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FERNWOOD

SPRING 2006

NEWS

News from the Fernwood Community Association

Million Dollar Dilemma

In the February 2006 edition of the Fernwood News, we called it "a legacy for a hundred years"; today, it's City Council's million dollar dilemma. The issue is the City's on-again off-again commitment to rectifying the City's bureaucratic error that now requires a \$950,000 solution. Are you perplexed? Well, you're not the only one.

As we reported in February, City Council unanimously agreed in principle last November 3 to fund extensive renovations to earthquake-proof the Fernwood Community Association's "Little Fernwood" hall at 1923 Fernwood Road. This decision was confirmed on January 30, with Council authorizing the allocation of funds. At the end of January, after six years of painstaking research and documentation, endless consultations with architects and lawyers, and hundreds of volunteer hours spent petitioning, pleading, and fundraising (\$200,000) -- all of it simply to rectify a problem that the City itself had created -- finally it looked as if the problem was sorted out, and as if we could get on with the long-planned and long-delayed renovations. It was "a done deal," right?

Apparently not.

A little over a week later, on Thursday, February 9, Council reconsidered, opting now to table the motion that could potentially see nearly \$2 million go to the FCA and the Fernwood Community Centre. Mayor and council wanted to sit down with the FCA and FCC to discuss a situation that City councillors referred to in the media by using words like "inferno" and "toxicity" (Victoria News 2/15/06, A1). After several delays, the meeting finally took place on March 30. Three hours of deliberation involving three board members from each of the two Fernwood groups, plus Mayor Lowe, Councillors Hughes and Madoff, a facilitator, and one City staff member concluded with a single agreement: the FCA and FCC agreed that they wanted the City to make up its mind about funding for Fernwood.

So what happened?

In a word: nothing.

At the FCA's monthly board meeting on April 12, FCA board members asked Councillor Hughes whether City Council intended to make the FCA request a line item in the 2006 budget. Hughes sidestepped the question by suggesting that the real issue was not about money, but about two community organizations that don't get along. If Councillor Hughes is right, the City, in effect, is using neighbourhood issues as justification for backing out of earlier commitments: to the FCA to rectify a long-standing problem created by the City, and to the FCC to help it secure funding for an important project it is planning. The City's position may solve the City's million dollar dilemma, but it does nothing to solve Fernwood's problems.

Is that fair?

We don't think so.

We urge Council to reconsider. Please lift the motion from the table, de-link the two proposals, and vote on each separately. We trust that you will see the real merits of both.

For in-depth information about the FCA's position, please consult its webpage at www.fernwoodvic.ca. Click on "A Brief History of the FCA Building Renovation Problems" and "Questions & Answers About Some Current Fernwood Issues."

See also page two: "A Tale of Two Organizations."

Fernwood Profile

Paul Phillips Has Left His Mark on Fernwood

by Ben Isitt



Paul Phillips outside his partially renovated 1890 heritage home at the corner of Balmoral and Camosun. Photo: Ben Isitt

The corner of Balmoral and Camosun may resemble a disaster zone some days, but the owner of the 1890 yellow character home that rises out of the rubble has earned his place in Fernwood history.

"I'm always astonished by the gentleness and the niceness of the people here," says Paul Phillips, age 73, whose recollections are coloured by his sharp Welsh tongue. "The spirit of this place -- through all the mess-ups, all the interference from outside sources -- they'll all fall by the wayside and sooner or later this place will demonstrate its spirit."

He should know. Thirty years ago, Phillips was a key player in Fernwood's Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), leveraging a million dollars in federal money that spawned both the FCA and FCC buildings, and "pocket park" street closures on Queens, Chambers, Grant, Pembroke and Gladstone. As a co-op organizer, Phillips helped build the first curb-side recycling box, forerunner to today's Blue Box program. He prevented the demolition of heritage buildings and helped form the Spring Ridge Housing Co-op. Later, Phillips ran the Fernwood Solar Farm, which survives today as the Compost Education Centre. The owner of three Fernwood properties, Phillips provides housing for over a dozen low-income people. The process may be messy, but the results are widely felt.

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The *Fernwood News* is a community newspaper, open to anyone wishing to share information or offer an opinion of interest to the people of Fernwood. Opinions expressed are those of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the FCA or contributors. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the City of Victoria, our advertisers, and the hard-working volunteers who help produce this newspaper.

We welcome your Fernwood stories and photos for the Summer issue. Deadline for submissions is Sunday July 15th 2006

Please support our local advertisers.

Fernwood Neighbourhood Association Membership Form

If you live or work in the Fernwood area (boundaries Quadra, Hillside, Fort and Shelbourne), make your voice heard by joining the Fernwood Neighbourhood Association.

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A Tale of Two Organizations

Editorial, part II

So what exactly is it about the relationship between the Fernwood Community Association and the Fernwood Community Centre that has City councillors using words like "toxicity" and "inferno"?

This is no place to revisit the facts and mythologies of the failed merger talks between the FCA and FCC in 2004-05. That's history now. Let's look at what has happened since then -- in particular, since the end of January when the FCC approached the City with its own funding request.

In the March 2006 edition of the Village Vibe, the FCC clearly stated its position vis-à-vis the FCA: "You wouldn't know it by reading the city's daily paper lately, but there is no ongoing funding feud between the FCCS ... and the Fernwood Community Association" ("Media Hype?" 2).

Meanwhile, at the March meeting of the FCA board of directors, the following motion was proposed: "that the FCA re-affirm its commitment to maintaining a cordial and cooperative relationship with the FCCS based on mutual respect and support, and on a clear delineation of our respective and distinct roles and interests in the community." This motion passed unanimously.

So where exactly is the evidence for the "toxic inferno"?

Let's be clear about the facts. Although the FCA board doesn't normally take an official position on FCC initiatives, there is widespread support among individual FCA board members for FCC initiatives that are in the best interest of the community and which don't simply duplicate or encroach upon traditional FCA activities and interests.

But there can be no denying that the FCA has serious concerns about the FCC.

Look again at the quotation from the Village Vibe: "there is no ongoing funding feud between the FCCS ... and the Fernwood Community Association." This pronouncement doesn't exactly jive with the following statement by FCC executive director Roberta Martell, made during a CBC radio discussion with FCA president Joanne Murray on February 9.

"Please come work with us! Please work with us, Joanne! Please work with us -- save the city a million dollars. There are people sleeping in doorways; there are people addicted to meth; there are not enough recovery beds; there aren't enough police; the planning department doesn't have enough officers; and the city is going to spend two million dollars within a block of each other? I think it's shameful and the taxpayers have been crying out!"

Ms. Martell's effusive refrain of "please work with us" is one she has repeated elsewhere during her busy media campaign at the end of January and in early February ("And I am just going to continue to invite the Fernwood Community Association to come and work with us," she told A Channel News, in early February 2006).

This refrain implies that an uncooperative FCA has been unwilling to work with a rebuked FCC -- another favourite theme of Ms. Martell's. Thus, on January 31, the Times Colonist noted Ms. Martell's view that the FCC "has been frustrated in its attempts to work [with] the FCA" ("\$2 million approved for Fernwood groups" B1); and on February 10, the Times Colonist noted that Martell "said the centre has sought co-operation from the FCA" ("Fernwood grants in jeopardy" B1).

All her protestations notwithstanding, the fact is that Ms. Martell and

the FCC have not made a single overture to work with the FCA since the failed merger talks. That's right: not once. If they claim otherwise, ask them for the evidence. Take our word for it: it doesn't exist.

