



GORGETILlicUM Neighbourhood

NEWS

Gorge Canada Day Picnic

Wednesday, July 1st

Springtime...and the annual Gorge Canada Day Picnic is in the works. We're hoping for another great community event, with many of the favourite events on tap once again for your enjoyment—see the enclosed Picnic program for details, or check the website www.gorgetillicum.ca.

On the main stage this year we are pleased to have Valdy as one of our headliners (www.valdy.com). Valdy continues to be one of the west coast's favourite performers, and his live festival set is full of fun and great music.

...Continued on page 6



Earth Day Cleanup in Cuthbert Holmes Park

The Earth Day Cleanup in Cuthbert Holmes Park on April 25th was a great success with over 50 people coming out to lend a hand. We are grateful to Saanich Parks Staff for their hard work and support and to Tim Hortons for supplying us with treats. We are pleased to see the community show that they care about the park. It's always nice to meet new people and re-connect with old friends.

Volunteers managed to clear an area of invasive species: mostly English Ivy, but also some Spurge-laurel daphne and English holly near the bridge at the centre of the park. The plant material removed filled five parking stalls! There were a surprising number of native plants hiding amongst the sea of ivy, and they should be able to thrive without the competition. To round out the event, Cory Manton (Saanich Parks) and some of the young volunteers planted many Douglas fir seedlings in the cleared area and elsewhere in the park.

The Friends of Cuthbert Holmes and the Gorge Tillicum Community Association would like to thank everyone who came out and participated. Thanks to Robert Baker for advertising the cleanup, and to Hank and Cleo Wulder for all of their signs. While we don't have firm plans for another such event this summer, we are thinking about the possibilities especially with the upcoming 20th anniversary of Cuthbert Holmes Park next year. Please contact Julian Anderson (cuthbertholmes@telus.net) or the GTCA (info@gorgetillicum.ca) if you would like to be informed of upcoming events in the park. — Julian Anderson & Karen Laberee

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Neighbourhood News

We welcome comments—please let us know what you think of your newsletter!

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Unsolicited Articles Welcome.

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All 4000 copies of this newsletter are delivered by volunteers and we could always use more help. Please contact Ray Farmer 382-1122.

Carriers needed west of Admirals Road – contact Ray Farmer

a word from the president

Well the dust has settled from our Annual General Meeting on March 25th and I have been handed the mantel of responsibility as president of the GTCA. We have been very fortunate to have both Harry Lewis and Paul Gerrard previously in this chair, and I am very appreciative of the strong leadership contributions they have made to our community. We cannot go wrong by continuing to follow the example they have set over the past 11 years.

We welcome new board members Julia Menard, Warren Ellam, and Gabe Epstein. Folks will remember Julia from the Green Space of our newsletter, and more recently spearheading the food security group, GTUF. Warren has agreed to take on the executive role as our treasurer, which is no small task. Gabe, who keeps the GTUF group informed, is interested in improving communication between the GTCA and the community.

We also must say a huge thanks to retiring directors, Russ and Betty Leech and John Hoole. Thank goodness John has agreed to help us with both the picnic and music in the park concerts.

We are now in the thick of the political season, not only with a provincial election having just passed, but a number of development proposals being brought forward for our consideration. On May 4th I made my first presentation to Council on the community's behalf, talking about the pros and cons for the condo proposal at the Cheltenham Court Motel site. Council wisely turned down the request for this rezoning.

Next up, perhaps by the time you read this, will be the Rio Can proposal for residential development on the northeast corner of the parking lot (where the two stand-alone restaurants are today). This proposal also has its pluses and minuses, and the debate is expected to be very interesting.

Congratulations to all who volunteered to spend the morning pulling invasive plants from Cuthbert Holmes Park on Earth Day. Julian Anderson, Friends of Cuthbert Holmes, was very happy to see the 50 or so helping hands.

Next up is the 11th Annual Gorge Canada Picnic. Harry Lewis and his team are very busy preparing another fun-filled day for all to enjoy. I am looking forward to seeing everyone there.

