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Letter from the Editor



Jenn Cornish,
Vela Vision Editor

Summer is upon us once again and everyone is enjoying the weather and the fun that this season brings.

As I was sitting on my patio the other day, I noticed the pitiful condition that my flowers are in this year. I realized that although they have the soil and water that are the necessities of their survival, I haven't given them the attention that they need to really thrive. As a result they have produced only one bloom so far this season. I realized that we, as people, are the same. We need more than just the basic necessities of life to thrive as human beings and realize our true potential. This fast paced society of North America in which we live often only values monetary contributions. Too often we forget that the best contribution that we can both give and receive is friendship and relationship with others. This has been clearly shown in the last few months as our government, rather than recognizing the worth and value of an individual are, instead, focussing only on monetary contributions as they seek to deport a young man with downs syndrome citing burden to society.

I feel so honored and privileged to be associated with an organization that values people for who they are and the gifts that they have to share: an organization that recognizes that relationships are the most important facet of life.

In this edition of Vela Vision, we are proud to share several stories that demonstrate how people are thriving rather than merely existing due to the nurturing relationships they have experienced. From high school graduation to community volunteering to enjoyment of sports competitions, our Vela Microboard members are living life to the fullest.

We always love to hear your stories. Please feel free to submit any stories of your accomplishments, passions, personal triumphs, etc. We have included a new section for Movie/Music/Theatre/Book Reviews and would love to have your critiques for publication in future editions. Letters to the editor are also very welcomed as well as suggestions, comments and feedback. We hope you enjoy this summer edition of Vela Vision and are looking forward to seeing all of you at our conference in October.

Bingo Update

As most of you now know, Vela relies on revenues from Gaming, specifically Bingo, to ensure our ongoing operations. Much of the direct advocacy and support we are able to provide for the individuals with Microboards is a direct result of this funding.

For the better part of a year, Vela has been involved in a process with the Gaming Commission that will ultimately determine the ongoing appropriateness of our eligibility for those funds. As of writing this, the outcome of those discussions is still not known.

Though this process has been most challenging for us, what has been very gratifying has been receiving letters of support and words of encouragement provided by so many of the Microboards. On behalf of all of us at Vela, I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone that took the time to write supporting our work. We can't tell you how much it has been appreciated.

- submitted by **Linda Perry**

reference group and Tim McCory of Friends of Ty Society, Evelyn Hiscock of Rosewood Friendship Society, Mina Singh of Priya's Society for Mutual Enhancement, and Carol Bush of Trevor Bush Society of Family and Friends, for volunteering for this job. Their input is greatly appreciated.

We look forward to presenting the material at our Microboard Conference, October 12th to 14th 2001.

-submitted by **Jeanette Holder**

those that did take the time to get to know him. His love for his friends, and his pleasure in their company was very evident. He provided a great example of how to enjoy friendship.

I was very privileged to have opportunities to witness the love Wes shared with his mom Bernice, and his brothers, Richard and Jason. The appreciation for one another emanated from their family. Their demonstration of mutual respect and support was, and is, an inspiration to me.

Law Foundation Project



In the last newsletter, we introduced you to the Law Foundation Project, a one year project to develop a Legal Education Manual and regional workshops for Vela Microboards. We are pleased to advise that Kitt Johnson has been hired on a short term basis, to assist in the completion of this work. Kitt has a degree in Criminal Justice and is very interested in the law. Her back ground is constitutional law and research.

Kitt has begun working on a plain language version of the Society Act Bylaws, the Client Services Agreement and the Component Services Schedule. I'm sure those of you who have contracts with the ministry will appreciate the value of a plain language contract. Kitt will continue to work on bringing clarity to documents such as the Employment Standards Act, WCB regulations and other relevant information.

A reference group has been formed to review the material for clarity, relevance to Microboards, grammar, structure, and presentation style.

We would like to thank Jenn Cornish for chairing this



Memorials



Wesley Doucet,
1977 - 2001

I met Wesley and his family about a year ago. The first time we met, I immediately sensed a kindred soul. Wesley was curious, but very cautious. He laughed easily, teased, and had a great sense of humour. He also clearly loved his family very much. His spirit shone. I liked him instantly.

Wesley knew what he liked and didn't like and certainly didn't waste your time trying to have you guess his preferences. I admired his directness.

