



PACIFIC GARDENS
COHOUSING COMMUNITY
NEWSLETTER

The Bloomin' News

WINTER EDITION
FALL EQUINOX TO
WINTER SOLSTICE 2016



December Decorating Party

Residents and friends gathered to trim trees, decorate cookies, share food, and start the festive season together.



NEW EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

Sometimes things take a long time in cohousing...but sometimes they happen really quickly!

At the last community meeting, Carolyn P. made a proposal to use remaining money in the Common House Improvements Fund to buy a better home gym set-up for the exercise room. A consulting team of Carolyn P., Vero, and Mia was given the go-ahead to jump on any deals they found, since good second-hand equipment goes fast.

Within a week, Vero found a great set-up at the right price, bought it, and brought it home, where Johnny and Chris helped unload it, and Bill set it up. It now resides proudly in the exercise room.

Get in touch with Vero and she'll be happy to show you how to use it.

Christmas Dinner

Join us for a potluck Christmas Dinner on December 25th, at 6 pm.

Judy is organizing a local organic turkey, along with the help of Tim and Carolyn P.

Sign up on the sheet outside the dining room for side dishes and desserts.

Holiday Donations

Suggested by Lisa and Jeff, and implemented by Judy, the Pacific Gardens community was invited to contribute to one of two local organizations this year, **Haven Society** and **Loaves and Fishes**.

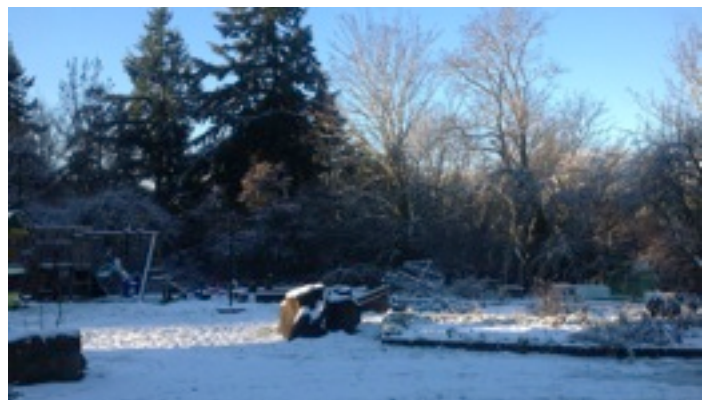
Mia and Judy have already brought away our donations, but there are still lots of opportunities to give to our wider community.

Non-perishable food and money donations can be brought to Loaves & Fishes Food Bank, 1009 Farquhar Street. Learn more about Loaves & Fishes here:

www.nanaimoloavesandfishes.org

Clothes and toiletries can be brought to Friends of Haven Thrift Shop, 451 Albert Street. Learn more about Haven Society here:

www.havensociety.com



Welcome to Pacific Gardens!

A warm welcome to Carolyn F. and Hannah! We are so glad you are here.

Colin's step-daughter Hannah is coming to live with him, just in time for Christmas.

Colin says "she's 8 years old and in Grade 3. She is beautiful, smart, funny, and empathetic. Sometimes she can be shy around new people but once she gets to know you she will open right up.

Some of her interests include dancing and singing. She loves playing in the pool and going for walks in the woods. She want to go in gymnastics this year.

We love going to The Vault for coffee and hot chocolate. I'm sure you will all have the opportunity to meet her."



From Carolyn F:

I'm slowly meeting everyone and hopefully in the new year I will be acquainted with some others.

My story, along with 3 brothers, began in the coal and steel city of Sydney, Cape Breton. When I was 7 years old we moved to Wabana, Bell Island, Newfoundland, an iron ore mining town, where everything was covered in red dust, including the tops of milk bottles left at our door step each morning and the faces of the miners marching out of the mines at 4pm. After 7 years, we returned to Sydney where I completed high school. I studied geology at Dalhousie University, Halifax and was thrilled to experience 2 summers working at Bedford Institute of Oceanography. In 1975 I accepted a position in the oil patch and moved to Calgary. During the recession of 1986/88, my husband and I with 3 year old son, joined the expat community in Libya, not long after President Reagan bombed Tripoli. Interesting times!

I have 2 great adult-kids, both currently at U of T; Andrew, studying math, and Trish, in Occupational Therapy. As an at-home mom, I kept busy with volunteer jobs; docent at Fort Calgary, cub scout leader, Literacy/ESL programs, and dabbled in journalism. These retirement days, I endure a love-hate relationship with my fiddle, and enjoy cycling, gardening, yoga, reading and running.

