

# Terrace:



## **A Dialogue to Develop Community Potential**

Saturday February 9, 2008  
Northwest Community College

*Hosted by The Skeena Diversity Committee*

## **Report on Process and Outcomes**

Convened in cooperation with:



Dialogue Programs  
Continuing Studies,  
Simon Fraser University

Sponsored by:



Ministry of Attorney General and  
Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism,  
Settlement and Multiculturalism Division

## **Executive Summary**

Terrace: A dialogue to Develop Community Potential  
Ideas. Diversity. Respect. Partnerships

The dialogue in Terrace on Saturday February 9, 2008 was one of thirteen community dialogues that are being planning and convened in 2007/2008 with the support of funding from the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism, local community sponsors and organizers and the guidance of Simon Fraser university's dialogue program.

In the spring of 2007, with the support of the Ministry, SFU's dialogue programs director visited Terrace for an exploratory meeting with members of the Skeena Diversity Society. Since that time the society has worked tirelessly to bring members of the board together to plan the February dialogue.

This report documents what happened at the Terrace dialogue and the ideas that emerged from the day. The event was held at Northwest Community College and hosted by the Skeena Diversity Society and in spite of a heavy snow storm and freezing temperatures more than 70 people attended the full day session. The appendices include the invitation, onsite agenda, a pocket guide to dialogue, table host guidelines, and media coverage.

Comments from participants who attended the dialogue reflect the value they experienced in being part of the conversation on the potential of Terrace to be an inclusive and welcoming community.

*I appreciate having the opportunity to say something.*

*I am here because I want to be part of a community that embraces all different cultures.*

*Now that I've been here 20 years I can call myself a local. I have lived through many recessions, and I have seen a lot of changes. There is no better place to raise a family. Yes, there are issues but we have a good life here compared to many places on earth. Let's look at what we have, to what works and use that to build on.*

*I have learned today that diversity is a huge issue in our community and the only way to make a difference is involvement.*

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## Focus Questions

The dialogue was one of thirteen community dialogues that will be hosted and planned locally in 2007/2008 with the support of funding from the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism, local community sponsors and organizers and the support of Simon Fraser University's dialogue program. The Skeena Diversity Society invited citizens of Terrace to join with others of diverse cultural backgrounds, leaders from business, government, First Nations, education, youth, media, health, the arts, law enforcement and faith based organizations to explore a number of questions together:

1. *Is Terrace a truly welcoming community?*
2. *Do we know and respect one another?*
3. *Do we appreciate and involve the many talented and skilled people in our community?*
4. *How do we work together for a better sustainable future?*

## Planning and Design of the Dialogue

### *Writing Contest: "My Story"*

In anticipation of the dialogue in February, organizers, Sasa Login and Ruby Ware launched a writing contest "My Story" with the local newspaper, the Terrace Standard. The call was made for writers of all ages to submit a story about what living in Terrace means to them. Over 50 entries were received and a selection of finalists was made in each of the four categories children, youth, young adults and over 55 years old. Many of the finalists attended the dialogue and were recognized with a certificate, a small honorarium and much applause.

As well as generating recognition for the February 9 Dialogue, the contest generated a great outpouring of support from local organizations including: the Public Library, the MLA's office, the School Boards and Northwest Community College.

The contest and submissions are posted in Appendix H.

### *Youth Dialogue*

On the day prior to the community dialogue, Skeena Diversity Society hosted a unique gathering of high school and elementary school children at Skeena High School. Young people were invited to draw their images of the kind of Terrace they would like. They learned to line dance, they were facilitated in discussions with students from the social work program at Northwest community College, they created Play Doh figures and used these to tell stories about themselves and what mattered to them. They also were inspired by two young adults NAMES, who performed break dancing and spoke about dance as a form of engagement and commitment to leading healthy lives.

## *Planning Committee*

There were many people and organizations involved in the planning and convening of the dialogue and they include: Nirmal Parmar, Jane Dickson, Audrey Bennett, Gary Snider, Marilyn Davies, Colleen Austin, Rosemary Craig, Jose Coosemans, Jenny Poulin, Cindy Nunes, Arlene Roberts, Denis Gagne, Karen Chrysler, Ginny Hawkshaw, Shylo Gerritsen, Susie Guno, Lora Hilbach, Tanya Johnson, Melanie Monds, Nadia Ouellet, and Saša Loggin (Society's Chair) and Ruby Ware (Coordinator).

## **Program**

The February 9 dialogue opened with more than 80 people present – all eager to get to know one another and that they did with a highly engaging opening exercise where each table grouping of 7-9 people formed into teams and introduced themselves, searched for their shared interests and then presented to the whole group both a team name and a demonstration of what they shared in common. This exercise was a great icebreaker. Following this exercise the whole group explored the meaning of dialogue and created a list of guidelines for themselves.

The whole group also brainstormed their understanding of diversity.

Then it was time for small group work: **Table Topic #1: What's Your Story?**

*Share your story with your group. Why are you here? Add your story to the "Family Tree"*

After a delicious lunch, finalists of the My Story contest were recognized and an afternoon energizing "Clapping Exercise" in which all the participants clapped in rhythm while listening to each other as one called out a word and the next person responded with an opposite word. The purpose of the exercise was to notice how important it is in dialogue to be present in the moment and to let go of pre-planned responses. Not always easy to do, as the group discovered.

The Agenda called for the next small group work: **Table Topic #2: Community from Your Point of View** *How do you see the community from your point of view?*

*Is this community accepting/welcoming? What is your experience? Do we appreciate and involve the many talented and skilled people in our community?*

But participants decided that they were ready for an open mic session that explore questions about the community and its capacity to welcome and include all people and participants shared their varied views and experiences.

Finally, the small groups resumed to explore what they were committed to doing as a result of their reflections and what they had learned along the way. **Table Topic #3: Where do we go from here? What have we learned during the day? Personal commitment – immediate and long-term - towards a vibrant creative community that lives in diversity and strives for inclusion.** These comments were posted on banner number three and are summarized later in this report.

Here are a few highlights from each of the key portions of the dialogue.

### *Welcoming Remarks*

from Moderator Colleen Austin, Skeena Diversity Society Board Member and Meharoona Ghani  
- Settlement and Multiculturalism Division Director

Colleen reminded all participants of the importance of diversity and of dialogue and she acknowledged the First Nations territory and the presence of local leaders from the community.

