

## President's Message



Dear PALs,

As all of us at PAL Vancouver prepare to celebrate our official openings and first year of operations, I'd like to take a moment to remember the large group of crucially important (and often unacknowledged) people who are the bedrock of PAL. I'm thinking of you, our many members and volunteers, including

- \* the 40 souls who braved the rainy night in April, 2001 to come to the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Salon to create a vision for PAL and select the first steering committee (that I had the honour to co-chair with **Joy Coghill**)
- \* the volunteers who collected hundreds of signatures in support of PAL in the summer of 2001
- \* those who stuffed and addressed the thousands of envelopes containing our needs assessment
- \* all the performers who stood in the lobbies of the **Arts Club, Playhouse** and **Gateway** Theatres as well as untold Equity co-op performances to pass the hat amongst audience members and raise the first funds we needed
- \* all the performers who gave benefit performances or participated in the two *Odes to Joy*
- \* all the members who attended our Annual General Meetings, asked pertinent questions and enthusiastically supported the efforts of the hard-working volunteer board of directors.

While most organizations start their fundraising efforts with the "major gift" and then work their way down - PAL Vancouver was built upon your time and countless loonies and toonies as we worked our way up to those crucial larger donations.

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# PALaver

story, tale, word, a talk, parley, conference or discussion

Issue #6

May 2007



## Vancity is a Grand PAL!

PAL Vancouver has recently received the good news that Vancity has approved a \$20,000 Sustainability Grant which was requested last fall. Bouquets to **Leslie Thompson** and **Val Mason** for their diligence involved in achieving this important funding. On hand to receive the cheque from **Maureen Cureton**, Energy Manager at Vancity were **David Abramowitz**, PAL Vancouver Treasurer and **Donna Wong-Juliani**, PAL Vancouver Vice-President.

## Happy Birthday PAL Vancouver

In some ways it seems amazing that on May 29, 2007 the Vancouver Performing Arts Lodge will have been in operation for one full year. It seems like yesterday when the moving vans and residents were lined up in front of the building waiting for the official permission to move in. An unforgettable moment was when **Joan Robison**, in a hot pink tracksuit marched in with her dog Whisper, on a hot pink leash. They were

officially the first to get their keys and enter their new home .

In other ways, so much has happened in the year that it seems like a very long time ago. In the beginning there was lots of drama, which is natural in a brand new building with more than one hundred new tenants. There was a fire, a flood, several break ins and the residents got used to the

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## CBC Shoots PAL Vancouver

In the early new year a producer and cameraman from the CBC TV Sunday News came out from Toronto to make a piece on PAL Vancouver. After the story board, created by **Camilla Ross**, was accepted, a hectic but fun schedule was set up for interviews, special committee meetings, and even shots of the dogs in residence. The CBC crew was very pleased with the footage they got but have had to edit eight hours of tape down to ten minutes of broadcast. For those who missed the broadcast PAL Vancouver will have a DVD.



### President con't

In the past year, our small staff and board has been so swamped with the challenges of running the building and completing the capital campaign that we temporarily stopped communicating regularly with you. Please accept our apologies and our thanks for your loyalty.

PAL Vancouver exists because of the dedication of hundreds of people who individually may not own much, but collectively are a powerhouse of passion, creativity and imagination. I salute you and hope you will continue supporting PAL in whatever way suits you for years to come.

Warm regards,  
Jane Heyman  
President, PAL Vancouver

## PAL Residents are Very Busy!

Since the opening of the building the residents have formed several committees which have been busy ensuring that the community is well served. One of the first to get active was the Social Committee which, under chair **Judy Walchuk**, has produced fabulous parties for Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, New Years, and now a Zodiac party every month for residents whose birthdays fall in that period.

The Garden Committee, under chair **Yvonne Adalian** has been busy all winter maintaining the garden, planning future development and now reconstructing a greenhouse donated by Board member, **Henry Hawthorn**.

As the roof theatre nears completion the Interim Theatre Advisory Committee (ITAC) has been struck to establish policies for the use and management of the space. The Committee, under chair **Jane Heyman**, is composed of representatives from the Vancouver community, PAL residents and the PAL Vancouver Board. The work has been challenging and the generous input from professional members of the theatre community has been greatly appreciated.

