



**A message from the Editor** *Jeff Moulins*

*Everybody is like a kaleidoscope. We are all living differently, which creates unique patterns to our lives. We also do things in ways that are very different from each other.*

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Some people like to live in a small town, where as others live in a large city. There are many other things that we do, that make us different. Despite these differences, our kaleidoscope patterns are very beautiful.

Every Vela Microboard is unique to the person it was formed around and the pattern of the Microboard changes over time. Before I had a Microboard, there were only two choices for me to consider about where I wanted to live. One was a six bed group home and the other was a hospital, neither of which I thought where real choices. I picked the group home, but I called it, "the lesser of two evils".

The work done by Vela Microboard Association is one of the most important parts of the Microboard's pattern. This part is consistent for each Microboard, but looks different because Vela's work is interwoven into each Microboards pattern. Vela has become indispensable to many

people with Microboards.

Everybody can have his or her own life and dreams; the pattern you make is up to you. Like a kaleidoscope, we are always changing and evolving, every day.

I have always been a risk taker. Starting my Microboard was a risk because I didn't know what it could mean or do for me. I like to go hiking and sailing and I used to go horseback riding. This July 4th I went gliding in an airplane. Doing things that are risky makes me feel normal, just like everyone else. It gets me out of my regular routine, gets me out of my chair and helps me to see things differently. This changes the pattern of my life to make it more interesting, exciting and fulfilling. I plan to go gliding again, so watch for pictures in an upcoming Newsletter!

I encourage you to break out of your regular pattern or routine and do new things. Give it a try and you will bring new colours into your kaleidoscope of life.

You are only able to recognize your own thoughts or actions that create your special picture of your life. We are all different from each other and this uniqueness can be a great pleasure, which shall never be changed. Of the most colorful kaleidoscopes, they have one thing in common; they are always changing their patterns and get more diverse. Without change where would we be?

I keep thinking I should say something about our theme for this newsletter which if you haven't yet realized is "kaleidoscope". Well, enough said about that! Seriously, once you have read the articles in this edition you will quickly realize how each of our lives is exactly a kaleidoscope and changes every time we make a decision throughout our day. From the subtle to the intense it changes all the time. It's what we make of that change that really counts.

Speaking of changes, we have a new board of directors for the coming year. Vela held its AGM on June 16th and the board for the coming year was both elected and/or confirmed. Board members are elected for a 2 year term so as not to necessitate the replacement of the entire board in any given year. With that in mind the following board members agreed to complete their 2 year commitment for this year, Melanie Marcotte, Shelley Durant (Treasurer), Terry Robertson (Vice-President) Ric Tesan and Randy Wilson (that's me). Elected for a 2 year term were, Cathy Lafortune, Dave Metheral (Secretary), Jeff Moulins and Evan Thomas. Cathy graciously has returned to Vela's board after taking some time out following a previous 8 year stint on the board of directors. Talk about dedication! It is so good to have you back, Cathy.

Dedication, isn't that what we "microboarders" are all about. We pick up a cause that we believe needs our attention, bite on like a pit bull and don't let go until we get what we need. Sounds like a plan to me. The upside is that we are connected to folks that have "been there, seen that, done it" or are more than willing to

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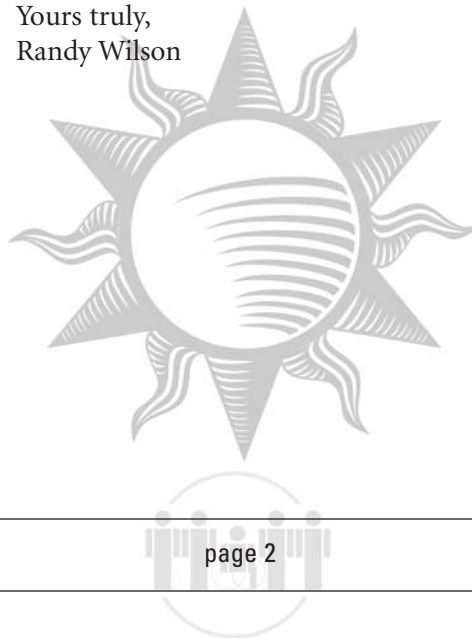
*We pick up a cause that  
we believe needs our  
attention, bite on like a pit  
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we get what we need.*

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bite on along side us. What a great feeling it is to know that you are not alone no matter what your kaleidoscope comes to look like. Take a moment to think about what you have to offer other microboards even if it's only one seemingly insignificant idea and multiply that by 500 and that's what they have to offer you. It's a heck of a deal for the price wouldn't you say? It is really surprising what networking can do for all of us.

