A photograph of a tall, white, Victorian-style house with green trim. The house has multiple stories, a prominent front porch, and several windows. Scaffolding is visible on the left side of the house, suggesting renovation work. The title "TALL TOSH TALES" is overlaid in large red letters.

TALL TOSH TALES

LENORE HELLUM

DEDICATION

Here's to all TOSH
members and volun-
teers and
Sponsors, Board mem-
bers and administra-
tors along the way,
past, present and
future...



TALL TOSH TALES

A Baker's dozen!

Opening
Tassels

Rough on the Diamond

Ironica Veronica

Bob-Bob-a-Re-Bob

Clothes Horses

Tea Bags

A Festival of Tree (*)

Putting on a fashion show
is no Picnic

Shaken...not stirred

Naughty Nautilus

Ten Cents a Dance

Dapper Flappers

() note the title is singular, as it's a
joke*

TALL TOSH TA- LES

Firstly, if anyone is still unaware, TOSH is an acronym for The Old School House.

As TOSH celebrates its 20th anniversary, it occurred to me that I have a few personal anecdotes stored away in my 20 year relationship with the Old Girl!

My goal is not to chronicle the great achievements along the way, nor try to acknowledge all the great people connected to her – that would be a serious goal and it has been done in formal ways.

No, mine are a few quick tickles to the underbelly from my own quirky vantage point.

Lenore

OPENING



It was a lovely, sunny day in May 1987. The School House was painted, primed and pampered after an arduous renovation and was ready for the grand opening.

The Board of Directors was lined up to greet the dignitaries as they arrived, then the official ceremonies would begin. In the meantime, back at our restaurant, John and I were readying to attend. I wore an ivory raw silk suit, with matching hat, into which I tucked a few diamond pins. I also jammed a few diamonds on my fingers, and then we entered our white stretch limo. John traveled in style in those days. We pulled up to TOSH, and as we disembarked in all our glittering glory, Tom McIver ran up, grabbed my arm and began effusively showing me around, up the stairs, into the new rooms, all the while excitedly explaining how wisely the money had been spent,

how much had been saved on the carpeting, etc. etc. I was rather in a daze at being given so much attention, but we chatted about construction labour, the generosity of people, and the mandate of TOSH. He offered me refreshments, thanked me for coming, and I circulated.

It wasn't long before my dear friend Diana Mongeau (co-founder) told me that I had been mistaken for Jean Southam, a wealthy patron who had donated a large sum of money and Tom really wanted to impress her as to the benefits her contribution had produced. Tom didn't forgive me for a while, but he finally did see the funny side.

Bless you, Tom. It has taken twenty years, but I think I am getting near the halfway mark in patronage to try and match Ms. Southam's donation!



TASSELS

All the TOSH volunteers are highly valued. Some are eccentric and flamboyant – others are soft spoken and introspective; still others are outspoken and direct; those we call the “Scottish Mafia”... a phrase originating with our illustrious Chairman Norman, when he incurred the wrath of the Scottish Gift Shop Co-coordinator... (But that's another story).

One of the soft spoken, wry volunteers was Helga Byers. It wasn't easy to impress her. She had been around the world and had seen everything. The challenge to make her laugh was my goal in life... Sometimes I could elicit a twinkle in the eye, and a purse to the lips.

One dreary January day I had a dentist appointment. I thought I would do a little schtick for the girls at reception to brighten their dreary day. I hung two long bright orange tassels on my ears. They fell to the shoulders of my black leather coat. When I arrived at the office, I launched into a raunchy burlesque number, peeling off my coat, swinging the tassels around my ears.

As I twirled around to include the waiting patients, I was swaying full in front of Helga – (darned if we didn't have the same dentist!!).

“Helga...dahling... don't you remember when we were in vaudeville together”? The eyes twinkled, the lips pursed... “Well, Lenore, don't you think that those tassels should be hanging from a little further down?”

Right smartly I shot back..."Well, Helga, I'm a lot older now and this is the only place left to hang them!"

The room erupted, including Helga. At last I got a real belt out of her!

We didn't know then that not long after we would lose her. I imagine her twinkling, pursing, and just maybe, trying on a pair of tassels now and again.



