

THE ROLE OF THE 'BUILDER' IN COMMUNITY SPORT IN CANADA

By

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BPE, University of BC, 1982

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ABSTRACT

Sport in Canada is led mostly led by volunteers and accounts for the largest proportion of volunteers in the country. Much of our sport infrastructure, especially in terms of the establishment of community sport facilities, and continued operation of organizations, depends on volunteers. Trends of declining and changing types of volunteering have profoundly negative potential consequences for community sport, especially if the key volunteers of our sport system are not replaced. For sport and recreation managers, in local government and in provincial or national sport governing bodies, the challenge will be to encourage and support existing sport builders and to be on the lookout for their successors. This project seeks to understand community sport 'builders', to illustrate the nature of their motivations and contributions, and to explore the types of support they need and desire in order to continue their work as exceptional volunteers.

Keywords: volunteers; asset mapping; sport; community sport; sport governance; community development

DEDICATION

To the memory of Keith Millar
a man who personified
the Builder

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INTRODUCTION

Local government provision of community centres, pools, playing fields and skating rinks is as much a part of the urban landscape as are libraries, schools and sidewalks. In addition to the obvious positive health outcomes of physical activity and play opportunities that these facilities enable, community-level sport is also widely considered a cohesive force, manifesting multiple contexts for positive social integration in the city. For example, and by way of contrast, with 64% of the nation's youth living in large urban centres, increasing anti-social, criminal and gang-related activity has prompted numerous studies and programs that promote sport as part of a solution (Patel, 2009). A recent Canadian study found that organized sport counteracts the following factors:

- Low self-esteem and self-worth;
- Lack of companionship, support and social interaction with family and peers;
- Poor school performance or non-attendance; and
- The absence of caring adult guidance.

Yet even though the provision of facilities is provided through community-wide and general capital resources, the activities that take place in those recreational facilities are largely led by volunteers. The value of that contribution, if paid, would make the activities they lead unaffordable and therefore inaccessible for most. This has been a characteristic of the vast majority of sport and recreation since the emergence of the modern city, even when government of various levels has encroached with programs (for an historical insight into the evolution of government involvement in recreation planning, please see Appendix A). Therefore, it is incumbent for the urban planner in every municipal department to recognize the significance, not only of the local recreation and sport facilities as part of the built environment, or their uses, but the organizers and volunteer 'planners' whose work populate those spaces, providing the vast majority of local sport and recreation opportunities.

At the national parks and recreation conference in Ottawa in September 2007, in a session entitled "Embracing Sport for All – The Role of Municipal Parks and Recreation", City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Manager Jeff Carmichael opened his presentation with a quote from a Province of Ontario position paper on sport entitled "Without Community Sport there would be no Sport" (1992). The purpose of this quote, and of Carmichael's presentation, was to draw the attention of members of a

profession whose mandate it is to provide services at the community level to enable Canadians to be active, creative, engaged, healthy and contributing members of society.

Carmichael was making the case for the role of municipal government as a foundation for the national sport system. To underscore the significance of the local influence of community sport, he reminded the audience of the importance of sport in Canadian society by quoting the Mission Statement of Sport Canada, a department of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage: “To enhance opportunities for Canadians to participate and excel in sport”.

If the foundation of Canadian sport is to be found in the local rinks, gyms and playing fields of communities where children and youth (primarily) play and gain skill, and where families support, spectate, and socialize, then that foundation’s composition must also take into account its human components; it must include the volunteer. The Canadian Sport Policy acknowledges this in its principles which state:

Sport is best developed at the local level where participation is provided through sport organizations, school settings post-secondary institutions, municipal recreation centres, and other community-based organizations...Sport is a powerful vehicle for the enhancement of health, well-being and community development. (Sport Canada 2002:14)

The goals of the Canada’s national Sport Policy include:

...support [for] the development of volunteer and salaried leadership and organizations at all levels to strengthen their contribution to a healthy and ethically based, athlete/participant-centred sport system. (Sport Canada 2002:18)

Similarly, the British Columbia Policy on Sport and Physical Activity recognizes in its objectives that:

Sport organizations need to be strong, autonomous and able to manage changing environments, demands and needs of their members. Our sport and physical activity system is made up of myriad organizations and agencies, from the community to the high performance level, and the global health of the system is dependent on the health of the individual agencies within it...Our sport and physical activity system is driven by volunteers – hard-working British Columbians who are committed to supporting athletes and participants. (BC’s Policy on Sport (n.d.):11)

This paper examines the most hard-working of these volunteers. Of particular interest are the conditions and environment that encourages the emergence of a relatively rare but vital type of community volunteer whom I will tentatively identify as a ‘builder’ in this report. This term or its equivalent appears in a variety of iterations, including analyses of the context of ‘community building’. In various fields of sport, halls of fame established at the local, provincial or national levels often have a lifetime

achievement award category for 'builders', and this is form of recognition comes the closest, perhaps, to acknowledging the type of volunteer that this paper will concentrate on. At the April 8, 2008 North Shore Sport Awards, the Master of Ceremonies opened with these words:

Tonight we honour athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and builders from our own community – people who have left a mark – not just in their sport but in their community, in their neighbourhood and in the lives of people around them.
(Obtained by personal communication)

As a subset of the large mass of community sport volunteers, among whom are included coaches, team managers, divisional coordinators, the builder was chosen for further examination for several reasons, not least including my own volunteer and professional background. Community sport attracts the highest proportion of volunteer activity in Canada. Moreover, and because of its ubiquity, community sport also happens to be an area of citizen activity, both as participants and volunteers, that is of interest to bureaucrats, policy makers and politicians at local, provincial and national levels. One of the goals for this paper, therefore, is to draw attention to an important aspect of community volunteerism so that all concerned may benefit from better understanding this and so that their work may be better supported than perhaps it is currently.

The importance placed on volunteerism in Canada is illustrated by the attention given to the subject by the federal government which, in 2001, established within Statistics Canada a permanent survey program on charitable giving, volunteering and participating. Three major surveys of this nature have been conducted since 1997, inquiring into the type of volunteer work performed, the conditions of volunteer work, the nature and characteristics of the volunteers themselves, and the value of volunteer effort in both societal and economic terms.

The surveys identify volunteers by age, income, marital status and focus of volunteer activity, all to understand and explain the reasons for their involvement with a broader aim of sustaining volunteerism as a Canadian cultural norm and maintaining, or increasing, the extent of volunteer activity amongst Canadians. Subsequent reports have attempted to determine common defining characteristics of Canadian volunteers.

Because of the research methods employed and the size and scope of the reports made available, volunteer agencies tend to rely on this data almost exclusively, particularly when such data is useful for comparing their sector with others or with other regions involved in the same sector. Consequently, most of the information about

volunteers and volunteering that is made available and that is used is statistical, and therefore, generalized. The volunteer 'profile' is assembled in terms of aggregated demographic factors (including age, gender, residency, education, and income). Types of volunteer activity are regularly reported in terms of the sectors to which volunteers are attracted, and the tasks that volunteers perform in those sectors. Duration of volunteering is analyzed in terms of the degree to which commitment is regular (over calendar periods of days, weeks and months) or episodic or short term.

The largest single area of volunteer engagement in Canada is sport and recreation (Hall 2006). The majority of volunteers in this segment are reportedly active as volunteers in the organizations that their children participate in, usually community sport clubs or teams (Doherty 2005). One study noted that volunteer activity declines in households where children are absent (Hall 2006). The study concluded that once the child leaves sport, the particular parental volunteer activity that was 'connected' to him or her usually ceases.

But what is of central interest to the voluntary sector is what motivates volunteers. The literature on this is largely limited to census-derived survey data, and therefore adequate only for general classifications. Statistics are helpful as indicators, but they should not be expected to convey the 'whole truth' about any given subject matter, particularly in the social sciences. Ironically, my review found that the literature dealing most directly with the key community volunteer, sometimes known as the 'champion', 'catalyst', or, in this paper, the 'builder', was not evident in the voluntary sector, but was often referred to in community development literature.

The most important part of the research presented in this paper is that which reports the individual stories of long-term volunteers who have attained leadership positions in their volunteer activities and who, as a result, make significant contributions to the organizations and activities within which they are key and active figures.

Although relative levels of commitment of volunteers are touched on in census data and reports, this paper will seek to demonstrate that there is a higher level of volunteer commitment that should be recognized and made the object of further study. This level of volunteerism is foundational, the size of the workforce inversely proportional to its importance. Without it, most social programs in this country would simply not exist,

much less be a source of continued concern about sustaining its current massive volunteer force.

In his presentation to the Parks and Recreation Conference, Carmichael pointed to numerous factors that assist and resist citizens in the realization of these goals. In concentrating on the builder, I wish to extend Carmichael's thesis and apply it to its most basic element.

VOLUNTEERS, LOCAL SPORT LEADERS AND BUILDERS

This inquiry is informed by my own professional and personal experience in the field of community sport. As an athlete, coach and bureaucrat, I have had direct contact with dozens of community sport volunteers and planners in municipal government and sport governing bodies, over more than 35 years. Having been fortunate to have spent most of those years in one community, I have seen effective and ineffective leadership, and, as a consequence, successful and less-than-successful organizations. I have watched community sport leadership that has matured and leadership that has diminished, occasionally in the same person over the course of time. Again, this has accompanied the rise and decline (though thankfully never the fall) of organizations.

An earlier working title for this paper was “The Builder and the Bureaucrat”; the intended objective being an exploration of the relationship between key community sport organization volunteer leaders and the local government officials that volunteer leaders must deal with. I often wondered what made both of these types of figures ‘tick’. I wondered what it was about the key volunteers that made them work as hard as they do, and pursue their avocation with often dogged determination. On the other side, I was curious about the bureaucrat, a term I use here only to describe both officials and employees of municipal governments and sport governing officials. These people were often as committed, impassioned and hard-working as community volunteer leaders. Of course, they were paid, and that perhaps accounts for some of the variableness I found in my dealings with them, for some indeed do not seem much interested in the objectives of sport volunteers or inclined to assist in advancing the operations of their organizations. The same might often be said of volunteers. Although financial reimbursement was not their reason for being involved, nonetheless, there was occasionally a sense of mercenary behaviour exhibited by volunteers that seemed to reach beyond the health of the players to focus instead upon the interests of their own children or themselves. Where I found the greatest degree of commitment, and the most significant impact of such commitment, was among the volunteers that had the longest tenure, who had stayed with a given sport, and often a particular local organization, for many years, even beyond the direct involvement of the volunteer’s children, who were the reason they got involved in the first place. In fact, this seemed to me to be one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the most effective community sport volunteer

leaders – length of service, and the accumulated experience in knowledge (memory) and associations (relationships) that went with it. Notwithstanding that this seems to also be true of *ineffective*, 'controlling' leadership that is held onto for too long, most often this type of community volunteer leader seemed to be able to overcome any obstacles that might be presented by the bureaucratic systems of local government or sport governance, by virtue of determination and skill. Therefore, I decided that I would focus my attention on the long-term community sport leader and determine if there were commonalities and characteristics that could be exploited by the bureaucracy for the benefit of the community and for the benefit of sport.

Concerned that my notion of the significance of this leader might arise from an experience that is not widely shared or understood, I decided to test it out on colleagues in the fields of sport and parks and recreation. All of the two dozen or so current professionals that I consulted with confirmed my contention. Several quite correctly pointed out that this type of volunteer leader exists not only in community sport, but in local arts, social services, education, and health organizations. I strongly concur with this point and hasten to note that my research is limited to community sport only for the sake of limiting the scale of my current project and 'sticking to the knitting', containing my research in an area of direct knowledge and expertise.

With the encouragement of colleagues, I formulated a working definition of this particular community sport volunteer leader that I dubbed the 'builder'. I also developed a series of questions for bureaucrats in the field to substantiate not only the existence of this leadership role, but also what impact volunteers performing this role had on their organizations and communities. I wanted to ascertain the bureaucrat's understanding of their department's role in public service in supporting and facilitating the work of volunteers as represented by these highly committed volunteers. I was particularly interested in what they thought their organization could do to support more fulsomely volunteers who were committing so much of their time freely to the community via local sport organizations.

I selected subjects for interviews from a set of candidates nominated by practitioners. I was interested in hearing their stories, beginning with why they had volunteered in the first place. Were their motivations the same as those identified by national census-related studies? I was even more interested in why they continued to serve as volunteers when their contemporaries quit. Were they persuaded to continue

under duress? Did they feel so connected to their volunteer role that they couldn't readily extract themselves? I thought that the dynamics of local organizational structures (i.e., Boards and Executives) were important as an indicator of effectiveness in delivering sport. So, I needed to know if these volunteers got along with their fellow board members, and what happened when they didn't. Believing that these long-term volunteer leaders possessed strong personalities, I wanted to know if they were ever perceived as 'bullies'. I was interested in their families and how they managed such lengthy commitment on the part of each builder. Were family members happy? Were children and spouses resentful about the many evenings of meetings that invariably accompany the role? Or was being busy in this role more of an escape from everyday life and commitments for them? Finally, I wanted to know about the relationship between the builder and municipal recreation officials, particularly with their principal contact in the department. Did the bureaucracy support them or impede their work? What did they do when they encountered problems with city council or other community sport organizations?

The stories collected from survey respondents and the interviews draw a direct connection between community sport facilities and organizations and the volunteers whose activity directly or indirectly brought about their development. The implications of this relationship are fundamental to urban life. Anything that might militate against the emergence of builders, or that might limit their personal initiatives, is problematic. For example, if general patterns of volunteering are shifting away from long-term commitment to 'episodic' volunteer experiences, a potential builder might not focus extended attention upon a single issue. The community could be deprived of a 'champion' who will see a building campaign through from inception to completion. By raising the importance of this aspect of community life, progressive planners (Forester 1982) will be prepared to spend the time necessary to encourage and facilitate the energies of these individuals. More importantly, the progressive planner will be 'allowed' and even encouraged to do so, even when, in so doing, time is consumed, and demands and expectations on strained resources are increased as a result.

My interest in researching this topic is an outcome of a career spent largely among volunteers and a growing sense of urgency since, during this time several of these unusual leaders have died. I believe their stories are highly instructive and should be assembled, especially in light of an apparent decline in community volunteerism.

Local government officials, as well as those involved in sport governance at the provincial and national levels, need to take note of this 'genus' of volunteer without whom little would get done to provide playing venues or to nurture the organizations that use them. It is my hope that a better understanding of this type of volunteer may lead to recognizing their value, seeking out those that are currently filling that role, and recognizing and encouraging their roles so that the energy that drives them can be maximized.

It is perhaps a peculiarity of practitioners in various fields that when confronted with situations in the real world that are outside of understood or learned theory, there is a tendency to imagine that these are unique, or specific to a particular situation at a particular time under special circumstances. Solutions and strategies are developed through adaptation, advice from mentors and trial-and-error approaches. This may be peculiar to those in the field of parks and recreation, nevertheless it has been true in my case. My attempts to develop an approach to the issues presented by community volunteers were cobbled together over time with varying degrees of effectiveness and success. I had a notion that what had worked for me, as my approach formed, might not be applicable in all cases or indeed be suitable for practitioners with temperaments that differed from mine. My general approach was to acknowledge and expect that working with community volunteers was necessarily time-consuming, sometimes frustrating, exacting an emotional toll, and usually involved development of relationships over time. In a word, I believed that working with community sport volunteers was 'messy'. It therefore came as a surprise to discover that there was literature pertaining to the various types of volunteer roles and that this literature has attempted to deal with the issues that confronted me as a practitioner.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Initially, I found that the literature on community development, particularly the methods and theory of McKnight and Kretzmann (1990), was very applicable to the situation of the planner in municipal parks, recreation and sport. Further probing into general planning theory led to intriguing and post-modern approaches of Forester (1982) and Lindblom (1959 1979), supported by an evolutionary shift in government approaches to program planning and municipal “enabling” as discussed by Smith and Nichols (2000) in Britain and Thibault (1999) in Canada. Recently, studies and texts published in Canada by Doherty (2005), Jurbala (2006), and Vail (2007), and in Australia by Cuskelly (2006) and Tower (2006), explore the issues of sport organization within various levels of government, including municipal governments, the area closest to my own experience and indeed, that of the majority of participants in sport and recreation. In addition to consulting these two related bodies of literature I reviewed the extensive reports and statistics on volunteerism in Canada. These studies paint the large picture of generalized voluntary sector research, and provide the starting point for this discussion.

