

# The Renal Review

Jan.-Feb. 2014

Vancouver Island Kidney Patients' Association



## Annual General Meeting

Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 1:00 pm.

Renal Boardroom, 2nd floor, Royal Jubilee Hospital, Victoria, B.C.

All members are welcome. Members in good standing will be able to vote. If your dues are not up to date, they can be accepted before the meeting begins.

There will be an election, too. Nominations will be accepted at the meeting; anyone wanting to be nominated who cannot attend the meeting should notify VIKPA by phone or email.

A Board meeting will follow the AGM. All members are welcome as observers.

## VIKPA's fourth annual **Silent Auction** Wednesday, March 5, 2014 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

in the Royal Jubilee Hospital Lobby

The auction promotes kidney month and raises funds for VIKPA to help Island kidney patients.

Each day, on average, fifteen Canadians learn that their kidneys have failed, often due to diabetes or hypertension. You can support Kidney Month and VIKPA by attending this event. Your donations and this auction are the lifeblood of our organization.

We'll have dozens of auction items you can bid on, including a return trip for two to Jasper from VIA Rail, a return trip for two to Port Angeles by ferry with a night in Sequim and one in Port Townsend, and Westjet tickets for two to anywhere they fly.

The popular 50/50 draw will also return.

### **Notes for bidders**

We'll try to notify you if your bid has won, but it will help you and us if you are able to check back in person after 3:30 to see if you were the winning bidder. Successful bidders are asked to make arrangements for payment and pickup of items as soon as possible after the close of bidding. Payments can be made by cash, cheque, Visa or Mastercard. An ATM is available by the front door.

If you have items you wish to donate, please call Lita Rolofs at 250-592-3643

For more information, email us, [info@vikpa.org](mailto:info@vikpa.org), or leave a message at 250-595-3650.

## My transplant experience, part 2

by Gary Pollock, VIKPA vice-president

*Part 1 of this story ended with Gary, after 12 years of dialysis, not being a good transplant candidate because of his rare blood type.*

Over the years, medicine improved quickly, and I was put on the transplant list. Because of the length of time I had spent on dialysis, I was high on the list. The main drawback was my blood type. I was told not to expect a call soon, as only one similar transplant had been done in a number of years.

Two weeks later, I was having a lunch break in my office between meetings when the phone rang. A voice I didn't know asked, "What are you doing?" I answered, "I'm about to have lunch." The voice responded, "Don't eat anything! We have a kidney for you". Now, only someone waiting for that call can know that feeling. You feel faint, your legs get weak, and you don't know whether to throw up or cry. I managed to sit down, as my chair was directly behind me. The caller asked if I was still there, as I had gone silent. I answered, and heard, "Are you ready for this? Can you be here in four hours?" I responded that I had to make a couple of calls first. The caller said I had one hour to make a decision, or they would need to go to the next person on the list.

I told my boss, who replied, "Why are you still here? Go." He made the necessary phone calls for me, and I called my wife. Then I went home, and grabbed my travel bag. (I always keep one packed, a habit I developed on dialysis). My wife was pulling into the yard as I was finishing what I needed. About 30 minutes had gone by. I had no sense of time.

Within minutes, we were en route from Campbell River to Nanaimo to catch a plane. My wife called and made flight arrangements on the way. They were incredible, telling us, "just get here, we'll be ready". Laurie called again to say we would be another 15 minutes. They said, "no problem."

When we arrived, Harbour Air had bumped a passenger and held the plane. Within 20 minutes I was landing at Vancouver Harbour. The pilot had called ahead, and a taxi was waiting. A few minutes later,

I was in the lobby of St. Paul's Hospital. I told them my name, and was whisked away. There wasn't really time to think about anything; I just followed.

So, less than four hours after getting a phone call at work in Campbell River, I was settled in a room in Vancouver awaiting a surgery that in my wildest dreams I never thought would happen. People had done things, and I was alone to think and wait.

It's a good thing you are given a tranquilizer, because the flood of emotions that hit is overwhelming. I remember going from laughing to crying to almost panic attacks.