The most recent committee to be struck is the Resident Council Steering Committee (RCSC) which is charged with making recommendations for the structure, make up and mandate of the Resident Council which will represent the interests of the residents

## Watch for OPENING CELEBRATIONS!!

**At the end of June when all the details of the building are complete, PAL Vancouver will host a series of opening events to show off the building and most of all to thank all those who were instrumental in realizing the dream! Watch for more information.**

### Happy Birthday con't

alarm going off at all hours of the day and night before the system was fixed. However, **Val Mason** and the staff soon took control as they became fully occupied with residents' needs. Some people arrived with nothing but their clothes but PAL had foreseen this possibility and a room full of donated furniture and accessories soon became the social centre as people found necessary items or traded in their own. There were still building deficiencies to

be sorted out and the roof theatre to be built. **Henry Hawthorn, Terry Kelly** and the Building Committee deserve a huge vote of thanks for all the crucial work they did on a volunteer basis to get the building up to standard.

A year later everything is running smoothly, the residents have settled in and the PAL Vancouver Board should be proud of how much they have achieved in a very short year.

## PAL Resident Profiles

In one short hour **Barney O'Sullivan**, at 92 our oldest resident, gave me a hundred year history of Vancouver and his life!!! It began in 1908 when his father came out to Canada from Ireland to seek his fortune. He soon sent for his wife and their 1 1/2 children who arrived in mid-winter after a horrendous journey across the ocean. Barney's father, who was offered jobs with both the RCMP and the CPR, and determined his choice by scrambling the letters of Spruce, the street in Burnaby where they lived and finding "USE CPR". As a young boy Barney remembers the horse drawn milk, bread, ice, coal, wood, and other delivery wagons and the children becoming attached to their favourite horse. The rent for their first house on East Broadway was \$5 a month but when it was raised to \$7.50, they moved. After several more moves around Vancouver the father was relocated to Nelson where Barney and his 2 brothers and sister spent a glorious childhood until they returned to Kitsilano just before he graduated. In 1933 the Great Depression kept Barney and his friends with few future prospects. After some time of wandering aimlessly, Barney displayed his strong spirit by going to the CPR and asking if he could work for free. He was soon promoted to a job with the take home pay of only \$15. As it was possible to buy a mickey of spirits for 85 cents and he lived at home, he could still afford some entertainment.

In 1944 Barney joined the RCAF as a fighter pilot and was over the beachhead in Normandy on D-Day. After the war he was introduced to a nurse who had actually been in Normandy while he was there. It was love at first sight and they were married a year later. As jobs were hard to find, Barney returned to the CPR for a while but soon joined a friend as a manufacturer's agent. After the birth of two daughters Barney's wife became a playwright and director. One

day when she needed an actor to fill a role, she asked Barney if he would fill in. And that was the beginning of his incredible acting career. His first roles were for the Vancouver Little Theatre but soon gave way to The Waltz of the Toreadors for TUTS and then A Visit to a Small Planet, the first production at the Q.E. Theatre. Barney then appeared at the Vancouver Playhouse, the Freddy Wood theatre at UBC where his work in Long Days Journey Into Night earned him the accolade, "most vivid performance". Of his many appearances over a thirty year period, Barney has special memories of John Proctor in The Crucible for the Playhouse, his season at Stratford with John Hirsch, 3 seasons at the Seattle Repertory Company and too many more to fit in this space. But no matter how important the roles he was offered Barney always preferred working in his garden at home in White Rock with his family. He is now content in his lovely PAL suite and happy to interact with the "young folk."

As soon as you enter **Sharon Bell's** suite, you know she is a multi-talented individual. The small foyer is decorated with two amazingly colourful and shimmering theatrical costumes, a Russian coat, made by PAL Resident **Padam** for the opening of the **Sonny and Cher** Show at the Cave and an Egyptian robe from a production Sheharazade choreographed by the legendary **Jack Card**. Nearby stands a folded screen filled with photographs of a classical dancer, show girl, gaucho girl and then there is an easel with a large abstract painting in process. This, in short is a snapshot of Sharon's incredible life.

