

34 YEARS
OF SERVICE

OAK BAY VOLUNTEER SERVICES



Newsletter

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2011 VOLUNTEER AWARDS

At this year's Annual General Meeting Mayor Christopher Causton presented pins to volunteers who reached the 5, 10 and 15 years level of service. Executive Director Joan

Halvorsen made two special presentations to volunteers who have completed 25 and 30 years of service to OBVS. We honour all these volunteers for their dedication!



Volunteers in attendance: left to right Peter Dowgailenko, Mayor Christopher Causton, Alan Clarke, John & Marie Caton, Sharon Apsey, Grace Yuen, Josephine Lee, Sonja Ruthe, Louise MacMinn, Barbara Cartwright, Judy Parkhurst, Nancy Schwartz, Ron Nicholson, Gill Rees

WE ALWAYS WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS

"Discover why some of the richest people in the world are not millionaires; they are volunteers." –*Jubail Breclona.*

Wanted: drivers, office workers with computer literacy, walkers, readers, visitors, handy people, and the list goes on. We do several New Client Visits each month, so we want to increase the number of volunteers in each category in order to meet clients' requests. We

especially require drivers to fulfill the growing number of drives requested every week. (See the article on page 3.)

We've all dreamed of it at one time or another, so what better way to improve your riches than by joining OBVS. Improve your wealth even more by encouraging someone you know to also become a volunteer.

----- Five Years -----

Alan Clarke
Bill Cozens
Diane Kallal
Ray Larson
Ron Nicholson
Gill Rees
Claude Rousseau
Sonja Ruthe
Nancy Schwartz

----- Ten Years -----

Sharon Apsey
John Caton
Marie Caton
Nada Dosenovic
Josephine Lee
Heidi Strickland

----- Fifteen Years -----

Barbara Cartwright
Peter Dowgailenko
Walter Prendergast
Grace Yuen

----- Twenty-five Years -----

Louise MacMinn

----- Thirty Years -----

Judy Parkhurst

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The next annual Blighty's fundraising dinner will be held on February 9, 2012. Tickets are \$125 each with a portion tax deductible. If you cannot attend, you can still contribute by purchasing non-attending tickets that entitle you to have your name in the draw for many prizes: \$50/1, \$75/2 or \$100/3 which are totally tax-deductible.

The food and wine is always delicious, and draw prizes top quality. Don't be disappointed, book early, as the event has been sold out the past few years.

Vera Woytack and Ann Belither

By Bronwyn Taylor

When greeted at the door by Ann and Vera, I knew immediately I was in for an interesting afternoon! Over tea and chocolate biscuits I heard the stories of these two wonderful women.

Vera was born in Berlin, Germany on October 14, 1920 where she grew up, attended school, and went on to a four-year course in Beauty Culture, which led to a job doing hair and make-up in the theatrical world, specifically light opera. As an only child, she "was spoiled from the whole family", and spent much time in the company of her cousins. It was apparent from the beginning that strong family values have always been an important part of Vera's life.

Widowed after only seven months of marriage, and having lost her father and her house, Vera returned to hairdressing as the theatre where she worked had been bombed. After the war Vera remarried; the couple had a son and daughter. In 1953 the family decided to come to Canada; Erwin settled in Edmonton, then Vera and the children followed five months later. "December is the wrong month to cross the Atlantic," laughed Vera. Their third child, another daughter, was born in Edmonton where they lived for the next twenty-six years.

Erwin worked on boats and in construction, often dealing with asbestos, which caused many health issues later in his life. Vera found a job in the largest beauty salon in Edmonton. Within five years the owner of the salon expanded and chose Vera to advise him on the design and décor of the new establishment, and to be its manager. When he retired fifteen years later, he offered the business to Vera as a gift.

In 1956 the Woytack family used their war reparation funds to buy camping equipment for their trip to B.C. They

headed west, ending in Victoria, and fell in love with it, but it wasn't until 1979 that the family relocated to our fair city. They bought the home where Vera still lives, as a widow since 2001.

Vera was very modest when asked about her hobbies and interests. The yard attests to her love of gardens and flowers. She came from a physically active family: skating, skiing, cross-country, and especially swimming were her sports of choice, while ballet, tap, and playing several musical instruments rounded out her artistic side. As an adult Vera tapped at the Monterey Centre and still participates in aqua fit for 55 and better. "I'm the 'better'," she says.