— Rob Wickson, president

Gorge Tillicum Community Association www.gorgetillicum.ca



GTCA Board of Directors 08/09

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The Board meets the first Thursday of each month, September to June, at Pearkes Recreation Centre. All members are welcome to attend!

LOCAL HEROS *Harland Bell*



A firm believer that “you only get out of society what you put in”, Harland is on the Board of Managers for Trinity Presbyterian Church and volunteers with a couple of food service programs as well.

If you think Cuthbert Holmes Park looks a lot tidier than it used to, you have Harland Bell to thank. Harland is a newcomer to our community, having moved here to share a house with his son’s family in November 2007, but he already makes a big contribution. A retired plant and animal scientist who grew up on a farm in Manitoba and spent his 36 year career in Brandon, he began trail walking for exercise during his initial semi-retirement in Calgary about 10 years ago, and started to pick up the litter as he went. He finds his volunteer work a great conversation starter and a good way to meet people—even if from time to time they think he must have been sentenced to community service!

So, if on your strolls through the park you see a bearded gent with a plastic basket and a pile of litter, stop and say hello to Harland, and thank him in person.

Even better, help him out by doing your own part to keep the park and our community litter-free by picking up after others when you can.

— Trevor Hancock

Food Programs at Saanich Neighbourhood Place

Food. Acquiring it, preparing it, and eating it, all take up a big part of our lives.

At Saanich Neighbourhood Place, a family resource centre located in Pearkes Recreation Centre, we try to take some of the stress out of that process. While we provide many parent support type programs (parenting programs, pre-natal nutrition program, and parent and tot drop in), we also provide a variety of food related programs.

Community Kitchens - Families meet once a month to cook several nutritious meals to take home and freeze. We can help connect you to a group, or help a group of people get organized. We have a great kitchen that we like to share.

Emergency Food Cupboard - A two day supply of non perishable food is available on an emergency basis for families.

Food Skills for Families -A program designed by the Canadian Diabetes Association that teaches low cost, nutritional cooking skills to families.

Good Food Box - A bulk buying program that aims to reduce the cost of fresh fruit and vegetables. Boxes are available each month. We are a pick up and payment location for this program.

Family Dinner Drop Ins - Saanich Neighbourhood Place cooks and serves a nutritious meal for families to share with each other.

All of our programs are free (some may have a suggested donation). Most require preregistration.

If you are interested in any of our programs, or want to find out more, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

www.saanichneighbourhoodplace.com
Phone: 250-360-1148
Email: sn-place@telus.net

— Colleen Hobson

Deanna Noyce & John Francis



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The Green Space

Here Come The Hens!

Imagine ... fresh, nutritious, cruelty-free eggs from your own back yard, straight to your kitchen!

It's legal in Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and many other jurisdictions across North America – but not in Saanich on properties less than 10,000 square feet (not yet, anyway).

As you may know from a recent Saanich News article, the Nezil Family are spear-heading a move to have the Saanich bylaw governing urban chickens changed to allow residents to keep a few hens (but no roosters) in their back yards. To support them in their efforts, contact them at 250-388-0024 or anezil@shaw.ca. You might also talk about the question of urban chickens with your family, friends, and neighbours.

Why do folks want to keep chickens? Here are a few reasons adapted from www.poultryone.com:

- Fresh eggs...think 10 metre diet.
- Chickens are great for gardeners— eating weeds and pests (e.g. carpenter ants) and providing chicken manure fertilizer
- Chickens make great pets. Some people even raise fancy chicken breeds to exhibit in poultry fairs. Chickens can be friendly and intelligent and are a great stress reliever.
- Some people raise chickens for a healthier alternative to the chicken meat sold in grocery stores.
- Raising poultry is a great way to increase your self sustainability. With the cost of everything in our economy rising, chickens can be a great investment.