ROUGH ON THE DIAMOND

TOSH was still in an early developmental learning curve. Every new Board of Directors had to iron out workable rules and mandates. This time we needed an administrator.

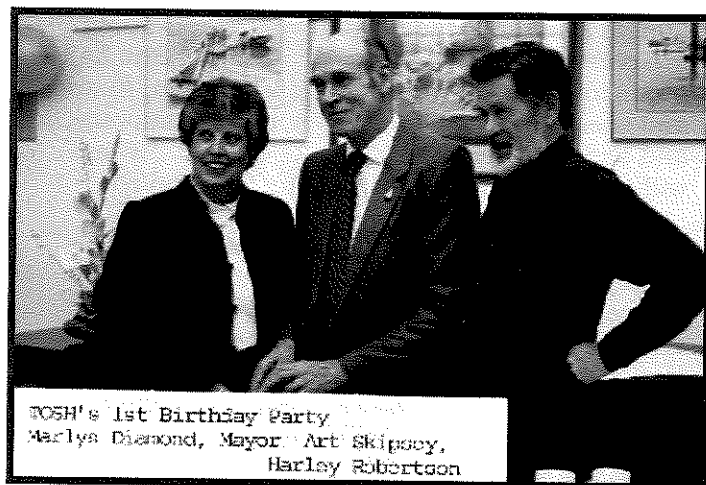
We were divided as to what set of qualifications were to be the priority. There were a few of us who thought "artistic vision" was the thing needed to push TOSH around the corner. While it was up and running, most of the board felt it required more financial and organizational acumen to keep it self-sufficient. We were – for instance – eligible for lottery funding, but it took an enormous amount of energy in administration just to keep any money in the bank. This, of course, I thought would take away from the "visionary energy". Marlys Diamond was one of two finalists being interviewed before that board meeting. She had a prodigious background in administration, finance and the workings of governmental bureaucracy, and she won the day with a majority. ..."where will the artistic vision come from?" I wailed.

The new person would have to walk a tightrope, what with our own resident artists' temperaments, and the grumblings of the local gift and art shops, who thought the non-profit organization, had a distinct, unfair advantage over them. I went into a "wait and see" mode, with one shoe in the air.

Well! In short shrift she sorted the staff, the artists, the stipends and the stamping of routine stuff, and in her spare time she organized the very swish Garden Art Auctions and the swag came rollin' in... She originated the Art in Bloom, where paintings are paired with flower arrangements... a lovely collaboration. The visionary was unfolding. This was a precursor to her putting Qualicum on the map with a running Five Bloom status in Communities in Bloom

So, as I sipped my wine at yet another successful reception, I found that my other foot had become firmly placed on the ground.

TOSH is so respected today, that it has become one of the Seven Local Wonders!
OKAY...this was a serious anecdote... bite me!!



TOSH's 1st Birthday Party
Marlys Diamond, Mayor Art Skipsey,
Harley Robertson

IRONICA VERONICA

Veronica Milner was one of the first stalwart supporters of the arts and of TOSH in particular.

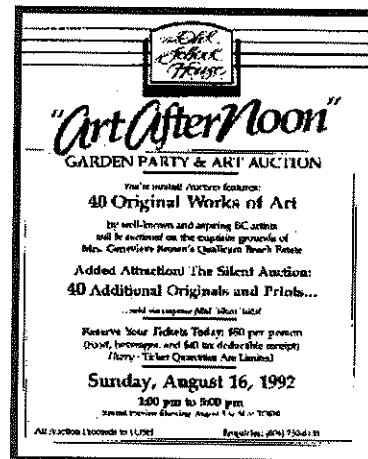
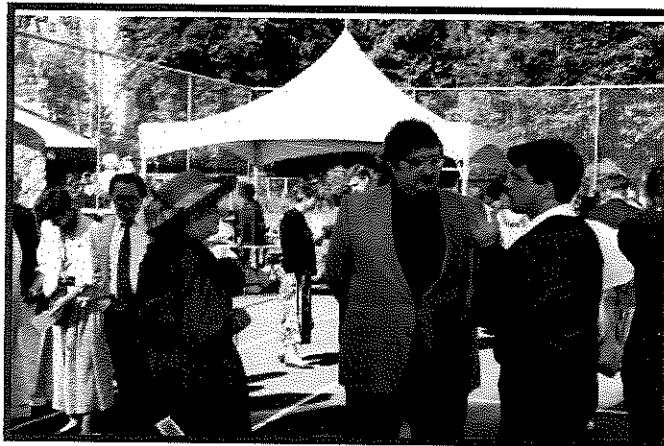
with noblesse oblige ,She kindly lent her property for the legendary garden party art auctions to raise money. Her life and background are detailed in Margaret Cadwaladr's book "In Veronica's Garden", which explains her claim to social station and her hauteur.