Vela's annual fall conference is set for September 21st to 23rd and I hope to see some of you there. If we have not met please introduce yourselves and come meet our staff and board of directors. We all look forward to welcoming you. Please visit our website @ [www.microboard.org](http://www.microboard.org) and good luck to you all as I look ahead to this coming year with Vela Microboard Association.

Yours truly,  
Randy Wilson



## **FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES**

### *Family Innovation and Grass Roots Support*

Families Helping Families is a new initiative started by a few Vela Microboard families in Community Living British Columbia's South Fraser region. A small number of Microboards in the region had realized modest surpluses that they felt they did not need as part of their contingency funds. They approached CLBC Manager Carla Theissen to discuss ways in which those funds could benefit other families, regardless of whether they had a Microboard or not, in the region.

With Carla's support and Vela acting as a host agency, the Families Helping Families fund was created. This is fund is to be accessed regionally by families requiring one time only financial assistance with items/supports not usually covered by other funding sources. The funds available are dependant on those provided by the Microboards in the region, along with additional one time only funds the region may have at the end of each fiscal year. As a result, the amount of money available from year to year will vary greatly.

A committee of three parents, one from each community in the region (Delta, Surrey and Richmond) sits on the panel that decides, based on the developed criteria, who will receive funds. To date funds have been provided to assist with such items as: transportation costs to and from day camp; camp cost; and extraordinary one time only emergency respite.

For more application information for the Families Helping Families fund please check out Vela's website at: [www.microboard.org](http://www.microboard.org)



Vela's 16th Annual Microboard Conference is just around the corner! Have a look at our plans for the conference and get your registration forms in soon. Don't delay; summer will soon be over.

By now, you know that the theme for this year's conference is The Kaleidoscope of Life. Sir David Brewster, a Scottish scientist, invented the kaleidoscope in 1816. He named his invention after the Greek words, kalos or beautiful, eidos or form, and scopos or watcher. So, kaleidoscope means the beautiful form watcher.

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*This year we have used the metaphor of the kaleidoscope as it relates to the changing pattern of our lives.*

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This year we have used the metaphor of the kaleidoscope as it relates to the changing pattern of our lives. At our Friday evening reception, which you can attend even if you can't come to the entire conference, you're welcome to join us Friday evening and participate in making your own kaleidoscope. Come, join the fun, and meet other Microboards from around the province.

Saturday morning we will present the Family Resilience Project Review, currently being carried out by Stephanie Watson. This project looks at why some families survive so well in the face of difficult circumstances. Find out what their life's kaleidoscope contains that helps them cope so well.

Later in the morning several Lower Mainland agencies, that found ways to see and do things differently, will share their resourceful endeavours.

The afternoon panel, made up of several Microboards, will share their creative "colours"; ideas that make life interesting and challenging for the person they support.

Like some of the patterns in a kaleidoscope, a few of the jobs we do for our Microboard are complicated and intricate. Listen to how others have found solutions to recruiting and retaining staff.

Gord Robertson has graciously offered to conduct a silent auction that will run all day Saturday. It's easy to participate! Bring some spare cash, put your name down on an item you'd love to take home and see who is the highest bidder at the end of the night. Gord will remove items at certain times during the day, so you never know, you may get the item of your dreams for next to nothing.

Dinner is next on the agenda. Sunrise Banquet Centre always "rises" to the occasion and serves a great meal. You can join us for the dinner even if you can't attend the entire conference. The cost for just the dinner is \$40.00.

Come and join the fun for the Saturday evening dance. We have a great time, socializing and kicking back. You can also attend this social event without attending the whole conference.