Or ask Ms. Martell herself. While you're at it, ask her why the FCC has rebuffed every attempt in the past year to initiate dialogue between the FCA and FCC -- and not once, but four times. In February of 2005, when the City offered to put up \$5000 for mediation, the FCA agreed, but the FCC said no. Soon after, a respected member of the community (an FCA member who supported an FCA-FCC merger) offered to facilitate dialogue between the organizations, the FCA agreed, but the FCC again said no. On June 23, Ms. Murray wrote to the FCC board suggesting mediation -- a direct response to the City's concern about "balkanization" in Fernwood. Two and a half months later, on September 12, FCC president Lee Herrin responded on behalf of the FCC, saying that "we don't feel that ... we can commit to a mediation process." Finally, in mid-February of this year, a mediator, this one contacted by a Fernwood business owner who wanted to help, approached the FCA and FCC about the possibility of initiating dialogue. Again, the FCA agreed, but the FCC said no. At the very time that Roberta Martell was telling the media how uncooperative the FCA was, the FCC was turning down an opportunity for dialogue. Please work with us? Come on.

If Ms. Martell really wants to foster better relations between the FCA and FCC, she would do well to avoid taking an us-or-them approach. On January 23, discussing the future of the FCA and FCC, the Times Colonist quoted Martell as saying that City councillors "have to make a courageous decision as to who represents Fernwood" ("Fernwood Funding Dilemma" B2). This kind of all-or-nothing posturing is not helpful.

We believe that there is a role in Fernwood for both the FCA and the FCC. As a modest organization not given to histrionic effusions or grand ventures, the FCA is at its best when finessing the details of nuts and bolts neighbourhood issues such as land use and safety concerns -- exactly the sort of details that don't interest Ms. Martell ("I find the minutiae of the day to day quite depressing," she noted in an email in which she extricated herself from involvement in a serious neighbourhood problem that didn't interest her [a private correspondence with a Fernwood resident on June 22, 2004]; and when Ms. Murray attempted to explain the FCA-FCC building issue in the context of other neighbourhood situations during her February 9 CBC radio appearance, an exasperated Ms. Martell interrupted her and suggested that she was not "really into the minutiae"). Unfortunately, community building is all about doing the details.

Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of FCC members and staff are decent, hard-working, community-spirited folk who want what's best for Fernwood.

That's why, in March of this year, the FCA board, in the presence of Councillor Hughes, debated and unanimously re-affirmed motions to work cooperatively with the FCC -- but as a separate organization following its own distinct path.

Given the statements made by the leadership of the FCC in the past year, what more could we do? Easter Sunday, 2006

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Do We Need a Derelict Building Bylaw?

by members of the FCALand Use Committee

We have a number of commercial and residential derelict or boarded-up buildings in Victoria and around the Fernwood neighbourhood. As the Times Colonist noted in its February 18, 2005 editorial:

"Derelict buildings are more than eyesores. They can be hazardous and attract vermin and vagrants, addicts and arsonists. They can ruin the look of a street and undermine property values in a neighbourhood."

For the last few months, the Downtown Advisory Committee has been looking at the issue of vacant and derelict buildings/empty lots. Although its work is continuing, we hope that they will recommend to City Council that the City take some action to address Victoria's derelict and boarded-up buildings.

In 2002, Winnipeg enacted its "Vacant and Derelict Buildings Bylaw" to address the growing issue of abandoned and boarded-up dwellings in that city. The objective of the bylaw, which restricts the amount of time a building may remain vacant and/or boarded-up, is to ensure that vacant buildings meet basic maintenance standards so that they do not devalue or pose a danger to surrounding properties and neighbourhoods. The Winnipeg bylaw has time limits and a process for declaring a building derelict, mechanisms



1176 Yates Street - Boarded up in November 2003. Approved for 17 housekeeping units.

that allow the City to take title ownership without compensation to the owner. So far, the City has not taken ownership of any buildings under this bylaw, and some owners have demolished buildings that were beyond repair. Winnipeg City officials believe the bylaw encourages owners to maintain their property, since allowing them to become derelict and boarding them up is now no longer a viable option.



1255 Pandora - Boarded up for over a year.

When you look at the pictures of the residential buildings currently boarded up in Victoria, it is easy to see that at one time they probably provided affordable rental housing. With rental vacancy rates at an all-time low and rents usually above what low-income people can afford to pay, it is unfortunate that we have any boarded-up residential buildings at all.

For the past eight years, the City has taken a positive approach downtown by offering a five-year property-tax holiday to

developers who provide housing while upgrading heritage buildings. This has been a good measure for downtown; however, it may now be time for a bylaw similar to Winnipeg's, a bylaw that will provide the motivation for owners to maintain their buildings.

Based on Winnipeg's experience with its bylaw, it is safe to assume that if Victoria had a similar bylaw some boarded-up buildings would become vacant lots. Is this acceptable? The process involved in Victoria's development of a bylaw similar to Winnipeg's would need to allow for a public discussion about how best to deal with the vacant and derelict buildings around town.

The Fernwood Community Association's Land Use Committee believes that it's time for City Council to engage in that public debate.

All photos by Stephanie Hill.



2415 Quadra Street - Derelict and then fire damaged. Now up for sale.

For more information about Winnipeg's bylaw, go to http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/pdf_files/vacantdwgs.pdf

The FCA's Land Use Committee will discuss this issue at its June 7, 2006 Land Use meeting at 7:30 pm at 1923 Fernwood Road (Main Hall). Everyone is welcome to attend.



1909 Birch - Boarded up for at least 20 years - roof now has holes in it.



2321 Cook: Boarded up in Sept. 2005: approved for seven suites and seven housekeeping rooms

Councillor's Report

by Helen Hughes



Councillor Helen Hughes

Spring is returning and with it outdoor activities and sidewalk seating at local coffee shops -- a great opportunity to greet neighbours who have been inside during the cooler rainy days of winter. I also hope it will be a new beginning for Fernwood residents to work together in a collaborative atmosphere for the betterment of the whole neighbourhood.

On March 30, three members of the boards of the Fernwood Community Association and the Fernwood Community Centre met with Mayor Alan Lowe, Councillor Pam Madoff, and me to exchange information and discuss the future of Fernwood. We, as a City Council, also want to see vibrant businesses in the Fernwood Square area. We must work together in a cooperative manner to achieve this dream.

The owners of the Shell station at the intersection of Yates, Fort, and Fernwood are in the process of asking Council to rezone the property.

The request is to change the use from a gas and service station to permit a retail store that would replace some of the service bays and create an expanded retail store. For over a year the proponents have worked with the Fernwood Community Association's Land Use Committee to make design changes suggested by community members. A public hearing will be held, so, if you want to be part of the process, watch for the sign that will give the hearing date.

A successful rezoning was granted for 2025 Chambers. This is very good news, since the sidewalk in front of this property and at 1209 Pembroke (a corner house that also faces onto Chambers) has been a source of concern for many people. An easement has been granted to the City by the owners of 1209, so that when 2025 is built, a proper sidewalk/driveway will be installed, completing the sidewalk between Pembroke and Gladstone.

The City recently approved a \$15,000 grant for a Youth Outreach Worker for the Fairfield, Oaklands, and Fernwood neighbourhoods. This person would help youth on a referral basis, and work with students and teacher personnel at Victoria High School and Central Middle School.

Looking beyond Fernwood to the wider community, I am pleased to report that a Poet Laureate position has been created by the City of Victoria. A public call for applicants has been made. If you would like more information, phone Gail Price Douglas at 361-0358. In May 2005, the City of Victoria passed a proclamation declaring that we are a Learning Community.

Discussions are being held with the Greater Victoria Public Library to provide an expansion of its services as a means of achieving this goal. Watch for a "Festival of Learning" in September!