Having brushed shoulders with her whenever she was a guest at our restaurant (the name Judge's Manor even evokes the old English aristocratic pastoral life, of which I was the doyenne), I called her by her first name, as we would be equals. During my stint on the TOSH garden party committees we called her Veronica.

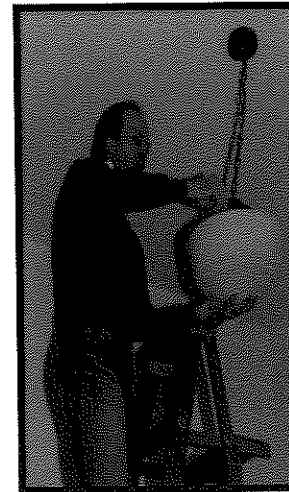
During later years, when she no longer lent her gardens, TOSH and Veronica no longer crossed paths and she fell off the radar for TOSH. One day I was running around, putting up posters for some TOSH occasion when I ran into the Fountain of Beauty – a hair salon no longer in existence.... There, in full curler flagrante sat Veronica. I was glad to see her after such a long time... "Hi, Veronica! so-o-o nice to see you!" I exclaimed. She fixed me with her haughty Villiers' eyes... "MRS. MILNER!" she staccatoed. "Oh, sorry, Mrs. Milner" I mumbled from my crumbled, dwarfed shortness, and quickly exited. This year, when Quality Foods celebrated its 25th Anniversary, one of the events was a lovely garden afternoon tea at the Milner Gardens. I was invit-

ed and was careful to wear a proper garden tea hat. I went through the house in a nostalgic mood to look again at her artwork and lifestyle, and I quietly thanked her as 'Mrs. Milner' – in case her ghost was in attendance. I thanked my hosts and when I was back up on the highway, I looked back up the long forest drive and yelled "YOU DONE GOOD, VERONICA!!"

I got a prickly stare from the yew tree.....



BOB-BOB-A -RE-BOB



Bob Mewburn is one of the exceptional mentors of TOSH. I think he lost all his hair at TOSH, while saving it from going under, with sheer will and worry.

The year he took on the job of administrator – gratis – there was just enough

money to hire a triumvirate of helpers in the office, for the busy summer months. Of the three, only one was much help... Cheryl O'Brien. She could work the computer, while I was a complete electronic neophyte.

Robert tried and tried to teach me the program. I needed to read instructions, and so would frantically try and keep up making notes as he scurried over the keyboard.... "There is no time to take notes, Lenore. Just watch and do!" He'd tear his hair and call me his worst nightmare.

I would also field the phone calls like the model secretary I used to be. He was never in... The "to do" list of errands was so long it kept him away. His mother Binks would call (her being a long time supporter of the arts as well). We knew each other from restaurant years as well, so we would chat.... "Has Bob eaten his lunch today?" she'd ask.

"If you include chewing out my ears.... Then, YES" I'd reply.

He would eventually get back to the office and I would ask him if he wanted the good news or the bad news first..... "Lenore, you're a nightmare!"

One day two agents from Cannon happened by, and asked if we would like an upgrade on our leased copier. Yippee..... I diligently took notes and quotes for Bob, whose job I was SURE would be easier with a new and improved copier. They were still there when he arrived back. I introduced them. He quickly pleaded "meeting" and closed the door to his office. When they left, he chewed my ears roundly... "Lenore, what were you thinking, entertaining an expense like that.... You're a nightmare!"

