



# *On Approach*

NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIA AIRPORT AUTHORITY



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*The new Air Terminal Building was designed by Moore Paterson Architects. The construction was overseen by Durwest Construction Management.*

# Editor's desk

A bit of rain; a bit of sun. Winter on Vancouver Island is a time of change. But all around it's pretty good. If you want to witness some other good changes, drive by the airport and check out your beautiful new airport terminal building. For those who missed the official grand opening in October, we will share some of that day with you in this issue of On Approach.

Also in this issue, we introduce you to Pacific Coastal Airlines, the down home company that brings air service to small communities throughout the province. And you'll find stories about some very interesting people. After eight years on the VAA Board, Chair Linda Petch is moving on to other adventures. You'll also meet Barb Nightingale, a very charming and fascinating lady of some years, who recently flew in a helicopter for the first time.

Somewhere in these pages you'll find a photo of a mystery building under construction near the main terminal. Pay close attention, and you might get a smart looking VAA shirt for your very own.

That's it for now. Happy reading. Stay warm and dry, and make sure to come by and see the new building.

Phil Jensen,  
editor



*Phil Jensen photo*

***The Snowbirds were hosted by the Victoria International Airport, when they put on their show at Oak Bay this past summer.***

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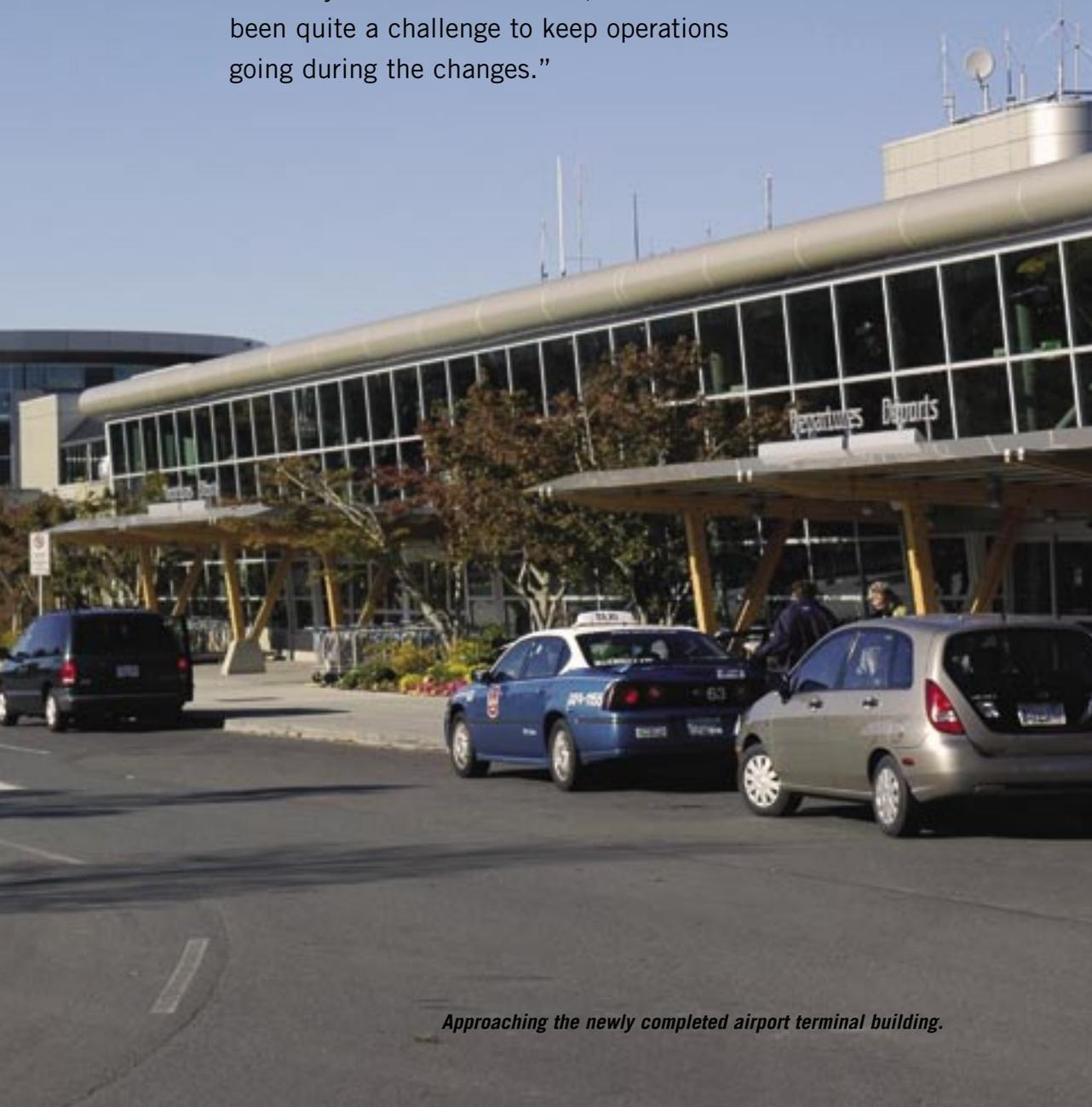
***On our cover: Illarion Gallant's Bouquet of Memories greet visitors to the airport.***

# Expansion and renew



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October 21, 2006 marked the official opening of the expanded airport terminal building. “It’s been an incredibly long journey,” says Richard Paquette, President and CEO of the Victoria Airport Authority. We started in 1998, and it’s been quite a challenge to keep operations going during the changes.”



