

## the blooming news fall equinox 2022



One of the things I enjoy most about cohousing and specifically about Pacific Gardens is the diversity of people in our community and therefore in our lives. Just in terms of age, our children offer so much. Our elders offer so much. And those of us in between offer so much.

These offerings take so many forms. The laughter and squeals of delight can't help but brighten the day. The histories and interests we all bring make for such lively conversations. The variety of skills cover so many bases in terms of keeping the building and grounds in good shape and people's lives comfortable and enriched. (Just the fact that I don't have to drive home after a dinner party is a big plus! :-). There is that consistent presence of a passing smile or hug, a helping hand, a timely meal. And the greater depth of knowing others offers opportunity for a deeper knowing of ourselves.

For me, it was originally hard to imagine what living in cohousing would be like. Now it's difficult to imagine what living outside of cohousing would be like. It might not be for everyone. There are certainly challenges in living in a way committed to community. And yet.... What an experiment. What an experience. What an adventure.

shout outs to: Colbie, Dave, Glen, Josie, Judy, Julia, Karen, Kari, Mary, Marianne, Mia, Pepe, Yuki, and our guest contributors, Freddie (Tree Frog) Fosterman, and Big Papa Razzi.

a word from the local Indigenous language of Hulquminum:

Nutsamaht - you and me are we.

~ from Kari

A BIG WELCOME TO COLBIE,  
JOSIE, AND DAVID!!!



### **Dave, Josie & Colbie**

As an active, adventurous family we have found the hub city deserves its name. Nanaimo is central to so much of what the island has to offer and Pacific Gardens is the ideal homebase. The close proximity to downtown has nurtured our already deep connections to the city's thriving art scene, yet it still feels like you've escaped to your serene countryside estate when you come home and hear the frogs croaking in the pond at night. Cohousing creates a special sense of community lost to most modern living arrangements while still allowing for privacy and your own space when your social battery is running low. We especially love the rich social environment for the kids with real play always only a quick door knock away, something we really value in an increasingly online yet isolated world.



aaaaand...  
A BIG WELCOME TO  
KAREN AND GLEN

We are excited to be joining the Pacific Gardens community on September 30! The various forms of community we have encountered throughout our lives have created our deep desire for community living and helped form our strong attraction to cohousing. In 2019, we joined a newly formed group in our hometown of Quesnel. We met regularly with this group over the next couple of years and learned a great deal. Although we enjoyed our group, we felt they were headed in a different direction and began to look elsewhere.

Over the next while, Glen completed his career working in child and youth mental health while Karen wrapped up her involvements with a community garden, the local food bank, in-school student mentoring, and the literacy bookstore.

We heard about Pacific Gardens and visited Nanaimo three times over the past year to see for ourselves. We fell in love with the city and knew this was the community we had been looking for. So we sold our house, found some temporary housing in Nanaimo, and waited for an opportunity to join PG.

We look forward to the opportunity to learn from others and gradually find out how we might best contribute. We are excited at the prospect of growing our existing friendships in the PG community and forming many new friendships. During times of solitude, you may find Karen curled up with a good book and Glen watching some obscure international movie.

Together we enjoy walking or e-biking Nanaimo's lovely trails or paddling a nearby lake in our canoe. We have two young adult children, Luke and Kristy. Luke and his partner Ira live and work in Berlin, and Kristy and Thomas in nearby Langley. Close proximity to our daughter and other family members and friends is one of many benefits to our move here.

## PF Favourite Nanaimo Places

When Ron and I want to go on a special date, our favourite spot is the Lighthouse on the waterfront. We love the ambiance on the round open patio where most seats have a view and the lights sparkle on the water at night. A light breeze keeps the air cool and fresh in summer. You can watch the Harbour Air planes coming in and taking off.

We also enjoy window tables in the pub on the top floor, and in the bistro on the main floor. Our favourite dish was clam chowder. That has since changed to fish chowder and they've added shrimp. Do phone ahead and check hours. They seem to change every season and in winter they may be closed.

We have also enjoyed the senior's special at the Pantry. 25% off the senior's menu on Mondays. Love their outside patio.

For entertainment we often go to Harbour City Concerts at the Unitarian Fellowship on Townsite —unless they expect a large audience and need a bigger venue. It is a series of good, mainly Canadian, and sometimes local musicians from a mix of genres ( often folk or blues) who entertain our enthusiastic audiences with original music. Rumour has it that the Carrot Cake at intermission is to die for.

~ from Frances

A favorite place close to us at the top of Seventh street is a hiking and biking area along the power line. This is where you can find "The Abyss ". A short but steep hike up to the top of the ridge. Richard is pictured here at the Abyss. It is a deep crevice in the rock created by a shift in the earth.

~ from Kari



My favourite place in Nanaimo. When I'm in a melancholy mood or just have an overwhelming love in my heart, I go down to the river and listen and watch the flow. Sometimes I make up songs and sing my heart out. It is ever changing and always soothing. There is a song by Jenny Lester "The River Mother Nature and Me" which is so beautiful and so meaningful and I sing that song sometimes when I'm there.

