

THE ASBC PAGE

IN MEMORY OF JAN BLACKBOURN

Janice Blackbourn (nee Champoux), a Founding Member of the Archaeological Society of BC, Nanaimo Branch, passed away suddenly at her home, on Saturday, July 10, 2004. She is survived by her two children Jessica and Michael Blackbourn, her sisters Phyllis Odell and Paula Shorrock, her mother Helen Champoux, her former husband David Blackbourn, her colleagues and her many friends in the ASBC, Nanaimo Branch (ASBC-NB).

Jan was born in Rhode Island, USA, on January 18, 1942. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science from the University of Rhode Island, where she developed a love for science, astrobiology and intellectual debate. During the mid-sixties, Jan moved to Vancouver, where she worked at the University of British Columbia. While there, she met and married David Blackbourn, in June of 1968. They started a family, and after staying home for a few years, Jan went back to work at Douglas College. The family moved to Nanaimo in the early 1980's. Jan worked intermittently at the Pacific Biological Station until recently, when she became the station's histologist. Jan particularly enjoyed the electron-microscopy part of her job, as well as the thrill of discovery. She found and described a new parasite, which turned out to be not only a new species, but a whole new class. Over the course of her career, Jan authored or co-authored numerous publications.



Jan and Daphne (ASBC-Nanaimo Branch)

Jan had the heart of a teacher and loved to be able to share her knowledge with others; part of the satisfaction she had in her job was sharing her skills with the younger or less experienced lab techs. Nothing made her happier than discussing ideas or being part of a lively debate, especially over a meal. Her enquiring mind and forthright manner made her fearless in the pursuit of "the truth."

The Harbour City Photography Club has also lost a valued member in Jan. Photography was a hobby Jan pursued with a sense of wonder and exploration, as can be seen in her dazzling microphotographs of Vitamin C. These photos transcend the realm of the snapshot to the sphere of art.

During her time in Vancouver, Jan worked as a volunteer on the St. Mungo Cannery archaeological excavation, which she enjoyed immensely. Consequently, when given the opportunity to participate at the 1992 Departure Bay archaeological project, Jan was one of the first to volunteer and she was instrumental in the creation of the Nanaimo branch of the ASBC. Since then she has been an important asset to the ASBC-NB, sitting on the executive in most of the intervening years. Jan fulfilled the position of President, membership coordinator, treasurer and most recently newsletter editor, admirably. Over the years, Jan also worked hard to convince the city to include archaeology in its official community plan. She contributed greatly to the dialogue with our provincial executive, and brought intelligence and reason to our own meetings. She will be sorely missed.

Jan was a loyal friend and mother: supportive and caring. Although bewildered by her children (she often wondered how she had produced such hugely creative kids), she was extremely proud of them. Jan also loved, food, fossils and fun. She laughed much, slept little and knew great joy in her family, work, and the beauty of Vancouver Island. She will remain forever in the hearts and minds of all who knew her.