*Approaching the newly completed airport terminal building.*



*Victoria Airport files*  
**Before and after at Victoria International Airport.**

For those who remember the building in its previous incarnation, the changes are quite remarkable. “It’s more than just an expansion,” Paquette says. “It’s a complete renewal. There’s not a single part of that building that hasn’t been improved in some way.” It’s bigger too. At 185 meters from one end to the other, it’s as long as two football fields. “It’s not a small terminal anymore. It just feels and works like one.”



*“It’s more than just an expansion,”*



*Bill Caan photo*

***A night shot of the passenger hold room from outside.***

The building is a work of art. Large windowed walls create a visual blending of indoor and outdoor environments. And liberal use of indigenous wood for trusses and panels adds to the strong “sense of place”. And then there’s the artwork. “I just think what we’ve done with a very small amount of money is amazing,” Board Chair Linda Petch remarks. “We have four wonderful commissioned pieces. Now we’re moving into the rotating art display. The comfortable chairs in the lounge area give it such a nice character and feeling. The ambience is wonderful.”

*work of art*



*Paul Connolly photo*



***[Clockwise from top] Stained glass windows by Ed Schaefer and Tom Mercer against a background of sky and West Coast vegetation. Illarion Gallant (left) and assistant installing Bouquet of Memories. Clowns entertain at opening day celebrations.***



***[Top] President and CEO Richard Paquette addresses the audience at opening day celebrations.***

***[Right] Board Chair Linda Petch shares her pleasure with the crowd on opening day.***

“The building is great,” Paquette says. “But there’s more to it than that. It’s the people who work at the airport that make it a memorable experience. From my perspective the folks we have working here are the best I’ve seen. Not just the VAA employees, but the airlines, the security staff, the Redcoat Volunteers. I think there is something special in Victoria, and it’s not just the building.”



# Pacific Coastal, the down home airline

Prior to the second world war, many isolated communities in BC depended on coastal steamers for transportation. The change from slow and unreliable surface transportation began during the early post war years, when a few adventurous spirits began dabbling in air transportation. Soon pioneering outfits like Queen Charlotte Airlines, BC Airlines, and Canadian Pacific Airlines were scrambling for a toehold in the aviation business of that time. The pioneering outfits are gone now, but their spirit of service and “can do” still survives at Pacific Coastal Airlines.

The family run business, founded by CEO Daryl Smith,

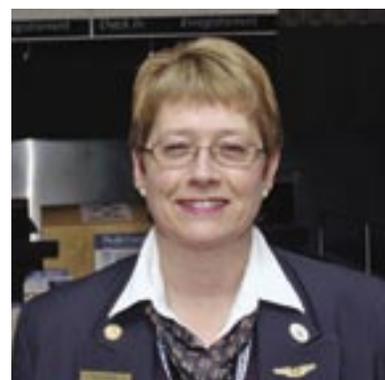
provides service to coastal communities of Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast, and all the way up to Masset in the Queen Charlotte Islands. They provide scheduled service to Anahim Lake and Williams Lake in the Cariboo, and Cranbrook and Trail in the Kootenays. The hub of the operation, and the largest base, is at the south terminal in Vancouver. The second largest base is Port Hardy. But Victoria claims the second largest passenger load in the entire operation, due to the frequency of flights out of here.

Base Supervisor Debra Murphy says the major part of business in Victoria consists of the commute between Victoria and Vancouver. “We also do some cargo shipping,” she says. “We ship Coast Guard parts and equipment. Food to Bella Bella. We ship food and everything else to Rivers Inlet. We also ship live cod and prawns to Vancouver from the North Coast. We fly them to Port Hardy, where they’re trucked to Vancouver. And when the Queen of the North went down, we made three trips a week between Port Hardy and Prince Rupert.”

Of all the aircraft operated by Pacific Coastal, the Grumman Goose generates the greatest interest. A true flying boat, the aircraft was first flown in 1937 and remains an important part of coastal aviation. “Pacific Coastal has the largest operating fleet of Gooses in the world today,” Debra says. “We have people from all over the world, who come to Port Hardy to fly in the Grumman Goose. It’s a

big attraction for aircraft enthusiasts.”