I calmly asked if he had eaten yet.

The three months moved inexorably slowly. Bob lost more hair, I never did see him eat anything,and I learned Windows.

He still came to TOSH to pour wine at the receptions, and I, like the Queen, carry no cash, so I would end up borrowing a toonie or two from Bob....."Lenore, you're still a nightmare!"

Two years ago his beautiful mother Binks passed on, and after the funeral, at the lovely reception he put together in her honour, I cornered him, glass of wine in hand, and said.... "Bob, your worst nightmare is here - Binks, I think, would like me to look after you now!" He rolled his eyes heavenward in supplication...

I think I still owe him a toonie!



CLOTHES HORSES

Besides making people laugh, my other life purpose is to just look good... "a walking sculpture" I always say.

To be well turned out and artistically put together, colours must coordinate, gold must glitter, and jewels must jaw-drop. Imagine my perturbation when I went to a TOSH function and encountered an ALMOST equally put together lady.

I soon found out that this person was Audrey Cameron, a volunteer and very fine artist in her own right, with a good eye for the "must-do" rules. She had the eye for colour coordination, the artistry and flair to be whimsical... but she was very discreet with the jewelry. She did not flaunt the honkin' pieces like me... so I came to call her "Tawdry Audrey".

She, being the lady that she is, gracefully accedes to second place! She just laughs and calls me the "Emperor"!





TEA BAGS

The annual Victorian Tea was anticipated as the highlight of the TOSH Christmas season.

The dear volunteer ladies would costume up. One artist volunteer dressed as Queen Victoria herself and presided over a very elegant, very English, very Victorian afternoon.

John and I always attended, dressed in our best tweeds.

The head of the kitchen at the first Victorian Tea was a five-foot-two bristly thistle from Scotland though!..."dinna be stingy wi' the tea bags, dearie...put in three to a pot – let it steep a full five minutes, then tak them oot richt awa!"

After a bit, she would check on things..."Hoo menna bags di' ya use, dearie?... It has to be perrr-fect for the Victorian TEA!"

As the door to the kitchen swung open and shut, we overheard everything. When we came to the end of the last good drop of tea, and the last good crumb of scone, John made his way to the kitchen to thank the ladies. "Well, it took you three tea bags to make a top notch cup of tea!" That nickname passed on, and all the kitchen staff



now
re-
fer



proudly to themselves as TOSH Tea Bags!



FESTIVAL OF TREE

Jean Grant Horner is a long time resident artist at TOSH, and her husband Frank has volunteered a great deal over the years. A serious bloke, is Frank (just read his prolific letters to the Editor almost weekly!).



The year that TOSH began their Festival of Trees, all volunteers and artists were on hand to participate... well maybe too many!

While the artists were being seriously creative – among them Jean – she left Frank to get into trouble with Nancy Whelan and me... Nancy was, of course, covering the event

for her column. I was wearing a particularly bright outfit – which prompted Frank and Nancy to prop me up against a green untrimmed tree, and I instantly became the whole decoration, complete with Xmas tree glass balls hanging from my ears! They started a contest to “find Lenore”... and they wanted to enter me into the Festival of Trees! but, as I can’t stand in a pail for 48 hours without watering, they just took a picture instead!!

PUTTING ON A FASHION SHOW IS NO PICNIC

From the moment I laid eyes on “Eyes on You”, I was hooked.



This was the TOSH studio of resident block print and fabric artist, Mary Leigh Campbell, who turned out a successful line of clothing, we called wearable art.

I became involved with her studio, retail selling, display, sign, had ple to dress!

Ask of the TOSH



de- and peo-

any pa-

trons, members and volunteers how many arm-



loads of new colour schemes they were "persuaded" to buy because I was able to convince them that their present colour palettes were all wrong for them, (they know who they are)). This was not high powered hustling though... their personalities really needed re-staging!

But it was the fashion shows that put us on the map. Mary always came up with unique themes derived from her seasonal lines.... I

would add funky flair. We staged one called "PICNIC", which featured indoor and outdoor loungewear, some were elegant complete with hats... others were sporty.