Wesley had faced many challenges in his brief time here with us. He was often misunderstood by those that didn't take the time to listen to him with more than just their ears. As a result, he was sometimes faced with other people's limitations and lack of understanding. In spite of at times being treated with insensitivity by those that didn't choose to or couldn't understand him, Wesley's heart remained intact. I respected his strength of character.

Wesley also made fast friends with

I respected Wesley's tenacity, loyalty and courage. I will remember the spirit of the man. A spirit that lived life in full, faced challenges even if afraid, and loved those close with deep commitment. All attributes I'm sure all of us only hope to one day achieve. I know my world and that of others has been expanded for having known Wesley. And I know that he will be greatly missed.

- submitted by **Linda Perry**

In honor of Wesley's memory, his mother Bernice Doucet-Ryan, is in the process of establishing a Foundation in his name. If you are interested in learning more about this foundation, please call the Vela Office at: (604) 575-2588 and leave a message for Bernice



Lily Ekelund,
1958 - 2001

Lily Ekelund was a woman of great strength and dignity. She was fiercely independent, valued her family, friends and her community.

Lily's relationship with her mother Hanny, was an inspiration to witness. They continually demonstrated mutual respect, gentle humour and obvious

enjoyment in each other's company.

Lily always had a keen interest in participating in her community. She was involved in many interests and activities. For a number of years Lily worked successfully from her home as a Shiatsu Massage Therapist.

Lily was one of only fifty people world wide diagnosed with Alstrom's Syndrome. She was keenly interested in the developments of researchers studying this rare disorder and was often a source of information and inspiration for those doing such research.

The challenges Lily faced as a result of Alstrom's, were significant. During her life Lily experienced profound degeneration of sight, hearing, and sense of touch. She also had a number of very serious episodes of heart fibrillation. She tolerated these health issues with grace and tenacity, seldom complaining.

Lily was determined to live on her own terms and did so right up to the time of her death. She cherished her time in her home and neighbourhood with her much loved assistance dog at her side.

Lily, with the support of her Microboard, as well as the sub-contractor Noble and Associates, and her intervener, Bev, was able to live life independently and to the fullest. This was the only way she would have had it.

Lily will be long remembered and missed by all who knew her.

- submitted by **Linda Perry**

New Autism Book

NEW BOOK OFFERS A PLAYFUL, EDUCATIONAL LOOK AT AUTISM

Delightful, charming and entertaining, A Place Within the Sphere by Tanis Morran

offers a look into the relationship between Savannah, a young girl with autism and her friend, Esmeralda. This is a tale of growing up and the unique realities and discoveries of knowing someone with autism with the opportunity of viewing the world through the eyes of someone whose world looks different from our own.

Teens and adults familiar with autism will enjoy this upbeat and sometimes funny story of growing up, and for those who have little knowledge of autism as well. The engaging cast of characters will keep you entertained with this eye-opening and charming story of friendship.

Tanis Morran is the mother of a teenager who has autism and volunteers as the secretary of the Victoria Society for Children with Autism. She has a bachelor's degree in education and divides her time between parenting, writing and volunteer work.

A Place Within the Sphere by Tanis Morran ISBN155212426-6 \$19.95 Canadian/\$12.95 U.S. is available through <http://www.amazon.com>

- submitted by **Stephanie Watson**

Competitive Spirit

BOCCIA, MY PASSION

I first learned about the ancient Italian game called Boccia back in secondary school at John Oliver Secondary in Vancouver. My Phys. Ed. teacher showed us how to play. Boccia normally is played outside in the park on grass, whereas we play in a gym on a 15 by 6 metre court.

According to the rules from the (CPSA/BC) web site, of which I am paraphrasing, there are five different classifications of competitors;



Alicia Caldwell

CP1 : these players are ambulatory with a little balance.

CP2 : the classification for those competitors who are in chairs. These two classifications are further broken down by whether or not the player can throw the balls.

Most of the competitors in British Columbia use a device called a chute. A chute is made out of wood or, more commonly, PCP drainpipe, "sewer pipe," which is no more than two meters long. We also have an attendant who sits in front of the competitor and faces him/her during the game play.

The first competition I ever took part in was the 1990 Disabled Summer Games in Penticton. I lost every game, but it was a good experience.