My review of the volunteer and non-profit literature included a thorough scan of research and publication titles sourced by Imagine Canada and Volunteer Canada, the latter including international journal articles compiled from a web-based resource *e-Volunteerism: The Electronic Journal of the Volunteerism Community*, complete with a search engine on the subject ‘special types of volunteers’. Very few studies dealt with the characteristics of volunteers in terms of quantifying or evaluating their commitment. Those that did were fortunately Canadian. In order to place the analysis developed in this paper in context, it is useful to review briefly the progression of analyses of volunteers over the last thirty years.

A 2000 Statistics Canada report “Distinguishing Characteristics of Active Volunteers in Canada” emerged from analysis of data from 18,301 cases drawn from Canada’s 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, the first comprehensive review of volunteer activity in Canadian history. In contrast to previous studies of volunteers which for several reasons “did not provide a broad, systemic picture of the distinguishing characteristics of volunteers with a high degree of confidence” (Reed 2000:5), this report, sought remedy those deficiencies. The report found that “although the incidence of volunteering rose modestly over the decade, the

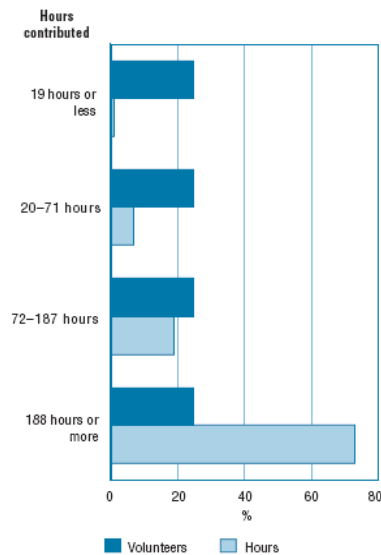
average time each volunteer contributed throughout the year had actually declined by twenty-two percent. The face of volunteering, it would appear, is changing” (Reed 2000:2). This is a significant statement that is particularly interesting when looking at the range of commitment levels.

The Statistics Canada report identified “truly active” volunteers. Although there is wide variation between them, they nonetheless share a distinct set of characteristics that counter some common notions of volunteers and are, thus, relevant to an exploration of the highly committed volunteer or builder. According to the report: “Level of education, for example, is often associated with a more generalized social awareness, yet it is not a consistent predictor of active volunteering” (Reed 2000:9). Similarly, “duration of residence in the community was of relatively minor significance and income played no distinguishing role at all” (Reed 2000:12). For these reasons, the researchers question the veracity of “the dominant status model’ [which] holds that volunteer activity has the effect of expressing or creating heightened social status for volunteers” (Reed 2000:14). Finally, and of less surprise, is a confirmation that those who volunteer more than the average also tend to be broadly engaged in civic affairs, giving credence to the commonplace saying that ‘if you want something done, ask a busy person’, and amply supported by the subjects interviewed for this paper.

The second National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, conducted by Statistics Canada in 2000, was based on a representative sample of 14,724 Canadians aged 15 years and older who were asked about their giving and volunteering in the previous year. The survey found that the average annual number of hours contributed per volunteer had increased to 162 hours from 149 hours since 1997 (Chart 1). The profile of volunteers in this survey associated the total hours of volunteering by proportion with the percentage of volunteers. This confirmed the popular notion that a minority of volunteers accomplish the majority of volunteer work. Also significant, as the interviews will later illustrate, is the influence of “early life experience” on volunteering (Chart 3).

Chart 1

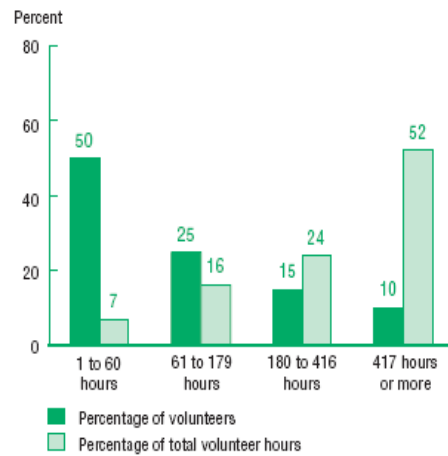
Distribution of volunteering by annual hours volunteered, Canadian volunteers aged 15 and older, 2000



(Hall 2001:33)

Chart 2

Distribution of volunteers and percentage of total volunteer hours contributed, by annual hours volunteered, volunteers aged 15 and older, Canada, 2004



Source: Statistics Canada, *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004*.

(Hall 2006:32)

Chart 3

The connection between early life experiences and volunteering

Volunteering in adulthood appears to be related to a number of early life experiences. In comparison with the volunteer rate for all Canadians (27%), the probability of volunteering is higher among those who, in their youth

- were active in student government (42% volunteered in 2000);
- had a parent who volunteered in the community (39%);
- were active in a religious organization (38%);
- did some kind of volunteer work (36%);
- were helped by others (35%);
- belonged to a youth group (35%);
- saw someone they admired helping others (34%);
- did door-to-door canvassing (33%); or
- participated in an organized team sport (31%).

Compared with 1997, there has been a 4% to 9% decline in the percentage of volunteers reporting each of these early life experiences. These findings suggest that the exposure to some early life experiences may help to increase the chances of volunteering in adulthood, although the links between these experiences and later volunteering may be weakening.

(Hall 2001:39)

The 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) developed the notion of “top volunteers” -- “the 25% of volunteers who account for 77% of all volunteer hours” -- and asked the prescient question “(w)ho are these top volunteers and what distinguishes them from other volunteers?” (Hall 2006:35). The

scale of volunteering by hours and the percentage of volunteers committing to the highest number of hours, as illustrated in Chart 2, became yet more refined.

Significantly, the survey brought clarity to volunteer's children as a stimulus or inhibitor of volunteering:

The likelihood of volunteering increases with the presence of children, particularly school-aged children, in the household. Those who had only school-aged children in the household were most likely to volunteer... (h)owever, those with no children volunteered the highest average number of hours (191) (Hall 2006:35)

The builder is a volunteer who maintains a leadership role in community sport after his or her children have left the sport and the family home.

Yet unexplored in the CSGVP, and a limitation in its direct applicability for this paper, is the extent, type and characteristics of the volunteers at the extreme end of commitment, which I have tentatively termed the builder. A subsequent study, and the only one that focuses on a single type of volunteer, is also based in Canada, and, though not dealing with sport exclusively, it does expand on the top volunteer concept. A 2006 Imagine Canada study, "Core Volunteers: Exploring the Values, Attitudes, and Behaviours underlying Sustained Volunteerism in Canada", comes closest to capturing those characteristics that distinguish the highly committed volunteer, defined there as those who commit 188 hours or more a year. In terms of my hypothesis, this includes the builder at the apex of this category. Taking a qualitative approach, this study revealed significant differences between these and "mainstream" volunteers. Among them, the core volunteer in Canada is more likely to be motivated by a strong passion for the cause of the organization, and tended to be less affected by any heightened social status that might be perceived as a factor in taking on a leadership position, an explanation known as the so-called "dominant status model" (Reed 2000:14), indicating not only true altruism but perhaps also openness to succession.

The National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating reported a decline in volunteer rates in Canada with one million fewer volunteers in 2000 than in 1997 (Hall 2001). This has serious implications for sport organizations needing coaches, managers, and executive members. The reasons for a decline in volunteering in sport likely parallel the decline in volunteerism in general. Technologies, including isolating forms of in-home entertainment and communication, family breakdown, personal mobility, urbanization, are all potential factors. And none of them, even if taken in isolation lend themselves to an easy 'fix' that is foreseeable under current economic and

social conditions. In a period of actual and imminent decline, then, it makes sense to look at what contributes to the societal good and do our best to maintain and strengthen it, if by so doing we can counteract the damage that is being caused by the erosion of our social fabric. Voluntary work is one of the parts of western and Canadian social life that is considered valuable. And in no area of community life is the work of the volunteer more prevalent, and therefore more valuable, than in sport.

The following statistical information puts the contribution of, and the investment in, the sport volunteer, into perspective.

There are 34,000 sport organizations in Canada. They represent the largest and most prevalent form of community action in the country, followed by 30,000 places of worship and 19,000 social service organizations.

Sport organizations involve 130,000 paid personnel, and 2.2 million volunteers, who fill 5.3 million volunteer positions.

There is no other part of the “voluntary sector” (which is made up of 161,000 charities and non-profits, has 1.2 million paid people and 6.5 million volunteers) that does so much with so little:

- It has the lowest ratio of paid staff to volunteers and is also the most financially independent as it generated most of its own income.
- Only 35% of the money in sport comes from government and most of that is for high performance sport (compared to, for example, organizations in health or social service or education that get 65%+ of their money from government).

The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport has done two groundbreaking pieces of research that gives us a couple of other insights:

- That second only to family, sport is the number one transmitter of values to young people.
- Although 90% of Canadians believe that sport has a positive influence on youth – they also believe that sport is overly-focused on competition to the detriment of promoting key values such as respect, accessibility, fairness and integrity and trust.
- Canadians want to see more done to better align sport with core societal values.

(Bowen 2006:3)

Given the value, and potential value, of sport participation, and the detriments of declining physical activity amongst youth (Bloom 2005), encouraging and enabling our best volunteers to stay involved, and to be able to focus more of their valuable attention on building excellent organizations that are attractive to continued participation (i.e., prevent dropouts) is therefore of paramount importance.

One of the observations of a Canadian study on civic engagement through sport speaks to the implications of addressing the issues of declining physical activity by identifying the key challenges at the local level of “getting enough volunteers to do the existing work, *and for the club to grow*” (Doherty n.d.:10, emphasis mine). The implication here is obvious, but it should steel the resolve of sport governance to minimize the barriers to volunteers and thus to ensure the availability of opportunities for participation.

Among the many challenges in maintaining the operations of a volunteer-based community sport organization is that of filling key positions on the board. In Doherty’s study, a survey indicated that attracting a sufficient number of volunteers was not so much an issue as was the relative output of individual volunteers and the types of jobs that they are willing to do. The lack of potential executive or board members, due to the immediate and heavy time commitments expected of them, along with club ‘politics’, and a shortage of other volunteers were cited as the main reasons for non-involvement at this level. The reasons why volunteers do get involved is, therefore, at least as important as counting the number of volunteers and the trends in volunteer activity in Canada and elsewhere.

Other research conducted in Canada indicates that there are several factors that incline individuals to volunteer, and that there may be a convergence of values that prompt volunteer activity. Smith, Gotlib and Barr (2006) provide four of these factors: the context of the environment in terms of community size and the type of organization that needs help, individual socioeconomics, gender and education level. Personal characteristics of extroversion, assertiveness and empathy were associated with volunteers. A fourth factor was the perceived value of the voluntary contribution in terms of effectiveness to the organization and to the volunteer him or herself. A final condition also factored in, and that was the circumstances under which the individual was recruited in the first place. Being asked to assist was a key driver to initiate volunteer activity (Gotlib 2006:3).

However, one critically important challenge in community sport organization arose in Doherty’s study when she found that “[t]he typical commitment of club volunteers was described as four to six years, which tends to coincide with the length of time that one’s child is involved in the club” (Doherty n.d.:11). While community sport is ubiquitous, and dependant on the volunteer, this level of volunteer turnover poses a

problem that is practically unique in the voluntary non-profit organizational structure. That sport volunteers tend to drop out as their children do is completely reasonable and to be expected. It does place a premium, however, on the willingness of the volunteer who will provide continuity and consistency by remaining part of the organization beyond the norm.

These results speak to volunteers in general, and while the builder must begin somewhere, the extraordinary amount of activity that is the subject of this paper raises questions concerning the reasons for deep, highly committed involvement and also about what it will take to retain the long-term volunteer in the face of changing times.

Even though the Imagine Canada study continues a progressive 'honing in' on the critical distinctions of the "core" or "top" volunteer, I find in it, and in the 2000 and 2004 national surveys discussed above, a significant shortcoming, in that they are snapshots, of, at most, a 'year in the life' of a volunteer. Still missing is longitudinal research on the total 'lifespan' of the volunteer. An ethnographically derived understanding of this would enable what I believe to be the highest calibre of volunteer, the builder, to emerge within the literature.

First, therefore, it is important to identify who these builders is are and what the conditions are that initiate their interest and then compel their dedication to a, sport or even more that one sport. The survey literature from Statistics Canada does contain some reference to the "elite" or "top" volunteer, but the people that I and others know contribute significantly more time and energy, and over much longer periods, than the statistics collected take account of. For example, The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (2004) defines the "top volunteer", as a person who devotes more than 188 hours per year to their volunteer job. By these criteria, I am not particularly interested in the "top volunteer"; what interests me is the 'over the top' volunteer.

The key to this paper is not the builder in isolation or as an individual, but the factors that enable the role of the builder to emerge, as they have in the cases that follow. It is like the hypothetical question: 'how many more Gretzky's were turned off sport because of a bad experience with sport?' To shed light on the positive factors it is important to understand the mental maps that have been drawn for sport and recreation at the community level as it has impacted participants and volunteers alike. By looking back, this discussion will be positioned to articulate the changes that have been

emerging over the last number of years and thus, project forward, hopefully using the examples and illustrations from this research to illuminate at least part of the path.

Vancouver, like most urban centres in Canada, is a major provider of recreation programs and facilities, and, like most other municipalities, is represented by a department or commission. And, as in most Canadian communities, the mechanism for ensuring the provision of sport and physical activity has shifted. Over the last couple of generations a government-led 'direct delivery' model where the bureaucrat is the expert and the participant is the consumer, has become more a 'community development' model where the citizenry is encouraged to plan their own programs and activities. (For a more complete description of this transition, please refer to Appendix A.)

The local government support to community organizations that deliver services that in turn serve the public good has a strong connection to the concept of the "enabling authority" in Britain as described by Smith:

Partnerships with the voluntary sector give local authorities the benefit of new insights into local conditions...additional organisational capacity, innovative ideas, access to charitable resources, and experience in participative mechanisms (Smith 2000:86).

Much as in Canada, trends in British volunteerism, particularly the trend to short-term commitment, does not adequately serve the needs of community sport. Nichols et al. state "[t]here are indications that the voluntary sector may need increasing support from external organizations. The organization which is likely to be the most sensitive to the needs of the voluntary sector and able to give support is the local authority" (Nichols et al 1998:120).

Closer to home, Thibault studied three Vancouver municipalities' leisure services departments and concluded that "[e]conomic political and social pressures are strong impetus for developing linkages with other public organizations [including] non-profit organizations" (Thibault et al 1999:138).

More recently, John Tower (2006) illustrated "relationship marketing" theory and the role of partnerships in not-for-profit sport in Australia. Acknowledging that "many sport organizations and sport venues [i.e., local government facilities] operate in a confrontational manner", he found that effective linkages, or partnerships, required effort. Tower concludes; "[i]f venues and associations can gain a better understanding of how they can work together and develop their relationships, then sport at a community level

will benefit as well”, (Tower 2006:179). Indeed, in a private conversation relating to the personal level of relationship-building that this paper focuses on, Dr. Tower indicated that personality types and styles occasionally mitigate efforts to build effective partnerships, confirming the sometimes ‘messy’ nature of community development (private conversation, October 2008).

Another tool of community development that informs this process of identifying and resourcing significant volunteers is the concept of Asset Mapping as developed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1990) and cited here by Kerka:

Asset mapping involves documenting the tangible and intangible *resources of a community*, viewing it as a place with assets to be preserved and enhanced, not deficits to be remedied. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) are credited with developing the concept of asset-based community development (ABCD), which draws on appreciative inquiry; the recognition of social capital; *participatory approaches to development*, which are based on principles of empowerment and ownership; collaborative economic development models that place priority on making the best use of a community’s resource base; and efforts to strengthen civil society by *engaging people as citizens rather than clients* (Mathie and Cunningham 2002). **Assets may be persons**, physical structures, natural resources, institutions, businesses, or informal organizations (Berkowitz and Wadud 2003). The ABCD process involves the community in making an inventory of assets and capacity, *building relationships*, developing a vision for the future, and *leveraging internal and external resources to support actions* to achieve it (Beaulieu 2002).

