

Observer

FAIRFIELD GONZALES

Issue #3 September 2012



Groups, individuals, businesses and non profits are building community in our neighbourhoods.

Open up the Observer & read their stories.

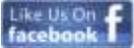
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Call Kaari at 250-382-4604 for more information.

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COMMUNITY SPACES

In today's increasingly individualistic and consumerist society, community is an alternative way of life. The word community can carry a variety of meanings. In a general sense, community refers to a gathering of people either based on shared values or proximity. Community movements have shifted over the years, but continue to be comprised of sharing spaces, challenging ideas and redefining friendship, work and family. Community spaces are important to have and maintain, as they do demand work and conflict resolution.

This issue of the Observer showcases some of the alternative ways of life that are thriving around us. Learn about community-based resources that are engaging new entrepreneurs and promoting community through music and dance. Find out how you can build community close to home, as well as ways to get to know your neighbourhood community. Organizing through community for change is also presented in this issue, along with current efforts to create more inclusive and accessible community spaces. Lastly, this issue remembers the history of the spaces where communities flourish.

In Community,
Julie Cormier

HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY THROUGH MUSIC, DANCE AND DRAMA

By Doug Paterson



One of the key ingredients in building community is a commitment to co-operate. Throughout time, in most communities, dancing, singing, drama and eating would be the main co-operative activities that would bring people together.

“This kind of sharing creates new relationships and bridges between people. Learning how to work and play with a variety of people is at the core of creating a healthy community.”

Ideas for community building include:

- Leave your house
- Turn off the T.V.
- Know your neighbours.
- Greet people
- Play together
- Buy from local merchants.
- Have potlucks.
- Listen to the birds
- Start a tradition
- Organize a block party
- Sing together
- Dance together
- Do drama together.

Music is the international language that joins people of all ages together in creative harmony and healing. We have a strong need for the feeling of belonging. We want to be both seen and heard. Acknowledging people in our own community with smiles, eye contact, and touch, creates opportunities to build relationships and shape community. Community dances are one of the best ways to accomplish this. Trust is built, through touch, on the dance floor. Connections are made.

In our over competitive world we need to make extra effort to enhance co-operation through social activities. Music enhances learning, nurtures self-expression, extends our lives and makes us happy. Skills in attending, listening and co-operating all occur and improve when families are involved in musical activities.

Doug Paterson builds community and family growth through singing, dancing, drama, and community



events. For further information:
sing@harmoniousfamilychoir.com 250-385-SING (7464)

OUR PLACE IS YOUR PLACE OPEN SPACE AT THE FGCA

One of the FGCA's commitments as a community association is to facilitate community enhancement. One way of doing this is by offering accessible space to members and non-members to organize, gather or even promote themselves. **'Our Place is Your Place'** refers to our space sharing event that happens on the last Monday of the month between 6 and 8pm.

Community members, emerging entrepreneurs or even established organizations are welcome to book free rental space for public events.

Clothing swaps, guitar jams, Reiki presentations, travel slideshows and movie nights are a few of the events we've hosted by inspired community members.

Have something in mind? Take advantage of community-based resources available to you.

Contact Thomas King
recreation@fairfieldcommunity.ca
 to discuss possibilities.



FALL FAIRfield TEMPORARY PLACE, LASTING LEGACY

By Vanya McDonell

In a neighbourhood built on history, it is not often that a new tradition comes along. Last September, through a fine blanket of autumn mist, the sights and sounds of **the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association's (FGCA)** very first FALL FAIRfield made Porter Park come alive. It was a true celebration of all that our area has to offer. From the stilt walkers and giant papier maché apples to the golden sounds of bands the Sweet Lowdown and Riverside, a festive air presided and an excellent time was had by all. Local gardeners showcased their wares, attendees sat in at the Saori Weavers booth to help create a beautiful handwoven banner, children sat enraptured by storytellers the Thom sisters, and folks from all walks of life got up to dance with the Saanich International Folk Dancers and local dance caller Doug Paterson.

In the months leading up to the festival, the FGCA's 2011 Artist in Residence Carolyn Knight printed pennants with the public at the Moss Street Market, built connections through the CommuniTEAS public forums, and reached out to the community to become involved. Her vision resonated with all who attended, **drawing comments such as "[my] favourite community event in years!"** **Volunteers who met through FALL FAIRfield** have made lasting friendships and the FGCA created strong local community partnerships.

