

Pacific HeartBeat

JULY 2019 NEWSLETTER

Often, in our newsletters, we hear from medical experts and researchers who bring fascinating medical information related to the heart. This time, we are taking a different approach—an article from one of our many volunteers who visit patients in cardiac wards.

Making the Healing Process a Bit Easier

The View from a Volunteer Visitor—
by Adrienne White



Adrienne White,
International Speaker
& Leadership
Consultant

One of the perks of having open heart surgery is that you can become a volunteer with the Pacific Open Heart Association! You may wonder, with a limited amount of time to talk to somebody before or after their surgery, what can you possibly share to reassure and inform patients? Let's start closer to the beginning...

As with many people, my need for open heart surgery came as a bit of a shock. At barely 50 years of age, and despite both parents having had heart attacks, the possibility of a heart attack hadn't really occurred to me.

I'm sure I'm not the only one who experienced this whole 'heart adventure' at the worst possible time. Not only was the idea of open heart surgery frightening, the prospect of months of healing was daunting. But you know, through the process, I learned a lot.

For me, quadruple bypass surgery identified some unexpected life lessons. These lessons have been distilled into a simple acronym that has been referred to by some as the secret ingredient to recovering from open heart surgery with a bit more grace and ease: C.A.B.L.E. Here is what it stands for...

The C stands for Clarity

While working with a Board of Directors, I noticed that some of the board members were having difficulty getting help for their portfolio. As it turned out, they defined help way too broadly. They needed to be clear and specific. I find the same is true for healing from such a major surgery. Let's face it—help is needed. People care, and generally speaking, they truly want to help. I'm sure

you've heard the well-meaning refrain, "Call me if you need anything." But, typically, you don't call and they don't check in. The truth is, unless they have been through open heart surgery, chances are good that they do not have a clue about how they can help. If you give them the gift of clarity, the chances are much better that they will be willing and able to help.

Weeks before my own surgery, I sent a very raw and honest email to my closest friends. I told them what was going on and clearly explained what I would need to make it through. Also, when talking to people, if they said, "Oh let me know if you need anything," inevitably my answer was something like, "Great! Thank you for offering. I need rides to follow-up appointments, and to be honest, an occasional assist with cooking, laundry and making the bed would make healing easier. It is really uncomfortable for me to ask for help, but if you can assist with any of that, even once a month, that would be a massive help."

Sometimes they could. Sometimes they couldn't. Either way, people generally can't help if they don't know what you need. And wow, is it ever freeing for you and the people around you to know what you need. It takes courage, to be sure. I bet you're courageous enough.

A stands for Ask and Allow

You might think that A stands for attitude, because a positive attitude makes all the difference. But, in this case, it stands for something different. When recovering from open heart surgery, especially when there are leg grafts involved, or you have additional health challenges, you need help. It is especially true if you are committed to protecting your sternum and incisions for optimal healing (and really, why wouldn't you be). To be willing to ask politely for what you need, and then to allow someone to help, can be hard. In fact, it might be more difficult than recovering from surgery,

but it can make recovery easier. I bet you're brave enough.

B stands for Be aware

The doctors, the nurses, and caregivers are generally not psychic. They need to know if something seems off. I found that was true with my medication. Once I was home, I was coughing so much that I lost my voice. It happened to coincide with a cardiology appointment. When I explained that I had lost my voice from coughing, the doctor realized that I needed a medication change.

Coughing as a side effect? Who knew? The point is, it's important to keep track of what you are feeling and what you are noticing. Write it down. Keep a log, because even if you feel like your brain is operating perfectly, after anaesthesia and pain medication, it probably isn't yet. In fact, you'd be smart to take someone with you to your follow-up appointments. I bet you're wise enough.

L stands for Look at your progress...

...from the day of your surgery, not a few weeks before. As a volunteer, I've come across some folks who are frustrated because two weeks before bypass surgery they could run up and down stairs. A few days after surgery they struggled with only a few stairs. Let's face it, this is a big surgery. It takes time to heal. It takes patience. The one delightful thing about recovering from heart surgery is that the milestones, especially at the beginning, are plentiful and quite predictable. At least that was my experience. I found that the milestones can be encouraging, even if it is just being able to go to the bathroom without adult supervision. I bet you can look at progress from the day of surgery.

E is for Ensure

Ensure that the people around you know they are appreciated. While you're in hospital,

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Making the Healing Process a Bit Easier (Continued from page 1)

cleaners create an environment to reduce your exposure to germs. The nurses, doctors, and various care professionals do their utmost to answer your questions and keep you as comfortable as possible, though their priority is your health. As the patient, recovery is typically a tough slog, but remember, this whole process is also tough on the people who care about you. Take time to let

them know that they're appreciated, even on the lousy days. I bet you are positive enough to do it.