(Kerka 2003, emphasis mine)

Hays and Kogl (2007) drew on the work of McKnight and Kretzmann to develop an understanding of “the mobilization of neighbourhood resources [which] may be actively encouraged by public officials or other agencies operating outside the neighbourhood” (Hays 2007:15), processes that are naturally similar to the mobilization of community sport organizations.

This paper focuses on the development of a community ‘asset’ in the form of individuals who are instrumental in creating other physical and non-material assets (e.g., public buildings and organizations), and the particular challenges of suitably resourcing and facilitating these individuals once their capacities are recognized. Nevertheless, implementation of the model can encounter resistance, requiring considerable organizational commitment, time and funding to accomplish. For this reason the purpose of this paper is to drill down to the work of the individual builder and the individual local level planner who can recognize and either facilitate or frustrate this type of volunteer’s efforts.

Forester addressed this in his analysis of use of information in the planning process, and outlined the duties of the “progressive planner” to overcome “the face of power [which is] manifest as the social and political (mis)-management of citizen’s knowledge, consent, trust and attention”. (Forester 1982:67). Although distinguishing the mobilization and action of affected citizens (Forester 1982:77) from Lindblom’s theory of incrementalism (Lindblom 1979) in which small steps in procedural decision-making avoid lasting mistakes, the latter contains an important similarity in finding place for “professional or personal values or interests [that] create diversity of view” (Lindblom 1959:88).

In a report from the 2006 Voluntary Sector Awareness Project, a Canadian multi-sector voluntary research project, Paul Jurbala (2006) draws upon insights from Richard Florida, author of The Rise of the Creative Class (2003), which identifies the positive economic and social impacts of plentiful and varied artistic, recreational and sporting outlets. Jurbala draws a line between the economic implications of factors that attract members of the creative class and the connection of these to the voluntary sector. Since this is the locus of practice responsible for the social vibrancy that is so attractive, Jurbala suggests that this connection should be of prime importance to the urban planner, the local bureaucrat.

For the most part, Jurbala’s report is concerned with the effect of national policy and programs on the local community club. He points out that the need for a “go-between, a translator...” (Jurbala 2006:15) entails a role that falls to the national and provincial voluntary sector. Yet there is another level of potential support that may be found closer to home for the community club.

Vail (2007) employed an action research methodology to engage a community development model to address the complex issue of declining participation in the sport of tennis in Canada. One of four key components of the community development approach was the existence of a local “champion/catalyst”, that “individual or group who believes that change is possible and is willing to take the first steps needed to create interest and support” (Vail 2007:575).

It is interesting to note that the only reference to the champion/catalyst (a category I take to be synonymous with that of the builder) that I have encountered was located, not in volunteer management literature, but in community development

literature. Even within that field, Vail herself indicates that “[a]mong the community development models that were reviewed, many did not address the community champion or catalyst directly, although in this literature it was assumed that someone or some organization...would intervene...to set the community in motion” (Vail 2007:576).

Outlining the inadequacies of various participation initiatives from mass marketing to national awards programs, Vail’s study suggests that they are typically ‘top-down’, initiated by the senior sport governing bodies at the provincial or national levels, and tend not to involve the community sport organization as a key stakeholder. Asserting from Pedlar that the process of social negotiation undertaken in community development is in itself valuable (Vail 2007:573), the champion provides “catalytic leadership [by] raising awareness, bringing diverse stakeholders together, developing strategies, and sustaining action over time” (Vail, citing Luke 2007:575).

What is difficult to determine, and apparently unknown to the trend watchers, is whether there is an increase or decline in the supply of builders. If this volunteer type is diminishing, then the issue of declining volunteerism may be even more critical than statistics indicate. Accordingly, the work undertaken in this report requires a different approach, because the national surveys that have been conducted are simply not tuned finely enough to discern this small but essential demographic category. My rough estimate is that the community sport builder is ‘one in a thousand’, taking into consideration the numbers of volunteers active in any given sport league at one time, multiplied by the years the builder is active as a volunteer, and compounded by the effects of the volunteer’s work in building the very organizations (or physical structure) that house multiplied numbers of volunteers.

The need for this research has been confirmed on every occasion where I have raised it in private and general conversation with recreation and sport officials, volunteer sector leaders and politicians across Canada. In each case, conversation turned to personal knowledge and recollection of key figures in the home communities, the individual’s own past, or current working relationships, highlighting individuals who would fit the model of the builder. When asked why they think a study of this nature is worth doing, there is always the sense, to paraphrase what was said of Lord Shaftesbury, ‘We’ll never see the likes of them again’, an instinctive belief that the nature and form of volunteering, especially among the most committed, is changing in Canada.

Research Question

Since volunteers are essential to the operation of sport facilities, leagues, and teams at the local level, and therefore critical for a nation like Canada that is passionate about sport, we need to understand a particular type of volunteer that supports and makes possible the work of others – a volunteer characterized in this paper as the 'builder' a title that is synonymous with "champion" and "catalyst" as used in Vail (2007).

This paper asks, what are the political, bureaucratic, and organizational conditions and individual personal and socio-economic, characteristics which contribute to the emergence of the community volunteer builder? In order to answer the main research question, several other questions must be posed in order to determine the validity and utility of distinguishing this type of volunteer. It is necessary to ask how their experience, which is far longer than that of most volunteers, differs from that of other volunteers. A tentative, working definition of this volunteer role was developed above in order to initiate this discussion about a small number of highly committed volunteers as a subset of the much larger mass of citizens who contribute significantly to Canadian social life:

Definition

The builder: A community-level volunteer whose activity in sport may have begun at a modest level but became far more extensive and significant through the holding of various positions of leadership. Builders serve as volunteers for the benefit of others beyond their own children, often long after their children have left the sport. Builders have contributed in extraordinary ways to the development of sport infrastructure, either in the form of facilities or organizational structures.

METHODOLOGY

The nature of differences between ‘builders’ and other types of volunteers are open to discovery through direct inquiry with a select number of these highly committed volunteers. In consequence, this paper will attempt to reveal the *particular* motivations and circumstances of this *particular* type of volunteer.

The research undertaken for this project was conducted by means of a qualitative survey of sports and recreational professionals and seven in-depth, iterative and semi-structured ethnographic interviews which examined in detail the social phenomena of highly committed volunteerism exemplified by six of these individuals. To develop a rounded profile of the builder’s role, the interviews were done with four long-term, highly committed volunteers, an adult family member of a builder, a volunteer colleague of a builder, and a local municipal official whose ‘job’ it was to work with a builder. The builders were referred by professionals or practitioners in the field of parks, recreation and sport who were consulted by means of a survey distributed through the various on-line sport and recreation information services, as well as through membership associations and lists of practitioners within the parks, recreation and sport management settings. The survey served two purposes. First, it endeavoured to test and confirm what had already been expressed in private, generalized conversations. Secondly, responses from practitioners served to identify potential candidates for in-depth interviews among individuals who appeared to be fulfilling the function and role of builders that professional colleagues felt was important in the community. One local municipal official from among the survey respondents was also selected for an in-depth interview in order to probe the dynamics of this relationship more deeply. For the same reason, the volunteer colleague of a builder and adult family members of a builder were identified by two of the builders themselves. Much of the work of the builder is relational. My assumption in recruiting through a type of ‘snowball sampling’ was that there would be openness on the part of survey respondents and builders themselves to contact and follow up with interview candidates. This was indeed the case. Practical logistical considerations restricted my interview choices to those close at hand. I therefore chose interview candidates who were located no more than a one-hour drive from my own home. I determined to seek meetings with people that were previously unknown to me for three reasons. Firstly, I felt this was important so as not to impose anything that I might have already known of an individual onto my questioning or my perceptions. Secondly, I was very interested to

meet builders that were so designated by someone else, to test if my working definition and description of this volunteer role yielded the same type of person as I had come to recognize in my own work. Thirdly, this was an opportunity to make the acquaintance of people who, as my hypothesis of this volunteer role suggested, were not well known outside of their own community, but whose contributions were significant. As one email survey response indicated "I am jealous of your choice of topics. You will get to hear so many great stories!"

The purpose of this paper is to inquire into an important community role, not to coin an exclusive term for that role. In this paper I have used the term 'builder' to provide a single and simple word that captures a broader, albeit formative and working, definition. It is not, however, the only term that I or others use to describe this role, including the individuals that have been identified and selected as persons whose performances manifest that role.

For this research, the term 'builder' was first used in the survey of sport and parks and recreation officials. The survey was field tested with four individuals from both the municipal and sport governance sectors. Slight modifications to the survey form were made as a result. The survey was sent via direct email to various distribution lists of sport and recreation professional networks, policy and program interest groups, and recent conference attendee lists that I had access to in personal files. Additionally, it was included in electronic bulletins put out by the Leisure Information Network, Sport Information Resource Centre, BC Recreation and Parks Association and Sport BC. The introduction to the survey was very important in providing not only an understanding of what I was inquiring into, but also for eliciting responses to the questions. In consideration of those who receive many such direct emails, uninvited, the questions posed were necessarily brief. This is the text of the invitation to participate in the survey, followed by the questions:

Dear Colleague,

I am engaged in graduate studies at Simon Fraser University, conducting research into the characteristics of a particular type of community volunteer in Canadian sport and recreation that I am referring to as the "Builder".

For this research the "Builder" is currently defined as: "A community-level volunteer whose activity in sport may have begun at a modest level but became significant through the holding of various positions of leadership, for the benefit of others beyond their own children, often long after children have left the sport, and which contributed to the development of facility or organizational assets."

This definition is open to modification pending the results of this survey. The question that is guiding my research is: "What are the conditions (political, bureaucratic, and organizational) and individual characteristics (personal and socio-economic), which contribute to the emergence of the community volunteer Builder?"

Please help advance a working understanding of this valuable community resource by replying to this email with your brief responses to the following questions:

1. Can you think of a living local sport leader whom you believe is, or was, pivotal to the development of sport in this community?
2. What was "built" as a result of this person's work?
3. What has been the community impact of this commitment?
4. How does this individual stand out in terms of commitment?
5. What has local government done to support the individual?
6. What else could be done to support this work in the future?
7. May I contact you again for follow up or further questions

Among the sixty survey responses received, not all identified a community level builder. Four of these respondents were consultants in the municipal recreation field or were engaged with national-level organizations. It was somewhat surprising to see how far removed from the local community one could appear to be and still be involved in the sport and recreation sector. Interestingly, a respondent from one national sport organization, is undertaking a longitudinal survey of the same volunteer type, and expressed a desire to learn the outcomes of this research.

Part way through the process of completing the survey I realized that there might be value in reflecting on the impact of sport governance in the volunteer activities of 'builders'. So the question "What have the sport governing bodies done to support this individual?" was inserted, with an emphasis added to distinguish sport governance, i.e., provincial sport organizations, from local government parks and recreation departments.

Survey responses were edited for clarity and grammatical corrections only. All names identifying people and specific communities or facilities were removed to conform with the University's Ethics policy.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Question #1 – “Can you think of a living local sport leader whom you believe is, or was, pivotal to the development of sport in this community?”

Having used the term ‘builder’ in the introduction, and having given the term some context, I felt it was safe to use a different term for the same person or role and hopefully create more associations and better ensure understanding. Given that this was a voluntary response survey, I am aware that there may have been some who chose not to respond at all and that the reason may have included not being aware of anyone that fulfilled the role I was seeking or, perhaps, of not agreeing with my elicitation of this type of role. Although the large majority of responses to this and the subsequent questions were positive, any conclusions and perceptions drawn should be regarded as provisional indicators that might encourage the practitioner to be conscious of the potential for taking into account this role in their communities.

Question #2 – “What did the Builder ‘build?’”

Intrinsic to the notion of the local sport builder is the likelihood that they are often unknown beyond their geographic community or their community of interest (i.e., sport). Therefore, to get a sense of the significance of the work they have done it was critical to ask “What did the builder ‘build?’”. The survey respondents readily replied, some in greater detail than others.

Of the sixty responses, thirteen indicated that the builder had had a role (always a major role) in developing hard infrastructure (i.e., sport facilities). Forty reported that what was significant about a given builder’s role was the development of a club, organization, a program, or as one put it, “the fabric of sport in BC”. Seven respondents indicated that their nominee had accomplished both the development of an organization or program and facilities. Clearly, the most significant or prominent aspect of the builder’s contribution in the view of recreation and sport practitioners is the ‘soft’ infrastructure, presumably without which, there would be no need for the built facilities for sport. This is an interesting twist on the ‘Field of Dreams’ notion of ‘build it and they will come’.

One respondent commented that “This [specific] person built a solid foundation for the organization, provided quality coaching and development programs, and well-rounded soccer programs for all levels and abilities.” Another respondent commenting on a ‘builder’ mentioned that, “He sustained a very successful baseball association in a socio-economically deprived community.” Still another respondent said simply that ‘her’ builder contributed “Structure, process, opportunity”. Already, we get the sense that these are extraordinary people.

Question #3 – “What has been the community impact of this commitment?”

By employing this wording I was looking for evidence of contributions to local life that went beyond the addition of physical structures to affect the larger social fabric of the community. The question anticipates that whatever it was that the builder built would likely have an influence in the community beyond merely ‘bricks and mortar’. The question “What has been the community impact of this commitment?” was meant to elicit the ‘ripple effect’ on community life that stretches beyond the sport, activity or physical building. This question appeared to be the least understood, however, with twenty-three of the sixty-six (33%) of the responses essentially repeating the answer to the previous question, referring to the sport, activity or facility itself. Other possible explanations notwithstanding (e.g., question structure, respondent hurry), this may be indicative of a lack of awareness or appreciation of the effects of community building work accomplished by the builder. It also may represent a previously untapped potential resource as a rationale to provide further support mechanisms, a concept that will be explored in the final section dealing with policy and practical implications. A sampling of responses to the question “What has been the community impact?” includes:

Increase in participation, specifically the girls’ program, and an increase in credibility and respect from other parents and the soccer community.

Recreation Facilities and programs for all members of the community. He strongly believes in an active lifestyle.

Structure for sport where it didn’t exist, opportunity for more to become involved in sport.

Major facilities now available for community use, economic development opportunities, higher profile on sport, more support from other council members as they are the power of the sport vote.

Positive impact on health and well being of citizens, Increase in sport and recreation opportunities, Increase in community assets, continuation of benefits of sport & recreation, Recognition to community as a whole.

Increased fitness involvement, happy members of the community.

Growth in participation of all ages, especially young girls/women, but also boys who went on to play at the national/international level.

In some cases the efforts of a builder, directed to benefit local children or the community through a particular organization, was found to be a resource that would benefit the community on a wider scale:

Greater connection between families in our village, and connection between the kids from the local English elementary school with the more distant French elementary school. Greater connection between the six villages.

A united (most times) sport community in the advocacy of facilities.

This sport is the only sport based on humanitarian reasons - To save a life - and it promotes general knowledge in water safety. Safer communities.

Greater awareness, positive image of our programs, growth, integration with the community.

Human and organizational capacity, community tradition.

In still other examples, the work of a builder or builders in one sport positively affected the work of another sport:

Much enhanced level of involvement in several sports. Significant growth has been accommodated.

Huge increase in the quality of soccer, football and field lacrosse development and competition facilities. The City has reduced the amount of play on fields which overlap with other field uses such as baseball and softball. This has enabled these groups to get on their diamonds earlier and with much better quality early season playing conditions. The City has also been able to reallocate former soccer fields to other field sports such as rugby and convert some former soccer fields in neighbourhood parks to more passive uses.

Thriving sport club which is a central focus for sport development in the community.

...a model organization

He has inspired countless volunteers to carry on his legacy in the little league organization and in organizations around Canada.

Soccer is THE community anchor in the spring and summer, taking over from cross-country which brings us together in the winter months

The leadership that is reported to emerge through the work of the builder is an inspiration to others in the organization who will not, of course, always remain in one

organization, but who are, or may subsequently become, active elsewhere. The lessons learned in sport, including leadership, are transferable, and one needs to go no further than the 'business' section of a bookstore to see the number of titles that use sport analogies. Much of leadership development today is, in fact, called 'coaching' for that reason. Survey comments that ascribed this type of leader to the builder included:

More, better athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers at participation and high performance levels. More physical activity. More kids learning a team sport in a community environment; Building community at not only the athlete level, but with the volunteers (i.e., parents) as well by providing an avenue with a common mission and strong community values.