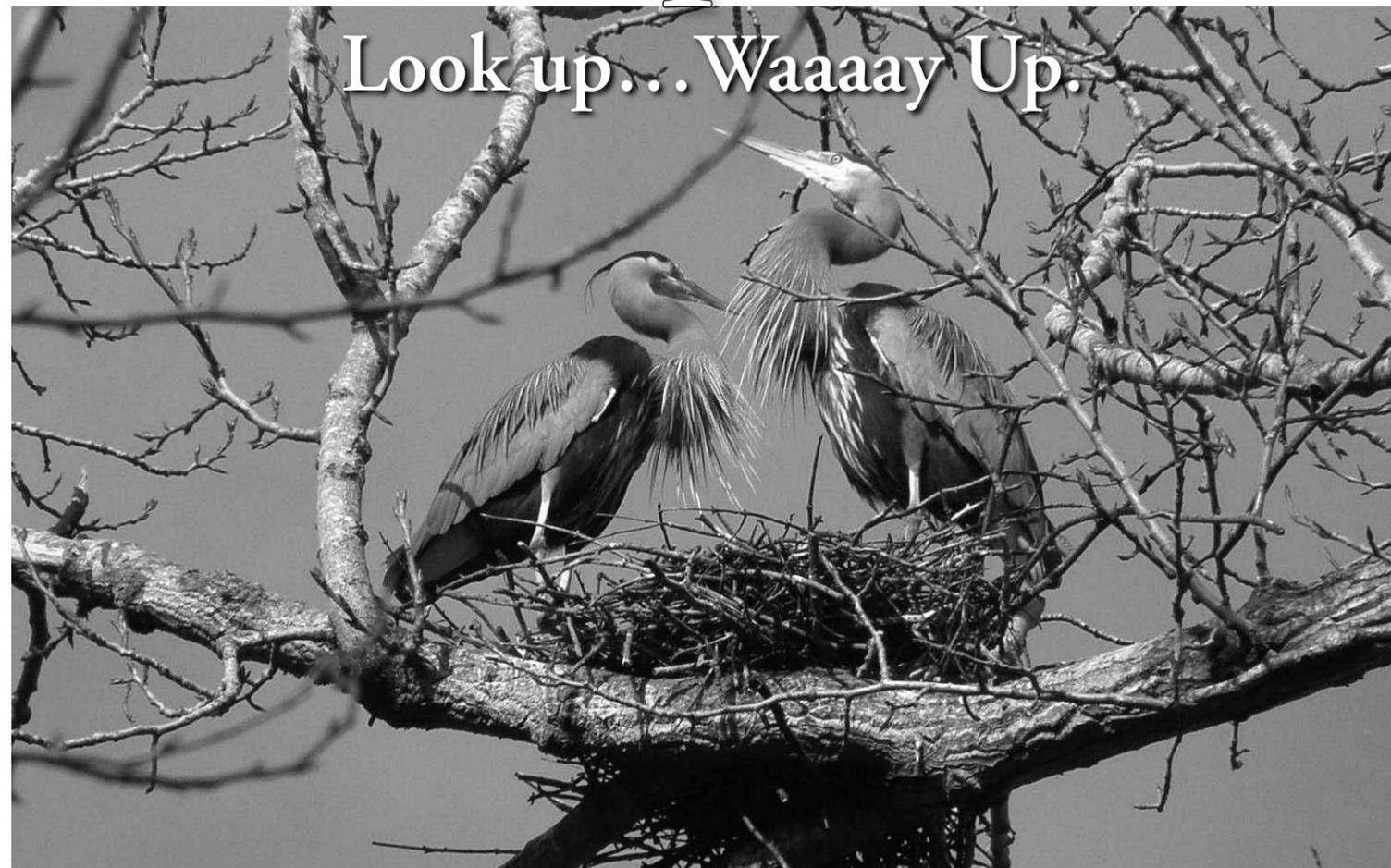
For further information and discussion about chickens, you might want to: view relevant documentaries (e.g. Mad City Chickens, recently screened at the Victoria Film Festival); read a book (e.g. Chickens in Your Backyard: A Beginner's Guide by Rick and Gail Luttmann or Chicken Tractor by Andy Lee); or consult one or more of the following websites:

1. www.ffcf.bc.ca/NewSiteFiles/programs/farm-city/urban-chickens.html (Farm Folk / City Folk).
2. <http://home.centurytel.net/thecitychicken/index.html> (TheCityChicken.com).
3. www.backyardchickens.com (BackYardChickens.com)

— Gabriel Epstein (250-382-1328)

HELP The Herons!

If you discover herons on the ground this season, wrap them snugly in a towel or jacket and call the WildARC at 250 478 9453 or www.wildarc.com. Last year the Wild Ark successfully raised and released 4 out of the 7 injured herons brought to them from Cuthbert Holmes Park. Since we estimated that only 3 to 9 heron fledglings survived the eagle attacks, these rescued birds are an important part of the surviving population.



Look up... Waaaay Up.

This photo of nesting herons is one of the many spectacular photos from Cuthbert Holmes Park taken by local photographer, Angela Wyatt. Angela is a graduate of the Western Academy of Photography, and has had her photos exhibited at the Sooke Art Show, Nanaimo Art Gallery, Gallery Cafe at Cedar Hill Rec Centre, Saanich Municipal Hall, as well as Gorge on Art.

www.flickr.com/photos/62946171@N00/sets/72157605613817812/show/with/279187762/

Cycling through Cuthbert Holmes Park, I remind myself to look way up... to see the fascinating activities of the Great Blue Herons that have returned to nest in the park for a third consecutive year.

Have you witnessed the awesome sight of these huge birds rising from the tree tops together, like a flock of prehistoric pterodactyls swirling overhead? Friends and I have counted more than fifty birds at one time.

The first contingent of herons returned on February 6, and a second group arrived on March 7 to begin choosing territory, nest

sights, and mates. The careful process of nest building goes on for weeks. Listening closely, you may hear the snapping of twigs as the herons break-off branches in the tree-tops. Then, returning to the nest-in-progress, the branch is offered with a courtly bow and a loud squawk, accepted by its mate and arranged into the growing nest.

On May 3, I counted 31 nests, many of which were already lively with the “chuckling” sounds of young herons. I first found hatched-out eggshells on April 26, so many of these squabbling youngsters are already several weeks old and will hopefully survive to leave the nests by early summer.

Last year Trudy Chatwin, a “Species at Risk” biologist with the B.C. Ministry of the Environment, helped identify and place permanent markers on each nest tree to help track the heron population over time.

Hérons in the wild can reach at least 23 years of age, but it is becoming more difficult for this “species at risk” to find undisturbed nesting sites.

On May 8, my granddaughter Zarya and I were counting heron hatchlings, when we witnessed a bald eagle attack. As all the heron parents rose from their nests uttering raucous cries, a raven, also nesting in the area, attacked the eagle and drove it

from the heronry. I'm sure we'll see the eagles again, as they also have young to feed.

In addition to the eagle attacks, these herons must also contend with looming human invasions planned nearby—the Rio Can Towers to the east and the Admirals Road Bridge to the west. Will these projects cause such disruption to the herons' nesting area, its food sources, and flight paths that they abandon this important habitat?

To learn more about the herons of Cuthbert Holmes Park, please come to hear Trudy Chatwin speak on Wednesday, June 10th at 7:30pm at Pearkes Recreation Centre.

— Honica Zylstra

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Music In The Park, 2009 Edition.

Once again we will be working with Saanich Parks to put on two summer concerts in our area—one at Meadow Park on Tuesday July 28, and the other at Rudd Park on Tuesday August 25. Both will be from 6pm to 8pm.

The Meadow Park concert will feature Kumbia, a Latin Caribbean band, while Children of Celebrities, a country/bluegrass/rock group, will headline the Rudd Park event. As always, there will be hotdog and ice cream vendors, and as new addition this year, a coffee vendor.

