The Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller
Vancouver Commandery

Spring 2014

Taking Stock, Moving Forward

The new Directors of the Vancouver Commandery of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, L to R, John Norton, KCJSJ,MMSJ; Jim McGregor, KCSJ; Matthew Casey, KGSJ; John Jennings, KCSJ; Commander Richard Earthy, KCJSJ; Robin Elliot, KCJSJ; Anne Rowland, DCSJ; Dan Konkin, KCSJ; Dan Tidball , KJSJ ; Ross Sharp, KGSJ . Missing Jack McGee, KGSJ.

Letter from Commander

Greetings to all :

As I move forward into my fourth, and last year as your Commander, I continue to be encouraged by the strength of all our Directors who have stepped up to serve. Their wisdom, passion and commitment are inspiring to all of us as we look to the future to determine where we should be best spending our time and energy to help the sick and the poor.

We can all be proud of the success of our Hospice project but we must not rest on our laurels. Surely there is work yet to be done.

Currently, we are conducting a Member Engagement Survey to best determine what talents our members bring to the Commandery, where they can serve the organization and also to give them a chance to offer suggestions as to what projects, large or small we should undertake next.

Under the direction of Chevalier Daryl Rock, KSJ, this fifteen minute survey will include all members who will be contacted during the next year and we are looking forward to reviewing the final results of this valuable tool.

We were saddened, after the grand opening of the St. John Hospice, when the fire suppression system failed causing devastating damage to the building. Restoration work is almost complete and we expect the facility to be back 'on line' very shortly.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Investiture and Gala on June 7th.

Yours in St. John,

Commander Richard D. Earthy, KCJSJ

Dates To Remember

You are encouraged to attend the Social Activities of the Commandery. We have many opportunities for all of our members to become involved in the rewarding work and events of the Vancouver Commandery.

June 7th 2014

Vancouver Commandery Investiture

Christ Church Cathedral - 5 P.M.

Annual Gala to follow

Annual Christmas Lunch

December 2014

Date and location TBA

Annual General Meeting

Thursday April 23rd. 2015

Newsletter Photography by

Dame Phyllis Grady, DCSJ

Awards

Almoner Ross Sharp presents a cheque to Cindy Linder the Volunteer coordinator for the Comox Valley Hospice Society and Executive Director Terri Odeneal.

Hospice Awards Program

The Sovereign Order of St. John makes three annual awards to hospices throughout British Columbia.

In 2013, the Order of St. John presented three awards to two hospice societies. *The Comox Valley Hospice Society* received two awards. One award for online training development to supplement face to face training for volunteers. The other in support of their advance care planning initiative through specific Arts programs and also through development of an online educational resource called "Having the Talk". It can be seen on the *Comox Valley Hospice Society* website.

The other society was the *Camp Kerry Society* and this was in support of their work on addressing bereavement issues in adolescents in the Vancouver area specifically.

The total value of the awards was $16,400.

Hospice Societies can apply for an award by applying to the awards committee of the BC Hospice Palliative Care Association. The BCHPCA then evaluates, refines and approves the requests which are then forwarded to the Order of St. John for their consideration.

The Order of St. John's Almoner committee, with many very experienced in philanthropy, was very impressed by the quality of the applications.

Commandery Directors

Where can you lend a hand ? Any one of your Directors will be glad to have your help and support. Please contact them.

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Membership Matthew Casey KGSJ

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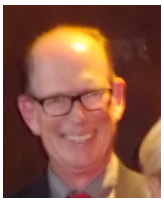

Receiver General Robin Elliot KCJSJ

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Herald Jim McGregor KCSJ

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Secretary John Jennings KCSJ

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Hospitaller Anne Rowland DCSJ

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Director Dan Tidball KJSJ

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St John Hospice Grand Opening

A Teaching Hospice Opens in

Vancouver - St. John Hospice

By Chevalier Peter H. Hebb, KJSJ,

Vancouver Commandery.

On 2013.09.06, a contemporary Hospice was opened on the campus of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The Vancouver Commandery celebrated the successful conclusion of its 7-year project fully 900 years after the SOSJ established a hospital in Jerusalem to care for the sick and poor during the Crusades.

Twenty years ago, the Commandery established annual supportive donations to the *British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association* to be used for regional palliative programs serving 5 million people.

Over time, the Commandery sought an organization, hoping to operate a hospice, with the concept of raising most of the money in return for naming it "**ST. JOHN HOSPICE**".

