

IMPACT

Quarterly Newsletter, Spring 2001

In Memory of Bill Chambers

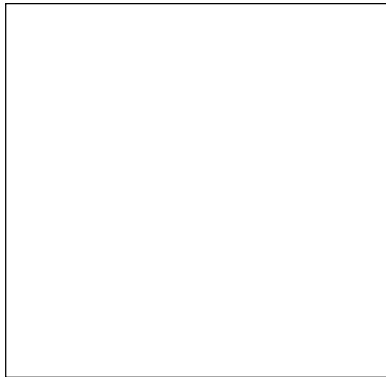
This issue of IMPACT is dedicated to Bill

Friends and staff of the NSDRC were saddened to learn of the passing of Bill Chambers on February 26, 2001. He will always be remembered as a valued and beloved friend whose contribution to this Association was outstanding.

One could go on and on recounting his many accomplishments while active with us and his other efforts on behalf of people with disabilities. Some of these were as a Past President, Chairman of our Building Committee, and founder, with his wife Lois, of the Robert Chambers Memorial Endowment Fund. Bill used his carpentry talents in designing and building many useful things at several of the association offices including the current location and at Hendry House where his son, Bob, resided. Bill was also an active supporter of the Lions Gate Action Association for whom he built a lottery ticket booth at Westview Shopping Centre. He was instrumental in forming the West Coast Blind Curling Association. Clearly without Bill's vision of a permanent home for our Association and his determined efforts to make it happen, we could still be without such a great resource. In 1996 Bill received an Honourary Lifetime Membership in recognition of his tremendous contribution to the Association.

Interestingly, Bill coped with the onset of a

1922-2001



visual impairment which eventually forced him to take early retirement. However, that didn't prevent him from doing the things that were so important to him and his family. His devotion to his community proved to be a real bonus for us at the NSDRC. His memory will live on when we remember Bill, and when we do; it will be with a smile and warm feeling in our hearts.

A brochure for the Robert Chambers Memorial Endowment Fund is enclosed with this newsletter. Inside is a picture of Bill's son Robert, a man with a vision, who captured Bill's heart to create a legacy for people with disabilities.

Anita Dadson

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Transportation Crisis

Long before the transit strike people using accessible buses on the North Shore were experiencing significant cuts to service. We were getting a taste of what it would be like to not have bus service.

September 1990 saw the start of wheelchair accessible conventional bus service in parts of the lower mainland. Accessible service came to North Vancouver a year later. February 1996 saw West Vancouver's Blue Buses become the first totally accessible fleet in BC. By this time North Vancouver had increased its accessible fleet and some service was available on most routes. Bus operators were now proficient with lift operation and wheelchair securement. People with disabilities and seniors welcomed the spontaneity and flexibility accessible buses offered. We didn't have to plan our lives a week in advance or justify our trips. For many people HandyDART use decreased or ceased completely.

Fast forward to September 2000. The North Vancouver bus fleet numbers 92, including spares, 52 should be lift-equipped wheelchair accessible buses. People started reporting that occasionally a bus would arrive that did not have a functioning lift. In November we learned that most wheelchair lifts on buses have a life span of 10 years, 5 North Van buses had broken lifts and that timely repair or replacement was unlikely. Coast Mountain Bus Company, the bus operator, had halted all lift repair or replacement work until the new year due to major overspending. By the end of September over 3 times the annual budget had been spent on lift repair or replacement!

Through January North Van passengers experienced periodic service interruptions. By early February at least 10 buses had broken lifts, by mid-March the number reached 17. Bus operators shared our frustration with what was once a reliable service. North Van Transit was submitting a daily list of the trips that would not be accessible and we were expected to call Customer Information to find out if the buses

we wanted to take would be accessible. Spontaneity was gone and stress levels were increasing. But, we were told, North Van buses are at the front of the line for repair.

With the April 1st bus strike less than a week away an interesting series of events occurred resulting in the North Van bus fleet being augmented with displaced buses from Richmond, Surrey and Vancouver. For 2 days all 52 buses were operationally accessible.