In addition to her three children, Vera has six grandchildren and one great granddaughter, all of whom mean the world to her. When the grandchildren were growing up they were always playing in her yard. To this day, a grandson takes her grocery shopping, and a granddaughter lives downstairs to keep her company. Vera is legally blind, and though fiercely independent, family support is important to help her maintain her independence; Ann's help aside.

Six years ago Vera had an unfortunate accident. A well-known and loved dog jumped up to say good-bye and knocked her over. She lost a tooth, fractured vertebrae and damaged a disc, which to her chagrin severely curtailed the physical activities she loved so much. Rehabilitation involved three months of physiotherapy three times a week at the pool, and that is how Vera met Ann. "A blessing, to be sure!" she grinned.

When I asked Ann about her birth date, she and Vera got into a great discourse over the actual year. When Vera's date prevailed, her comment was, "My



Ann Belither & Vera Woytack entering the Rec. Centre

bubble (brain) is still working." This banter exemplifies the rapport these women have developed over the years of their association, now very much a true friendship.

They finally agreed that Ann was born in 1931, in Singapore on October 16. Her father worked for Asiatic Pacific Petroleum and was transferred quite often. When Ann was one, the family moved to England. A year later the company needed someone in New York; they stayed for another year before being transferred to San Francisco where Ann grew up.

Like Vera, Ann was involved in many sports. Her involvement in volunteering also began at an early age. During the war she worked for British war relief and the Red Cross blood bank. Ann's father retired in 1949 and the family returned to England; Ann to a year in a Swiss finishing school before her return to England. She and her mother could not stand it there. Ann's older brother attended Shawnigan Lake Boys School during the war. They all liked Victoria as it was "a little bit of England, and a bit like the rest of North America," so the decision to move here suited everyone's needs.

Ann studied microbiology

and biochemistry at UBC, which led to medical research in Vancouver General Hospital and later to the University of Saskatchewan University Hospital. When her father died Ann returned to Victoria as a support for her mother, where she remains to this day.

Photography is one of Ann's major hobbies, so when she left the field of medical research, she took a job in the Woodward's camera department where she worked until the store closed. Golf was her major sport and she supported the game by serving on executive committees at both the club and district levels until three years ago, when her arthritis made it just too difficult to play.

Ann began with OBVS about seven years ago, when she was not able to golf as much as she had in the past. Her first drive with Vera was five years ago, driving her to the pool for her physiotherapy session, and in Ann's words, "Now we're stuck with each other." What I observed was they are 'stuck' because of mutual admiration and respect.

They sometimes have lunch together, Ann will drop in to see if Vera is well, she drives her to other appointments, and Vera knows Ann is at the other end of the phone if needed. Despite her physical limitations Vera is always positive. "Why worry about the next day, next week, next year? Even if a doctor gives me bad news, I don't dwell on it, I deal with it!" Ann said, "It's a two-way street, this volunteering. Vera's very good for me; my arthritis could get me down but she won't let me (get down)."

One thing they agreed upon immediately, without having any good-natured banter back and forth, is that they have become each other's best friend.

Vera ended by expressing her appreciation for everything OBVS has done for her over the years, and says, "It is a wonderful organization that everyone should be made aware of!"

DRIVERS NEEDED

This is by far our most requested service, and the area for which we always need additional volunteers. As our clients age, we find that they require more assistance with shopping and other errands in addition to their medical appointment drives.

It is essential for OBVS to recruit a larger cadre of drivers to ensure the continuation of this most valued service. If you know of a friend, neighbour, or family member who might become a volunteer driver, please encourage them to contact the office.

Expenses: In order to ensure that driving remains a viable service, we reimburse drivers \$0.50/km. Some volunteers make a claim, others make no claim, while others claim the allowance and donate back to OBVS and receive a receipt for income tax purposes.

If paid parking is required, the cost is the responsibility of the client. OBVS has a limited number of permits for Disabled Parking should the client require such a spot, though we encourage clients to get their own Disability Parking Pass which they can use with any of their drivers. Passes are available at the Disability Resource Center on Fort St. at a cost of \$20, and are valid for three years.