A legacy of both facilities and of sports league organizations or teams. He was a role model for many individuals. (sometimes of "how not to behave"... but he did have "passion" for sport.) He has influenced all three municipalities in [our region] - building facilities, partnerships and networks. He was very well known as a coach as well, influencing young lives such as myself.

Huge, he has been able to support the development of coaches at all levels not just elite, and ensured, quality coaching is available for the youth, while ensuring those coaches involved are properly supported.

Healthy positive youth that are leaders for youth and positively impact the school and community

Hundreds of well trained, well supported referees, teams coached, games organized and an incredible role model for others. He is well known among parents and now, as he has been around for that long, among the young men who grew up in Boys' Soccer – he is a role model – I am sure some young men are now giving back to soccer because they see he is still out there volunteering

Respondents were sensitive to the impact of this certain type of volunteer to have an impact beyond a particular sport, in fact, even beyond sport. Respondents also realized the significance of building more than physical infrastructure or human organizations. Many social and community outcomes that extended beyond the direct contribution of the builder were identified.

Question #4 – “How does this individual stand out in terms of commitment?”

Probably the most effusive responses were provided for this question. The responses were varied and not easily categorized. The question intended to distinguish the builder from the 'run of the mill' volunteer. Most understood this and responded with qualifiers that serve as illustrations of the definition that I have given to the builder:

She is extremely committed. Retiring this year, she leaves a strong group of executive members who are taking over.

Visionary, relentless, well spoken, very highly respected by other community sport leaders, look to improve playing conditions for all field sport groups in the community, not just soccer. They had a very appealing business plan and they have exceeded their commitments made to the sport community and the City.

Totally committed and dedicated to working on sports related issues 24 /7 (he never shut up, especially on the side of a soccer field).

Invested in this organization, retirement is near but letting go will be very difficult, despite building a very strong club structure.

[He] achieved this major "build" by using methods of collaboration and consensus among all the sporting bodies in [our city].

His commitment is amazing. It is long and deep.

He is always in the background of important decisions but let others have the public stage. Working personally with many individuals in private informal atmospheres was his best asset along with his vision and ethics.

He always has time to mentor new members of any association. After his children left the sport he continued to share his knowledge and experiences to grow the sport. A real leader, who is totally committed to the sport.

Ongoing council participation. Influence at the field sport association level on front line issues. Sometimes this is positive and sometimes creates problems.

Goes to the meetings, does the follow up, lobbies effectively.

Strongly committed to all aspects of soccer development. He did not have any children in the programs, yet volunteered for over 15 years and participated in the club for 29 years.

Put in thousands of hours over many years to get the facility built, taking lots of frustration and abuse from those that should have been supportive, but instead made life difficult.

Her passion for community development around sport for all ages and abilities/disabilities builds integrated community networks across business, all levels of government, agencies and is inclusive of cultural and social diversity.

He fills many roles from the board of directors, to race director to hard working set up volunteer. He fundraises, he works with schools, he partners with other organizations.

The lifelong commitment which is athlete focused and requires a significant portion of time and energy. The commitment permeates all aspects of their life and becomes a large part of there identity.

He leads from the front when necessary, and from the side when that's required. He communicates. He takes informed decisions. He stays with an idea.

She passed away 5 years ago but, when still active, was well-know throughout the region for her tenacity in pursuing funding and in finding ways to support athletes. She was reliable, willing to assist in community events and considered a resource for sport information.

He was extremely persistent in following through on the dream....when one approach didn't work he moved on to another until something did work.

She has continued to develop our organization from a Provincial, Regional and Local level both in mentoring volunteers and in her own personal commitment.

In reading through these and other responses, I got the sense that the writers were nominating a candidate for an award of merit. Remembering that this was a survey of very busy people, the passion evident in the responses is a strong indicator of the level of admiration and respect, even though, as one writer pointed out, their builder's influence "sometimes creates problems", a reality that I deal with later.

Question #5 – “What has local government done to support the individual?”

This is the first question that invites self-reflection, implying that there is a role for local government in the support and encouragement of volunteers. Some municipal departmental mission statements and goals make this implicit. Therefore, the reader should be aware that responses to this question may be somewhat more generous in describing the supportive work of the municipality than might, in practice, be reported by the volunteers with whom they deal. This is, in fact, a question that was explored in the detailed interviews with the builders, and the responses there will indicate mixed reviews regarding municipal support.

Some of the responses to this question seem to betray a degree of cynicism, which may be an expression of frustration with their own organization. Some indicate a hint of defensiveness, and there were several that declined to answer this question, as was also the case for some with subsequent question regarding support from sport governing bodies.

Seventeen of the sixty-three responses (29%) indicated that the builder “got” what he or she was advocating for, presumably in the form of facilities or something that 'cost' the municipality something:

Financial support in the development of the facility.

Approved funding for the artificial turf field proposal and the 5 fields will be completed by Fall 2008.

Facilitated the development of a sport facility in the early 90's one of the first full time facilities in BC. They are now supporting a facility expansion.

Council support for most sport related initiatives. Significant capital investment in sport facilities.

The support has been targeted to development the facilities for the community and club

Hundreds of thousands of dollars were contributed by Council towards improvements at [the] Ball Park.

One response betrayed both grudging acquiescence and a sense of active non-cooperation on the part of the bureaucracy:

Not much, the Park Board eventually signed an agreement, but made [the builder] go through unreasonable hoops and made him feel like it was all for his self interest that he was doing this instead of understanding his selflessness in this effort. They continually referred to him [negatively] as a 'special interest' when he was trying to negotiate as much public good into the agreement as possible.

A similar number (18) of responses indicated that local government had taken an actively supportive role in the ongoing enabling of the builder in the volunteer task:

Have built sport into the city strategic plan.

Listened and learned, taken the advice, understood the goals and objectives, meshed philosophy.

As the face of the club, he knows local government people personally and can call on them anytime. They respect his opinion. He has met with them over the years to discuss and negotiate club projects and financing.

Local government appointed him to many positions within the committee structure and through the committee structure provided education, orientation, but most importantly an opportunity for participation in important policy decisions both on the boards and informally with decision makers.

Provided a venue in which he could get involved and be part of a broader sport related group: Sport Council. The Government provided financial support and professional staff for various meetings and projects. A way for sports related projects to be prioritized and forwarded into the Municipal Budgeting process.

[Our city] has a sports council that ensures sport users groups work together. I am sure this results in increased value for the hours each volunteer contributes.

[She] is often called upon [by the City] for advice and serves whenever called.

He has been appointed to Council advisory Committees to speak for sport & volunteers.

Eight responses indicated that local government had provided recognition of this volunteer's efforts in ways such as facility naming (3), and recognition awards (2). It is interesting that this is mentioned at all, particularly in light of surveys of volunteers which often indicate that special recognition is not desired, nor is it a motivator.

Eleven respondents indicated that local government had done “nothing” or “very little” to support the work of the builder that they had in mind, while ten were “unsure”, “did not know” or indicated that the question was not applicable to them. So for the majority of respondents, the municipality has been a positive partner in the endeavours of the sport builder. There does seem to be recognition, however, that there is room to do more, as responses to the final question indicate.

Question #6 – “What have the sport governing bodies done to support this individual?”

This question yielded fewer responses, only 22 of sixty, and these indicated that respondents from local government typically were less aware of the potential role of sport governing bodies in supporting local volunteers. Nevertheless, types of responses received revealed interesting differences that may be pertinent to the sport governing bodies when they consider their activities of their key, most committed volunteers.

Respondents reported a similar proportion of enabling-type support from sport governing bodies as performed by local government (27% and 26%, respectively). Three respondents either did not know or were unsure of the role of sport governing bodies in supporting the builder, and two rather ambiguously referred to factors, seemingly outside of the control of the provincial sport organization, that had actually made the builder’s volunteer task more difficult:

...sometimes they seem to find ways to make things more difficult for local organizations.

...increasing 'insurance rates' have made a sport that was quite accessible to all (a pair of boots and a stick were all that was needed), increasingly inaccessible for all but those with money.

In marked contrast to most responses to the local government question, three respondents took the opportunity to report, not support from the sport governing body, but from the wider organization.

The sport governing bodies elected him as president. So the question really should be what has he done to support the sport governing body? He provided his leadership and expertise to establish an organization that is well positioned to provide high performance athletes and a solid foundation for recreational play.

The question doesn't fit given that he and the sport governing body are one and the same, which is not to say that he owns it. Rather, his imprint is all over it. And now others carry the sport governing body forward in a similar way.

Regionally, she had a seat at the Board table for a multi-sport organization providing a wide range of services to athletes and coaches; provincially, she held positions on the Board and other organizations I do not have information on. She was frequently asked (by the provincial body) to serve in key roles for major multi-sport events being hosted in her community.

Some builders were reported to have had some impact on local government when asked to give input on policies or sit on committees. Perhaps the most common equivalent to the examples cited above occurs at the local level when the builder runs for their city council or school board. These cases, too, would be indicators of builders using their influence, on a different scale, to ‘give back to the community’, as the builders interviewed for this paper put it.

Question #7 – “What else could be done to support this work in the future?”

The most important question in this survey was “What else could be done to support this work in the future?” Sensing that this is where ‘the rubber meets the road’, responses to this question were the least ambiguous and the most pointed, as if this was an opportunity to advocate for the volunteer and to promote active enabling (that will be discussed more fully in the final section which discusses implications for policy and practice). This was also the question with the fewest proportion of responses of “don’t know” or “unsure” (four). In all, sixty-six suggestions were made (a few respondents had more than one idea). The thought and consideration given in response to this question was impressive, especially since it was the last item of the survey. Some responses were very specific, including:

Letters of support and have booked provincial and national championships and elite training camps on the new fields.

Funding for his dream of an indoor facility...

Training and equipping volunteers to be effective and efficient in their roles was frequently identified as an opportunity for local government or sport governance to encourage participation by volunteers and to build community capacity:

More dollars/human resources spent on community sport volunteer development so that provincial sport organizations can produce more volunteer leaders at all levels within their various levels of governance. More partnerships (from community to provincial to national) who work together to create leadership learning/training opportunities for community volunteers.

Professional development course and tools easily available and accessible (time is the big issue).

Recognition in professional field the value of dedicated volunteer time. Review duplication of services of bureaucratic organizations. Pooling of resources and administration by one body.

Using this model of facilities development as a “Case Study” for other individuals, clubs, districts and cities to assist in strategies for their own facilities.

Internally, we could refer individuals to these local contacts more often.

Succession planning, that is, ensuring smooth leadership transition, was identified by a few as an important aspect of training and equipping the ‘next’ leadership that would obviously and inevitably be needed at some future point to ‘fill the shoes’ of these builders, a point which is also identified later in the interviews with individuals who had been identified by others as having held this type of role:

...if he was still alive we could have helped with developing succession planning to develop ‘new’ sport leaders in the community. A way to carry the torch onward. There seems to be a big gap now that many of the old sports leaders have passed on. New leaders and ‘Builders’ to fill their shoes.

Assist with transition of work to new board members. This person is not good with delegation and tends to do it herself instead of relinquishing control. When presidents like these step down they leave a big void that may be difficult to replace.

[The husband and wife team] will need an influx of twenty- or thirty-something volunteers to succeed them as they approach retirement age and will want to start succession planning.

Another component to enabling the builder that was identified were a number of specific support mechanisms, usually identified in terms of physical and human resources such as clerical assistance and photocopying, that were perceived as necessary to maximize the work of the builder (and presumably, volunteers in general):

Develop an empowered municipal Sports Council to provide a voice for all community sports groups.

Resource centre, info sharing, best practices, speaking engagements.

Identification of Community or Regional Foundations that could through grants, support the club. Establishment of an Endowment or City Trust for Sport based on a percentage of land and property value levied against developers – who by bringing more people into the community put a strain on existing facilities and the capacity of clubs to provide programs and services to members.

Partnership in bringing or directing benefactors to support the club.

Having staff in place as community builder that support community members i.e. grant application, resources, meeting space etc.

Engage in more communication, provide services in kind, seed money.

Probably access to more potential volunteers – the [City] has recently hired a volunteer coordinator – I am not sure if this person will work with parks/sports

volunteers but anything that matches potential volunteers with the training they need to get involved and the support they need to stay involved is always a huge help. In [the builder's] case, I think personal contact is a key – he is a guy who is able to motivate and interest people – his excitement and commitment to the game are 'catching'

I don't think he would want recognition necessarily....certainly not for him personally, but I think he would appreciate cities and municipalities being more supportive of organized sport.

Recognition in meaningful ways i.e. help the volunteer achieve the goals they have, not just a decoration

As if to underscore the rationale for supporting and encouraging community volunteers who take on large responsibilities over extended periods of time, several respondents (nine) suggested the need of general appreciation and respect for the work of the builder:

Understanding and appreciation for the value of what they are trying to achieve.

Recognition in professional field the value of dedicated volunteer time.

The community hero needs to be respected and supported as the highest priority when allocating resources.

Sport Governing Bodies could attempt to understand local infrastructure better....occasionally decisions are made which have a significant impact on facilities and the expectation is that we will simply make it work.

A close corollary to showing respect and appreciation is the response of paying attention to what the builder has to say. This echoes much of what appears in the community development literature and confirms the inter-personal nature of the relationship between the volunteer builder and the public official, as expressed here by respondents:

Listen when he speaks, including him in documents such as the Recreation Master Plan, Chair of Recreation Commissions, and on the Program/Design Committee for the new complex.

Ensure that others are hearing his message, as it is not always about the glory, rather, there is a need for those individuals who tirelessly work with others behind the scene.

One of the difficulties that volunteers face in this type of advocacy and input is misunderstandings with staff. This goes both ways. Staff are the professionals responsible for the work and frequently consider outsiders as threats to their 'expertise'. Without doubt, staff waiting for meetings and outside input to form delays and inhibits some staff work. On the other side volunteers can often see their work as paying lip service or acting as rubber stamps. A lot of time has to be devoted to criteria and understandings of the various roles.

Finally, there were ten responses that called for public recognition of the work of builders. A few of these recommendations to recognize and award these volunteers took on a more deliberate tone as a response to this question, again, seemingly to underscore the enduring significance of which actions could be taken to further the aims, goals and work of the builder:

They need to be recognized for their achievements outside of individual communities.

Sport BC and the Provincial government could recognize sport leaders who are at the core of the sport movement.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM SURVEY RESPONSES

By the number and content of responses received, it appears that the research question selected for this project is reasonably well-founded and that my starting definition of the role of the builder is provisionally adequate as a means for pursuing my intended purpose.

The recognition of the extent and value of builders' contributions is slightly tempered, however, by some apparent difficulty on the part of sport professionals in seeing beyond the direct task performed by these volunteers. While this may be a consequence of some deficiency within the questions posed, I am led to wonder if the respondents possibly may not be looking for the 'ripple effects' of volunteer efforts, and, thereby, perhaps missing opportunities to recognize and even magnify those impacts.

There appears to be little knowledge or awareness among sport governance officials and municipal officials of the roles played by builders in each others 'camp'. This is a cursory observation based on few responses, and the questions were not explicitly worded to elicit that awareness. But, if it is common, then it may serve as a warning of the need to consider a volunteer's other commitments, which may help to avoid burnout.

The overall sense that emerges from the survey responses is that of a strong interest in, admiration of, and respect for the work of the builder. The notion of the bureaucrat as the expert and members of the public as recipients of services is quite absent from this general recognition of the important relationship of bureaucrats with this key volunteer who so often effects positive social outcomes.

The last word from the surveys belongs to a respondent who captures the essence of the builder succinctly:

I believe that these types of individuals are typically like the rarely recognized songwriters of huge musical hits. They are providing the framework that facilitates success. The best way to support them is to ensure that they are in positions where their experience can play a role in setting the future paths for their area of passion.