Meharoona shared a letter of greetings from the Minister. In his letter, the Minister congratulated Terrace on organizing this dialogue and reiterated the importance of building safe, welcoming, inclusive communities (see Appendix D for Message from the Honourable Wally Oppal).

### *Introductory Exercise*

*Find Out What We Have in Common, Find a Name for Our Team and Present to the Group:*

- *The Eclectic Fish Bowl:* We found we are similar in that we are human, but different in the same way that starfish, electric eels, and fish are. All our cultures share commonalities but it gets really interesting when we find our differences. We also agreed that while we live in the fish bowl called Terrace, “the ocean is our world”.
- *The Common Bowl:* We all enjoy eating salmon and pickeral and we have many things in common – we eat from the same bowl
- *The Big Ones:* Everything is bigger in a small town, yesterdays strangers are tomorrows friends...
- *The Welcomers:* Our main concern with diversity is welcoming – we want to be involved in welcoming everyone in our community
- *The Circle of Friends:* What we have in common are the gifts we bring to each others – sincerity and hope, “ We are like tea bags, you never know how strong you are until you’ve been in hot water”
- *The Fresh Air Club:* We are from different places, we’ve moved around a lot but we have all come back to Terrace because of the fresh air.
- *The Good Samaritans:* Being a good Samaritan is a characteristic of all good people who live on the planet. We illustrate this approach by reenacting how people help each other through difficulties (even people from Vancouver who have summer tired on in winter!)

*The Nature Lovers:* We appreciate the beauty of the area and what it provides us.

## *Why Dialogue?*

Joanna Ashworth

Williams Isaacs in his book, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together* says that dialogue is a conversation with a centre not sides. Joanna pointed out that at the centre of this dialogue were a few core questions that everyone in the room cared deeply about related to the potential of the Terrace to be a welcoming and inclusive community. She invited the participants to share their own experiences with dialogue and to openly explore what it would take participants to listen to understand in a way that is consonant with dialogue. Joanna invited each of the tables to consider this question and then turned the group's attention to the SFU dialogue guidelines for dialogue (these are included in the Table Host's Notes).

The group generated their own set of guidelines through this exercise.

*Dialogue is:*

- *Honest, no duplicity, no hidden agenda*
- *The uniquely human struggle to effectively and purposefully escape the inherent isolation of psychological encapsulation*
- *Taking time to express ones meaning*
- *It's a healing process, an opportunity to learn from each other*
- *Energizing, engaging, respectful, non-judgmental*
- *Embracing and experiencing difference*
- *Speaking truth*
- *Questioning your internal chatter*
- *Back up what you say (examine assumptions)*
- *Give credibility (inquire into other people's assumptions)*
- *Showing interest*
- *A way to learn*
- *Active listening*
- *Listening unconditionally*
- *Being in the moment*
- *Listening without judgment*
- *Inviting of others, making them comfortable*
- *Seeking the spark of deeper meaning*
- *Paying attention to body language, making eye contact*
- *Seeking feedback and interaction*
- *Compelling arguments*
- *When your mind has been changed*
- *An emotional high by sharing integrity*
- *An open perspective (generosity of spirit)*
- *Creates trust, a new spark*
- *Feeling understood by someone else*

- *Giving a compliment (showing positive reinforcement)*
- *Open mind*
- *Identify our shared purpose*
- *Open to something new*
- *Uplifting*
- *Feeling understood (see that people are listening)*
- *Showing that we are listening*
- *Set a feeling of trust and respect*
- *We give up our position about being right or taking a position*

*Some of the challenges of dialogue:*

- *It's hard to use reflective listening but it is huge!*

*Then the group was asked to share their perspective on the meaning of diversity and here is a list of their thoughts.*

*Diversity is:*

- *More diversity, the richer the community*
- *Diversity makes good dialogue – more solutions, more job offers*
- *Strength, celebration*
- *Understanding*
- *Consideration of others*
- *Acceptance of difference*
- *Difference without division*
- *Adaptability*
- *Accept it!*
- *Willingness to understand*
- *To recognize the value of both the penguin and polar bear*
- *Embracing, acknowledging, accepting and celebrating difference*
- *Genetically humans are not different from each other – we are culturally different*
- *Different without division*
- *Many but one*
- *Let's get used to – we are a produce of our experience*
- *Diversity is exciting*
- *Willingness to understand*
- *Fear (of the unknown)*
- *Is a process*
- *People are working hard to understand*
- *The inevitable arrangement and share of virtually infinite combinations of potential qualities, by virtually infinite sampling*
- *A willingness to learn and embrace another's differences and respect them*
- *Educating young children to play and work with each other*
- *We are not going to go backwards*

- *Life experiences*
- *Diversity is like a penguin and a panda – living in different parts of the world, both black and white (from Youth Forum)*

*To know is to grow and do!*

*Life is too short so let's show our support*

*Circle of Friends: writing is a powerful tool for learning and teaching*

*I came here to support my friend, because that's what friends do*

*Be good to your body – where else are you going to live?*

### *Small group conversations*

This portion of the dialogue was designed around the World Café Method. The café style helps people relax and creates the environment for intimate conversations in small groups. The three dialogue questions were posted around the room on large banners, visible to all: Banner One: What is Dialogue/Diversity? Banner Two: How do you see the community from your point of view?/Is the community accepting and inclusive?/ Do we appreciate and involve the many talented and skilled people in our community? Banner Three: Where do we go from here?/What is your personal commitment in the short and long term to create a vibrant community that lives in diversity and strives for inclusion?

Throughout the conversations, participants wrote their ideas on post it notes. Each conversation was supported by a “table host”. The hosts were drawn from Students from Northwest Community College’s Social Work program and Skeena Diversity board members who helped people meet each other and ensured that everyone had the opportunity to speak (see Appendix C for table host guidelines). A speaking stone was used to encourage turn taking. At the end of each table conversation, the ideas were gathered up and posted on the banners so that everyone could read and consider the emerging themes.

Many stories were shared in small group conversations. Some of the themes from the stories heard included the idea that Terrace was a good place to come home to, that Terrace was a good refuge from the world, and that the community was beginning to look more closely at it underbelly in spite of how difficult, and that Terrace is a good place to raise a family.