So, mark your calendars to make sure you don't miss these fun family events.

— John Hoole

...continued from front page

Gorge Canada Day Picnic – Wednesday, July 1st

Back again after a tour de force performance last year is Todd Butler, the Comox Valley troubadour and guitarist extraordinaire (www.toddbutler.com). We are very pleased to welcome for the first time to the picnic, Children of Celebrities (www.childrenofcelebrities.com) and the Bachands (www.myspace.com/KristinaQuinnBachand)—minus Kristina but replaced by Tyler Carson, another outstanding young local fiddler. These artists, and other returning favourites, will make the Gorge Canada Day Picnic main stage the place to be on July 1st.

For your community association to host such a day, we need many hands. If you can give a few hours on, or before, July 1st with some of these tasks please contact us info@gorgetillicum.ca:

- Moving chairs and tables June 30th and July 2nd;
- Setting up chairs and tables at Kosapsom Park and at VCKC < 9am on July 1st;
- Taking down chairs and tables at Kosapsom Park and at VCKC > 4pm on July 1st;
- Coordinating the 'Green Team', or assisting with recycling on July 1st;
- Coordinating media contacts around the Picnic;

Looking forward to another great Canada Day on the Gorge!

— Harry Lewis

Upcoming Events

GTCA Board Meeting: Thursday, June 4, 7:00–9:00pm, G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre

Rivers & Oceans Day Festival at Gorge Park (Esquimalt): Sunday, June 7, 1.00pm–4:00pm, Esquimalt Gorge Park. Bring your family and friends across the Gorge to Esquimalt Gorge Park to see, touch, taste and feel the wonders of the ocean and its surrounding environment. Event includes educational activities, children's crafts and touch tanks. For more info: Vicki Klyne at (250) 412-8511.

Heron Talk: Wednesday, June 10, 7:30pm. Owen Room, Pearkes Recreation Centre. The Gorge Waterway Initiative Speaker Series presents Trudy Chatwin, Species at Risk Biologist. For more information: CuthbertHolmes@telus.net

Saanich Silver Threads Celebrate Summer Luncheon: Wednesday, June 24, 11.30am–1:00pm, Les Passmore, 286 Hampton Rd. Drop in; everyone welcome. For more information: 250-382-3151

11th Gorge Canada Day Picnic: Gorge Waterway, Wednesday, July 1, 8:30am–4:00pm at Gorge Waterway Park and Kosapsom Park. Celebrate Canada Day along the Gorge Waterway with a pancake breakfast, parade, stage entertainment,

classic cars, kids' activities, street hockey, Strawberry Tea, market and more. More information at 250-384-8460 or www.gorgetillicum.ca

Gorge on Art: Saturday, July 4, 11:00am–4:00pm. Walk the Gorge Waterway and visit a fabulous selection of art from over 45 artists, for viewing and purchase. Food kiosks and much, much more. More information at 250-475-7124 or www.saanich.ca

Sunfest on Ice: Thursday, July 9, 2:30pm - 3:50pm at G. R. Pearkes Rec. Centre. Pearkes creates a "cool" setting on ice for everyone to enjoy. There will be prizes for skaters and the always popular sundae artist station. Skate rentals are FREE. More information at www.saanich.ca

Music in Meadow Park: Tuesday, July 28, 6:00pm–8:00pm. Bring your picnic dinner, blankets, and chairs and enjoy a free neighbourhood concert in Meadow Park! Food is available for purchase. More information at www.saanich.ca

Music in Rudd Park: Tuesday, August 25, 6:00pm–8:00pm. Come and enjoy a free neighbourhood concert in Rudd Park! See details above.

GTCA Board Meeting: Thursday, September 3, 7:00pm–9:00pm, G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre.

Sanich Figure Skating Club Skate and Dress Sale: Sunday, September 13, 10:00am–10:30pm at G. R. Pearkes Rec. Centre. FREE Admission.

