



ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 5276, Station B, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4

Autumn 2010 Newsletter

CONTENTS

- Councillor’s Report**
- Rockland Native Garden: The Snowberry**
- Deer in Rockland**
- Rockland Heritage**

Please share a copy of the RNA Newsletter with a neighbour.

COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

I am happy to have been appointed the councillor liaison to Rockland, a next door neighbourhood to my home neighbourhood of Fairfield. Please feel free to contact me at my home e-mail geoffyoung@shaw.ca with any questions about Rockland or City of Victoria matters. I am hoping to regularly write a short piece dealing with Rockland issues for this newsletter.

A recent new development of two houses on Despard has raised the issue of houses that vary markedly from the standards of the neighbourhood. A number of residents have pointed out that the new houses seem to be taller and closer together than typical houses on the street. This has raised concerns on the part of neighbours.

As we are all aware property values in the City are far above their levels when much of the City was built (even allowing for inflation) and throughout the City we have seen a gradual increase in density as homeowners and developers seek to squeeze more buildings onto existing lots. Sometimes we have seen older or smaller houses demolished and replaced with larger houses or duplexes. Often we have seen small lot subdivision with two or even three houses taking the place of one, or with a new house sandwiched between two existing houses. Sometime the new developments fit in well with the existing level of development in the neighbourhood. Sometimes they represent a change in character.

At present the major residential zones in the city prescribe

the same standards for height, setbacks, parking etc. for all neighbourhoods (there are a few exceptions). Often zoning standards reflect lot sizes, of course - that is, on bigger lots rear setbacks might be bigger or houses might be allowed more floor area. However, zoning standards do not reflect the existing buildings in the neighbourhood or on the street. Thus they can sometimes represent a major departure from what exists. It is certainly worth asking whether zoning should be more reflective of individual neighbourhood standards so that new houses are similar in size and character to older ones.

Sometimes houses depart from their traditional neighbours because of their modern style or because they are just not very well-designed. We on council are asked why we do not prohibit such houses. The City has never attempted to prescribe the style, colour or appearance of single family houses (although in some areas we do so for commercial or condominium buildings). While it may be tempting to think that we could do so, a little reflection suggests that requiring any prospective home owner who wants a house that is a little more modern than its neighbours or of a different style to enter into a debate with city bureaucrats or other appointed arbiters of good taste present all kinds of problems. A house that is simply ugly will be difficult to sell, so they are rarely built.

**Geoff Young,
Councillor**

ROCKLAND NATIVE GARDEN: THE SNOWBERRY

Our community native garden is located just beyond the new Craigdarroch Gates on Joan Crescent. The objective of this small plot is to showcase indigenous plant material. While Victoria is located in the Garry Oak Ecosystem, many of the plants extend over a wider geographic area. Notable is the Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos*), a member of the honeysuckle family (*Caprifoliaceae*).

The flowers of the Snowberry attract bees and hummingbirds. The photo here highlights the white waxy berries that provide food for large forest animals (bears), smaller mammals and birds during the fall and winter. The genus *Symphoricarpos* was established in France in 1755. The name, *Symphoricarpos albus* var. *laevigatus*, provides clues about this plant: symphorer = to bear together; karpos = fruit; albus = white; and laevigatus = smooth leaves. Thus, white fruits borne on a bush with smooth leaves.

Indigenous west of the Rockies, the common Western Snowberry is highly adaptable to sun and shade, varied soil conditions and moist to dry sites. Spreading underground by rhizomes, the plant is resistant to fire and overfeeding. The Snowberry is adaptable, vigorous and dependable. Indeed, as the Rockland gardeners well know, constant vigilance is necessary to keep the Snowberry in bounds.

The First Peoples used the hollow Snowberry branch for arrow shafts and pipe stems. The fruit was used for medicinal purposes and to make hair soap.

The earliest reference to the Snowberry is attributed to the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1803. In 1813, American President Thomas Jefferson sent cuttings to a female friend in Paris, France. Ever accommodating, the Eastern and Western species of the Snowberry naturalized in Europe (UK, Ireland and northern Europe). Today the useful Snowberry is a practical choice for successful site stabilization in adverse conditions. The white berries will brighten our Native Garden during the coming winter months.



The Common Snowberry readies for the winter season.
Photographers: Andy and Sally Wasowski, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Lise Chartrand

DEER IN ROCKLAND



Dave Clark photo

It's noon and a young deer just arrived in the back yard. Just like the doe and fawn did last week, it goes straight to the Portuguese Laurel tree (a type of cherry) and spends the next 20 minutes nibbling the tiny fallen cherries. Occasionally sniffs at some branch at eye level, but no nibbling leaves today. Then, 5 minutes of grooming its hindquarter under the rhodo; step, step hop over the fence to the neighbour's lawn. After another few minutes, 3 turns around in a favourite spot, and kneel down, and lie down for a rest.

The first time ever I saw deer in the yard was almost two years ago on New Year's Eve, and that night, 2 deer were in that same spot, eating fallen cherries. These deer are newcomers exploring what is, for them, a pretty rich habitat.

Depending on the season, here are some of the deers' favourite foods in my yard.

In order of preference, the deer eat blossoms of rose, lily, viscaria, crocosmia, hosta, tulip, beans. Like me, their leafy diet includes peas, beans, tomatoes, lettuce and other salad greens, and also lilies-of-the-valley, delphiniums, tulips, hostas, hydrangeas, Asiatic lilies, roses, polygonatum, solomon's seal, violets, twinberry honeysuckle, snowberry, and the leaves of apple and pear fruit trees. They bonsai my bonsai Mountain ash. - What are they eating in your yard?

