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**LISNS**

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 2007 - 2008**

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Thanks  
 to our  
 Dial-a-Law  
 Sponsors:

Nova Scotia Legal Aid



**President's Report 2006 - 2007**

It was an exciting year for the Board of Directors of LISNS beginning with the planning and organizing of celebrations for the 25th Anniversary of the Legal Society. On behalf of the Board, I thank Justice Elizabeth Roscoe and Roscoe and Justice Nancy Bateman Honourary Co-Chairs of the 25th Anniversary celebrations.

The Board was also very busy in its second year of assuming responsibility for Fund Development which had been previously been the function of the Fund Development Committee. Fund development is always a challenge for a small organization such as LISNS. It has been an interesting and sometimes steep learning curve for everyone involved. I would like to thank all the Board members for their significant contribution to fund development over the past year.

I would also like to acknowledge fellow board member Kathy Sutherland who was nominated for the award of AFP (Association of Fundraising Professionals) Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser, recognizing her work with LISNS, on the Law Day Lunch live auction over the past 4 years.



*Kathy Sutherland is congratulated by Dan MacRury for her AFP Philanthropy Awards nomination*

The Law Day Lunch was a huge success with our dynamic and well traveled guest speaker Bruce Kirkby. Over the last three years the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia Law Lunch has continued to grow and is recognized as one of the premier fund-raising events in Halifax.

The 25th Anniversary celebrations have also included a successful poster contest in local schools with Meaghan Fielding's submission selected for first prize.

Overall, it was a busy year for our Executive, Board and Committees, but most importantly for the staff who are dedicated to offering such quality programs and projects. On behalf of the Board I take this opportunity to thank the Society's executive director, Maria Franks, and all her staff for their dedication over the last year. I also thank members of the executive, particularly Tilly Pillay, our outgoing Vice-President, who has been a Board member of LISNS for the past six years, and all Board and committee members who volunteered so much of their time, knowledge and experience.

It has been an honour and privilege to serve as a Board member for the last four years and President during the past year which marks the 25th Anniversary of the Society. This volunteer experience has been truly rewarding and it's been a pleasure to work with all of you. I wish LISNS every success over the next 25 years.

Daniel A. MacRury, Q.C.  
 President, Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia

**AGM and Volunteer Recognition**



*Cutting of the 25th Anniversary cake at the AGM and Volunteer Recognition by co-chairs Justice Roscoe & Justice Bateman*



*Outgoing Board Members – Dan MacRury, QC (LISNS President) & Tilly Pillay, (LISNS Vice President)*



*Kathy Sutherland and Terry Yeadon, Board members, look over the LISNS display and Youth Justice pamphlets that were released in December 2006*

# The 2006 - 07 Year in Review

## Executive Director's Report

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR APRIL 01, 2006 - MARCH 31, 2007

#### REVENUE

##### GRANTS

Law Foundation of N.S.	\$100,000
Department of Justice Canada	70,000
N.S. Department of Justice	50,000

##### PROGRAMS

Publication Sales	2,521
Lawyer Referral Service	7,945

##### FUNDRAISING

54,344

##### OTHER

943

##### SUB-TOTAL

285,753

##### PROJECTS

179,980

##### TOTAL

\$465,733

#### EXPENSES

##### PROGRAMS

Legal Info Line & Lawyer Referral Service	\$71,595
Dial - a - Law	12,014
Publications	13,590
Community programs	40,061
Website	9,539

##### COST OF RAISING FUNDS

22,239

##### PROJECTS

179,980

##### ADMINISTRATION

116,425

##### TOTAL

\$465,443

##### EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES

\$ 290

*A copy of the audited statements is available upon request*

In 1984, when I first came to work at the Public Legal Education Society, as the Legal Information Society was then known, we fought over the electric typewriter. We used carbon paper. There were no fax machines, computers, voice mail or Internet. We did have spell check - it was called a dictionary!

We didn't have a dedicated Legal Information Line. The Lawyer Referral Service was operated by the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society. We, perhaps, answered a couple of calls a week from a librarian or an individual with a legal question. Our main concentration was on publications, mostly for schools.

There was still scepticism about the need for the public to be informed about the law. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms was still very new. Self-represented litigants were rare commodities! Many things have changed over the last twenty-five years. Most obviously we changed our name. As well, the demand for legal information has grown. From less than 100 calls a year, we now answer more than 7,500 in the same timeframe.

The electric typewriter has given way to computers. We look up information on-line rather than in a book. There are more than 60,000 visitors to our website annually. We now operate the Lawyer Referral Service and the Dial-a-Law program. Our focus has moved away from publications and more towards on-line resources and towards legal information delivered over the phone.

Some things have not changed. While many Nova Scotians have access to the Internet, many others do not. As well, people like to have someone listen to their problem. With the prevalence of voicemail and e-mail, direct contact with individual staff within agencies and government departments is often restricted. The Legal Information Line continues to offer that personal one-on-one human contact.

