

## **Outstanding Women of the Boundary**

People all over the world celebrated International Women's Day on March 8th . In Grand Forks, the Boundary Women's Coalition (BWC) hosted their third annual "Outstanding Women of the Boundary" reception on March 6th to recognize some amazing women in the area. Among the 58 women who were honored for their contribution to the community were four of our own Doukhorbor women: Laura P Verigin, Laura Savinkoff, Selena Demenoff, and Deena Androsoff.

International Women's Day was established by the United Nations in 1977 to celebrate women and their achievements, particularly in the advancement of equality. The focus of this day's event was on acknowledging the positive accomplishments throughout the years and it truly was a heartwarming evening, full of inspiration. The following incredible women were recognized in six different categories:

Community Leader: Laura Savinkoff, Cara Lee Malange, Joan Holmes, Kristine Eyre, Lizanne Eastwood, Selena Demenoff, Angela Burch, Becky (Rebecca) Deane, Grace McGregor, Wendy McCulloch, Sally Garcelon, Marguerite Rotvold, Colleen Lang, Christine Thompson, Connie Marchal, Brenda LaCroix, and Marge Henderson.

Business: Anisah Madden, Nadia Tomashewsky, Stephanie Corfe, Pat Pownell, Lorraine Van Boeyen, Andre Harrison, Shella Gardezi, Melanie Zane, Connie Sorenson Lawrence, Leah Carnahan and Marsha McGregor.

Healthy Role Model: Marge Henderson, Lorraine Lindy, Margaret Eek, Kim Wright, Rachael Lautand, Twyla Frey, Karin Bagn, Mona Mattei, Heather McIver, Patricia Ostlund and Sonya Wood.

Inspiring Friend: Karen Donald, Lizanne Eastwood, Louise McAnerin, Deena Androsoff, Twyla Frey, Jennifer Eaton, Nettie Sims Thomas, Suzanne Lee and Cora Ludwar.

Outstanding Youth: Selena Demenoff, Katelyn Gourlie and Stephanie Mandryk.

Inspiring Senior: Leona Sharkey, Phyllis Funk, Kay Read, Laura P Verigin, Margaret Eek, Alice Glanville and Peggy Phillips.

Congratulations to you all!

### **Laura P Verigin "Inspiring Senior"**

*The following letter of nomination was submitted to the Boundary Women's Coalition for their consideration in the selection of candidates for the annual "Outstanding Women of the Boundary" celebration.*

Laura has served not only the Doukhorbor community but the wider Boundary area throughout her lifetime in activities that promote peace and social justice through non-violent communication, dialogue and action. As the wife of the Honorary Chairman of the largest Doukhorbor organization, the USCC, her life was under the public microscope yet she remained humble, dignified and compassionate. Despite years of discrimination and disregard from the wider public simply for being a Doukhorbor she continued to be true to her faith and to the pursuit of peaceful solutions. Also under this microscope this lady raised three children, participated with her husband in his global travels and activities but remained an individual, honored and respected. She hosted many dignitaries from around the world – Government officials and activists, artists, writers, etc – while running a household. She is an inspiring lady that deserves to be honored for giving of herself, not as a martyr but as a loving, caring woman to her local community, her Doukhorbor family, her global community while feeding, clothing and guiding her children and supporting a husband through his lifetime of service. Since the death of her husband this past fall, she is struggling to adjust and once again her indomitable spirit rises and she

continues to serve our community in a dignified, compassionate, loving, spiritual way that honors all. I feel she deserves the honor of Inspirational Senior because of the inspiration she gives to all of us in the many hurdles she has had to overcome where public life melded with private – really she did not have a private life that was not scrutinized by someone whether Government, the Doukhorbor community or the broader community. Not a life that I would knowingly choose but she did and serves us all well.



At the USCC Talent Night in Grand Forks, March 14, 2009, USCC Executive Director, JJ Verigin presents flowers to (l. to r.): Laura Verigin, Laura Savinkoff and Selena Demenoff.  
D.E. (Jim) Popoff photo.