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## New staff welcomed

Two new staff members have recently been welcomed to the Shalom team:

- **Marianne Wiens** (MSW) has been hired as a part-time counsellor;
- **Amy Davison** has been hired as a part-time evening receptionist.

## Inside this issue:

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Why we support Shalom</b>     | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Meet the Board</b>            | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Wanda's wisdom</b>            | <b>3</b> |
| <b>PCC group launched</b>        | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Reasons to support Shalom</b> | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Contact info</b>              | <b>4</b> |

## Former Lieutenant Governor shares experience with mental illness

At first glance James Bartleman appears to have lived a charmed life. During a distinguished career in Canada's foreign service and as a diplomatic advisor to a Prime Minister, he has mingled with world leaders.

Even though he had a fulfilling career and has many stories to tell from his travels around the globe, he has suffered for more than 15 years from depression that was at times debilitating.

With the support of his family and those around him, through writing his memoirs and eventually with the assistance of the appropriate medication, he has been able to cope. He has become the author of several books in his retirement years. His recent novel "*As Long as the Rivers Flow*," profiles the life of an aboriginal woman from Northern Ontario who experienced abuse in a residential school.

Bartleman, a former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario from 2002-2007, was the guest speaker at a community forum hosted by Shalom at Knox Presbyterian Church on September 30, 2011. His topic was "*Mental Illness and What I Did About It*." Approximately 175 people attended.



**James Bartleman signs his book, *As Long as the Rivers Flow*, at the September 30 event**

### Mental illness does not respect age, race, gender, religion, ethnic origin or social class

Bartleman, who grew up in poverty in the Muskoka resort town of Port Carling, has aboriginal heritage through his mother. He is a member of the Chippewa Rama First Nation and was Canada's first aboriginal ambassador.

His experience with depression confirms what we know through our work at Shalom. Mental illness does not respect age, race, gender, religion, ethnic origin or social class. Any one of us can be affected.

During his term as Lieutenant Governor and since, Bartleman has been a passionate advocate against the stigma of mental illness and racism and a promoter of the well-being of aboriginal children.

# Why we support the work of Shalom

by Sandra & John Schiedel

*Everyone longs for peace, contentment and wholeness in their lives. This includes feelings about self as well as in relationships with others. Some of us are able to live most of our lives with predominantly positive experiences.*

*Many of us also go through seasons of discontent, stress and darkness, where there seems to be no hope. This lack of hope is frequently accompanied by a lack of resources which further contributes to the darkness.*

*Shalom Counselling Services has been a source of support to walk with people through their journey of*



Executive Director Wanda Wagler-Martin (L) chats with Sandra & John Schiedel at the 2011 Spring Breakfast

*healing, whether they can afford the service or not.*

*This is one of the major reasons why we have been long-time donors to Shalom.*

*As well, we have great admiration and respect for the commitment, dedication and professional skill of the counsellors at Shalom,*

*some of whom have been there for many years.*

*We continue to value the special niche that Shalom offers to this community.*

Sandra Schiedel is a retired school principal and a past chair of the Shalom Board. John Schiedel is also retired and is a former owner of Protrend Construction

## Meet the Shalom Board

Shalom is governed by a Board of nine dedicated volunteers.

**Gladys Bender** (Chair) is a Nurse Therapist in children's mental health at Lutherwood. She enjoys hiking, biking, reading, full moons, contradance, and becoming receptive to the wisdom of aging and her intuitive nature.

**Andrew Roth** (Vice-Chair) has a busy law practice with Miller Thomson. Away from work, he enjoys spending time with his family.

**Marilyn Leis** (Secretary) works with her husband in their business, Murray Leis Construction. She enjoys walking, reading and entertaining guests.

**Bob Shantz** (Treasurer) is a semi-retired businessman who coordinates Waterloo Region ASSETS+, a training program for people wanting to start their own micro-businesses. In his spare time he likes golfing, curling and spending time with his family at the cottage.



**Back L-R: Lynne Blake-Dickson, Gladys Bender (chair), Jim Erb, Gary Knarr, Bob Shantz, Andrew Roth. Front: Gloria Shantz, Marilyn Leis. Not pictured: David Gingerich**

**Lynne Blake-Dickson** volunteers with several church and community organizations and loves nature, gardening and looking for small miracles and blessings.

**Jim Erb** is a Funeral Director with Erb & Good Family Funeral Home who likes raising funds for worthy causes and spending time with his family.

**Gary Knarr** is a Mennonite pastor whose interests include history, music, nature and drama.

**Gloria Shantz** is a retired teacher who finds interactions with children inspiring. Her favourite activities include horseback riding, gardening, skiing, reading, playing the piano and baking.

**David Gingerich** is our newest member. He is a Psychologist with the school board and also has a private clinical practice. He enjoys spending time with his family, playing and coaching sports and studying the relationship between psychology and theology.

## Sweat the small stuff in relationships

by Wanda Wagler-Martin, MSW, RSW



While I agree with much of the wisdom espoused in Richard Carlson's, Don't Sweat the Small Stuff books, there is one area of life where the small stuff merits our attention. I don't necessarily subscribe to the need to "sweat" this area of our lives, but I do believe that in the arena of couple relationships the small stuff matters.