Over the years, LISNS has had the benefit of committed core funders whom I would like to acknowledge:

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia which has provided funding throughout our 25 year history; the Department of Justice Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Justice; both have provided funding for more than 17 years.

While we appreciate core funding support we are aware the reality is that it has not kept pace with inflation or increased demands for our services. This reality has brought about another significant change within LISNS. To overcome this barrier we, and particularly our Board, has embraced and put resources into fund development so that we can meet our goal of raising more than one third of our budget through fundraising activities. We could not continue to provide the level and variety of legal information services that we do without the support of our donors and sponsors. They make all the difference.

Over the last 25 years we have benefited from the skills, knowledge and generosity of hundreds of volunteers on the Board and on committees, and through our programs and projects. Through their volunteer work, LISNS is able to continue to enable Nova Scotians to access the legal information they need.

I want to acknowledge the work of LISNS staff, Wendy Turner, Andrea McBeth, Barrie Warren, Peter Mushkat and Gwen Atkinson.

Two Executive members are leaving, Dan MacRury and Tilly Pillay. They are exemplary examples of how members of the legal profession give back to the community through their volunteer commitment. I thank them for their support and leadership over the last few years. It has been a great pleasure to work with them.

**Maria G. Franks**  
**Executive Director**

# Summary of Program Statistics 2006/07

Dial-a-Law	Legal information Line and Lawyer Referral Service	Publications	Outreach	Website
<p>Calls: 11,145</p> <p># of tapes accessed: 5,984</p> <p>Top 10 scripts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Separation 474</li> <li>* Child Custody &amp; Access 383</li> <li>* Child Support 360</li> <li>* Divorce 314</li> <li>* Common law 241</li> <li>* Spousal Support 205</li> <li>* Probate 184</li> <li>* Personal Injury 118</li> <li>* Libel &amp; Slander 126</li> <li>* Grandparents' Rights 115</li> </ul>	<p>Calls answered: 7429</p> <p>Emails: 227</p> <p>Top 5 areas of law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Family 3,513</li> <li>* Criminal &amp; provincial offences 1,273</li> <li>* Court Procedures 1,227</li> <li>* Torts 586</li> <li>* Debtor/Creditor 527</li> </ul> <p># of referrals to lawyers on Lawyer Referral Service : 1,542</p> <p>Origin of calls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* HRM 4,740</li> <li>* Northern 683</li> <li>* Cape Breton 667</li> <li>* Valley/Digby 662</li> <li>* South Shore 575</li> <li>* Out of Prov 286</li> <li>* Unknown 142</li> </ul> <p>Referrals to Legal Info Line by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Phone book 1,864</li> <li>* Legal Aid 1,286</li> <li>* Courts 898</li> <li>* Previous user/friend 766</li> <li>* Website 894</li> <li>* Govt/Boards 891</li> <li>* Community group 503</li> <li>* Bar Soc/lawyer 286</li> <li>* MP/MLA 75</li> </ul>	<p>Publications distributed: 7357</p> <p>Most popular Publications requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Family 1,703</li> <li>* Criminal 965</li> <li>* Seniors' issues 638</li> </ul>	<p>Displays and Presentations:</p> <p>CBA Law Fair: April 2006</p> <p>Seniors Secretariat 50+ Expo: June 2006</p> <p>International Women's Day Conference: Feb. 2007</p> <p>Gerontology Assoc. of NS: March 2007</p> <p>Atlantic Regional Crime Prevention Conference: June 2006</p> <p>Speaker Requests: 20 Topics requested</p> <p>Most popular topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Wills/health law 9</li> <li>* Family Law 5</li> <li>* Employment 2</li> <li>* Education 1</li> <li>* Youth Justice 1</li> <li>* Forensics 1</li> <li>* Small Claims 1</li> </ul>	<p>Unique visitors: 67,693</p> <p>Email questions answered: 227</p> <p>Pages viewed: 193,306</p> <p>FAQs accessed: 106,881</p> <p>Most accessed pages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English - FAQs</li> <li>* Divorce 6,222</li> <li>* Separation 5,758</li> <li>* Family Law 5,263</li> </ul> <p>French</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Guide for not-for-profits in Atlantic Canada 532</li> <li>* Common law (Happily Ever After) 462</li> <li>* Jury Duty 254</li> </ul>

**Random survey of 100 callers to the Legal Information Line over a one month period indicated:**

- \* 48 callers were from outside the Halifax area and a further 7 were calling from other parts of Canada
- \* 26 were referred to LISNS by Legal Aid
- \* 91 were first time users of the Legal Information Line
- \* 55 got through on the first call, 33 on the 2-10 call.
- \* 78 were between the ages of 19-55
- \* 52 were female/ 48 male
- \* First language: English 84; French 7; Arabic 4; German 2; Chinese 1; Russian 1
- \* 59 identified themselves as having Canadian origin; 6 declined to answer the question
- \* 50 had a household income of less than \$25,000; 29 had an income between 25,000 -\$50,000
- \* 55 had a household of 1-2; 22 had a household of 3; 23 a household of 4 or more
- \* 64 had access to the internet at home or work
- \* 38 had a family law problem; 9 a criminal law problem; 15 had questions about court procedure; 4 involved an issue of family violence (callers may have more than one legal issue).

