



ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

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

Spring 2016 Newsletter

CONTENTS

Fairies and gnomes are back
New stormwater utility
Calling all lawyers!
Victoria police community services
Central's Naturalized Play Space
What a terrible day in the neighbourhood
Rockland Heritage
Board of Directors
About This Newsletter

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

HOW WAS EARTH DAY 2016 CELEBRATED IN ROCKLAND?

By cutting down three “protected” trees, including two Garry oaks in order to blast way for a new house.



Let's hope a similar fate doesn't await the trees at the Truth Centre:



and at 1512 Regents Place:



It's time for the City to close the gaping holes in the Tree Preservation Bylaw.

All photos supplied by Janet Simpson.

FAIRIES AND GNOMES ARE BACK



“ The Fairies and Gnomes have returned from their winter holiday and settled on the 1600 block of Rockland Ave again, ... to make residents and tourists smile. “

Photos supplied by Norman Clark.



NEW STORMWATER UTILITY

This autumn, the first [Stormwater Utility](#) bills will be sent out to property owners. Through the [Rainwater Rewards](#) program, there is an opportunity to reduce your bill and get rebates.

Using [cisterns](#), permeable pavers, raingardens, and other similar methods help slow and clean the rainwater, either capturing it for re-use, or slowly diffusing it back to the natural water table.



Applications for the Rainwater Rewards Program are now being accepted, but the deadline is June 30th to ensure any reductions can be applied to the 2016 bill. If you have an existing project, you can qualify for a 10% ongoing reduction. In addition, new approved projects can tap in to a limited rebate fund on a first-come, first-served basis.



All photos from City of Victoria website.

The City of Victoria Stormwater Specialist is available to help as you map out the method that might be suited best to your property and to help guide you through the Rainwater Rewards application process. Please email stormwater@victoria.ca with any questions or call 250.361.0443.



CALLING ALL LAWYERS !

From time to time, the neighbourhood association would really appreciate being able to ask a lawyer a question.

If you would be willing to help in this way, please let me know at jesimpson@shaw.ca. Thank you!

SPRING IS SPRUNG



Belling your cat will not save me! Please keep him or her indoors while I am learning how to fly in the spring! Thank you!

VICTORIA POLICE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Are you aware of the services the Victoria Police Public Affairs and Crime Prevention section offers to members of community organizations?

They will attend community events and can do a variety of things including:

- An info booth with crime prevention information (Block Watch, personal safety, fraud & identity theft)

- Child Find BC

- Bike registration program

- Info on volunteering with Crime Watch

- Valuable engraving service

The Crime Watch volunteers and Reserves also offer a few different crime prevention services that can be deployed to the neighbourhood including Lock Out Auto Crime and Speedwatch.

Watch this newsletter for more details and information on these programs.

CENTRAL'S NATURALIZED PLAY SPACE

On May the 6th 'Ecole Central Middle School celebrated the grand opening of their Naturalized Play Space. The school is situated on the Greenway that extends from Clover Point to Victoria Senior Secondary School and the Fernwood Village.



In 2012, in cooperation with the City of Victoria and supported by the RNA, the school led by staff member Kathie Cross, embarked on an ambitious project to convert a parking lot and a portion of the adjacent playing field into a diverse, welcoming space for outdoor play and interaction.



Initially, the paved area was closed to regular vehicle traffic and a number of colourful raised beds were constructed where students plant and tend vegetables.

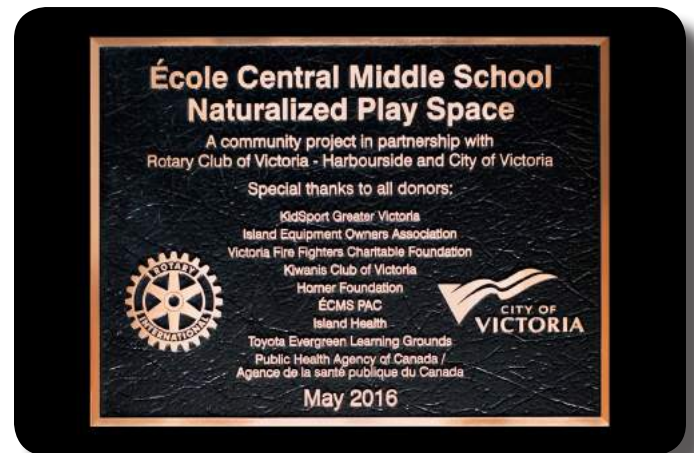
Along the way, the project has expanded, supported by grants, donations and services from the Harbourside Rotary Club, and nine other foundations and associations.

A landscape architect was retained to refine the initial vision to link a variety of play areas and create a cohesive space - a diverse landscape that uses natural elements to

create welcoming spaces for interaction between students. Also incorporated is a rain garden that receives storm water runoff from the paved surfaces and keeps the greatly expanded bicycle parking area mud-free.



The project is being supported by the Island Health Authority as a pilot to determine its impact on health outcomes. Researchers from UVic studied student behaviours prior to the project, and have recently followed up to document changes that can be attributed to the new environment. Student activity levels have increased by 40%. Feedback from the students underscores their appreciation that their needs are being considered, and that age-appropriate choices are available for play, for learning and for social interaction.