I didn't know where to practice since I was living in a group home surrounding and I couldn't practice anywhere. That surrounding made me more dependent on people than I had

been before or since. I went to the Boccia Championships in '91 at Douglas College in New Westminster. That summer I had something more important in my life; I got married and so I missed the Summer Games. From '92 on I missed only one of the Boccia Championships, due to illness and attended all of the BC Summer Games for People with Physical Disabilities or Sportfest, as they are called this year.



Mimi Hearle



Holly McDonald

British Columbia has one of the, if not the, best boc- cia tournaments in Canada. I attended one tournament in Edmonton but, ironically, I only c o m p e t e d against players from Fort St. John and the Lower Mainland.

This was due to the fact that we were the only ones that played with chutes and were, therefore, the only ones in our classification.

My best finish was in '95 in Port Alberni, when I couldn't do anything wrong and won the gold for the individual competition, and silver for pairs.

We play in the summer for fun, but every spring or fall is ordinarily when the BC Championships take place at Douglas College in New Westminster. This competition can be quite intense for everybody.

- submitted by **Jeff Moulins**

SUMMER GAMES

LONDON, ON (April 28, 2001) - For the first time in Canada Games history, athletes with a developmental disability will compete at the 2001 Canada Summer Games. The athletes will compete in swimming events at the Canada Games Aquatic Centre this August.

Young athletes today took part in a demonstration ceremony at the Canada Games Aquatic Centre, highlighting the decision to have swimmers with developmental disabilities



compete with full medal status. The swimmers met with the 2001 Canada Games provincial and territorial Chefs de Mission attending a Games preview and assessment conference.

Gisele Regimbal, Director of Communications with the Canada Games Council, said the decision was a joint one made by the Council, Canadian Special Olympics and Swimming/Natation Canada. "The Canada Games represent excellence in sport and now athletes with a developmental disability can compete fully and equally as part of their provincial or territorial team," she added.

Randy Geene, coach of Team Ontario's male swimmers with a developmental disability, said the decision to include the athletes in the Canada Games is an example of openness and fairness in Canadian sport. "Events for athletes with a physical disability have been included in the athletics and swimming programs since the 1993 Canada Summer Games in Kamloops, B.C. This is a natural extension of what we do for swimmers overall," Geene said.

The 2001 Alliance London Canada Summer Games is committed to hosting a community-based, athlete-centered Games that supports the goals for and demonstrates the achievements of amateur sport in Canada with the support of our funding partners the Government of Canada, Government of Ontario, City of London and Canada Games Council. The Alliance is composed of the Cities of London, St. Thomas, and Woodstock and the village of Grand Bend and the University of Western Ontario.

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Ceridian Payroll

CERIDIAN
Ceridian Canada Ltd.
1400-1200 W. 73rd Ave.
Vancouver, BC V6P 6G5
Tel: (804) 267-6200
Fax: (804) 267-6201

June 11, 2001

Dear Microboard:

Ceridian Canada Ltd. is pleased to extend free payroll set-up to any new Microboards that partner with Ceridian, as well to provide a dedicated Account Manager to oversee your payroll. It is important to us that we continue to meet your payroll needs, requirements and expectations.

I am confident based on your requirements as outlined in our discussion to date, Ceridian will continue to provide you with flexible, cost efficient and permanent solutions to meet those requirements and expectations.

I look forward to working together.

Yours truly,
Ceridian Canada Ltd.

Mike Kully
Sales Consultant

Recently, Vela staff met with representatives from Ceridian Payroll to discuss specific concerns brought forward by Vela Microboards. We, at Vela, felt that educating Ceridian personnel with respect to the scope, uniqueness, and differing levels of support required by individual Microboards would benefit those of you who purchase Ceridian's services. As well, we took the opportunity to present an overview of a "Vela Microboard", and Vela Microboard Association of B.C.'s role in the development of Microboards.

Laurie Frizell, Payroll Account Manager, and Roberta Chapman, Supervisor were impressed by the sheer number of successfully operating Microboards throughout the province. They were very enthusiastic in suggesting changes they could implement that would further benefit streamlining payroll services to Vela Microboards. Our heartfelt thanks to them.

We would especially like to thank Mike Kully, Sales Consultant, Ceridian Canada for agreeing to wave the start up fee for new Microboards.