INTERVIEWS – FOUR BUILDERS

The survey of parks, recreation and sport professions was the point of departure for what would form the most important part of this research. The survey served three purposes: testing a provisional working definition of the builder, confirming and informing my understanding of the research question, and, ultimately providing an opportunity to meet with a selection of volunteers who were previously not known to me.

Because I was concerned about the amount of time it would take busy administrators to complete a survey form, to ensure a better rate of responses, I kept the number of questions to a minimum and sought only brief written responses. My follow up interviews with individual builders was, in consequence, somewhat of a 'shot in the dark'. I proceeded on the basis that the professionals who had responded to my survey understood the questions that I had posed and that the volunteer builder I would, as a result, ask to meet would, in fact, be the types of persons I was hoping to interview.

Interview candidates were selected on the basis of the 'story' about them that was briefly outlined in the survey to parks and recreation and sport officials. I decided to pursue examples of leadership in different sports, including both team and individual sports. As noted previously, for convenience of research I focused on volunteers in the Metro Vancouver area. I also decided to seek interviews with people whom I did not know, to hopefully minimize my own preconceptions of them and their achievements. This also gave me an opportunity to inquire into the builder's relationship with local government departments.

I deliberately chose not to know more about the volunteers that was described in the survey in order to take on the subjects 'as they were'. Before meeting the four builders whom I introduce here, I knew only their names and genders. I did not have any details concerning age, marital status, or profession/employment. I was anxious (both in terms of anticipation and uncertainty) to test my contention about the existence of this volunteer type, and so proceeded on the assumption that my counterparts in other communities were thinking along the same lines as I and would report experiences similar to my own. The four individuals introduced here turned out to be more different from one another than could have been deliberately planned.

The in-depth interviews that I conducted were much like oral career histories that placed the individual's significant past involvement in sport alongside events in the community. The questions that formed the basis of all of the in-depth interviews may be found in Appendix B. The interviews were each no more than one-hour in length, and were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Illustrative quotations from these interviews have been used to provide specific cases and illustrate certain characteristics that the research question is seeking to uncover. Longer quotations have been used in order to best convey speakers' voices. Typical editorial devices have been employed only to increase readability and flow (i.e., periods, paragraph insertions, parentheses). Any editorial asides that I considered necessary for clarity have been included in square brackets [].

All names have been changed in accordance with the requirements of the University's Ethics policy.

What is clear for each of these four individuals is that they did not deliberately set out to become community leaders. Sport leadership was not a conscious choice, but in each case a response to a need that they perceived, first in respect to members of their own families, and then beyond the immediate interests and involvement of family members. Community leadership was also not apparently pursued as a stepping stone to a professional or political career.

What surprised me was just how much this level of volunteerism 'cost' these individuals, in actual out-of-pocket expenses or in the sacrifice of potential earnings. In one case personal income was clearly not an issue, but in others, it most definitely was. In two of the cases, the builders developed a sense of obligation to be involved in other significant volunteer activity in the community. In both cases, they recounted the existence of 'pressure' from within this volunteering involvement to take on other roles.

Builder #1 – Gord*¹

By all accounts, ('Gord') is a very successful, fast-moving and high-powered business leader in a large municipality. Because of the high profile nature of the results of his work, (although he himself was unknown to me as an outsider to his sport) I have also altered identification of his sport and the major sport facility he developed, which

¹ As noted, not his actual name

according to both the survey respondent who initially identified him and his volunteer colleague whom I also interviewed, Gord accomplished practically single-handedly.

(‘Eric’)² is a volunteer recruited by Gord as a teenager twenty years ago and who evidently fulfilled the role of ‘right-hand man’, a ‘partner in crime’ that seems to be commonplace among leaders of Gord’s calibre. When the builder was defined for him, Eric said, “as you were talking, images came into my mind of salty old bastards who are a pain in the neck but absolutely essential to the local [sport] program”. Eric indicated that Gord fit this category. Eric’s comments will be interjected in the following narrative, although he and Gord were interviewed separately.

Gord recounted the beginnings of his extended involvement in community sports:

I started out with my children obviously, my two daughters, and I started out being a coach. I had a great time coaching. I spent thousands of hours coaching. I started in 1981 with the [the local league]. I was coach the first year and I became the president in 1982. The fellow in charge, there was only seven teams, it was too much work, and the league was going to fold so somebody had to take over. My wife went to the meeting and volunteered me to be president. By 1984 there were 113 teams. I went to schools and advertised to promote the sport in the [local] area. We delivered flyers to all the elementary schools and junior highs and high schools. [The sport] was coming of age in the community. The population exploded afterward. It [had been] the best kept secret in town.

I’m a businessman, and there’s no use complaining about something, so you do something about it. So from coaching I went to being the league president, and from there I went to be on the board of [a provincial sport organization] as the minor (kids) program director, and then I became VP Finance. I became VP, but I was never the president. During that time I was the Director in charge of building [a major facility]. (Says Eric, “He quickly moved into leadership positions because he always saw a need but he never wanted to schmooze. At one point he was the de facto president of [the provincial body] when his title was VP.”)

As my kids got older and they moved up into the junior and senior ranks, and as several of my players had tryouts with the Canadian Olympic team, and because they had nowhere to play and their funding was low, I came up with the idea of starting [an international tournament], which has become the largest and most popular in the world, and I’m still there today. My kids are long retired, 13 years.

The beginnings of a builder’s career appear to be prompted by factors experienced by most volunteers: they became involved because their kids got involved in one or another sport. Gord’s rapid rise to club presidency was unusual, but came about because he was ‘asked’. In spite of “being volunteered”, he was clearly willing to respond to an appeal for him specifically to step in. In this sense there is nothing unusual

² As noted, not his actual name

about Gord's experience. What is unusual is the scope and scale of Gord's commitment once he got started. Eric adds this explanation:

He was so committed to his projects and clubs that he committed his own resources, sometimes sending his staff out to schools with flyers. It's one of the reasons that the league grew from 100 to 1,000 [players] under his leadership.

The drive and determination that led Gord to build several unusually successful businesses was evidently transferred to community sport. Although there may be a tendency to think of great leaders in isolation, it is true that no one can make significant progress alone. So I was curious to learn from each of the builders whom I interviewed what 'special' relationships with co-volunteers they had experienced. Gord's recall of pivotal characters was immediate.

[T]here was another coach of an older team who was a businessman as well. He was absolutely fantastic in the growth; he had "gray matter". He took over all the equipment. I had an RCMP officer who had a daughter who was playing who really came to the table, and we built a pretty good infrastructure of parents who were doers. We went out and got coaches, we started putting on [skills] clinics with professional-type, qualified pitching people and instructors who could take the kids further than, to a level that, we were capable of... It was always a bit trying from seven coaches to find 113 people that would want to be coach, but we worked hard at it.

The ability to form a team of 'doers' was significant for the success of this builder, but it meant that he had to get along with other volunteers. The community-level builder toils in relative obscurity, even within his or her own community. It is doubtful that Gord is well known outside of his community, and it is even possible that he is not that well known inside his community, aside from those he directly connected with through his involvement in sport. It is likely that most players and their parents are also largely unaware of his work. Therefore, at the local level, the builder must be more of a bridge-builder: hence the reliance on key fellow volunteers. But how far does the builder have to go in 'making nice' in order to get work done? Apparently, according to Gord, not too far:

My leadership style is tough, I'm a perfectionist. I can be cantankerous. A lot of people won't sit in the same room as me, because they say I intimidate them. But I don't intimidate people knowingly. If I do it, I don't know it. If they're afraid of me, I don't know why. I'm only tough and cantankerous when things don't go smoothly.

In spite of presenting a strong character, Gord indicated that there were some volunteers as well as employees of his companies who had been with him for many years. Eric confirmed this:

He was ahead of his time. He often saw things that most people could not. He spent a lot of political capital [Gord was apparently active politically, though behind the scenes, which will become clear later in this account] to achieve what he envisioned. He often went out on a limb. He was tireless when he gets in mind what he wants to do. He'll listen to the naysayers for a bit, but when he's determined it's the right move, he goes for it. He hasn't been active in the [minor] organization for seven years, but two Executive meetings don't go by without reference to his vision. I say to volunteers who sometimes challenge his views that you can do it this way, or go away. Gord referred to it as a "benevolent dictatorship".

His influence on me has been huge. As for his leadership and management style, he has high expectations on his volunteers, but he has high expectations of himself as well. He doesn't ask a volunteer to do anything that he hasn't already done himself. There were times when we would be planning an event late into the night and he's sent me home after we'd agreed to reconvene early in the morning. We'd meet the next day and it would be obvious that he stayed up for hours later the night before, writing memos, and sending faxes about the things we had agreed about that day. There were many times when we would send volunteers home because it was late and then stay behind to finish up. We have always had a very high volunteer retention rate. He always makes the event that we're working on an exciting thing to be involved in. He expects volunteers to treat the job like a job. He expects that of himself.

Yet neither Gord nor the volunteers he recruited got paid for their work. The ethic for being involved in the community was based on Gord's previous family and youth sport experience:

I was an elite soccer player; my dad coached me until I was 18 or 19. I played baseball, every sport there was, and no matter what I did, my father was always there. I played soccer up till I was about 23. When I had children I felt that I had to support them like my father supported me. Of course they started at a pretty young age, my youngest was five, so when my time came to assist my children, both my wife and I stepped in. I coached a boy's team in 1966, 10 and 12 year olds; we won the Fraser Valley championships. I was 20, the community came to me because I had come up through the ranks and I was a well-known soccer player. I did that two seasons.

The transition from player to coach (before he had children of his own) was a preview of the 'be asked to fill a need and do it' style that later figured in his transition from coach to president. This represented an unlikely awareness for a 20-year-old, but Gord brought it out when prompted to reflect upon his previous sport involvement. "You're making me remember stuff that I had forgotten I had done", was a comment he made during the interview.

[What keeps me involved] is the need. The Canadian athlete needs the event. It gives the athlete in Canada from here to Halifax the opportunity to be seen at a high profile venue and without it Canada wouldn't have the ability or the funding to bring all the best athletes to one area at one time. So I guess I'm not obligated, but I feel that in the best interests of the sport that the event has to go on. I said that this year would be the last year, but the world talked me out of it.

For Gord there was evidently more to it than being asked – in each of his roles, he indicated that he was responding to something that he perceived as a need. Some might think it far-fetched to equate it to a crisis response, but community-level sport can elicit strong passions and loyalties in people who have experienced it.³ For Gord, the need for a coach to step forward became apparent as a 20-year-old. Later, with the prospect of a youth league folding, he became president. Still later, he developed and still maintains a tournament because of “the need”.

Gord’s relationship with the City was “super”:

I took to them many ideas. I sold them on [the facility]. The [City] wasn’t as big then. They weren’t as financially sound as they are today and a lot of facilities weren’t there. The Parks and Recreation Commission were on my side from the minute I made the proposal.

Gord went on to describe how his relationship was built. Around the same time as he was proposing the new facility, a major multi-sport provincial ‘Games’ tournament was being planned. Gord had accepted a position on the Board of Directors. “It was probably because of me haunting them [with the facility proposal] that I got the [Games] job. I’d better not say no, right?” His involvement was significant, especially when the Board structure fell apart the day before opening ceremonies. Gord used his business contacts and influence to save the day.

By four hours into Day 1 I was running the whole show. If you were to go to the [Games CEO] he would tell you that I personally saved the Games. I won’t say that, but that’s what he would say. He and I lived together for 72 hours let me tell you. We pulled it off without anybody knowing – it was all in the background. The lady from Facilities in Parks and Recreation who was working with the Organizing Committee came up to me afterward and said “it was a pleasure working with a true professional”. I never forgot that. I mean, I hadn’t really thought about what I had done. Probably from that I gained a lot of respect from the local Parks and Recreation department.

The relating of this experience caused me to wonder if a citizen’s ‘worth’ to a City dictates how much influence that person can exert in the future. Whether or not this question can be answered in principle or in practice, there appears to be connection in Gord’s mind. There was clearly some suggestion that Gord needed to ‘pay his dues’.

The possibility of a ‘give to get’ approach becomes complicated when an apparently good and reasonable proposal comes from a group or individual that is not respected, or worse, when a poorly thought out proposal comes from a well-liked and

³ One only has to look as far as Starbuck’s cup No. 52 in The Way I See It series, which says “Give me world politics, gender politics, party politics, or small-town politics ... I’ll take them all over the politics of youth sports,” a quip attributed to Everett City, WA, Councillor Brenda Stonecipher.

popular local organization or representative. Respect, worth, tenure, influence (e.g., political/business connections) may not be a significant factor, or be seen to factor in decisions made by Council, but there are many ways that an initiative or proposal can be advanced or held back, supported or frustrated, at the staff level. This remains an open question suggesting that a municipal department staff can, if they wish to do so, address application and processing procedures, including how public input is made. It also raises that matter of what members of the public need to know in order to advance a proposal successfully. Is the playing field level?

Gord was fortunate to have a supportive Parks and Recreation department to work with, and he knew it. Still, there are limits to how far a staff group can assist.

The bureaucrats were on my side, the actual people in-house. With Council I was often in turmoil with them. I guess you could say I'm a right-wing person and right wing people don't get along very well with left-wing people in government and I was a known supporter of the right wing of the area, both provincially and locally. The staff stayed outside [of the politics] but...I obviously had to do some lobbying and try to get some left-wingers on my side. I was able to keep the ball rolling, but it wasn't easy. [Provincially, a Social Credit government was] in power when I started to build it, there was a right wing portion of Council at the time. In 1990 the NDP took over and all hell broke loose and they did everything they could to get it stopped, in the midst of construction.

Gord's experience with sport governance was similar to his relationship to local government, except that, consistent with the survey responses, the response of the provincial body was to bring the builder on board, literally.

[The PSO] was very supportive of everything I recommended to them, including the [post-secondary] program. I was elected/appointed to be the Director responsible for building [the facility which the PSO then operated] I had the total support of the Directors.

When asked what advice he would give to a bureaucrat in local government or in sport, Gord responded,

Work with'em. I mean, you gotta know who you're with. It's no different than business, some people come up with the god damndest ideas, and maybe they go about it the wrong way and they need help getting on track. I was either lucky or stupid, but I'd do it again.

One of my ideas was to have Christmas dinner. A lot of kids playing softball that couldn't afford fees. We helped them. It was because of them that brought the idea to my head to have a Christmas function for the community on Christmas Eve. I was told that was ridiculous. I said well when do you want to have it? The week before? Is that Christmas to you? Christmas is Christmas. The closest thing to Christmas Day is Christmas eve. I don't think I can get volunteers on Christmas Day, but I think I can on Christmas Eve. 'You'll never get them – nobody's going to give up their Christmas Eve'. Well we had more volunteers than people. It carries on today and it's still a [club] event started because of

people in the organization who weren't going to have a very good Christmas, how's that?

Builder #2 – Colleen

('Colleen') is a 50-something administrator of a community sport club that leases public recreation facility space in a mid-sized municipality. Colleen joined the small, 30-player club in the late 1970's as a paid coach shortly after it was established. The club now has a membership of 4,500, is considered one of the two leading clubs in the province and recently was recognized by the national sport organization for its success, by all accounts mostly attributable to Colleen's work. Colleen receives a salary, but the reason for including her in a study focusing on volunteer builders will quickly become apparent. Her children were never involved in the club.

I originally got into it [volunteering] as a kid, because my parents were always doing stuff. I belonged to [a service club] as a teenager that wasn't sports oriented but it was [about] giving back to the community. In the late 60's group stuff like that, clubs, was a big thing, a huge social thing, and of course being part of that meant you were doing stuff, giving back to the community, it was just something we did.

[My parents] didn't do much but they were active I think a lot of volunteering is coming from family roots, look at the kids now - if your parents are giving back to the community or doing something or volunteering their time, they're going to encourage their kids to do it. It's something that's really important and I think it's missing right now.

When I was at university just coming from that group thing, being part of an organization, at [university] I traveled as an exchange student, and part of the commitment was to organize the exchange program the following year for the kids coming here, which was really great, because this was organized student to student.

I went through teaching in Phys Ed and wound up teaching [locally]. My major was PE and that's what I really wanted to do but I was stuck that year, new teacher, new person on the block doing a multitude of stuff, and I ended up hating it. But I had a group of kids come to me that year asking if I would start a sport club. They had come from a junior high school which had a big sport program.

