

# EDUCATING CANADIANS (Part 2)

Our June Newsletter highlighted the excitement and interest generated by the Nepal Study Tour project, an ongoing program of education both for the participants of last spring's tour of the TRAS projects in Nepal and for the Canadian audiences who see their slide shows.

In this issue, we want to pay tribute to other Canadians who have helped Tibetan exiles and Indian and Nepalese villagers by spreading the word about TRAS. These people have not been selected for a study tour; they probably don't see themselves as anything but ordinary citizens — but thanks to some chance happening in their lives, they have become advocates for change in the often desperate living conditions of people half a world away in the Himalayan region.

The catalyst for the Woodcocks (who founded TRAS) was a meeting with a

Tibetan lady who introduced them to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. John Conway, our second President, was inspired by the Woodcocks, and he, in turn spread the word to others, including the Leaches. Sometimes it was a book — Dorothea Leach mentions the lasting impression "Seven Years in Tibet" made on her, as does Georgina Henderson (*see Page 2*).

Others went to India on holiday, on business, on personal retreats, little thinking they would become "hooked" on Tibetans! ALL OF THEM DID MORE THAN SEND A DONATION TO TRAS — they also spread the word further and further, and today the projects sponsored by TRAS and CIDA are the tangible results of all this informal education of Canadians.

We know that 8 of you have been busy over the summer persuading



others to join TRAS, through our membership drive. Congratulations to these 8 and welcome to our new members!

We are highlighting a few stories from members whose work for TRAS is known to us. There must be many more of you who help to spread the word! Please let us know what you have done, so that we can print your stories too.

Ordinary Canadians? Extra-ordinary is nearer the mark! May their stories be an inspiration to us all!

***There is a complete list of current TRAS and TRAS/CIDA projects on Pages 6 & 7, plus a map showing their locations. If you are moved to tell others about TRAS work, remember that we will be delighted to furnish you with information, handouts, photographs, slides. Just get in touch with the TRAS Office! The only requirement from you is enthusiasm and a belief in what TRAS does - the rest just happens - ask Jessie Kaye!***



***Success Story! TRAS sponsored children at Buddah Memorial Home***

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# TRAS - VICTORIA: 29 years later

Georgina Henderson

*TRAS was founded in and still operates from Vancouver, BC. From time to time we have had representatives in Alberta and Ontario, who have done valuable work for TRAS - but the only fully fledged TRAS Branch is in Victoria, where a handful of enthusiastic "amateurs" do a professional job of fund raising and education.*

Georgina Henderson writes: Don Edwards wrote about us in the Summer 1992 issue of the Newsletter. In the late 1960s Don and his wife, Heather, had just returned from a two year stint in India, where they were "captivated by Tibetan personalities and their culture". An article about their trip appeared in a Victoria paper, leading to a meeting with the Woodcocks who had recently founded TRAS.

So TRAS Victoria was born, and one of the first calls the Edwards received was from Jean Christie, who read that article and joined Heather and Don to raise funds for Tibetan relief and promote sponsorships through the Vancouver TRAS. As Jean's father had been a tea planter in Ceylon, she was keenly interested in that part of the world. Tom and Celia Hughes joined at this time too.

Early fundraising was based on importing and selling Tibetan carpets and handicrafts, including an annual raffle for a 2'x 3' carpet. Then in the 1970s the group began to participate in the Hillside Mall Fall Bazaar, held yearly for Victoria's charitable organisations. Genuine handicrafts were liberally mixed with 'junk' until the bazaar management said that no more garage sale-type things were permitted on the tables, and we abandoned the bazaar in 1991.

The group has always been small but active, meeting several times a year at each other's houses. Vel and Larry

Rossiter got interested in Tibet after reading Lobsang Rampa's books, in which the author described his life as a Tibetan monk, his traditional medical training and his spiritual explorations. (He turned out to be an Englishman who had never been to Tibet and lived in Ontario for many years. Fascinating reading nonetheless!) The Rossiters later helped out by being the sponsorship secretaries for TRAS for a few years.

Peggy and Fred Larson responded to a newspaper article appealing for sponsorships for Tibetan refugees. Their church group raised funds for some years until other uses for the money were selected. So the Larsons then joined TRAS through the Edwards.

In the 1950s in East Grinstead, Sussex, Fiona Odgren saw a cinema newsreel about the Dalai Lama, and felt a kinship with Tibet. In the 1970s, then living in Vancouver, Fiona saw a television program about the Leaches and their work with Tibetans. She was impressed with TRAS' volunteer approach and its links with young Tibetans, and so she joined and worked on the board of directors. When she later moved to Victoria, she joined our group.