-submitted by **Lori Emanuels**

International News

MICROBOARD MEMBER WINS MISS NORTHERN IRELAND



Julie and Angela McCarthy

Angela McCarthy, sister of Julie McCarthy and a Microboard member of the Julie McCarthy Society of Family and Friends, is the newly crowned Miss Northern Ireland. With sister Julie, Mom Valerie, and Dad Victor, proudly watching, Angela won her title on June 15th, 2001. She will be going on to compete in the Miss World Competition this fall in Hawaii.

Angela and Julie grew up in Canada, moving back to Northern Ireland with

their parents after graduating from high school. Since that time, their family has been very busy creating a stir. With the help of her determined parents, Julie has the distinction of having the first Microboard in Northern Ireland. Angela quickly involved herself in a variety of activities. She has been teaching piano and volleyball, life guarding, was a member of the Irish National Women's Volleyball team, and has been modeling professionally. Accomplishing all this while attending college. An amazing young woman with much to be proud of. Congratulations Angela!

- submitted by **Linda Perry**

AGM

VELA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Vela's Annual General Meeting was held June 9, 2001. For the last several years our AGM has been held in the fall at the start of the annual Microboard Conference. This was changed this year to more easily address our fiscal time lines and obligations. We were very pleased to see representatives from Microboards, now members of Vela, at the AGM. Thanks for your ongoing support.

The 2001/02 Board of Directors of Vela Microboard Association

Continuing with one more year to serve on Vela's Board of Directors are: Cathy Lafortune, Sherry McDonald, Jeff Moulins, Gil Poitras, Ric Tesan, and Randy Wilson

Directors re-elected for a two year term were: Jenn Cornish, Peter Melhuish, and John Nyce

We welcomed newcomers, also for a two year term: Janice Barr, Bernice Doucet-Ryan, and Rob Fairfield

Look for profiles on our new board members in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

For those you who were unable to attend this year's AGM we have included a copy of the Executive Director's report in order to keep you all apprised of the past year's activities:

Executive Director's Report

As we wrap up our twentieth year as a Society, and our twelfth year supporting Microboards, we see the momentum of our work continue to increase. There have been lots of exciting developments, challenges and changes for Vela's board and staff.

Since the last Annual General Meeting in September we have seen the creation of nearly twenty more Microboards. Many of these boards have worked out unique funding arrangements. As a result, it is becoming more and more common to have shared funding between various government branches, in particular Ministry for Children and Families and the various Health Boards around the province.

Thanks to the efforts of Stephanie Watson, we have developed a new policy and procedures manual, have reorganized our work loads and developed a clear focus. This has not always been an easy transition and we owe Stephanie a debt of gratitude for her efforts.

All this has allowed us to prepare for the successful receipt of two new grants.

The first grant from the Law Foundation, is for one year. We will be creating a plain language document that will explain most of the laws, statutes and policies that may impact Microboards. We have hired two students Kitt Johnson and Richard Doucet to complete the research and translation of the

documents. Their work will be reviewed by a small group of representatives from Microboards and edited based on feedback.

This binder will then be piloted around the province to ensure its relevancy to the Microboards. These presentations will allow us to fine tune the document based on feedback received.

We are grateful to have the skills of Kitt and Richard and welcome them to the Vela team for the summer months. Thanks to Jennifer Cornish and Randy Wilson for their assistance in getting this project up and running. Thanks also to Carol Bush, Evelyn Hiscock, Tim McCrory and Mina Singh for so willingly agreeing to assist on the reference group, and Jennifer will no doubt play a very key role as the chair of those meetings.

Our second grant is from the Vancouver Foundation. This is a three year grant to establish partnerships with two organizations that represent people that may benefit from the support of Microboards, but have not had the opportunity to access such supports. Our first year is to lay the ground work, prepare our staff, develop the criteria for the partnership and approach potential partners. The second and third years will allow time to establish the partnerships and create Microboards for new folks in previously seldom supported sectors.

Over the past year, Vela along with several Microboards, worked in partnership with the Provincial Monitoring Group to create and pilot a monitoring tool for Microboards. Several Microboards throughout B.C. have participated in the pilot process. We are looking forward to the discussions that will be taking place shortly to review the process and tool used. From first reports, most of the Microboards

found the experience positive and the process useful. Though Microboards still maintain with pride some very unique perspectives and as a result of those perspectives, some were challenged by the confines of some of the government's contractual expectations. However, this was not reflective of the monitoring process itself.

