

Linens still popular, thanks to Evelyn

While many may think the days of the dazzling white linen tablecloth and delicate doilies are things of the past, Evelyn Roth knows these special items are still around. True, they were far more popular in the days of our grandmothers but, as the person who handles linens for the Thrift Store, Evelyn says these treasures are still dropped off at the back door. There is a variety of items and styles in the linen category – table cloths, napkins, place mats, table runners and bedding -- from the luxury linens to the cotton, polyester items.

Evelyn, who joined the Auxiliary in 2007 and has worked at the Thrift Store the last ten years, ended up taking over as linen specialist when the person looking after them became ill. "I was concerned that the items may be discarded. With no one to look after them, they were piling up."

Some articles are stained or yellowed from age. She takes them home, uses a pre-stain remover and lets them sit overnight; stubborn stains are carefully treated with bleach. Then she launders and irons as required. If in need of repair, Gibsons' Auxiliary member, Merrilee Baldock, mends them so they are saleable.

It is a labour of love. "I appreciate the handiwork that has been put into the fine linens and doilies, as my mother and grandmother both did beautiful work. It is probably a forgotten art now," says Evelyn adding that Irish Damask linens and battenburg lace are still appreciated by some shoppers. Pricing of these precious handmade goods can be tricky; depending on its condition and size, a crocheted tablecloth may sell for \$30 or more while a Damask linen would be in the \$10-\$15 range.

Occasionally impressive items are dropped in the linen bin and for Evelyn, it is always about the handiwork such as the hours that go into a large, handmade cotton tablecloth or the knitted and tatted doilies. "This is fine, tedious work and we don't see it being done today. For example, there is very little tatting done these days."

Evelyn is grateful that the cashiers at the Thrift Store pass on the compliments to her when customers purchase the linens she has worked so hard on. "It's sometimes surprising who purchases," she smiles, "two women from northern BC bought doilies to incorporate into their quilting projects and a funeral home in Vancouver purchased embroidered table cloths for tea tables."

Along with the high-end merchandise, bedding is another category that entails time and work as it all has to be sorted, measured and priced. At the suggestion of Auxiliary volunteer, Elise Rudland, Sunshine Coast Community Living Association was approached to see if this task could be a work experience opportunity for individuals living with disabilities. Now Community Living pick up and return much of the bedding weekly. It is sized, folded and priced for sale and the Thrift Store pays a small fee per unit.



We made it — about the same time this newsletter arrives, spring will be officially welcomed. Seize the season, get out in the garden, walk with friends and enjoy your volunteering time.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." ~ Muhammad Ali

EVENTS CALENDAR

March 1-June 12 PH Annual Raffle tickets on sale from PH members (Tickets 3/\$5, Prizes of \$300, \$200, \$100)

April 14-17 BCAHA-AGM Conference in Prince George

Thurs April 25 HMB Fabulous Bridge Luncheon, 11-3, Botanical Gardens

Fri May 10 Auxiliary Day

Sat May 11th HMB Bake Sale – Trail Bay Mall – 10-3

Sat May 18 May Day Parade, Pender Harbour

A member shares her story

Carol Bowie has always volunteered. "I believe volunteering contributes positively to the greater community." Consequently, when she and her husband, David, moved to the Sunshine Coast in June, 1999, giving her time was a natural move. Carol joined the Healthcare Auxiliary and the Sunshine Coast Quilters Guild.

"As a new coaster I wanted to meet people," Carol says adding that with the Auxiliary she admires the "unerring focus on supporting health care and developing friendships with a similar goal." As a quilter her service component includes being one of the many who make baby quilts for every newborn on the Sunshine Coast.

There is a well-known adage about volunteering: find a cause you have a passion for and join in. For Carol, whose past working life included a wide range of vocations from secretary/bookkeeper to bus driver and newspaper columnist, this was the Loan Cupboard.

At a branch meeting in February 2000 she heard about the service that provides home support medical equipment to the commu-

nity at no cost. "Inside my heart and head, I knew I wanted to be involved there."

Over the last 19 years Carol has seen many changes at the Loan Cupboard that originally was only opened two hours a day (more on holidays and weekends) with only one person on a shift. As a new volunteer, she trained along with a seasoned volunteer. Today there are 30 volunteers and they are open five days a week, 10am to 2pm. She recalls that in 2003 the Loan Cupboard inventory was computerized and there were 320 articles. Now 880 pieces of equipment make up the inventory and each month 170 pieces of equipment are lent out.

As well as serving on the Auxiliary executive for many years, Carol was, along with Betty Laidlaw, a founding member of the Inventory Team at the Loan Cupboard. She says it has been wonderful seeing the changes and progress of this popular loan service.

"In the last eight years or so, the team I worked on at the Loan Cupboard have focused on assisting the hospital staff and community health

workers to learn how to record what is needed to borrow equipment for their patients," explains Carol adding that all the data needs to be entered on a master sheet and that often equipment is required outside of the Loan Cupboard hours of operation. One morning she arrived for her shift at 8:30 am to find a hospital staff member carefully teaching a new employee how to do the paperwork. "My heart was overjoyed to see how well the system is working," she recalls, adding that part of the joy of volunteering is her working relationships. "Because the Loan Cupboard is located in the hospital, I get to enjoy the camaraderie with hospital staff as well as Auxiliary members."

In January Carol retired from the Loan Cupboard. She lauds the team of people she has worked with over the years as "cooperative, hard-working and cheerful." As well, she says her husband has been a solid supporter assisting at the Loan Cupboard as well as other aspects of the Auxiliary. While Carol, a born volunteer, is saying good-bye to the Loan Cupboard, she will still be a familiar face at the Auxiliary.

Passing along plaudits

Recently, Auxiliary volunteer Judy Forman-Clark, was at Sechelt Hospital for treatment. Her stay turned into a heart warming incident that she wanted to share.

When she was asked to put on a pair of socks, she mentioned that the socks are often donated to the Thrift Store where she volunteers. Pam, the nurse, became very ani-

mated and proceeded to thank her and said, "You have no idea what your donations mean to us here and throughout the hospital." Then a man in scrubs with 'Tim' on his nameplate, shook her hand and thanked her saying, "You volunteers do so much towards providing our equipment."

"I responded on behalf of all

of us, saying it is our pleasure to help," states Judy but says it didn't stop there. During a follow-up with Dr. Black (he is Dr. duPlesses' replacement), he also mentioned the Thrift Store saying that being new to the Coast, he had gone into the store to introduce himself. "What a lovely community we live in," glows Judy.