Next time you are downtown, watch for historic sidewalk prisms, which are three-inch purple glass squares dating from the 1900s. Janis Ringuette, a Victoria resident, presented City Council with an exhaustive research report about this unique feature in our city. There are 11,125 intact prisms in downtown Victoria; another 495 are missing or filled with other material. Unfortunately, damage and past repairs have had a negative effect upon them, but the City is now aware of how to preserve these gems. The largest number of sidewalk prisms are located around the Yarrow Building (Broughton, Broad, and Fort Streets). When the sun shines on them, the purple color is radiant. For more information about glass prisms, go to <http://glassian.org/Prism/index.html>

I can be contacted at 361-0217 (City Hall) or 361-1291 (home), or by email at hhughes@victoria.ca

Heritage Corner

1459 Vining St 1898-1901
Thomas & Jessie E. Donovan
Builder: Thomas Donovan

Thomas Donovan, a bricklayer, bought the land by 1895, and began building the house about 1898. However it wasn't completed until 1901. Thomas was born in Newport, Wales, in 1866 and came to Victoria in 1891. The 1891 census reveals that he was the sole Welshman boarding with nine Scots, three of them carpenters. In 1895 Thomas, a Catholic, married Jessie Terry, an Episcopalian born in Toronto in 1874 who came here in 1884. Thomas was a contractor and a foreman on the construction of the Inner Harbour Causeway across James Bay in 1905. He was killed Dec 1913, when his hunting shack at Elk Lake burned at midnight. He was seen returning to the shack after dusk, but was identified only by his gun, knife, watch, and belt buckle in the ruins. Jessie was left with at least five children aged 4 to 18. She was still living in the house in 1924 with two of them: Eva an assistant at The Photorium, and Fred a mechanic at Victoria Auto Livery. By 1929 the family had moved; by 1937 sons Fred and Thomas Cornelius were both working as shinglers. Jessie outlived her husband by 60 years and died at age 99.



1459 Vining Street, 1984 Photo: VHF/Norm Spanos

In the early 1930s the owners were Lillian K. (Allen) and Bruce A. "Pinkie" McKelvie, managing editor of the Victoria Daily Colonist for seven years. Pinkie was born in Vancouver in 1889; he was given his nickname by a fellow reporter when he was young, plump and pink-cheeked. He and brother Archibald J. "Spook" McKelvie became police reporters in Vancouver in the days when they were licensed to carry revolvers themselves. He later covered politicians, mine disasters and earned an international reputation for his stories on the misdeeds of religious cultist Brother XII. During his time Pinkie also worked for the British and Canadian secret services. He was passionate about BC history, lobbied for heritage status of the Petroglyph site near Nanaimo, wrote books on BC history, and was president of BC Historical Association and grand factor of Native Sons of BC. He was a champion of BC Indians; the Sliamons made him an honorary chief. Pinkie McKelvie died in 1960 and was buried at St. Johns Church in Cobble Hill, where he'd lived for many years.

Excerpted from *This Old House: Victoria's Heritage Neighbourhoods, volume one, (Fernwood & Victoria West)* by The Victoria Heritage Foundation

Committees of the Association

Land Use Committee. Chair: Stephanie Hill. Meets at 7:00 on the first Wednesday of every month.

Building Committee. Chair: Juan Carlos Flores. Meets at 5:00 on the third Thursday of every month.

Safety Committee. Co-chairs: Joanne Murray and Brian J. Day. Meets at 7:30 on the fourth Monday of every month.

Cultural Committee. Chair: Richard Olafson. Meets as required.

Communications Committee. Chair: Tony Sprckett. Meets at 7:00 on the second Monday of every month.

Contact office@fernwoodvic.ca or 384-7441 for additional information.

The board of directors of the Fernwood Community Association meets at 7:00 on the second Wednesday of every month except August. The boardroom is at the back of 1923 Fernwood, at the top of the disability ramp. Parking is located at the back of the building. The public is welcome. Please contact the office beforehand if you wish to make a presentation.

Safety Committee Report

by members of the Safety Committee.

Created in 2002 in response to neighbourhood concerns about problem apartments at 2120 Ridge Road and 2111 Spring Street, the FCA's Safety Committee has evolved from a single-issue committee to one with multiple interests.

As reported in the last issue of the Fernwood News, the troubled situation at problem apartments on Ridge Road and Spring Street is now (we hope) history, but committee members and neighbours remain vigilant, working with Brian Siddall of Brown Brothers to identify problems as they arise at those properties. Fortunately, there have been few problems of late, but with the City Council's six-month review coming up in May, the committee will be making representations to Council and the Bylaw office. On February 21, committee co-chair Brian J. Day toured 2111 Spring with Brian Siddall, who discussed with Day planned upgrades to the building, and showed him a suite that was under renovation. Siddall noted that at this stage of the ongoing renovation, the emphasis is on interior rather than exterior work. He made a point too of emphasizing that he wants to hear from neighbourhood with concerns (call 385 8771). The committee and neighbours remain concerned about recent visits to the properties by their contractually "red-zoned" owner Inderjit Gill. We have a zero-tolerance policy where Mr. Gill is concerned, reporting all "Gill sightings" to Siddall, and to the City's senior bylaw officer Dan Scoones. We have been assured that Mr. Gill has had impressed upon him the inappropriateness of these visits, which could affect his ability to retain his business licence.

In response to ongoing neighbourhood concerns, the Safety Committee recently sent a letter to the City requesting that it consider creating a uniform speed limit for Fernwood Road. We'll keep you posted on developments.

In response to one committee member's request, Councillor Hughes promised to look into the speed limit on Cook Street at George Jay School.

With the help of Councillor Hughes, we hope in an upcoming issue of this column to be able to confirm statistically something that many neighbours are telling us anecdotally: that Fernwood has become a much safer place, with fewer break-ins and police visits. On our walks around the neighbourhood, we are certainly noticing a lot fewer drug-related paraphernalia lying about -- a reassuring thing for anyone with small children. The decision of the Bylaw Office to close down problem properties at 2123 Cook and 1301 Gladstone as well as the changes it helped effect on Ridge Road and Spring Street have played a large part in this very positive change -- though the closing down of 2123 Cook has created its own problems, as noted in the article on derelict buildings elsewhere in this issue of the News.

Finally, the Safety Committee is happy to be working with residents from the Harris Green end of our neighbourhood on a party planned for later this summer on the Harris Green public lawn in front of the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Although the exact nature of this party has not yet been determined, a neighbourhood meeting is planned at the First Church of Christ, Scientist on April 24, to discuss what the neighbourhood would like to see, both for this community party and for longer-term plans for Harris Green, a green space that many neighbours feel is no longer as "resident-friendly" as it used to be. As always, we will keep you posted.

The Safety Committee meets in the FCA boardroom on the fourth Monday of each month, at 7:30 pm.

Communications Committee Report

by Tony Sprckett, committee chair

The recently reconstituted Communications Committee has been busy in recent months. The committee has a three-fold mandate:

1. To disseminate information to our members and/or the public;
2. To demonstrate the value of the FCA to the community;
3. To develop communications policy and tools to support the communications needs of the FCA.

The two primary communications vehicles of the Fernwood Community Association are the Fernwood News and the website at: www.fernwoodvic.ca The website will be revamped this spring and will continue to be available at the newly acquired domain above.

The committee is also currently developing an external media policy and a supporting toolkit, to get our message out when the need arises.