The work in Northern Ireland continues to be very successful. Thanks to the efforts of Valerie McCarthy, mom of the the young woman with the first Microboard in Northern Ireland, Jeff Moulins and I will be speaking at a conference in Belfast this September. We owe Val a big thank you for all her hard work on behalf of Vela and Microboards in Northern Ireland, she is truly an inspiration.

Since September we have been involved in presentations and consultations in Northern Ireland, Hawaii, Utah, Virginia, and Tennessee. All have met with an enthusiastic response.

As a result of these presentations, many groups are requesting we consider providing an institute for those interested in starting Microboards outside of B.C. This will need serious consideration and if we go ahead, much planning will need to occur in the near future.

The ongoing Gaming audit has presented many many challenges to us as an organization. For the first time in ten years we have been informed that much of our work is not seen as eligible for gaming revenue as it is not believed to be in direct support to individuals and is seen as new development work.

As of the point of writing this report, we have seen a significant reduction in our Bingo Revenue. This will present us with many challenges in the coming months. Needless to say, has been a very long and difficult process. However, we are hopeful we are near the completion of negotiations and clarifications.

As a Society we owe Peter Melhuish a very significant debt of gratitude. He has been extremely helpful and committed to assisting with the negotiations, attending many meetings, writing letters and innumerable phone calls. We would surely have lost our bingo license all together were it not for Peter's advocacy on our behalf. I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Peter from all of us at Vela, the Microboards and most importantly, the individuals we support.

Recently Paul Malette of CBI consulting contacted us to inform us that his doctoral thesis, which was a review of Microboards, has been accepted as a chapter in a book to be published by Paul H. Brooks on Person centered Planning. This will be a wonderful forum for our work.

Unfortunately, I also have to report we have had two very sad good byes in the last couple of months. Wesley Doucet, a talented, warm and delightful young man living in Mission passed away this spring. In early May, Lily Ekelund a dynamic, strong and independently minded woman from Vancouver also passed away. Each offered many gifts to those that knew them and they will be greatly missed.

Some of the faces at Vela have changed in the last six months.

Our board has welcomed two new members during this year, Randy Wilson and Gil Poitras. Their input and assistance has been most appreciated.

As of today's AGM, we will be saying good bye to a valued board member. Cyndi Dillen has been on Vela's board for several years, previously as President. Due to a recent move to California, Cyndi stepped down from that position. She has continued on as a board member and worked hard on behalf of Vela. Her contributions, time and efforts will be greatly missed.



I would like to thank all of the board members that have sat on committees and have given above and beyond during this year for your commitment and hard work. I can't express the appreciation felt for your efforts.

We also have a very dedicated volunteer that continues to contribute tremendously to our work. Glyn Townsend, our Web Master and computer consultant is generous with his skills, time and advice. We are extremely fortunate to have his involvement in our organization. Thanks to Glyn on behalf of all of us at Vela.

As mentioned in last year's report to the Annual General Meeting, Helen Stovell joined our staff team in July, 2000 as our Office Manager. Helen quickly took a 'leap into the deep end' of our finances and has managed to organize the books and clarify our financial processes. Thanks to Helen, we have been able to successfully ensure that our Audited Financial Statements have been completed in time for today's meeting. As well, the Charitable Tax Return, Gaming Account Summary, and Canadian Mortgage and Housing Financial Reports will be done on time and in a clear and complete fashion. Helen deserves a very warm round of thanks from all of us at Vela for taking on a tough job so successfully.

In October, 2000 Lori Emanuels join the staff as a Facilitator. Lori had worked for us as a consultant for a number of years, and is a welcome addition to our Facilitation team. Lori has been a very quick study and has assisted with securing many positive changes/additions for Vela and the Microboards. As a result of Lori's efforts, Microboards are now recognized as a distinct category at Ceridian Payroll Company. She has successfully negotiated a suspension of their start up fees on behalf of Microboards. Lori is currently in negotiations with Heath Benefits Consulting to have a very competitive benefits package put together for Microboards to access if they so chose.

Our thanks to Lori for jumping in so enthusiastically and with such commitment. Jeanette Holder continues to be a source of organizational order and the mistress of the check list. She has helped to standardize many of our internal processes such as time sheets and mileage account summaries for the Vela staff. Jeanette will also be overseeing the work being completed by our new project staff working on our Law Foundation Grant. Thanks to Jeanette for her continued support to the Microboards.

