



# Saanich MATTERS

Saanich Civic League E-Bulletin June 2008

## Only 19% voted in our 2005 municipal elections.

Did you know that municipal government is the level of government that most directly influences our daily lives? More than just property taxes and potholes, municipal responsibilities span provision of drinking water, sewers, recycling, and garbage; police and fire protection; land use planning and zoning; urban containment and preservation of green space; recreation, and culture; opportunities for inter-municipal leadership on transportation, food security, emergency preparedness, climate change, and more.

Yet, in the last municipal election, only 19% of Saanich residents voted, down from 30% in 1996. When municipal decisions touch our lives in so many ways, why are 81% of us so civically disengaged that we do not vote? Saanich Civic League wants to know what you think.

**What is the Saanich Civic League?** The SCL is a values-based, non-partisan, positive citizen's organization committed to increasing informed voter turnout and re-engaging citizens at the local level. Formed last fall out of citizen concern, SCL is modeled on a Canadian civic engagement success story--the Guelph Civic League.

**What does the SCL do?** The SCL does not endorse candidates. Instead, it promotes conversations among neighbours, organizations and local government - conversations that begin by asking: What makes Saanich an "amazing place" to live for you? and What do you desire for Saanich's future? The SCL believes that active, civically engaged citizens are the key to a strong community and to our future quality of life.

### These Ten Values guide our work.

- Accessible government that works for citizen
- Saanich in social, economic, and environmental balance
- A strong, diversified local economy
- Leadership to combat global warming / climate change
- Genuine community, walk-able, affordable, safe, including village-centred neighbourhoods
- A strong commitment to heritage, culture, and the arts
- Beauty as a civic priority, including preservation of natural areas and quality development
- Strong local agriculture, local markets, and increased local food supply
- Accessible, clean-energy transportation networks
- Actively engaged citizens, demonstrated by increased voter turnout

### How can you learn more or get involved?

- Attend our first big public event: Forum on Civic Engagement on June 19.
- Talk to neighbours and friends about the future of Saanich and the importance of voting in the upcoming November municipal election. Send them this E-Bulletin.
- Learn more. Invite an SCL speaker to address your group.
- Email [saanichcivicleague@shaw.ca](mailto:saanichcivicleague@shaw.ca).

- Join the SCL: \$25 a year for individuals, \$40 per family. Send donation/membership cheque to Saanich Civic League. 30222 Saanich Centre PO, Saanich BC V8X 5E1.
- If civic engagement matters to you, consider joining a SCL committee. Email [saanichcivicleague@shaw.ca](mailto:saanichcivicleague@shaw.ca) Website coming soon!

## What's happening now?

Free PUBLIC FORUM on CIVIC ENGAGEMENT. June 19th. Annie O'Donoghue, President Guelph Civic League, and Will Horter, Executive Director, Dogwood Initiative, on: Why do we need a citizen shift from paralysis to action at the local level, now? and How to change the face of municipal politics using citizen-led, non-partisan, values.

### **Grand Pacific Hotel, Victoria, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Thursday June 19.**

Annie O'Donoghue is the driving force behind the citizen-led values-based campaign that is changing the face of municipal elections and civic engagement in her city.



*Annie O'Donoghue*

Between elections, the Guelph Civic League plays a strong role in promoting civic discourse, mentoring citizen-led groups and embracing a collaborative multi-stakeholder approach to governance. Annie now travels across the country sharing the Guelph experience.

### **Links of the Month**

Community Associations, <http://www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/resident/community/funding/associations.html>.

Guelph Civic League: <http://www.guelphcivicleague.ca>.

SmartGrowth BC: <http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca>

Coming soon! SCL website: [www.saanichcivicleague.ca](http://www.saanichcivicleague.ca)

Watch for more Saanich Matters E-Bulletins!

Why citizens don't vote in municipal elections.

What the District of Saanich does to inform residents about elections.

What do you value? Saanich Civic League Citizen Survey.