

GAS Helipad dedication, 28 April 2012

It is a great pleasure to represent the Board of Directors and the members of the Gabriola Ambulance Society today to dedicate the new helipad.

First, though, I'd like to mention a little history behind the helipad donation. As many of you already know, the Gabriola Ambulance Society provides services to its members such as reimbursement for ambulance fees, and loans of various low-tech medical equipment.

But one of its other mandates has always simply been to contribute to the wellbeing of the community at large. We've done that in a number of ways over the last 43 years of our existence, including:

- Donations of equipment to the existing medical clinic;
- Supporting paramedic training costs and public first aid training;
- Providing an annual scholarship to a local high school student pursuing medically-related studies, and
- Not least of all, through our donations of \$30,000 to the new clinic, including the \$10,000 provided for the helipad construction.

I should also mention that we are extremely fortunate to have the funds to do that as the result of several legacies and donations provided to us over the years. George von Westarp, who was president of the Ambulance Society for many years, tells us that generous bequests were made to the Society many years ago by the Rollo, Drake and Bracke families, and that between 1974 to 1981, Gabriola's volunteer ambulance attendants and drivers generously donated to the Ambulance Society all of the stipends they received from the provincial government, which amounted to a very generous sum of money.

It seems a good moment to give both our past and present ambulance drivers and attendants, both volunteer and professional, a resounding acknowledgement and thank you for what they have contributed and continue to do for all of us who need them from time to time.

Today the Board and Members of the Ambulance Society are delighted to witness the helipad completed and in place, together with our beautiful plaque that commemorates the donation, designed by our former president Tawny Maclachlan Capon. For those of you who don't know, Tawny was also a volunteer ambulance driver and attendant for many years, and the donation for the helipad was her brainchild. Tawny felt that it was one of the most meaningful gifts we could give the community, and the Board unanimously supported the idea.

I'm sure everyone here today has some idea of what it means to have immediate access to emergency help when it's needed most. I know that the Ambulance Society Board

takes great comfort in knowing that this helipad is here to serve everyone and anyone who may need it in an emergency.

I would therefore like to dedicate this helicopter pad in the name of the Gabriola Ambulance Society to:

- The Gabriola Community Clinic,
- The hundreds of tireless volunteers and donors who have contributed to the Clinic project, and
- The people of Gabriola and Mudge Islands.

Thank you all again, and may you never need this helipad yourselves.

Katherine Gordon, on behalf of the Gabriola Ambulance Society Board