Martin Sweny read "Seven Years in Tibet" in the 1980s and met the Rossiters and TRAS at one of our Hillside bazaars. He remembers that in 1961 he travelled in Yugoslavia with an itinerant German accordion player, and a comment made by this fellow has stuck in Martin's mind to this day. The German had seen the Dalai Lama, and he told Martin, "Wherever the Dalai Lama is, that's home for me".

I was also hooked by reading "Seven Years in Tibet". It was a dark and stormy night in 1956 and I was babysitting. The family not only had the book but was late getting home, so I read the whole

thing and was mightily impressed with such an amazing country. Lobsang Rampa got me further interested as well. When we lived in England in the 1970s, I joined the Tibet Society of the UK and worked for the Tibet Shop and the Buddhist Society. We were thoroughly involved in the Tibetan community there and when we moved to Victoria in 1975, I was thrilled to meet the Victoria TRAS group.

David and Ruby Etheridge lived in India for 8 months and when they returned to Victoria they often sent parcels to Father Abraham, a friend who lived near Darjeeling. David and Don Edwards had worked together and one day Don asked how much it cost to send parcels to India. That was the beginning of the Etheridges' TRAS involvement.

Our annual spring garage sale was our main source of funds from 1981 - 1995, and this was great fun. We held it at our house, decorating the porch and trees with banners and signs. One year we were given a lot of Indian scarves to sell, so it all looked very festive. There was always the excitement of wondering if the rain would hold off - it usually did!

We finally gave up the garage sale as it was truly a huge amount of work. We realised it had gone on for so many years because the babies who were originally tied into their prams to watch were now biking around the neighbourhood putting up the signs and enthusiastically selling stuff of questionable value to anyone who looked even remotely interested. And one of those former babies gave a Social Studies presentation to her grade 10 classmates which concluded with everyone writing to Deng Xiaoping urging him to reconsider policies on Tibet. She is now attending Li Po Chun United

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Sponsorship

Harimaya Ranteej

## Joan Ford

The only trouble with a moving and appealing article is that it gets all the attention! Thanks to Keith Morgan's article, followed by the interest generated by the Nepal Study Tour participants (who have a very soft spot for this wonderful institution), TRAS has gained many new sponsors for the Buddha Memorial Home.

**NOW WE NEED TO CONCENTRATE ON MUSTANG!** The Mustang Girls High School Scholarship Project is equally deserving of your attention. Imagine a remote, dry, mountainous area in northern Nepal, where the climate is harsh, life is hard and where education, particularly for girls, is minimal. Without it, progress is impossible. You have the chance to help TRAS improve the lives of ONE QUARTER of the girl population of Mustang (that's 90 girls!). Think what a difference it could make to the region IF JUST A HANDFUL OF THESE GIRLS WERE ABLE TO GO ON TO TRAIN AS TEACHERS, HEALTH WORKERS, ORGANIC FARMERS, COMMUNITY MANAGERS.

Joan Ford, Sponsorship Secretary, writes: "Things have been quiet with the Sponsorship Program during the summer, perhaps too quiet, as only two of the four girls from the Mustang Girls Scholarship Project featured in the last Newsletter have found sponsors. If you can see your way to helping one of these girls, please contact the TRAS Office. The cost is \$150.00 per annum. I am showing the histories of two typical girls."

Born in Mustang Ghansa (1983). Parents occupation – agriculture. Harimaya has 3 brothers and 3 sisters. Parents need help because of the large size of the family. Harimaya is putting a lot of effort into her school work.

## Bishu Paija

Born in Mustang Ghansa (1984). Parents occupation – agriculture. Because of the large size of the family (2 brothers and 5 sisters) the parents need help with her education. She is a good student.

*(Continued from page 2)*

World College in Hong Kong, and has given several talks about Tibet to the students, most of whom had no idea of the situation there. So these garage sales have had very far-reaching effects!

Our fundraising now comes solely from our annual raffle and the sale of imported Tibetan rugs. We always have the suspense of "I wonder what will come and in what colours and sizes", as there may or may not be catalogues which may or may not be accurate, and the merchandise may or may not come by seemail (always our preference), air-

mail or at all. The uncertainties add excitement!

Thanks to the kindness of the local chapter of the Canada-Tibet Committee, we have had TRAS sales tables at all their events for the past few years. Without this help, we would not be able to carry on selling carpets, as, although we are enthusiastic buyers of our own goods, we are all running out of floor and wall space. It also gives us a great way to promote TRAS and its activities.

