

Spotlight on Sheila Grant

Spotlight ON SENIORS

*Celebrating the stories, talents
and contributions of our members.*



Sheila Grant

September 2026

I was born in Ladysmith, the third of four. My dad was a first-aid man and timekeeper for a local logging company, and my mother was a stay-at-home mom. We were Catholic so for grades one to eight we kids went to elementary school taught by nuns from the Sisters of Charity. I enjoyed school but never had "A" grades! After graduation from high school in 1964 I decided I would become a nun so went by train to Halifax to the Mother house for training. Two years later I decided I was in the wrong kind of work so returned home.

Next, I tried nursing and went to Victoria for the three-year RN program at the Royal Jubilee School of Nursing. During that time, I met Jim Jones, a divorced gent with a three-year-old adopted son, Laird. After graduation I lived with them in Vancouver as Jim, whose goal was to become a teacher, was accepted in the S. F. U. Maturity Student program. I nursed at the Burnaby General Hospital which I loved as it was small and personal in the 1970s. Jim and I got married and I adopted Laird. We moved to East Vancouver and I transferred to a closer hospital where I ended up injuring my left wrist while lifting a patient. They did surgery and during the recovery, I got pregnant and quit nursing to protect my wrist.

I had Christina and one day an Avon Lady came calling and asked me if I would like to become an Avon Lady too. I agreed and loved those years with the Avon Company! We bought our first house in Mission and during that time the manager asked if I would like a job as an Avon Manager... Christina was three and enjoyed the local daycare so I took the Avon job, and for the next eight years I became the manager for Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, Mission, Agassiz, Hope, Merritt, Princeton, Lytton and Lillooet. We ended up becoming number 10 in Canada with our sales! However, I ended up with asthma, compliments of the Avon perfumed products I had on hand for new Avon ladies and once again ended up being in the wrong line of work.

For recreational activities Jim purchased first a tent, then a larger tent with a floor, then a tent trailer, a travel trailer, camper, larger travel trailer then a Class C motorhome! We joined a travel trailer club and went RVing with them every second weekend. At an outing one of the club members asked if anyone would like the job of editor of their newsletter...Jim said, "Sheila will do it." We bought an electric typewriter and I produced a monthly newsletter and loved it. Jim and I divorced when Christina was 14 and Laird was on his own by then. We sold the house. He moved back to Victoria and sadly Christina went with him.



I went into a Mission apartment and bought the RV newsletter from the Association for \$1.00 and made it into magazine called The RV Times. I had an office space and staff and settled in. We also did a yearly magazine called My Town Mission BC. I used Macintosh computers and had a laser printer. We also did typesetting for the local print shop. There were various highlights for me during my years in Mission. I was born in 1947 so when I turned 47, I decided to do some firsts. I walked on hot coals without burning my feet. I climbed Mt. Lytton with friends. I went sky diving three times and went to Guatemala for a week to help build a school where I was one of the volunteers who attached filled water bottles to wire mesh. The water bottles were then used as insulation.

During that time, I reconnected with a friend Tony deGroen. We got married and I moved to Qualicum Beach. Tony and I were only together for a few years. One day my brother called and asked if we would go to his oldest son's wedding in

Charlotte town PEI. I agreed but Tony said he was not willing to go and when I returned Tony said he needed a divorce as he was my husband and my job was to do what he said! I thought he was joking but he was serious. So, I moved me and the magazine to Victoria!

A few years later an advertiser invited me to come to a motorhome rally he was sponsoring in Enderby. He had a trailer set up for me to use. There I connected with a gent, Alan, who was a widower from Surrey. A year later he sold his big house and bought a small one on land in Aldergrove and I moved in too and became Sheila Tourond. We bought a trailer, set it up in the back yard and converted it to an office for The RV Times.

Lots of RVing journeys happened, alone and with friends. On one of our RV trips we stopped in a small town that had a yarn shop that sold books of knitted dolls and animals. I bought a few and it changed my life! At my booth at RV Shows I always had a free draw for one of the dolls I knit. Huge success! And when gingerbread house kits started being sold in grocery stores, I was delighted and made many of them giving them to advertisers and family members and one year I ended up creating 15! That year one of Alan's grandson helped! I always filled them with candy too which people loved. Sadly, after 6 years together Alan asked for a divorce too, I didn't see it coming thinking we were doing great.



Again, I moved back to Victoria where I rented apartments then bought a house/office in Sooke and enjoyed my time. I joined the women's Lions Club and created a newsletter for them calling it The ROAR. By age 70 I decided to retire. Unfortunately, I closed my magazine, sold my house and declared bankruptcy Not a highpoint. I moved back to Ladysmith, transferred to the local Lions Club, did a Lions newsletter when I learned about the Seniors Housing that I now rent and live. I still create knitted dolls and animals and sell them at a booth at the Christmas Craft Sale on 'Light Up' night. I joined our Senior Club and now enjoy Mahjong and Canasta and Chair Exercise and Tai Chi.



Edited by **Jan Bradshaw**, Membership Chair,
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