The committee developed the following Terms of Reference statement for the Fernwood News in February of 2005:

The Communications Committee of the Fernwood Community Association (FCA) appoints Mark Bateman, Brian Day, Ben Isitt, and Joanne Murray as editorial board of the Fernwood News for the next four issues (May, August, and November 2006, and February 2007), effective immediately. As part of its mandate, the editorial board is granted full authority to accept, reject, edit, and request changes to all copy received by the paper for publication. As part of its mandate, the editorial board must:

1. be mindful that the paper has a special relationship with the FCA, and that it will reflect the values of that organization;
 2. actively solicit and consider copy from interested community members;
 3. discuss plans for and progress on each upcoming issue at the meeting of the Communications Committee immediately before publication (April, July, and October, 2006, and January 2007);
 4. engage in a critique of the latest issue at the meeting of the Communications Committee immediately after publication (May, August, and November, 2006, and February 2007).
- The editorial board maintains the following principles and practices:
1. that the newspaper must actively aim to be financially independent;
 2. that Mark Bateman is the paper's publisher, Brian Day its copy editor, and Joanne Murray its financial administrator;
 3. that all text copy must be submitted to Brian Day by no later than the 15th day of the month immediately preceding publication;
 4. that all photographs and other graphic submissions must be submitted to Mark Bateman by no later than the 15th day of the month immediately preceding publication;
 5. that all submissions must be submitted via email; text copy should be submitted as "Plain Text" documents;
 6. that the final edited version of all text copy will be submitted to Mark Bateman by Brian Day;
 7. that every reasonable effort should be made to consult and discuss with contributors changes made to their submissions, though the editorial board reserves the right to make changes without consultation on late submissions and where the exigencies of publication layout require it;
 8. that the Fernwood News will be published to the website as soon as possible after the hard-copy edition has been finalized.

Furthermore, the editorial board should meet (or communicate electronically) at least twice in the two weeks between the submission deadline and the publication date: once to discuss the inclusion, exclusion, and layout of copy; and once to view and edit the final layout of the text before it is sent to the printer. During these meetings (real or "virtual"), at least half of the editorial board must be involved for decisions to be made about inclusions, exclusions, and layout.

The Communications Committee meets in the FCA boardroom on the second Monday of each month, at 7:00 pm. If you are interested in participating, please contact the committee in advance at: communications@fernwoodvic.ca

Cultural Committee Report

by Richard Olafson

The Fernwood Cultural Committee was formed in the early 1990s in response to a growing need in Fernwood for a cultural policy, and to promote the vibrant culture of Fernwood, which is home to many artists, writers, and theatrical and musical performers. It has always been part of the Fernwood Community Association's mandate to provide cultural space to the community and to encourage cultural activities. Over the years, the heritage building at 1923 Fernwood Road has hosted Cafe Sympatico, a weekly Blues Jam, numerous musicians, art shows, Reggae events, a meeting place of artists, and much more. There is the unforgettable moment, perhaps ten years ago, when P.K. Page, an iconic figure in Canadian poetry, showed up for a poetry reading, put her name on the open mike list, and got up to read a poem just like everyone else.

The home to Victoria's only intact heritage village, Fernwood has always had an extraordinary amount of cultural activity. If Fernwood is the cultural hub of Victoria, 1923 Fernwood is cultural centre of Fernwood, with all spokes on the cultural wheel emanating outward from there. The FCA's "Little Fernwood" hall provides an economical space for workshops, classes, and rehearsals. Because the hall is the only venue of its kind in Victoria, its importance to the community cannot be stressed enough. In a city with limited small-venue performance spaces, this building meets a real need, serving a broad spectrum of groups, from the eccentric and unusual to the mainstream.

One of the more recent and important developments has been the committee's relationship with Theatre Inconnu. Although associated with its long-time Market Square location, Theatre Inconnu has been located in Little Fernwood hall since 2004. Under the leadership of Clayton Jevne as artistic director, Theatre Inconnu already has an impressive thirty-year history of theatre in Victoria, both as a touring and local company -- a stellar example of how out of the local and the particular comes the global and the universal. This is a very important, yet arms-length relationship, in which both groups, the Fernwood Community Association and Theatre Inconnu, have flourished.

Recent and upcoming cultural events at Little Fernwood include a one-act play festival, poetry reading, and songwriter's showcase. A cabaret-style coffee house featuring local Fernwood musicians is currently under consideration, something that we hope will become a monthly event.

The Cultural Committee welcomes your ideas and input.

Fernwood Total Plastic Recycle Pick-up

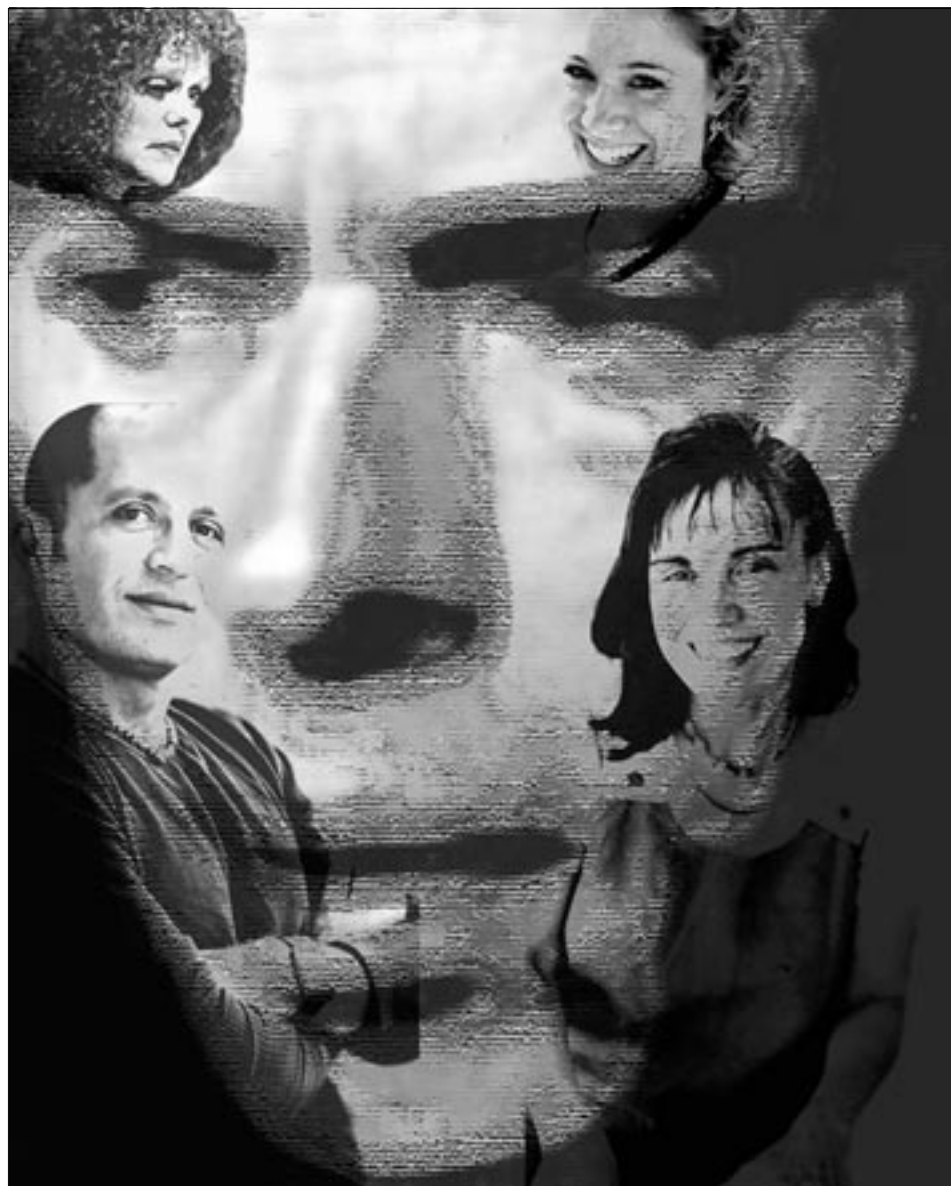


Bring all recyclable plastics to
Fernwood Community Centre
1240 Gladstone Ave.

2nd Saturday of
each month
10am-1pm



Theatre Inconnu!



Fernwood's "other theatre," Theatre Inconnu, which has its home in the FCA's Little Fernwood Hall, has some dates for you to mark on your calendar.

Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris, May 19 - June 3

This intimate, cabaret-style production has been an international hit for over thirty years. Of Belgian birth, Jacques Brel was one of the 20th century's greatest poet-singer-songwriters. His passionate performances are legendary, and the emotion of his lyrics and melodies crossed all borders. His untimely death in 1978 cast an entire continent into deep mourning. This production, which introduced North American audiences to the genius of Brel, is a collection of his songs, telling the timeless story of love, life, and humanity. Cam Culham, Donna Williams, Christian Paolo, and Stephanie Gill will share their wonderful singing talents with accompanist June Bender. Although most of the songs will be done in English translation, some will be sung in the original French. The passion, humour, and insight of Brel's poetry and the beauty of his melodies are unsurpassed. This is a concert that all will enjoy!

May 19 - June 3, evening and matinee shows (phone for details)

Tickets \$10 & \$12

Half-price (\$6) preview on Tuesday, May 16

Pay What You Can on Wednesday, May 24

The Little Fernwood Hall
1923 Fernwood Rd.
360-0234

www.theatreinconnu.com

Fernwood's Spring Ridge Community Well Update

by Bill Goers

The discovery of water locally is described by J. D. Pemberton, the Colonial Surveyor, in his 1852 report to Hudson's Bay Company: "the spring...lies high on the top of a gravel hill or bank... [and] there are some other springs of a similar kind in the neighborhood as yet untried..."

This "hill or bank" was most probably what is now Stevenson Park, the Fernwood Community Centre, and Victoria High School. Other well-chronicled springs were located at Princess Street and Spring Street, Pembroke Street and Ridge Road, and across from Stevenson Park's northwest corner on Pembroke Street.

These springs had been a free local water supply since their discovery. On this basis, in 1858 Governor James Douglas declared the springs a public reserve.

Three years later, in 1861, George Hunter Carey (Vancouver Island's Attorney General) and another local named John J. Cochrane "bought" the springs from the Hudson's Bay Company. They fenced off the area and were answered with a fierce public protest, which culminated in the fence being burned. A police court ensued. John D. Montrose was accused of tearing down the fence. A waterman, William Harrison, declared that he was placed in charge of the springs in 1858 by Sheriff Muir, who was acting under Governor Douglas' orders. The sale collapsed, with the court ruling that the HBC had no right to sell the springs that Governor Douglas had proclaimed a preserve.

In April 1867, the HBC re-conveyed Vancouver Island to Queen Victoria. The Island then became part of British Columbia, and a few months later British Columbia joined in Confederation with Canada. The records of the transaction show that the ownership of the Island was Crown land except for "one well, set apart and appropriated to public use...[of citizens of the] town of Victoria, lots 68-73 plan 2078..." (the Spring Ridge area).

In 1858, Governor Douglas declared that the water belonged to the people, and in 1867 Queen Victoria officially proclaimed it -- a declaration that remains in force today, and which nothing but a royal proclamation can change.

The Community Well Project celebrates and commemorates this unique history. The well site is probably within 50 meters of "Spring Ridge" and the people's well.

Since our digging of the well in July 2005, interest in the project has spread. We are now in contact with representatives from VIHA (about water safety), the Ministry of Environment (about ground water purity), the civic Emergency Preparedness Team (about the site's potential as a possible emergency water source), and a local hydrological engineer, as well as City counsellors and City Parks. The project includes Fernwood residents and representatives from both the FCA and FCC.

Ideas about what the well site should include are a hand pump, some type of water feature, and historical plaques.

Here is one plaque idea:

THE PEOPLE'S WELL

The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, has agreed to reconvey to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors, Vancouver Island together with all royalties of the seas except and always reserve of the grant and surrender...the Old Spring and adjoining land, and except one well set apart and appropriated to public use....

AN ACT FOR THE UNION OF THE COLONY OF VANCOUVER ISLAND WITH THE COLONY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.
Signed August 6, 1866.

We welcome all ideas and suggestions.

The Maypole

by Joanne Murray

Many ancient fertility rituals are symbolic attempts to increase the fertility of the Earth. One of the most common ones still practiced today is the Maypole celebration. From Sweden to Czechoslovakia, this ancient fertility symbol is erected each year for dancers to spiral around, intertwining brightly coloured ribbons that are tied to the top of the pole, wrapping the pole in a cocoon of rainbow hues.

May Eve, the eve of the second division of the Celtic year, was also known as Beltane, a time when sacred bonfires were lit on hilltops -- a time for dancing, feasting, fire leaping, and driving of cattle around and between the bonfires. With the crops newly planted in the fields, this communal celebration was the promise of bountiful harvest, fertile livestock, and bonnie children. The fires in household hearths were extinguished, and embers from the sacred fire used to relight freshly cleaned hearths in readiness for the year ahead.

As imperial Rome expanded its borders, northern pagans incorporated the concept of Flora, the Roman goddess of spring. Every year early in May, the children of Rome came dancing to Flora's temple, wearing wreaths of flowers in their hair, and bringing garlands and bouquets for the goddess. She was also worshipped with offerings of flowers at springs and wells. The May Day traditions of making flower garlands for the hair and carrying the Maypole from the forest to the village to the accompaniment of flutes along a path strewn flowers became part of the May Day tradition.

By the Middle Ages every English village had its Maypole. The bringing in of the Maypole from the woods was a great occasion accompanied by much rejoicing and merrymaking. Young people would go off into the forests on May Day Eve. At dawn, young maidens would gather the early dew and anoint their faces in the belief this would bring them true love. The young men would cut down a tree

and bring it into the village laden with flowers and stripped of all but its topmost branches. Bright streamers, an Italian tradition adopted later, and sprays of flowers were attached at the very top. Young men and women danced around the pole, weaving the streamers into a lovely pattern down its full length.

Changes brought by the Reformation included attempts to do away with practices that were obviously of pagan origin. In France, the May Tree became the Tree of Liberty, a symbol of the French Revolution. Despite the new nomenclature, the peasants treated the tree in the same traditional spirit, and would dance around it the same way as their forefathers had always done.



May Day Points To Ponder

by Tony Sprackett

The international celebration of May Day began in the late 19th century. Treated as a statutory holiday in many countries, it was seen as recognition of the struggle of common people for better working conditions and a demand for more equality and dignity.

The Current Economic Environment

The generation of youth now coming of age faces enormous challenges. The cost of accommodation is rocketing skyward with no sign of peaking yet. Food prices will continue to rise in lock-step with our dependency on fossil fuels needed to transport foodstuffs from agricultural regions, and with the erratic weather patterns that global warming generates. Corporations, relentlessly pursuing an improved profit margin, push down hard on wages. Small businesses struggle so hard to compete with monolithic corporations that they are unable to pay sustainable wages. High education costs cause young people to amass huge debt in order to learn skills that our aging society will be desperate for in a generation. McJobs, at minimum wage, sometimes requiring split shifts, are the alternative.

Why Organize?

Big employers -- the corporations capable of paying a wage that can sustain a family -- are, by their nature, focused on bottom-line profit. If labour costs go down, profits go up. It's that simple. Unions are the only counter-balancing force to this corporate downward push on wages and benefits.

A Bit of Canadian Labour History

To illustrate the problems non-unionized workers face today and in the future, we need only look at the past. Although the goalposts workers struggle to achieve have changed, thanks to the heroic efforts of those who went before the philosophy of maximizing profit has not. You may be shocked to learn about the status of workers a hundred years ago. We get a glimpse of working conditions in the past by looking at a few of the objectives documented by the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress in 1898:

1. Free compulsory education;
2. A legal working day of 8 hours and a six-day work week;
3. A minimum living wage based on local conditions;
4. Abolition of child labour under the age of 14;
5. Abolition of property qualifications to hold public office.

Accomplishments

All the things listed above are now so woven into the fabric of our society that we may take them for granted. But these basic rights were not instituted due to the generosity of governments or the economic elite of our society. In fact, they fought these changes bitterly, and in some cases, viciously. These improvements were accomplished at the instigation and insistence of labour unions.