Now we are well into what will likely be a long transit strike. People who can get to the Blue Buses can get into Vancouver and from Lynn Valley into West Van. But what about those who can't, what are we supposed to do? Taxis are okay once in awhile but frequent use gets expensive, even with TaxiSavers and we only have 2 wheelchair accessible taxis on the North Shore. We can use HandyDART, but for some that is no longer an option. We can rely on the good will of family, friends and neighbours. If we have power mobility aids we can at least get out and about in our own neighbourhoods. Our worlds have become much smaller.

NSDRC has been forced to postpone indefinitely an Advocacy Workshop because the presenter and many people registered for the workshop rely on public transit.

Pam Horton

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EDITORIAL NOTE:

The views and opinions expressed within the pages of IMPACT are not necessarily those held by the total membership of Board of Directors of the North Shore Disability Resource Centre Association. IMPACT invites your contribution in the way of stories, letters, poetry, comments, etc.

The Bus Strike has narrowed my world...

For most of my life I was isolated from the world. My world was my room. Three years ago I began to use a power wheelchair and to live at the NSDRC's Ranch; this along with public transit has made the GVRD my backyard and the world my oyster.

HandyDART is too inconvenient and taxis or my own van too expensive. From the Ranch, East 10th Street and Hendry Avenue in North Vancouver it's but a short zip to the 228, 232, 240, and 255 bus stops. I can go where and do anything I want on a whim. And I do, every day, every week.

But not now... I now have only one option: the Blue 255. To get to Vancouver I have to take a 255 to West Vancouver, then one of the Blue Buses downtown and then I use SkyTrain. But the last 255 to leave Park Royal for North Vancouver on weekends and holidays is at 6:00 p.m. Weekdays it's 7:20 p.m. (Let's not forget the frequent closures on the Lion's Gate Bridge.) Therefore, the strike has narrowed my world. It usually takes an hour to get home from Planet Bingo (Main and Broadway, Vancouver) where I volunteer for the NSDRC, using the SkyTrain, SeaBus and 228 - it now takes two to three hours. If I go to the Capilano Mall area there's no point waiting for a 255 for the trip back because they are always too full to let me on - I wheel home instead. And most important of all I can't go where I want in the GVRD other than the narrow bands around the Blue Bus and the SkyTrain routes.

Then there are the attendants that work at the Ranch that have two jobs, are single parents and/or live in Richmond and can only afford public transit. The strain on their lives the longer the strike goes on is much worse than anything I'm going through.

Paul Caune

Recreation Opportunities in West Vancouver

The District of West Vancouver Parks and Community Services offer a variety of new programs developed for people with disabilities including: Funky Fridays, Gymnastics, Hip Hop Dance, IntroFit, Teen Summer Social Daycamp for teens and young adults with developmental disabilities.

Did you know that a beach wheelchair and pathway system was bought through municipal capital funds in 2000 for use at Ambleside Beach?

Did you also know that the West Vancouver Arena has undergone extensive renovations and now includes: automatic doors, full wheelchair access to changerooms, showers and washrooms?

For more information on the above programs and equipment and to receive a copy of the Access Services quarterly newsletter contact Patty Clarke, Recreation Access Coordinator at 925-7279.

Adapted Equipment at the West Vancouver Aquatic Centre

The "APT Unit" is now available at the West Vancouver Aquatic Center Weight Room. The APT Unit is an Arm Ergometer for people with disabilities to use as a way to get a cardio workout.

The Arm Ergometer is unique with both a motor assist for people learning to re-use certain muscles and a number of different non-motor levels of endurance. The APT Unit has a range of tensions for people from athletic training to moderate training use.

The APT Unit is currently used by individuals who have varying degrees of disabilities ranging from spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, arthritis, strokes and neuromuscular disabilities, and for joint rehabilitation participants.

Diversity Workshop

Diversity – what does that mean to you? What about multi-culturalism? Do you include people with disabilities when you define diversity and/or multi-culturalism? Many private, public, and non-profit organizations have Diversity and/or Multi-culturalism Policy statements. Unfortunately many policy statements do not include people with disabilities and the terms diversity and multi-culturalism are used interchangeably. It is widely accepted that multi-culturalism is about ethnic roots. But what about people who are deaf who will argue, quite rightly, that there is a deaf culture with it's own language, history and traditions? Many people still struggle when defining what diversity means to them. They will say “the community”, yet when asked who that includes - people with disabilities are either mentioned as an afterthought or not mentioned at all.

