

EDITOR'S NOTE...

We have heard so many stories and received so many generous donations recently, that we decided to dedicate this issue to them, and indeed to everyone who has lost a loved one.

From Julie Ann Copp's inspiring tribute to the Rosedale Hospice, to the experience of Phil Sidebottom and his family, the aim of the Society is reinforced: our community needs a hospice.

Our Angels in Memory fundraiser appears to be an appropriate

event, but why angels, and why a Christmas tree? According to Wikipedia, an angel is a supernatural being found in many religions: in Christianity, Judaism and Islam they act as messengers from God or Allah. With origins in European pre-Christian pagan cultures, the Christmas tree has gained an extensive history and become a common sight during the winter season in numerous cultures. So, we hope that Angels in Memory will be regarded as a non-sectar-

ian event and become an annual favourite. From atheist to Zen Buddhist, each with his or her own beliefs, our needs are the same, and as this Society's mission so aptly states: these needs can be met by the concept of hospice, which... cares for the whole person and respects individual choice in defining the quality of life.

JAN EVANS



...a fundraiser in honour of Mary Elizabeth Lambert and Philip Neil Sidebottom.

On behalf of the committee (Betty, Lori, Ann, Paulette, Jan, June E, Peggy and Carolyn) I would like to thank everyone who attended our kick-offs at City Centre Atlantic on Dresden Row and Sunnyside Mall in Bedford. Special thanks to

the malls for allowing us into their spaces for this inaugural year, our honorary chairs for each site - Roger and Carolyn, and a big thanks to the McCallas and 'The Bells of St. David's' for providing entertainment for the kick-offs.

We've been planning this event since the summer, and the Christmas ornaments couldn't come out soon enough for us! The search was not as easy as we thought it would

be, but we're very happy with the angels we did find, and we've had many compliments on them.

Thanks to everyone for volunteering to work at the donation tables and the gift-wrapping booth. We hope this spirit flows into next year and enables us to plan for a third location in Dartmouth.

JUNE BOURQUE
Chair of Angels in Memory

TESTIMONIAL...

A couple of months ago we received a phone call from a woman enquiring about hospices in our area. Her mother had recently died in Rosedale Hospice in Calgary; her mother and the whole family had been treated with so much kindness, love and support, she wanted to ensure that a similar facility existed in the area where she lived. She was disappointed that there was no such place, but decided to join our society to help reach that goal. Welcome to Janice Webber, our new member. The following are excerpts from an article about the family's experience with hospice, as written by her sister Julie Ann Copp. Thank you, Julie Ann, for sharing your story with us. Betty Morton

Two months after her cancer was discovered, my mother's oncologist told her that no more radiation would be done. The doctor brought a couple of brochures over to where I sat, handed them to me and said "This is something I want you to do for your mother. Call these people and find out what they can do to help. You will need their skills to continue to provide your mom with the care she deserves." I could see that each brochure mentioned the word "Hospice", as I tucked them into my purse.

Until this time the word "Hospice" meant little to me. I really did not know what it was. The pictures in the brochures looked like an old folk's home. This was definitely not what we envisioned for our mother and certainly the antithesis of what she would want or accept. I called the places in the brochures and realized that providing a bed was not at all what they were about. It became clear that a hospice was a place to die: a place to end your time, where you would have the medical attention your family was not trained to provide, and where a volunteer would be by your bed if a family member was not; a place of peace and quiet where you would prepare yourself for the labour of dying and where

your family were welcome to stay with you. We determined that one brother and one sister would inspect the hospice facilities in the city and, hopefully, a bed would be available if and when it was needed.

I was home for a week when the call came. Mom had had a stroke and was in the Tom Baker Cancer Centre of Foothills Hospital. I flew back immediately to help my siblings. Mom lay against her pillows. The arm and leg on her left side no longer worked. Her left eye stared off to one side, unseeing and unblinking. There was no more pretending that this illness would go away. I put my arms around her and cried. The doctors told us they were in the business of curing, and that there would be no cure. We needed to move her to a hospice. There had been no beds available in any of the hospices, but miraculously, on the day we needed one, a bed for our mother was found at The Rosedale Hospice. What was even more surprising was that this was the hospice both my brother and sister had favoured over all the others.

There is more to a hospice than the physical property. It is like being in a cocoon where the rest of the world no longer matters. There is

a feeling that one has come to the right place and that all will be well; that we were in this together with the staff of the Rosedale and that they were going to shoulder some of the burden.

The Rosedale, with its solid brick walls and tall shady trees, seemed a peaceful haven, far from the ambulances and hospital loudspeakers. Its location in a residential neighborhood allowed us to pretend to ourselves that we were coming home each time we arrived. Although there were many nurses, nurses aides, a resident doctor on call and trained volunteers, it did not seem clinical. Homemade cookies accompanied the coffee pot and a fridge full of juices and other beverages were there for the taking. Large vases of flowers made joyful statements here and there about the building and when commented upon, one learned that the flowers were grown in the gardens of the Rosedale itself. Over the next weeks we spent many hours in the garden, sitting under the apple trees on benches where we could view the gardens which were provided and maintained by volunteers in memory of others who had passed through the Rosedale before us. The Rosedale provided comfort in every way. There was a peaceful,

"When you can no longer add days to your life, . . .

homelike atmosphere that gave us relief from the stress of watching our mother struggle against the inevitable. The staff became our sounding board, our source of what to expect and how to interpret what we were observing as our mother suffered yet another stroke. We could finally talk to someone about her impending death without feeling like ghouls.