#### 1. Selected comments:

*I'm feeling like we, as a community are falling apart. Mainly, we need a place for people to live (affordable and clean), and place for people to work.*

*Evolution of Life: I always learn something new from people that are not in my circle of friends. Diversity is fascinating.*

*Oral tradition of sharing stories is essential to our survival as a community of humans.*

*The journey is the learning.*

*Terrace is a good place for young people, especially youth at-risk. Change requires change in their environment. They need to feel valued members of our community too.*

*I have lived in Terrace all my life. I've seen community spirit, kindness and good Samaritans. I have also seen racism and prejudice. I am here because I can't find a solution to these problems on my own. They are deep rooted problems that have been here for many years. I believe that the solution lies in education our town's youth. The children are the ones who carry on our beliefs. I want to help teach them the beliefs that they need to hear in order to heal our town.*

### *Open Mic*

There were many heartfelt and meaningful contributions from participants who spontaneously shared their experience with living in Terrace in response to the questions: How do you see the community? Is the community accepting and welcoming? And do we appreciate and accept the many talented and skilled people in our community?

A summary of the remarks made in this session are listed in Appendix . some of the themes included:

- There is still a divide between the aboriginal and no-aboriginal communities although many commented that they as aboriginal people mostly have felt welcomed and were able to pursue their goals of work and learning, but much more can be done
- Many spoke about the physical layout and feel of Terrace and expressed a desire to have the build environment be more inclusive (sidewalks) and more colourful and inviting aesthetically (from beige to bright!)
- Others encouraged their fellow citizens to take charge of their destiny and not be overly reliant on government to make change in their community. There was a sense that much more can be done in Terrace if citizens were more proactive and involved.
- Change is possible and racism and discrimination of any kind (sexual orientation, ability, visible minority) should not be tolerated and people need to be supported by others in the community to communicate this message.

## **Commitments and Implications for Action**

### Commitments

Following the posting of the ideas from the last question, participants had the opportunity Think together at their small tables and then reflect silently on their own personal commitments for action. These commitments were written on post-it notes and placed on the banner on the back

wall for all to read. Commitments included a call to action on a number of fronts: the media, schools, city council, and the community. Many participants renewed their commitment to volunteer in various capacities and to being caring, accepting and aware members of their community.

#### Media

- Several people committed to write letters to the Editor of the Terrace Standard newspaper calling attention to the issue of diversity, what they learned at the dialogue and its value for bringing people together in dialogue. Participants also committed to writing stories for Terrace Daily – locally owned and operated interactive online newspaper.

#### Schools

- Volunteer at schools, acting as a teachers aid to build relationships with students from diverse backgrounds using my unique upbringing as a means to ease the feelings of alienation.

#### Community

- Get involved locally
- Help bring back the Community Centre or Civic Centre
- Continue working toward an inclusive and strong community
- Work with Terrace Anti-poverty
- Be involved politically
- Work toward electoral participatory democracy
- Join Skeena Diversity Society
- Volunteer
- Attend Skeena Diversity society meetings and help wherever possible. Be involved in carrying out the message of “diversity without division” within the public schools
- Be part of a group who works towards making Terrace all inclusive

#### City Council

- Bring together staff and city councilors and non-profits to co-host anti racism workshops and education
- Petition to build sidewalks
- Petition to build the civic centre

#### Personally

- Listen to understand others
- Keep speaking out!
- Speak out!
- Teach my son, day-to-day to live the most honest and inclusive life he can. To speak out against people who are not inclusive and to make a difference, one person at a time.
- Teach my kids to be tolerant and involved

- To make a garden and try to make some sort of group or mentorship with a few young people. Maybe farm lawns. Spread awareness of the need for local sustainability – and the ties to fitness, economy, etc.
- Confront racism and marginalization head on. Speak out and make change happen

### *Closing circle – What are you taking away from this dialogue?*

In the circle, participants shared their thoughts on the dialogue (See Appendix H for closing circle thoughts). The general feeling was of encouragement, hopefulness, energy to take action and good will among those who gathered to make Terrace a more inclusive and welcoming place.

### *Media*

The Skeena Diversity Society had a good working relationship with the Terrace Standard and as well Saša Loggin was interviewed by CBC radio the day of the session.

SFU's media director sent the invitation /program out with the following message to local media Prince Rupert CBC Daybreak North, Terrace CFTK TV, and CFRN and the Terrace Standard:

"You probably already have this information, but attached is a invitation to Saturday's Dialogue to Develop Community Potential being held at the Northwest Community Centre. SFU Dialogue programs have been involved in a number of similar, very successful sessions in other parts of the province. Saša Loggin at Skeena Diversity, 250.635.0105 is the best person to talk to."

### *Next Steps*

People are all invited to attend the regular meetings of the Skeena Diversity Society which meets two times a month. This report will be forwarded to all who attended and participants will be encouraged to work with the Skeena Diversity Society to move some of these ideas into action.

Commitments to action that were generated by the group were discussed earlier and the Board will now have the important task of reflecting on what was suggested, what was learned from this process and the hosting of this important event and use the information and wisdom of this group to inform its plans and actions.

# Appendix A: Program Invitation

Skeena Diversity Society believes in the strength and creativity of an inclusive and diverse community.



*Dialogue: is a conversation with centre, not sides. It is a way of taking the energy of our differences and channeling it toward something that has never been created before. It lifts us out of polarization and into a greater common sense, and is thereby a means for accessing the intelligence and coordinated power of groups and people.*

*William Isaacs, Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*

Skeena Diversity Society hosts

## A Dialogue to Develop Community Potential

*Ideas. Diversity. Respect. Partnerships.*

You are invited to join citizens from diverse cultural backgrounds and leaders from business, community, government, First Nations, education, youth, media, health, the arts, law enforcement, faith-based organizations and other special guests to explore:

- ✓ Is Terrace truly a welcoming community?
- ✓ Do we know and respect each other?
- ✓ Do we appreciate and involve the many talented and skilled people in our community?
- ✓ How do we work together for a better sustainable future?

**Saturday February 9, 2008**

**Northwest Community College**

**10 am - 4 pm**

Lunch will be provided.

