
GORGE TILLICUM
Neighbourhood News
Gorge Tillicum Community Association Spring 2001

GTCA Annual General Meeting

Thursday, May 17th at 7:30 p.m.
Pearkes Rec. Centre/Lam Room
Special Presentation:
Safe Communities by John Story,
ICBC.
AGM business to follow.

3rd GORGE CANADA DAY PICNIC

Dear friends,

Once again the Gorge Tillicum Community Association in collaboration with the Municipality of Saanich is hosting the Gorge Canada Day Picnic on Sunday, July 1st. This great car free community event provides something for everyone we hope: from the canoe and kayak rides to the pancake breakfast, the stage entertainment to the kids parade, the bike rodeo to the Canada Day craft market, the strawberry tea to strolling heritage costumes. It's a chance to get out and meet your neighbours, and invite "outsiders" to come and join us for a fine day at the Gorge.

The planning group is always on the look out for new blood and new ideas, so if you would like to join in the fun of creating a great community event, or if you'd rather just volunteer some help on the day, just give me, Harry Lewis a call for more information at 384-8460

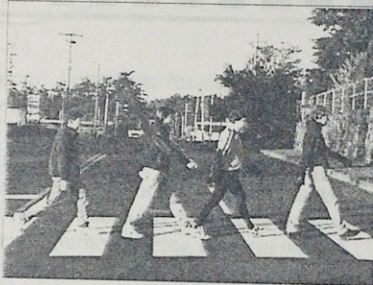
...more on the picnic on pg.3

CHANGES ON TILLICUM

Report by... Harry Lewis

A welcome addition to the Tillicum streetscape is the new pedestrian light at Obed. A corner with a dark history for accidents, the new pedestrian crossing light should make this a safer crossing point for members of the community. Other similar pedestrian lights are due to be installed at Gorge/Wascana and Burnside/Wascana during 2001, so that walking will be safer for us all. While the lights bring with them a sense of safety, please exercise caution when crossing as drivers take a while to adapt to new traffic controls.

We are hoping that the new light at Obed will just mark the beginning of a "revitalization" process along Tillicum. As one of our main thoroughfares and business areas it is badly in need of some



Abbey Road?, the Beatles?, No just GTCA members from left to right, Ray Farmer, Paul Gerrard, Rob Wickson & Harry Lewis at the Tillicum/Obed intersection.

upgrading to make it more attractive for those who live around it. The association will be active in bringing community members, business and property owners, and the District of Saanich together to examine ways to "revitalize" Tillicum Rd.

Watch for future announcements as this project gets under way.

THE TRAFFIC CIRCLE

Report by... Heather Stewart

Can you remember a time when you could walk down the middle of the street and not worry about being hit by a car? Can you remember a time when traffic didn't negatively impact your life?

I grew up in a town in northern Ontario (yes, I'm a transplant citizen). Every year the rains would flood the city. All the cars would stay parked in their driveways, but the residents would go out "puddle stomping". I also spent my fair share of time on streets playing hopscotch, skipping rope, playing road hockey and riding my bike.

In the Gorge-Tillicum neighbourhood, during the snowstorm of 1996, residents would walk down the middle of the street without worrying about cars, because the cars were buried in the snow. Neighbours came out of their homes to meet and talk to each other, right there in the street. Children were out playing in the snow and running around the neighbourhood. Is this not the way a community should be? I have heard stories from my neighbours about times, in the not so distant past, when the Gorge-Tillicum..... cont'd pg. 2

PROVINCIAL ELECTION: A CHANGE IN THE AIR?

by Harry Lewis

As we go to print with this publication, the Premier has called an election to be held on May 16th. Interestingly our neighbourhood encompasses two constituencies; Tillicum Rd. is the dividing line between the riding of Victoria Hillside to the east, and Saanich South to the west. In both of these ridings current Saanich councillors are running for provincial seats. In Victoria Hillside Councillor Sheila Orr is representing the Liberal Party and taking on incumbent NDP MLA Steve Orcherton. In Saanich South Councillor David Cubberley is standing for the NDP, and his chief opponent will be Susan Brice, former mayor of Oak Bay, representing the Liberal Party.

Andrew Petter, who has represented Saanich South for a number of years, has chosen not to run again. Our thanks and best wishes to Mr. Petter as he exits the provincial political stage.

The GTCA will be sponsoring an all candidates meeting in the run up to election day.