Want to be a 'star' for Vela? Sunday morning starts with "your news". Give us the "Kalei-da-scoop" on how your life has changed because of your Microboard. We will be videotaping the session for Gabrielle Miller, Vela's spokesperson. Gabrielle is an awarding winning star from two nationally acclaimed CTV shows, Corner Gas and Robson Arms.

As Vela's spokesperson Gabrielle wants to hear your stories. Since Gabrielle can't be with us, we will videotape your stories, ensuring she can truly represent your experiences to others.

As always, we will be taking pictures during the conference. Glyn will take the pictures and create a video presentation for Sunday morning. Later the video will be added to our web site, so don't forget to check it out.

Glyn will also have his scanner at the conference. If you want to create a web page, just bring your information, pictures for Glyn to scan and a mock up of how you would like them to appear on the computer screen. Glyn will provide this service at any time for Vela Microboards. If you can't attend the conference, you can contact Glyn directly at glynt@telus.net to find out how to create your own web page.

Remember, if you are not attending the conference, want to attend any of: the Friday night reception; the Saturday night dinner; and/or dance, please complete the "Registration for Social Events" form that came with your conference package.

Can't come to the conference, but still want to have some fun with the kaleidoscope theme. Visit this web site and by just dragging the mouse around your screen, you'll make wonderful kaleidoscope pictures. [www.permadi.com/java/spaint/spaint.html](http://www.permadi.com/java/spaint/spaint.html) Have fun!

The conference is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old friends and to make new ones. We look forward to seeing you the weekend of September 21-23/07

Work continues by individuals and agencies, to improve and examine the level of emergency preparedness at the local and provincial levels for persons living with disabilities (PWDs). This article will attempt to outline weaknesses and voids in our current systems, introduce the formation of a group of disability organizations to research areas in the current emergency plans and how they might be corrected or improved for PWDs, followed by a plan of action all of us can prepare until such changes can be implemented.

Last fall, the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (BCCPD) put out a call for groups interested in participating in emergency planning specific for PWDs. The first meeting was held in September 2006 and the ad hoc committee of various disability groups, such as those working in community living, mental health, cerebral palsy, sight impaired, deaf, HIV/AIDS, met to discuss the needs of their specific groups as well as identify what services currently exist and what areas might need to be strengthened. In addition, representatives from the health authorities, provincial emergency preparation (PEP), and municipal emergency personnel have been invited to the conversation, with groups such as fire departments, St John's Ambulance, and the Red Cross.

People with disabilities make up approximately 15% of the population in British Columbia. To date, emergency planning has not addressed disability-specific needs in various emergency or disaster situations. The purpose of the group is to identify issues facing people with disabilities in emergency and disaster situations, with the goal of creating plans to work together with emergency personnel, to include planning for people with disabilities in the event of an emergency or disaster. This critical work has no precedent in BC, and the committee intends to start laying the groundwork and implement changes for the future safety of people with disabilities throughout our province.

In Vancouver, the bulk of emergency services in the event of a major catastrophe (such as an earthquake), are tasked out to local volunteer groups with key staff from the government left to organize communications. If a person is displaced from their home, the designated shelters and collection centres are primarily housed in the city's community centres throughout the city. Other municipalities and areas have similar designated areas depending on the emergency scenario unfolding.

At the first meeting the group entered into a dialogue of who actually provides emergency supports on the municipal level, and who provides those specific services. Some of the issues that were identified as problematic; most of the services in emergency situations will be performed by volunteers from the local community, with some basic training in emergency planning, but, who often have no background in dealing with PWDs. Based on reports from major disasters in other areas, such as New Orleans, and the aftermath of Katrina, and closer to home the floods on the Chilliwack River late last year, the group identified that specific training for the needs of PWDs must be added to the core training of emergency volunteers, so that in the event of a major disaster, those involved in dispatching the emergency protocols will have some basic knowledge and sensitivity training around disability issues and what services are necessary.

