

Talk it up Victoria



Renfrew Victoria Hospital

Your Community Healthcare Centre

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Life beyond work!

The RVH family is a busy, dedicated group of professionals who give their all on a daily basis. This issue of *Talk It Up Victoria* provides a glimpse of how they find balance in their lives. Whether it's sports, family or the arts, our team is as passionate about their leisure pursuits as they are about their role in our community's health care. We hope you enjoy their stories as much as they enjoy their lives!

Combine two dogs with two skis and, hang on for the ride, you're skijoring!

Pastimes can come into our lives from the most unexpected sources. Take skijoring, for example. It was a rather unruly dog that first inspired Cari-lynn McSorley and her husband Paul to try this obscure Scandinavian sport.

They were living in the Yukon at the time, so they had been exposed to the combination of dog-sledding and cross-country skiing known as skijoring.

"We had this dog who was terrible on a leash," recalls McSorley. "We figured maybe he'd pull for a reason."

That was a few years ago.

Today, Paul and Cari-lynn are masters to four skijoring dogs and they just competed for the first time at the sport's world championships, where they placed comfortably among the top 20 competitors on the globe.

It started with local for-fun races, where

the couple's natural athleticism and skill with dogs led them to a number of first-place finishes. When they got serious about the sport, Cari-lynn took skate-ski lessons and they adopted some serious racing dogs. It should be noted, though, that the couple's two German short-haired pointers and their two "greysthers" (hounds crossed with greyhounds), are more family members than racing machines. They happily live indoors and sleep in comfort on the bed.

Cari-lynn and Paul travel to competitions every weekend through the winter. They train in the spring and fall by harnessing up behind the dogs and either running as fast as they can or "bikejoring" using unpowered scooters. The sport is a true work-out for everyone involved. Skijoring involves more than just leaning back on your skis and letting the dogs pull you along. The people are expected to carry half the load, so they are actively skate-skiing throughout the 16-kilometre race course.

Racers are regularly skiing between 30 and 35 kilometres per hour. They are also directing the dogs and maintaining their focus despite the distractions of other dogs and animals. McSorley says wild rabbits are a regular hazard in this sport.

"We've made many a snow angel alongside that course," she chuckles. "It's fast and it's crazy."

It's also the perfect leisure release. McSorley is a nurse supervisor and coordinator at RVH. Working through the night, when regular management staff are off-duty, the role involves a high level of responsibility, making sure all of the necessary resources and staff are in place to manage the needs of patients and staff as they arise.

"There can be a lot of unexpected demands," comments McSorley.

She enjoys the challenges of her career, and she particularly enjoys the warmth and friendliness she has encountered at RVH since she began working there on a casual basis a year ago.

When asked if skijoring provides a necessary work-life balance, she laughs.

"I don't know if I could use the word 'balance'," she admits. "This sport and my dogs rule my life."



Cari-lynn in action with one of her dogs.

Excitement builds with preparation for a new family member

Paul and Meredith Brabant are expecting their third child.

Over the next 20 months, they will be spending a lot of their spare time preparing for its arrival.

“It’s a bit different than a regular pregnancy,” acknowledges Meredith with a smile.

In fact, they will actually travel halfway around the world when delivery time arrives.

This baby will be born in the poverty-stricken east African country of Ethiopia. As an infant, it will be adopted by the Brabants and brought home to Renfrew to be raised with their two biological children, now aged five and two.

“From the beginning, we wanted to have both biological and adopted children,” note the couple, who are both x-ray technologists at RVH.

For the baby, adoption in Canada could very well mean the difference between survival and death. Infant mortality rates in Ethiopia are very high and the average life expectancy is only 45 years. AIDS and malnutrition are both rampant and health care is largely non-existent, with just two medical doctors per 100,000 people, according to the 2006 World Health Report.

Over the next two years, the Brabants will go through a series of home visits by social workers and interviews with Family and Children’s Services staff. They will be required to pass checks by the local police as well as the OPP, the RCMP and Interpol. They will also attend two weekends of training in Ottawa, as part of the provincial requirements for all adopting parents.

While they are not concerned about raising a third child, they do want to learn as much as they can to succeed in the special challenges of adoption and blended families.

The Brabants plan to teach their children about the culture of Africa and Ethiopia, and instill pride in their mixed heritage.

Paul is already immersing himself in the Amharic language, thanks to a DVD package he purchased from the Foreign Language Institute.

Paul and Meredith will spend approximately 10 days in Ethiopia when they travel there to collect their new child, and they plan to make the most of that time by sightseeing and experiencing the local culture.