Born in Vancouver, she began ballet lessons at 3 and took the Royal Academy exams eventually to the level of teacher. Sharon's career in dance was based on her classic training. There are photos of a

production of Les Sylphides with the Vancouver Ballet Society. She was featured in the big shows at the Cave and Isy's which took her to Las Vegas, Miami, Puerto Rico, Los Angeles and Chicago with her partner and husband. Sharon was an acclaimed show girl appearing in night club versions of Romeo and Juliet in "a g-string, tights and toe shoes!" The Vegas Visitor called Sharon, "Delectable oomph of a beguiling lead dancer." Sharon returned to Vancouver to join Ballet Horizon with her sister Diane and Diane's then husband, Padam (both of whom are PAL residents).

The next move in this extraordinary career was a stint in Argentina in a Gaucho act with her then partner, Roberto, which moved to Paris where the show was produced at the famous Olympia. An Italian tour of "Circus on Ice" in a tent followed.

Throughout her career, Sharon has always taken classes in acting and dance. She recently completed the 2 year certificate course in visual art at Emily Carr and continues to take acting class. Sharon is presently trying to find a balance in her life and, after all these experiences and adventures, who is the real Sharon?

**Georgina Hegedos** was born to a ballerina mother and a journalist father in Budapest, Hungary shortly before the outbreak of World War II. Georgina began her stage career at 4 with a child's role in Madame Butterfly. She remained with the Hungarian Opera House in the ballet company until she was 18. As her mother was an artist, they were entitled to a private two bedroom apartment which was rare in those days. In 1956 her father left the family and the country after he had been in hiding

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## PAL Resident Profiles

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for many years. Georgina then joined an ensemble company in the country where she took many roles as actor, dancer and choreographer. When she returned some years later to Budapest, Georgina joined a revue theatre where she took part in political theatre, circus acts and variety shows. In 1972 she had a great surprise when she received a letter from her father from Vancouver, inviting her to join him. When she arrived with her Finnish husband, who was a restaurateur, they started working in a canteen in UBC, then a deli and finally they opened the Hot Pot on Robson street where they served the first espresso coffee in Vancouver and became the hangout for the many Hungarians who had fled the revolution. In 1988 the restaurant collapsed with the economy as patrons could not afford to eat out. Never defeated Georgina auditioned for the Big Meat Eater and won a Genie for Best Actress. She then found an actor's agent and began acting on a CTV series, played Golda in the Gateway Theatre production of Fiddler on the Roof. She spent three years as Hungarian correspondent for CBC. The very successful play "Menopositive," by J.J. McCall, was based on her life.

Her latest film, shot in Scotland, was Almost Heaven directed by **Sheldon Piery** and starring **Tom Conti**. Georgina has combined all her talents to organize and run the very successful Hungarian Theatre Company, which has been running in Vancouver since 1972. She has also written four books including her autobiography and her life in Hungary. The day before we talked, she had performed 9 roles in a play she had written and produced!!!



## Oh Joy!!!

The ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society has awarded PAL Vancouver's co-founder, **Joy Coghill** "The Leslie Yeo Award for Excellence in Volunteerism for 2007" This award recognizes the huge contribution that Joy has made to her community on many fronts including PAL Vancouver. The Board of AFBS is proud to select Joy as the very first recipient of this award which will be officially presented at the Annual Members' Meeting on June 8, 2007 at PAL Vancouver. The award consists of a cash prize of \$5,000 and national recognition of this prestigious honour, named in memory of Leslie Yeo one of the founding members of AFBS over 30 years ago. Leslie was also the founding Artistic Director of the first professional regional theatre company in Canada and instrumental in establishing PAL Toronto. It is fitting that one of the country's theatre pioneers should receive an award in memory of another. Congratulations Joy!!!!

## PAL's First Baby

We welcome the first baby to be born at PAL. A daughter born at 5am on Wednesday, May 9th 2007 to **Fabienne Lauber** and **Roger Zimmerman** Congratulations to all!

## Sneak Preview of the PAL Theatre

The Annual General Meeting of PAL Vancouver Society will be held on Sunday, June 10 at 4pm in the roof-top theatre at 581 Cardero Street

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