



Submitted photo

Lisa Verbicky

THE PASSIONATE ADVOCATE

BY DAVID MORRISON

Dazzled by their eloquence and the authority with which they presented a topic, perhaps you've considered the personality driving the quill of a contributor to this fine publication? Okay, maybe you haven't. But you'd be right to if you did, as we're a fascinating bunch with collective life experience and knowledge beyond imagination! Well, something like that.

Lisa Verbicky is a perfect case in point. You'll know Lisa from her informed, enlightening articles for *The Beacon* - reportage that should leave you in little doubt she's a social commentator who cares deeply for her community. A young mother of two and concerned citizen of Lighthouse Country, she examines the day-to-day matters faced by us all, like housing and schooling. But no-one ever meant it more when she says: "The feel of a town is much

more about people than pretty projects." You gotta love anyone who thinks like that.

"I like to help out the little guy or good causes," she says, modestly deflecting attention from what I believe to be a quietly pivotal role in this neck of the woods. "I think of my community in terms of potential to create a sense of belonging," she continues in a tone mirroring her essays. Yet this is not idealistic claptrap, but borne of genuine compassion and rich wisdom gained from extensive world travel with eyes wide open. Simply put, Lisa is intent to take what she's learned in life and implement it for the greater good.

She is currently working towards a certificate in community economic development as a direct consequence of what she's witnessed on her adventures overseas. "It's a huge passion of mine after seeing how the global economy has

impacted many people around the world, including our own small communities," she explains. More locally-focused positive change to this end is something she's keen to see via, as she expresses it, "an economic development strategy not just for the region, but for our local communities."

This philosophy stems not only from sound personal politics but a wildly diverse and unusual international resume. She's worked as a guide in the Rockies, a Japanese language teacher's assistant, sponsored mountain bike rider, animal hospital nurse and a marketing consultant for a Hollywood-themed sushi franchise in China. She's also taught English to an affluent Hong Kong wine exporter and acted as a house sitter in Germany. The result is one truly world-wise individual.

From the comfort of her... er... "office" (read: laptop on a lap tray in a nest of bed-bound pillows), our Edmonton born heroine feverishly pens "pretty much anything" as a freelancer. As well as her sparkling regular contributions to *The Beacon*, she's working on a children's story, writing for numerous small independent businesses and is involved in the music industry in a most refreshing and innovative way. "I'm helping out with an exciting writing project out of L.A. with the first ever non-profit, industry-based music camp for youth that actually takes kids aged 12-18 out on tour with headlining bands," she announces with pride. Cool!

Despite her work further afield, it seems matters close to home will always remain Lisa's priority. Surely a fine politician in the making if she chose to follow such a path, she sees common sense forward planning as the way ahead. "I would like to see a community 'envisioning' process taken seriously and put into action," she says. I hope her wishes come true, I really do. With such commitment to those beyond her borders, it's only right and fair.

This world needs more like her, eh?

Follow Lisa Verbicky's community reports in these pages.