Even with favourite foods like pole beans, I've never seen deer nibble above the 1.2 meter mark (4 feet). Do you ever see deer on their hind legs, eating? Any plant with stems and leaves above the 1.5 metre level should be fine in the long run, but I have a lot of new sight lines in the metre to metre-and-a-half layer.

I have noticed several yards with new gates and strategically-placed potted plants - are these successful in deflecting deer from their favourite foods?

Like so many of the rest of us, Deer have decided that Rockland is a nice place to call home. A nice place to bed down for the night, and a wide choice of fresh salad greens year-round.

I am interested to know more about what they are eating in your garden, what's the maximum height of their nibbles, what are their favoured travel routes, how far does an individual range?

Send your answers and thoughts on deer and the urban forest to Secretary@rockland.bc.ca

Dave Clark
Secretary

ps: the deer is still at rest on the neighbour's lawn.

pps: In the hours after that deer left the neighbour's yard, it was followed by a pair of yearling bucks (knobs of their first-year spikes just starting to protrude) and 10 minutes after they left, a group of three - a one-antlered stag, a doe and another fawn - that's 6 deer through the yard in a single afternoon, travelling in 3 groups. The latter groups of deer were also eating cherries, as well as sedum blossoms, and canterbury bells.

How far does the distinctive one-antlered stag range?

ROCKLAND HERITAGE



Helen Edwards photo

If you walk past 1017 Craigdarroch Road, you would never guess that this was once the home of a most famous woman who had buried two equally interesting husbands.

Mrs. Sylvestria Theodora Hastings, who had the house built in 1915, had the distinction of being the first woman to vote in Canada and possibly in the USA. She was born Sylvestria Theodora Layzell in Sydney, Australia on January 17, 1846 to Lucy Berden and Robert Layzell. She came to British Columbia with her parents in 1858, travelling up the coast from San Francisco in the clipper ship Oracle. Her father was an early councilor in Victoria and was lost at sea in the wreck of the steamer Pacific in 1875.

Her first husband was Philip Smith (born 1827 at Kempston, Bedfordshire, England). They were married in Victoria on June 19, 1862. They had four children, Philip Robert (born May 27, 1863), Alfred William (born September 1864), John Lovell (born Dec 15, 1866), and Elizabeth Rebecca (born September 9, 1868). Philip was an early mining man and a pioneer over the Fort Douglas route to Cariboo. For years the family lived at Fort Douglas where Philip had a pack train, a hotel, a bakery and a blacksmith shop. He also ran ferries at Seaton and Pemberton Lakes. When the Fraser Canyon was blasted out and the river navigated by Captain William Irving, Philip's businesses ceased to be profitable as all travel was then diverted into the goldfields via Yale – a trip that did not require lake transportation and long, hard portages. Philip died on December 22, 1870.

Sylvestria cast her history-making vote in the Victoria mayoralty election in 1875 when she cast a ballot for James Drummond. She was allowed to vote, as she was now the head of the household with her four children living with her.

She married Oregon Columbus Hastings (born Pontoosuc, Hancock, Illinois, USA on Aril 26, 1846) in Victoria on October 2, 1884. They had one daughter, Juanita, who was born on November 2, 1885 in Victoria. Oregon was one of the early pioneers of Victoria. He sailed into the harbour in 1852, on a schooner owned by his father. The family had travelled across the plains in a prairie schooner drawn by oxen in 1847, arriving ultimately at Portland, Oregon. His father, Loren, travelled to the California goldfields and eventually set up a store that carried miner's supplies, hauling his goods from Sacramento and Stockton with oxen. In 1851 he chanced upon an abandoned mine and with a little effort, took out over \$1,000 worth of gold. When the California business began to fail, Loren bought a schooner and returned to Portland to his family. He then decided to relocate to Port Townsend, Washington. There,

he became a member of the state legislature.

Oregon worked for a while on his father's farm at Port Townsend but moved to Victoria to set up a photographic business. In 1889, he sold the business and became United States collector of customs at St. Michael's Alaska – the gateway to the gold fields via American soil. As this was a summer job, he spent his winters in Victoria where he studied astronomy. To this end, he built the first observatory on St. Charles Street – the first telescope and astronomical lens in the Pacific Northwest. He also made a study of microscopic work. Oregon died at his home at 737 Herald Street on August 5, 1912 and was buried at Ross Bay Cemetery.

Mrs. Hastings had moved from 1017 Craigdarroch Road to their former address at 727 Herald Street by 1923 and died in Victoria on March 6, 1926, at the Aged and Infirm Ladies Home (now Rose Manor), having outlived three of her children (Philip Robert died April 8, 1925, Alfred William died May 9, 1883, and Elizabeth Rebecca died July 14, 1914). She was survived by John Lovell Smith, living at Shawnigan Lake and Juanita Hastings who had moved to 1140 Chapman Street. Sylvestria Theodora Hastings was buried in the family plot in Ross Bay Cemetery.

Helen Edwards

PS. Is there a building you would like to know more about? Let me know at heritagelady@gmail.com and I will try to accommodate you.

RNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 2010-2011

President: Janet Simpson
Vice President: Bob June
Secretary: David Clark
Treasurer: Catherine Spencer
Directors: John Edwards
Jean Gubby
Bill Brooks
Jane Wheatley

RNA Email Server List

Would you like to hear more about events in Rockland? Please join the neighbours list through the RNA website at www.rockland.bc.ca.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The Rockland Neighbourhood Association Newsletter is published four times a year. It is distributed electronically to all members. Submissions from members on issues of interest are always accepted and photos are particularly welcome.

Deadlines for the upcoming issues are:

Winter 2010 - January 15, 2011
Spring 2011 - March 15, 2011
Summer 2011 - June 15, 2011
Autumn 2011 - September 15, 2011

All submissions should be sent to Communication Chair John Edwards - jcsedwards@gmail.com.