The second meeting was held at Vancouver's E-comm centre in East Vancouver. Discussion focused on identifying areas the committee would like to focus on, and set up sub-committees to meet before the next meeting and return back to the main group with recommendations. The sub-committees identified were: Accessibility, Awareness and Preparedness, Communications, Medical Supplies and Supports, Network Training, and Volunteer Registry. Committee members were given a tour of E-comm which is the emergency communications centre

for southwest British Columbia, including a 9-1-1 call centre, radio and dispatch systems, E-comm provides emergency communication services and support systems to emergency responders and the two-million residents of southwest BC.

The third meeting held at the Canadian Institute for the Blind (CNIB) received the sub-committee reports. Terms of reference were discussed and it was decided that the purpose of the group was "To work collaboratively with various stakeholders in order to develop comprehensive emergency planning strategies and crucial life saving mechanisms that will assist and support people with disabilities during emergencies and disasters throughout British Columbia."

As there are no formal plans available from government agencies specific for persons with disabilities in Canada, the committee reviewed documents published by the American Red Cross, and rather than starting from scratch it is the intention of the task force to adapt that the American Red Cross "Disaster Preparedness for people with disabilities" handbook to a "BC" centric model as part of the solution. Discussion to have materials prepared in various mediums, such as Braille and American Sign Language, were considered important.

The committee intends to apply for various streams of funding to carry on this important and timely work. BCCPD will research and apply for grants from the Vancouver Foundation, City of Vancouver, Worksafe BC, BC Paraplegic Foundation, and the Public Health Agency of Canada to fund specific initiatives to improve emergency preparedness for PWDs throughout BC.

If you are interested in participating in the Emergency Preparedness for PWDs, you can contact Karen at BCCPD, [bod@bccpd.bc.ca](mailto:bod@bccpd.bc.ca). Meetings are held monthly, with the sub-committees meeting as required.

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## Emergency Preparedness for People living with Disabilities, Cont.' *Glyn Townson*

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The group is working on the training deficits of current emergency preparedness volunteers and designated government officials. Currently, there are not any official emergency protocols in place for PWDs. It is prudent for anyone living with a disability to have detailed plans for a variety of emergency scenarios. One of the basic recommendations is to create a support network, consisting of several different people, as part of any individual plan.

Emergency and Crisis situations can vary, so, it is important to have a variety of people and contacts lined up, some people on that list may not be available, or unable to reach you. Relying on a single person, or a couple of people is not recommended.

Some points to consider in your emergency preparations. Have an evacuation plan mapped out for your home and another one for school, or

work. Prepare to have three days of emergency supplies for food and water. Make a list of your personal needs, such as medications, assistive devices, battery packs, and prepare for seven days before services may be restored. Until local BC specific resources are available you can refer to the American Red Cross manual for Emergency Planning for persons with disabilities at;  
<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability.pdf>

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## Update on Microboard Development in Western Australia *Linda Perry*

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At the end of July, I was very fortunate to spend a few days in Perth, Western Australia. My time was spent with a group of folks committed to getting microboards up and running in their state.

In our last newsletter we heard from this group they had said they hoped to apply for funding and find a host agency to help them along the way. Since that time they have successfully received two year funding, thanks to the assistance of Perth Home Care Services.

Perth Home Care Services has received the grant and will assist with the development of A "Vela-like" entity. While this is being created, the development of the first few microboards in Western Australia will also get under way.

During my short trip to Western Australia, I spent a very productive weekend in retreat with the core group of supporters for this initiative. This group was made up primarily of parents, with a few folks from government (some of them also parents of children with special needs) and a small number of progressive thinking service providers supporting the work.

As has been said by several participants, they felt they had accomplished several months work in the two days spent in concentrated process and planning.

I would anticipate we would be making direct contact between families in W.A. and here in B.C. as the work progresses.

I felt honoured to participate in this dynamic planning process with such a terrific group of folks. I'm looking forward to watching and participating in the evolution of the project in W.A. Look for additional updates in future newsletters.

*Western Australia Microboard Retreat team*



Its Friday morning, June 29; its 7:30 am, my support worker, Colleen, my best friend Jamie and I are **OFF TO THE RODEO** also known as the Williams Lake Stampede. It's hot and sunny and we have a three hour drive to Willie's Puddle to get our room and scope out the town before we hit the rodeo opening ceremonies tonight.