In December, 2000 Lori Mairs left Vela. I'm sure you join me in wishing Lori success in her future endeavors.

So as I started, I will conclude. This truly has been a year of exciting developments, challenges and changes. I cannot convey the depth of my gratitude to all those that have contributed over the past year to successfully make Vela a strong, active, organization. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and we would not be the unique and dynamic association we are today without the combined efforts, good will and dedication. We have much to be proud of.

-submitted by **Linda Perry**
Executive Director

SPECIAL THANKS

For personal reasons, Jenn Cornish recently stepped down from the Board of Directors at Vela. We are all very grateful to Jenn for her time, energy and enthusiasm as a board member. She will be missed. However, the silver lining on this cloud is Jenn's willingness to continue on as Chair of two committees. She will still be at the helm for our Communications Committee and the Law Foundation Project Reference Group.

Jenn, on behalf of the Microboards and the team at Vela, thank you so much for all your hard work and support. It's appreciated!

1) What does it cost to access Vela's services?

Currently, within the Province of B.C. there is no fee for our services.

2) Can our Vela Microboard fundraise?

Yes, but you would be unable to provide a tax receipt. You would require charitable status to issue a tax receipt. In order to obtain charitable status your society would be required to prove that it benefits the community and since a Vela Microboard serves only one individual it is viewed by Revenue Canada as not benefiting the community.

Also, services purchased with the funding provided through government ministry sources are insured through the government's blanket insurance policy. As money from fundraising is not government money, there would be no insurance coverage; your society would be liable for anything that money from fundraising sources was used for.

3) Can you be a board member for a Vela Microboard that you work for?

No, if you are a board member, working for that same Vela Microboard would present a conflict of interest. It is stated in the Society Act By-Laws "A director must not be remunerated for being or acting as a director but a director must be reimbursed for all expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred by the director while engaged in the affairs of the society."

Kindergarten to Grad

Back in '83' in our school district there was no option for inclusion. Our oldest son Brent, having a developmental disability and reaching the age of six, was ready to enter the public school system. Although there is a school 1 block from our house that was K to grade 4, Brent had to be bussed or driven to a school 15 minutes away to a class for "those kids". The class turned out to be in a detached portable that was out at the back of the main school building. The only contact with the general school population was at recess and lunch out on the playing field if the staff felt like taking "those kids" out.

Within a few days of Debbie , (Brent's mom), driving Brent to school and leaving him in the portable, we decided that this was not acceptable for our son. This is where all the work and the countless hours that Debbie has put in all began. But this is not a story about changing the system. This is a story about our daughter Roxanne.

Due to the fact that we already had Brent and were heavily involved with the school system, Debbie and I knew what we wanted for Roxanne. Or more accurately, what we didn't want for Roxanne. We wanted the same thing that all parents want for their children, happiness, success, friendships and an environment that gives them the freedom to make the choices that will affect their own future.

Roxanne has two older brothers, Brent 23 and Todd 20. When Todd was ready to go to school it was no problem for him to go to our neighbourhood school. After all he is "typical" whatever that means. This was our " foot in the door " so to speak and gave Debbie



Roxanne Wilson and friends

the opportunity to come up with a plan of attack. At every school function and event she made sure that Roxanne was there with her and that everyone, teachers, staff and parents knew who she was. The seed was planted. The question was not " can Roxanne attend the school on the corner with her brother Todd? ". The question was more, " how do we make this happen? ". That is a whole other story.

When it came time for Roxanne to register for kindergarten she was accepted into the regular class without question. Roxanne was one of the first children in our district to be registered in regular classes at her neighbourhood school.

During her primary years, Roxanne made many new friendships some of which are still with her today. Being with her peers throughout 13 years of school has enabled Roxanne to develop the skills required to make and maintain friendships. Although we refused to put any limitations on Roxanne she has grown in leaps and bounds above all of our expectations. The truth is that it doesn't stop there. The benefits to all of those who have been fortunate enough to have Roxanne touch their lives is immeasurable. The opportunities for her peers to see and realize that all of us has a place in our community and an ability

to contribute to it has proven itself again and again.