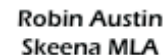
This event is free, but please **register by February 7:**

**coordinator@skeenediversity.com**, call **635-0105** or online at **www.skeenediversity.com**. Space is limited.

Hosted and Coordinated by Skeena Diversity Society and Dialogue Team:

Saša Loggin  
Nirmal Parmar  
Jane Dickson  
Audrey Bennett  
Gary Snider  
Marylin Davies  
Colleen Austin  
Rosemary Craig  
Jose Coosemans  
Jenny Poulin  
Ruby Ware  
Cindy Nunes  
Arlene Roberts  
Denis Gagne  
Karen Chrysler  
Ginny Hawkshaw  
Shylo Gerritsen  
Susie Guno  
Lora Hilbach  
Tanya Johnson  
Melanie Monds  
Nadia Ouellet  
Joanna Ashworth

With support from:



## Appendix B: On-site Program



### A Dialogue to Develop Community Potential

Saturday February 9, 2008  
Northwest Community College

#### AGENDA

- 9:00 am **Registration**  
Find your team (specific colour and shape)
- 10:00 am **Welcome**  
Introduce the Purpose of the Day
- 10:30 am **Icebreaker – Team Similarities**  
Find something your team has in common, name your team. Prepare a brief demonstration – skit, song, poem, anything creative.
- 11:00 am **What is a Dialogue?**  
What makes a good dialogue? Share your personal experience of a time you had a really good conversation.
- What is Diversity?**  
What do you imagine when you think of diversity?
- 11:30 am **Table Topic #1: What's Your Story?**  
Share your story with your group. Why are you here?  
Add your story to the "Family Tree"
- 12:30 pm *Lunch provided*
- 1:00 pm **"MY STORY" WRITING CONTEST PRESENTATION**
- 1:30 pm **Play the "Opposite Game"**
- 2:00 pm **Table Topic #2: Community from Your Point of View**  
How do you see the community from your point of view?  
Is this community accepting/welcoming? What is your experience?  
Do we appreciate and involve the many talented and skilled people in our community?
- 2:45 pm **Table Topic #3: Where do we go from here?**  
What have we learned during the day?  
Personal commitment – immediate and long-term - towards a vibrant creative community that lives in diversity and strives for inclusion.
- 3:30 pm **Wrap Up Circle:**  
Describe the day in one word or phrase  
Evaluation Form

**ONGOING  
ACTIVITY**  
Model of an "ideal  
community" - draw  
or sculpt.

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*This event is organized and hosted by Skeena Diversity Society and Community Partners in collaboration with Simon Fraser University's Centre for Dialogue. Funding for this event is provided by the Ministry of Attorney General and the Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism.*

## **Appendix C: Table Host Guidelines**

### Table Host Guidelines for Terrace Dialogue

#### **About the dialogue format**

Each table will have 5-6 participants.

After each “Dialogue Round” participants will move to another table and hosts will welcome a new mix of people. There will be several table changes throughout the session.

#### **Your role:**

Remind people at your tables to jot down key connections, ideas, discoveries and deeper questions as they emerge.

Remain at your tables when others leave and welcome people from other tables.

Briefly share key insights from the previous conversation so others can link and build using ideas from their respective tables.

#### **Tips for Good Dialogue:**

- Encourage each speaker to offer experiences and stories rather than fixed positions, e.g., ask: “What story or example can you offer to illustrate your viewpoint?”
- Encourage each listener to listen openly, with curiosity and empathy
- Focus attention on key questions
- Allow time for silence and reflection
- Take turns
- Take time to wonder about the meaning of each contribution
- Ask participants to weave and connect themes and ideas and insights
- Encourage each other to cross-pollinate ideas and insights across the groups as they travel from table to table.

## Appendix D: Greetings from the Honourable Wally Oppal



WelcomeBC

### Message from the Honourable Wally Oppal Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism



As Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism, I am pleased to congratulate Terrace for taking the initiative to convene: *A Dialogue to Develop Community Potential*. Community dialogues such as this are important in enabling British Columbians to discuss broader ideas about creating welcoming and inclusive communities.

With this dialogue, Terrace is taking another step towards building community connections, bridging cultures and supporting inter-cultural relationships with long time residents of Terrace, those who are new to the region, and members of the First Nations communities such as the Kitsumkalum Band.

In order to foster vibrant and inclusive communities we need to ensure that everybody has a sense of belonging. We are a diverse and multicultural society that wants its children to reach their full potential and so we must find ways to prevent racism and discrimination.

At a time of increasing immigration to our province we want all communities to be viewed as welcoming destinations. It for this reason that the Government of British Columbia continues to support the development of welcoming and inclusive communities through the WelcomeBC initiative. This will include both improved services to immigrants, and also enhancing the capacity of communities to support the newcomers' integration in a way that will benefit the cultural, social and economic fabric of our society.

Thank you for ensuring newcomers to our province, and those who have made this province their home for many generations, are supported in enjoying a safe and inclusive home here in Terrace.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "Wally Oppal".

Honourable Wally Oppal  
Attorney General

## **Appendix E: Summary of the Open Mic Comments**

### **What is your view of Terrace?**

I have noticed that the schools in Terrace are segregated by aboriginal and non-aboriginal children and I am not happy with this. I think it's wrong.

I am a strong supporter of Terrace and the developments: The Millennium Park, the Ice Arena, there are more than 200 clubs here. But there is one problem and that is the lack of sidewalks around the community. This creates a lack of accessibility for people who walk and who are in wheelchairs. This is a shame on our town. "Shame on us for allowing this".

Thanks to the Tsmisian for living and learning on their territory. As a person from Haida Gay, I came here and at first I was afraid of racism but I was surprised that I didn't have any problems. I do sometimes feel shame though, for those who are treated badly in a few businesses. There are still pockets in Terrace where this happens and where change is needed. It is important to help where I can. To look for the root causes of poverty and abuse.

There is still a rift between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal society. This won't be fixed unless we address it – and start with the kids.

As a proud Gitzan I want to part of the group that moves Terrace into being a more welcoming place – this includes businesses and schools.

Tackling racism is a huge project and nobody wants to take it on – but we have to face it.

I have a lot of friends who are First Nations – I am here because I want to be part of a community that embraces all different cultures.

Buses run only after 10 am and if there's no money for a taxi this means people will be excluded. I also worry that many kids can't afford to play hockey – so there's the economic problem and there is also racism, homophobia, and religious intolerance. Terrace could be so amazing – but there are people who feel really isolated. I appreciate having the opportunity to say something.