The five Gooses and three DeHavilland Beavers in the Coastal fleet play a major role in servicing fishing lodges at Rivers Inlet and Masset. For their scheduled passenger service, the airline operates a variety of modern aircraft, providing seating for up to 33 passengers each.



**Debra Murphy, Pacific Coastal Airlines' Victoria Base Supervisor.**

Debra joined the company in 1994, as a summer hire in Port Hardy, and stayed on. Soon after the Victoria base opened in 2000, she was promoted to her present job as the base supervisor. “I really like it here,” she says. “It’s a down home company, deeply involved in the community. And they really appreciate their employees.”

“Victoria is one of the spokes of the wheel,” she says. “It’s an important part, and we see a lot of people throughout the Pacific Coastal world. “But every base is important as far as we’re concerned. Everyone here is so friendly, and it’s a lovely airport.”



**Pilots Ryan Fulton and Steve Morrison. Left to right: Juan Duque, ramp crew; Debra Murphy, base manager, Shirley Kozak, customer service; and Mitchell Voth, ramp crew.**



**VAA Board Chair Linda Petch**

## Moving on

authorities and boards set up their governance structures. "In any new organization, the board has to think through its role, versus the role of management, and agree on how they're going to operate as a board," she explains. Her responsibility as a consultant to the new VAA was to assist them in the selection and development of appropriate systems and processes, allowing them to manage effectively as a board.

Milestones during Petch's tenure on the board (Chair for the past three years) include the airport terminal building expansion, the addition of more direct flights out of Victoria, a satisfactory solution to the issue of excessive rents required by the federal government and commissioned art at the airport. "It's been fun. And it would be fun to be around for the new master plan," Petch says. "But I had a role. The terminal building expansion is complete; the parking lot is

almost complete; the plans are there for the new restaurant. I am a firm believer in board turnover. It's really healthy."

And it's not as though Petch has nothing else to do. She serves on the Vancouver Island Health Authority board, is Chair of the Health Employees of British Columbia and has her regular consulting work to keep her busy. "Serving on a board is the equivalent (in work) of a consulting contract for me," she says. "I put as much work into one as the other."

But now that she's no longer on the VAA board, Petch can speak freely about how our little airport is run. And she does. "Richard (Paquette) is a terrific CEO, and has a great management team," she says. "They're very competent. They're people focussed, and they demonstrate real integrity in their dealings with everyone. People respond to that. That's the strength of the airport."

**D**ecember 31, 2006 marks the end of Board Chair Linda Petch's tenure with the Victoria Airport Authority. Under VAA bylaws, eight years is the maximum allowed for board membership. Truth be known Petch has been involved for a little more than eight years, although not as a board member.

In her work day life, Petch specializes in helping public



### Identify this building

**The first person to correctly identify this unfinished structure at the airport will win a Victoria Airport Authority shirt. Call Paul Connolly at 953-7501. The deadline is Dec, 15, and persons with a professional or employee relationship to the VAA are not eligible to participate.**

# A long time coming

Barb Nightingale went for a helicopter ride the other day. Maybe not such a big thing in itself, but it's been a life long dream for this 85 year old grand niece of Larry Bell, the founder of Bell Helicopters. Thanks to Al Engst, general manager and co-owner of Dominion Helicopters and Bob Reimer, president and owner of the Coast Helicopter College in Sidney, the dream was finally realized.

Due to family circumstances, Barb moved from her native California at the age of six, and spent her childhood and young adulthood in the Vancouver area. During those years, Barb's Uncle Larry, in partnership with inventor Arthur Young, developed the Bell 47, the world's first commercial helicopter. By 1940, Barb had moved to Victoria with her husband, David Nightingale, and has



**Barb Nightingale with Pilot Bob Reimer, President of Coast Helicopter College.**

resided here ever since.

"I was a bride of two months when we moved here," she says. Barb's husband, David Nightingale, was in the army when they first married and worked at a number of jobs throughout his life, including selling English sports cars at

the Plimley dealership on Yates Street. "He was second cousin to Florence Nightingale," Barb recalls. "She was quite a lady, I'll tell you."

Barb had been pursuing her goal of riding in a helicopter for several years, but somehow things just never worked out.

Then this fall, her friend Bryan Gray got in touch with Bob Reimer, asking if there was something that could be done. Bob was willing to use the school machine, a Robinson 222, but he realized that what Barb really wanted was to fly in a Bell machine. And as it happened, a Bell Jet Ranger belonging to Dominion Helicopters of Fort Nelson was temporarily parked in a nearby hangar. Bob made a quick phone call to Al Engst, and the rest is history. "I can't begin to tell you," Barb says of that day. "It was a dream come alive."



**Barb Nightingale flying in a Dominion Helicopters Bell Jet Ranger. Pilot is Bob Reimer of Coast Helicopter College.**