“We’re really looking forward to that,” says Meredith. “We plan to carry some of their culture home with us.”



The Brabant family, from left, Owen, Meredith, Paul and Ruby.

Horsing around on the homefront



Kevin Gillan with Mike on the farm.

Kevin Gillan knows that, no matter what time he gets home from work, there will always be a welcome there for him.

As he drives into the yard, his six horses will usually rally around him, looking for a treat or access to the shelter of their stalls.

The horses, combined with about 40 sheep, are both a source of pride and a stress-buster for Gillan.

“If you have a hard day at work, you go out with the horses or you go out in the bush to do some cutting,” says the RVH maintenance worker. “You leave everything else behind.”

While the solitary connection with the animals provides daily enjoyment, Gillan notes that there are also a lot of social opportunities in farming. The connection goes back to his youth, when he got into 4H with his cousins and helped them show their beef cattle. The extended family also had seven ponies—one for each cousin.

“It was a lot of fun,” Gillan recalls.

He first bought horses of his own in the 1980s, and did the circuit showing them at local fairs. He travels a little farther, to the Elmira and St. Jacob’s area, each spring to attend horse sales.

This is a hobby that comes with a healthy dose of hard work. Gillan harvests his own hay in June, July and August, and keeps himself busy maintaining all the necessary farm machinery, feeding the animals and cleaning their stalls.

At this time of year, an average workday begins at about 5 a.m., when the horses are let out of the barn for a day in the yard.

“It keeps me mobile,” Gillan says. “I enjoy it.”

Nurses put responsibilities on ice for a bit of play time

Nurses gain a lot of professional experience in stick-handling tricky situations.

On the job, RVH Dialysis Nurse Manager Janice Verch-Whittington can organize the schedules of dozens of



dialysis patients and staff in the blink of an eye, ER Nurse Terri-Lynn Sukkel can handle a complicated trauma case with poise and confidence, and Discharge Planner Susan Goldsmith can assess the complex needs of a patient about to be released.

Each of the three RVH staff members has also found a more light-hearted approach to stick-handling. In the last few years, they've all become recreational hockey players.

Verch-Whittington led the way, signing up for hockey school in Cobden about two-and-a-half years ago. She had played recreational hockey in her days at the University of Ottawa, but admits that her skates and skills had become pretty rusty.

"I was falling all over the place," she chuckles. "I was outside my comfort zone completely. It was very challenging physically."

The school consists of 10 sessions run over two to three weeks. Despite the aches, pains and bruises of the first week, Verch-Whittington persevered.

Now, she plays in the Arnprior recreational league every week and recruits as many co-workers as possible to join her on the ice.

She looks forward to hockey night each week, and has made a wide circle of new friends throughout the Ottawa Valley.

"It's boosted my self-esteem, and my kids think it's pretty cool too," reports Verch-Whittington.

"Although I'm approaching 40, I can take on something new," she adds with pride.

From left, Janice Verch-Whittington, Susan Goldsmith and Terri-Lynn Sukkel suited up for some time on the ice.

Finding release on a country road

Denise Dominy has heard the call of the open road, and is responding with the roar of a motorcycle.

Last summer, the RVH speech and language pathologist earned her motorcycle licence and she's spending this winter dreaming of next summer's tours.



"I really enjoy cruising down a quiet road," she says. "And I like the 'cool factor' of being able to say 'I drive a motorcycle'."

Dominy explains that she is actually following in her husband Ralph's bike tracks. He got his licence a year earlier, and encouraged her to get out of the passenger's seat and onto her own bike.

"He felt we'd both be happier with our own motorcycles," she says. "I guess the big dream is one of togetherness and shared enjoyment of a hobby."

The couple enjoys short trips—afternoon jaunts through the Ottawa Valley countryside, getaways to their cottage and possibly overnights in nearby towns.

Dominy says two wheels are very different than four.

"When I'm driving a car, I often solve problems or make complex plans which may be personal or work-related," she explains. "I can't do that on a motorcycle. I have to concentrate on the process of driving, the road conditions and the vehicles around me."

"That in itself is an escape," she concludes.

Denise Dominy is gearing up for another motorcycle season.

Music takes Cruise from gigabytes to gigs

Local bands like Southpaw, Marauder and the Gully Cats have been helping people unwind for years.

For Ted Cruise, a member of the RVH information technology team, it is a pastime that involves more than a couple of hours on a Friday or Saturday night. He has been writing the songs that others enjoy, practising and performing on stage for the past 30 years.

The interest goes back to when he was six, and picked up his first guitar. Ten years later, Cruise was the guitar player for Marauder, a local hit on the high school scene.

