

# THE GOOD LIFE

The Newsletter of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Retired Teachers' Association

Oct. 2010

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## 2010- 2011 Executive

President - Carol Baird-Krul  
Past President - Linda Willis  
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2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President - Cheryle Sosnowski  
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Editor - Les Ellis  
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Health & Housing - Leah Bradford  
Director-at-Large - Vi Brzovic

## President's Message

Summer is officially over and I hope, despite the mixed bag of weather we had, it was a good few months for you.

As those of you who attended this year's AGM in June know new people stepped up to fill vacancies that had occurred in the Executive due to the resignations of several long standing members. Each and everyone who serves on the Executive help to make our organization stronger because of their varying points of view and different skill sets. A special thank you goes to our retiring Secretary, Ethel McGillivray, whose outstanding contribution cannot be underestimated. As well, we want to thank our former Treasurer, Wendie Harrington, who always kept a steady eye on our accounts. Our two Vice Presidents also retired from their positions, Brent Busch, due to other commitments and, Bill Anderson, because of a serious health issue that I'm pleased to report is now looking much better. Last, but by no means least, Marv Worden our intrepid Newsletter Editor also decided to give up the reins due to involvement in other ventures. Your new, revitalized Executive is full of energy and ideas, so I think we can look to our second quarter century as an RTA local starting off on a very positive note.

In June our local presented three awards to graduating students (2 girls and a boy) in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District, who are going on to post secondary studies in the field of education. We received well written letters of thanks from each of them.

Retired teachers continue to help kids in many different ways. At the beginning of the new school year several volunteered to work on stocking the lockers. As well some of our members are on the Board of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation. Others have taken an interest in being Ambassadors for the Canucks Autism Network. This is a new fully supported curriculum designed to teach understanding and empathy for students with disabilities that is financed in part by the Vancouver Canucks.

An invitation to attend the NDTA Retirement Dinner in June was received. It is always a pleasure to attend as it is a happy, well organized event. Pat Hogue and I attended as RTA reps and spent our pre-dinner time visiting each of the tables, meeting the retirees and inviting them to come to the 'To Hell with the Bell' Breakfast. A good number of them did take us up on the invitation and attended the Breakfast were they were treated to an absolutely delicious meal especially prepared for them by our new caterers at the Bowen Road Legion.

On another note, due to an agreement with SD 68 it is now possible for you to make a tax deductible donation to the RTA that can either support the Skipsey Educational Collection or the Bursaries that we provide to students each year. It is a simple process, because all you have to do is make a donation of at least \$20 to the School District with a notation that it is for the RTA and they will issue you with a tax receipt. I hope you'll consider this option for any charitable monies you may have as it would have a benefit to both yourself and our organization.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any comments, questions or concerns. Finally, I'd like to say that whatever the 'new' year brings your way, be it something new and exciting or, simply continuing to enjoy life here on the coast I look forward to seeing you at our lunches, as well as, any other RTA events that might come up during the year.

Carol Baird-Krul – President

## **Canucks Autism Network**

The Canucks Autism Network is looking for volunteer ambassadors in our district. This is an ideal way for retired teachers to use their experience and expertise to keep helping students, without the stress of running a classroom. If you are interested in more information about this program in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith SD contact either Meg Smith at the network ([www.canucksautism.ca](http://www.canucksautism.ca)) or Carol Baird-Krul at 250-247-0077.

## **Social Committee**

The Ladysmith-Nanaimo RTA has enjoyed lunches at the Nanaimo Golf Club for a number of years now. In the recent past though there have been a number of concerns expressed by attendees about the escalating costs and menu selections.

A committee was struck to investigate the possibility of moving to another location and having a more varied menu. After considerable searching, it was discovered that the Golf Club location was very much in line with the prices being charged at comparable venues around Nanaimo. However that did not address the concern that their price was going to increase again in Sept. 2010 and that members would not likely be happy having

to pay the proposed price point for a lunch. Additionally, changing the menu there, while at the same time addressing the need to have a vegetarian and a non-vegetarian selection, was going to involve an additional price increase.