Then came the doubts: Am I doing the right thing? What if this doesn't work? Is this a one-shot deal? How could I ever go back on dialysis again after being so close? I guess this is normal, because they had the answers to questions I hadn't even asked.

So, the waiting began. Seconds seemed like minutes, minutes like hours, hours like days. Magically, the door opened, and I heard, "How are you feeling? We are ready for you now." It was a good thing someone was there to help me onto a gurney, because I don't know if I could have done it alone.

My first post-transplant memory was waking up in a recovery room with one other person. Someone was standing over me charting numbers and taking vitals. I lay there quietly waiting for the pain to hit, but there was only a mild discomfort and total disorientation. I was told to lie quietly for a few minutes and not move around.

A while later, I started to become more aware. I had been in surgery for six hours, but everything had gone well. A couple of unforeseen issues had been easily solved. I spent 12 hours in recovery, longer than normal; I never did find out why.

I was moved to a private room on the renal ward, and slept on and off for a few hours. Later that day I was helped to sit on the edge of the bed. This, in fact, was one of the more terrifying moments of the whole process. .... continued on page 3

## My transplant experience, part 2

(continued from page 2)

Looking back, it seems ridiculous. That evening I was taking a few steps, and the next day was using a walker.

The third day I progressed to longer walks using an IV pole for support, and also to carry the catheter bag and meds. I was attached to a morphine pump, and was to give myself a pump when I felt pain.

Within five days I was deemed well and in good enough shape to leave the hospital, although I had to be very close for daily visits for a while. I had thought getting released would be a high point, but it was quite scary. You want to get out, but being there offers a sense of security and protection. You aren't forced to do things on your own, or wonder, if something happens, what do I do? But I left, and found out quickly that I could manage. That's when I felt my confidence coming back.

After two weeks I felt I had the confidence and the ability to manage alone, so Laurie went home. Being alone the first time was a little disconcerting.

I consider myself fortunate. The transplant was a good match, and there were very few complications. I was in hospital for five days, in Vancouver for four

weeks as an outpatient, and back to work a week later (office work only, and four hours a day)

By the seventh week I was walking, and getting my energy back. But it took about six months to get back to where I could do something without that nagging feeling of whether I could do it or not.

I am now four years post transplant, and still, a day or so before blood work I tend to get irritable and anxious. Some people never get past this, and I guess that will be me. I can't say it has been clear sailing, because it hasn't. There have been issues. But you find out why, fix them, and move on.

The hardest thing to accept, and get others to realize, is that I am not cured. A transplant is another source of life support. It is foreign to your body, and you will always need medications to stay alive. But staying alive on dialysis is a struggle, while keeping alive on transplant becomes a way of life. There are far fewer impediments, usually not insurmountable.

In the back of my mind, I know that someday something may happen, and the donor kidney will fail. But if that day comes, well, I'll deal with it then.

---

## President's message

by Cheryl Jones

**Christmas party** - Thank you to those who attended our Christmas party - VIHA staff, VIKPA executive and kidney patients, friends and family. It was nice to see a few new faces and be greeted by staff who came by to thank VIKPA for its contributions throughout the year. We had a lovely renal friendly luncheon, followed by our usual silly Christmas games. We thank Renal Services, represented by Bill Kane, Greg Searle and Dan Martinusen, for providing the wonderful Christmas lunch.

**Nanaimo news** - Last November Gary Pollock and I attended the Patient Advisory Committee meeting in Victoria. The big news is from Nanaimo, where the renovation of the Community Dialysis Facility will create a new Kidney Care Clinic. A transplant clinic is also in Nanaimo's long-term plans.

**Kevin Campbell** - the Tough Mudder guy, covered in a previous newsletter, received the gift of life in November from a distant relative, after a Facebook appeal. Kevin has done a lot to raise the profile of kidney disease and organ donor registration, and we're glad it worked out for him.

## VIKPA Awards

In our fall newsletter we introduced the recipients of the 2013 Dee Sangha Award and Gordon Duthie Bursaries. If you didn't know about the awards, missed the deadline or want to reapply, it is already time to start thinking about it. Please note also that we've increased the funding for the bursaries.

