

# Working overtime to volunteer

*Professionals dedicate time, expertise and passion to support community*

BY J. MAURY HARRIS | for the VBJ

They are men and women of many hats.

Even as a tough economy often demands longer hours at the office, professionals across Clark County are stepping up to help their community, volunteering their increasingly-precious time as members of nonprofit boards, fundraisers and advisors.

However, even dedicated people only have so much time to give. This is why many organizations are continually in need of new volunteer leaders, especially in an economy where philanthropic services are in high demand.

Bruce Davidson, president at Davidson and Associates Insurance in Vancouver, has been on the board of the Clark College Foundation since 2003 and a member of Vancouver Rotary since 1989. According to Davidson, he sees Clark County as exceptional in terms of community involvement, but said that nonprofit organizations are increasingly in need of donations – whether in terms of time or money.

“I think that in today’s economy – where resources from the federal, state and local levels are diminishing – it’s going to be more incumbent than ever before for people to step up and get behind other ways of providing support and care for people,” Davidson said.

Davidson isn’t alone in this belief either. Kim Capeloto, executive vice president of operations and marketing

at Riverview Community Bank, verified the same increase in volunteer requests. Capeloto said working the standard 40-hour week is extremely rare for him, so he’s selective in committing his time.

“Obviously, I have a personal connection to the organizations that I volunteer my time with,” Capeloto said. “There are a lot of causes that add value to the community, but my evaluation is often based on what’s important to me and my family.”

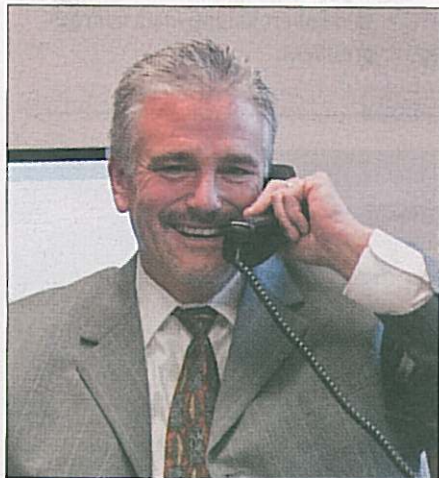
According to Capeloto, that means he still fulfills around 65 percent of the requests he receives. Beyond his professional responsibilities, Capeloto sits on the board of Junior Achievement, Identity Clark County and the School of Piano Technology for the Blind. He also serves on four committees and has dedicated time to emcee, speak and auctioneer at over 40 events in the past year.

But Capeloto said that without overwhelming support and understanding from his family and colleagues, he couldn’t juggle the responsibilities successfully. According to Lisa Lowe, an attorney at Schwabe, Williamson and Wyatt, time is an “X” factor for most volunteers and is one of the first questions she asks before committing to a volunteer role. For most, it comes down to time

management, planning ahead and setting limitations.

“I can’t write huge checks; I’m just not in that financial situation,” Lowe said, “But I can give my time ... and I know how valuable that is to me.”

Lowe also sits on a number of committees and is a board member for Identity Clark County and the Humane Society for Southwest Washington. She said that aside from making a difference in the community, these roles also allow her to meet a diverse group of community members. For her, that’s what makes volunteerism a valuable resource both personally and



Buck Heidrick\_VBJ

In addition to her “day job” at Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt, Lisa Lowe, seen above, sits on several nonprofit boards.

Following a national trend, more and more local business executives spend their free time serving on multiple nonprofit boards. Descending from top left, former GVCC president and CEO Kim Capeloto; Karen Gocia of Normandeau Associates, Inc.; and Davidson Insurance president Bruce Davidson.

professionally, she said.

As for Davidson, the connections are also personal and professional. He noted the connections he has to the community as a local small business owner and as a father. Whether it's the Red Cross, Vancouver Girls Softball Association or Kiwanis, Davidson touted these organizations' impact on the everyday lives of people in the area.

"I have a civic responsibility as a citizen and a business responsibility as a business leader to give back to the community that has supported me and my family," Davidson said. "I don't rely on acknowledgement or recognition because that's not why I'm doing it."

Karen Ciocia, public involvement manager at Normandeau Associates, said this notion is exactly what nonprofit organizations should strive to capture – a genuine passion for a said cause.

"Board members need to contribute, not just money, but their time and expertise," Ciocia said. "Getting people to come on board for the right reasons, and not just to fill out their resume is very important."

For Ciocia, that passion is displayed serving on the board of the Clark County Skills Center, the Red Cross and Partners In Careers. They're causes she personally cares for and says it's because the boards filled positions based on their mission and vision. Lowe agrees that tailoring "good people" to an organization is crucial, but also very tough in a difficult economic environment.

In Lowe's opinion, people are becoming busier, which leaves nonprofits vying for limited time. So her definition of "good people," is one based on the individual's consistency and dedication. She says it's all about the people who step-up by joining committees, taking on projects or knocking on doors.

"Listening recently, companies that used to be able to write large checks are writing smaller checks, if anything at all," Lowe said. "Everyone's struggling to survive during this time, so the discussions about

talent have become more intentional."

According to Lowe and Davidson, the need for volunteers includes assets such as specialized skills, personality traits, vocation, background and connections. So the need for volunteers is perpetual in many ways, and always increasing.

It means a lot of opportunity for those interested in getting

involved. And according to Capeloto, the reasons to volunteer are innumerable in a bustling community like Clark County.

"The catalyst for me is helping these organizations continue serving the community, because seeing the individual successes in our community is what keeps me motivated and keeps me rolling," he said. <sup>VBJ</sup>