At that point I hadn't realized that it was a sport, and as much as I enjoyed doing what I now know as sport at that time I didn't know it was something you could join, and it wasn't until I took it up at university that I really fell in love with it and of course at that point I figured I'm too late to do it, but I could coach it, and that I'd like to be involved with it somehow, though I never had any goals or ambitions as to how I was going to do it. And so when these kids came to me and said we've got a little bit of equipment can you start a sport club, I said sure, but you'll have to help me, too, because I have very limited information or knowledge of the sport, but I'm willing to grow with it. And so they introduced me to the teacher that was at the junior high and she had done so much with it, and so we went there and trained with her after school and then I took her job the next year so of

course I could continue. So we ran a sport competition for all the elementary schools in [the city] and I really enjoyed doing it. I like the interaction of people. It certainly wasn't in your job description and it wasn't something I had to do, but I liked it.

The role played by her parents and a sport mentor were clearly pivotal to Colleen's ability to respond to the request of her students. Colleen's growth in the sport was incremental: "She [the other teacher] was teaching me and the kids and it just developed, and my life in sport, and family, became the rest of what I did."

That '79 and we had 30 kids then. Neither of us were doing it because we wanted a job, She was doing it to help fund her university, now she was out of school and she had gone on to form a very successful company with her husband, so we were both doing it really for the love of the sport. It wasn't actually until we incorporated into a Society in '89 when we thought we'd better put our act together and hire coaches and pay people and do things properly. [As a paid Coordinator], I pay everyone else better than me, because they're the ones doing it as a career, [and] it's not important to me. The Board hires me and I hire everybody else.

When the club suffered a serious setback due to building damage, Colleen found herself at the door of the City in a way that had not been necessary up to that point.

Colleen described her relationship with the municipality as:

...hot and cold, but mostly cold, confrontational, sometimes cooperative, it depends on what I'm asking them for. I like to do [things] from a more cooperative point of view and I think since 2002 I have done more in the community than I did before (outside of sport) and I think that has helped sport, too, because they are beginning to see that maybe it's not selfish, I'm not asking for me, I'm asking for a bigger group of people and I think that's been recognized. Since the fire we had to get more profile, and I had always been intending to go the business association meetings and the Chamber of Commerce lunches and I just never [previously] made the time to go, and [now] I absolutely had to go and so I did that and I found it very enjoyable and I found it really good to be out in the community and market [the sport club].

While there is clearly a benefit for all concerned in Colleen's increased community involvement (she is also Chair of the local Sport Hall of Fame committee), there is at least a hint of necessity behind her deliberateness to move out into the community more (i.e., "I absolutely had to go"). In terms of municipal support, Colleen remarked "you need to feel like you're being heard and that your ideas are appreciated and I haven't necessarily felt that...and from a confrontational point of view..."

At this point it is worthwhile to quote Colleen at length, because the "confrontational point of view" was clearly a sore point and one that she did not care to recall much less talk about, and it provides a valuable insight into the strength of character required to be a builder, but also illustrates by way of a negative example how

this could have been better handled by the City. Her story is reminiscent of an account offered by a survey respondent whose identified builder had experienced extreme frustration in another municipality close to Colleen's.

[Ten years ago], after having contributed \$300,000 to the construction of the [new] recreation centre and receiving free rent for five years, I get this quarter-page letter saying 'your rent will be \$60,000 a year, starting [immediately] and it's going to Council in the form of a bylaw and you got until such-and-such a date to respond' [the date being] three days away. You've gotta be kidding? Where did they ever think we could come up with \$60,000 a year to pay in rent? I was so livid. Nobody pays that, sport doesn't pay that. All he did was take the \$300,000 and divide it by the five years to come up with sixty. And then to say this is non-negotiable! Needless to say, we didn't pay it, we got it down to \$1,000 a month. But why should I have to go through the anguish of a year and a half [of negotiations] to come down to paying \$10,000 a year? I don't even like to relate [that story] to people because it is so negative. Because we are doing something successful that they are not? We're not paying people like you're paying, we're not unionized, our staff will actually take out the garbage, you know.

So after our 10-year lease expired, [once again] it took a long time, but the negotiating ended up to be fine. It wasn't easy. In the first meeting, they were really rude to me, it was, like, rude. They said "this is what you have to pay, this is what we're been told, end of meeting. It was [pause] awful. I remember coming back in here saying "you don't treat other people like that". It was our Chair our Past Chair and myself who did the negotiation and I was just livid. There were some meetings that I just had to leave, they were so bad, they were so one-sided, so I mean they [the Chair and Past Chair] just drilled them [the City] down, but you just shouldn't have to do that. You know, right from the beginning you should come at it from "this is what we need this is what you need, OK, how are we going to get there". In the end our rent is fair; this place isn't costing parks and rec anything. The rate was pulled right down to what we felt we could afford.

I have a 1½" binder on this. Why can't we sit down and talk about 'what are your needs?' This is how you negotiate – this is what [the City] needs and this is what we need and then you come to a compromise. But it's not about our needs it's not feeling like they're listening to us, it's all about what they have to have, and whoever is the person that they're sending to talk about this, they're either not the person that is making any kind of decision, they're only the person that is being told to tell us, and so you sit at a meeting and basically it's a canned speech you're getting and, you know, I think people deserve better than that. I mean, this is a lot for a club to have your rent quadrupled and you really think we're just going to say "OK" and write you a cheque? Why? Why do you need that? In sport in [this City], they have a budget they have to meet, I totally understand that, but it doesn't seem fair to individual sports that they have to pay more than team sports and most individual sport require something, like an indoor facility [that costs rent] whereas [outdoor] team sports get their fields for free. I don't think that just because we pay so much in rent that soccer players should have to, I think it should be the other way 'round – if you're going to subsidize soccer players and mow their grass and put in artificial turf, so you should for the indoor facilities. There should be equality and I don't think there is, and I don't think we're the only city that has that [problem].

As a staff person whose work in the club is recognized as transcending her paid position, a quasi-volunteer in a sense, Colleen is nevertheless limited in the influence

she can have on the development and recruitment of the club's board. How she has adapted is illustrative of the intricacies of local volunteer board management.

I think just aligning yourself with people that are going to help, obviously having a good board is important and I think this coming year we have a good Board; We'll have some weak people on it, including the Chair. So over the summer I like to meet to get the planning done, so I had some [unofficial] meetings and I put the agenda together myself, and I'll have to give some thought about this because now that we're back in the fall I have to hand this back to [the Chair] but I felt that there was a little bit more excitement on the Board because there was an agenda that had more action items on it and people could really put their hands on something they had to do, with minutes that followed right away and there was action and the next meeting you actually followed up on the actions. People actually liked that and they were responding better to that. I ran the meetings and stayed tight to the agenda and got ideas flowing. You know if ideas happen and somebody actually follows through on those ideas, it's gonna be good.

And then every year we have a board/staff meeting and that's very good. They get to hear directly from the staff, not just me. I think if [board member enthusiasm] starts to fall off again, I'll pull another meeting like that again, they hear energy from them and it's contagious, energy is contagious. Laziness is contagious [too], so you want to keep the energy flowing.

In a manner that sounds like Eric's description of Gord, the leader of this ad-hoc Board was able to instill a passion and drive that was, as she put it "contagious".⁴

Builder #3 – Mary

After fifteen years, ('Mary'), now 68 years old, has recently stepped down from all involvement in a small semi-rural community's minor sport association. Most of Mary's involvement occurred after her two sons left the sport, and during all that time she worked full-time with a long daily commute to the big city. Although not a single parent while a 'sport mom', Mary's spouse did not appear to be at all involved in getting their sons to games and practices. Under Mary's quiet and sometimes behind-the-scenes leadership, the local sport organization has grown from a shaky foundation to a stable organization that has produced high performance players, some of whom have proceeded to college scholarships, and minor and major leagues.

⁴ This is clearly indicative of the saying attributed to professional coach Tom Hansen, PhD: "An organization cannot out perform the constraints of its leadership".

From the outset Mary made it clear that she was “in it for the kids”. Her sons had transitioned from soccer to this sport and Mary was amazed at the level of disorganization during registration. Without being asked, the next year, Mary ran for registrar and being successful (not surprising, since this is a very unpopular job) Mary made significant changes to procedures, greatly easing the time-consuming, albeit familiar Canadian scene of pre-dawn registration line-ups.

Registration difficulties were not the only problems plaguing the organization. According to the municipal recreation manager who ‘nominated’ Mary in the survey, the club executive was dysfunctional: argumentative, ruled by majority, factional, and frequently in arrears. Elected members clearly acted in self-interest (i.e., to the advantage of their own children). Mary confirmed this by stating “I hated going to those meetings”.

In her role as registrar, a philosophy emerged for Mary that would characterize her approach to leadership. She made sure that finances would not be a barrier to participation. “Mistakes of the parents are not the kid’s problem”, Mary states, referring to parents whose lifestyle choices or employment failures (or both) leave little income for so-called non-essentials. Mary would negotiate payment plans and several times paid some children’s registration fees out of her own pocket. “I never made the club pay for that – if my husband only knew!” After serving ten years as registrar, Mary became president and served four years before handing over leadership to a new president, “who I like very much – he thinks the way I do”, and stepping down to the treasurer role in order to “wean myself and let the younger people come in and have their hand at it”. Mary then shadowed the new registrar who she had encouraged to take on the role to make sure she wouldn’t quit”.

Mary continued with her leadership role after her sons had left the club. She did not assume the top position until after her sons had left the club. At no time had Mary assumed a position that would invite criticism or suspicion of manipulation in order to benefit her sons’ participation in the sport.

Somewhat unusually for builders, Mary did not have a family history of civic engagement or volunteering. An only child, her parents both worked, leaving Mary to be raised by a grandmother who “taught me lots of things. She taught me to ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you’, but do it to them first”. This is clearly an ethic of

giving that stuck, and while Mary did not consider herself a “strong person”, at the end of the interview she did allow that “being raised an only child does I guess make you pretty strong and self-reliant”. Only as a side comment did Mary mention that her self-reliant trait was also forged by being the only “bread-winner” of the household with a 35-year career in office management at a major big-city engineering firm, which required her to devote close to two hours of commuting daily.

My kids started playing sport, but to begin with they did soccer but kept saying ‘mom, we wanna do [this new sport]’, so we went with it, go with the flow for the first year or so, then I thought, ‘why do we have to line up for hour after hour just to pay for registration?’ Everyone fighting in the lineup I thought that there must be a better way, and that’s how it started. There was some dissent on the Executive and as you know there is an AGM once a year, and we went and I decided to run for Registrar and I made it in, and the first thing I did was say, we’re not having line-ups, did everything by mail-in and also developed pre-registration to fairly establish teams [in time for the season start].

I was there for the kids, not just my kids but all the kids. I have a real passion for kids, right? Also I didn’t believe that the mistakes of the parents should be the fault of the kids and that’s basically where it started.

Mary had what I would consider a strong philosophical base or approach to children’s sport that appeared to be a catalyst for her involvement as a volunteer, and most certainly guided her steps in finding “a better way”, as she put it.

I was registrar from ’93 to ’02 and then I was president for 4½ years and then Treasurer for 2½ years and now I’m nothing.

[On leaving the role of president], I think it’s time to let the younger people come in, you’ve created some programs. I would do anything to let a child play sport, work out a 10-month payment plan; I would do anything, if people were short of money I’d even pay out of my own pocket. I paid more money out of my own pocket for this organization if anybody knew they’d die, especially my husband, but that’s just the way it was. I would never charge [the organization] for a thing.

Then I thought, “what can I do to make these kids better”? We’re so small, the other communities in our District have 1,000 kids each, we have 350, and our kids always lose. So let’s start a [pre-season training] program so they’d be ready for evaluation. It was a huge success, so we started a conditioning camp, and we brought in [a local player] from the Chicago Black Hawks and a couple of local kids who have gone to the [semi-professional] League, so the kids could see that if you work hard, this is what you could achieve.

I was about the kids. They would argue but I would always say ‘take a look at the kids’ and ‘think about it’, ‘well what’s a better way of doing it, let’s come up with a better way, you don’t like my way what’s a better way’. Some things didn’t always work, I wanted to hire someone to do [player] evaluations because even

though I knew this kid was better than that kid, the marks were [fixed] because it was the parents in the same division, grading their own kids and saying 'you give that kid a low mark and I'll give yours a high mark', and that's not right. Well, I lost that one...the other thing I could never get across was that the "rep" [high performance] coaches should be coaching our house [league] kids, because they're the better coaches, right? Not being knowledgeable about sport, the "rep" kids are already better athletically.

When asked how she developed her philosophy concerning the importance of quality coaching for the lower skill levels, Mary said "I don't know – it's just common sense, because you have to be there for all the kids, it's not golf, where it's an individual sport, they're all a group of kids and you have to do what's best for all the kids, right?"

Mary espoused a strong philosophy that accompanied her values of "I'm in it for the kids". She believed that players in this small rural association were not getting enough playing time, particularly practice time. Mary was unaware that this philosophy had gained prominence on the national stage several years later in hockey at an Ice Summit led by Wayne Gretzky.

Mary's leadership style was quite different from those of the other builders whom interviewed.

In the beginning I hardly said a word because it was so cliquey, and there was arguing and, I can't describe it, I used to hate the meetings it was so argumentative, and eventually at an AGM somebody would drop out and somebody else would step up to the plate. Yeah, we went through some tough times. When I first became president, I forget the terminology when you ask somebody to leave, but it was like that, [we'd say] if you don't voluntarily leave we'll impeach you. Because when you have the Executive, there's eleven of us and we have to have consensus, have to be able to discuss things, what you're going to do and how you're going to do it, you just don't go do it behind everybody's back, and that's what was happening. Our President was asked to step down by our Equipment Manager, and they asked if I would take it on and I said I'd give it a whirl. A lot of people are on an Executive, especially in this sport, for their own kids, you know? By the time I came to be President I didn't have any kids [in the sport] so I came at it from a more overall picture and not just my child's as so many other people do.

Mary indicated that in the total of sixteen years on the Executive, she saw a turnover in the "good" people as well, but that overall, the leadership style favoured within the club became one of consensus-building.

I'm a firm believer that you're the president and these are your responsibilities and the other positions had theirs, I wasn't the type to step in. Those were their [responsibilities] whereas I know in some cases before the president used to tell people what they could and couldn't do. And that to me is not right. If you're appointed to a position then that's your position and you run it how you see fit. If there is a big problem then we'll sit down and discuss it.

When asked how she came to develop her leadership style, Mary replied that it was:

Common sense. I didn't learn about it, I only went to Grade 11. It was the way I was brought up. You work hard and you give it 110%, and that's how I did it. I think when you're brought up as an only child and you're left alone a lot, you watch. I'm good at watching. And I must say the thing about being an only child, it makes you a lot stronger, because I don't have any brothers or sisters to share anything with and you have to deal with it, there's nobody else.

Mary established a management style of decision-by-consensus. When confronted by criticism "I would ask 'how would you do it differently? What is a better way?'". According to the municipal recreation manager, as a direct consequence of her approach to board management and her values of equity and universality (for all the kids), the club found it much easier to attract new board members of like mind.

Although she could not identify a specific colleague who stood out, Mary did mention three that she had recruited to hold significant leadership positions, including the new secretary and president. Mary would not acknowledge any mentoring role, but then indicated that she assisted the new registrar for one whole season before leaving the executive.

In response to a question regarding the relationship between the club and the municipality, Mary had much to say that echoed the experiences of the others interviewed. In spite of some aspects of these dealings not being to her liking, she indicated that overall the relationship was "great":

They would help with the rates going up. I would book the [facility] and if I knew in advance I'd go in August and book [it] at the old price. And they were very forgiving if we booked and we couldn't use it even though they had a 48 hour rule [cancellation policy] they would bend it a lot. And they loved me being the treasurer, because I made sure that everything was paid. When a bill was due on the first of the month we paid on the first of the month and they never had that before. I'd say 'gotta pay now' when before it was always two, three months late. I'd say it'll all work out in the end. Pay on the first and the adjustments will be made on the next statement. And we're renting the [facility], I couldn't get that across, that's it's just like renting an apartment, you pay on the first of the month.