June 30 is the deadline for applications for both awards. Applications must be received by us on or before the deadline. No late or incomplete applications will be accepted.

The **Gordon Duthie Bursary** awards are given annually to assist a Vancouver Island kidney patient who is a VIKPA member in good standing (or the patient's spouse, child or grandchild) to attend an accredited post-secondary institution in Canada in order to improve employment skills or qualifications. A maximum of \$1500 per person and a total maximum of \$10,500 will be awarded to successful applicants each year.

The **Dee Sangha Award** is awarded annually to a kidney patient who is a VIKPA member in good standing and displays Dee Sangha's "can do" attitude. It is to assist Vancouver Island renal patients in improving their lives while dealing with the everyday challenges of living with kidney disease. In particular, the award committee looks for a renal patient who is working towards a goal coming back from adversity. A maximum of \$1000 will be awarded to one person per year.

If you are a renal patient, you may be eligible for both awards.

For detailed eligibility requirements and an application form, please visit our website at [www.vikpa.org](http://www.vikpa.org) under the 'services' tab. Alternatively, contact us using any of the other methods listed on the next page, or ask one of the renal social workers.

## Help for our community

In December 2013, VIKPA sent Christmas gift certificates to 260 Island kidney patients, who were identified by the social workers as needing a little boost. When VIKPA launched this program in 2003, we gave out only 72 of these certificates.

This year we were moved by a letter from an anonymous recipient, who wrote as follows:

*I'm writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for your kindness in sending me a \$50 grocery gift card this Christmas (by way of my social worker at the hospital). I was extremely touched by your kindness.*

*The gift card truly helped me this holiday season as it has been quite a challenging year for me after suddenly being diagnosed of acute renal failure this summer. I unexpectedly found myself jobless due to my long hospital stay, overwhelmed with the sudden changes in my life and without any source of income.*

*I hope you will understand my wish to remain anonymous at this time. One day I will share my story with you and will look forward to returning your kindness. In the meantime, I just wanted to let you know that your gift truly was appreciated.*

## Follow us online

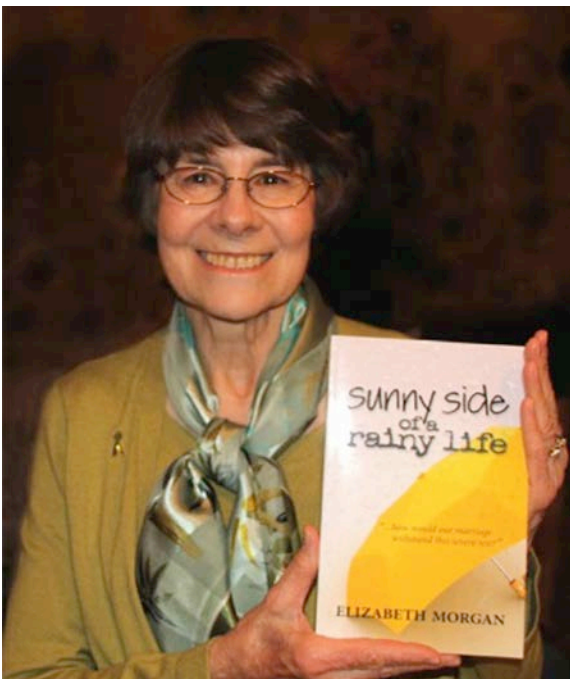
Every month a few more people elect to receive their newsletter by email, saving us money. But remember, we're also on Twitter (@VIKPA2) and Facebook (look for "Vancouver Island Kidney Patients' Association").

## In Memoriam

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the families and friends of renal patients who have passed away in recent months: Gary Carlson, Don Curling, Sylvia de Dood, Ian Forbes, Norman Harms, Jack Hennis, Daniel Johnstone, Kenneth Jones, Douglas Newbold, Jelka Mlinar, Ken Penston, Delores (Hilda) Ree, E. Rodil, Harry Sjoberg, Eilleen Lin Ho Whitaker, Lawrence C.C. Yeh, Lance Yoshida.

