

LISNS Annual Report 2010 – 2011

Look what you have done!

If you are one of the many volunteers or donors who helped LISNS in the 2010 – 2011 year, we want you to stand up and take a bow. You were a large part in LISNS success this year.

Volunteers:

LISNS Board of Directors 2010 – 2011

Tanya Jones, President
Kevin A. MacDonald, Vice President
Jonathan Gallant, CA, Treasurer
Sean Layden, QC, Past President
Joseph Cameron Michelle Higgins
Raphina Ghosn Justice Beryl MacDonald
Don MacDougall, QC Matthew Pierce
Andrew Rankin Suzanne Robichaud
John Underhill

Leaving the Board during the 2010-2011 Term:

Kathleen Corey, Jose Rodriguez, Bill Ferguson

New Board Members 2011 – 2012:

Elizabeth Buckle Jennifer Pink
Lindsay Thomson Jessica Lumiere

Committee Members:

donalee Moulton, Darren Brennan, Nichole Pickard, Barry Burke, Donna Casey, Sarah McGrath, Andrew Waugh, Douglas Lloy, Genevieve Harvey, LH Paris, Linda Wood, Matthew Darrah, Megan Longley, Peter Dostal, Tammy Wohler, Lee-Ann Conrod & the Projects Advisory Committees

Philanthropy Volunteers:

Krisinda Lowe, Delthia Miller, Shannon Brennan

Administration, Research & Writing:

Rajlakshimi (Rini) Mitra Michael Maynes, JD,
Martika Diggs Julia Crabbe

Legal Information Line:

Al Doolittle Laura Brennick Chantelle Lafitte
Mark Darcy Julia Agapitos Lindsay Thomson
(Pro Bono Students Canada - Dalhousie's Schulich School of Law)

Here's what you will find in this report:

- Pg 1 Annual Grants
- Pg 1 Volunteer Recognition
- Pg 2 Executive Director's Report
- Pg 2 Event Sponsors
- Pg 4 Summary of Audited Financial Statements
- Pg 4 President's Report
- Pg 4 Program Information

Legal Information Contact Information

Website: legalinfo.org

Legal Information Line:
(902)455 – 3135 (HRM) or toll free in NS
1 – 800 – 665 – 9779

Lawyer Referral Service:
Same as above Legal Info Line

Dial-a-Law:
(902) 420 – 1888 (No toll free for these pre-
recorded Q & A's)

Administration Contact Information

Legal Information Society of NS
5523B Young St
Halifax, NS B3K 1Z7
Ph: (902) 454 - 2198
Fax: (902) 455 – 3105
Email: lisns@legalinfo.org

Annual Funding Grants

Law Foundation of Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Department of Justice
Department of Justice Canada

Boyne Clarke Summer Student:
Sean McCarroll



Executive Director's Report

2010/11 started on a fairly low point but ended on a high. The year commenced with a cut to one of our annual grants as the result of low interest rates and tough economic climate. We had plenty of warning so we were able to plan to some extent. The cut coupled with an existing accumulated deficit meant that the Board had some difficult choices to make as they set strategic priorities for LISNS and financial goals. One consequence was that staff time was cut by 5% and the vacant position of Project Officer was not filled. The additional work related to developing project proposals and managing projects was taken on, in the short term, by the Executive Director. This situation will continue in 2011/12

Following strategic planning deliberations the Board set priorities with more focus on delivering and disseminating information through the website and through community outreach and less on the legal information line. To accommodate these priorities resources to the legal information line were scaled back. The onset of these changes began in the fall.

While we recognize that not everyone has access to the Internet we know that more than 64,850 unique visitors came to our website during the fiscal year. This is an increase of 24% over the previous year. 72% were from Nova Scotia. As well, more than 69% of callers surveyed in our annual snapshot survey had access to the Internet at home or at work and there is also access at CAP sites.

Another key priority is community outreach particularly outside HRM so that we are reaching more rural areas and learning about their legal information needs as well as providing legal information. At the same time we know that many people like to discuss their problem with a 'live' person and through the legal information line and lawyer referral service we continue to provide this option. In 2011, we answered more than 6,000 legal information line calls.

We had set a goal of eliminating the accumulated deficit over a four year period from 2009-13. The year ended on a high note as we managed to eliminate the deficit two years ahead of time.

This is not to say that funding is not an issue for LISNS, as it is for many non-profits. Our government funding has not increased in many years and there is increasing competition for fundraising dollars from all sectors. At the same time we recognize the growing demand from the public for reliable, relevant and understandable legal information. Many people cannot afford to hire legal services when they have questions about the law or even a serious legal issue to deal with. While we cannot give legal advice we are always seeking opportunities to effectively meet demand for accessible legal information. See Executive / Page 3

Thank you

Play in a Day 2010 Event Sponsors



Certified Media Group



With a small complement of four full-time and one part time staff we run six programs as well as projects. As part of community outreach we participate in community events and committees so that we can provide a strong voice for public access to legal information. Some community outreach activities in 2010/11:

- Established the LISNS Hon Lorne Clarke Q.C. Access to Justice Award – the inaugural recipient was Shawna Hoyte, Q.C.
- Staged our second Divorce Fair bringing together the many types of professionals that married or common law couples might need to use as they go through separation or divorce. They included financial and pension advisers, rental agencies, appraisers, realtors, court services, mediators and, of course, legal services.
- Had an information booth at the Canadian Bar Association – NS (CBA) Law Fair, 50 + Expo; and the Atlantic Coordinating Committee on Crime Prevention and Community Safety's (ACC) annual regional crime prevention conference
- Partnered with Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, Nova Scotia Legal Aid and the Immigrant Settlement and Integration Service in the development and delivery of legal information workshops for new Canadians and to provide opportunities for justice system professionals to learn about the needs and barriers facing new Canadians who are accessing the justice system.
- Participated in Nova Scotia Government consultation with the voluntary sector.
- Hosted a number of law student volunteers from the Pro-bono Students Canada at Dalhousie's Schulich Law School, and the Boyne Clarke Summer Student program
- Participated on the boards of the Public Legal Education Association of Canada, the Canadian Criminal Justice Association, the Nova Scotia Criminal Justice Association, and the ACC
- Participated as a member of the Department of Seniors Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Committee

Projects

- Seniors Legal Information Guide *It's in Your Hands* to help seniors arrange their affairs so as to reduce the potential for financial abuse. We concluded this very successful project which delivered 33 workshops across the province, developed and distributed more than 2,000 copies of a booklet *It's in Your Hands*. The project was funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program with second and third printings funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors. Demand for workshops continues but we don't have the resources to meet this demand at the moment. *It's in Your Hands* is also on-line at legalinfo.org in English and French.
- Partnered with Community Sector Council, NL to develop information and deliver workshops on Compliant Fundraising Practices. The Project was funded by the CRA's Charities Directorate Charities Partnership and Outreach Program
- Began work a project to develop legal information on the justice system for newcomers to Canada. Funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

I take this opportunity to thank:

- the Board and Executive for devoting time, experience and practical skills to LISNS and their support through good times and bad
- staff for their dedication to the work of LISNS and for their ideas and suggestions for improving service delivery
- volunteers who serve on standing and project advisory committees and/or help out with program delivery
- all those who participated in and contributed towards the success of our fund raising events
- annual grant funders; the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, Justice Canada, the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, program & event sponsors, and donors

During the coming year in addition to implementing our priorities we will be laying plans for our 30th anniversary in 2012/13.

Maria Franks, Executive Director, Report 2010 - 2011

Website Advertiser



WAGNERS
A SERIOUS INJURY LAW FIRM

Q & A Pages:

- Lost Income Due to A Motor Vehicle Accident
- Medical Malpractice and Complaints
- Personal Injury
- Slip And Fall

LISNS President's Report 2010 – 2011

This past year (April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011) has been an exciting year for the Board of Directors as we started into "Year 1" of our five year Strategic Plan.

LISNS has been around since 1982. In the intervening twenty-nine (29) years technology and the way people access information has changed. One of the priorities in our five year Strategic Plan is to focus on developing LISNS' website to disseminate legal information. This was reflected this year by an increased investment in our website as well as the assignment of staff under the direction of our Executive Director Maria Franks.

The "Plan" also focuses on community outreach, with less emphasis on the Legal Information Line, Lawyer Referral Service, publications and Dial-a-Law. This year a new committee was formed, the "Legal Content Committee", to review the legal information LISNS provides to Nova Scotians beginning with the website. In addition it is our goal to identify what legal information and resources are needed, review the topics LISNS already covers, identify what other information is provided and explore potential partnerships to fill those gaps.

Fund Development has seen another successful year under the direction of our Manager of Fund Development Gwen Atkinson, the hard work of LISNS staff, the Philanthropy Committee and all board members. In 2010 there were two main fundraising events, the direct mail campaign beginning in September and Play in a Day in October. Both events were a great success. Play in a Day in particular not only raised funds for LISNS but also raised the profile of LISNS within the community.

As I leave my post as chair of the board to take on the ever coveted position of Secretary I look forward to another year of volunteering with my fellow LISNS board members and working with LISNS staff and executive director to carry on our vision that "the citizens of Nova Scotia understand and are able to act on their rights and responsibilities in accordance with the law."

Yours truly,

Tanya R. Jones, President of the Board of the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR APRIL 01, 2010 - MARCH 31, 2011

REVENUE

GRANTS

Law Foundation of N.S.	\$133,000
Department of Justice Canada	70,000
Department of Justice Nova Scotia	50,000

PROGRAMS

Publication Sales	1,543
Lawyer Referral Service	5,125
Divorce Fair	7,190

FUNDRAISING

57,775

OTHER

367

SUB-TOTAL

325,000

PROJECTS

218,843

TOTAL

\$543,843

EXPENSES

PROGRAMS

Legal Info Line & Lawyer Referral Service	\$69,413
Dial -a - Law	10,529
Publications	21,224
Community Programs	45,369
Website	28,947

COST OF RAISING FUNDS

50,283

PROJECTS

218,843

ADMINISTRATION

85,392

TOTAL

\$530,000

INCOME FOR THE YEAR

\$13,843

A copy of the audited statements is available upon request

Interesting Info:

Dial-a-Law (pre-recorded legal information Q & A's):
Was called 4,270 times

Legal Information Line & Lawyer Referral Service answered
6,365 calls (staff answered 6,140 – volunteers answered 225)

Did You Know?

- LISNS distributed almost 8,500 publications / information brochures
- The most questions we answer by phone and through online Q&A's are questions about Family Law
- 35% of calls to the Legal Information Line are from outside HRM
- LISNS made 10 presentation or displays in this fiscal year
- Visits to the website (legalinfo.org) have almost doubled in the last 3 years
- On average, about 225 people come to the LISNS site each day

If you would like the complete list of Program statistics email: development@legalinfo.org