I have been reflecting over the years about the state of marital relationships. They seem to be under some jeopardy and I have certainly witnessed many "good ones" that have reached the point of no return. Why is this?

The marital vows of young love-struck couples often include some phrasing that acknowledges that marriage includes both "better and worse" times. Yet we witness an increasing spate of couples who leave the commitment of marriage when it is perceived that the challenges outweigh the benefits. What is contributing to this?

Marriage is hard work. And, as David Schnarch writes, in Passionate Marriage, no one said that marriage would be easy. Yet why do some marriages withstand the test of time in spite of obvious trials, while others come apart in spite of a relationship that appears to be ideal?

We can never fully understand the dynamics of a couple's relationship. What goes on in the intricate details of life and love can have subtle components that make for wonderful connection or much tension. It is in these small details that the foundation for a relationship is established and maintained.

The intricacies of intimacy are built in the day-to-day details of life. Attitudes, responses and patterns that develop over the years have the potential to contribute to a growing healthy relationship, or to create barriers that grow between couples as the years pass. The themes that surface in the early years of commitment have a tendency to keep resurfacing throughout the lifetime of the relationship. While small things may seem unimportant and not worth addressing, over time this "small stuff" can build a momentum that results in one partner choosing to leave the relationship.

I recognize that not all marriages can continue. And, we don't serve couples well if we judge their decision to go in separate ways. However, the ending of a relationship is typically infused with immense pain and it takes incredible energy to go through the process of separating. It makes me wonder how relationships could be trans-

formed if couples put as much energy into growing and strengthening marriages, as couples are forced to exert when marriages are ending.

Relationships are complex, and I don't have an easy formula for keeping marriages healthy. I also recognize what a gift it is for those in long-term marriages who celebrate their continued commitment. I also believe that this ideal is possible for many more couples.

What might make this possible? A core component of healthy marriage is a healthy self. It can be challenging to build a solid commitment if one or both partners are carrying unresolved issues that need to be addressed. Give yourself permission to get the help you need to deal with your stuff. If we don't do this, we risk projecting our ongoing struggles onto our partner and our marriage will suffer.

The second critical variable is the courage and willingness to deal with the issues that inevitably surface in a relationship. Acknowledging this reality is the initial step in addressing these obstacles. At times couples can work through issues on their own, and sometimes they need some help. Have the courage to seek help before problems become too entrenched and bitterness levels run high. Consider regular marital check-ups, whether at an anniversary dinner or in a counsellor's office, as a forum to review the state of marital health. It can be as simple as talking about "What's going well?" and "What needs some work?"

Thirdly, celebrate commitment. Claim it as a healthy norm, acknowledging the wonderful things that can accompany long-term commitment. Let's recognize that trust and love builds over many years and that we need to make time for those things that nurture connection. Amidst the details of life this can get lost but since we only live in the present, this is when relationships are truly built. Relationship care cannot wait for getaway weekends or those more special times.

So let's celebrate the good things of marriage, recognize the challenges and have the courage to deal with the "small stuff." As Dr. Joyce Brothers reminds us: Marriage is not just spiritual communion, it is also remembering to take out the trash.

Wanda Wagler-Martin is Executive Director of  
Shalom Counselling Services

# Seedlings

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*Helping People Grow Toward  
Peace & Wholeness*

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## Pastors & Counsellors in Consultation groups launched

The first two Pastors & Counsellors in Consultation (PCC) groups started in October. Each group is comprised of six pastors and is facilitated by a senior staff person from Shalom. Executive Director Wanda Wagler-Martin is facilitating one group and Clinical Director Karen Huehn is facilitating the other. Each group runs for four two hour sessions.

The groups offer a place for pastors to meet with colleagues and an experienced counselling professional in a safe, confidential setting to discuss issues they experience in the context of their ministry .

Shalom is able to offer these groups at a subsidized rate thanks to a generous donation from W-S Feed & Supply. Thanks to Paul and Darlene Wideman for this assistance.

Shalom is hoping to offer more PCC groups in the winter. Pastors should call the Shalom office at 519-886-9690 to get on the waiting list or speak to Wanda Wagler-Martin to learn more about the groups.

## Good reasons to invest in the work of Shalom

### Did you know?

In 2010:

- 1,342 people received service from Shalom;
- 87% of counselling hours required some fee subsidy;
- 48% of counselling fees were from those with family incomes below the poverty line;
- People from 22 businesses and organizations came to Shalom for counselling through our Employee Assistance Program.
- Your donations (including a grant from United Way) and fundraising events provided 43% of Shalom's operating revenue;
- Relationship difficulties, mental illness and family & parenting concerns were the three main reasons people sought counselling.

### You Can Help

Making counselling accessible and affordable to all remains a core value at Shalom. Accomplishing this requires your ongoing partnership.

You can support our work in the following ways;

- Donate to our annual operating fund. This can be done by sending a cheque to us at the address noted above on this page. You can also donate electronically through CanadaHelps on our website at [www.shalomcounselling.org](http://www.shalomcounselling.org).
- Leave a legacy gift to our **Partnership Fund** managed by the Mennonite Foundation of Canada. See our website under the "You Can Help" tab for more information.

Thank you for "**Helping People Grow Toward Peace and Wholeness.**"