

Galiano Health Care Society
Annual General Meeting
April 26, 2015
President's Report

At last year's AGM in April, 2014, I reported that the Galiano Health Care Society was still trying to persuade the Capital Regional District to conduct a referendum, to see whether the community was willing to support the operation and maintenance of the Health Care Centre through a levy on annual property taxes. We had asked for this referendum because the Vancouver Island Health Authority refused to provide additional financial support for the Health Centre, and the Society was dependent on the success of annual fundraising events and donations to cover basic operating costs.

In January the CRD finally agreed to conduct the referendum, which took place at the same time as last November's elections. Fortunately, once community members had the opportunity to express their support with a vote, they did so with a resounding 90% majority. They could not have demonstrated more clearly how much they value the Galiano Health Care Centre, and its vital role in the community. Needless to say, the outcome of the referendum was very gratifying to members of the Society's board, because it means that there will be stable and predictable revenue to support the basic operations of the Health Care Centre going forward.

The Society will continue to fundraise, but the proceeds of fundraising events and donations will be directed to supporting programs and the purchase of specialized equipment, rather than to cover overhead costs. We will continue to put on our annual Wine and Beer Festival in August, which depends upon the help of many volunteers who devote countless hours to make the Festival a success. Here at the AGM is another example of people volunteering their time to support the Society's programs -- the beautiful quilt created and donated by the Needlework Guild for our fundraising raffle. (Please buy lots of tickets!)

On a less positive note, unfortunately last November the Vancouver Island Health Authority decided to cut funding for the First Call Nurse position, which removed on-call nursing coverage from the two weekends each month that it had been in place for several years. This was done without consultation with the medical team or with the Society. As Society members know, we have strongly protested this action by the health authority, and have called for re-instatement of this position. We circulated a petition that collected 627 signatures, which was submitted to the provincial Legislature in March. To date we have had no response to the petition.

Health care on Galiano depends not only on the support of many volunteers, but of course it also depends directly on the caring and professional expertise of the Galiano medical team. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Erin Carlson as our family physician, and to have had Jo Rippin as our Nurse Practitioner. We have also had the great good fortune to have had the dedicated work of Home and Community Care Nurse Colette Lagace and First Call Nurse Diana Lilly, who will be speaking to us later today, and whose retirement we will be recognizing with a celebration after the formal part of today's meeting.

You'll also be hearing shortly from Linda Ruedrich, who is the board's executive director and the manager of the Health Centre. Linda somehow keeps everything running, and all of us in line, at least most of the time. Many thanks to her, and to the front line support staff (Alex, Erin, and Nicole) who are friendly, caring, and very helpful to everyone.

I also want to thank my fellow board members for their work on behalf of the Society. In particular I would like to recognize and thank the individuals who will be leaving the board for their contributions to community health care during their terms: Judy Parrack, Kendall Kyle, Bowie Keefer, and Cathy Stephenson, and also Sharon Gove who had to leave the board earlier in the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Hoebel