

the blooming news
summer solstice 2022



For me, living in cohousing is like living in a cocoon, in so many ways a protection from the onslaughts of a what can be a cold and remote world, while at the same time providing gentle proddings to free my wings from my own self imposed constraints.

Thanks as always to the contributors: Dan, Frances, Jim, Julia, Marianne, and Mia, and to all of you.

Farewell to some good
Friends.

I'm sure I speak for everyone
when I say we're going to
miss Chiaki, Victor and
Emma. Victor and I spent
many an enjoyable afternoon
at the Union Hall sharing
philosophical ideas as well as
the odd sip of whiskey. I'll
never forget Chiaki
approaching us when we
moved in to welcome us and
offer help with whatever we
needed. And Emma? She is
just the most lovely young
lady.

Best wishes to the three of
you from everyone at PG.



from Jim

What I am noticing since I've had my hands in the soil and my ear to good music is that there is a subtle energy of excitement in the groups of people who have similar interests. In my opinion, gardening has so many benefits. The grounding that happens when you interact with the source of life's nourishment and the participation in that miracle never ceases to make my heart sing in happiness. Not to mention the easy harvesting of food that is so convenient and organic. Berry crops are now on course to provide that delicious annual treat.

Of course, on our property you can also indulge your selves in a tour of so many different areas that have other offerings to our senses. As I write this I have just taken in the amazing aromas of wild rose, peony and phlox. And there is more to come with lavender, sweet peas, jasmine and others that don't come to mind right now. Watching the deciduous trees come to leaf and the dogwoods put on their show has been the seasonal progression to the warmer months most of us hanker for all winter. I've also had the incredible privilege to be part of smaller musical performances from small in community jam sessions to house concerts and concerts in smaller venues. It's hard for me to describe the feelings that well up in me when I witness the interaction of musicians when they play in sync with each other. It just might be that I feel I'm part of that harmony, symbolic of the greater interpretation that we are all one. It could be that I have a vicarious experience of the hormone rush that many musicians get from playing or singing. Let's just say I have thoroughly enjoyed these experiences.

Both these types of experiences have lifted me out of the winter doldrums and turned my mind away from the constant reporting of death and destruction. That's not to say that I am in denial of the terrible truths of these times. It is more to say that to be able to figure out a way that I can contribute meaningfully to alleviate such suffering is to bring balance to what it means to be alive. And to be grateful for all the gifts that surround me here at Pacific Gardens.

-with love,

from Marianne



Bandera Parker performed a benefit concert for ROAR, Reaching Out Assisting Refugees, on May 21, 2022 at our own Pacific Gardens.

\$1338 was raised



part 1

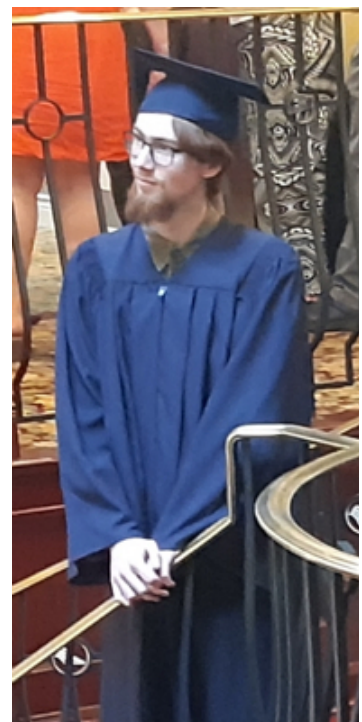
My first cohousing social gathering must have been the Ground breaking ceremony. That special joyous moment in time when one holds the shovel. What I remember vividly is when Doris greeted me with that glamorous, joyous smile of hers. I felt absolute total happiness. I have appreciated her awesome smile ever since. Some other memory of the day was the sleep over on our piece of land. About eight of us slept under the stars that clear night. Young four year old Julian was nestled besides me. I wondered if he needed a bedtime story. He was so quiet. Suddenly he cheerfully piped up, " A dome." "A dome? What dome?" I asked, a bit surprised

"It's a big DOME over there". He pointed his chubby little finger right up into the nighttime starry sky. He had a delightful moment of curiosity and discovery. Then we slept. Early the next morning Julia tackled the breakfast chores. The bacon and eggs picnic and the togetherness in the great Harewood outdoors tasted of such heavenly goodness. I feel loving-kindness gratitude for that special day.

from Mia



Julian, Marcus, and Mookie





The PR team did a great job getting the word out. We had somewhere around 30 external guests, many of whom had never been to PG before!



part b

Frances, Yuki and Louise had the opportunity to go to Dema's interactive theatre play, directed by Larrisa Coser at the OV Theatre.