Organized labour relentlessly pressured those in power, over many years, to gain these fundamental improvements. The legal-working-day item was improved later to five eight-hour days per week. Workers' Compensation Boards were created so that workers and their families could survive financially after being injured on the job -- again, instigated by labour unions.

This May Day, please take some time to reflect on what your life today might be like had those workers long ago failed in their fight to be able to organize. Think too about what your future might be if there were no unions in it. Unions will not survive into the future if the youth of today do not value and step up to protect what has been won for them in the past. The links below will help you gain knowledge.

Canadian Museum of Civilization Canadian Labour History
www.civilization.ca/hist/labour/lab01e.html

Canadian Labour Congress
canadianlabour.ca/

BC Federation of Labour
www.bcfed.com

Paul Phillips continued from front page...

Paul Gwyn Phillips was born in Gloucestershire in 1933 and raised in Bülth, Wales (pronounced Bilth). The son of market gardeners who later operated a small hotel, he was raised Baptist but migrated toward an anarchist philosophy.

"The status quo didn't quite do it for me," Phillips says. "It was more than obvious that your accent defined who you were."

He left England for Toronto in 1958 and worked at odd jobs, including a stint at Weston's Bakery that fueled his later involvement in the food co-op movement. He moved west to Vancouver, returned to England for a while, then settled into the folk music scene in the United States.

Phillips was exposed to folk music as a young man in London in the 1950s, stumbling across a performance of the protest song "The Banks Are Made of Marble." He acquired a five-string banjo and was hooked. He played at the Seattle World Fair in 1961, and toured the folk circuit, performing with Pete Seeger and Phil Ochs.

At Joliet, Illinois in 1967, Phillips was invited to address a protest rally against the Vietnam War. Motioning toward the rail tracks leading out of the town's arsenal, he told the crowd, "If you want to stop it, you've got to put yourself on the lines." Two months later, at his home in the countryside south of Los Angeles, Phillips was arrested by two FBI agents and charged of sedition. Due to a technicality and considerable luck, Phillips was kicked out of the country and returned to Vancouver.

Phillips flirted with the Kitsilano scene, then came to Victoria where he helped found the Amor de Cosmos Food Co-operative in 1970. The St. John Divine Church served as the distribution centre, with six zone houses spread throughout the city. Flower power flourished at the time, and Phillips lived in co-op houses in Fairfield, Vic West, and James Bay, before he and three friends purchased a home on Mason Street, in Fernwood, for \$16,000.

Phillips applied for, and received, a federal grant to expand food co-ops, and worked in Vancouver for the Fed-Up Food Co-op, which developed a food distribution network extending up to the Queen Charlotte Islands, with weekly trade exceeding \$80,000. At its height, the co-op ran a bakery, newspaper, honey-making plant, three retail stores, and a cannery. By 1975, however, years of activity were taking their toll.

"I'm a small-time guy, really," Phillips says.

He returned to Victoria to focus on community work in Fernwood. Controversy was brewing over land development. The area bounded by Pembroke, Gladstone, Fernwood Road and Stevenson Park was slated for a major federal housing project, akin to Blanshard Courts.

"These were the days when houses were getting smashed down all over the place," Phillips recalls.

Meanwhile, at Fort and Foul Bay, 17 houses were slated for demolition to make way for seniors' housing. BC's deputy minister of housing, George Chatterton, challenged Phillips to find a better solution for the 17 houses. He did.

In an elaborate plan supported by the NDP government of the day, facilitated by the National Housing Act (1973), Phillips helped form the Spring Ridge Housing Co-op Association. The province purchased land on Pembroke Street, and four of the condemned houses were relocated, raised, and converted to duplex suites. The remaining houses were recycled for building material. Over time, other buildings were added. Today, 36 people are housed at the Spring Ridge Co-op.

But the Spring Ridge Housing Co-op was just the beginning. In the mid-1970s, federal and provincial politics created a climate ripe for innovative social policies.

"You could pick up the world and run with it," Phillips recalls fondly. Fernwood residents mobilized behind the federal Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), and in a few short years transformed the physical and cultural environment of Fernwood.

The NIP legacy began with the closure of Queens and Chambers Streets behind George Jay Elementary, and the construction of an adventure playground. Other street closures followed at Grant, Pembroke, and, finally, Gladstone, today's Fernwood Square, where a gazebo was built by marginalized youth that still stands today.

When the NIP era finally ended, the Bakery building at 1923 Fernwood Road had been acquired by the City for \$89,000 (25% paid by the city, with the remainder covered by provincial and NIP grants). Pressure from Phillips, the FCA (formed in 1973) and the NIP committee also secured funds for a community centre in Stevenson Park, despite a confidential memo from the City manager stating "we should...do our best to divert the residents from the idea of a community centre." The FCA was prevented from running the facility, however, because civic leaders feared the group was too "radical."

Phillips later served as a director of both the FCA and FCC. "I think it's tragic," Phillips says of tension between the two groups. "You have people with good ideas and they just don't have the will to really behave decently. They see others in adversarial positions." He remains optimistic, however, believing things "will always get better.... I've got that much faith in people's abilities."

In the 1980s, Phillips headed the Fernwood Solar Farm at Chambers and North Park, securing school-district land and employing young offenders sentenced to community service. He worked on the side as a landscape gardener, but in 1988 suffered a severe head injury while at work. Since then, he has focused on converting his properties for affordable housing, and restoring Fernwood House at the top Rudlin Street.

Phillips was married briefly in the 1960s, and has a daughter from that marriage, Olwen, who lives in Los Angeles. He considers his family to include close friends and their children, including a second daughter Sylvia.

Whoopies, Red Tide, Amor de Cosmos Food Co-op, Fed-Up, Co-op Resource Society, Tunnel Canary, LEAP, Spring Ridge Housing Co-op, Neighbour-Aiders, Bench-Bunch, NIP, the Fernwood Solar Farm.

All these projects benefited from the unorthodox energy of Paul Phillips, and changed Fernwood for the better. When asked about the unkempt state of his Camosun Street property, Phillips refuses to mince words.

"Maybe it could be done faster, and maybe I'm not as efficient as I should be. But it's just like an ancient dig. You've got to go at it with a paintbrush," he says, citing the discovery of intricate original woodwork on the exterior of 116-year-old building, and the installation of new electrical, plumbing, heating and fire-safety systems in the 6000-sq.-foot house. "If you could do it better, dynamite! Get over here!"

Remember this unique slice of history the next time you pass the chaotic corner of Balmoral and Camosun. More important, take action in Fernwood to build on Paul Phillips' impressive legacy.



"Spring" into Action with our Organic Gardening & Composting Workshops!

Saturday, May 6th, 11am-1pm, Composting Basics Workshop. Free.

Saturday, May 13th, 10am-2pm, 3rd Annual Organic Plant Sale. Support local organic growers. Annuals, Perennials, Veggie Starts, Seeds & more!

Admission by donation.

Saturday, May 20th, 2-4pm, Brew and Use Compost Tea Workshop. \$15.

Saturday, June 3rd, 11am-1pm, Composting Basics Workshop. Free.

Saturday, June 10th, 2-4pm, Anyone Can Grow Greens Workshop. \$15.

Saturday, June 17th, 2-4pm, Gardening without Pesticides:

Controlling Problem Weeds. \$15.

Saturday, June 24th, 2-4pm, Gardening without Pesticides:

Mulching, Sheet Mulching & Soil Building. \$15.

Saturday, July 8th, 11am-1pm, Composting Basics Workshop. Free.

Saturday, July 8th, 2-4pm, Urban Chickens Workshop. \$15.

Saturday, July 15th, 2-4pm, Gardening without Pesticides: Organic Lawn Care. \$15.