We had a great drive, I lounged in my car seat watching dvds on my new portable DVD player with Jamie while Colleen played chauffeur. She keeps singing country music songs to get us in the cowboy mood (is there another reason to go to rodeos other than watch the cowboys?). Entering Williams Lake we can see the hustle and bustle of rodeo fans has already begun. There are people everywhere and the parking lots in the hotels and motels are jammed packed. Our hotel is down the road a little and we are all looking forward to getting into our rooms and relaxing a bit before we hit the Stampede Grounds tonight.

Well, the overwhelming demand on hotel rooms has caused a little confusion for the staff at our hotel. Our rooms were not what we had requested so they have put us into a large room where we will all bunk together. Colleen is happy as it is very large and I can maneuver my power chair around the room with a fair amount of ease. I will have to put up with Colleen and Jamie snoring...they both warned me!

**WELCOME TO THE WILLIAMS LAKE STAMPEDE!!** It's 6:00 pm and its still hot and the stampede grounds are very dusty. People are swarming everywhere. There's an outside steakhouse set up on the grounds of a car dealership, the carnival rides and games are right across from the stampede bleachers and there are booths lining the entrance to the stampede with people selling all sorts of country wares. We get to park real close to the stadium. Colleen is very impressed with the accessibility and

convenience for wheelchair parking. As it turns out the wheelchair seating is great also. Some of the best seats in the house. A great view of the bull chutes, the track, the roping chutes and best of all - we are right in front of the concession stand!

The opening ceremonies are full of country pomp and circumstance. Williams Lake has a girls quarter horse drill team. The girls carry flags and ride around the track in formation to country music and it is all very colourful. After the Canadian and American National Anthems and a cowboy prayer, the real rodeo starts. The bucking broncs, calf roping, steer wrestling and bull riding make for some fast paced and high energy entertainment but its nothing like my favorites, the chuckwagon racing, the pony express ride and something unique to Williams Lake, the Mountain Ride. The chuckwagons and the pony express race around the track and the whole audience gets into it with lots of yelling and cheering but it's the Mountain Ride that almost makes your heart stop. Riders start up the side of the hill near the Save On Store and come down the side of the hill onto the track. The hill is very steep and has a couple of hairpin turns. The riders take off and all you can hear is the thundering of hooves. Unfortunately, tonight one of the horses takes a tumble and does a somersault on the first switchback. Turns out the horse is okay but he rider has a broken ankle. It was scary and exciting all at the same time. The evening ends with the chuckwagon races and then its off to the hotel to get some rest for tomorrow.

Saturday morning is parade day but it turns out we can't get parking close enough to see the parade. We see

### Announcing Vela's short story and photo contest.

*Do you have a story to tell about your microboard?*

*Have you got pictures to go with it?*

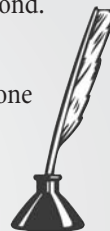
Now is your chance to share these with other microboards and beyond.

Vela is holding a photograph and short story contest.

Send a story, maximum 500 words (we said **SHORT**) with at least one photograph to go with the story.



First prize: \$100.00, Second: \$ 75.00  
Third: \$ 50.00



We will feature stories and photos in upcoming VelaVision newsletters, so now is your time to shine.

Submissions will be accepted via, Linda Perry Executive Director email address: [lindaperry@microboard.org](mailto:lindaperry@microboard.org)

Or post to our office:

**Vela Microboard Association Short Story and Photo Contest**

#100 - 17564 -56A Avenue, Surrey BC. V3S 1G3

To be eligible, all entries must have been received no later than noon on Monday, October 15, 2007.

Winners will be notified by Friday, November 2, 2007

## Adventures with Bree Cont.'

what we can from the van but head off to the stampede grounds to wander the little stalls and buy some souvenirs. Jamie plays some of the games on the midway and I convince Colleen to play a couple. She loses five bucks and complains so much that I am almost in hysterics. We hear the announcer, start to call the pony chariot races which take place before the rodeo starts so we head over to our seats and get set up. Colleen brought the binoculars today. She said she wanted to be able to watch the racing around the track but her first look has brought an interesting discovery: right behind the bull chutes is a small area with a gazebo like tent with a sign saying "Cowboy Corral". Well it turns out this is where the cowboys get ready before their event. I don't know if I'll be able to wrestle the binoculars away from Colleen now. Interesting to find out that cowboys wear spandex bicycle shorts under their jeans. But the rodeo is starting and there is lots to see even without binoculars.