Gorge Park Cleanup: Saturday, September 19, 9am–1pm. For more information: info@gorgetillicum.ca

Victoria Baby Fair: Saturday, September 26, 10:00am - 5:00pm & Sunday, September 27, 10:00am - 4:00pm, at G. R. Pearkes Rec. Centre. More information at www.vancouverislandbabyfair.com or (250) 686-5693

B.C. Women's Show: October 2–4, at G. R. Pearkes Rec. Centre. More information at www.atrshows.com/womens_show_exhibitor.html or (250) 472-6410

Victoria Fall Home Expo: October 16–18, at G. R. Pearkes Rec. Centre. More information at www.homeshowtime.com or 1-800-471-1112

32nd Annual Creative Craft Fair: November 7–9, at G. R. Pearkes Rec. Centre. More information at www.creativecraftfairs.com or (250) 658-0971

FREE Emergency Preparedness Begins With You: Saturday, November 14, 1:00pm–3:00pm, G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre. Learn how to plan and prepare before disaster strikes. Register at 475-5400

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Of Days Gone By



This summer, visitors to our provincial museum can see a block-buster display of man-made objects from around the world that date back thousands of years. Old “artefacts” can also be found free-of-charge in our neighbourhood near the Gorge Bridge on Tillicum Road.

Under the southern end of today's span is a fenced area protecting the oldest known archaeological site on Vancouver Island—an ancient shell midden, 4,000 years old, reflecting aboriginal habitation along the waterway that predates the ancient pyramids of Egypt.

Other nearby remnants of human activity are decidedly more recent. At the water's edge just below the midden is a stone and concrete platform used to construct the bowstring span of 1882 by Gorge Road West resident Daniel Adams. Concrete footings for the spans of 1899 and 1933 (as visible in this photograph of that period) are still very much in place to this day. An inspection of the water's edge under the Saanich end of today's bridge will reveal smaller cement footings with centered iron pins that once supported the boardwalk pictured here. That towpath—built in the 1890s for the safety and convenience of boaters—stood on site for over 50 years.

In the distance stands the “Free” public bathing house opened by the city in 1912 to serve Victoria's many swimmers. This was the area's favourite swimming hole for many years, attracting hundreds of bathers, both young and old, on fine summer days. Though burnt to the ground by a young vandal in 1945, the structure's supporting concrete piers still lie in the water adjacent to Saanich's Gorge Park, just below Fairways.

More concrete and stone work from the past can be found further along the shore at Aaron (aka Curtis) Point. The recent removal of ground-covering ivy from the eastern slope there has revealed two man-made ledges that may have supported a small gazebo or boat ramp from the early years of the last century. Along the water's edge facing the Gorge Bridge is another remnant of crude concrete work, likely used to support the series of diving towers erected there around 1920. Contrary to popular belief, the adjacent steps were installed as part of a campground landing, decades after the last diving tower was demolished.

Crossing back over the Gorge Bridge will take you into the Esquimalt Gorge Park, the location of concrete fishponds built as part of a Japanese tea garden in 1907. Nearby tall fir trees still support wooden insulators that carried the electric power to operate a roller coaster and other attractions in this former amusement park.

— Dennis Minaker, author of “The Gorge of Summers Gone”

Snippets

Saanich Council unanimously rejected Herbert Kwan, Architect's proposed development at 994 Gorge Rd. West. Many neighbours voiced their concerns, which included height, lack of fit with the local neighbourhood character, and increases to local traffic.

*

Despite numerous letters from PACs, community associations, and concerned individuals, Saanich Engineering remains unwilling to budge with their planned increase to the width of the new Admirals Road Bridge, and lack of railings between the sidewalk and road. The GTCA is now focussing efforts on requesting an advance beacon to notify drivers well before they reach the crosswalk at the bottom of the hill. Please write or email Saanich Engineering if you support this idea.