Criteria: Drives are primarily for people who are unable to manage by bus or taxi,

for financial or health related reasons. Extenuating or short-term circumstances are taken into account and each situation is assessed on its own merit. A saying we use is, "If in doubt, help out!"

Booking: It is best to book drives one week ahead whenever possible, more if the drive is very early in the morning or on a weekend or holiday. If an appointment spans several hours, we may have to book two drivers—one to the appointment, and another for the return drive.

It is essential to give the office as much information as possible when requesting a drive:

1. Date of drive
2. Time of appointment
3. Address of appointment, and ancillary stops (only if necessary)
4. Name of Doctor or other professional
5. Length of appointment (if known)
6. Vehicle restrictions, equipment/mobility aids
7. Special assistance required (back injury, blind, drops in eyes, etc.)

Again, if you or someone you know might be interested in becoming a driver, even if you are only available one day a week or once a month, please contact the OBVS office by phone, fax, e-mail, or come in person.

Many people in your **Community** need the personal assistance of a **Volunteer**.



Even one drive per month would help!

OAK BAY VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Call us at: 250-595-1034

Shaping the Journey: *living with dementia*[™]

Shaping the Journey: living with dementia[™] is an educational program designed specifically for people experiencing the early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, as well as a care-partner, family member, or friend.

It is for people who want to explore the journey ahead in a positive and supportive environment.



Six sessions (2.25 hours each) will cover:

- The Brain and Dementia
- Hearing the Diagnosis
- Maintaining your General Health
- Life After Diagnosis
- Planning Ahead
- Maintaining your Spirit

Dates: Sept 13, 20, 27; Oct 4, 11, 18 (every Tuesday)

Time: 10:00am to 12:15pm

Location: Hillside Seniors Health Centre -1454 Hillside Ave.

To Register Contact: Emily Pridham at 250-382-2033

CPR WORKSHOP JULY 2011

By Bronwyn Taylor

Know that several of our drivers, visitors, walkers, and others have recently or previously been certified in CPR. Certificates are valid for 3 years. Volunteers can take refresher courses any time within the 3-year period, or wait until their certificate expires before renewing.

The workshops are conducted by the Oak Bay Firefighters. Having participated, I plan to attend as many future workshops as are offered to keep up my skills because it is not something you get to practise on a regular basis (thank goodness). If CPR is not practiced regularly you soon forget the procedures that may save a life

one day, not to mention keeping up to date with the constant changes in protocols for providing CPR.

The following is a quote from Honora Bowring, another of the participants:

"It was a great workshop. What was really special was the instructor: pleasant, knowledgeable and humorous. People were enthusiastic. We started off with a questionnaire; having the book ahead certainly helped. CPR has changed. Each person became familiar with the AED (automated external defibrillator).

The age group was varied; 30's, middle-aged and older. It was a good learning experience."



Grace Yuen

Oak Bay Emergency Preparedness Workshops

Register for one of the workshops listed below and learn how to be personally prepared to enable you and your family to be self-sufficient for a minimum of 7 days after a major emergency or disaster. Receive an information package to help you get prepared.

To register: 250-592-9121 (Oak Bay Fire Hall) or coordinator@oakbayemergency.com

Workshops: 6:45 (Sign-in)-9:00 pm
Presentations start at 7 pm sharp.

Location: Windsor Park Pavilion, 2451 Windsor Rd

Workshop Dates 2011

- Tuesday, September 20th, 2011
- Tuesday, November 15th, 2011

Workshop Dates 2012

- Tuesday, January 17, 2012
- Tuesday, March 13, 2012
- Tuesday, May 8th, 2012 (EP Week)

Seniors' Preparedness Workshop: Keeping you Safe!

Monterey Recreation Centre, 1442 Monterey Ave
Register: Reception or call 250-370-7300 (use #96174)
Wednesday, October 5th, 2011 - 1:00 - 2:30pm
Learn what to do in an earthquake and other hazards; the importance of a BUDDY System; how to develop your Personal Preparedness Plan and receive FREE items to add to your Grab & Go Bag!



Firefighter John Ballantyne & Honora Bowring

OAK BAY VOLUNTEER SERVICES

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