So, given that we seemed to want a lower-costing lunch with a varied menu, an in-town location, easily-accessible and free parking, a space for 50 to 100 attendees, etc., it was decided that we should move to a hall with a caterer who was offering lunch at a cost that just might meet our member's needs. Not an easy task, let me tell you!

A decision was made to try our get-togethers at Legion 256 (by Q'way School) with a caterer coming in to set up and provide lunch. In total, we are charged \$14.00 for the food, 15% tip, 12% HST and \$100.00 for the use of a private room. That totals up to close to \$20.00 per person. The caterer is interested in presenting us with a varied menu, some "themed" lunches, so that we have more variety to offer members, yet keeping in line the desire to have a reasonably-priced meal.

Feedback forms will be available to members so that the Executive can monitor the level of satisfaction.

Patricia Hogue  
Social Chair

## **Upcoming Lunches 2010 - 2011**

Tuesday, December 7, 2010

Tuesday, February 1, 2011

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Tuesday, June 11, 2011 AGM

Tuesday, September 6, 2011 To Hell With the Bell

## **Health and Housing**

Your Nanaimo-Ladysmith RTA can help you get more information regarding both health and housing issues. If you have concerns, please contact Leah Bradford at 250-758-0563.

## **Heritage Committee**

The Heritage Committee resumed meeting mid-September. We have almost completed the catalogue of the texts. The next step will be having the catalogue available through our website of RTA District 68. We have had several visitors to the room, seeking information on genealogy, early schools, and general interest. We intend to have the room open to the public this year, two afternoons a month--days and times to be announced.

There are opportunities for you to help. We would like to develop a "school program" to allow grade five students to visit the room, and see

school materials from the past. There has also been an interest in Maclean's Writing.

Fundraising continues to be a challenge. Should you wish to contribute, any contribution over \$25 receives a tax receipt.

Please come and visit us in Room 159 on Tuesday mornings between 9:30 and 11:00 am. If you want to help out, email Vicki Harrison: [vharrison55@shaw.ca](mailto:vharrison55@shaw.ca) or call 250 754 4981.

New retirees with President Carol Baird-Krul and Membership Chairman Jim Young



## **BCRTA Annual General Meeting**

Several weeks ago Trevor Muise and I had the privilege of representing the Nanaimo-Ladysmith branch at the Provincial AGM.

All teachers received a copy of the "Summary of Reports" from the various committees with the fall mailing of POSTSCRIPT. On the first day, two committees presented expanded reports. The first to present was the review committee. Its purpose is to look at all aspects of the Association and decide if any changes should be made to the Association to help it meet its goals. An overview of the BCRTA, from the executive positions and standing committees that are presently in place down to the local branches and members, was presented to the delegates. This is an ongoing process that is outlined on page 19 of the summary. The committee explained its purpose, what it had done to

date and asked for input from the delegates. Further information will be gathered throughout the next year, with the committee's recommendations to be made at the 2011 AGM.

The second presentation was from the pensions and benefits committee. As you know, the new terms of our pension have allowed for the continuation of a cost of living increase each year but we will now be responsible for purchasing our own extended health benefits. This will take place in January 2012. In the meantime the committee has been in negotiation on our behalf to get a group rate reduction. They had hoped to present the delegates with figures but final numbers weren't available for the meeting. As soon as they are, the membership will be notified and then you will have approximately a year to investigate other plans and their costs and decide which plan you will join. BCAA Advantage and CARP were suggested alternatives to look into, although there are many others.

Day two began with a presentation by the R.R. Smith Foundation. As a retired teacher in BC, you are automatically a member of the foundation. This foundation gives scholarships and grants around the world to help advance education whether by cash or materials. The foundation lamented that last year only one Canadian project received funding. If you know of any educational project that is short on funding please contact the foundation through the RTA. (see pages 28-29, Summary of Reports)

The rest of the day was spent electing the new executive for 2010-2011, and reviewing and accepting the reports as written in the Summary of Reports booklet. It was learned that there is a shortfall in our finances for this year. To recover this shortfall it was accepted that the dues collected next year (September 2011) will be increased by \$5.00 per member.