The work doesn't stop here. Next up is an additional seating area of four benches, each decorated with a different animal symbol important to the Coast Salish culture, and annotated with descriptions of that animal's character and the meaning it can bring to the students. Funding is also being sought to provide another gathering area that can be accessed by those with mobility challenges.

Hopefully this great accomplishment will inspire related initiatives to improve the quality of our living environment.

Photo credits: Page 4, left: Dave Clark; page 4, right, K. Cross; this page: Dave Clark.



WHAT A TERRIBLE DAY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

This is an email that was sent to Mayor Lisa Helps on April 22, 2016. It is being printed here with the full permission of the author.

Dear Lisa:

This really is a terrible day in our neighborhood. As I went to work I saw wonderful large old Garry Oaks are being cut down at 1326 Richardson, where we just had a historic old building crushed and taken to the dump. As I went to an appointment on Oak Bay Avenue I saw the excavator on the Elford site where another old building was torn down and sent to the dump.

This is a mockery of and makes a sham of the OCP. Green City; not a chance.

It is imperative that work is done to get rigorous bylaw protection in place to protect our heritage.

Lets start staff looking to world class, not BC class, solutions now. Not is four, six or twelve months.

Lets see the same energy and investment in protecting our city that has gone into Biketoria.

I regularly see the tourists walking through my neighborhood. Trust me, they are not here to see boxes they can see at home. They are here for architecture, pleasant walking, a green canopy; for the outcomes the OCP is supposed to deliver

Sorry Lisa, but this really is a bad, bad day.

Regards;

Bob June

ROCKLAND HERITAGE

by Helen Edwards

It was indeed a sad day in the neighbourhood when the building at 1326 Richardson was demolished with all of its material trucked to the dump.

Most residents would walk by this house and never guess at its history.

This was the original coach house of the Robleda Estate that had its mansion facing Rockland Avenue and its property extended down to present-day Richardson Street. Thomas B. Hall, owner of Ross Hall Rice and Flour Milling Co., commissioned Robleda to be built in 1890. The next owner was Captain James William Troup, manager of the British Columbia Coast Service. He was well known for his skill in navigating river rapids and built up a fleet of 12 Princess ships for the Canadian Pacific Railway. He was known locally for his love of motoring around with Victoria with his fellow car-aficionados Thomas Plimley, Albert Todd, R. P Butchart, and Doctor E. C. Hart. According to local reports, his White steam car could travel at over 70 miles per hour at a time when the speed limit in Victoria was 6 mph. He moved to a new home in 1908, selling to John Arbuthnot, a former lumberman and Mayor of Winnipeg who became involved financially with the coal mining industry on Vancouver Island. He was living in the mansion when it was destroyed by fire in 1927. All that remained at that time was the stonewall bearing the estate's name and the coach house.

In 1928, a Tudor Revival was built on its foundations by architects Ralph Berrill of Victoria and Jameson Parker of Portland, Oregon for Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Pooley. That building remains intact today.

The land was subdivided and Robleda Crescent was opened up for development in the 1940s and many houses rose on new building lots. The coach house remained as the sole reminder of the glory days of the estate.

The old coach house was eventually turned into rental suites and remained that way for decades. It sat, a proud reminder of a storied past, and was well loved by local residents. It was still in great shape in the 1970s and even in the summer of 2001.



All that came to a crashing end this April. It is almost scary just how fast the history of a site can be obliterated. First came the removal of the siding on the lower level.



Then came the bite of the demolition machines, making short work of old-growth timber and any interior furnishings.



Massive timbers were reduced to matchsticks and a once proud building was reduced to rubble. All that remained was for the trucking away of the pile of wood - a sad end for such a building.



It did not take long for the trees on the site to be removed as well (see page 1 for photo), creating an empty landscape.



Next came the installation of a power pole and, more recently, a water connection. It is indeed sad when no consideration of the history of a site is given when demolition is considered. It is time for us to make our politicians aware that we as a neighbourhood care about our past and want to retain our older buildings. I am personally tired of people telling me that a building is old and tired. I have seen what the right person can do with an old building and only wish that such efforts were rewarded with more than a community award.

We know what is happening in Vancouver and, lest we get smug, it is happening here as well. Perhaps not to the same extent, but dirt is now more valuable than buildings and that is not a good thing. I hate to think of the cost of trucking still-useable material to the landfill, but it

must be considerable. Perhaps, it needs to be made even more costly so that material can be recycled to those of us who are looking for salvaged materials. I do not have the answers, but it is a cause that I am willing to fight for.

I had a long-time Fairfield resident ask me the other day who on earth allowed that house to go down. She knew the history and had been in there a number of times. I had no answer for her. Now the building lives on in our memories. Gone, but not forgotten.

Photos: Page 6, left and top right: Hallmark Heritage Society Archives; middle and bottom right: Janet Simpson. page 7: Helen Edwards.

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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 during the year. It is distributed electronically to all members. Submissions from members on issues of interest are always accepted and photographs are particularly welcome.

Deadline for the next newsletter is June 15, 2016. All submissions should be sent to Newsletter Editor, Helen Edwards at heritagelady@gmail.com.