BC PROVINCIAL ELECTION ALL CANDIDATES MEETING

Victoria-Hillside and Saanich South

As our neighbourhood spans both ridings we have decided to host a dual riding meeting

THURS, MAY 9th, 7:30pm

TILlicum ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Traffic Circle-cont'd from pg. 1

neighbourhood didn't have a traffic problem. Long-time residents can remember when Tillicum Road was easy to cross, when Maddock was a quiet residential street and when Harriet was a dirt road.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting a war against the automobile. I have a car in my driveway..It can be very convenient and useful. But maybe we are ultimately paying too high a price for the "convenience". The bottom line is that we don't have to accept our neighbourhood being overrun with commuters. We don't have to "just live" with the traffic. We can reclaim our streets for multiple uses; cars, bicycle, pedestrians or just as a meeting place for the people in the neighbourhood. We can make our streets safer.

Is this possible? Yes. Is it going to be tough to accomplish? You bet. But it is not "them" or "the other people" who are going to fix these problems. It is all of us who live in the Gorge-Tillicum neighbourhood. Here are some first steps that we can all take:

1. Become an associate member of the Gorge-Tillicum Neighbourhood Transportation Committee (GTNTC).
Contact, Christine Helmink at 385-3388 or chelmink@hotmail.com.
Volunteer to do what **you can**- making phone calls, handing out leaflets, staffing booths or attending Municipal Council meetings just to show some support.
2. Fill out the GTNTC Transportation Survey, which will be coming to households in the area bordered by Gorge/Tillicum and Burnside/Harriet in the next month or so, and **return it promptly**. We need your input on what traffic problems are occurring on your street.
3. Finally, think about your own transportation habits. Are there ways that you can reduce car use but still accomplish everything you need to?
This is a start, and then check in future newsletters for the next steps. Have confidence that we can get there, one foot in front of the other, if we are all walking together.

GORGE TILlicum COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Executive Members 2000/2001

President: Harry Lewis 384-8460
email: hlewis@pacificcoast.net

Vice President: Paul Gerrard 386-2745

Secretary: Debbie Burkhart 480-7522

Treasurer: Rob Wickson 383-9241

Membership: Anne Genuist 384-9412

Newsletter: Rod Burkhart 480-7522

Area Directors 2000/2001

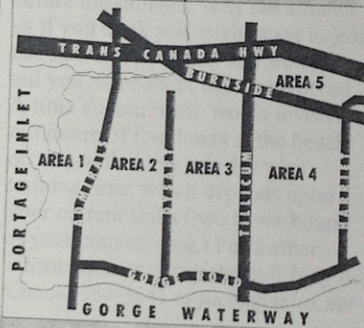
Area 1: Ed Lyons 479-9030

Area 2: Steve Legg 384-9412

Area 3: Bob June 381-0848

Area 4: Ray Farmer 382-1122

Area 5: Sue Koolman 475-1889



GORGE TILlicum COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

GTCA Memberships run
Jan.-Dec. 2001 at a cost of
\$5.00 per household.

Name.....

Address.....

P/C.....Ph:.....

Please mail to: Anne Genuist
820 Cowper Str.
Victoria, BC
V9A 2G3

Qu'Appelle Calling the Planting

Reported by: Ed Lyons and Sue Koolman

As part of the Community Development Grants awarded to our community from Saanich last fall, we received 17 large trees for planting in Qu'Appelle Park. Saturday, March 3rd dawned bright and mild - a wonderful day for tree planting!

Qu'Appelle Park on 1300 block of Qu'Appelle St. started 53 years ago as a neighbourhood initiative to clear three bramble covered lots as a community space for children and families to enjoy. The Cobb, Bosher, Blaus, Heavener, Beddington & Veitch families spearheaded the work and maintenance. Their descendants, including Bea Cobb and Fay Johansen, celebrated 50 years in 1998 with the planting of a memorial garden with a bronze plaque.

The park continues its growth as neighbours, GTCA members, and Saanich supporters enjoyed a festive tree planting party. Purple-leaved plums adorn Qu'Appelle St.

Several groups of Siberian spruce trees mark the north boundary near the apartment building. The maples and red oaks form the blocks of plantings between the basketball court and the kids play area

The showcase tree from Dave Hill was a Handkerchief tree that marks the entrance to the park. It will form a spectacular white-flower in the spring. These trees form the landscaping structure for the new play areas and facilities being designed by Saanich Parks.

Besides the neighbours and GTCA executive, Mayor Frank Leonard and Councilors David Cubberley and Jackie Ngai came to participate. Diane Murray from the Parks Dept. was on hand to informally discuss future plans for Qu'Appelle Park. A community open house will happen later this year. Dave Hill, Saanich arborist, and his crew made sure we didn't bury the trees too deeply. They will maintain them with watering and fertilization on a regular basis.

Mrs. Faye Johanson and her sister graced the event. They provided the continuity between their past efforts to beautify the Park and our present efforts to continue this work. We would like to offer a special thanks to Wilfred Chan on Davin Street, who provided electricity from his house for the coffee system. Thanks to Art's Bakery for the cinnamon buns and to the volunteers who planted.