The last item on the agenda for the day was a resolution from the Elk Valley branch. Their proposal is that now that the cost-of-living increase has been protected in our pension, they want to have that yearly increase applied to everyone equally. At present, if we receive (for example) a 2 per cent increase, that increase is a lower dollar amount for those on a lower pension than it is for someone at a higher pension. Their proposal would mathematically work out the total amount of the increase to all pensioners and then divide that raise to the same dollar value for everyone. This proposal caused quite a stir at the AGM. Arguments can be made for both options, as has been done by the BCTF as well when they have bargained increases and salary scale step reductions. Having just come through a review to get to the changes presently happening to our pension, this proposal was tabled until next year's AGM. In the meantime, this idea will be sent to the Pension Review Board for consideration. It must be remembered that no matter what next year's retired teachers' AGM decides, it will only be a recommendation, as only the BCTF and government representatives can change the pension.

Both Trevor and I felt that this was a great learning experience and would encourage anyone who wants to learn more about our association to consider attending the provincial AGM in the future.

Les Ellis

## Membership

According to our newest membership list dated September 10, 2010, we have 501 RTA members in our Nanaimo-Ladysmith branch! Since last June we have 19 new members, while 8 former members' names have been dropped. We can usually expect a few more retirees to join us during the next months, and we will endeavour to contact the "dropped" members to confirm their intentions.

Province-wide, there is a total of 14,177 (as of June 30, 2010) members in the BCRTA. New branches have been formed in Mission, Nicola Valley, Princeton, and Prince Rupert, for a new total of 47 branches.

The provincial body has the same desire as our local RTA to increase its membership numbers. If you know of any retired teachers who are not members of the RTA, convince them to join. The main purpose of the BCRTA as stated in the Constitution is "to promote the interests and to guard the welfare of its members." The RTA works for the benefit of all retired teachers, and indirectly for all seniors. As members of the BCRTA we also have representation at the meetings of the Canadian RTA. Many of the issues faced by seniors are national in scope and, as we saw as members of the BCTF, there is power in numbers. Issues that the BCRTA is dealing with include hospitalization costs, low cost housing for seniors and a universal pharmacare system to reduce prescription drug costs.

The BCRTA is serious about wanting new members. Sign up a new member today using the form found in POSTSCRIPT. Send it in to the BCRTA and your name will be entered into a quarterly draw for \$250.00 and the person you sign up will be in a draw for \$100.00. You can enter the draw as often as you sign up new members. Good luck!

The BCTF and government have agreed to changes to our pension plan that will sustain our cost-of-living adjustments (yearly increments). Our current extended health benefits plan has been reviewed and researched and continues as is until December 31, 2011. A new plan to take its place will be announced before the end of this year.

The provincial AGM passed a \$5 RTA membership fee increase, so we can expect that to be collected from our September 2011 pension cheque.

Johnson Inc. administers several insurance products for BCRTA members. Medoc travel insurance has been very competitive and popular with 7,464 policies in force. Information on this and several other products (including house insurance) can be found on the BCRTA website: [www.bcrta.ca](http://www.bcrta.ca)

Who is this man? Mike?



## Canadian Heritage Fairs Program

The Heritage Fairs Program is an educational initiative designed to increase awareness and interest in Canadian history. The event of a “history fair” actively involves Canadian youth, schools, businesses and community groups in a contemporary celebration of our shared traditions and heritage. Students are encouraged to research any aspect of Canadian history that interests them, and then present the results of their efforts in a public forum. When students are encouraged to look outside the classroom for their learning activities, they discover the wealth of information available to them from local resources such as our own RTA *Skipsey Educational Heritage Centre*. Local businesses and community organizations can be involved by assisting students with their projects, volunteering for the Fairs, providing sponsorship for their region, and providing their own exhibits for the Fairs.