“When I finished high school, I joined a working act and played full-time for two years, six nights a week traveling a corridor from Montreal in the east to Thunder Bay in the west,” Cruise recalls.

Eventually, the novelty wore thin and Cruise went back to school to study electronics.

Like music, his career has included numerous stops at places like Mitel and Prestec Electronics in Ottawa, Com 1 Computers and his own consulting business locally. He joined the RVH family in October of 2005.



Ted Cruise, second from right in 1978 with bandmate Peter Payton at his left, and above, far left, with Southpaw.

Fabric weaves its magic in a busy life

Dr. Sharon Collins' interest in fabric goes back to her childhood. Her mother was a talented seamstress who sewed out of necessity to clothe her nine children.

About when she was to begin school, Collins was being taught the basics of how to handle a needle and thread.

The skills have been honed throughout her life. She recalls making her own clothes in high school, and preparing for an important job interview by making a new outfit to suit the occasion.

About 10 or 12 years ago, she fell in love with quilting. That too, has been taken to a new level in the creation of fibre art.

“It’s beyond sewing the straight line,” Collins says in humble understatement.

The fabric works she creates are beautiful interpretations of images that inspire her. They often include hand-painted or dyed fabric and they blend texture with colour to create unique moods.

In some cases, she is inspired by an object such as the play of light on a flower. At other times, the fabric speaks to her and reveals its own image such as “Northern Lights”, a shimmering mixture of purples, turquoise and blue created with hand-dyed and commercial fabrics.

Collins says she can spend up to 30 hours on a single creation, and often spends 30 hours a week with her fabrics.

“It’s a drive, but it’s also an out,” she says, explaining that sewing time is a relaxing escape and creative release.

“I can sit in my studio all day and barely come up for a cup of coffee,” she admits.

The time is easier to find now, with all three grown children away from home. But Collins says it was always important to find time for her artistic pursuits.

“You make the time because it’s part of who you are,” she says. “I’ve always made time for that aspect of my life.”

Next month, Collins' fabric art will be on display at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum in Almonte as part of an exhibit on the theme “The Essence of Place”. Participating in shows and taking classes adds a social element to the pursuit.

“I like the camaraderie,” says Collins. “It adds another element.”



Dr. Sharon Collins with some of her fibre art creations.

Talk it up Victoria - the Renfrew Victoria Hospital newsletter

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CARING *for* TOMORROW

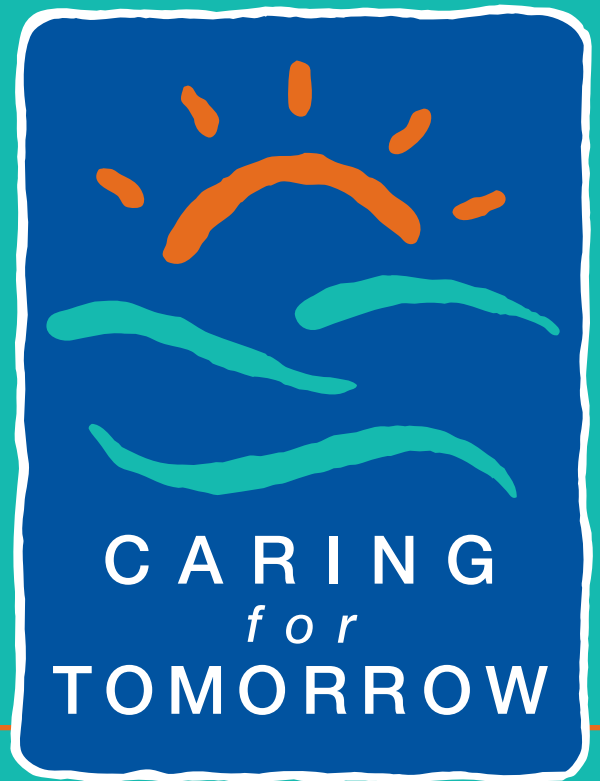
News from the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation

If you would like to learn more about the various ways you can contribute to Renfrew Victoria Hospital, please contact us:

Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation, 499 Raglan Street North,
Renfrew, Ontario K7V 1P6

Phone: (613) 432-4851, ext. 263

www.rvhfoundation.com



Thank you for your giving spirit!

While the 2008 Tree of Lights account will remain open until March 31, which is the end of our fiscal year, we want to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of this annual Christmas campaign.

Once again, the people of this area have astounded us with their generosity. Your gifts to this campaign have reached approximately \$90,000—a significant contribution to the RVH Foundation CT Fund!