As a child I was adopted into the Haida nation – there family always supported each other. I was born in Terrace and have worked here for 25 years. We need a civic centre and we should not be segregated into communities (according to financial well-being). It used to be that the homeless has a place to go – we used to be able to take care of our own in the past, and we need to do this again.

As someone who has lived in Terrace for about 10 years I see that nobody wants prejudice to continue, nobody wants people to live on the streets, but its not changing. And this is

dysfunctional. There was a time when the local milk company produced ice cream and milk locally but it was closed down because of milk producers from the south. There was a time when one of the buildings in Terrace was painted purple and it looked great but people were up in arms about it. If you look around you will see that Terrace is beige. We need more colour in Terrace.... We are so governed at every level and we always to look to government for solutions – but we need to start looking to ourselves for solutions. Change doesn't seem to happen unless a situation starts to threaten our lives. Then we will act. This is the human condition – to crisis manage. There is a saying that 'the government that governs least, governs best'. And sometimes government-sponsored dialogues pacify people. We need to look at the big issues and don't rely on government to make change.

There needs to be more support for gay teens in Terrace. As a young person, I had no help when I came out. There won't be any support unless you speak out – and schools should be a place of safety. Right now schools are not safe for teens who are gay.

It takes a community to support parents to raise a child. We need to find out what parents need and find ways to support them. Many parents are isolated – they need transportation, childcare, and parenting support. There are many ways to do this.

As someone who works in government, I see my work as a change agent. Having experienced racism as a child I grew up seeing that antiracism is about having basic human rights. I am here to make a difference and as Gandhi said "Be the change you want to see in the world".

I choose to live in Terrace. This town has problems and we need to find ways to take care of each other. We need to take care of the elderly and home support needs to be ripped apart and we need to go back to the time when we respected our elders and took care of them.

There is a saying that the "All Blacks" team (a formidable force in international rugby and have a winning record against every international rugby team), use to get ready to play. There is a lot of power in the community through the work we can do together and in what we think. Let's not squash the vitality and vision = let's get together in the spirit of action. I am originally from Saskatoon where neighbours help one another. In Terrace there has been a sense of isolation – a sense that the South forgets us, forgotten by the economy. Those days are over – when we look at Vancouver and Victoria -= we see an overflow of migrants from these areas. We are coming to Terrace to find a home that we can afford. And there will be many more coming, for many reasons. I want to live in place where if things happen (global environmental crisis/power outage etc) I would rather be in Terrace not Vancouver. I'd like to see something like what the community of Michosen on Vancouver Island is doing and that is mapping all the skills in the community – listing for example, who is a carpenter, who is a mechanic, who is a farmer? etc., so if necessary we can count on our own resources.

I would like to see the sign that says, "Terrace is going Mining" be changed to "Terrace is becoming a Community"

I grew up in Prince Rupert; I have a south Asian background and am married to a Caucasian. In Prince Rupert when growing up we were aware of each other's backgrounds but we didn't focus on our differences. We celebrated our differences. At my child's daycare we celebrate Dalwali "the Festival of Lights". I have taught by children to never turn their backs on anyone. I teach my children to treat everyone equally. With regard to the Civic Centre, In Prince Rupert, there is a civic centre and there is free sports equipment for anyone who needs it. Not everyone can afford to play hockey and this makes it possible for everyone to be active in sports. We can make a difference.

Now that I've been here 20 years I can call myself a local. I have lived through many recessions, and I have seen a lot of changes. There is no better place to raise a family. Yes, there are issues but we have a good life here compared to many places on earth. Let's look at what we have, to what works and use that to build on. It's a place where you can rebuild your life.

I have hope about the direction we are taking about and we need to remember that there are two villages and one town and that we are on the Simsiem territory. We need to teach people, including our children, how not to be racist. We need to walk our talk. We need to show by what we do. One inspiration is Jane Elliot's work about racism in schools and she say children do not drop out, they are forced out and that racism is not a first nations issue. We have responsibility for ourselves and we have the ability to teach our children.

## Appendix F: Closing Circle Comments

### What are you taking away from today?

- Impressive
- Inspirational
- Evolving
- Enriching
- Spiritual
- Safe
- Fantastic
- Incredible
- Stimulating
- Revealing
- Has potential
- Strength in the eye of a stormy day
- Looks of dialogue that warrants reflective thinking
- Informative
- Got a lot of information
- Thought provoking
- Unexpected
- Change is in the air
- Good blueprint for further development
- We're on the right track
- Hopeful
- Fulfilling
- Unified
- Educational
- Surprise
- Encouraging
- Empowering
- A place for positive connection
- Honest
- Motivating
- Optimistically promising
- Strength in numbers
- Surprise to see so many people with a shared attitude
- Networking opportunity
- A good day for learning and listening: we share the same problems
- Passionate
- Invigorating
- Energizing
- Positive beginning

- Learning to listen
- Thought provoking
- How do we take the discussion to action?
- Awareness – we are working with awareness
- The start of a hopeful future

## Appendix G: Evaluation Feedback

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### 1. The most surprising and/or engaging part of the dialogue was...

1. Small group discussion
2. The creative naming
3. Learning about different issues
4. Learning to understand others stories
5. Some of the social/economic issues with political overtones (blame game)
6. Playing the opposite game
7. The “open mic” discussion
8. People’s emotions when telling their story and views
9. Stories shared in teams in the am
10. Intelligent thought process – the group were all very strategic
11. How much people don’t like the second sheet of ice
12. The sharing in the afternoon – I spent most of the morning trying to figure out where the gathering was going (being unfamiliar with it)
13. The story sharing
14. How well our group talked openly
15. That so many people have so many interesting thoughts and have to say something
16. So many people on the same page – yay!
17. The personal stories that were shared by the group
18. Personal stories and perspectives being shared in the centre...
19. Solving community issues: i.e. Racism, Community Unity, Civic Centre, etc.
20. Personal views
21. The passion in the afternoon, finding kindred spirits
22. The open mic
23. The passion/feeling of safety/the commonality of concerns
24. Remember that we need to give and take when hearing and listening
25. Listening to the stories – very engaging
26. Team similarities
27. Hearing others views on our community & their experiences. I also found the different perspectives on what diversity is interesting
28. People’s passion and honesty
29. The number of people willing to discuss the problems we face in Terrace