In 2007, Prior Emeritus Poul Hansen, KCJSJ, MMSJ, then Commander of Vancouver, called a Special General Meeting of the Vancouver Commandery. The assembled Knights and Dames unanimously agreed to set on a course to raise $3 million to fund a hospice on the west side of Vancouver as the Commandery' s new charitable objective.

Knights and Dames then started an intensive program of educational visitations to hospices both in Vancouver, and in Scotland after the Sovereign Council meeting at Dunblane in late 2007. Some Knights joined the board of a community-based hospice to gain firsthand operational knowledge.

In time, the Commandery and its charitable foundation, *The Order of St. John Palliative Care Foundation*, realized that with the combined and widely-based professional and managerial talents of its 150 Knights and Dames, the Order didn't need to support another organization. It would build its own!

The completed hospice provides 14 bedroom suites, as well as furniture, equipment and attractive landscaping all in keeping with the home-like, residential objective. Besides a kitchen, dining room, living room, specialized assisted-bath room and service rooms, there is a quiet room, a family room where visiting children can play, various offices, and the Faculty of Medicine's aforementioned facilities.

In just over a year, about $4.4 million was raised from Members and their friends, including welcomed donations from the SOSJ Priory of Scotland and the Prior of The Western United States of America. As well, the Government of The Province of British Columbia gave $1 million.

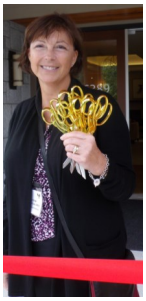
The Legal Committee worked out some tricky issues in drafting the 99 year long-term land lease. The finished hospice is sub-leased for a renewable 20-year term to the government's local regional health authority, which is providing full operational services.

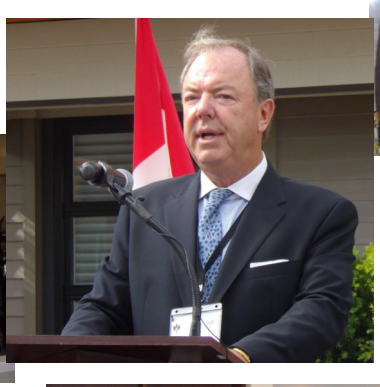
The Mission Statement of SOSJ calls on all Knights and Dames to deliver benefits "for the Lord's sick and poor". Consequently, the Vancouver Commandery feels very comfortable in directing its charitable efforts to the palliative field, including hospices.

From Site Dedication,

to Ribbon cutting in fourteen months!

St John Hospice Grand Opening and Celebration





Almoner Report

Almoner Report 2014

The almoner committee is tasked with identifying and examining opportunities to assist the Commandery to provide benefits for God's sick and poor.

The opening of the St. John Hospice has demonstrated how extraordinary persistence, strength of purpose, dedication and skill can overcome a multitude of difficulties, expected and unexpected, real issues and even imagined ones. The Almoner Committee would like to acknowledge with great gratitude the foresight of our commanders and philanthropic leaders who took on this challenge of providing benefits for the sick and poor through this building. The opportunities gifted to the University of British Columbia by the creation of this beautiful Hospice are immediate and long lasting. The opportunities to deliver excellence in care lies with Coastal Health and our Hospice volunteers and projects provided by our Hospitaller. The opportunities for providing excellence in education for the doctors of the Province and identifying best practices, by research, is the challenge facing the University of British Columbia.

Initially intended as a hospice in one of the areas of Vancouver poorly served with palliative care facilities the Hospice has evolved to be an academic hospice with the ability to enhance the teaching and research capabilities of the University of British Columbia. With the appointment of a visionary leader the hospice could become a national and international leader in teaching and research in this neglected discipline. The completion of the $5.5 million hospice represents a challenge for us, the Provincial Government, but particularly the University of British Columbia. I would like to examine these challenges, not only for the SOSJ and Almoner committee but also for our partners in the building of the St. John Hospice those whose names appear on the donor board in the foyer of the Hospice. They deserve our gratitude now. They will receive gratitude from the families and Hospice residents, for many decades.

After funding of such a large project we have to properly respect our donors and temper our enthusiasm to solve all palliative care issues today. However change can also be effected by acting as a catalyst, an advocate and we gladly take that on, attempting to influence others with the ability to effect societal changes.

A number of important projects recommended by the Almoner Committee have received support in 2013.