The hospital will be investing nearly \$3 million to bring this important diagnostic service to Renfrew.

“The Tree of Lights campaign is a shining example of the Renfrew area’s generosity,” comments RVH Foundation Chair

Jim Lemenchick, mentioning in particular the many volunteers who supported the campaign and Artist Betty Flower whose painting was featured on the card.

“Christmas is a time for giving, but we are delighted to report that our community’s support is ongoing,” he adds. “It is because of that high level of commitment that we have such a fine hospital in Renfrew.”

Donations to the Tree of Lights fund are often made to commemorate special people or honour loved ones. Those special tributes will be noted and posted on the RVH Foundation website, together with the honour roll of our supporters. Visit the website at: www.rvhfoundation.com.

Thanks to our community partners, the fun just never stops!

We’ve got a full list of events lined up to help everyone get through the final weeks of winter. Mark these on your calendar, and you won’t even have time to notice the cold winds and messy melting snowbanks!

Friday, February 27 – The Amigos will be hosting their fifth annual Celebration of Life dance, featuring Half Cutt, The Debenhams and the Ghost Town Cryers. The doors will open at the Renfrew Armouries on 7:00 p.m. and tickets will be available there. You can also buy tickets in advance at Scotia Bank, the Bear’s Den, Dahl’s Convenience, Sandy’s Deli and Mill Music. The entry fee is only \$10, and we guarantee this event will make you glad to be living in Renfrew! A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the RVH oncology program.

Sunday, March 8 – It’s bowling time! The local Loyal Orange Lodge #1393 is organizing its annual Bowl for Health and Fun in support of the RVH regional dialysis program. How long has it been since you decked yourself out in bowling shoes and

counted up strikes and spares? This is always an afternoon of fun competition, and everyone is welcome. To register a team, please contact Norm Eady at 613-432-4200.

Saturday, May 2 – The RVH Auxiliary’s Touch of Class Gala will sparkle at the Renfrew Inn. Originally scheduled for Saturday, February 14, the date was changed to accommodate those who were unable to attend because of previous commitments. We appreciate everyone’s interest and enthusiasm for this special event, and encourage you to set the date aside now to avoid disappointment. The sponsors and entertainers are looking forward to a full house on May 2! Tickets will be available at the RVH Foundation Office and other locations to be announced as the date draws nearer.



A look at where your money is invested through the year

While our major thrust has been the CT fund over the past year, a number of capital investments have been made to keep equipment up-to-date throughout the hospital. For example, in the past few months we have purchased:

- a continuous glucose monitor for our diabetes patients. This device, which is about the size of a quarter, records a patient's blood sugar levels throughout the day and night. The computerized



system takes more than 200 blood sugar readings a day while the patient continues daily activities at home. The results are provided in graph form to help the patient and our professional team track how various activities and foods affect sugar levels. The information is analyzed by our health care team to help refine the patient's diabetes management plan.

- BiPAP Vision, a non-invasive ventilator support system designed to deliver ventilation to individuals suffering from breathing problems, including sleep apnea, congestive heart failure and lung disorders. BiPAP stands for "bi-level positive airway pressure", a breathing apparatus that helps people get more air into their lungs. The new Vision system is simple to use and very accurate and reliable.



- A variety of new items for the emergency department, including a stretcher (in itself a significant investment at a cost of more than \$5,000), and a defibrillator heart monitor that helps staff detect irregularities in heart function and "shock" the heart back into rhythm.



- The installation of a new, fully digital x-ray system. This is a \$600,000 project that has just begun. It will involve the replacement of our current x-ray equipment, which is now more than 17 years old, and replacement with a Toshiba Radrex-I digital radiography system. The x-ray room will be completely refurbished as part of this project, which means that it will be closed down for the next six to eight weeks. General x-rays will still be provided, but will be done during these renovations in our fluoroscopy suite. This may result in longer wait times for non-urgent diagnostics during the renovation period. Please bear with us through these growing pains. The reward will be a state-of-the-art diagnostic radiology room to better serve our community.

There are many ways to give

We're proud of the way Renfrew area residents have been "Thinking Outside The Box" in recent months. The response has been overwhelming to our invitation to find creative new ways to be an RVH supporter. Card parties, hostess gifts, games nights and more have resulted in our community having fun while supporting the quality health care they deserve. Your support of this initiative is appreciated and we invite you to share your great ideas with others.

As you "wrap up" your financial reporting for 2008, be sure and discuss donation options with your financial advisors that can benefit both you and your charity of choice. We would be happy to discuss options such as our monthly donor program, memorial garden stones and planned giving.