C.A.B.L.E.

Have clarity. Ask for help and allow. Be aware of changes. Look at progress from day zero and ensure that the people around you are acknowledged. These are a few of the choices and behaviours that will help make your healing process easier, for you and the people who care about you. ♥

President's Report— Summer 2019



Rolf Gullmes

I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Rolf Gullmes. I had triple bypass surgery at the Royal Columbian Hospital in 2011. I became a member of POHA and a visitor at RCH in 2012. It is a great experience to repay what was given

to me by a POHA visitor when I was a hospital patient.

I have served on the POHA Board for three years and was elected President in April 2019. During that time I've seen board members devote their efforts to improving the organization.

Among them is our past-president, Rick Cozzuol. During his three years of leadership, Rick served us well. He is credited with

improving the visitor program at St. Paul's Hospital. Under the leadership of Aaron Lanteigne and Richard Lemire, we now have a full complement of visitors for the first time in many years.

Membership continues to be a concern. We need your continued support and would appreciate your efforts in helping us to grow. Currently we have 270 members. In the lower mainland, there are about 2,500 open heart procedures performed annually at the Royal Columbian, Vancouver General and St. Paul's hospitals. We need to recruit more members from the patients we visit. If you have any suggestions please contact us—we need your help.

I am pleased to report that we have fifty-two POHA visitors at the surgical hospitals and thirteen visitors at the eight feeder hospitals. We are proud of them; their visits help to lower the stress levels of pre- and post-operative patients. Congratulations for a job well done.

The Pacific Open Heart Association is run entirely by volunteers. By becoming a member, you support an organization that enables volunteers to appear in hospitals to visit folks who are about to have, or who have recently had, open heart surgery. POHA does other good work, and donates to important heart-related hospital equipment. You can help POHA make a difference by donating or becoming a member.

Membership Cards

To save costs, a new approach has been taken to the production and distribution of cards. Rather than being renewed annually, members will receive reformatted, undated cards with this newsletter.

Roland Clifford



Our new Vice President is Roland Clifford. He is a digital typographer who composes documents, and arranges the printing and distribution of POHA materials.

Volunteering

As a member you may wish to get involved in helping POHA get stronger.

Contact me at Rolf@RolfTheRealtor.com or Roland at info@pacificopenheart.org

Thanks for your continuing support. ♥

Rolf Gullmes

President, Pacific Open Heart Association

Communications

The Pacific Open Heart Association uses its website for information and membership and sends emails to those members who have provided email addresses.

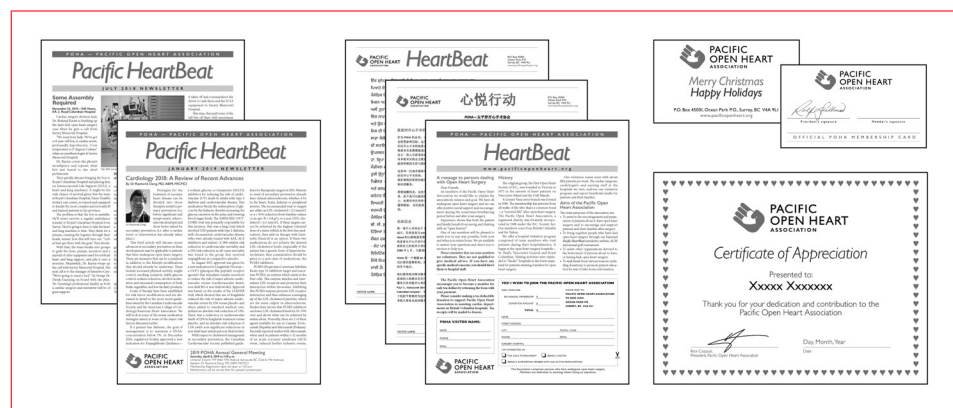
In addition, POHA produces a wide variety of material for patients and members.

In 2016, POHA introduced a new logo. Some stationery still exists with the old logo. It should be depleted in 2019.

Pacific HeartBeat newsletters are published in January and July. On the website they show in full colour. For economy, printing is in two colours. Each print run is 2,000 copies. We send 270 to members. The remainder are given to open heart patients and attendees at Healthy Heart meetings.

HeartBeat information sheets are given to patients. Language availability: English, Mandarin and Punjabi.

