

the bloomin' news
winter solstice 2022



there are those that say
regardless of holidays or absence of holidays
regardless of demographic or absence of demographic
regardless of lifestyle or absence of lifestyle
regardless of what is believed or not believed
regardless of what may have been thought said or acted
or not thought said or acted
we are all related
we are all worthy
of offering and receiving gratitude
we are all worthy
of offering and receiving lovingkindness
we are all worthy
of offering and receiving forgiveness
we are all worthy
of offering and receiving blessings and prayers
in whatever form

may all of us walk upon the land
as if walking upon an open and loving hand
heard by attentive ears
seen by appreciative eyes
as a birthright of the freedom of being
may all of us bask in the beauty of
what is etched in the swirls at our fingertips and
in the creases of our palms

thanks to all of the contributors: Frances, Marianne, Glen,
James, Jim, Judy, Karen, KJ, Mia, Millie, and Myriam,





“Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort, of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but to pour them all out just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keeping what is worth keeping and then, with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away.”

- George Eliot 1819-80

English novelist, Pseudonym of Mary Ann Evans

thanks, Judy

Recycling is making a small dent in our “plastic problem” but it seems that the only real solution is to use less plastic. Many of you at Pacific Gardens are trying to do just this.



When we moved to Nanaimo, our intention was to try and further reduce our dependency on plastic. Consider plastic containers alone. We use them for dish, hand, and laundry soap, for body wash, shampoo, toothpaste, and hand lotion . . . and the list goes on.

Then we discovered the Vancouver Island Refillery where we found a number of great products we like. Our favourite is the lemongrass and mint foaming hand soap from Ucluelet. We also like their bulk food option and recently purchased a 25 pound bag of organic, gluten-free, non-OMG rolled oats to share with 5 of our PG neighbours.

Word got back to the managers that we care about the environment at Pacific Gardens. So they made a special offer ONLY for PG residents – a first-time visit 15% discount (non-food items only due to their small profit margin on food). The gift certificate you need to obtain this discount is available from Glen or Karen.

thanks, Glen

The Climate Emergency Is Here – What Are We a Community Going to Do About It?

The climate emergency is here, and is only going to get worse. It will change our lives irrevocably. However, many of us seem to be in denial about this looming threat.

I look around me at PGCC and most people continue to act as if it's business as usual. It's not.

We need to start seriously preparing as a community for what is coming down the road and talk about what we can do.

For example, if there is another heat dome, will we welcome our Harewood neighbours who don't have adequate cooling systems to seek refuge in our dining room?

What can we do to build our own food security? Do we have any plans for growing and harvesting different fruits and vegetables in a systematic way so that we will all have something to eat?

How will we determine who gets what? Will children's needs be prioritized (as I think they should)? In the event of a food shortage, would we be willing to harvest the wild deer or rabbits on the property?

What about developing a skills inventory? Who can fix and repair machinery, vehicles, appliances? Who knows how to can food, sew clothing, make furniture? Who is willing to teach others their skills?

I've tried at least twice over the years to form a group willing to discuss our response to the climate crisis, but have never got buy-in. I sense most people would prefer to deny problems, but I always feel better when I try to take action on them rather than ignore them.

Is it just me, or does anyone else in our community feel this way?

thanks, KJ



This time of the year is not the best for bird-watching but for some of us that means anticipating the return of many of our 'feathery friends' in March. The important work done by several of our residents in the riparian area (next to the river), east side of the parking lot and the 'Duck Pond', mainly removal of invasive plants and replacement with native species has been an important benefit to animals that have lived here for millions of years. The reason this work is important is that it is a small step in quelling the loss of animal habitat. Some studies state that humans have destroyed 80% of wildlife habitat on the planet in the past 100 years (a lot of it due to clear cut logging and urban sprawl). I guess what I'm saying is that we should be proud of what we in Pacific Gardens have done in this area to restore the natural condition of our planet.

This is a difficult concept for some to come to terms with. It's easy when I imagine myself standing on the moon like the astronauts and contemplating this precious, delicate and tiny blue ball that is our home.



Okay, let's get back to earth. One of the easier wonders to grasp is the presence of birds here at Pacific Gardens. We have documented 40 species of birds on our property and there are fewer pleasures I like more in my old age that to sit out in the 'Union Hall' near the duck pond with my trusty Nikon and enjoy their company. Throughout this newsletter are photos of many of them.

thanks, Jim

(editors note: Some photos are from Jim and others from Glen)



Myriam's dance crew
and friend



Recently I took a course on Climate change entitled How to Talk about Climate Change and it *changed* me in that I gained a lot of clarity. I found it very interesting that my expectations of the course had to do with understanding the scientific evidence that would allow me to speak more knowledgeably about what is happening.

While it didn't surprise some people with whom I related my experience, it did surprise me that it was all about communication skills, polling, statistics, social influencing, story telling and door-to-door canvassing. The assumption was the science was all clear and easily attainable if we went to the right sources.

When I did go to the polls, the IPCC, and other sites, I found out I had a lot more to worry about than I had previous to taking this course. After the first session I was in the approx. 50% of students who felt a despair, a more poignant feeling than the healthy concern we came into the course with. Over time I did allow myself some skepticism about "the right sources."

The instructor, to my surprise, had also had expectations that we were all climate activists and had been so for a while. I was surprised as I had not defined myself as an activist.

As I read more and pondered these problems I started really understanding the interrelationship of so many issues that are front and center at this time in our world's history. Nature out of balance is symptomatic of so many other injustices and disparities.

As the course came to an end, I was happy to find myself close to where I had started in terms of my position, including what I can be doing in my personal life to minimize adding to the problem. I also realized that many of the projects and volunteer positions I've had

and personal decisions I've made do qualify me as an activist. Though not as demonstrator or rallyist. I think the real turning point for me was watching a lovely film on

Kanopy (through VIRL) called "2040." It charted a young father's journey across the globe to find out what could be done with existing technologies to make a better future for his young daughter. It really gave me a sense of hope and belief that we still have opportunities. As a species we need those beliefs to motivate the people who can create new technologies and make the important scientific discoveries to better solutions.

While we all will likely experience many stressors going forward and have to do some, possibly a lot of adapting, we have the precious advantage of our community. The interrelationships we share here are so important as we recognize what needs to be addressed and how individuals are stepping up in the ways they can commit to. Each of us benefit from those efforts.

The list could be exhaustive and I don't claim to know what everyone is doing. And I would like to acknowledge the recycling team, the compost masters, the gardeners, the EV owners, all the people who are involved in protests, sit on boards of environmental groups, social action/justice committees, health and wellness workers to mention a few. I also applaud Frances's initiative to start the conversation about ageing in community. My most sincere thanks to all of you.

A sign I saw recently states "The strongest communities are those who are prepared to respond in the worst of time." We have already committed to this preparation in our Vision and Mission statements.

thanks, Marianne



pranam

bringing these humble bones
to rest upon the humus bones of Mother Earth
bringing this humble forehead
to rest upon the humus forehead of Mother Earth
bringing these humble hands
to rest upon the humus hands of Mother Earth
bringing this humble heart
to rest upon the humus heart of Mother Earth

of this Earth
of this Mother
we are of this