Pre-register for workshops at 386-WORM or info@compost.bc.ca. Call to find out how to become a Compost Club member and receive 10 free workshops per year. All workshops held at the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre located at 1216 North Park St.

History Corner

Spring Ridge Common: A Link with Our Past

by Robbie Clarke

In 1887, a one-room school was built on a sandy site at Chambers Street and Gladstone Avenue, then called North Chatham Street. Our neighbourhood was on the rural edge of Victoria at that time, but Chambers Street was the route from town to Cedar Hill Road, an important arterial road in those early days.

The little wood-framed school building became known as Spring Ridge School, and stood on the site for over 80 years. This school was quickly expanded in 1889 to four classrooms -- a sign of the urbanization that was starting to occur. The much larger elementary school nearby, George Jay, was not opened until 1910, and the current Victoria High School was opened a couple of years after that.

Unfortunately, Spring Ridge School no longer exists, having been demolished in 1968, but its site is now occupied by an evolving community project known as Spring Ridge Common.

The Fernwood Community Association proposed this volunteer project to the Greater Victoria School District in 1994, and was granted an ongoing lease at that time. Part of the idea was to maintain this heritage site as community open space, with recognition of its historical significance. A task force of the FCA is currently reviewing the management plan for Spring Ridge Common, and welcomes written input from the community.



Modern-day volunteers help out at Spring Ridge Common Photo: Joanne Murray

The Balmoral Eight

by Brian J. Day

On very short notice, about three dozen Fernwood residents, environmentalists, and other concerned Victoria citizens gathered in the early evening of Saturday, April 15 to participate in a vigil for eight Scotch pines under imminent threat of removal.

On April 5, tenants of the apartment at 1118 Balmoral learned of the owner's plan to cut down the trees on April 19. In short order, the tenants organized a petition, the vigil, and a media campaign that reached all major media outlets in the city.

"Wow," said one Balmoral Street resident, watching as people gathered in the deepening dusk. "Usually you're lucky if you get maybe five people for a something like this."

It was a view shared by the organizers, who have been delighted by the response. Although they acknowledge that they may not save the eight fully mature trees, they are encouraged by the interest, which they hope will translate into a toughening of the City's tree bylaw.

According to a statement from Cornerstone Properties, which manages the apartment on behalf of owner Birger Nenzen, the trees "have outlived their time and could possibly be a danger to residents. Most importantly, the roots are traveling towards the building itself and could cause structural damage." The owner reportedly wants to replace the trees with a lawn and irrigation system.

One Fernwood neighbour who was prepared to consider the owner's concerns wondered aloud why all eight trees needed to be removed. According to vigil organizer Reisa Stone, the City of Victoria's own tree preservation officer said that the trees posed no risk to people.

As the protestors point out in their pamphlet, the trees "are rich with juncos, robins, finches, tree swallows, sparrows, hummingbirds & crows. Not to mention Stanley the Squirrel. It is nesting season, so infant wildlife may also be destroyed during tree removal."

The loss of the trees will undeniably change the immediate environment and the streetscape.

As one long-time resident suggested, pointing up the street to a tree that locals saved on City property some years back, "Fernwood folk love their trees."

The Coffin

Compiled by Michael Trelawny and friends

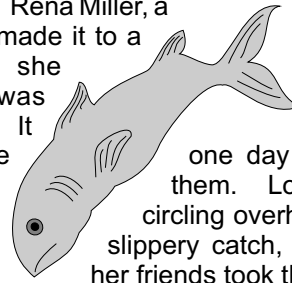


"But remembering the early civility they brought upon these Countreys, and forgetting long passed mischiefs; We mercifully preserve their bones, and pisse not upon their ashes."

From Sir Thomas Browne's Hydriotaphia, or Urneburiall (1658).

The Coffin is dedicated to providing a final resting place for Fernwood stories that we feel deserve one last fond farewell.

Fish fall from the sky. If you were channel surfing on Monday, April 3 and you thought one of the contestants on Jeopardy! looked familiar -- don't worry, you weren't losing your mind. Rena Miller, a long-time Fernwood resident, may not have made it to a finished second, but she and delivered what was certainly the best personal anecdote of the evening. It seems Rena and her hiking group were out on a hike one day when a live salmon dropped onto the path in front of them. Looking up, they saw one very annoyed bird of prey circling overhead. They retreated to let the hunter retrieve its slippery catch, but the cautious bird wouldn't cooperate, so Rena and her friends took the salmon home with them and barbecued one of the more interesting found feasts to come their way.



Grow-op goes up in smoke. Recently, amid the wail of police and fire truck sirens, an attic grow-op in the 1200 block of Denman Street caught fire, doing extensive smoke damage to the building. We can only hope for the landlords' sake that their insurance policy covers the damage. An increasing number of insurance companies won't pay out for grow-op related fires. Landlords beware!

Oops! In the editorial of the February issue of the Fernwood News, we reported that a coffee house was moving into the refurbished former corner store at Chambers and Princess. We were dead wrong. In fact, a baby store is going in -- opening this month, in fact. (Hmm, how about a baby store and coffee shop -- for java-babies and their yummy mummies.)

Speaking of coffee . . . Are you one of those Fernwood naysayers who wonders if the Cornerstone Building will ever reopen? -- who just can't be persuaded by the signs in the windows declaring the project "ahead of schedule"? Well, The Coffin, true to its motto, has two words for you: Pisse not! We have it on good authority that the building's new NRGized owners should have their Cornerstone coffee shop up and running in time for David Suzuki's visit to Fernwood later this month. So be happy! Make ours organic, fair trade, bird-friendly, and shade-grown, please.

Enough already about coffee. Have you noticed the newly levelled lawn at Haegart Park where once there were only foundations of some long-forgotten building? Well, so did we. Although the land actually belongs to the School District, City Parks took care of the job -- which looks great. Can any Fernwood News reader tell us what those foundations belonged to? We would love to hear from you.

Speaking of jobs well done, Spring Street and Ridge Road neighbours would like to thank City workers who went above and beyond the call of duty in creating a sidewalk on Spring Street between Pembroke and Denman. The crew filled a long-neglected and slowly growing hole in the parking lot of the apartment at 2136 Ridge Road while they were putting in the sidewalk. Thanks also to Councillor Dean Fortin for his help in having the sidewalk put in.



Did we hear that right? At her February 28 talk to a standing-room-only crowd at Little Fernwood Hall, City councillor Pamela Madoff noted that 43% of all Victoria residents live at or below the poverty line. Shocked and intrigued by this statistic, we went digging for the truth. Councillor Madoff suggested that we talk to the Community Social Planning Council, which in turn referred us to the Community Council's 2005 publication, Quality of Life in BC's Capital Region. This document (the probable source of Councillor Madoff's information), using figures compiled in 2000, states that 43.6% of Victoria households bring in under \$30,000 a year. We also contacted the CRD's Regional Planning department. The CRD, drawing on information from the 2000 Census, employs a more complicated formula to calculate "low-income" designations (they don't use the term "poverty line," which, according to the person we spoke to, is an "American concept"). There were three different categories: among economic family units, 15% of Victoria families fell into the low-income category; among unattached individuals 15 years or older, the figure is 39.9%; and among all individuals (a catch-all category), the figure is 24.5% -- somewhat lower than the Community Council's number used by Councillor Madoff, but still shockingly high. For the record, the CRD's low-income designation applies to anyone whose expenditures as a percentage of income are 20% above the average expenditure on food, shelter, and clothing. So where do we sign up for the Revolution?

If you have a Fernwood tale to tell, or a question or comment, be it cryptic or admonitory, whimsical or grave, The Coffin won't rest in peace until it has given your submission the eulogy it deserves.

Kid's Corner

Cody: "On which side do cats have the most fur?"
Maya: "On the outside."