It was always Russian roulette finding models in time for a show. Our mainstays were Charlotte, Mary's lovely daughter at 15, and Colleen, equally young, petite and blonde.

I had to trust that the perfect model would turn up in time... sweet, well-behaved and that she would look well in the clothing. I prayed....

Mary announced the opening of the program and first model - TA-DAH!! In bounced Teacup, the best-behaved, sweetest Jack Russell, bringing with her, on the other end of the leash, my an-

swered prayer model... Susan... a tall, leggy, fine-boned blonde. They were the hit of the day!

What a picnic!

SHAKEN NOT STIRRED

Still about
ion...

Mary had print-
ulous
and white
called
"Martini".
image of a
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a swoop-
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martinis!



fash-

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martini
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course -
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couple of

TUFF MARTINI

1 1/2 oz. Gin or Vodka
dash Real Lime
1/2 oz. Dry vermouth
Stuffed olive on a toothpick in the drink
With these garnishes
Garnish with Bacon Rinds on the rim.

BERRY BLISS

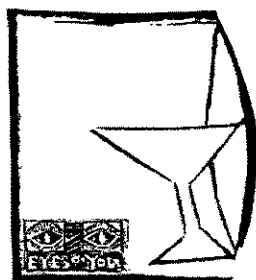
1 1/2 oz. Gin or Vodka
1/2 oz. Sweet red Vermouth
dash cassia

Garnish with halved Strawberries on toothpick
Drop whole Raspberries at bottom of glass.

VIRGIN MISS

4 oz. Club soda and any fruit drink

Garnish with edible petals floating on top
(rose, nasturtium, dorange, violet)



EYES ON YOU
The Old School House Gallery
Studio #2, 122 Fern Road, West
Qualicum Beach, BC V0R 2T0
(250) 752-7058, Fax 752-2600

MARTINI MAGIC

MARTINIS WERE FOR VERY DRY WITS
WITH DRY VERMOUTH AND LEMON PEEL

BUT IT'S OKAY TO DUMB THEM DOWN WITH BACON BITS
AND HEAR AFICIONADOS SQUEAL

THERE'S "SURE" AND "TUFF", AND CARTOON "SMURF"
THERE'S "DRAGON BREATH", "KISS OF DEATH", AND "BERRY BLISS",
THERE'S "POOKIE POUT", "LIZARD LIPS" AND "VIRGIN MISS",

OF MARTINI MAGIC THERE IS NO DEARTH
MAKE YOUR OWN MARTINI MIRTH!

TOOLS

Stainless steel shaker
Star less steel bar spoon
Tall spoon (for the martini that's "stirred, not shaken")
Cordiment & garnish bowls
Toothpicks
Ice



CARTOON SMURF MARTINI

1 1/2 oz. Gin or Vodka
1/2 oz. Peach Schnapps

Garnish with a marshmallow that has been soaked
in Grandine. Add a couple more plain white ones
on the rim with toothpicks.

SURE MARTINI

1 1/2 oz. Gin or Vodka
dash dry white Vermouth
dash Green Chartreuse

Garnish with cooked prawn (tail shell on) that
has been dipped in Chartreuse and rolled in
finely chopped herbs: (sprig thyme, chives,
Leaf of lemon mint, and lemon pepper)

KISS OF DEATH

1 1/2 oz. Vodka
1/2 oz. Kaluha
1/2 oz. Cold espresso coffee or 1/2 tsp. instant espresso

Drop in three chocolate covered coffee beans

LIZARD LIPS

1 1/2 oz. Gin/Vodka
1/2 oz. Dry white vermouth

Garnish with alternating strips of
sun-dried tomato that has been
soaking in gin with a dash of
Tabasco and thin strips of beef
jerky or pepperoni on toothpicks.

PEPPERMINT POOKIE POUT

1 1/2 oz. Gin/Vodka
dash peppermint schnapps

Garnish with candy canes on rim.

DRAGON BREATH

1 1/2 oz. Gin or Vodka
1/2 oz. Vermouth
dash Tabasco
Fresh Ground pepper

Float garlic croutons on top.