It would be nice, before they knocked it [the old facility] down we had this huge trophy case and then they built these expensive dinky little things. But there's no message centre, that's my biggest beef. I'm saying 'John [the current president], go to them, we used to have a slot system where the team managers could pick up information. We need [both] that and email these days. Communication, and that was my big thing when I was president, "Communicate, communicate, I would say". At the new [facility] we're not allowed to put anything on the walls, God no, you don't dare put anything on the walls.

I was the sole bread winner. My husband is a lot older than me. When we came here he had retired. I was the breadwinner, he never did anything. I drove my kids, I'd come home from work, pack the kids up and head [to another municipality] and be home around 11:00, 12:00 to be up at 4:00am to go again. Son, who now is training in a second trade and has to go to bed early to be up at 5:30am, says "Mom, I don't know how you did it".

Just how Mary did it, and the impact on her two sons was of interest to this study. What is the impact of a high-performing volunteer on the family? With all that time taken up with sport, what gets put aside? Are there negative impressions left by this depth of involvement?

These questions were posed to Mary's son who made the comment referred to above. ('Doug') played six or seven years in the club.

Sad to say, it wasn't until I, I guess you get older you can look back on it but you start working and you appreciate what she did [on the Executive]. She'd be tired after working all day and drive out to [the city], drive all the way back, make dinner and then turn around and then drive for another hour to get to where we were going. When you're younger you can't understand that.

While there was little appreciation for or understanding of what his mother was doing at the time, it was clear that the time Mary spent supporting his participation in the sport was important and valued. This comes through in the memories he has of his adolescent years growing up, most of which centred on sport.

Doug's experience in sport was positive, as he states: "When I have kids I will definitely put them in sport, in soccer, anything they want, for sure". As to his own attitudes concerning volunteering and leadership, it is clear that the example of his mother has shaped Doug's perspectives on sport and life:

I went to work up in [the Interior] and I didn't know anybody, my mom said 'why don't you get out and help with coaching or clinics' so that's what I did, because I had done it when I was younger back home

There's a lot of people who like to complain, but not many that are willing to go in and help.

She wanted to give us something she didn't have, I guess. Yeah, I wish I had that determination.

When the time comes [that I have kids of my own] it'll always be in the back of my mind, and I'll know it's possible and that I can do the same.

She just wanted everything to be fair for everybody, she never had any favourites. She made it so every kid had a chance to try out. If a kid was too shy, like I was, she made it so everyone could try out and some kids who wouldn't otherwise have tried out were the better players but didn't know it.

She always emphasized that good things happen to good people and she always said she'd give the shirt off her back for anyone, and she really did.

Growing up, we were never grounded or anything. Her number one thing was "just don't lie". All our friends, they were always getting curfews and getting grounded and we never had anything like that. I wouldn't want her to look down on us, to disappoint her like we had so much respect for her, I realize now. As long we tried our hardest. It was never like "oh you didn't do it good enough, you could do it better", as long as we tried hard.

Builder #4 — Angela

The first thing that struck me about ('Angela') was her age. In following up with the municipal manager who referred me to this volunteer I was faxed an article from the local paper with a small, grainy photograph. The article reported that Angela was leaving her long-held post as president of the local baseball club because of health concerns. Indeed, I was reluctant to pursue this candidate further for that reason, not wishing to impose at what might be a difficult time. Nevertheless, I felt there was a good story there, but I was not expecting someone so young. She told me that she was under 40. I indicated that this is somewhat unusual in volunteers who achieve the status of being referred to as builders. And indeed, Angela's entrée into sport leadership was unusual.

My brother and I were active; whatever we could get involved in. Refereeing was a way to earn some money without it interfering with school. The pay was fairly decent, today it's even better. Our parents weren't overly athletic, though they love sports. But it was the neighbourhood we grew up in. Kids were always involved with something or always out on the street playing sport or football or soccer in the park or wherever. The environment we were in was an influence. The kid across the street played in the NHL. Also heavily involved in school sports and intramurals.

I attended clinics and as I got involved I was seeing things being taught incorrectly to the kids and that always piqued my interest and then my nephew who was five at the time wanted to play, but he was a year too young. My older sister told the league "but we have a coach (Angela)". Little Ronnie is my favourite so she knew I would do it.

In my second year of coaching our divisional coordinator got in a serious car accident and her husband asked if I would step in "temporarily" -- for 20 years! I have a problem with the word "no".

I have done the gamut of jobs in the organization, shifting with the growth of the club. Suddenly there are new demands and expectations that you can't meet. When I first started the total was 300 [players], now they're sitting at 1,800 to 2,000. This is mostly due to population growth and the low cost of the sport. Well, I guess we were fairly organized; our ducks were pretty much in a row when things went out. It always makes it easier if you look organized, even if you aren't in the background, as long as you look it.

With the exception of Mary, whose role model was her grandmother, the role of parents in the active community life of all four builders I interviewed is consistently high. As only Gord's father was active in sport, it appears that the ethic of doing something for others is transferable across various types of activities. Angela indicates:

My parents were very supportive, everything we've ever done they supported us 110%, so if we wanted to give it a try we were given the chance, though we had to see it through, there was none of this 'I didn't like it today I'm not going back tomorrow'.

Angela also mentioned her good fortune in having employers whose consideration facilitated her efforts as a volunteer:

While I was doing this I was working, or going to university full-time. I was going to become a teacher but then 'life happened'. My employer for 16 years was the best bosses in the world outside of the ones I have today. They let me work toward anything I needed; school schedule, sport schedule, whatever I needed, they accommodated with a day off. They were family, the business was family.

Even until her recent resignation from community sport, Angela has been the youngest of the board members. When asked about the dynamics of such a situation, Angela's response echoes Mary's and Colleen's sense of being above the petty politics and being able to move agendas forward with more freedom:

The biggest difference is that I was the only [executive member] who didn't have a kid playing. Except for Mike, whose daughter has left the sport. Mike started coaching at the same time I did and came onto the board a few years after I did. He's my best friend and it's nice to know someone is covering your back, even though like typical friends we go at it in the board room, and we all do and that's the way it should be, you should be able to go at it in the boardroom. I always started out our first meeting after the AGM with "we're all here for a common reason, and if we battle, the battle stays in the boardroom". When we walk out whether we like the decision made or not we're a united front. You can't show to the people, your membership that there's conflict or internal turmoil because that spells the demise of everything you've worked for, that you're trying to do.

Everyone's going to have an opinion, but if you tried something three years ago and it didn't work, chances are that three years later it still isn't going to work. This is where Mike and I have struggled the most, because we've 'been there, done that' and now it 'OK we'll fly at it, if you want to run with it, run with it, let us know how it works out'.

People have to respect that it's a ton of work no matter what role you have in any group or association you have. It's another full time job in some cases. And if you don't research what you're getting yourself into you may be going in with the best of intentions, or all of the wrong intentions [e.g.] to get what you want, but you'll fall flat on your face because you can't meet the demands of the role.

[As club president for 10 years] I was an active leader, hands on. I didn't want their jobs but I wanted to be sure they did it [laughs]. It was not micro-managing by any stretch, you've got a role to do, do it, and if you need help I'm here to help. I don't believe in active recruiting, I think that if somebody wants to step and take the job, well, jump in.

Not having my own kid I was a little more objective about the situation. I'm the first person to pull myself out of anything where there's a conflict [of interest]. You could look at things at a bigger picture.

When I pointed out to Angela that it didn't sound as though, as a teenager, she calculated the cost of what would become twenty years of labour, she replied "No, I fell into it, but this is what I tell people now. Twenty years ago I said 'bring it on, c'mon, let's change the world'". The emergence of the builder clearly seems to be an incremental and somewhat incidental process rather than a deliberate one. Her organization's relationship with the City also grew over time:

When I first started out I really didn't have a lot to do with them. You've got a role, you take care of your job. But as the association grew and the demands grew you became more of a focal point or a figurehead. If Mike couldn't "get it done" then I'd go in. If the employee couldn't help then you'd go to the boss. So as we grew, and maybe as a shift in the way they worked in office of Parks and Rec, I started getting copied on the emails, started getting more faxes, I'd get phone calls where before I would never get that. My role within their world became bigger as there was a change, and I don't know whether that was a change in the management system or the way they chose to manage [their relationships with the] user groups or just us because of our size.

Mother Nature may have played a role in this [growing advocacy] because field closures drive me crazy, and I've noticed a lack of willingness to accommodate growth by installing artificial turf which in the end is more cost effective for them. It was always they don't have the money for it, they can't do this, they can't do that.

Angela related research that she conducted with local field closure statistics demonstrating the viability of alternatives. Sitting down with municipal staff, and relating how this kind of information would look in the media, Angela reported that the result has been the development of the town's first artificial turf field. Already, the indication is that more are required.

Aside from little roadblocks like that the City has been phenomenal to work with. They've been moving forward with all their facilities, and they're trying hard, but they need to get moving with some of that money they're sitting on. We've even initiated our own field user levy to raise capital funds to go to the City to build fields, maintain fields, do whatever, to keep the quality facilities we have. But it falls on deaf ears when we say 'we're willing to help, just tell us how. You're telling that how we can do it is through money, so why not let us come to Council to say 'we're willing to put in a minimum of \$20,000 a year towards field development if you're willing to work with us'.

When I pointed out that nothing prevented Angela and her club from going to the city council directly, her response indicated sensitivity to her relationship with municipal bureaucrats: "you always want the support of Parks and Recreation, that's the hand that feeds, right?" What kept Angela from being a 'loose cannon' and heading off direct to council was her understanding that the parks and recreation staff are the people that she

had to work with on a regular basis, and so she was reluctant to do an 'end run' even though it would have been fully within her rights as a citizen.

Complicating Angela's position was her public persona as an employee of a company that has significant contracts with the city. Her concern included not only the ongoing relationship with the community sport organization but also her employer's continued relationship with the city, (and of course, her own employment security). Such is the life for volunteers with 'day jobs' in the community.

If it wasn't for that, what I would have liked to have done was dress every one of our kids in their uniforms and march them down Main St. to the lawn of City Hall and alerted every media that we were doing that. That accomplishes nothing though.

Angela's inclination was to react to political inertia in an assertive manner, but her common sense led her to choose a route that was more patient and longsuffering, and ultimately more productive.

When pressed to justify the use of the term "phenomenal" (since to this point there hadn't seemed to be much evidence for such a designation), Angela replied "We love to hate them. [The Director] is a great guy, but I love to hate him, too. They work with you, right? There's give and take. If we have field closures but we have very important games to have played, if we talk about it, there's usually a way. They understand the importance of getting the games in. They often give us the latitude to make decisions. There will be times when the fields are open but it would be insane to play on them [because of changed weather conditions] so we close them, as an association, because we don't want to damage the fields. [Referring to the parks and recreation department] it's their customer service level the girls in the front, whether we agree to disagree, they're always willing to sit down and talk issues through with you. I think that's important to building the relationship. I can't speak for the other user groups in the City, but my relationship, though tenuous at times, what wouldn't be. They've got what we want and sometimes they say 'no'. The common idea in our sport is that the other sport gets more than we do. It's not true, but that's the perception. You battle through it, recognizing that the other groups feel the same way about our sport.

Apparently unconscious of the irony, Angela reveals that what she experiences as a citizen, volunteer and employee in the same community may also be true of the municipal bureaucrat. It is possible that the municipal staff person, especially working in the same area where he or she is active as a volunteer, may be frustrated with either the municipality or the sport organization (or both), but be limited in what can be said or done because of the employment relationship.

Angela demonstrated a low regard for the provincial sport organization in her comments. "They've done nothing. At the grassroots level they talk about it, talk about it and talk about it some more, and charge us, and I'm the district chair so I interact with

them regularly, but they've done nothing for us". Indicative not only of the variety of political situations that the volunteer can be found in, the depth of that involvement is no doubt increased with time and experience. Here, Angela shows how a continuing volunteer role can be wielded as an important leadership voice that can be raised at the regional level. In spite of an illness that forced her resignation from the club, she almost forgot to mention two key committee roles she continues to perform as a local sport leader. When I pointed out the significance of this, Angela practically dismissed it by stating what seemed to her to be obvious "it's the one thing I continue to do for the club, because my experience at the regional level, they could never replace that, because as uppity as it sounds, you need to know how to deal with other leagues and clubs". In view of her extensive experience with the region and therefore with the provincial sport organization, it was not hard to solicit advice from Angela for the provincial sport body:

They all need to get on association boards themselves, to get into the trenches. Right now I'm in the middle of i.d. [identity] cards for the district because I'm the registrar (another function that Angela continues to hold but did not think to mention explicitly). I think they need to see some of the things that the volunteers go through at the grassroots level that they insist on, that are really futile. I will spend the next three or four days on these i.d. cards, and the referee will never check them. The whole point is to validate that player to your team. Both the process and the concept are both silly. We submit team lists every game to the referee, which is far more valuable to me than an i.d. card. I honestly think that they are good people down there, but they're not in the trenches. They only get a parent come to them when they don't know the proper avenue to go to. Maybe I think they do nothing for us because we've never had a reason to have them involved with us. Which is always a possibility, too. I always think we fly under the radar here, because we deal with the issues before they get any further. Other regions are worse, like Prince George. Out here we have representation, but they have no interest in going up there. They need to do the town hall meetings, of all the regions, if people show, great, if they don't well that's fine too. One of the worst things they did was get rid of the provincial registrar, because I have no one to go to.

When asked about the legacy that she felt would remain from her twenty years of leadership with the club, Angela's response was surprisingly similar to Gord's and Mary's:

My legacy will be the hiring of our head coach. We were always a feeder club to [a neighbouring, larger community]; always losing kids there because their program was arguably better. So we developed kids to a certain point and then, with a 20 minute drive down the freeway our club, we were never advancing with our development.

There is evidence in Angela's experience that the organization does not fully comprehend the city's potential to assist the club in meeting its goals. For example, Angela's club does all the training of its coaches. When asked, she indicated that the municipality does not do any coaching training. This is an area where there is

considerable divergence in municipal practice. Some parks and recreation departments are very active in supplying cross-sport 'theory' training, while others, like Angela's, do not do so at all. What is striking in this instance is that Angela, even when responding to a direct question about a municipal role in developing volunteer coaches in her sport, did not appear to consider this desirable, or to view the lack of that service as any kind of failure on the part of the bureaucracy. It seemed not to occur to her that this is a service that the bureaucracy could reasonably provide in order to assist the club in sport development. In other words, what she didn't know didn't seem to hurt her. Even after many years of involvement, it also appears that 'best practices' in sport management and community sport development are not communicated in such a way as to make a difference to normal club operations.

I was curious to know how a builder would see her or his role as an ambassador and mentor to the wider sport community, particularly in terms of inter sport cooperation and effectiveness. Angela, while arguing that the municipality had no business bringing sport organizations together, since, according to her this was the responsibility of the groups themselves, admitted that the lack of maturity of clubs would prevent this from happening effectively. Yet when asked what was necessary for Angela also said:

Communication is the key, within the club, outside the club. If you look back and ask any association anywhere, the biggest weakness is lack of communication. You can't presume that people know about you and know what's going on. You have to walk a mile in the person's shoes that's coming to you, and vice versa.

You let them have their say, you explain your role, and if they still aren't happy you say "y'know what? The AGM is coming and at the end of the day the job is yours. In fact, don't wait for February, come take it now".

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH ‘BUILDERS’

Much of the experience of these identified builders is consistent with some of the general conclusions that can be drawn from Statistics Canada studies on the nature and characteristics of volunteers. In other words, these four people are in some respects not very different from other committed volunteers, except that their interest in and commitment to the sport or the organization within which they have served endured far beyond the norm. This then is a characteristic, not of the person, but of the role of the builder: they are able to stand apart from real or perceived complications of self-interest by being in their respective leadership roles while not having their own children involved in the club.

An apparently unintended outcome of these builders' involvement was revealed in the question about what they considered will be their most enduring legacies. Each of the four indicated one type of system or another for player/athlete development. Angela's most memorable contribution was the hiring of a head coach, making her club competitive in the region. Because of Mary's lengthy tenure, several players had ascended to professional ranks. Gord's development of the high performance squad in his sport, the new playing facility and the major tournament all contributed to what Eric referred to as "hundreds" of players who made national and Olympic teams and received scholarships. In their minds there appeared to be a direct correlation between their time at the helm and their ability to affect organizational direction that took the club beyond serving grassroots needs but also provided services that would meet the needs of those local resident players and athletes that had the desire and talent to achieve excellence.