Bobbi Williamson, Programme Coordinator for the Nanaimo District Museum, is organizing the local Heritage Fair. She is looking for volunteers to work on a committee to help organize and promote the Fair as well as volunteers to help with the actual judging of student projects at the event in February. If you can help, please contact Bobbi at the Museum at 753-1821 or, if you wish further information, Deryck Cowling at 758-3201 or [dcowling@shaw.ca](mailto:dcowling@shaw.ca)

# Margaret Litch



Margaret Litch may be retired but her legacy as an inspirational teacher-librarian in School District #68 still lives on and was recently recognized provincially with the notification that she is this year's recipient of the prestigious Val Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award. The Award will be presented by the B.C. Teacher-Librarians' Association at their annual conference in Kelowna on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Margaret has had a long career spanning some 36 years of service in a number of Nanaimo schools at both the elementary and secondary levels. Writing in support of Margaret's nomination, Thora Howell cites Margaret's "...energy and enthusiasm have been a gift to the schools and the students", and that: "She truly cares about each of her students and communicates it effectively. It is very special to be part of her world. She is attentive to each student, has a wonderful sense of humour, a magical smile and an astonishing grasp of books and other resources."

Robyn McKay, another former bookseller and specialist in children's literature, stated that she "...was always impressed with the lengths Margaret would go to put the perfect book into each student's hands". Ms Litch is also widely recognized as a mentor and advocate on several levels not only for her colleagues, but for children's authors and Canadian literature as well. Even in retirement she continues to promote the important role that teacher-librarians play in our schools and the importance of a well-resourced library as the heart of the school.

So clearly, Margaret Litch's distinguished career as a teacher-librarian may be over, but her passion for education and for connecting children with good literature has never ended.

## Fall Native Plant Walks

Care to enjoy the natural beauty of woodlands and wetlands in this autumn season of mists and mellow fruitfulness? NALT is leading 1 hour native plant walks through the beautiful woods and ponds at the VanKerkoerle property in Cassidy.

Meet at the NALT *Natural Abundance* Native Plant Nursery, 3145 Frost Road, south of Nanaimo. There is no fee, but advance sign-up is required. To register or for questions, please e-mail [paul@nalt.bc.ca](mailto:paul@nalt.bc.ca) or call 250.714.1990.

Dates of upcoming hikes include  
Wednesday October 20, 10 AM  
Saturday, November 6, 10 AM  
Wednesday, November 17, 1 PM

Nanaimo & Area Land Trust  
[www.nalt.bc.ca](http://www.nalt.bc.ca)  
250-714-1990

## Canadian Blood Services “Partners for Life”

The Nanaimo and District Teachers’ Association is a “*Partner in Life*” with the Canadian Blood Services and encourages all its members, friends and families to support them in giving “the gift of life”. RTA members can also participate as many of us have in the past and continue to do so. If you have not contributed recently, we would encourage you to consider making an appointment to do so. Clinics are held every four weeks in Nanaimo and in Ladysmith as well. It just takes an hour to donate enough blood for up to three people. Just call 1-888 2 DONATE (or 1-888-236-6283) to make an appointment.

Also, don’t forget to go online to register as a supporter of the NDTA team in their goal to collect 200 units annually. It is easy to register. Simply:

go to [www.blood.ca/partnersforlife](http://www.blood.ca/partnersforlife)  
click on “Join Partners for Life”, then click on “Member”  
click on “Sign me up to donate with my team!”  
fill out the secure form and click “submit”

It’s as easy as that!

Deryck Cowling, ret’d.  
NDTA Partners for Life Coordinator

## Children's Science Exam Answers

Name the four seasons.

Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

How is dew formed?

The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

How can you delay milk turning sour?

Keep it in the cow.

What causes the tides in the oceans?

The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon. All water tends to flow towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature hates a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.

What are steroids?

Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

What happens to your body as you age?

When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental

What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?

He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

Premature death.

How are the main parts of the body categorized? ( e.g., abdomen)

The body is consisted into three parts -- the brainium, the borax and the abdominal cavity. The brainium contains the brain; the borax contains the heart and lungs, and the abdominal cavity contains the five bowels A, E, I, O, and U

What is the fibula?

A small lie.

What does varicose mean?

Nearby.

Give the meaning of the term 'Caesarian Section.'