### 2. If there were another dialogue on this topic I would like to talk about...

1. I think the topics we discussed were good
2. Finding solutions
3. I would like Part 1: what we did today; Part 2: where do we go from here; give time for reflection
4. Only about human relations and not political issues

5. Pulling families and neighbours together
6. Working together to create change
7. My years in high school, the groups of friends I had from diverse backgrounds and how that paved the way for us today.
8. Ideas for small businesses that could flourish here
9. Ideas for ways to enable the creation of economic events
10. Ideas for ways to circumvent or manipulate governance to achieve our goals
11. Community solutions that are geared by the community
12. Support for gay youth
13. How to assist the “spirit” of the community to emerge or surface.
14. The positives
15. Educational sessions for service and “store” providers
16. I think there are so many little things or big things that you have to talk about. You should therefore have a dialogue for all the different topics (First Nations, school system...)
17. Warp to incite change in community
18. Ways in which to move this topic out into the greater community of Terrace
19. True democracy, and personal choice...
20. Efforts to bring community together
21. Civic Centre for all peoples in the community
22. More experiences and stories and sharing them with people who need to hear this: (1) Rotary, (2) Chamber, (3) School District
23. Taking the message to schools
24. Much more time needed for Personal Commitment, brainstorming of ideas and finding like-minded people to work on them together
25. Less about economics and more about people & life-giving focus
26. ACTION – now what?
27. Improving existing services
28. Building community strengths
29. Youth/racism in the schools
30. CO-OP, wood manufacturing centre, public housing, reducing physical footprint of the community
31. Skills for dialogue, then skills for brainstorming ideas and collective actions – how in a community do we define a “vision” and value system to live by (i.e. Community Charter)
32. Families – values, strengths, improvement
33. People helping themselves

### **3. My suggestions for improvement include...**

1. CO-OP, wood manufacturing centre, public housing, reducing physical footprint of the community
2. Tables in a circle rather than a classroom style, perhaps a “talking stick”
3. Need to take from the sharing to identification of issues to be addressed

4. For improvement, I think younger people should be involved. They can bring different issues and opinions.
5. Before hand, explain “no blame” – it’s not either or i.e. sidewalks vs. second sheet of ice – all has a value.
6. Stay away from political issues
7. At least a dialogue every six months
8. The organization and speakers were awesome. I don’t think you could have done much better
9. Facilitating our youths needs – dealing with Racism and Bullying by creating programs, groups within schools, volunteer programs, etc.
10. Stop letting governance bully you!!
11. More salad
12. More interactive activities
13. Well throughout and planned day. GREAT food!
14. To concentrate on where we do we go from here to make a difference
15. Rotate venue around town
16. Change to school system (childcare – social work)
17. Speak out in support of diversity
18. True City of Terrace, regional democracy
19. More community awareness, inform people i.e. newspaper, fundraisers, community events, etc.
20. Building a civic centre
21. Have another one soon
22. More people!
23. More time for table talk, let us define dialogue
24. Arrange a Reflective Practice Workshop (Storytellers Foundation- Hazelton)
25. More focused mic “story time”
26. More room at the tables (bigger tables)
27. Less time for personal axe-grinding

#### **4. Additional comments about the content or the process of the dialogue...**

1. I think there should be more of these in schools. Good that you had it for grade 7’s but what about the others? Less full group
2. Shift people from table to table
3. It was very informative and great to meet with so many diverse individuals
4. Process should have some mechanism like “talking stick” where everyone speaks on the topic
5. Overall very good session
6. I would suggest in a follow up that the essence of this workshop, all the written submissions, be compiled in a book that could be published, promoted and sold in the community.
7. I was delighted to see the variety of the thoughts, opinions and concern as part of moving forward.
8. Many Topic #2 speakers spoke on their “pet preoccupations” e.g. Childcare, eldercare, etc.
9. Actively stir up a free log of ownership in the participants.

10. Not enough time
11. Appreciate the flexibility of the organizers allowing the day to go where it wanted to go.  
Thank you for the great day!
12. Very emotional, intense, realization, a great experience
13. Boycott racist stores
14. I am impressed how many people have to say something and want to change something!
15. Inspiring, insightful, solidarity!
16. It was great!
17. This was quite surprise. I was not expecting an entire day event, but nevertheless I feel many relevant issues were addressed.
18. Very well chaired
19. Well done, sensitively handled
20. It felt safe, appreciated the time for everyone to speak.
21. Step by step planning
22. There was a wide range of concerns that individuals voiced & I admire their courage to speak up as well as for those who chose to speak about what they learned from their experiences and how it made them stronger.
23. Social actions vs. politics
24. Writing Contest sounded great.
25. Valuable day – a step forward. Need a “next step” dialogue in perhaps 6 months.

## **Appendix H: Media Coverage**

### **Terrace Standard Story Contest**

**Sharing stories. Getting to know you. Getting to know all about our community.**

*February 27, 2008*

TELLING YOUR story can be done in a variety of ways. Do you tell your life story? Or an incident that stands out vividly in your mind? How about the story of how you came to live with the people you now call your family?

Skeena Diversity Society's "My Story" writing contest invited all ages to tell their stories to show the diversity of the community.

Some writers said how difficult they thought it would be to stay within the 1,000 word limit and others went over by a few hundred words. Some kept their stories short and markedly under the limit while telling a compelling tale.

More than 50 writers submitted their stories for judging and four winners in each age group were chosen. No one was ranked as first or second place so some stories would not be seen as, in one organizer's words, "worthier."

We've randomly chosen one winner from each group and printed their stories here so everyone can learn a little more about our community and the people who live here.

Enjoy....

#### **Age 12 and under: Watching the Skeena Valley flood**

*February 27, 2008*

*By Mikala Ann Dunn*

I live in Skeena Valley Trailer Court on Queensway Drive. The first thing we kids noticed was the river starting to rise. Our parents told us we could not go to the creek beside the trailer court without an adult because we could get swept into the high flowing water.

The construction workers were cutting down the trees as they slowly dug the ditch deeper on the left side of the trailer court. The last tree they cut down was my favorite climbing tree. I could see farther than the trailer court and across the river to Ferry Island. While up in the tree spying on my friends, the wind would make the tree and me sway back and forth.

On the right side of the trailer court, they cut down more trees. One tree was four feet across. We called it the big tree fort. We spent lots of time playing there. When I noticed that it was gone, I was sad that they cut it down and mad at the people who did it.

