

**Galiano Health Care Society  
Annual General Meeting  
April 26, 2015**

**Executive Director/Manager's Report  
Submitted by Linda Ruedrich**

This is my 12<sup>th</sup> report to the membership of the Health Care Society, and it's been both a pleasure and a challenge to work for the Society this many years. I can't help but reflect on the changes that have occurred, and this is the theme my report. To quote one of my favorite poets, Bob Dylan, "may you have a strong foundation, when the winds of changes shift". And that is what the Society, it's professionals, staff and board have built - a strong foundation that houses primary and emergency health care services while providing health and wellness programs. Together, we do our best for health care on Galiano Island.

The past year has seen shifts and changes: the retirement of some very long time nurses, maternity leave starting and ending, changing faces at the front desk, our new doctor and nurse practitioner cementing their practices and applying their visions for health, and now, sadly, a change in the NP position coming up in June.

The Board also changes year to year, just when I have them whipped into shape, there's new recruits to deal with. I don't always tell them I will miss them when they go, but I do. Over this past 12 years I've likely had more bosses than any other Galiano employee. I doubt there is a prize. But the beauty of change and diversity is the possibility of learning something new. Everyone involved in the Society has a vision which adds yet another brick to the foundation. Along with the beauty there is also sorrow: the loss of people you have come to like and rely on for service and wisdom; knowing those who are ill, who die...; and then, there are the cuts and demands from the powers that - VIHA - over which we have little control, yet they have the power to affect and frustrate the good efforts of those providing service. In the end, each year we work hard, and hope the good will outweighs the bad, and, so far, it has.

**Staffing:**

I would also like to thank Alex and Erin, our Medical office support staff, for their outstanding work and dedication this year. It's Alex's 10th year anniversary this September working as an MOA. Her knowledge, good humour and quest for excellence is a gift to us all. Maybe we should give her a day off to recuperate from this decade in the trenches of Galiano health. While Nicole Mourner enjoyed her first year with her new baby, Erin Anderson took on the job and has become a valued member of the GHCS team. . It's a steep learning curve, but Erin is tenacious and compassionate, and has done an excellent job while being a delight to work with. I am so happy she will continue as a part time worker.

It is the year of losing nurses: the retirement of Diana Lilly and Colette Lagace, and our loved NP, Jo Rippen, who is off on a new adventure. You will hear from them later, so I will not steal any thunder, except to say good luck, and continue to find joy in your life; you are all valued and treasured women. And a huge thank you to Cathy Chapman, who came to us from Pender every month to do the First Call nurse job, who will also missed.

I think our doctor Erin Carlson, secretly, would rather be a gardener, but we can only be grateful doctoring is also her passion. I am - almost - over the PTSD of finding locums for 3.5 years to cover medical services on the Island. My recovery has been aided in a huge part by the wonderful-ness that is Erin C. We are all made just that much better by the fact that she chose this island to practice medicine. I would like to thank her for her enthusiasm, optimism, (because lord knows that is my challenge) good sense of humor, and honorable work ethic. It is a real pleasure working with you, Erin.

### **Programs:**

The society has been able to add some great senior's resource and wellness programs in the last 2 years, thanks to some successful grant applications, and to the generous donations of community members. You will hear a report from Nancy McPhee about the ongoing Aging in Place Program which was borne out of the community's concern that residents are able to stay on Galiano with the resources needed for all the phases of aging. A new venture called Better at Home will bring some of those resources into our senior's community. I thank Nancy for all her work this year. It is hard to stay motivated, and on task, when you are a lone community development and outreach worker without a desk or office, but Nancy has mastered those skills. We are very lucky to have her on staff.

The Mental Health Committee and friends: Wendy, Jenelle, Virginia, Diane, Peter, Dana and I have been working hard to increase awareness that that mental health issues are simply health issues like any other. The committee goal is increase our awareness that mental health issues are common and need support and resources. We have some exciting things planned for 2015: films and speakers; and a very special performance in July by David Granier, well know comic and mental health advocate, who will be bringing his "Stand up for Mental Health" show to Galiano.

There's this broad category of things we do called Volunteer Services, but that does not describe the essential niches these programs, and unbelievable people who run the programs, fulfill. From the seniors Walk and Talk, to Transition in Dying/Palliative Support, Volunteer Drivers, the Mental Health Committee, an Emergency Disaster plan for the clinic, etc. We have partnered with the Library, the Galiano Club and Salt Spring Community Services, and our own Medical Professionals, to bring resources to Galiano, whether that be speakers, informative workshops, films and conversations about Mental Health and wellness, Advanced care planning, etc. Board members and community members give more hours than you can imagine ensuring well being for us all. Look around you, and thank the person next to you, they have most likely walked, talked, put up chairs, baked, quilted, sewn, sat at an information table, counseled, cried, held someone's hand in comfort, driven, put up tents, slaved over a hot stove, carried things and a thousand other jobs, both big and small, for your health. It's thanks to you; we have a strong foundation when the winds of change shift.

### **The Building:**

Let's face it; a large part of offering health care on Galiano involves our building. It has to bend and stretch to fulfill all the demands that come our way, and so needs a far amount of tender loving care. Next year, the Health Care Centre turns 25 - I think that might be 60 in building years. About the time a little "work" needs to be done. This year we have replaced some windows, started to replace the old fluorescent lights, repaired some dental equipment, and increased janitorial hours to keep up with changing regulations to ensure the Centre is as clean as it can be. Thank you, Ayla and Kristina, for your tireless efforts in maintaining the necessary high standards.

Storage is always a major issue, and with more practitioners and services there's more demand for space. We have some attempt to fix this by combining an outside and inside storage area that's warm and dry but it's kinda like that junk drawer we all have – the one where you throw stuff in with hopes of sorting it out later. Well, it's later... and some 'real' storage solutions must be planned.

We are getting some help in planning a better parking situation for people with disabilities. The current ramp doesn't allow wheelchairs to maneuver, and there's only one parking space for people with mobility issues. We want to make the Centre as accessible as possible for all patients. A big thank you to Geoff, Bowie and Murray, who are always willing to roll up their sleeves solve the many issues facing an aging building.