

## The history of the Pacific Open Heart Association

By Mike Martin

The Pacific Open Heart Association (POHA), was formed in 1973 as a branch of the First Open Heart Society of B.C., which is based in Victoria.

A Vancouver branch was created in January, 1986. The organization was renamed the Pacific Open Heart Association, and incorporated as a nonprofit society on October 3, 1988. Then, as now, the annual membership fee was ten dollars.

On September 12, 1988 the first meeting of POHA was held with Per H. Danielsen, President; Dave Wood, Vice-President; Helen Irving, Treasurer and Charles Bonne, Secretary.

In September, 1988 the first annual POHA golf tournament was organized by Don Topp and held in Campbell River. This year, the 38th annual golf tournament took place in Delta.

In 1988, Don Topp set up and furnished a family room at St. Paul's Hospital. It was used by families while their loved ones underwent open heart surgery (OHS). As demand for space increased, we had to give up the room.

In 1992, we started a pillow program. With our partner, Telus, we make and deliver a coveted, red, heart-shaped pillow to each OHS patient in Vancouver General Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital. There is a similar program run by the Ladies' Auxiliary at the Royal Columbian Hospital.

Don Topp passed away in 1996. His family initiated a trophy to be given each year to a person who has donated a great deal of time and effort for the good of POHA. The first recipients were Doug and Beryl Hamilton of Parksville.



*Annalise Schatz visiting a patient at Royal Columbian Hospital before his surgery*

In January, 1991, Dr. Robert Hayden performed the first open heart surgery at the Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster. A visitation team was later organized. In January, 2001 the 10th anniversary was celebrated with POHA volunteers Mike Martin, Pat Hagan and Geoff Mook taking part.

In the summer of 1998, a luncheon was held in Central Park to celebrate the 10th anniversary of POHA's incorporation. A 20th anniversary celebration was held in October, 2008.

The Pacific Open Heart Association was affiliated with the Kelowna Coronary Exercise Society until 2012 when Dr. Guy Fradet performed the first open heart surgery at Kelowna General Hospital.

Over the years, we have raised funds by various means, including the annual golf tournament, members' donations and legacy donations. As a result, we donate about \$20,000 each year to hospitals for the improvement of patient care and comfort.

The Pacific Open Heart Association has about fifty volunteer visitors who visit patients before and after open heart surgery. They provide support and share their

experiences. Visits are made daily at the three heart surgery hospitals: Vancouver General, St. Paul's and Royal Columbian. Similarly, we visit patients in what we call "feeder hospitals." These patients in Ridge Meadows, Eagle Ridge, Langley, Surrey, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Peace Arch and Burnaby Hospitals are awaiting transfer to a surgery hospital.

The following are valuable members of the POHA volunteer visitor team:

- Harold Boer • Jeremy Brandlmayer
- Bruce Bried • Alfred Buchi • Sheila Byers
- Jay Chambers • Ben Choi • Lisa Constable
- Rick Cozzuol • Robert Davies • Ed Dezura
- Jim Dyson • George Faerber • Nancy Farrell
- Matt Foley • Rolf Gullmes • Walter Gumprich
- Pat Hagan • Dave Harris • Marc Haslam
- Julie Jacob • Drew James • Roger Kocheff
- Davis Kosowan • Peter Langfield • Bob Lauro
- Stephen Lee • Thomas Lundgren • Bernie McNeil • Mike Martin • Jerry Moloci • Len Mueller • Ron Paley • Mildred Parks • Juanita Russell • Ken Scambler • Annalise Schatz • Bryan Symonds • Norman Tang • Maria Thomas • Scott Trainor. ♥

**VOLUNTEER VISITORS** are needed at three surgery hospitals. These visits take one to two hours every other week. Training is provided and you will be supported by a team leader and hospital staff. If you are interested, please contact one of the POHA team leaders for more information: **Nancy Farrell** • 604-442-7565 • St. Paul's Hospital. **Alfred Buchi** • 604-581-5508 • Vancouver General Hospital. **Mike Martin** • 604-535-3195 • Royal Columbian Hospital. Or contact us at [volunteer@pacificopenheart.org](mailto:volunteer@pacificopenheart.org) ♥

## President's Report



Happy Summer. I hope you are enjoying the warmer temperatures and sunshine.

Our hospital visitation program continues to operate smoothly. It is so nice to be welcomed by patients and staff. I believe the shutdown of our visitations during COVID-19 created a greater appreciation of the Pacific Open Heart Association (POHA).

We are always looking for new volunteer visitors. If you are interested in participating in this rewarding experience, please contact us at: [volunteer@pacificopenheart.org](mailto:volunteer@pacificopenheart.org).

Recently, we changed our accounting program. Our old program was challenging to manage. Our Treasurer, Meryl Kaye De Leon, did a great deal of research and concluded that Quickbooks is best suited to our needs.