The Caesarian Section is a district in Rome.

What does the word benign mean?

Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

Bob makes a new "Friend"



## Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation

The Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation had its origins at Nanaimo District Secondary School in the counseling department with Sandra “Ma” Brown. It was Sandra with her extensive community contacts who spearheaded the search for scholarships and bursaries for the NDSS students of the 1970’s and early 80’s. At that time NDSS was the only graduating secondary school in the district and the district was growing. While some scholarships, such as the Altrusa go further back (in this case all the way back to 1964) most were added during this period.

In the earliest years, teachers and department heads chose the scholarship and bursary winners. After 1977, this increasingly challenging job defaulted to the counselors and administrators at NDSS. The counseling department in the late 1970’s included Sandra Brown, Marg Sloat, Peter McCue, Jim Young, and at various times Emile DeKonig, and Laurie Hedberg who later went into administration. The NDSS administrator who was part of the inception of the scholarship society was Vice Principal Andy Bohay. It was Sandra and Andy who co-chaired the meetings to decide on scholarship winners. Jim Young kept the books from 1977-1979 with the help of a bookkeeping class. He also set up the early policies and procedures used.

As Sandra and others succeeded in bringing in more scholarships, and as the source of some of the new money was from organizations rather than individuals, it was decided to form NDSS Financial Assistance Society in 1982. The tracking of scholarship monies and the donor contacts moved over to Francis Lainchbury, a CUPE member who at that time held the position of Career Aide. She continued to track the growing pool of money

till 1996. By then it became more like a full time job on its own for Francis and she had other Career Aide responsibilities as well, so Francis found herself taking a lot of work home.

NDSS had its awards nights in the gym until the grad class outgrew the facility. The awarding of scholarships was originally part of that evening and included academic awards, sports trophies, and service awards, as well as scholarships. As the graduating class grew beyond 400 to well over 700 students, the school board of that era decided to convert John Barsby, Woodlands, and Wellington from junior highs to 8-12 high schools. These schools had their first graduating classes in 1990. As Dover Bay Secondary was planned and built to open in 1992, it too became an 8-12 school.

When the new schools opened, the Honours Night moved out of NDSS and the Scholarship Awards Ceremony was held at the social centre at Beban Park. When the numbers outgrew the venue in 1998, the event was switched to the newly opened Port Theatre for awards over \$500. Awards under \$500 are presented at each schools year-end Awards Ceremony.

In 1996 Rick Borelli assigned Erin Van Steen, who was a CUPE member for the new District Career Services Centre, to assume the Secretary-Treasurer position of the Society when Francis Lainchbury retired. Ray Gullison was intended to be the Chairperson, but had plans to retire. Kathy Reynes (who later became Kathy Smith) took on the role as Chairperson. Erin was the main donor contact person as well as responsible for writing cheques to successful scholarship recipients. It has been largely Erin's drive, dedication and hard work that helped push the Society to the next level. With a combination of Erin and Kathy, the Society started to take on challenges beyond the scholarship program. The Mini-O for special needs students in the secondary schools was one of the programs.

As the programs continue to grown, so has the need to provide a structure that includes the larger community beyond the school district. In 2007, the Society became Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation. Dave Hammond is the current President and he leads a very dynamic volunteer Board of Directors, which consist of 20 very prominent community members. Kathy Smith, Noreen Martin, Patty Mitchell, Carol Baird-Krul and myself also sit on the board.

Today, the programs include scholarships & bursaries; the Student Support Fund; the Mini-O; Stock the Lockers Program in partnership with Staples Business Depot; elementary music programs, and directed funds for specific programs. The monies that secure these efforts are fully under the control of the Foundation Board of Directors through the legislative protection of the Societies Act. The School District is consulted regularly regarding the disbursement of funds. However, final decisions are made by the current Board of Directors of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation. Today the school district generously provides a home for the Foundation offices at John Barsby. They also provide an in-kind donation to pay Erin's salary and the salary of a secretarial assistant. However, the Foundation will be providing half the salary of the new accountant position. In the future, the Foundation hopes to be fully independent from the

School District as it continues to provide support programs for the educational future of the students of School District 68. From its beginnings in the 1970's with the vision of Sandra Brown and the support of the counseling staff and administrators at NDSS, till now when it's programs reach all elementary and secondary schools in the district, this Foundation which is unique in the province, has served the students well.