There is another accident today, this time with the chuckwagons but everyone turns out okay. You would think it would be the bull riders or the bronc busters that get hurt but it looks like racing is the more dangerous of the sports out here today. The half time show is a real hoot! Miniature chuckwagons pulled by Shetland ponies. They set up a miniature track in front of the bull shoots. The crowd loves it! There is lots of shouting and cheering just like for the real chuckwagon racers. The ponies are no bigger than a large dog.

Supper time and the stampede is over for today. We buy some chicken and head back to the hotel to rest for

tomorrow. Jamie and Colleen make fun of my dainty cough. Every time the room is quiet one of them will make a soft little cough and then laugh and say "who am I?", then the other person says "It must be Bree" cough again. We are laughing so hard



*Bree and long time best friend Jamie checking out midway games*

I am sure we are keeping our neighbours awake. It's almost midnight before we all calm down and go to sleep.

Sunday is family day and "tough enough to wear pink day" at the Stampede. Some of the proceeds from today go to Breast Cancer research. Most of the cowboys are wearing pink shirts. The stadium is packed to the rafters. Even the wheelchair section is totally full. We are getting to know the different cowboys and learn how well they are doing on the rodeo circuit. Today there are bull riders and calf ropers from as far away as New Zealand and Australia. The big excitement today is that one of the horses gets loose on the track during the pony express event. He starts to run the opposite way around the track. They try to head him off but he just turns around and races past everyone again. They finally pull some gates closed and a large trailer is pulled out to block his way so he is led away by one of his handlers.

We slept in today so that we would

have the energy to go out for a nice dinner and play at the casino. Colleen is not very lucky again. She loses ten bucks and calls it a night. I play my ten bucks for a long time but Colleen doesn't bring me much luck either so I'm down my money.

Guess its time to go watch Jamie. She really knows what she's doing. She plays video blackjack and doubles down and splits and everything (I have no idea what any of that means but Jamie sure does). She made some money tonight so we all call it a night and go to the hotel for some much needed rest.

Monday is much quieter compared to yesterday but before I know it the wheelchair section is packed and more people are coming in. The final event is the bull riding "ride off" and I guess this is the most popular event of most rodeos as the bull rider can make a lot of money on this one ride alone. There are no accidents today. A rider had fallen off during the Mountain Race yesterday but he was back on his horse today and did the ride and came in second. The rodeo comes to a slow close and Colleen puts the binoculars away and we pack up to head home. Jamie and I are lucky because we easily fall asleep on the drive home. It has been a great weekend and we are looking forward to the "West of the Rockies Rodeo Finals" in Prince George in October. But we can't help but think the cowboys need us there to cheer them on at the Canadian Finals in Edmonton in November. Hmm...**ROAD TRIP!!!**

Colleen and I booked a room today (August 1) to attend the Rodeo Finals in Edmonton - still looking for our rich cowboys.

**THANK YOU**

*Thank you to all our Funders & Donors*

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*Vela would also like to express heartfelt appreciation to Gabrielle Miller star of CTV comedies Corner Gas and Robson Arms for her ongoing assistance and enthusiasm as spokesperson on behalf of Vela and Microboards. Thanks as well to the cast and crew of Corner Gas for their support.*



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**Yes, I wish to become a member of Vela Microboard Association:**

- I enclose \$25.00 for a non-voting Annual Family or Individual Membership
- I enclose \$35.00 for a voting Annual Family or Individual Membership
- I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_, which is what I can afford
- We enclose \$100.00 for a business, Organization, or non-profit Society Membership

I would like to make a donation to support the Vela Microboard Association:  
 \$25.00     \$50.00     \$100.00     \$250.00     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

All donations of \$10.00 or more will be sent a tax receipt to the address provided above.  
 Please mail your donation to;  
**#100 - 17564 56A Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V3S 1G3**