EYES ON YOU
The Old School House Gallery
Studio #2, 122 Fern Road, West
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(250) 752-7058, Fax 752-2800

Thanks to:
Jonathan Rott - Photography
Lavone Holman - Martin Magic
Judy Osting - Bartending
Mann - Videos
and all our
Models
enjoy
Mary Leach



We excitedly put together "Martini Magic" fashion show. Mary hired a real bartender who would be able to execute the wondrous recipes I concocted. Martini bars were becoming big in the urban centres and with imagination provided a prodigious experimentation – (our program and recipes follow).

It certainly was easy to coordinate the models, who only had black and white to choose from... so they were ready early and started to gather around the bar.

Mary and I had to quickly proclaim a rule... only one martini before the runway...

The announcement was made... out came the models, pushing one another..... giggling, out of program order..... Louise couldn't manage her tippy heels, and so came barefoot carrying her shoes. Heather stopped midway, threw herself into a bend, her heavy mop of hair brushing the floor... then threw herself upright, tossing the mane back and teetered away.

James, the tableau 'waiter' came on carrying a tray of full martinis! They were supposed to be props.... But the girls all grabbed one and sipped all the way home. I now realized why I had such an unruly, giggly, barefoot bunch on my hands! I was shaken to consider that I may be dealing with future Kate Mosses.



NAUGHTY NAUTILUS



Another founder of TOSH was a well known artist – Tina Beard... her Husband, Graham Beard, not too much... then.....

He is - of course - our locally famous paleontologist, with his collection of 500 million year old bones and fossils, now housed at the Historical Society Centre.

Back in the day, he housed everything in his house and garage, and was trying to raise consciousness about old bones. There was a Shaw Cable show called "Airtime" that I was a regular panelist on (the comic relief). Graham Beard was a guest on this show – the same show that I had chosen to bring in Madonna's newly published exotic, erotic coffee table book. I had it wrapped in brown paper, feigning a family time slot.

Graham gave a very erudite talk and showed off the pieces that he brought. They were TV friendly fossils.

I started my Madonna shtick by showing an old postcard picture of the Queen of Sheba belly dancing at the Chicago World's Fair. She was the most popular attraction at the fair. I claimed she was Madonna's Great-Grandmother. She wore only a filmy skirt and two concentric circled breastplates – that coincidentally looked exactly like two concentric circled fossils in Graham's collection... I grabbed them and yelled "Madonna would kill for these... they aren't fossils, they are the Queen of Sheba's wardrobe!", and promptly placed them in their strategic places.

I know Graham would have wished for a station blackout, but I know his students took a much greater interest in fossils since then... I really think I launched him into fame... he would argue the point.





DAPPER FLAPPERS

Something about the Roaring Twenties brings out the party souls, and the dancin' soles!

Since Bard to Broadway moved its summer theatre next to TOSH, there have been a few collaborative events. The year Bard did "Mame", TOSH decided to host a Roaring Twenties Tea Dance that would evoke a scene out of F.Scott Fitzgerald. There was no gin in the bathtub, but there was a fountain of champagne.... Literally....there was wine and of course, tea!

It was a costume event with gun molls, and 23 skidoo types (?????). By far the most outstanding "Mame" had to be Vivien Sears, in her fringed black flapper number, showing dimpled knees (the bees' knees, of course!), glittering headband, complete with egret feather, and a party smile that never quit. Her red lips never closed except to sip over the edge of a champagne glass.

A very young man, Brooks Maxwell, was tinkling

the ivories, and I had reservations about him being too young to be familiar with the jazzy music of that historical decade... But, just as back in the original days, when champagne flowed, energy got more frenetic and soon the tempo picked up. Vivien's fringes soon began to shake and shimmy.

The Charleston was ON! Most of us leaped up and joined her, and it was a sight to see the old TOSH volunteers getting their groove back, including me!

We kept that piano player thumping until he was sweating... "Mame" will always BE Vivien!





*The Old School House Arts Centre
20th Anniversary: 1988 - 2008*

*Stories by Lenore Hellam
Book Design by Corinne James
Photos by Volunteers over the 20 years
Transcription by Beatrix Graham*



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TALL TOSH TALES

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