~from Judy





One of my favourite places is Maffeo-Sutton Park, especially the walkway around the north side with this view of the arbutus tree and the Harbour looking over to Saysutshun (Newcastle Island



Marine Provincial Park). The whole park is beautiful with so many lovely features, including Swy-A-Lana lagoon. My memories of the place stretch back to the time before this area became the park that it is today. There was an old foundry with piles of rusting metal lying around in pools of water, and also a big skating rink and parking lot where I went skating sometimes. There was only a small park on the north side. I'm glad the proposed condo development didn't go through and a group of community-minded people pushed to expand and redesign the Park in the 1990s.

Another place I love and have been to many times is Colliery Dam Park, where again, community minded people fought fairly recently to preserve the lakes which were made over 100 years ago by damming the Chase River to supply water for washing coal from nearby mines. The lakes are valued for many kinds of



recreation and are a source of peace and tranquillity. In the summer I attended a couple of yoga classes there. The swimming is great in hot weather as many of us know!

~ from Mary

My favourite place in Nanaimo is the Red Dahlia in Kari's garden. It's safe, convenient to the pond and all my friends hop in there at one time or another.

~ Freddie "Tree Frog"  
Fosterman (a.k.a Kari)



The following is the list of my favorite spots:

Cafes:

Mon Petit Choux: French cafe

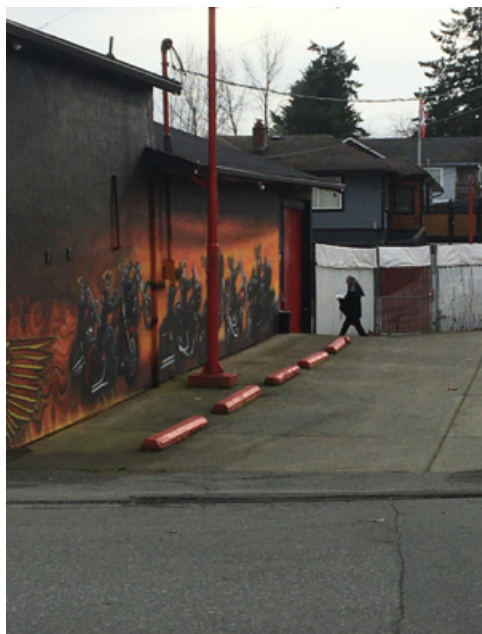
The Bee's Knees Café and Catering: Cafe with Persian flavors

White Rabbit Coffee

Seafood Supplier:

Evening Cove: fresh oysters and clams

~ from Yuki



Here is K.J.'s favourite Nanaimo hot spot, the Hell's Angels Clubhouse, where she is affectionately known as the Green Harley Queen

~ from Big Papa Razzi

P.S. She was delivering neighbourhood safety flyers to them. "Why not?", she said. "Here's a letterbox."



Imagine, a quiet evening, after sunset. You walk slowly along the deepening trail, towards the woods, listening to the day settle and the night awaken. A light is in your pocket, but the moon is risen and its light is enough. The sharp shadows flicker as the evening breezes pick up. An owl hoots, a mouse scurries under the leaves. You smile, at peace with the lake, the moon and your gentle pace along the rippling shores.

Next time, you may bring a friend to share the experience.

~ from Julia

One of my favourite places in Nanaimo, or any city, is the library. To me, one of the greatest inventions ever, and one that offers so much to any community. So many worlds await in the form of books, movies, music. As soon as I enter, I feel transported. There is a similar feeling in any library in the world. The quiet, the knowledge, the wisdom of the ages. And all I need is my trusty library card. (Plus, you might find Jamie kindly taking care of business.)

~ from Craig

## Living at Pacific Gardens

On the east  
The Majesty of the trees  
dancing in the wind  
My wind chimes  
play triumphantly.

The children come  
and share  
Their insights,  
Their pleasures,  
And some facts of the world  
My heart sings.

Miraculous  
Small seeds  
Six months ago  
dormant and still  
Now towering sunflowers  
Such a testament to life.

Underlying tremors  
And then the occasional eruption  
Bad feelings  
Grasping onto hurt  
So much suffering  
Do we need to be right?

Eyes bright  
Mischievous grins  
Shared delights  
They knock on my door  
And gather me into their play  
I laugh with them.

Spontaneous sharing  
Understandings of the same,  
so different  
Hearts rooted in curiosity  
Lean outward.





A wise woman often said that we are all members of the Scar Clan. We all have our secret sufferings. Our hidden places of hurt. Places hidden even from ourselves. Places scary, difficult, and so tender to the touch. All making it so hard to trust. How human this is. How bravely, if sometimes hesitantly, we still greet each day. Despite of these scars, or perhaps because of them, we can and do bring times of kindness and compassion, times of true community into this world. A triumph of being human.

Times arise when we can feel threatened, overwhelmed, unthinking, or unaware of all of the circumstances. At these times, we can knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly, speak and act from these places of suffering in ways that are hurtful toward others. It seems inevitable. A dilemma of being human. (I can already hear a little voice in my head saying, "Yeah. Sure. Others might do that. But not ME!" Personal accountability - also a place that is scary, difficult, and tender. A place that begs for a clear and gentle honesty with ourselves.)

And yet, and most importantly, living in community also provides opportunity where safer surroundings can intentionally be created and more trusting climates and relationships can deliberately be formed.

So I'm very grateful for the people here at Pacific Gardens who have so skillfully helped us to nurture this safety and subsequently this trust among us. And I'm grateful for all of us who are learning how to create an environment within ourselves and in our community where safety and trust can increasingly settle into the fabric of living together. Let's all keep heading in this direction, each in our time and each at our pace.