The river kept rising higher and higher as we kept close watch, hoping it would not come over the dike as the workers hurried to make it bigger. Dump trucks came and went. The park had a worn down hole that filled with ground water – we splashed in it and made mud pies with the clay we scooped from the bottom.

As the ground water rose, the trailer court owner brought a big noisy machine to pump it back on the other side of the dike.

A lady from the newspaper came to take pictures of the flood. She took one of my mom, my cousin and two other people on top of the dike. The next day it was in the Vancouver paper. We got copies of the paper to keep for later.

### **Age 13 to 20: A place to call home** February 27, 2008

*By Crystal Guno*

There was a point in my life that I felt like I didn't know where I belonged, that was until I found a family that I could call my own. This all started when I was asked to move out of my Grandma's. I had gone to my aunty Diane's place to stay for the time being. As much as I knew how she wanted me to stay there I knew that I couldn't stay long.

At times I would feel like I was a burden, because the house was already packed and they didn't need another person in the way. I didn't have a room to stay in so I slept on the couch.

I knew that I had to find another place to stay, so I started talking to friends about it.

I heard from a good friend of mine, Erin, who reminded me that her Grandma said I could stay in their spare bedroom.

I was pretty excited about this because Erin was my best friend. There was one condition for me staying there and that was I had to make it to school everyday.

Once I got settled in, things were going smoothly and I was making it to school.

Then I started to get comfortable, we started to sneak out and drink on school days. That got us in trouble when I started to miss school more. Erin's Grandma warned me that if I kept this up, I would have to find another place to live.

Eventually I had to find another place to stay.

I was in such a rebellious stage, I didn't want to follow rules: all I wanted to do was go out and have fun.

So this next place that I moved to was with my Grandpa Larry.

We went over the rules and expectations of my staying there. They weren't too bad, but back then I didn't like them.

He told me that I had to make it to school on time and not miss any days, do chores around the house, and become more independent.

So I settled in. I now lived a lot further away than I did before.

I lived in Thornhill on the bench.

I had to take the city bus really early just to get to school, which I didn't like so I was always trying to stay home but my Grandpa wouldn't let me.

He made me do a lot of what I wanted to do on my own. I had to find my own rides and do my own thing pretty much, which I guess you can say I wasn't really used to.

My Grandpa and I didn't really get along that well; I didn't know him that well, as he wasn't in my life very often. I rarely ever saw him. I know when he disciplined me, he only did so because he cared and wanted to see me succeed in life.

But I was too young and dumb to realize it. I was hurtful and mean because all I wanted to do was party and have fun with my friends.

I never thought about my future; it just didn't seem that important, which was pretty irresponsible and disrespectful of me.

So I started to find another place to stay because I didn't want to follow rules. Again all I cared about was partying and having fun with my friends.

The next place that I found to stay was with one of my friends, Corrina. She and her family had told me that I was welcome to stay with them.

At this point I was feeling like I just needed to get away from my Grandpa for a while. So I moved in with my friend Corrina.

This family was a very religious family considering her father was a pastor. This was a definite change for me.

When we sat down and discussed the rules and expectations, I was kind of scared. There were so many rules and changes for me to adjust to. I had to give up some of the music that I listened to and some of the clothes that I wore.

I didn't have as much freedom as I did with my Grandpa. Suddenly my Grandpa's house started to sound a lot better.

But I couldn't just pick up and leave right away as I had already moved so I decided I'd stay and see how things went.

I had a tight schedule of going to school, coming home, helping with dinner, doing homework then going to church.

That was pretty much a daily thing.

I was all right with it at the beginning but about after two weeks of it, I was starting to miss being at my Grandpa's. I talked to them about how I was feeling and we had decided that it was a good idea for me to go back to my Grandpa's.

So I moved back to my Grandpa's and he had let me know that I wasn't going to be slacking off and doing nothing while I was living there. I had to start working and doing better in school.

I agreed to the conditions and decided that I would try.

But in the end I just didn't want to listen and we fought all the time.

I bet you can guess what I did next... I started to look for another place to live.

I talked to one of my friends, Shalane.

She had told me that she would talk to her parents and see if I could stay with them. She talked to her parents and they had said that I would stay with them.

I moved in, we talked about the rules and I was pretty happy with them. I felt like they weren't too strict or too laid back. I started to think maybe this was going to be the place that I could stay for good at.

And I was right; I ended up living at this house for close to three years. I loved it, I felt like I was a part of their family.

They took me in and never gave up on me. I feel like I owe them so much. Sure I made mistakes while living there but doesn't everyone?

They always made sure that I was all right and safe.

They were strict when they had to be and also laid back and awesome at other times.

I spent time with them a lot too. Sue and Shane, who are Shalane's parents, were almost like my second parents.

I still think of them that way to this day.

Even though I don't live with them, I still keep in touch and talk with them all the time.

All the while I was moving around and going house to house I was pretty depressed.

I felt as if I were a rag doll being thrown every which way. I had quite the depressing moments while I moved around.

My family I didn't really want to stay with because they drank all the time.

I was so happy that I got to enjoy my time with Sue and Shane because they taught me a lot.

They taught me how to be responsible, independent, more active, healthy and respectful.

These things will carry on in me so that I can succeed on my own when I go away to college and have my own family.

I know there are other kids out there that have been in the same situation. Maybe they didn't get it as easy as I did.

Sometimes I think I take some stuff for granted.

I'm so grateful that I found a family that took me in and loved me.

### **Age 21 to 54: Finding a soulmate at a young age**

February 27, 2008

*By Yvonne Bohn*

I wouldn't have imagined as a young teenager that I would spend the rest of my life with James. I met him through my cousin Ken over the summer of 1997. We hung out with the same group of friends – that's how we got to know each other.

We had our disagreements but we seemed to get along all right. By the end of the summer, he asked me out. It took me by surprise, I didn't know how to react. I told him I would have to think about it.

I talked with one of my good friends, who convinced me that he was a good guy and not just a jerk. I did say "yes."

James was 18 and I was 16 when we started dating. We had a great time together always wanting to be with one another.

Eventually we spent too much time together – our other friends were upset because we ditched them a lot. They took it pretty hard so we had to make time apart. This proved an advantage for our relationship because when we did get together, it was that much better.