Although the 2012 FALL FAIRfield will miss Carolyn and all that she had to offer, we continue on full steam into our second year, growing and changing while staying true to the original vision of a community-driven, arts-based Harvest Fête. Highlights for this year's festival include:

- ☞ Celtic band BlackAngus (get ready to dance!)
- ☞ Magician The Great Giffoni
- ☞ Musician Mick Gorman and friends
- ☞ Contra Dance with caller Doug Paterson
- ☞ Salutations: A Community Card. Mark Victoria's 150 Years of Settlement by adding your comments to a community greeting card, with artist Carolyn Knight
- ☞ Harvest Hats: decorate and wear a hat in the harvest theme and win a prize!
- ☞ The Saanich International Folk Dancers
- ☞ Expanded food and drink offerings
- ☞ Bouncy castle, face painting, and Daisy the Cow!



Fall Fairfield 2011

One of the legacies from last year's Artist in Residence is that we continue to engage the community at our arts and crafts booth at the Moss Street Market, situated **beside the musicians' tent from 10am-2pm** every Saturday. All summer long and into the fall, volunteers Kim Pringle and Mina Hong have been working hard with the market patrons to create everything from paper bag puppets to a collaborative banner.

Continuing from their success last year, we hosted many CommuniTEAs to meet up with interested folks and to vision for FALL FAIRfield throughout the summer. Ideas bounced around, connections were made, and many moments of inspiration transpired!

Throughout August and September the FGCA is offering two free arts-based workshops. The Lantern Making Workshop on August 11th 2012 was a great success as community members collectively created fair décor. On September 15th we will hold a Harvest Hat Making Workshop at the Fairfield Community Place for neighbours to get involved in the Harvest Hat theme. Our hope is that in helping to create the look and feel of the event, community members can attain a feeling of ownership in the place-making of their neighbourhood festival.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 29TH 1 to 5 pm
Come to Porter Park (behind Sir James Douglas School and Fairfield Community Place at 1330 Fairfield Rd.) from and be prepared to enjoy all the bounty that is FALL FAIRfield.

It's sure to be a family favourite for years to come!





A LITTLE TASTE OF ITALY

By Julie Cormier

Victoria's cycling culture inspires a variety of wacky inventions on wheels. Some contraptions are used to cart kids to school, others to transport surf boards or compost bins. For Claudio Costi, his three-wheeled invention is used as the *Il Forno di Claudio* company vehicle and an all-in-one market stall.

Built on the balcony of his Fairfield apartment, Claudio pedals his delightful baked goods across town, from the kitchen to his major buyers and to local markets. Once parked, a series of wooden flaps open up, serving as display shelves, a serving table and a sign, and hidden in the front are heating plates that keep the baked goods nice and toasty all day.

Claudio is proud of his Italian heritage and shares his passion by bringing native flavors from various regions of Italy to the Island. **He's doing a good job at it as business is growing in popularity.**

Claudio is community-oriented and believes strongly in neighbourhood-based services. As a frequent program user of **the FGCA's out of school care and many cooking classes, he jumped at the opportunity to bake Italian goods in the community centre's commercial kitchen, a year and a half ago.** Cooking during the wee hours of the morning, Claudio started out with grissini only. Now, he sells up to 12 different items, ranging from crostini to delicious ciabatta and pane nero, as well as specialty items for the holiday seasons. Fully dedicated to his **business, Claudio's success has outgrown the FGCA's kitchen capacity so he's recently moved to a larger kitchen.**

Another success story! The FGCA is thrilled to see young entrepreneurs utilize community facilities as a way to leverage into new careers. Claudio aspires to one day own a bakery in Victoria and get further involved in his community.



Find Claudio with his three-wheeled cart on Saturdays at the James Bay Market or Wednesdays at Market Square Market and indulge in a little taste of Italy.



Claudio Costi at the Market Square Market



CREATIVELY UNITED CONNECTS COMMUNITY

By Frances Litman

Dreaming big paid off for the Fairfield community and more than 16 local charities when international award-winning photographer Frances Litman created a one-of-a-kind, three day, fun-filled family festival this past April in support of those doing the hero work in our community.

Richmond at Richardson became a hub of activity from April 20-22 when the parking lot and grounds of St. Matthias Church were transformed into an indoor/outdoor Earth Week festival.

For the first time ever, dozens of non-government organizations were given the opportunity to be in one place at the same time with the intention of sharing their message with the public in an entertaining and engaging way.

Musicians, artists, speakers and entertainers lent their time and talent to this free event. Three ticketed performances were among the many highlights of the weekend. These included featuring such notable people and group such as Robert Bateman, Ann Mortifee, Paul Horn, the Getting' High Choir, Holly Artzen, Kevin Wright and TedTalks speaker/photographer Garth Lenz.

An estimated 4,000 people attended. One of the many good news stories from the event was that, at the conclusion, just two bags of garbage remained thanks to a solid program of composting and recycling. As well, \$6000 was shared among 16 charities including: WildArc, The Dogwood Initiative, The Ancient Forest Alliance, the Land Conservancy, Sierra Club and 11 others.