We thank everyone who has donated in memory of loved ones, and families who have designated VIKPA as their charity. If you wish to make an In Memoriam donation to VIKPA, please mail to our address below. Please include name and contact information of the next-of-kin, so we may notify them of your gift. For bequest information, ask for our brochure or visit [www.vikpa.org](http://www.vikpa.org).

## New book about life with kidney disease



### *Sunny Side of a Rainy Life*

by Liz Morgan

This account is a positive memoir about Liz's life with kidney disease, dialysis, and a transplant from her brother.

It is a faith and love story as well. With the support of her amazing husband and two sons she found a renewed purpose in life and a realization of the power and glory of God.

Her inspirational writings – on topics of health, faith, and marriage – have appeared in professional medical publications, as well as newspapers and literary magazines in Saskatchewan, Toronto, and New York.

VIKPA has bought a copy for each Renal Unit. You can order your own copy today for only \$15 plus shipping at [lizron42@gmail.com](mailto:lizron42@gmail.com)

## About VIKPA

The Vancouver Island Kidney Patients' Association (VIKPA) is an all-volunteer, legally incorporated, non-profit society and a registered Canadian charity working for the benefit of all renal patients.

VIKPA provides items and services to renal units and individuals, and advocates for renal patients on Vancouver Island by attending Hospital Advisory Committees and presenting patients' concerns and needs.

Our address is: Box 5145, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6N4

Voice mail: (250) 595-3650 Web: [www.vikpa.org](http://www.vikpa.org) Email: [info@vikpa.org](mailto:info@vikpa.org)

President: Cheryl Jones

Vice-President: Gary Pollock

Secretary: Wally Rolofs

Treasurer: Erica McMonnies

Members at large: Lita Rolofs, Tim Hicks, Matt Stanley

## Membership update

It's time to renew your membership if you haven't already. You can join or renew online at [www.vikpa.org](http://www.vikpa.org) - click on the "MEMBERSHIP" tab near the top of the page. But of course we're always happy to receive a cheque in the mail; use the form at right.

## Donations

VIKPA thanks the Victoria Chinese Ladies' Club, and particularly Rowena Yipp, for a recent donation.

If you wish to make a donation to VIKPA, do it online at [www.vikpa.org](http://www.vikpa.org) or by paper when you do your membership by mail (there's a form in each newsletter).

We'll send a tax receipt for donations of \$10 or more. If we have an email address for you, we'll send the receipt that way (and save almost a dollar in postage).

Nearly all the money donated to VIKPA goes towards renal patients on Vancouver Island. We are 100% volunteer-based, and non-patient spending is limited to unavoidable costs such as insurance, bank and accounting fees.

## Another man's journey

In August 2013, Mike Smith started a blog about his experiences in dealing with kidney disease. After just a few months, Mike finds himself on the pre-transplant list. You can follow Mike's story at [mike2kal.wordpress.com](http://mike2kal.wordpress.com). Note that it's in reverse order, newest first. You might want to read a few pages to find out where he is now, then jump to the start (the bottom) to get the whole story.

## Kidneybuzz

VIKPA VP Gary Pollock recommends the website [www.kidneybuzz.com](http://www.kidneybuzz.com) as a useful information source with a good cookbook included. Started by a California student whose father has Chronic Kidney Disease, the site is a non-professional collection of articles. It doesn't appear to be trying to be an all-purpose reference site; there are already plenty of those.

## Membership form

Membership is open to all, including families and friends of renal patients. We appreciate your support, which enables us to support kidney patients on Vancouver Island.

Membership term is January-December. Dues paid after November 1 will apply to the following year.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/town \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

please email my newsletter

Enclosed is \$10 for my annual membership.

New  Renewal

Enclosed is a donation of \$\_\_\_\_  
(Receipts issued for \$10 or more)  
Total enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me about a donation.

I would like to volunteer. Please contact me.

I am:  Pre-dialysis  Hemodialysis  
 Peritoneal dialysis  Transplant  
 Family member  Care worker  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Please mail this form to:

Vancouver Island Kidney Patients' Association  
Box 5145, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6N4

Charitable Registration 89183 2172 RR0001