Six months into our relationship we found out that I was six weeks pregnant. I wasn't too surprised because I was not on birth control.

We both knew I was pregnant before we saw my doctor. James came with me to see the doctor. Although it was difficult for James to deal with my pregnancy, he was very supportive of what I wanted to do.

The day after we found out we were going to have a baby, James and I had dinner with his parents to tell them. They were very supportive of our decision, even though we were so young. We talked about some future stuff; they brought up some things we never thought about. They were really great parents for understanding what we were going through.

After we left, I was upset with James because that was my first time meeting his parents. I never thought that was how I would meet them. He wasn't living with his parents, so he never really cared if I met them, although he had met my whole family already.

I waited a week to tell my parents. I was so scared to tell my mom; I knew she would be mad. When we told her, she didn't really have anything to say. I guess she was stunned and couldn't say anything. James was with me, so since she wasn't saying anything, we left.

I never went home that night. The next day my mom and I talked. Well, kind of talked.

She called me a whore and said some other nasty things. She was so mad that she took off on me; I left right after she did. James came to pick me up. I packed my stuff and moved out.

James and I ended up living with his parents. I dropped out of school because I couldn't deal with going to school with a pregnant belly.

I knew I would be able to take the responsibility of having a baby. I never really felt pregnant until I started to show and I could feel the baby moving around.

The movements started off as flutters; as the baby grew, those flutters turned into waves. It was awesome to feel the baby move around inside of me and it was even better when we got an ultrasound picture of our baby. James loved it. He showed everyone that picture.

We went to my weekly checkup and my doctor was concerned. She sent me to the hospital to see a specialist.

When he was done checking me he said, "The baby has to be born today."

We were in shock!

I still had two more weeks until my due date. James and my sister Theresa were in the delivery room with me; they were both great in helping me give birth.

Damian Gary Adrian Bohn weighed 9lbs 9oz. He was born on September 20, 1998 at 5:05 a.m. and shares a birthday with my great-grandma Lila.

After Damian was born, we enrolled at P.A.C.E.S., a school for teen parents.

Although I was only 17 when I had Damian, I knew I was meant to be a mom at that time. I never graduated because I couldn't focus on schoolwork; I just wanted to be with my baby.

I am now 27-years-old. I have been married to James for five years but we've been together for 10 years. We have two children. Damian is nine-years-old and Avery is four-years-old.

I am back at school going for my dogwood. After that, I am going for my R.N. I can't wait for the day that I become a nurse.

I can now clearly imagine spending the rest of my adult life in a profession that I love with the man that helped to make it all happen

## **Age 55 and up: Reconnecting with the old country**

February 27, 2008

*By Rose Dreger*

I was born after the war as the fourth child of a refugee family living in a tiny farming village in Germany. It still has only one road that goes in and out and is not on the way to anywhere. My parents loved me and my older siblings doted on me. We lived in two rooms with the family of the local Lutheran pastor. One of my earliest memories is going down the road to buy bread and being chased back by chattering geese, about the same size as me, but much more threatening.

When I turned five, our family immigrated to Canada, and we had the long ocean voyage from Bremerhaven in northern Germany to St. John, New Brunswick, followed by our cross Canada train ride to Vancouver. I remember the triple bunk beds on the boat, and was very proud that I did not feel seasick.

I wanted to go to school, but there was no public kindergarten in those days, and I had to sit out the year being babysat by relatives, while my parents worked. My favourite experience was being looked after by my mom's cousin who was acclimatized to Canada and let me make white toast with jam for breakfast. At home, we stuck to traditional rye bread from the German bakeries in the neighbourhood.

During my delay in public education, I learned English with my siblings and we had fun pronouncing German words in English. My older brothers taught me to read and write in German before I started school.

We were poor, but didn't think of ourselves that way. I remember begging to go blueberry picking in Richmond with my older siblings when I was five, and picking 19 pounds of berries on one day. We got five cents a pound, but the boss was so impressed she gave me a whole dollar. I took it home and gave it to my parents as my way of saying I wanted to help.

We played scrub baseball on our street. Whenever a car came by, we interrupted the game. A favourite pastime was to go to Stanley Park on Sundays with our dad. We took the bus and joined the crowds wandering in the zoo area, an endless source of pleasure for me.

School was easy and I always had good friends. Along with my siblings, I went on to higher education. Our parents, who had been very comfortably off before the war, told us they had decided to emigrate from Europe, to give us a better chance of a successful life. Education was our ticket to reach our goals. It worked for all of us.

After university graduation, life took me to Cameroon in West Africa where I worked as a volunteer teacher and nurse for a year. This experience shaped my life in many ways. I learned

that things could be done in different ways. The native children were a delight and to this day hearing the Cameroonian accent gives me great pleasure. I also met my husband.

Fresh from my African adventure and newly wed, I drove for the first time past Hope to Terrace. It was the end of summer in the early seventies, and slash burning was underway. I didn't see much of the Skeena Valley in my first days and had no idea mountains surrounded us. I started my job by driving the road to Prince Rupert for orientation. I remember the series of one-lane bridges and the narrow road squeezed between the river and the railway.

Like many young professionals, we wondered if we would stay in Terrace for a couple of years and then move. We immediately loved the outdoor opportunities, but the amenities were not what they are today. Dusty roads were one of the things I disliked.

We kept in touch with our families, and visited our parents when we had children. We wanted them to know their grandparents. Years later, our daughter lived in her paternal grandparents' home for a few years.

The north lured us as well. By fortunate circumstance we purchased lakefront property in the southern Yukon, enabling us to enjoy the beauty of the north. It is only in retirement, however, that we can make it a yearly event.

In the past few years, we have rekindled a connection to Germany. Our son, who showed an interest in learning German at university, became fluent in the language and applied for a transfer with his company. He has joined the considerable number of expatriate Canadians living and working in Europe. The cycle is complete. I wonder where our grandchild will find her home.

## **The rest of the pack**

Here's the rest of the "My Story" winners in each age group:

12 and under

Jordan Mark

Erin Rose

Aaron Magerison

13 - 20

Kimberley Lambert

Tanya Uy

Anja Dieckersmann

21 - 54

Amanda Beckett

Jennifer Jones

Arjunna Miyagawa

55 and over

Dawna Marie Ottenbreit

John Roders

Earle Tupper

Ruth Ann Warner-Jamieson