

Mayor Pam Goldsmith-Jones
Library Foundation Croquet Tournament
June 18, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Opening Remarks

Welcome to the big library tent. To be able to spend the day playing a game by the beach, sipping champagne, shaking hands and kissing each other, buying expensive mulligans, and sitting down together for dinner – we are all fortunate to be able to celebrate and support our community in this way, and we do it because we are madly in love with the West Van Memorial Library.

Formal Address

In two weeks, Ann Goodhart will retire after being our Chief Librarian for 13 years. In those 13 years our little library has changed dramatically, through 3 Mayors, 8 Board Chairs, and 39 Library Trustees. And yet, in keeping with Ann's quiet style and professional training, we have barely noticed that this cornerstone of our community has become **the most** versatile of institutions. It has been said that "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Nobody can affect positive change like our library – a combination of Ann's leadership and her smart staff, our visionary Board, an entirely supportive community, and of course, this potential is realized by our incredibly capable and ambitious Library Foundation.

In those 13 years, we went from a dated automated catalogue system to the internet, from a person checking out our books to an automated system, from no talking to tutors everywhere, from switching around the whole collection and moving the Peters Room to taking down the old story house. Just a couple of years ago there was no proper sign out front – even the lighting was only just added, in flagrant defiance of the sign bylaw. The logo of dancing leaves and taking out the wall you walked into when you first arrived have lightened and liberated our library as it takes us into the 21st century.

We know our library will continue to thrive, in spite of brutal municipal budgets and senior government funding cuts. I would say that because we rely on ourselves to support our library, we are on very solid ground. I'd like to read something from the wonderful little book called

The Rights of the Reader:

“We human beings build houses because we're alive, but we write books because we're mortal. We live in groups because we're sociable, but we read because we know we're alone. Reading offers a kind of companionship that takes no one's place, but that no one can replace either. It offers no definitive explanation of our destiny, but links us inextricably to life. Its tiny secret links remind us of how paradoxically happy we are to be alive, while illuminating how tragically absurd life is. So

our reasons for reading are as strange as our reasons for living. And no one has the right to call that intimacy to account.”

We maintain an intimacy today, and every day, in the library. And it is that quality that is perhaps what we value the most. Our library manages to be both home to us, and a very public place. It represents our ideals as individuals and as a community. We are committed to keeping that delicate balance in place. I would like to thank Ann for respecting that, for leading with that goal in mind, and wish her well as she leaves West Vancouver. I know our library is better off – I hope Ann is as well, for having been one of us. (Present flowers to Ann.)

In conclusion, for all of us who are likely never to leave West Van, tonight is our special opportunity to demonstrate the respect we have for the library in our lives, and to our community. Enjoy dinner.