Roxanne attended her graduation in a limousine with 9 friends from school. She had a fabulous time from the dinner dance to the after grad cruise and all the way back to a 5:00 AM breakfast at the school. At her commencement on June 10th I watched her walk up onto the stage to accept her diploma from the principal. The whistles, whoops and applause that I heard when they announced her name were the fruit of 13 years of blood, sweat and tears. Watching that young woman standing on the stage in front of an auditorium filled with people and all her peers cheering her on made the whole damn journey worthwhile. Roxanne is one of the first students in the district to graduate after being fully included at her neighbourhood school from K to grade 12. She is a pioneer.

Where is she going from here? I can't answer that, but I do know that with the assistance and support she will get through Roxanne's It's My Life Society, she is headed in the direction of her own making. Empowerment forever! Vela Microboards rule !!!!!

-submitted by **Randy Wilson**



APG

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY GROUP

Since 1984 the Applied Psychology Group (A.P.G.) has provided professional support services to adults with developmental disabilities and to the staff/caregivers/family members who are supporting them. A.P.G. provides these services under contract to the Ministry for Children and Families.

Currently A.P.G. contracts with four regions: South Fraser, Upper Fraser Valley, Burnaby and Simon Fraser. Referrals for support are made through the social worker assigned to the individual needing service.

The Applied Psychology Group is a multi-disciplinary team of professionals with backgrounds in psychology, behavioral sciences, special education, speech pathology, counselling and psychiatric nursing.

-submitted by Stephanie Watson

For more information concerning these services, you may contact A.P.G. at:

Suite 2018

7495 132nd Street

Surrey, BC, V3W 1J8

Tel: (604) 543-8488

Fax: (604) 543-6166

Celebrity Corner

Volunteer shares her story

BY CARA MACDONALD
Morning Star Writer

There's nothing Marianne Pope likes better than getting out in the community and doing volunteer work.

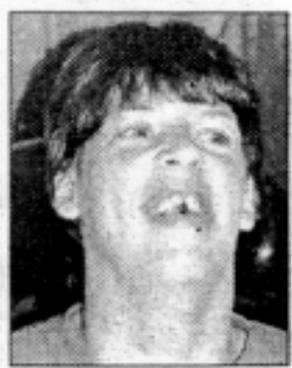
"Her personal preference is anything that involves people," said support worker Shannon Saunders, who drives Pope around to her various volunteer duties.

Pope, 28, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, spends Wednesdays doing personal shopping for Willowdale Home senior residents. Then on Thursday, she attends the organizational meetings for the Good Food Box in the morning and is on hand in the afternoon when people come to pick up the boxes.

Her other volunteer work has included a video store and picking up kids after school

"She likes the social contact and knows almost everyone in the community," said Saunders, who has been with Pope for four years and understands her hand and eye gestures, facial expressions and smiles perfectly.

"She communicates exactly what she wants. Marianne is quite patient and she always gets her point



-Marianne Pope

across and she has an excellent sense of humour. She has lots of choices and she makes her own choices. One of her favourite choices is being out doing things in the community. She feels that everyone has something to contribute."

Pope wants everyone to know that Good Food Boxes are now available for pick-up in Armstrong. Participants get a box of fresh fruit and vegetables for \$10 because bulk-buying brings the cost down. Pay (cash only) before noon May 9 at the Kindale Development Centre TLC Gift Shop at 2543 Pleasant Valley Dr. (546-6774). To pick up, bring receipts and shopping bags to First Baptist Church at 3185 Becker St., Armstrong (546-9598) on May 17. Home delivery is available at a cost of \$2 per box. For more information or to volunteer to help call Bev Rossner at 546-3793 or Donna Antonishak at 549-5715.

Editor's note: Pope is one of more than 7.5 million volunteers being honoured this year, the International Year of Volunteers. In Canada, volunteers contribute a total of 1.1 billion hours per year, the equivalent of 578,000 full-time jobs — roughly equal to the labour force of Manitoba in 1997.

The national average for volunteering is 149 hours a year. Seven of every 10 Canadians help people directly, by doing housework, driving someone to appointments or providing some other assistance.

-clipped with the permission from the "Morning Star"

In My Opinion

MOVIE REVIEWS



Mimi Hearle,
Movie Critic

Movie: A.I.
(Artificial Intelligence)

A.I. is a science-fiction film, but also a fairy-tale. The film has excellent special effects and sound. The film is very different, unlike anything I have seen before. I really enjoyed the acting, the boy (Haley-Joel Osment) was excellent. The story was interesting and the movie was fast paced, it didn't drag on like some movies I've seen. Overall I enjoyed the movie from the beginning to the end. I highly recommend this movie.