There had been a number of false alerts but on Mom's last day, somehow we knew that this was going to be the real thing. We were called shortly after five am by the brother on duty. All of us arrived as quickly as possible. Mom lay as she had for days, breathing loudly, her arms held stiffly against the beribboned nightie the nurses had chosen the night before. We hovered for a while and then found places to sit and talk quietly throughout the building. The staff turned her and

washed her and put on another beautiful bedgown. The day wore on and our mother continued to breathe loudly. Around 5:15 pm one of my brothers came to the easy chair where I was dozing and woke me. "Come now," he said. "Something's happening."

All of my siblings were gathered around the bed. The chaplain was there and two or three of the staff. She breathed a loud raspy breath and a second one. We all joined hands and waited. There was no more. She didn't breathe again. She was gone. She, who had given us life, had lost hers. The agony of it was almost unbearable. I couldn't be strong; I couldn't hold back the tears. We each moved to the top of the bed and said our goodbyes and gave her our last kisses. The nurses gathered us into their arms and they cried with us. In those moments we felt their pain as they

watched ours. They had given more intense caring and emotion to us over that short period of time at the Rosedale than many of our own extended family had given us over a lifetime. The depth of it was mind-boggling, and still is.

Every community deserves to have the kind of place where its members can retreat at the end of their lives to garner their strength for that final transition from this reality into the next: a place of dignity for the patient, where the love of family and community come together to cradle the spirit in a love that transcends this life and journeys with it to what comes next. We need to gather together to make this happen for us all. Donations to your local hospice society are needed. Do it for your community, your family and yourself.

A TRIBUTE...

Philip Neal Sidebottom ended his long three year battle with cancer in September 2006. He fought this insidious disease valiantly and, just as he lived his life, with passion, humour and dignity. Thanks to Phil and his wife Sybil, the Hospice Society has received close to \$12,000 in donations in his honour. These donations have come from the UK, Calgary, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, from friends, co-workers and family.

Though I never had the opportunity to meet him, it is obvious from the support we have received in his honour that he was extremely well loved. The following tribute to Phil was written by Sybil, who has now become a member of the Society. Welcome Sybil, and thank you for directing these generous donations our way.

Betty Morton

Philip Neal Sidebottom was born in Oldham, England. He was educated in the United Kingdom and qualified there as a Mechanical Nuclear Engineer; he immigrated to Canada in 1977. Here he pursued a career with Nova Scotia Power, building, operating and managing the provincial power generating plant until he retired in 2001.

Following his retirement, Phil devoted his time and energies to travel, his grandchildren and to developing his talent as an artist, becoming a skilled amateur painter and the winner of awards in several exhibitions. Throughout his life, in addition to these interests, Phil had a passion for flying and

for working with his hands, doing carpentry, home renovations and mechanical work.

Phil had such a passion and zest for life even after the cancer took over his body. He fought courageously for three years, losing that battle at age 63. Phil was determined not to die in hospital and as his illness

progressed, his personal interest in hospice developed. He and his family felt there was a lack of medical home care for his circumstances: a hospice facility would have

made a tremendous difference to his comfort in the last weeks of his life. He would have been so proud of all the donations made in his name to the Hospice Society. He

would really have wanted others to benefit from a much needed hospice facility in Halifax, even though he did not.

ANNABELLE'S CAPS...

In 2001, Canadian knitting designer Lucy Neatby compiled a book of hand knitted hat patterns. The patterns had been created by Lucy and twenty five other designers from Canada, the United States and New Zealand, to support their friend and fellow knitter Annabelle Dawson, who was diagnosed with cancer.

Annabelle wore as many hats as there are patterns in the book: she

was a wife, mother, friend, mentor, teacher, knitter and so much more. It is a testament to her character that she continued to give more than she asked of others.

The pattern book "Annabelle's Caps" is dedicated to Annabelle Dawson and to all those who are living with cancer, and their supporters, wherever they may be. All proceeds from the book are donated to respected cancer care

institutions in Canada and the United States.

A generous donation of \$2000 has been made to the Hospice Society in memory of Annabelle Dawson. The Society thanks the designer group for making this important contribution possible. To purchase a copy of "Annabelle's Caps", contact Lucy Neatby 434-5179.

THANK YOU TO ANN, BETTY AND RBC ...

The Hospice Society has received \$1000 from the Royal Bank of Canada under the Employee/Pensioners Volunteer Grant Program. Ann Matthews and Betty Morton each qualified for a \$500 donation in acknowledgment of the numerous volunteer hours they have given to the Society.

ASSISTANT TO THE BOARD'S SECRETARY...

The Hospice Society is moving along with the activities that were planned last year and presented at the 2006 AGM, one of the tasks being to hire an administrative assistant to Betty Morton, secretary to the board, who has been working really hard to keep up with the demands of the Society. These demands have been increasing exponentially, reflecting growth in membership, donations and general activities; in order to sustain and maintain the growth, the board realized that an assistant to the secretary was crucial. After the investigation of different possibilities, board members Michelle Pinfold and Betty Morton selected Stephanie Munroe for the job. The board has hired her for a set amount of hours per week to help Betty in her administrative duties. Stephanie is energetic and enthusiastic and we're positive her contribution will be key to the continuous growth of the Society.

LELY ABUD
Chair

THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS

Carol Anne Ando
Karin Myers
John Owen
Sybil Sidebottom
Janice Webber

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"When you can no longer add days to your life, add life to your days."