The play was about the challenges new comers face when they arrive to Canada. Both Yuki and Frances took part in it by putting their hand up and saying stop. Then they were called up on stage and replaced one of the actors and changed the script to a more peaceful, supportive one. There were tears and lots of laughs. We thoroughly enjoyed it.

(Editor's note: For those of you who don't know, Dema used to rent here at PG. She donated her wonderful art piece to PG. It hangs in our foyer, a photo of which is below.)

from Louise





from Dan

Learning about Intentional Community

When I first came to PG, I noticed that many people here were really into the cohousing movement. I was constantly being encouraged to sign up for workshops on different aspects of governance or life in an intentional community. People were very committed to on-going learning. They would try to get me to read Communities magazine. People kept going on tours to see other cohousing communities and make connections. I had so many groups and communities in my life already. I resisted all this.

I did tag along when we had a minor crisis and found out that we needed to learn a lot more about how to live and work with our bylaws. I was glad that VISOA (Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association) was running a workshop on how to handle (and how to prevent!) bylaw complaints. It is especially problematic in cohousing because everyone is on the strata council. A formal complaint has to be heard by everybody! I began to see the point of all this learning.

This year, when I came back from two months away at the cottage, I decided I need to be more open to this movement. Our own founders were very inspiring and other communities seemed worth learning about. I put my name on the list for Communities magazine and began to read it monthly.



I have to say I found my exploration fascinating. I didn't realize the variety of visions that formed the beginning of many of these communities. I didn't know how long some of them lasted. I was surprised how many were involved in very experimental behaviours including open sexual relationships and going completely back to

the land and off grid. The writers were very open about their successes and their problems, so you could really learn what works and what doesn't. One article laid out the opening assumptions their community was built on, what worked and what didn't. The most important one that worked from the outset was equality and equity of voice. Many others that were apparent no-brainers didn't work. "It takes a village to raise a child" was one of those. They learned the value of strong families and parental control.



The latest issue I read had a strong theme running through it related to climate change and how communities can build in resilience to take care of each other in hard times. One listed a bunch of skills we could think of developing so that if civilization as we know it collapsed, we could still communicate and find each other – or we could continue to wash our clothes when the chip died in our washing machine. They planned to have hard copies of important information. They want to be resilient if we lose access to the internet. It's much more positive reading than the other magazine I follow regularly – the Guardian Weekly. Reading Communities magazine lifted my spirits with its positive and deeply caring and compassionate approach. Let's keep dreaming. Perhaps cohousers will develop new models of society for the world.

I was glad to sign up for a new workshop run by cohousers on aging in place. A bunch of PG-ers are going to do the program together. We are living into our vision.

from Frances

I come to these waters with the heart of a child. I am captivated with excitement and awe, for life is profoundly beautiful.

I could sit here eternally!

I can finally stop time and feel the waters in my womb.

What a relief to acknowledge my grief and to realize that it's not all mine.

I humbly offer my tears, I could cry rivers and mourn for years to come. it's as if my body had been dammed up and now was free to flow. Perhaps the inflammation in our bodies is simply suppressed sorrow and pain. Perhaps disease is rooted in the putrid stagnation of neglected emotions.

The tears that initially tasted bitter have turned sweet. My grief turned into praise, my pain distilled into sweet medicine. My face has softened and my entire body feels renewed. Here is my heart, my song, my appreciation, my gratitude. I am here, I am the living spring, I am the wilderness, these waters run through my veins. This is the intimacy and romance I seek to embody.

It is evermore clear to me that community and environment makes it possible for us to release unnatural expectations and show up with the integrity of our hearts.

Amidst suffocating heat and lack of sleep I still feel the rejuvenation of being held by the forest and sharing authentically with kin.

Thank you for gifting your presence.

May we continue to slow down and listen. May we dance to her rhythm and live in service to the wild.

From centehua.sage on instagram