Membership cards are distributed with the July newsletter.



Merry Christmas cards are attached to one hundred poinsettias. Santa gives them to patients hospitalized during the holidays.

Certificates of Appreciation are awarded to long-term retiring members for exceptional service.

Baseball caps are worn by POHA volunteers at the Founder's Cup charity golf tournament. Their high visibility has attracted a lot of attention.

1600 **POHA pillows** are produced annually. They are made by Telus volunteers. POHA visitors give the pillows to post-operative open heart patients at St. Paul's Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital.

Other material produced: Consent forms; ID cards; AGM documents; visitor information pads; stationery and membership correspondence. ♥



35th Annual “POHA Moe Pitcher Golf Tournament”– June 14, 2019

This year, sixty-eight golfers played golf at Poppy Estate Golf Course in Aldergrove. It was a time for renewing old friendships, remembering those who were not with us and for making new acquaintances.

Our golf committee endeavours to provide an affordable and enjoyable experience for every golfer. Unfortunately several golfers experienced medical issues and were last-minute cancellations. I hope that they are on the mend and that they will be able to join us again next year.

A successful tournament is only possible with the support of our generous sponsors. They allow us to donate excess funds to local hospitals for the benefit of cardiac patients. Please take note of the following sponsors and try to use their businesses.

Coast Capital Savings was, again, a major



The winning team—Rick Howard, Bart Findlay, Peter Edwards and Harry Perler were presented the trophy by Joanne Pitcher

sponsor. This year’s Hole sponsors were DMCL Chartered Accountants; National Bank; Home Restaurants; Hollis Wealth; Austin Metal Fabricators (Len and Monique Mueller sponsorship and auction donation); RCH Hospital Foundation; Glen Doherty (Fraser Health); Tina Oye (VGH); HUB Insurance; Mainland Fireplaces; West Coast Golf Group; Golden Eagle Golf Course. A special thanks to those donating extra prizes.

The tournament cannot run smoothly without the help of our volunteers. Thanks to Mike Martin, Pat Hagan, Alfred Buchi, Dennis Kraft, Ellen Cozzuol, and the golf

committee—Rick Cozzuol, Bob Axford, Amelia Moloci and John Chesman.

Tournament Results:

This year tournament winners were Bart Findlay, Harry Perler, Rick Howard and Peter Edwards. They finished with a great seven under par. Well done.

Patricia Van Vloten was the only one to sink a putt for \$120.00. Patricia donated her winnings to POHA. Thank you Patricia and HUB Insurance.

Honorable mention to Adele Cutri who was closest to the pin on both competition holes beating all the golfers. Well done Adele.

Gord Sutherland won the early bird draw for a free entry to the 2020 tournament.

If you are interested in adding your name to our golfer list please contact me at: rkocheff@telus.net or 604-467-2904.

Thanks to all for attending.

We look forward to seeing you next year. ♥
Roger Kocheff

Letter from Peace Arch Hospital

On behalf of the 4th floor staff at Peace Arch Hospital, we would like to extend our deepest and sincerest appreciation to the Pacific Open Heart Association for the donation of two patient educational tablets. These tablets will help us prepare our patients for their open-heart surgery and their recovery through education.

Thank you for this generous donation! ♥

Anita Ytsma, RN, MScN, *Clinical Operations Manager PAH ICU, Telemetry, 4th floor Medicine, Cardiac Rehab and Diagnostic Cardiology*



Left to Right are: Marjorie Mhondiwa, RN (holding tablet); Naomi Roth, RN (holding tablet); Dunia Pinnegar (Clinical Nurse Educator); Anne Brownlee (Director); Pat Hagan, POHA; Mike Martin, POHA; Louise Willis, RN (Patient Care Coordinator); Anita Ytsma, RN (Manager).

New Board Member– Jay Chambers



Jay Chambers

I was born and brought up in Vancouver. My working background was in the areas of retail and regulatory authority.

Recently, when I retired, one of my first to do’s was to become a volunteer POHA visitor. The opportunity to offer support to individuals who have just had open heart surgery was appealing to me and has proven to be, personally, very rewarding. ♥

Jay Chambers

2019 Don Topp Award – Barbara Smith



The recipient of this year's award is Barbara Smith. The award is given in recognition of going above and beyond in one's duties as a volunteer. Barb is hard working, fun and funny, always smiling and a joy to work with. Barb took on the management of the membership database and later the role of Treasurer.