Many schools in the province have scholarships provided by the community, but no other community has a Schools Foundation that provides hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships, bursaries and awards year after year. However, few communities have the needs that Nanaimo-Ladysmith has. The level of child poverty in our community is huge. There are still students in Nanaimo-Ladysmith who need much more support. There are still students going hungry; there are still students who lack basic school supplies; there are still students who can't participate in extra curricular activities; or can't attend their own graduation celebrations for lack of funds. We need all the support we can get to fill those needs. We have the structure through the Foundation to get the job done - now we just have to raise the funds needed.

Trevor Muise - September 20, 2010

## **N-L RTA Pitches In**

Retired teachers may not have been worried about heading back to school this September, but some Nanaimo-Ladysmith retirees did answer the bell recently to help prepare local students for the coming school year.

When Erin Van Steen, Executive Director of SD #68 Schools Foundation, sent out the call for volunteers to help stock backpacks with school supplies from Staples and Costco for vulnerable students in SD 68 schools, several of our local members pitched right in. They understand the importance of all pupils having the needed supplies right from day one in order to build the foundation for a successful school year. No doubt the children's teachers and parents appreciate the value of this program too!

Local retired teachers participating included: Noreen Martin, Martina Nash, Janice Spencer, Trevor Muise, Kathy Smith, Sandy Dobson, Patty Mitchell, and Linda Sinclair.

RTA Volunteers Pitch-in (below)

Names from left to right –

Standing: Kathy Smith, two Costco employees, Noreen Martin, Martina Nash, Janice Spencer, Trevor Muise,

Kneeling: Costco employee, Sandy Dobson, Erin Van Steen – Executive Director Schools Foundation, Patty Mitchell, Marina Lockhart – Executive Assistant Schools Foundation, Linda Sinclair, Roger Prior – Schools Foundation Director



## Morrell Nature Sanctuary

Morrell Nature Sanctuary is looking for people who have an interest in nature to lead Kindergarten to Grade 5 school children on nature discovery walks in the Sanctuary. The programs coincide with the school year and are well attended by eager school classes. A training session and initial walk with an experienced instructor available. Each session is one to two hours depending on subject. Details of each program is available on the Sanctuary website - [morrell.bc.ca](http://morrell.bc.ca). If you enjoy walking trails in a beautiful forest setting while teaching about the natural world, this volunteer position might be for you. Please contact us at 250-753-5811 or email [morrell@shawbiz.ca](mailto:morrell@shawbiz.ca) for more information.

Thank you  
Bob Harvey  
Volunteer Nature Interpreter coordinator.

## God Help Them

After being interviewed by the school administration, the prospective teacher said: 'Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids, correct their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse, monitor their dress habits,

cancel their T-shirt messages and instill in them a love for learning. You want me to check their backpacks for weapons, wage war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, and raise their sense of self esteem and personal pride. You want me to teach them patriotism and good citizenship, sportsmanship and fair play, and how to register to vote, balance a checkbook, and apply for a job. You want me to check their heads for lice, recognize signs of antisocial behavior and make sure that they all pass the final exams. You also want me to provide them with an equal education regardless of their handicaps and communicate regularly with their parents in English, French or any other language, by letter, telephone, newsletter and report card. You want me to do all this with a piece of chalk, a blackboard, a bulletin board, a few books, and a big smile. You want me to do all this and then you tell me I can't pray?

## RTA Christmas Lunch Entertainment

As we start planning for the RTA Christmas lunch entertainment we are asking anyone who has a contact at a school with a choir to please pass the information on to our Director-at-Large Vi Brzovic at [marfanbc2000@yahoo.ca](mailto:marfanbc2000@yahoo.ca) so that arrangements can be made.

Pat Hogue  
Social Chair

## Octoberfest Luncheon