We have continued to provide financial support to the BC Hospice and Palliative Care Association during its recent evolution. We have partnered with them in carrying out the first inventory of hospices and hospice societies in BC and their facilities with a health economist and an SFU graduate student. The fact that this inventory had not been developed before clearly underlines the need to better address the end of life issues in BC. The Canadian Association of Palliative Care has requested to use this new methodology of data collection and analysis developed by the BCHPCA and jointly funded by our Commandery. We are pleased to continue to be an effective catalyst and partner with the BCHPCA in 2014.

End of life care has many components, one of the most important being the clear understanding of the wishes of the patient and family; advance care planning. This obviously implies that public education is important. In 2013 we were delighted to support two such initiatives of the Comox Valley Hospice society, one of the leaders on Vancouver Island. We also provided additional support to assist them to disseminate their findings to the hospices and palliative care groups throughout BC. We would like to acknowledge and commend the efforts of the Provincial Government in addressing this issue.

We were particularly pleased to be supporters of a very important organization Camp Kerry which provides assistance, specifically to children and youth who have experienced a family loss. Bereavement can be particularly difficult in this group. Sensitive intervention often with their peers can be very effective. The societal and personal harm often present can be significantly ameliorated. We expect to have the opportunity to continue, with others, to support Camp Kerry this year.

Through the BCHPCA around 200 hospices, hospice societies and individual members have been supported by grants totaling over $100,000 during the last 4 years. At the request of the Almoner committee an additional $36,500 was donated in 2013 to the Camp Kerry Society, to the Comox Valley Hospice Society and to the BCHPCA for general support. This is in addition to the successful capital campaign of around $5.5 million for the Hospice.

Since the Hospice has been conceived, planned and funded and built the Provincial Government has shown commendable leadership in enhancing hospice beds, providing substantial funding for hospice construction in a number of places, including the Comox Valley and the lower mainland including Peace Arch Hospital. Possibly the most important action by our BC Government a few weeks ago is the creation of a center of excellence for palliative care and appointed a well known and highly respected palliative care clinician Dr. Doris Barwych from Fraser Health. This has been done through the Institute of Transformation and Sustainability another important initiative.

It is encouraging for us to learn that the University of British Columbia has been successful in their "Start an Evolution '' fundraising campaign which has raised more than $1.5 billion and is on target to meet its $2 billion target this year. I think this makes UBC the most successful University in Canada in attracting philanthropy.

The concept of the St. John Hospice 5 years ago has evolved into Canada's first academic free standing hospice. At that time, UBC joined us in this evolution. They have since put in place in the basement of the Hospice equipment allowing remote teaching via the internet. With the construction phase over we are excited to encourage the University to take the next important step to appoint a visionary leader with international experience and reputation who will be able to make optimal use of the Hospice which we have jointly created. A very small fraction of the targeted $2 billion of the Start an Evolution Campaign will enable UBC to significantly influence the teaching of the discipline of palliative care. The current teaching of undergraduates and the equally important education of mature physicians requires urgent attention. By structuring a strong academic unit bringing in acknowledged experts of international experience and significant eminence UBC has the ability to influence teaching and research into the delivery of palliative care across Canada and beyond.

We hope that the facilities of our St. John Hospice will assist the UBC Medical Faculty to meet this challenge. We will continue to explore how we may be able to assist them, consistent with our resources.

As almoner I would like to propose an additional role possibly for our committee: to identify projects which may provide enhanced recognition of the work in which we are involved. Some might also be interested in the newly researched and important influence of the SOSJ on the development of Western medicine over the early part of the last 900 years. Informative pamphlets in the Hospice and possibly educational videos in the cottage at the entrance to the Botanical garden might be considered. It is possible that some Hospice visitors might wish to support our work financially.

It remains for me a difficult fact to note that each year in BC about 60% of deaths still occur in acute care hospitals.

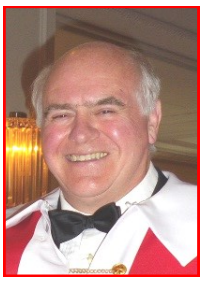
We know that most patients receiving end of life care would prefer to be at home or in a hospice. Unfortunately around 20,000 patients each year, in BC, do not receive this simple wish.

Finally with much of our attention over the last few years focused on palliative care, in 2014 the Almoner committee will look for additional benefits perhaps in a different area of need so that we may be able to help provide for God's sick and poor.

Respectfully submitted,

Chevalier Ross Sharp , KGSJ

Almoner



Annual Christmas Luncheon

The Annual Christmas Luncheon was held in the beautiful setting of the Arbutus Club on December 6th.Our guests were entertained by the Essonance Chamber Choir. Our guests were entertained by the Essonance Chamber Choir.