Kevin Stovell
Movie Critic

Movie: Dr. Doolittle 2

I thought this movie was hilarious. It was hilarious because it had lots of burping, foofing, and yodeling. It was about monkeys and a big bear. They were trying to get the girl bear to marry the boy bear. The animals wanted to save their lives because they were going to cut down the trees. Doctor Dolittle was funny. It has a bit of bad language that I'm not going to repeat because I'll get in trouble. Doctor Dolittle could understand the animals. If people want to go and see it, they should.

Editor's Note:

Seen a good movie lately? Read a good book? Would you like to share your impressions with our readers? Send your movie or book review to:

Editor, Vela Vision,
Fax: (604) 575-2589
Email info@microboard.org

Or mail your review to:

Vela Vision
5686 176th Street
Surrey, B.C. V3S 4C6

Upcoming Events

VELA MICROBOARD ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2001

Mark your calendars!!! Vela's Annual Microboard conference will be held October 12 - 14th 2001 at the Sheraton Guildford Hotel in Surrey, B.C. More information will follow.

TASH CONFERENCE

The 2001 Tash Conference will be held November 14-17th at the Marriott Anaheim, California. The TASH 2001 Conference Committee has identified interest in presentations that address the theme "Imaging the Future". For more information check the Tash Website at www.tash.org

ART FESTIVAL: kickstART

Roundhouse Community Centre
181 Roundhouse (Pacific at Davie),
Vancouver, B.C.

The Society for Disability Arts and Culture presents "kickstART", a celebration of disability art and culture

with symposium sessions, workshops and performances. Exploring visual and literary arts, dance, theatre, music, film, video and humour, "kickstART" will highlight the works of artists and performers with disabilities.

Events at the Roundhouse and Plaza of Nations.

From: Thursday, August 16th, 2001
To: Sunday, August 19th, 2001.
Time: Daily

For more information call 685-3368

FAMILY FOCUS CONFERENCE

2001 - A Family Odyssey
October 19-21, 2001
Burnaby Hilton Metrotown

Friday October 19th:
Registration and opening reception
Saturday October 20:
Key note address and workshops
Sunday October 21st:
Workshops and closing lunch

Conference Message Line:
(604) 299-0181
or call Family Support Institute at
(604) 875-1119

Email: familyfocus@telus.net
Fax: (604) 875-6744

Mail: Family Focus
2001,#300 - 30 East 6th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C., V5T 4P4

ATTENTION

**PLANNING ON ATTENDING
THE ANNUAL
VELA MICROBOARD CONFERENCE?
DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS
AUGUST 31 2001!**



VELA MICROBOARD ASSOCIATION OF B.C.

A small, dedicated organization doing important work

Vela Microboard Association of BC is a small non-profit organization that does the big job and the important work of developing microboards for individuals and families throughout British Columbia. Vela relies on donations and the generosity of its supporters and sponsors to continue its work.

How you can become a Vela supporter

You can help support Vela and its work by making a donation. All Vela supporters will receive copies of the *Vela Vision* newsletter and information mailouts.

You may also wish to leave a legacy for the future through a planned gift or bequest in your will or through a gift of life insurance.

Thank you for supporting Vela Microboard Association of BC to continue its work developing innovative and individualized supports and options for people with disabilities.

DONATIONS

We, at Vela Microboard Association would like to thank the following for their generous donations to our organization:

Janice Barr
Illa Burke
Ken & Maria Glaze
Nick & Annette Pope

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Vela Microboard Association of BC DONATION FORM

Name/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Yes, I wish to become a Vela supporter.

I wish to make a donation in the amount of \$ _____

I wish to leave a legacy and would like information on how to make a bequest.

Mail to: Vela Microboard Association of BC
5686 - 176th St., Surrey, BC, V3S 4C6
Or Fax to: (604) 575-2589

All Donations of \$10.00 or more will receive a tax receipt

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!



Sandra and Dad



Randy, Roxanne, Debbie and Brent



Brandi and friend

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Helen Stovell

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Dave Koop - Gateway Graphics

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Yes, I wish to become a member of Vela Microboard Association.

Amount Enclosed: \$ 25.00 Annual Family & Individual

(0-\$25) \$ _____ Whatever You Can Afford

Amount Enclosed: \$ 100.00 Non-Profit Society,
Business,
Organization



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