

String of Pearls roll into Government House



BY CAROLE AUDET

“When you’re my age you remember the originals,” jokes Brian Allen, one of the attendees at the Music on the Lawn series presented at Government House in July featuring the String of Pearls. “They’re a good imitation of the Andrews Sisters.”

And like the Andrews Sisters, String of Pearls has innate ability to make people want to dance.

Their strength is 1940s wartime music, and with 2005 being the Year of the Veteran, it seemed fitting for them to be invited to participate in this year’s series.

“They are always such a draw,” explains Christine Diemer, Deputy Director of Government House. “There must be 1,700 people here tonight.”

The band, with the singing talent of Susan Wilkey, Megan Preece and Angela Ireland Ford, has been entertaining audiences for seven years. String of Pearls was born as a result of the dissolution of Doc & the Doo-Wops when its lead and namesake passed

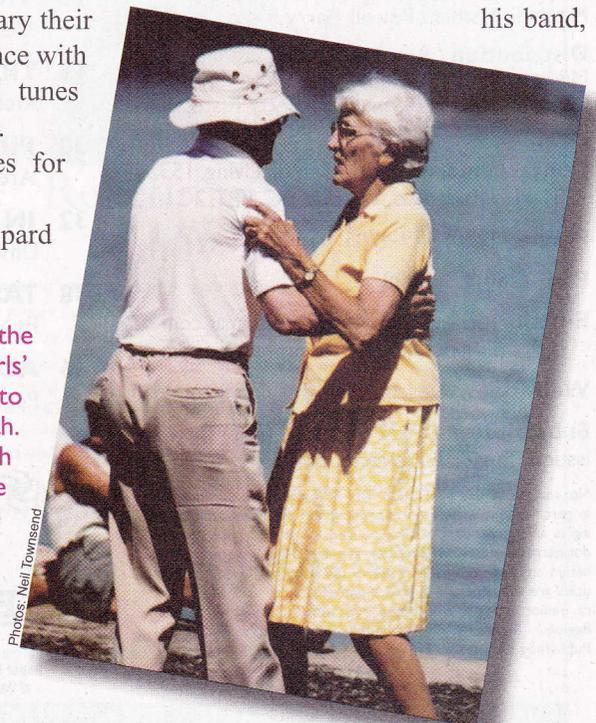
away. With the resurgence of swing dancing, the band has a faithful following and attracts large crowds. They entertain audiences as far north as Courtenay on Vancouver Island, on the mainland and in Washington State. Additionally, they tend to vary their performance for each audience with a repertoire that includes tunes from the 1920s to the 1960s.

“We’ve got our groupies for sure,” says Wilkey.

The musicians, Don Leppard

on drums, Anita Bonkowski on bass, Angela Carter on keyboard and Tom Ackerman on horn, make their living — one way and another — in the music industry. In fact, drummer Don Leppard started this year’s Music on the Lawn series on July 7 with his band,

For those who remember the classics, String of Pearls’ music brings them back to their youth. Above, the band poses with Lieutenant Governor The Honourable Iona Campagnolo.



Photos: Neil Townsend

Don Leppard Big Band.

"At my age, it's sort of a wash which band I was with where," says Leppard of his extensive musical career.

Wilkey has an impressive and broad background in the world of entertainment. Not only is she a talented and experienced singer who at one time performed with Doug and the Slugs, but she is also an accomplished actress with many appearances in movies and television series.

The leading ladies also provided some comic relief with weird and wacky costume changes. They also lead a "guess the TV show theme music" competition with people from the audience invited to compete

The crowd that came to see String of Pearls on this beautiful evening in Victoria spanned several generations. Young children could be seen excitedly bopping to the music immediately in front of the stage, while the more polished dancers found their own private corners to practice their swing dancing routines.

The band still has a lot of enthusiasm for performing. Even on nights when they may not be feeling in top form, all that's required is one glance into the crowd to chase the blahs away.

"We love it," says Wilkey. "When the lights come on and you see the audience moving to the music — it's great!"

For more information on String of Pearls and their upcoming shows, visit their website at www.stringofpearls.ca **SL**



Serving Victoria residents since 1946

We appreciate our senior's support

- * Friendly and courteous drivers
- * Wheelchair accessible vans for people with special needs
- * All major credit cards and Interac accepted

Ph: 382-2222 or 382-4235



www.taxicab.com

Housing Guide for Seniors

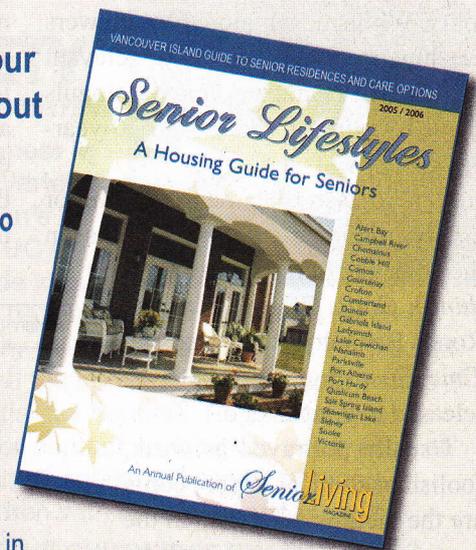
Senior Living is pleased to present *Senior Lifestyles*, our first **Housing Guide for Seniors**, containing information about a variety of retirement lifestyle options.

Accompanied by a selection of informative articles, this **FREE** guide offers up-to-date listings of senior housing facilities **throughout Vancouver Island**.

This guide is useful to

- seniors looking for alternative housing
- children of seniors who are assisting their parent to select a housing option
- professionals who work with seniors or their families
- businesses that provide services to seniors
- seniors moving to Vancouver Island from other parts of BC or out of province

Listings include addresses and contact information, housing costs, number of units in the housing complex, hospitality services, optional home care services, amenities and security features.



Available Island-wide at most libraries, health care centres, hospitals, occupational therapists, senior activity centres, major senior residences, participating pharmacies and businesses offering products or services for seniors.

For a complete distribution list, visit our website at www.seniorlivingmag.com