Over the last three decades, then, our small group's support for Tibet and the Tibetan cause has never waned. Judy

and T.C. Tethong have been our 'on-the-spot' connections and mentors for over twenty years, and we have always appreciated the great help of the Vancouver TRAS members.

*The Victoria Branch has sent thousands of dollars to TRAS over the years. They continue to send an annual payment to Mrs. Taring's Old People's Home, with the rest of their fundraising going into the general Project Fund.*

**Members' stories are continued on page 4**

## TALKING ABOUT TOILETS

*Jessie Kaye*

*Talking about toilets can lead to a personal project that is growing like Topsy! Jessie Kaye, a long-time TRAS member in Hamilton, Ontario, explains how she comes to be involved in toilets and the surprising avenues this topic has led her along:*

One evening about midnight my husband came into the bedroom brandishing an e-mail which he said had come from Bridget at the TRAS office in answer to my query about a possible project our church could adopt. Too lazy to put my glasses back on, I suggested he read it to me. After listening to what he read, I sat up in bed saying, "TOILETS! How does she think I can sell TOILETS to a bunch of staid Anglicans?"

The project Bridget had suggested was one in conjunction with SHARE, a small Indian NGO run by a dedicated retired couple in the Kulu Valley in Northern India. It was to help build what Canadians call 'outhouses' in poor villages around Manali, and would be co-funded by TRAS and CIDA.

When I took the proposal and poster to our Outreach Group, they embraced

the idea with enthusiasm. A young doctor, Karen Trollope-Kumar, who had just joined the group, said she had gone to India as a medical student. There she had married a doctor and the two of them had worked for community health projects for eleven years in Uttar Pradesh, an area similar to the Kulu Valley where the toilets were needed. She knew first hand the need for better sanitation and the horrors of sewage. Karen strongly felt that this project was more than just a money raising one. It should be an educational tool linked up with concern for the environment. We talked about working up a presentation for the Sunday School. We asked Mrs. Hales for photographs of the area and were sent a good selection which we put onto a display board. Then we decided that the whole parish should be involved in the educational component of this project.

We have planned to have a fund raising lunch after church at which Indian food will be served. After the meal Karen will show her slides and our display board will be prominent.

We have also planned an educational as well as money raising session in our Sunday School. We decided to draw a large outline of a toilet and then on cardboard we'd do the same picture, colour it, cut it up into 85 jigsaw pieces and as the children brought or earned enough

for a piece (\$1.00 each), that piece would go onto the outline. In this way we hoped to spur them on to filling in the whole picture and buying a toilet.

In our area there is an annual street sale. We hope to make some money at this for the



*"First dig a hole" - SHARE staff examine a toilet-in-the-making.*

project. Once again, the display board will be on show.

This summer Karen is active in organising three sessions of a global awareness summer camp for young people. Karen will show her slides and tell these youngsters about the Kulu Valley.

The Outreach Group became so excited about this project that we couldn't wait to help until we had raised the money. We felt the toilets were needed NOW so we asked the Parish Council for a grant. Now we have to make the money to pay it back! We said we wanted enough for ten toilets, but are hoping that we will make enough to buy more than that. Wish us luck!

## INSPIRED BY TIBETAN NUNS

An Unexpected Project

*Joyce Elliot & Patrick Stewart*

When we visited Dharamsala, it was not our intention to take on a project of fundraising for Tibetan nuns. We were on our own pilgrimage when we briefly stopped at the Geden Choeling Nunnery. We were struck by the good humour and quiet strength of these Tibetan women even though materially they were as poor as church mice. They were not asking for more for themselves. They could adequately manage even though some were sleeping under tarps in the heavy Himalayan monsoons. What they did request was help for the women who continued to arrive at their doorstep

*(Continued on page 5)*



*Children at one of Karen's Global awareness camps pose with Jessie's "Kulu Valley Toilets" display board*



*Crammed onto a narrow terrace in hilly Dharamsala, the nuns have built a prayer hall as the focal point of their lives*

after travelling out of Tibet. Much to our surprise, we both knew we needed to return to Canada and raise money to support these women devoting their lives to their spiritual goals and to prayer for an end to suffering in our world.

Back in Canada, we talked to TRAS and received their endorsement and support for this project. No matching government funds would be available since this was a religious order, but tax receipts could be issued. We gave slide shows speaking from our hearts about our pilgrimage and of the nuns' needs. Others were also inspired. We started a newsletter that reached new people but more importantly kept those already connected informed and involved. Projects were undertaken to raffle a Tibetan carpet and make prints from a prayer flag wood block.

