success.** New Directors for your gift of your expertise and experience. **Erin** for photos of the cake
- **Wes M.** for arranging with **Jennifer D.** for a videotaped interview on Shaw Community Cable. Thank you to the Board of Directors of Shaw Cable, **Hillary H. and Al (cameraman)** for an excellent show!
- **Knights of Columbus, Saanich Peninsula Council,** for welcome funds-which sadly may be the last due to cut backs in Gaming funds.
- **Rosa G.** for sets of dishes and other items suitable for our houses.
- **Elsie McL.** for great baking for our 18th Birthday celebration and for networking for us to obtain items useful to persons in our houses.
- Financial support from the **Sid T., Lois M.; John T.**
- **Tim, Vicki and Carol of Olive Grove Restaurant** for beautiful toiletries.
- **Greg and Shelley M.** for all the help you contribute to Wes.
- **Leonna and friend** for donating so many beautiful clothes.
- **Reine** for behind the scenes work for the society. Chown Place Board of Directors for allowing us to use your hall for Board meetings for years. **Chown Place Fellowship** for gifts of food and money over this time.
- **Lori C., and Cathy C.** for transporting donated dresser and other goods.
- **Trish G.** through **Marj L.** for a single bed needed at Charlei Pyott House.
- **The Unitarian Church** regularly *supplies rent* for person with no funds.
- **Several Churches & Agencies in Greater Victoria** for funds.
- Designated funds through the **United Way and Federal Superannuates.**

In common with all groups trying to ease pain and suffering today, the Human Exchange is facing a real shortage of operational funds for it's 7 houses.

Measures we are currently taking to save funds:

- We ask that those with Internet *read the newsletter on line* to save printing and postage costs. Also *hand delivery* of newsletters is preferred method of distributing hard copies.
- Persons in our houses are asked to *budget to buy their own house supplies* unless these are donated. (Impossible for some)
- Persons in our houses *share the cost of Internet/Cable.* VHES does not pay for these.

Tradesmen and Professional people whose services we need have been asked to take a *tax receipt for the materials side of their service.* In some cases a discount was given without a request for a tax receipt.

Remembering the Human Exchange in your Will is already happening in Victoria and at the Salt Spring Island Branch. Thank you to anyone who chooses to show their appreciation of our Transitional Housing in this way

DONATIONS to Victoria Human Exchange Society : Box 8534 - Victoria BC - V8W 3S1

Pager # GREATER VICTORIA : 361-2762 Anywhere else in North America: 1-800-691-9366

Cell phones 250-920-5056 250-857-3905 Web-site: www.humanx.org