

Nova Scotians should be able to solve legal problems with informed choices, and act on their rights & responsibilities. They need the legal information LISNS provides.

At the heart of every justice system there are people with questions. LISNS provides answers.

We provide Nova Scotians with the legal information they need when they need it.

The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS) makes sure Nova Scotians have access to legal information.

LISNS is a registered charity established in 1982.



LEGAL SEAGULL

The Legal Seagull is your way to find the information you are looking for on the LISNS website.

LISNS Volunteers

Board of Directors 2009-2010

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Fund Development

Carmen Bachynski
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Scott Trivers

Priorities and Challenges

2009/10 brought high and lows. We started the year with an increase in funding from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia. However, due to the economic climate and record low interest rates we faced a cut in core funding from the Foundation for the fiscal year 2010/11. This impacted our planning for the future. In addition, we developed a plan to eliminate our deficit over the next four years. We are well on our way to accomplishing the goals we set.

The Board and staff engaged in a priority setting process with the guidance of PassionWorks. One key priority we identified is to establish our website as our future key, cost effective communications tool and resource for the dissemination of legal information. While we recognize that not everyone has access to the Internet we know that more than 52,000 unique visitors came to our website during the fiscal year and 67% were from Nova Scotia. Another key priority is community outreach across the province so that we are reaching more rural areas and learning about their legal information needs, as well as providing legal information.

Funding continues to be an issue, as it is for many non-profits, where 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 for legal information. We will not let scarce dollars decrease our enthusiasm for meeting the growing demand for legal information.

In January we offered what we believe to be Canada's first Divorce Fair which brought together the many kinds of professionals that married or common law couples might need to use as they go through separation or divorce including financial and pension advisers, rental agencies, appraisers, realtors, court services, mediators and, of course, legal services. The event received national and local media coverage and, more importantly, provided much needed information to those who attended and were going through the often painful and confusing process of separation or divorce.

In addition, we ran several projects:

- Positive Aging – **pension information on-line** for seniors and those planning retirement - funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Senior Positive Aging Fund
- Seniors Legal Information Guide ***It's in Your Hands*** to help seniors arrange their affairs to reduce the potential for financial abuse - funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, New Horizons for Seniors
- ***To Be or Not to Be Decision Tree*** – an on-line tool to assist organizations that are considering applying for charitable status to assess whether it would benefit them - funded by Canada Revenue Agency, Charities Partnership and Outreach Program.

We continued our collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association – NS Division on a pilot training project for Mental Health Peer Advocates to assist mental health consumers who have legal issues.

Thank you to the Board for devoting time, experience and practical skills to LISNS. Thank you to staff for their dedication to the work of LISNS, for their ideas and suggestions for improving service delivery, and being willing to take on extra work to get the job done. Thanks in particular to Gwen Atkinson for her stellar work in the development and logistics for the Divorce Fair and for taking on an additional fund raiser the Law-Di-Dah Dinner in addition to the Law Lunch last year. Thanks also to committee and other volunteers who contributed towards the work of the Society.

Finally we cannot do our work without financial support. Thank you to our core funders - the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, the Department of Justice Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Justice and to our donors, and program and event sponsors and attendees for their support. ***Maria Franks, Executive Director, LISNS***

... to answer questions.... in easy to understand language.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2009-2010

It has been a challenging and exciting year for the Board of Directors and staff, beginning with the planning and organizing of the future vision for the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS). We re-defined the priorities of the Society in the face of ever-decreasing sources of core funding and the current fiscal climate's impact on fundraising. The Board and staff engaged with PassionWorks to review the programs provided by LISNS in light of changing technologies and changing times.

LISNS annual Law Day Lunch has been one of the Society's premier fund raising events. This past year the Board took things in a new direction with the introduction of the "Law-Di-Dah-Dinner" which was held at the Westin Hotel in March. The event was a great success, with the return of past Law Day Lunch speaker Bruce Kirkby, a fantastic on line auction and our ever popular "Big Dip" where everyone wins a prize.

As well, LISNS created its *Hon. Lorne Clarke Access to Justice Award* in recognition of an individual or group that makes an exceptional contribution in promoting access to justice and legal information in Nova Scotia. Shawna Hoyte, a lawyer with Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, was the first recipient of the Award which was presented at the Law-Di-Dah Dinner.