*

Volunteers from the Esquimalt Anglers were devastated to find the Colquitz Fish Fence vandalized on May 17. They are now unable to count and monitor coho smolts heading out to sea. If you see any criminal or suspicious activity in Cuthbert Holmes Park, please call Park Watch at 475-4321.

*

VCKC's Annual Paddle for the Kids on March 28th raised more than 16,000\$ for Camp Shawnigan. They will also be offering voyageur canoe and dragonboat rides at the Canada Day Picnic (July 1st) with proceeds again benefitting this program.

*

Are you part of Block Watch? Numerous benefits include protecting your home, potential insurance discounts with some carriers, and connecting with your neighbours. For more information, contact the Block Watch Office at 250 475-4365, or blockwatch@saanichpolice.ca

*

If you notice any swan or other bird deaths along the Gorge, please let GWI coordinator, Jody Watson (jwatson@crd.bc.ca) know any associated details. It is important to know if the diverters installed along the hydro lines are effective and to gain an understanding as to what might be causing these casualties.

Become a member of the Gorge Tillicum Community Association TODAY!

Why become a member?

- Membership dues are only \$5.00 per person (\$25.00 per business).
- Your fee will help support our Annual Canada Day Picnic.
- Your fee also helps fund the publication of this newsletter, a valuable information link to the community.
- You will become part of a very active group of community-minded people, who care about the Gorge Tillicum Community and its neighbourhood.

Mail to:
Gorge Tillicum Community Association,
P.O. Box 44152, Victoria, BC V9A 2A0

**2009 Membership Application/
Renewal**

Name(s) : _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Cheque enclosed (\$5/person \$25/business):
\$ _____

Each year the Gorge Tillicum Community Association mails out over 200 membership renewal forms to its members. This is very time consuming and costly. However, most of the renewal forms are returned with the \$5.00 per person yearly dues. Thank you to all the members who donated a little extra to cover the cost. Last year we had 346 paid up members (an increase of 40 from the previous year). So far this year we have about 112 paid up. If you haven't had a chance to renew or join yet, drop by the membership tent at the Canada Day Picnic. Thank you to all the GTCA members—you have helped make our neighbourhood a better place to live.

— Ray Farmer, GTCA Membership



**At the Centre
G.R. PEARKES
RECREATION CENTRE**

Pearkes Recreation Centre offers something for everyone this summer!

Preschool Kiddie Camp

Week after week of arts, outdoor exploration, music, games, circle time, and adventure for 3–5 year olds.

**July 6-10
Dora and Diego**

**July 13-17
Nine Leagues Under the Sea**

**July 20-24
Play with Me, Sesame**

**July 27-31
Out and About in the Neighbourhood**

**August 4-7
Snow Place like Home**

**August 10-14
Fantasy and Folklore**

**August 17-21
Pirate Pete and Poly Parrot**

**August 24-28
Can You Solve Blue's Clues?**

Summer Combo Camp

Summer Combo camp offers an exciting and active program in a superior facility with knowledgeable staff who will keep your child active this summer.

Every week in July and August for ages 6-11.

Each week is filled with:

- A day trip to places throughout the city
- Outdoor activities, sports and hikes in the neighbouring parks
- Challenging crafts and drama projects.
- Campers will also create tasty cuisine in the kitchen for them to enjoy.

Preteen Camps (11-14 years)

**July 20-24, 1–3pm
Play On Words – Writing Camp**

**Aug 10–13, 10–11am
Bollywood Dance Camp**

**Aug 4–7, 2–4pm
Belly Dance Camp**

**Aug 24–28, 1–4pm
Red Cross Babysitting Camp**

Facility Hours: June 27-Sept 6 2009

Mon-Fri 6:00AM - 10:00PM Sat-Sun 7:00AM - 8:00PM



PARKS & RECREATION
Pearkes Recreation Centre

PEARKES RECREATION CENTRE
3100 Tillicum Road
Phone 475-5400



24 hour info line:
475-5576
www.saanich.ca