Pam Horton has developed a workshop called “A Diverse Community includes People with Disabilities”. During this two hour interactive workshop participants examine societal attitudes through the ages and explore the roots of their own attitudes and feelings toward people with disabilities. Participants discuss the changes they have seen and the power of language and actions.

“I like to keep the group small, about 15, so that everyone has an opportunity to participate,” says Pam. “The best groups have people who are all ages because they remember different movies and TV shows and we quickly see the changing image of people with disabilities.”

John Neumann is now co-presenting this workshop with Pam and says “if you want to sit and be lectured to this workshop, it is not for you. It is very interactive and self-revealing.”

For more information about this workshop please leave Pam at message at the NSDRRC at 985-5371.

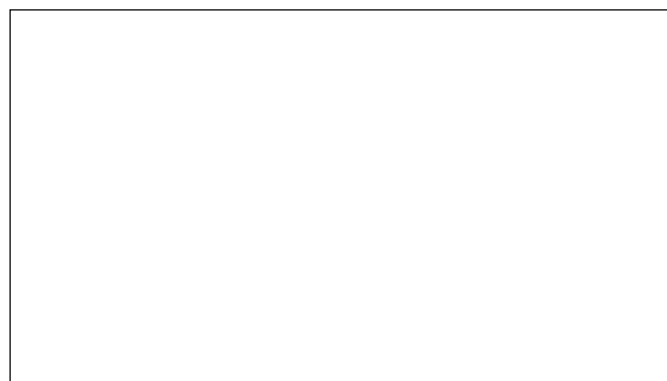
Diversity Detectives

For four weeks in February and March the Grade 3/4 Class at Westcot Elementary School in West Vancouver became the test site for a diversity awareness program delivered by the NSDRRC. On Thursday mornings for an hour and a half, Murray Browatzke, Cathy Crouse, and Lucy Goncalves came to the classroom with an array of interactive games, video clips, personal accounts and craft activities to stimulate the students' thoughts and experiences on the topic of diversity.

And, oh yes, there was homework too. Between each session the students were given a detective assignment, which they reported on at the beginning of the following week. The assignments included observations, descriptions of their own lives, and materials gleaned from the media.

Cathy Crouse, Executive Director of the NSDRRC coordinated the teaching team, and says that “Diversity Detectives was a creative endeavour from the get go. Lucy, Murray and I developed the program as we went along and it was tremendous fun to see how the students responded to the material. You knew right away when you hit or missed the mark. For example, when Lucy told her personal story of inclusion and exclusion, she used photo collages and videotape to illustrate her life. Boy, were the kids ever impressed when they

continued on next page...



The Grade 3/4 Class at Westcot Elementary School in West Vancouver

Diversity Detectives - continued from Page 4

saw a video of her leaving her wheelchair, getting into a plane – and then parachuting out of it!”

Murray Browatzke, Special Services Manager, reflects that “This was a course in “sameness” as much as it was about diversity. It was exciting to see the children recognize that at a core level, the little things that make us different do not have to become barriers to understanding, acceptance and inclusion. They really began to understand that our feelings, dreams and aspirations are not all that different despite differences in ethnicity, age, gender, ability or sexual orientation. By learning to respect our sameness and our differences we can draw on the strength in diversity to build real community! Participating in this process was an honor.”

Lucy Goncalves, Vice President of the NSDRC Board, was already familiar to one of the students in the class because she teaches Sunday school at their church. She knew the importance of keeping the children active and involved. Lucy feels that “children are a great source of inspiration as they are so insightful and open-minded. It was interesting to see the changes over the weeks as they began to understand the different concepts of diversity. The use of games and assignments encouraged the kids to bring their own ideas and reflections to the discussion. For example, one student told us how she includes her sister, who has a disability, in various activities.



Lucy Goncalves presents the story of her life through photos.

I immensely enjoyed listening to their stories as they gave me a different perspective toward inclusion and acceptance”.