The Essonance Chamber Choir is an a capella group based in Vancouver, BC. The choir has been active in community events in the Lower Mainland since 2008. The choir is currently led by founder and musical director, Livia Gho.

Chevalier Christopher Gaze presented an added gift to the luncheon guests with a recitation of The Gift of The Magi by O. Henry, which was well received by all.

We enjoyed a wonderful lunch and great fellowship that carried with us throughout the Holiday Season.

I wish to thank Dame Teresa Mitchell-Banks, DGSJ who organized this very popular event on her own and also Administrator Gail Dunn for her continued assistance.

Chevalier Dann Konkin KCSJ, Chair Events and Social Committee

The Essonance Chamber Choir

Chevalier Christopher Gaze shared his gift with the guests.

"O all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the wisest." O. Henry

Chevalier Mark Ballard, KSJ was the Master of Ceremonies for the Christmas Luncheon .

Arbutus Club Lunch

2014 AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Vancouver Commandery of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem was held On Thursday April 24th, 2014 at the Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club,4300 S.W Marine Drive in Vancouver B.C.

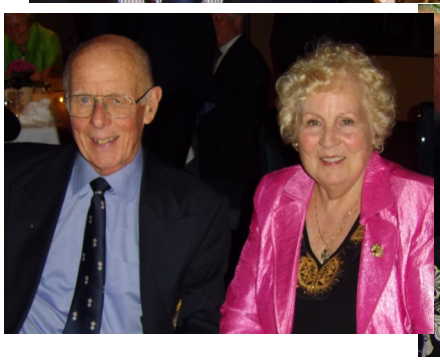
Elections for Office were conducted and the Commander and Directors were appointed for the upcoming year. Reports from the Directors were presented to the members and the Financial report indicated that the Commandery is well situated to complete its obligations throughout the coming year.

A special thank – you was extended to all those who had worked hard and contributed to the success of the many special events undertaken by the Vancouver Commandery throughout the year.

Richard D. Earthy, KCJSJ

Commander

2014 AGM SOCIAL



Visit to the Scotland Investiture

The group of 4 are Dame Gail Mackay, DJSJ of Victoria; Dame Lynda-May O'Brien, DCSJ & H.E. Bailiff Al Wagner, GCSJ, MMSJ, of Vancouver and Dame Barbie Hislop, DSJ of England (Formerly of Vancouver) The second picture is of spouses Terence O'Brien and John Hislop.

THE COMMANDERY OF GLASGOW INVESTITURE - 22 - 25 AUGUST 2013

108 Knights, Dames and their guests attended the Glasgow Investiture from Canada, Finland, Germany Denmark USA, England & Scotland. Representing Canada were Dame Gail Mackay, DJSJ, who proudly carried the Flag of Canada, Dame Lynda-May O'Brien, KJSJ and her husband Terry, and H.E. Bailiff Al Wagner, GCSJ, MMSJ and his wife Renuka Anne. It was wonderful to reunite with Dame Barbie Hislop, DSJ and her husband John. Barbie is now a member of the Commandery of London. For four days we were wined and dined to the sounds of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra Brass Section, the Glasgow Phoenix Choir, the Caledonian Fiddle Orchestra and the RSNO Jazz Trio. A particular highlight of the extended weekend was travelling by coach with 88 Knights and Dames to attend the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo complete with a RAF fly pass and the single malt that was enjoyed on the ride back to Glasgow.

Eleven Aspirants were invested - 6 in the Commandery of Glasgow; 2 in the Commandery of Helsinki 2 in the German Association and 1 in the Commandery of St. Joseph. In addition Chevalier Allan McCullock, KGSJ was inducted as Commander; Prior Jim Wylie, KSJS as Prior of Scotland; Prior Vassilios Papalois, KJSJ as Prior of England; and Grand Prior Martin Marschner von Helmreich as Grand Prior of Germany.

Commander Lynda-May O'Brien, DJSJ
Commandery of the Okanagan

From the Editor

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter. Once again, I thank all those members who contributed articles or photos. Please remember, if you have a Commandery event or a personal special occasion, we would like to record it on these pages.

Please send any information to: Chevalier Jim McGregor - nine-1@shaw.ca or

Gail Dunn - Administrator - admin@sosjvancouver.org - (604) 682– 2938

Please visit our website: www.sosjvancouver.org