



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

VALERIE STEFANICH

by Patricia Santilli

"I'm English." That's what Valerie said when she sat down for a chat. However, if you know Valerie, you KNOW she's English. And it's not just the British accent that will captivate you; it's her lovely manners, her easy kindnesses and her "cheerio" attitude that will pull you into her world.

Raised as a British Army brat (Val's own words), she lived in Germany, Cyprus and Nova Scotia, became a librarian and then, at the tender age of 21, started on a world trip with a friend. She got as far as Milwaukee and gradually fell in love with it...and with Dan, whom she met while studying at UWM for an English degree and later a graduate degree in Social Work. And she's stayed in love with Milwaukee because of its accessibility and its friendly atmosphere. By the way, she's also stayed in love with Dan. They're both avid readers and love to cook and entertain. Valerie is also interested in health systems around the globe and in 2005 toured with a group of gerontologists in Cuba and in 2006 helped to administer polio vaccines in poor rural villages in India.

Valerie is thrilled with the Woman's Club of Wisconsin. "Built by women for women," the traditions, the committees ... it "offered much more than what I expected." She loves how WCW is open to change, new ideas and activities. It reaches out to the community through the Foundation, the Community Outreach Committee, and the new opportunities for business networking. And ... Valerie actually LIKES committee work and developing new programs. You might want to attend one of her *Conversations on Aging* sessions, or the 3rd Annual Central City Bus Tour in June or simply donate eye-glasses to the yearly collection she started for our Club and the Milwaukee Rotary Club to donate to South America.

Valerie's enthusiasm is catching. She and her business partner of 28 years, Phyllis Brostoff, have created a private, professional care management and care giving business (Stowell Associates Select Staff Inc.) employing close to 180 employees. Their "good and loyal" staff and Val's and Phyllis' leadership won them the BBB Torch Award for Ethics & Integrity in Business. Impressive! Although Valerie recently moved her office to her home, she will continue to oversee her business and expand her involvement in Milwaukee community endeavors.

Visiting her daughter Megan, a nurse, in Seattle and connecting with her son Andrew, a commercial real estate broker in Milwaukee, she and Dan will take their annual trip back to Bath, England, to visit her "mum" and travel the world whenever possible. But all in all, her English ways have endeared her to our appreciative American lives.