And what did the students say? According to their written evaluations, their main recommendation for improvement was to make the program longer. What did they like the best? The games, of course, along with the candy prizes. But not just that, as the following comments reflect. “I liked the activities, the movies, the homework and everything we did. It was a super blast.” “I think the best thing about Diversity Detectives was working together and learning that everyone matters the same.” “What I liked best about the Diversity Detectives was that if we don’t include people it makes us weaker.”

Leanne Rasmussen, the classroom teacher, was excited about the program and has helped the NSDRC team to debrief and plan for future development. She says that “The Diversity Detectives course was so rich and meaningful on many levels. It was well organized, relevant and provided the students with exposure to interesting people who they would not have met otherwise. There are many ways that these concepts can be taught on a day to day basis, but it is also helpful to have an external resource come in to help focus attention on this very important area of learning.”

Summer Recreation Opportunities

Summer is just around the corner! Below are places that are adaptive to people with all kinds of disabilities to help you enjoy the great outdoors. Enjoy your summer!

BC Wheelchair Sports (Ph: 737-3090) recommends the following website:

WeMedia Sports Website: www.wemedia.com

One of the world's leading sites for people with disabilities, their families and friends that covers webcasts, athlete interviews/profiles, and enabling access to sports for the community.

Disabled Sailing Association of B.C. Website: www.reachdisability.org/dsa

This site provides people with disabilities with the opportunity to leave their restrictions behind and become active participants in an exciting outdoor sport. (Ph: 222-3003)

B.C. Paraplegic Association Website: www.canparaplegic.org/bc

BCPA assists persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence, self-reliance and full community participation. The Comox Valley 25th Annual Fishing Derby for people with disabilities takes place on June 15,16,&17, 2001. (Ph: 530-8283)

B.C. Parks - Disabled Access Program Website: www.elp.gov.bc.ca/bcparks

Information on FREE accessible camping sites throughout B.C. (Ph: 250-356-8794)

Power to Be Adaptive Outdoor Recreation Website: www.powr2b.com

Provides high quality outdoor adaptive recreational opportunities (climbing) to people with special needs. Emphasis is placed on guaranteeing a safe environment and ensuring client satisfaction and endeavours. (Phone: 1-250-416-0045 or 1-800-375-2363)

Cerebral Palsy Sports Association of B.C. Website: www.cpsports.com

CPSABC facilitates the delivery of quality recreation and sports opportunities including recreational/skill development programs, competitive clubs and regional competitions. (Ph: 599-5240)

Pacific Riding for the Disabled Association Website: www.prda.ca

This organization is dedicated to providing both therapy and personal growth to children and adults with disabilities through the realm of horseback riding. (Ph: 530-8717; 888-1262)

B.C. Mobilities Opportunities Society Website: www.reachdisability.org/bcmos

This organization makes it possible for people with disabilities to access B.C.'s great outdoors including adventurous recreational goals such as kayaking, rock climbing and bungee jumping. (Ph: 688-6464)

Access Sea to Sky Adventures Website: www.accessseatosky.com

Provides "hassle-free", accessible, recreational holidays for people with disabilities. Located amidst the spectacular Coast mountains seventy-five miles north of Vancouver. (Ph: 932-0923 or 1-888-244-5611)

Lower Mainland Wheelchair Volleyball Society (Ph: 877-1963 or E-mail: lmwvs@hotmail.com)

Check your local recreation centre to find out what recreation opportunities they offer in your community.

Send a Child to Summer Camp...

Blake is an 11-year old boy who loves to go camping. Last summer he spent two weekends camping in Squamish and enjoyed hiking, swimming and picnicking. It gave Blake an opportunity to learn about outdoor camping, tenting and cooking as well as enjoying other families at the camp. Mom works irregular hours and doesn't enjoy camping. Funding from our Summer Program allowed Blake to go on these adventures with a skilled caregiver who was also an avid and experienced camper.



Blake loves to go camping!

By providing one-to-one workers, Summer Program levels the playing field for children with disabilities. It means they can access community programs of their choice in their neighbourhoods. Many attend recreation centre day camps; others attend overnight camping, take lessons or develop a program of their own.

Support through community grants and agency fundraising enabled us to provide support for nearly 120 families last year. Unfortunately most families were only able to receive two weeks of support which is not a lot considering that the school break is ten weeks long. Through increased agency fundraising and community support we hope to increase our support. If you can help send a child to summer camp please send us the Response Form on Page 8 noting your designation to the Summer Program or call Margot Beauchamp directly at 904-4087.