"Knock Knock."
"Who's there?"
"Distressing."
"Distressing who?"
"Distressing has too much vinegar!"

Get involved! Send us your original artwork, photos, jokes, short stories or whatever and we will do our best to publish them in subsequent issues



WILD FIRE
bread & pastry

all organic
community bakery

Monday-Friday 7:30-6:00
Saturday 8:00-5:00

381-3473
1517 Quadra Street (at Mason)

Working for you in Victoria

Carole James, MLA
Victoria - Beacon Hill
1084 Fort Street
Phone: 250-952-4511
carole.james.mla@leg.bc.ca

Rob Fleming, MLA
Victoria - Hillside
1020 Hillside Avenue
Phone: 250 360 2023
rob.flemingmla@leg.bc.ca

Free Victoria

A compendium of free services and activities around town

Greater Victoria Youth Week

Youth Week is an annual country-wide celebration of youth and their achievements. This year, to celebrate the event locally, the following free events are being offered between April 29 to May 6th:

Freeze Fest Youth Skate

Tuesday, May 2nd, from 5-8 p.m. at Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre (enter at Gate 3, the back entrance off the parking lot). Ages: 11 years +. Free skates and helmets available while supplies last. Free tickets must be picked up at Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre (2275 Quadra) anytime before event. The event includes: on-ice DJ, the Zone on site, a bungee run, scavenger hunt with prizes, summer job information, prizes, food, freezies, fun, and more. Concession: bring \$3 for pop, chips and a hot dog.

Mayfair Mall Lot Party

Saturday, May 6th, 11-4 p.m. at Mayfair Mall Parking Lot (corner of Topaz and Blanshard). Live on location music from the Zone Ranger 11-1 p.m. Local teen bands, road hockey, basketball, inflatables, temporary tattoos. Food by Mayfair Mall Food Court.

Much Music Video Dance Party

Saturday, May 6th, 7-10 p.m. at Pearkes Recreation Centre (3100 Tillicum Road).

Free for Children:

Mother Goose. Fernwood Community Centre, 1240 Gladstone.

Group experience for parents, caregivers, infants, toddlers, and young children, teaching rhymes, songs, and stories. Alternating Saturday mornings. Free. Pre-Registration is required: 381-1552.

Toddler time. Greater Victoria Public Library Central Branch, 735 Broughton, Wednesday, May 3rd and 10th at 9:30 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. for 2-3 year olds with parent/caregiver.

Toddler time. GVPL Oak Bay Branch, 1442 Monterey, Wednesday, May 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th at 10:30 11:00am for ages 16-35 months.

Preschool Storytime. Central Library, 735 Broughton, Thursday, May 4th, 11th, 18th, May 25th at 10:15 a.m. for 4-5 year olds.

Preschool Storytime. GVPL Oak Bay Branch, 1442 Monterey, Tuesday, May 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd, 10:30-11:00 a.m. and Friday, May 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th, 2-2:30 p.m.. Stories, songs, and puppets for 3-5 year olds. Caregivers welcomed and encouraged to participate.

Family Storytime. Central Library, 735 Broughton, Saturday, May 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th, at 10:30-11:00 a.m. Stories, songs, and puppets for young children. Caregivers welcome, and required for children under three.

There will be a summer program of Family Storytime at GVPL branches on Saturday mornings. Dates are not yet finalized.

Short Film Showcase for Kids. GVPL Oak Bay Branch, 1442 Monterey Friday, May 19th, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Join us for popcorn and a selection of classic children's films for school-aged children to age 10. Registration begins May 4th.

Extreme Reading Summer Reading Club 2006. June 29th to Sept 2nd. Read for fun and prizes, participate in great program, including a musical party with Vancouver musician Chris Hamilton. Teen volunteers lead session of stories, games, crafts, and shared reading. Contact local branch for more information.

Almost Free:

Parent and Tot Playgroup. Fernwood Community Centre Gym, 1240 Gladstone. Every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Socialize with other parents while your child enjoys toys and playtime. Coffee, juice, and snacks provided. \$1 per family.

Free for Youth:

Youth Drop-In Basketball for boys and girls ages 12-18. Sundays from 7-9 p.m. at the Fernwood Community Centre, 1240 Gladstone.

Almost Free for Youth:

Friday Night Drop-In Basketball for ages 13+ on Friday nights from 6-8 p.m. at the Boys and Girls Club gym, 1240 Yates St. \$2 a night.

Free for Seniors:

Surfing Seniors Drop-In. Central Library, 735 Broughton. First Wednesday of each month from 10-11:30 a.m. Learn to become more internet savvy. Drop in to the library and practice your skills with a trainer. Each month offers a brand new theme and lots of interesting websites to try. No need to pre-register.

Accessible Transit Services. Community Travel Training is a free service to orient seniors to use the transit service. Call 384-7723 for more information.

Free Recreation:

Free Swim at Oak Bay Recreation Centre, 1975 Bee, once a month. Next free swim: Sunday, May 14th, 9-11 a.m. Call 595-7946 for June and July dates.

Teen Swim at Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre, 2275 Quadra, every Friday evening, 9-10:30. Teens only, 13-17 years. Cost \$2.

Almost Free:

The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1040 Moss Street. First Tuesday of every month: admission by donation. May 2nd, June 6th, July 4th.

Free Internet and Computer Access:

Free Internet and Computer Access for Community Members: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:15 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Wednesdays between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. at Fernwood Community Centre, 1240 Gladstone.

Free Internet and Computer Access for Everyone: Central Library, 735 Broughton. Surf the Internet and check your email at computer stations on both the first and second floors, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Emergency Preparedness Instruction:

Wednesday June 7th, 6:45-8:45 p.m. Individual and Family Preparedness. You may be on your own for up to 72 hours before outside help can arrive. Yates Street Fire Hall, 1234 Yates, Camosun St. entrance. Call 920-3373 to pre-register.

Friday June 16th 6:30-9:00 p.m. Participate in search for casualties! Is your house safe to re-enter after an earthquake? Fairfield Community Association, OSC Room, 1330 Fairfield Road. Call 920-3373 to pre-register.

Free Legal and Social Services:

Free Legal Advice and Representation. The Law Centre, 1221 Broad (3rd floor), provides legal help to eligible persons who have criminal, family, civil, human rights, welfare, E.I., landlord, and tenant concerns. Call for an appointment at 385-1212.

Free employment services to immigrants and new Canadians who are looking for work or training. Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society, #305 535 Yates. Employment counselling, electronic resources centre, educational and training opportunities, job placement, workshops. 361-9433, ext 206.

Free employment services to French-speaking people. La Societe Francophone de Victoria, 535 Yates (2nd floor). Free internet access, job board, messaging services, and more. For information, call 388-7350.

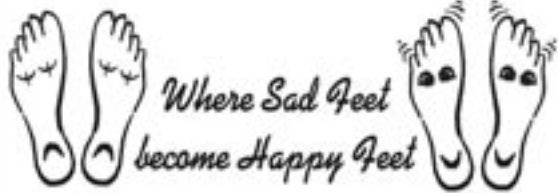
Free Seminars:

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions


This program is designed to give people with chronic conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, fibromyalgia, and depression the skills and tools to help themselves manage the everyday challenges of their chronic condition. The course is led by pairs of volunteers with chronic health conditions to groups of between 10 to 12 participants. The course is not a "sit and listen" course but highly interactive, with discussions, brainstorming, and problem-solving. It is not an exercise class. Classes meet once a week for 2 hours for 6 weeks. For more information or to register call toll free 1-800-902-3767 or e-mail mvdavies@dccnet.com. Course seminar held at UVic's David Strong Building, room 114. Free to anyone ages 19 or over; open to all, whether or not you have a chronic condition. Friends, families, neighbours, and spouses are welcome.

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Marin enjoys the spring sunshine on Sayward Street, while practising her violin. Photo: Joanne Murray