

2006 Presidents Message

The usual signs of the approach of another cricket season have been noted: the spike in the sales of analgesic balm and life insurance policies, and new rosters of St. John's Ambulance crews to include standby duties at local pitches. These were expected. But this year some much more positive phenomena have been observed which augur well for the new season.

Chief among these is the number of practices which individual players and teams have organized over the last many weeks. It seems there is a serious intent on the part of many players to raise their skill levels well before the "mid season form" might normally be expected to kick in. This can only benefit the quality of cricket overall. It would be marvellous to have local cricket standards rise to the level of not so long ago which enabled Victoria to play Vancouver on even terms in the Inter-City and Tomalin Cup matches.

Another positive sign: the number of younger players who are rising through the junior programme who will soon be able to join the ranks of the VDCA Colts. The Colts are a good indicator of the health of Victoria cricket. Their success last season was very gratifying and we wish Benjy Brooks and his Midweek and weekend sides further success in 2006, and success too, for coach Tony Cordle as he develops the talents of these youngsters.

A third and not unrelated positive sign was the recent pre-season work party at Beacon Hill to spruce up the pavilion and grounds. In the past, the turn-out to this event has been dismal. This Spring saw eighteen motivated people who with pride and enthusiasm repaired the ravages and grime of Winter. It should be noted that the majority were Midweek players and chief among them were the Wicket Maidens. Thanks to all for such a great show of support.

To continue with the theme of thanks for services rendered over the past year, (or many years), the VDCA owes a great debt to the Beacon Hill Pavilion Society. This group headed by Pat Ely, Dave Billingham, and Chris Upshon, among others, were instrumental in providing the usual standard of excellent entertainment at the end of the season for the visit of the MCC and their match against the BC President's XI. This was in addition to the ongoing finances which the Pavilion Society raises to keep our pavilion in good shape.

My thanks go also to last year's executive for their guidance and competent handling of VDCA affairs. Robin Scutt, former Treasurer, and Wayne Beckham, former Vice-President, did a great deal to enhance the standard of administration and give us credibility. The new executive looks forward to continuing in this manner.

My thanks also to all the others who faithfully volunteer, often behind the scenes, to make things work. Inevitably when naming names, some will be missed, but that notwithstanding, here are some notables: Tony Cox (schedule), Niels Nohr (handbook), Bob Sherratt (pavilion maintenance), Alun Rees (Ashley Hall Memorial Match), Simon Heslop (grounds), Milton Carter (refreshments), and numerous coaches and assistants in our junior programmes.

This season we face a challenge in not having a pavilion at Windsor Park, (and the following season the challenge in coming up with funds to pay for the increased rental fees for the new one!). The result will be an excellent facility for cricket, however.

The VDCA welcomes the return of Nanaimo as a separate club. We wish them well as they grow the game in the Mid-Island.

Our website, www.vdca.ca is operational and will enhance our communication internally and with the media and public. Our advertisers will appreciate the much wider net their ads will cover.

We have some very exciting events to look forward to this season, chief among them the VISAS Tournament in early August. To Nick Grant, David Billingham, Shelly Fathers, David Sear, and Guy Drake, every success in putting this together. Early indications are that the 2006 VISAS could be the best ever.

Two other visiting sides will be coming - Stonyhurst College from England in June and the Gloucester Gypsies, in late August. These are good sides and the matches will be worthy of your support.

Finally, I would be remiss in not reiterating that the VDCA exists because of the goodwill of numerous people. If you would like to ensure the continuation and growth of local cricket, opportunities for involvement abound. Contact the appropriate person at the club or league level; their details can be found in the handbook and on our website. If you would like to make a financial contribution, a Life Membership is an option and Trustee Brian Tetlow would be happy to advise you. We have been blessed in the past by being the recipient of legacies. If you would consider having the VDCA listed as a beneficiary on a policy or a will, your gift would have a lasting impact. Treasurer Duncan Hollows can advise in this instance.

To all cricket enthusiasts, whether players, umpires, coaches or spectators, may the season ahead be a memorable one.

John Wenman. President