This project took on a life of its own! No longer were we the 'doers'. Shortly thereafter we moved to Vancouver Island expecting that the fundraising would end. But this was not to be. Without any effort from us the donations continued, requests for prints continued and a

relationship with the Geden Choeling Nunnery continued. Even now, seven years later, this project has life. The Quadra Island community has taken on some fundraising activities and just last week 4 prints were ordered from Calgary.

More aid was raised from this small project than we ever dreamed possible. The goal had been to help the Geden Choeling Nunnery build one new building. In fact two new structures were built. Yet the need continues. Just recently we received a letter, humbly asking for more assistance as the numbers of new refugee nuns arriving in Dharamsala continues to be high. We will continue to do what small steps we can in order to help.

### **A ONE-WOMAN CRUSADE**

*Vivian Hunter*

*Vivian Hunter is a long time member who has worked tirelessly for TRAS without the support of a local group. She does not give herself credit for the*

*donations and sponsorships which she has generated. Vivian will be familiar to many of you as our one-time sponsorship secretary and newsletter editor. Until recently she ran an art gallery in Terra Cotta, Ontario.*

Telling about the wonderful work of TRAS has come easily for me ever since I began sponsoring a 10 year old Tibetan boy, Wangdu, at the Tibetan Homes Foundation in 1963. I received his interesting letters as well as the TRAS Newsletter, which kept me up to date on the exciting new projects.

When I began to sell Tibetan paintings and carpets for the Tibetans exiled in India, my audience widened and several lengthy visits to the Settlements in India gave me plenty to talk about to the local newspapers, to groups at York University in Toronto, high schools and Amnesty International as well as to my church.

How thrilling it was to be guest of honour at Wangdu's engagement party with his lovely fiancée, Chime, in February 1983 (also Losar - a very happy and auspicious time). Wangdu is now Director of Namgyal High School in Kathmandu and has two very bright children. He is the epitome of the finest of the generation of educated Tibetans who are caring for their people because TRAS and other NGOs cared for them.



*Vivian Hunter with Wangdu and Chime at their engagement party*

# CURRENT PROJECTS 1998

These projects continue the TRAS commitment to the Tibetan exiles and their village neighbours in the Himalayan region, with particular emphasis on vocational training, environmental protection, agriculture and programs for women and children. The projects which are jointly sponsored by TRAS and the Canadian International Development Agency are marked (TRAS/CIDA).

## NEPAL

**King Mahendra Trust - Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP)**, Sikles region, Nepal: \$381,802. (TRAS/CIDA) 3 year integrated rural development to assist remote villages balance needs of local people, environmental protection and tourist invasion. Village tree nurseries, reforestation, organic farming and kitchen gardens, day care centres, income generation, adult literacy classes, mothers' groups, trail improvements and ecotourism campsites.

**Himalayan Education Project for Young Canadians**, ACAP, Sikles, Nepal: \$38,179 (TRAS/CIDA) Overseas development education studies for Grade 11 students, trekking to the ACAP villages. Each student committed to giving 6 lectures in Canada upon return. The second group will be going to Nepal in 2000.

**Appropriate Agricultural Alternatives (AAA)**, Kathmandu, Nepal: \$89,769. (TRAS/CIDA) 3 year project to teach local farmers organic farming methods and successful techniques to eliminate dangerous overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

- ♦ **Buddha Memorial Home**, Kathmandu, Nepal (2 projects)
- ♦ **Rebuilding carpentry and tailoring workshops**: \$10,000. Workshops used for vocational training for the school's students (street children and orphans).
- ♦ **Vocational training course in tailoring**: \$11,415. 1 year course for 8 girls.

## TIBET

**English Language School**, Lhasa, Tibet: \$4,830. 1 year English course for 15 young people x 3 years. Without knowledge of English, many job opportunities are denied the Tibetans.

**Pelshong Tibetan Medical School**, Shigatse, Tibet: \$40,500.(TRAS/CIDA) 6 year training for 45 students in traditional Tibetan medicine. Recently completed. Students have returned to villages to practise medicine. Survey of course effectiveness in progress.



## NORTHERN INDIA (Tibetan Projects)

**Community Health Workers' Training**, Dharamsala, India: \$24,723. (TRAS/CIDA) Continuation of our CHW Training at Delek Hospital. 36 CHWs over 3 years to be trained for placement in Tibetan settlements

**Vocational Training for Pre-Primary Teachers and Unemployed Youth**, Dharamsala, India: \$114,815. (TRAS/CIDA) 2 year project to train 50 teachers and 50 unemployed youth. Teachers are guaranteed jobs; youth will be trained in skills needed by Tibetan settlements and helped to set up small businesses in these settlements

**Computer Training, Institute of Buddhist Dialectics**, Dharamsala, India: \$17,600. Purchase of computers for on-going training courses in computer literacy and desktop publishing. First class of 12 students has successfully graduated.