In June, our annual POHA Golf Tournament was a great success. Many thanks to Roger Kocheff, the Golf Committee and the volunteers for organizing and assisting in the tournament. Roger's ability to arrange for good weather always impresses me.

Sadly, one of our Directors, Bob Axford, recently passed away. We enjoyed working with Bob, who was Captain for our Feeder hospitals. We will miss his commitment to our visitation program, and his sage thoughts and advice at the Board table.

As a result of the retirements of Barb Smith and Rick Cozzuol from our Board, and the passing of Bob Axford, we are looking for individuals to join our Board of Directors. If you are interested in this rewarding opportunity, please contact us at: [board@pacificopenheart.org](mailto:board@pacificopenheart.org).

Our 2024, POHA Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 19, at 1:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver. It is located at 949 West 49th Avenue. All POHA members and friends are invited to attend. Please mark it on your calendars.

All the best to you and yours this summer.  
Jay Chambers, *President*



**Bob Axford.** The Board of POHA is sorry to announce his sudden passing on March 27, 2024. Bob had been a member since he had open heart surgery. He volunteered at Royal Columbian Hospital from 2011, providing support for patients facing similar surgery to his procedure. He was the team leader for the program in outlying hospitals, coordinating the visitation of patients awaiting their transfer into a surgery hospital. Bob was awarded the Don Topp trophy in 2017 in recognition of his exemplary service to the association. He will be missed by his family, friends and members of POHA.



**PACIFIC  
OPEN HEART  
ASSOCIATION**

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<https://www.pacificopenheart.org>

## 38th Annual "POHA Moe Pitcher Golf Tournament"



The winning team—Bob Lauro, Don Mueller, Len Mueller and Darryl Gordon—received the trophy from Joanne Pitcher (centre) and Roger Kocheff (right).

**June 5, 2024** This year 72 golfers played at the Delta Golf and Country Club. It was a time for renewing old friendships, remembering those who are not with us and for making new acquaintances.

Our golf committee endeavors to provide an affordable and enjoyable experience for every golfer. We had great weather, and an enjoyable experience.

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

This year's Hole sponsors were: DMCL Chartered Accountants; Home Restaurants; John Timms and Associates; Austin Metal Fabricators; RCH Hospital Foundation; Ridge Meadows Hospital Foundation; Pro-Mix Concrete; Kodiaks Hockey Club; Patrick Yearwood Lawyers; Pera Growth Hub; Neurologik Rehab; and Patrick O'Brien of RBC Wealth Management. A special thanks to those donating extra prizes. Thanks Len Mueller.

The tournament cannot run smoothly without the help of our volunteers. They performed admirably. Thanks to: Amelia Moloci, Mike Martin, Pat Hagan, Bruce Bried, Alfred Buchi, Ellen Cozzuol, Cory Barclay, Ingrid Dyson and Leisau Clifford. Special thanks to

the golf committee—Roger Kocheff, Rick Cozzuol, Jim Dyson, Amelia Moloci and Jay Chambers.

### Tournament Results:

This year's tournament winners were the foursome of Len Mueller, Darryl Gordon, Bob Lauro and Don Mueller. They were six under par. Thanks to Joanne Pitcher for her team's attendance and her help presenting the "Moe Pitcher" Trophy to the winning team.

Glenn Allen and Gary Musil were the only golfers to sink a putt during the putting contest. They each won \$40.

Glenn Allen won straightest drive. Bruce McLaren and Craig Desautels won closest-to-the-pin. Emelene Thompson and Darcy Jacobson had ladies' closest-to-the-pin shots. Darcy Jacobson, Steve Lebedovich and Patrick Chan won closest-to-the-pin second shot.

Darcy Jacobson also won the early bird draw for a free entry to the 2025 tournament.

I want to thank all golfers for making this year's tournament a success. A special thanks to Patrick Chan and Ric Ernst for securing foursomes to complete a full field.

If you are interested in adding your name to our golfer email list, please contact me at: [rkocheff@telus.net](mailto:rkocheff@telus.net) or 604-467-2904.

Sincerely, Roger Kocheff

### YES! I WISH TO JOIN THE PACIFIC OPEN HEART ASSOCIATION

I ENCLOSE  \$10 ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP  \$20 TWO-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

DONATION (OPTIONAL) \$

TOTAL \$

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I AM ALSO INTERESTED IN:  BEING A VISITOR  THE POHA GOLF TOURNAMENT

#### Please mail cheque to:

Pacific Open Heart Association, PO Box 45001, Ocean Park PO, Surrey, B.C., V4A 9L1.

#### Pay membership by Interac e-transfer:

Send money securely and directly from your bank account with Interac e-transfer.

(1) Log into your online or mobile banking app.

(2) Select 'Interac e-transfer' and select your account.

(3) Enter POHA email 'etransfer@pacificopenheart.org' as payee.

(4) Enter the amount. In the message area, please specify 'membership'.