In the recent past, I engaged with the small, but committed environmental activist groups in Calgary. I cheer the local food movement here in BC and regard local food production and protection of our fresh water, oceans and attendant species, as a positive focus going forward.

I wish everyone peace, love, some reflection and renewal this holiday season.



Aviva Concert

Just over a week ago, the Aviva choir treated residents and friends to a delightful concert in the dining-room. The atmosphere was festive and the songs beautifully and enthusiastically sung. Adults and children danced at the back of the room and also sat gently soaking up the music. After the songs, there was an opportunity to mingle and jingle (ho ho ho) with delicious fruit punch and food. The children and also quite a few of the adults had their photos taken with Santa Claus.

Thank you to the Aviva choir, Mia, Anne, Kathryn and everyone who decorated the dining-room, helped with and provided food for the event and, of course, thanks to Santa for joining us.

Submitted by Claire



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Every Thursday
Potluck 6 pm

Sunday December 25
Christmas Potluck 6 pm

Saturday December 31
Monthly Work Party 10 am

Monday January 9
Community Meeting 630-830 pm

Monday February 6
Community Meeting 630-830 pm

Monday March 6
Community Meeting 630-830 pm

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT SNOW REMOVAL

We have a week and a half of snowy weather behind us, and it's not unlikely that we'll see more before the winter is over.

Snow clearing of the driveway is contracted out to a snow plow when 3-4 inches have accumulated. Snow clearing of the stairs, entrances and walkways is every resident's responsibility and is entirely done by volunteer efforts.

Many thanks to those who worked hard to keep our walkways snow- and ice-free during the last week and a half!

How Does Your Garden Grow?

There's an old nursery rhyme that goes: "Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow? With silver bells and cockle shells And so my garden grows."

Except in the case of my garden, it didn't. For too many years it had been a patch of overgrown shrubs and lanky lavender interspersed with weeds of every variety and a smattering of moss. Something had to be done, but what? That was not an easy question to answer, given the history of this little plot outside my unit.

When I moved in the drought-stricken summer of 2009, it was a Gobi desert with no plant life. The rich farming topsoil originally there had been removed and taken to another development being built on Seventh Street by our construction company, and the fill given to us in its place had plastic, nails, drywall, and other toxic rubbish in it. Despite the best efforts of Kari and others, there was one area of my garden that would not grow anything other than moss or weeds (in a good year); numerous attempts were made to grow grass on it, but to no avail.

I suffered from garden envy. I knew I wouldn't be able to have a vegetable garden without spending years building up the soil, but I wanted to have a wildflower garden like Susana's that would be a haven for bees, birds, butterflies, and hummingbirds. So I decided to consult some landscapers. I told them of my dreams of creating a beautiful flower oasis, and in discussion with them, hit upon the idea of having a wooden deck to cover the weedy patch, in the shape of a fish.

And that's why I now have a fish-shaped cedar deck in my front garden. Next steps are to install flagstones, and then new topsoil that meets the Pacific Gardens requirements. It doesn't have to be certified organic, but must not contain chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, or vermiculite.

The overgrown shrubs will be dug up and re-planted elsewhere on Pacific Gardens property, and new lavender, plus herbs such as thyme and rosemary, bergamot, (better known as bee balm), and my favourite, a lilac bush, will be planted.

When the summer comes, I hope it will become a gathering-place for my Pacific Gardens neighbours. And I also hope that although I am not growing food on this plot, by providing habitat for birds and bees, I am helping other gardens grow.

Submitted by Kathryn

Call for Newsletter Submissions

A community newsletter is only as good as its contributions from the community...so we want your input! **Share something with us anytime before March 15** in time for our Spring edition. Photos, articles, ideas, and miscellany can be sent to Steph - sjyeker@gmail.com.



MEMORIAL TREE-PLANTING

Back in September, residents and friends who knew David Weston gathered to plant a hazelnut tree in his memory on the south side of the property.

It joins two other hazelnut trees just outside the garden fence - look closely and you'll find a small wooden tunnel he made for his son to play with standing at the base of his tree.



FROM YOUR FRIENDLY, INNOVATIVE RECYCLING TEAM

We are adding a bin in the Recycling Room for clothing that is clean but not good enough to be salable.

This is a new initiative by your local NRE to reduce garment waste in landfill.

Steph shows off her work party apron - giant pockets and excellent coverage!