As always, the success of the dinner was due in large part to the huge effort of our fund development officer Gwen Atkinson and on behalf of the Board I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gwen for all of her hard work, which does not go unnoticed.

This year saw us say goodbye to our Project Manager, Peter Muskrat, who has left the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia to take up a new and exciting opportunity. On behalf of staff and the Board I acknowledge all the wonderful work done by Peter, and wish him the best in the future.

Ensuring that our Society continues to meet needs in challenging times requires commitment from Board and staff. I recognize and thank Board members and other volunteers for all their hard work.

I would like to take this time to thank and acknowledge the staff of LISNS and our executive director Maria Franks for their hard work and dedication to this worthwhile one-of-a-kind not for profit society. Through our efforts countless Nova Scotians have received accessible and understandable legal information in this past year. We have made a tangible and invaluable contribution to improving the lives of every day Nova Scotians.

Finally I would like to acknowledge and thank out-going board members Terry Yeadon, Aleta Cromwell and Nichole Pickard for their contribution to the work of LISNS.

As I enter 2010-2011 as President of the Board of Directors of the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia I look forward to volunteering with LISNS 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." I look forward to working with returning Board members and those newly elected.

Tanya R. Jones , LISNS President of the Board

Interesting Info:

Legal Information Line

- 37% of calls to the line are from outside HRM.
- 41% of calls are about family law issues.

Did you know?

- We had calls from 1,171 self represented litigants?



The LISNS Lorne Clarke, QC Access to Justice Award:
Justice Lawrence O'Neil, Barbara Darby (nominee), Shawna Hoyte (winner), Lorne Clarke, QC, Constance Glube

Congratulations to LISNS volunteers Dillon Trider and Al Doolittle on each being awarded one of the first Schulich School of Law Scholarships!

Interesting Info:

Dial-a-Law

- Callers listened to legal information scripts over the phone almost 3,000 times.
- The most popular script was separation.

Community Outreach

- Our Divorce Fair attracted nationwide media coverage as the first in Canada.
- As well as the Divorce Fair we participated in 12 other community events such as the 50+ Expo and the CBA Law Fair to spread the word about LISNS and to highlight our resources.

... LISNS can help... when you need the legal info to make decisions.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR APRIL 01, 2009 - MARCH 31, 2010

REVENUE

GRANTS

Law Foundation of N.S.	\$160,000
Department of Justice Canada	70,000
Department of Justice Nova Scotia	50,000
ACC Management Fee	15,000

PROGRAMS

Publication Sales	846
Lawyer Referral Service	5,450
Divorce Fair	8,295

FUNDRAISING

108,530

OTHER

927

SUB-TOTAL

419,048

PROJECTS

264,096

TOTAL

\$683,144

EXPENSES

PROGRAMS

Legal Info Line & Lawyer Referral Service	\$89,406
Dial-a-Law	14,475
Publications	16,457
Community Programs	68,692
Website	10,120

COST OF RAISING FUNDS

69,427

PROJECTS

264,096

ADMINISTRATION

138,214

TOTAL

\$670,887

INCOME FOR THE YEAR

\$12,257

A copy of the audited statements is available upon request

Interesting Info:

Website

- The LISNS website legalinfo.org had 52,265 unique visitors last year
- 67% of them were in Nova Scotia.
- 169,914 pages were viewed.

Did you know?

- There are more than 50 legal information question and answer topics on our website - just click on the "Legal Information" tab on the homepage.

Publications

- We distributed more than 8,600 brochures in 2009/10
- 3,500 newsletters were sent to libraries, police departments and other community groups around NS.

Did you Know?

- Our most popular brochures were on Youth Justice.

LEGALinformation
SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA Start Here. Learn More™

Mailing Address:
5523B Young St
Halifax, NS B3K 1Z7

Website (with lots of easy
to understand information)
legalinfo.org

LISNS is a charitable
organization. We welcome
donations made online or
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LISNS Core Funders are:

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

If and when the time is right for you, please remember the
Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia in your will.
Contact the Manager, Fund Development for the correct
legal wording.
(902) 454 - 2198

Thank You Event Sponsors

LAW-Di-Dah Dinner March '10

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