**Nurses' Training**, Dharamsala, India (2 projects):

- ♦ **Vocational training course in nursing-1**: \$4,116. Course for 8 young women in community hospitals in and near Dharamsala. They will run health education programs.
- ♦ **Vocational training course in nursing-2**: \$2,856. Second batch of nurses for same training.

**Thanka Painting Training**. Dharamsala, India: \$4,116. 3 year training in the art of Tibetan religious painting. Large market for this age old skill.

**Little Flowers Creche**, Dharmasala, India: \$1,500 per year. Support for creche for 45 toddlers, the children of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile workers. The Centre, in the government compound, allows mothers to work and be self-supporting.

**Tibetan Homes Foundation Old People's Home**, Mussoorie, India: \$350 p.a. Annual grant to maintain living quarters for elderly Tibetan exiles.

**Chagpori Tibetan Medical School**, Darjeeling, India: \$38,550. (TRAS/CIDA) Having built and equipped pharmacy to process herbs for Tibetan medicines and trained the herb gatherers, TRAS wishes to train 3 monks as pharmacists.

**Rinchen Zangpo Society**, Kangra, India: \$4,200. Teacher Training for 5 girls for the schools in a remote valley.

**NERDA: Shillong Tibetan Settlement**, Shillong, Meghalaya, India: \$17,400. Construction of 4 classrooms for middle school in Tibetan settlement in remote area of northeastern India.

## NORTHERN INDIA (Indian projects)

**CHIRAG** Nainital, India (3 projects)

**Social forestry** – \$114,950. (TRAS/CIDA) 12 villages involved in village tree nurseries, replanting denuded village forest plots with fodder and fuel trees to hold soil and provide for the population; management of newly grown forests and education re: care of forests.

**Sustainable Energy** – \$207,676. (TRAS/CIDA) 20 villages (2,500 people) involved in construction of rain-water cisterns, biogas plants, smokeless 'chulas' (updated traditional cooking stoves), provision of pressure cookers, training of local builders.

**Mother and Child Care, Phase 2** – \$82,224. (TRAS/CIDA) Programs to help women and children - 500 children in daycare and kindergartens, extra teachers to supplement primary education for 1,650 children, adult literacy classes for 220 women and women's action groups for 750 women in 22 villages.

**SHARE: Construction of toilets, Phase 2** - Kulu Valley, India: \$40,312. (TRAS/CIDA) . Construction of 250 basic toilets in steep terrain, to improve personal hygiene and health and the cleanliness of water supply. Health education provided to the villagers.

## SOUTHERN INDIA (Indian projects)

(Note – Although Mysore is south of our main project area, Sister Victorine, the Administrator is an old friend of TRAS. She helped many Tibetan children in the early days, and does more with a dollar than anyone we know! We now help with vocational training for poor Indian village children.)

**Incarnation Convent**, Mysore, India: Vocational Training Projects for 12 Teachers (\$8,095), Mechanics (\$11,571) and 12 Nurses (\$14,095).

## TRAS EXECUTIVE

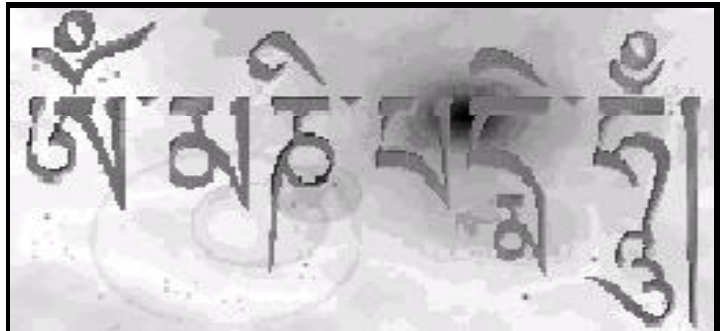
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**Om Mani Padme Hum**  
*Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus*



Yearly Membership donation (\$20) ----- \$ 20

*Possible Additional Donations:*

Monthly Donation of \$25 for the “Child Development and Education  
 Project” at a residential school -----

Monthly Donation of \$10 for a child in a “Family and Community  
 Development Project” -----

Donation to the Old People’s Fund, which supports a “Self-Help Project”  
 for the elderly and infirm -----

Donation to the general fund or other specific area of your choice -----

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Please write address and postal code on your cheque and mail to:

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