## Thank You to our Law Day Lunch Sponsors



# Projects Report, 2006 - 07

In addition to core programs, LISNS has a long history of using project funding to provide legal information for specific audiences. In 2006/07 we undertook a variety of projects aimed at youth, charities, teachers, farm resource managers, and website users.

## Youth Criminal Justice Act Projects

LISNS has developed a variety of information for youth, parents and those working with youth to foster an understanding of the effects of Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA). These projects were funded through the Department of Justice Canada's Youth Justice Initiative.

### YCJA Web pages

LISNS' colourful interactive web pages follow a youth crime from commission to sentence. They describe the role of the police, the judge and other actors in the process, what happens at trial and the consequences of youth crime. The latest page describes what happens when a youth receives a custodial sentence.

### YCJA Scenarios

LISNS developed two short dramas that consider youth justice issues. This project is the beginning of an exploration of the potential for using theatre as a means of delivering information to youth and others. Drama has been used in BC (The People's Law School) and Alberta (Public Legal Education Network of Alberta). LISNS consulted with both those jurisdictions before determining what might be most effective in Nova Scotia. It is hoped that the resulting scripts (available in both English and French) will be used not just as theatre pieces but also as teaching tools in the classroom.

### YCJA pamphlets and other print materials

LISNS continues the distribution of print materials in English and French on youth justice issues to the elementary and secondary schools of Nova Scotia and to agencies working with youth.

### YCJA Q&A/FAQ

LISNS is maintaining its online question and answer and FAQ service to enhance LISNS web-based youth justice initiative.

### YCJA Teachers' Resource Network

LISNS continued to engage law teachers in Nova Scotia schools through the Resource Network by offering them on-line access to more resource materials and the opportunity to share experiences

in a secure environment (access is by registration).

### Bullying - Teachers' Rights brochure

With the support of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (the NSTU), LISNS adapted a pamphlet that was first produced by Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick for use in Nova Scotia. This was printed and distributed by the NSTU and is also available online in both English and French.

### Environmental Law for the Agriculture Sector in Nova Scotia

With the support of the NS Department of Agriculture; the Department of Environment & Labour; and the NS Federation of Agriculture, LISNS has updated and adapted the Guide to Environmental Law for Nova Scotia to consider how environmental law - both common law and legislation (federal; provincial; and municipal) - applies to agricultural activities in the province. There will be a series of workshops to introduce this material to those involved in the sector in 2007/08.

### Law for Non-profit Organizations in Atlantic Canada

With the support of the Canada Revenue Agency Charities Directorate, LISNS has updated the existing information resource for non-profit organizations operating in Atlantic Canada. This resource is online for in both English and French. There is also limited distribution in other formats upon request.

### The Annotated T3010a Project (Charities Return)

In collaboration with the other PLEI organizations in the Atlantic Region, LISNS developed an annotated version of the Charitable Information Return to assist Registered Charities in completing this annual report required under the Income Tax Act. This initiative was funded by the Charities Directorate of the CRA. The project will continue with the introduction of this material to charitable organizations in each of the Atlantic Provinces by LISNS and the other PLE organizations in 2007/2008 through a number of information sessions. The overall goal of the project is to ensure that charitable organizations are able to fulfill their legal obligation to file the Return in a timely fashion and deliver complete and accurate reports.

For information about projects please contact Peter Mushkat, Project Manager at [projectofficer@legalinfo.org](mailto:projectofficer@legalinfo.org)

## Project Activity on our Website

### Family Violence FAQ

With the financial support of the Family Law Section of the Department of Justice Canada, LISNS expanded the FAQ section of its website to include a section on Family Violence issues including Emergency Protection Orders, Elder Abuse, Peace Bonds, Domestic Abuse, Being a Witness in a Criminal Trial, and Sexual Assault. These FAQ are available in English and French.

### Criminal Law FAQ

With the financial support of the Department of Justice Canada, LISNS expanded the Criminal Law FAQ on its website to include Representing Yourself in Criminal Court, You and the Police, Sentencing, and Jury Duty. These FAQ are available in English and French.

### Bankruptcy FAQ

Also with the financial support of the Department of Justice Canada, we added FAQ on Bankruptcy to our Consumer Law available in English and French.

## Congratulations to LISNS

*Raphina Ghosn (Board Member) and Natalie Ghosn (Volunteer) wish LISNS well for another 25 years*



*Volunteers Justice Elizabeth Roscoe and past Board Member, Yvonne LaHaye extend their best wishes to LISNS as well*