While it appears that initially there was not much to separate them from other volunteers, it is clear that at some point, their leadership qualities were noticed. More importantly, perhaps, their leadership seems to have drawn other volunteers. This quality of the leader or builder has at least two impacts. One, it is likely that the parents who are drawn to serve in volunteer capacities, especially on an executive or board, will have values and philosophies that are congruent with the existing leadership (it is perhaps fortunate that some potential builders, such as Mary, are willing to serve even on unpleasant and factionalized committees). Secondly, future leadership is better ensured, particularly if the board is characterized by an atmosphere of cooperation and

cohesion. Cuskelly et al. found that in Australia "...administrative roles require a greater commitment compared to other categories of sport volunteers. The demands of sport administration extend beyond the typical seasonal nature of sport and necessitate volunteer administrators to be involved almost all year round" (Cuskelly et al. 2006:95). So it stands to reason that these positions are normally the hardest to fill.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND URBAN PLANNING PRACTICE

Who is this unpaid advocate and supporter of local sport activities whose dedication may be demarcated by names on buildings and playing fields that are unknown beyond the local community, and, often unknown inside the community after only a relatively few years or generations? The builder is typically a volunteer who started the way most volunteers do, as parents who, perhaps reluctantly, respond to an appeal for team leaders (often as coach or manager). Out of the large number who make this commitment, and may even extend it to managing a division or sitting on a sport club's board, the vast majority leave their voluntary role(s) when their children leave the league.

The builder, however, is among the few whose commitment is significantly greater and more durable. Because there is no common definition of this classification of volunteer, I propose that the builder be defined simply as one whose involvement in sport (and possibly within the arts or social services) outlasts the direct involvement of his or her own children in one or more organizations. Indeed, I suggest that the development of much if not most local sport and recreation material and non-material infrastructure (e.g., buildings and organizations) can be traced to the activity, passion, drive, and determination of one or another builder.

When a volunteer is undertaking what might -- if the cases considered above are to be relied upon -- turn out to be a life's work, it is worth considering what it is that the builder is building. The local club is arguably the backbone of the Canadian sport system. The vast majority of the participants in organized sport belong to clubs and leagues that typically number membership in the hundreds. My own community of the North Shore of Metro Vancouver (combined population 160,000) boasts over 100 community sport organizations. The actual number of sport organizations is unknown by any level of government, whether local, provincial or federal. Some are unaligned with a sport governing body, some are not incorporated, some gather in church gymnasiums, service club halls and even commercial spaces (e.g., karate 'dojos').

Whether this complexity is the cause or effect of a club-based system, nevertheless, most sport occurs at the local level and is led by volunteers. And whether incorporated and aligned or not, organizational structure for non-profit sport tends to

follow a structure of members who vote democratically for a board of directors charged with the responsibility of carrying out the operations of the club: securing facilities, purchasing equipment, recruiting and training coaches and managers, assigning players, setting schedules. Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) quote Watt's (2003) outline of the characteristics of sport organizations where the predominance of the club system of non-profit organizations is shown to infuse the Australian sport system, which in this regard is similar to Canada's:

1. They are grant aided with the vast majority of them dependent on national government funding to sustain their operation.
2. They are considered autonomous in the sense that they are largely self-controlling and decide their own strategies despite being dependent on government funding and subject to the views of a myriad of stakeholders.
3. They rely extensively on the time and efforts of volunteers to ensure programmes and services are delivered.
4. National governing bodies (NGBs) fulfill a lobbying role by requesting support and interest in their respective sport on behalf of their participants.
5. Nonprofit sport organizations, especially at the club level, rely extensively on member contributions to fund their activities.
6. The volunteers involved in governing the organizations by sitting on committees and performing other duties do so in the spare time, often in addition to their normal form of employment.
7. They rely on their links with public sector bodies such as elite sport institutes and local governments to assist with their activities.
8. As mentioned previously, most of these organizations operate on an individual membership basis but many also have clubs or other organizations as members.
9. Individual members, especially those in key governance roles, are vital for supporting initiatives and ideas that need to be instigated within the member clubs and associations of a sport NGB.
10. They are governed democratically with a general principle of one vote per member but are usually dominated by limited cliques of influential individuals.
11. The decision-making processes are dominated by committees and committee structures, which may be inefficient but enables democratic processes to be enacted

(Hoye et al 2007:37)

The local sport leader who is prepared to take on the task of navigating government bureaucracy for the benefit of others must be a rare individual. Encouraging commitment of this sort by volunteer leaders is therefore essential to the continuation and proliferation of sport in our country. Key to the ongoing life of the sport organization is the board member. Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) cite Meyer and Allen (1991) who proposed three components to organizational commitment:

- (1) Affective communication where individuals become committed because they want to;
- (2) Continuance commitment where individuals develop commitment because they have to, and
- (3) Normative commitment where individuals feel they ought to be committed.

(Hoye et al, p. 100)

When a builder undertakes the task of establishing or 'growing' an organization, what often emerges is something that is unique to that setting, an organization that may not be connected in any way to other groups even of the same sport in the same community or nearby communities. This is part of what the Voluntary Sector Awareness Project (Jurbala 2006) identified as one of the necessary and vital aspects of the Canadian identity. Not only is the citizen free to choose what type of activity to engage in (whether as a participant or a volunteer), but he or she is also free to start a new activity or organization "without asking leave of the authorities, navigating a maze of bureaucracy, or fearing retribution, [making] our communities so diverse, vital and robust" (Jurbala 2006:16).

This freedom presents both an opportunity and a challenge. The very tolerance that welcomes the creation of new sport organizations in our communities makes planning difficult and can place a strain on resources in order to accommodate new demands and needs. Citing John Woolcock of the World Bank, Jurbala distinguishes between policies and programs of government, and the practices which, "in the realm of local volunteer organizations, determine how things are done in the real world. Policies and programs are technocratic and bureaucratic; practices are idiosyncratic, differing in every context, time and place", maintaining that "while policy is faceless, practices demand face-to-face interactions that build trust, norms of behaviour and so on" (Jurbala 2006:15)..

In spite of the importance of the builder, Vail's (2007) review of the community development models found that "many do not address the community champion or catalyst directly" (Vail 2007:576). This, it seems, could either reduce the effectiveness of applying a community development model, inhibit the emergence of a builder, or, worse, actually make it impossible to accommodate a builder when he or she emerges. A community development model should, therefore, create space for "catalytic leadership".

According to Forester, community development is successful when the "progressive planner" establishes "contacts, trust and working relationships with neighbourhood and community organizations" (Forester 1982:73). Although community building/community development as described by M. Scott Peck (1993) and McKnight (1990) was not initially Gord's primary purpose, it certainly did occur as a result of his efforts.

The rebuke delivered by Colleen about the behaviour of the parks and recreation staff, although providing only one side of the story, is nevertheless instructive in that community development requires some level of cooperation that was apparently missing in her situation. From a bird's eye view, it appears that the extent of success or mitigation of difficulties depends on the degree of open and honest communication between partners (Peck 1987).

The importance of highly skilled volunteers must be acknowledged as a major key to the success of the clubs and associations described through the builder's experience and verified through numerous surveys. Far from being "uncertified" people who can't understand "the complexities" (Sandercock 1998:79), the combination of leaders from otherwise random public assemblies of parents who no doubt inhabit the worlds of business, academia, architecture, law and project management often combine with great effectiveness and achieve what Peck refers to as "synergies".

Planners and bureaucrats in parks and recreation and sport should beware, however, of adopting a single 'cookie-cutter' approach to volunteer and community development. The difficult negotiations that Colleen endured point out the importance of "listening" as "a deeply hermeneutic activity" (Sandercock 1998:77). On a practical level as well, it may well be the role of the progressive planner to fill skill gaps to "empower citizen action" as a "practical organizing process" (Forester 1982:77). The failure of Mary's municipal facility planners to make the building as useful for the sport club as it might have been may have partly to do with 'empowerment' issues that result in frustration and the need for advocacy after-the-fact.

In spite of the builder's seemingly boundless energy, the local planner, who, as Hays and Kogl pointed out, may be tempted to see community leadership as a "reason to *avoid* committing serious resources to addressing neighbourhood problems" (Hays 2007, p.15), should also be aware of the potential for burnout, recalling Andrea's admission that her first thought after receiving her diagnosis was "Phew, I can quit".

Even when sport and recreation officials acknowledge the importance of the work of community volunteers, the pressure of having only limited time to develop relationships is probably the biggest single concern. While nurturing community organizations and their leaders may seem like just another 'time-thief', the recreation manager who identified Mary as a builder, however, thought otherwise:

[W]henever an association is struggling, it requires more of our time, and if there's dissension in the ranks we're always going to spend more time [with them]. It's not because we're in there refereeing, that's not our role...but certainly the time we have to spend with them is greater when things aren't going well.

One example of this time-saving (and effective community action) is illustrated by this manager:

[W]e had some kids break into lockers. One of them happened to be wearing a [local sport organization] jacket. We caught them on video, and called the president. The kids were immediately dealt with through [the organization]. I mean, we didn't even have to get involved. Each kid was disciplined, writing letters of apology, missing a game and a practice, paying for the damage and doing volunteer time at the rink. That's when you know you're all working well together.

When Mary was asked what more local government could do for the club, her only wish was that they could have their old "message centre" back, a highly visible and well-used rack for notices specific to parents, players and board members. "You need to have that as well as e-mail. Now, (i.e., post-retrofit), you can't even stick a notice on the glass". It was somewhat amusing, almost quaint, how little support was thought of as being necessary or desirable from the municipality to make a difference to this builder.

By contrast, when the recreation manager was asked what more the municipality could do for clubs like Mary's, she repeated the role of the municipality that seems most common – provision of facilities. In addition to this, the recreation manager indicated that the club is provided meeting room space. However, after the interview was over and the tape turned off, the manager expressed, almost off-handedly, the need for "celebration". "We encourage it", she said. When asked to elaborate, the manager pointed to a large painted mural on the wall of the swimming pool recognizing the achievements of a local Olympic swimmer. She then surprised me by indicating that her department had commissioned and paid for the painting. It apparently did not occur to her that this represented a significant support to the local swim club and a measure that might serve to inspire community youth to join the sport and strive to excel.

The apparent connection between consistency in community organization leadership and the contribution the local organization makes in the long run to excellence can be a difficult challenge for local government. Because even though a few achieve it, doing so usually requires a disproportionate amount of scarce, local facility use, and sometimes even specialized facilities or pieces of equipment. This often puts the needs of a few in conflict with the needs and desires of the many. Municipalities that

support local organizations that seek to be high functioning must therefore be prepared to articulate their own approaches to sport development, hopefully in consultation with the community sport organizations that caused the problem in the first place, as well as the broader public.

The literature of community development and planning that advocates a role for the local official as an enabler of sport organizations is supported by survey responses that told many stories of important community outcomes created by the efforts of sport builders. The same could be said of the responses from sport governance officials. The practical effects of this enabling (or lack thereof) are illustrated in several ways by the four builders and the others that were interviewed, including the municipal official. And although there were similarities, there were also significant differences in each of the examples. All of this indicates that the effort put in to support and enable community sport volunteers is worth it. It is my hope that this conclusion will stimulate more local parks and recreation departments, and sport governing bodies to adopt and implement an organizational direction similar to that of one BC municipality whose mission statement proclaims in part: “to facilitate the coordination of sports and *sport organizations*” (email correspondence, emphasis mine).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Prior to the Depression years leading up to WWII, recreation and healthy physical activity – as with social services such as health care and education -- was provided by non-profit, usually religious, community organizations such as the YMCA. Some of the 'New Deal'-type initiatives in Canada and the U.S. for young people involved government-sponsored physical fitness, dance and sport programs. 'Pro-Rec' was an example of such a program in B.C. As Canada entered the war years, fitness programs became necessary as a function of militarization and battle-preparedness, and hence more scientific with the emergence of the 5BX (Basic eXercises) and 10BX programs for women and men respectively. In the post-war years of economic prosperity, many returning veterans remained in the employ of the government building the modern era's new infrastructure of roads, highways, schools, hospitals, libraries, parks, and recreation facilities. Disciplines learned in the military were a natural fit for the program and facility leadership required for a new generation of youth, the baby-boomers. Programs and especially the construction and management of facilities for physical fitness, athletic/competitive leagues, and positive social contact that had been the domain of faith-based organizations, remained the responsibility of government, local government in particular.

Programs, services and facilities from the 1960's were increasingly delivered by local government employees, 'experts' educated in physical education, sport science and recreation management. A scientific and structured approach emerged alongside the parent-volunteer organizations of sand-lot sports (e.g., baseball and soccer) and eventually dictated how and where facilities would be built and how they would be used.

This model of public recreation can be characterized as 'direct delivery' where the needs of the community are determined by 'experts' and programs are planned and promoted with minimal input from the targeted or potential users. Under direct delivery model, the most public input that is sought is from random sample surveys prior to program/facility development and participant satisfaction surveys after the program was completed. This is similar to the "survey before plan" town-planning approach of Patrick Geddes (Geddes 1915).

Intentional municipal support for and encouragement of community organizations to provide programs and services, and give leadership in facility development, is a trend

that emerged in the late 1980's. This coincided with economic recession and public aversion to rapidly rising taxes, including property taxes that pay for much of the programs and services offered by local government. Demand for programs and facilities, and the genuine desire to see them be maintained and grow, led local government to various alternative means including corporate sponsorship, support for community initiatives and advocacy for the benefits of parks and recreation.

THE PROGRAM CONTINUUM	
<i>[FROM] SOCIAL PLANNING</i>	<i>[TO] COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct program delivery • Task oriented • Professional controlled • Dependent relationship • Serves instrumental and utilitarian needs • Routinized program services • Customer as consumer • Professional viewed as expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect service delivery • Process oriented • Customer controlled • Independence • Serves expressive needs • Individualized program services • Customer as activator • Professional viewed as collaborator

Adapted from: Edgington, C. *Leisure Programming: A Service-Centred and Benefits Approach*

The 'benefits' approach in Canada was a movement that strove to maintain and increase services in the face of frozen or reduced budgets by increasing the community 'voice' in advocacy.

Leisure [services] provides leadership opportunities that build strong communities, community recreation promotes ethnic and cultural harmony, recreating together builds strong families and leisure opportunities are often the foundation for community pride. All we need to do now is increase our commitment to supporting and facilitating more of the events and activities that deliver these benefits. We need to shift our emphasis from managing facilities and conducting highly structured programs to becoming community developers (CPRA).

In Vancouver, this movement was expressed in the 1990 Strategic Plan of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation titled "Vision for the Future" that states in part,

Community Centres will be jointly operated by the Board and Community Associations (and) the Board will enter into agreements with other organizations to operate recreation facilities where it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are beneficial to the public good. (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 1990, Strategic Plan: A Vision for the Future.)

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Interview #1 – Local government official in parks and recreation.

This interview pursued the same set of questions as contained in the earlier survey of members of this category. The interview posed these questions and probed the responses in greater depth.

Interview #2 – The Builder

- How did you get started in volunteering?
- What were and are the motivations for your initial and continued involvement?
- What influenced your choices in the use of your discretionary time?
- What is the legacy of your volunteer commitment?
- You have made a significant contribution to the community – what else needs to be done? (by you or someone else)?
- What has local government done to make your job easier or more difficult? (aided or frustrated your work?)
- What has sport governance done to make your job easier or more difficult?
- What will happen to the organization when you retire?
- What could be done to encourage others to continue or improve on your work?

Interview #3 – Family member

- How did his/her volunteer work impact the family?
- What frustrated ___ about his/her involvement?
- What is the legacy of this volunteer work – in the family? – in the community?

Interview #4 – the Associate Volunteer

- How does ___'s work impact the organization?
- What will be the legacy of ___'s work?
- How has ___'s work influenced others?
- How has ___ been supported by local government and sport government?
- What will happen after ___ retires?

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