Rick Scott Performs in Support of the Children's Summer Program

As a result of a generous offer from Rick Scott to do a Benefit Concert for our Summer Program along with the energy provided by a volunteer committee and volunteers, the April 8th concert held at Larson Elementary School was a success.

We had a lot of community support with the North Shore News as a sponsor along with PACTS. Kids Books in the Edgemont Village assisted by providing a venue for ticket sales and Jim Peterson, Principal at Larson was very supportive of the event. We had volunteers assisting on the day of the concert and the support of many of the families involved in our Summer Program. Sand Northrup provided entertainment before Rick's appearance, adding a festival spirit to the occasion.

More than anything, the joy and enthusiasm that shone from the faces of the children and adults attending, made everything worthwhile. After the concert, as he packed up his gear, Rick spoke of how much he enjoyed doing this sort of event. He spoke of the love he feels when he performs for a benefit and how different it is to be in a room with so many "angels". There was a magic that only music can bring and from where I sat, facing the audience, rather than the performer, it was a truly beautiful experience.

Thank you to Rick, the volunteers, sponsors and supporters, and to the audience, without whom the concert would not have been.

Mary Smelko

Rick Scott is pictured with one of his greatest fans, Darian.

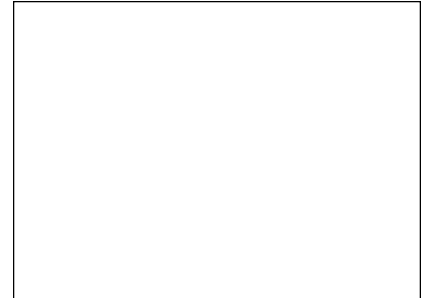
Starship Bingo License Renewed

The NSDRC is pleased to announce that we recently received our renewed membership license for Mount Pleasant Starship Community Charitable Association (Planet Bingo). Our membership with Planet Bingo contributes financially to support our mission, vision, and values.

The NSDRC could not maintain our membership status through Planet Bingo without the ongoing commitment of our Bingo volunteers. On May 23, 2001 a luncheon was held for all the Planet Bingo Volunteers from the 61 member agencies to celebrate and recognize, together, the dedication and hours of time our volunteers have contributed to all the charities.

Lori Kemp and Chantal Laverdure, two of our current Bingo Volunteers, attended the ceremonies. Lori and Chantal have been dedicated Bingo Volunteers for the NSDRC and other organizations for the past several years. They truly deserve Volunteer Recognition for the commitment they have shown. Our third Bingo Volunteer, Paul Caune, not able to make the lunch, wrote the IMPACT article on Page 3. He is always on time for his shift - even with the bus strike he manages to make it to his Bingo Volunteer shift on time. Thank you Bingo Volunteers we couldn't do it without you!

We **urgently need Bingo Volunteers** for Planet Bingo shifts every 2nd Monday from 12:30 – 4:00 p.m. The facility is wheelchair accessible, non-smoking, and located on Main Street in Vancouver. If you are interested in helping out please call Teresa Englmann at 904-4084 for further details.



Volunteers Chantal and Lori (L-R) are pictured with Captain Planet Bingo at the appreciation luncheon.

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RESPONSE FORM *Please return in the postage paid envelope or:*



A United Way Member Agency

PHONE/TTY: (604) 985-5371
E-MAIL: nsdrc@nsdrc.org
FAX: (604) 985-7594
WEB SITE: www.nscweb.org/nsdrc

- Yes**, I would like to support the Association's activities by making
 1) a general or 2) a designated donation to _____. DONATION: \$_____
- Yes**, I would like to join the NSDRC in "Working for a Community
 for All" by being a member. MEMBERSHIP FEE: \$_____
- New
 Renewal
 \$5 Individual
 \$20 Organization

Name: _____

Address: _____ E-Mail: _____

City: _____ Home Phone: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Office Phone: _____

Enclosed is my donation by: cheque, VISA, or MasterCARD

Card #: _____ Expiry: _____

Signature: _____

Total Enclosed:

\$ _____