Mayor Leonard chats with Bea Cobb and another local resident while in the background Rob Wickson and Councillor David Cubberley are assisted by Saanich arborist Dave Hill with their planting.

Come to the Beach & See who Lives there!

Judy & Chuck Sigmund

Would you like to learn about our local beaches and at the same time share the responsibility of stewardship with other members of our community? We can offer you the opportunity to become familiar with the beach, while at the same time collecting information about the plants and animals that live there. We are a small group of volunteers with the Georgia Strait Alliance who are currently conducting scientific studies of four local beaches. During the months of May and June we will be offering training sessions for new volunteers. Training will involve establishing quadrants, species identification and data collection. It is our goal to add at least eight more committed volunteers to our group before the summer. Why not contact us if you think you might want to join our stewardship group and we can tell you more about what's involved. A time commitment would involve a minimum of four hours at the beach on a specified low tide day plus training time, which depends upon your current skills (two to six hours at your convenience.) For further information or to register call Judy or Chuck, 384-3841 or juchu@telus.net

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR CANADA DAY PICNIC

We are very pleased to report that Tillicum Centre has decided to double its financial support of the Picnic! A big thank you from the Association for your contribution to the community. The Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club has once again volunteered time and equipment to provide rides on the waterway; in addition the delicious Strawberry Tea will be served on the clubhouse patio. Thanks to VCKC whose contribution on the water adds a splash to the day.

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COMMUNITY GRANTS AWARDED TO GTCA

Report by... Harry Lewis

In the fall of 2000 Saanich started a neighbourhood grants program through which community associations could apply for funding to support initiatives which would improve the quality of life in their areas. We were successful in the first round of applications, receiving support to help with publication of this newsletter and with tree planting in Meadow and Qu'Appelle Parks.

We have just received notice that our Spring applications have also been successful!

As a result we shall be:

- a.) sponsoring an all candidates meeting in the upcoming provincial election.
- b.) sponsoring a community kick off event for the Tillicum Road revitalization.
- c.) receiving District financial support for the Gorge Canada Day Picnic.
- d.) hosting a neighbourhood event with safety as the focus (Safe and Sound)

Obviously a community association as busy as this one needs your help and support. Consider calling us, or come out to our Annual General Meeting on Thursday, May 17th at Pearkes Community Centre. The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. See you there!

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Gorge Centre - 2947 Tillicum Rd.
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Councillor

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OF DAYS GONE BY

by Dennis Minaker, Author of "The Gorge of Summers Gone"

Colonial settlement in the Gorge Tillicum area began in the early 1850s when the Hudson's Bay Company opened up land to private ownership. Initial buyers were all former employees of the company, paying one pound sterling for each acre of land. Rocky ground and swamps were thrown in free. Some received land for free in exchange for completed service with the fur-trading company. Such was the case of James Stewart, William Veitch, Robert Melrose, James White, James Liddle, and John Russell, all of whom had sailed from England in 1853 to work at Craigflower Farm for five years. In 1858 they each received strips of land bordering the waterway between Craigflower school ground and present-day Austin Avenue.

James Yates, a former company shipwright, purchased a section of land centered along

Dysart Road, named after his hometown in Scotland. Yates' considerable wealth came from operating the first licensed saloon in the colony on Wharf Street and developing properties along Yates Street during the goldrush of 1858.

Seventy acres of land marked today by Heath and Parkview drives plus Cuthbert Holmes Park and some of Tillicum Mall were divided between three former Metis boatman of the HBC, Nicholas Auger, John Lemon and Jean Jolibois. Together they formed what Governor James Douglas called "a Canadian village for defence against the Indians".

In 1858 Doctor John F. Kennedy purchased land that now stretches from Inez Drive to Tillicum Road, north into the mall site. Born in 1805, Kennedy studied medicine in Edinburgh before signing on as company surgeon. He also served as treaty interpreter and chief trader before retiring to Fort Victoria in 1856.

Early Gorge Tillicum neighbourhood residents James and Mary Yates and son Harry, c.1864



The 400 acres of Craigie Lea Farm, east from Tillicum Road to Carroll Street, made up the bulk of James Yates' estate purchased in the summer of 1852. Survey marks at the time included a "blazed pine tree" near the foot of Earl Grey Street on the banks of the Gorge.

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WE ACKNOWLEDGE...

- Dennis Minaker, author of 'The Gorge of Summers Gone', who will contribute a regular local history column. Thanks Dennis

- The assistance provided by Saanich Community Services Neighbourhood Development Grant in producing this newsletter.

- Thanks to Rod Burkhart for his design work in developing our new Gorge Tillicum Community Association logo- check it out!