Barb also volunteers at Langley Memorial Hospital Auxiliary as the Treasurer. ♥

Rick Cozzuol presents the Don Topp Memorial Trophy to Barbara Smith

2019 POHA Annual General Meeting

Thirty-eight members attended the AGM on April 6, 2019. Board members and volunteers introduced themselves and stated how they became involved with POHA.

The financial report showed a good situation in conformance with our investment strategy and government requirements.

POHA continues to provide funds to the surgery hospitals as well as "feeder" hospitals for use in cardiac care.

The Captains' reports confirmed the appreciation of the hospitals, their staff and patients for the valuable service that POHA visitors provide.

Rick Cozzuol presided at his last meeting as POHA president. He has provided leadership, hard work, and commitment for the past three years. Thank you, Rick!

Several new positions were confirmed for the next two years: Rolf Gullmes as President; Roland Clifford as Vice President; Aaron Lanteigne as Captain of St. Paul's visitors; Richard Lemire as Assistant Captain of St. Paul's visitors. Current members of the board have one more year remaining in their term.

Last December we lost a member of the POHA community, Jennifer Rule—captain of the St. Paul's visitors. She worked tirelessly to ensure that heart patients at the hospital were visited.

This year our guest speaker, Dr. Raymond Dong, cardiologist, gave an entertaining presentation on Preventative Cardiology. He impressed upon the attendees the importance of exercise and healthy eating. ♥

POHA contributes to Lifepak 15 monitor



Glen Doherty, Operations Manager Cardiac Surgery, ICU/Diagnostic Cardiology and Kiran Sanghe, 2 South, Patient Care Coordinator, at Royal Columbian Hospital with Lifepak 15.

Glen Doherty wrote to POHA about the Lifepak monitor in the 2 South Stepdown Cardiac Unit at Royal Columbian Hospital. "Thank you so much for your generosity. We are so grateful for your support. This vital machine makes a huge difference in the care we provide everyday."

The Lifepak 15 is a state-of-the-art portable monitor/defibrillator used during transport of high risk patients within the hospital. In the event of an emergency, it can be used as a defibrillator and to provide a metronome to guide CPR compressions and ventilation.

A plaque will be attached to recognize POHA's donation towards the purchase of this unit. ♥

POHA Volunteer Visitors

The main purpose of POHA is to assist in the encouragement and preparation of patients about to have open heart surgery and to encourage and support patients and their families after surgery. This goal is achieved by the work of teams of dedicated volunteers, all of whom have had surgery themselves, who visit most patients before and after surgery.

There is a team of volunteers at each of the three surgery hospitals in the Lower Mainland, and a team that covers the Fraser Health feeder hospitals.

Royal Columbian Hospital

• Robert Axford • Ed Bradbeer • David Chapman • Rick Cozzuol • Karen Dalgetty • Bill Fedechko • Matt Foley • Rolf Gullmes • Wayne Haluk • Pat Hagan • Dave Harris • Bob Lauro • Bernie McNeill • Mike Martin • Len Mueller • Mac Parlee • Adrienne White • Frank Winters • John Yeatman

Vancouver General Hospital

• Alfred Buchi • Charlens Challmie • Jay Chambers • Robert Davies • Deanna Frank • Gerald Green • Marc Haslam • Paul Lau • Thomas Lundgren • Ian Perry • Fred Sato • John Shinnick • Sharon Swoboda

St. Paul's Hospital

• Nancy Farrell • Walter Gumprich • Nils Hognestad • Rose Holbrook • Drew James • Paul Lau • Aaron Lanteigne • Richard Lemire • Kathy McAuliffe • Bob McDowell • Quinn Miller • Colin Rolston • Juanita Russell • Judy Todrick

Fraser Health Hospitals

ABBOTSFORD REGIONAL: George Faerber
• Peter Langfield **BURNABY GENERAL:** Maureen Baker **CHILLIWACK REGIONAL:** Albert Loewen • Dick Mackenzie **EAGLE RIDGE & RIDGE MEADOWS:** Ed Dezura • Roger Kocheff • Brian Symonds **LANGLEY MEMORIAL:** Mac Parlee • Tom Taylor **PEACE ARCH:** Pat Hagan **SURREY MEMORIAL:** Alfred Buchi • Art Simmons ♥

Pacific HeartBeat Newsletter

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Correspondence

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Contact Numbers

For further information about POHA, please phone one of the hospital volunteer visitor team captains:

St. Paul's Hospital
Aaron Lanteigne 778-835-8572

Vancouver General Hospital
Alfred Buchi 604-581-5508

Royal Columbian Hospital
Mike Martin 604-535-3195

Feeder Hospitals
Bob Axford 604-462-9295



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