

Black and White Polo 2015

For those of you who could not attend this year:

- The weather was cloudy and cold.
- It rained the night before so that polo was cancelled and the Governor Generals Horse Guard Cavalry could not perform their military ride.
- Marcel Bregstein actually injured his arm in the cold while doing Sabrage with champagne bottles so broke no new world records.
- **Liona Boyd** came to sing especially for us but was forced to sing bundled up in the tent near the silent auction to keep the guitars dry.

THAT SAID,

- We still drank the champagne
- We ate a great lunch
- The silent and live auctions and the art show were all great fun
- ***And we had a great day!***

The event raised over **\$40,000**, which made it one of the most successful events ever sponsored by the Toronto Commandery.

So I would say it was a pretty good day.

Ian Carlsen and his committee members have already met to start planning the 2016 event. Ian has been doing an excellent job of recruiting committee members from outside the Order. This increases both the audience and our volunteer base every year.

I hope that we can continue to see more people at this year's event, to be held at the Gormely Polo Field on September 18, 2016.

The Toronto Commandery Hospice

To help you appreciate what has been going on with the Toronto Commandery Hospice, I would like to share three stories. Although there have been few announcements over the last year, we have actually been quite busy.

--

Our Move Into Visiting Hospice.

In June 2014 we started talks with Hazel Burns Hospice, a visiting hospice that has been supported by St. Lazarus in past years. Discussions went well between the two boards. With the LHIN's encouragement, the boards agreed in November 2014 that Hazel Burns would join us to become the visiting hospice side of The Toronto Commandery Hospice.

Hazel Burns' activities are almost 100% government funded, so while adding to our community service, the visiting hospice would not present a drain on the fundraising or cash flow for the residential Hospice.

The Central LHIN, which had been involved throughout the discussions, then informed us that the two boards must now write a joint letter to formally express their intention **to integrate** and to ask for their permission. A letter was therefore written, signed and delivered.

And then we waited.

Luckily we are both determined and patient, because as of today, after about 20 months, we continue to wait for LHIN approval. That said, our plans and relationship carry on.

Our Property At 75 Kincort Street.

We knew that approval of our plans at this site were going to present us with an uphill battle. We first needed approval from the Committee of Adjustments. Every planner we spoke to told us that we did not have a chance of approval.

Our 8 year search had taught us that land available for development in Toronto is scarce, so what choice did we have but to persevere?

Hon. David Jarvis, with the assistance of Beth Ellis, developed our presentation, which we took to the Committee of Adjustment hearing in September 2014. David's presentation was brief and professional and included a written summary for the committee, suspecting that they would have read nothing before the hearing.

During his presentation, David was interrupted a number of times by cheers and applause from all the others who had come for a committee hearing that day ~ our new best friends !

One of the committee members then informed us that we had come to the **right committee** at the **right time** and he was wondering, "**Could he reserve a bed?**"

He went on with a passionate, pro-hospice argument to the rest of the committee until the chair assured him that he had made his point.

We were approved by the Committee of Adjustments!

But on the last possible day, the city solicitor appealed the committee's decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. The Kincort site is located in an Employment Zone, a designation reserved for manufacturing and they would argue that a residential hospice is an unacceptable land use.

As we started to plan our new strategy, we hit another little hurdle.

David Jarvis was appointed to the bench and His honour could no longer argue our case.

But

About that time, I received a call from David Bronskill, a lawyer from Goodman's who specializes in the OMB. Could he be of assistance?

Of course he could!

So Goodman's investigated our case, and advised on how we should proceed.

We took His Honour's appointment as a reason to postpone the OMB.

This story is on-going.

Or is it?

While We Faced The Challenge At The OMB, My Third Story Started.

We were approached last summer by a developer who asked to make a presentation to the hospice board. The opportunity they presented was a new development near a hospital.

They wanted our hospice to be part of the development, which was a different tone than we were used to!

- The lot was actually bigger than Kincort.
- They would build a turnkey hospice that could be whatever size we wanted **or could afford**.
- Rather than being located in an industrial area, there was a river near by and we would have forest, peace and beauty all to ourselves on two sides of the building.

That meeting was the closest I have ever felt as if we had won a lottery.

So what was the catch?

It is funny, but there did not really seem to be a catch.

Mind you, we would have to re-think the whole model of how we had planned the hospice, so we started our due diligence on the site and all the parties involved.

But that was August.

You probably wouldn't guess what happened in September, so I will tell you.

Yet another party gave us a call. They had a building that would be suitable for a hospice... were we interested?

So after 11 years of what seemed like climbing up the Scarborough bluffs in the rain, we now owned one piece of land and were being offered two others.

Does anyone think that hospice board work is dull!

Since September we have been doing due diligence and weighing the merits and draw-backs of the sites, trying to understand the challenges that come with each. We were faced with three completely different development and architectural plans.

But we have learned that wherever we go in today's highly regulated world, there will be challenges!

We are getting closer to the point where we can be completely transparent about where we will go and what our hospice will look like.

But until we have a finalized agreement, we will be unable to make an announcement. But that time will come!

It has been almost 12 years since we started what will be the Canadian Grand Priory's most significant project, to build a hospice, **but a hospice will be built.**

The Hospice board, with its friends and advisors are passionate about what we are doing. We are not just building a hospice; we are building a **centre of excellence** that will provide hospice-palliative care to our community for decades to come. In so doing it will benefit thousands of people and their families, to say nothing of reducing the cost of health care.

Once established, the hospice will need ongoing support as funding from the provincial government is short of operating costs.

But hope that this will be relatively easy. Once the hospice is operational, it will be impossible not to see the contribution that it is making to our community and the difference it will be making to many families.

To be built, however, the hospice needs support from as many people as possible. This is more difficult because it requires us all to imagine what we cannot see.

- Supporters must join the people who are devoting their volunteer time and their hearts to build the hospice.
- Supporters need the vision to invest in our community's future.
- To help appreciate the worthiness of the Hospice, just think of the members of our organization, your family, your friends and your acquaintances who have passed away over the last 12 years. Think of how many people might have benefited from hospice care.

To build the Hospice, we need your help.

Thank you.