"We walked our talk and kept our footprint to a minimum to show people what is possible when we work together," said Frances Litman, festival founder and lead volunteer.

"It was great to hear wonderful feedback from the Fairfield community about how happy they were to hold a festival of this scope in their neighbourhood with such community spirit."

Be sure to check out the festival website at www.creativelyunitedfortheplanet.com for photographs, videos and lots of additional information and stay tuned for details to come regarding the 2013 festival planned for April 20-21. You can also follow and post like-minded material to *Creatively United* on Facebook.



Creatively United for the Planet Festival 2012



Frances Litman

SAFE HARBOUR PROGRAM PROMOTES DIVERSITY

By Steven Baileys

The Safe Harbour Program is a nation-wide initiative designed for local businesses and organizations who wish to take a leadership role in creating an environment where all members of our community feel safe and welcomed.

Based on the popular “block-watch” program, Safe Harbour recruits local businesses and agencies to become part of a network that commits to equitable treatment in the workplace while providing a “safe place” for anyone who is a victim of discrimination. Organizations complete the 2 hour session and commit to being a Safe Harbour member by displaying a Safe Harbour decal on their entrance window. This commitment indicates to the community that they are a welcoming place, supportive of diversity and will assist victims of discrimination.

The interactive workshop involves scenarios and discussions that explore stereotyping, bias, and marginalization and offer practical ways to address discrimination. Safe Harbour locations sign on to 3 key commitments:

- Equitable Treatment for All: Welcoming all clients in a respectful manner
- An Immediate Safe Place: Providing an immediate safe refuge for someone experiencing discrimination in or near the worksite, which may include a place to sit, a glass of water, a phone to use, and access to a list of service providers in the community
- Prepared Employees and Worksites: Preparing all managers and staff to implement these commitments.

Building on its roots in 33 communities in B.C., Safe Harbour: Respect for All continues to grow in public recognition through TV and radio PSAs, media outreach, and social media. The Province of BC awarded Safe Harbour the 2011 Nesika Award which celebrates BC's cultural diversity and indigenous communities.

More than 50 local businesses and organizations are now part of the Safe

Harbour network here in Victoria. Local Safe Harbour organizations include: Vancity Savings, Safeway Stores, Victoria and Saanich Silverthreads, James Bay New Horizons, Fairfield Gonzales Community Association, among others. The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) is the Safe Harbour community representative and provides no-cost Safe Harbour sessions to businesses and agencies. If your organization would like to arrange for a Safe Harbour session, please contact program coordinator Steven Lorenzo Baileys of ICA at 388-4728 ext. 116 or email: sbaileys@icavictoria.org. For more information about the Safe Harbour program please visit: www.safeharbour.ca



SAFE HARBOUR

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DID YOU KNOW?

The majority of automatic doors in the Fairfield neighbourhood, and the City, are actually donated! When planning new buildings developers continue to neglect accessibility needs of those operating chairs, carts, strollers or walkers. This afterthought does not go unnoticed however, especially by Ron Machetuk. Ron advocates for access for all and recently succeeded in getting the Starbucks coffee shop in Cook Street Village to put in an automatic door. Ron is part of the Garth Homer Society and has volunteered for the FGCA for a number of years. Accessibility, especially of public spaces, is still an issue that needs to be talked about and advocated for. So speak out for a more enabling environment for everybody.

The FGCA nods to all those movers and shakers who raise a stink to make public spaces accessible for all abilities. Next time you walk through an automatic door, look for the recognition plaque to see who is supporting access for all.

FGCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS A CONDUIT FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

By Julie Cormier & Ro Fife

Are you someone who is eager to engage in the neighbourhood community, to identify issues, and to develop community-based solutions? Serving on the FGCA board of directors is your opportunity to take on a formal leadership role, to collaborate with neighbours, and to represent a larger community with diverse needs and interests.

Since 1975, community members have come together formally as the community association to enhance the quality of life for the residents of Fairfield Gonzales. Since its incorporation as a society, the FGCA has nurtured its community by establishing and expanding grass root services, such as school age childcare, as well as volunteer projects, such as the Plastic Recycling Program. As the FGCA evolved, along with the Fairfield Community Place the centre, the association has established a reputation as a leader in providing a strong voice for a better Fairfield Gonzales, a facilitator of supports close to home for youth, seniors, families and individuals and a hub where residents connect and work together.

Our board structure of governance ensures that community members can participate actively in pursuing the organizational mission and continue to vision for the future of the community association. Directors typically serve for two year, renewable terms. Our board of directors meet on the first Monday of the

month (no August meeting). Board responsibilities include attending monthly director meetings, participation with an association committee, monitoring the agency operation for due diligence with its fiduciary and legal obligations, and serving as a public ambassador for the programs, services and projects of the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association.

Board members must have a current membership with the FGCA. Membership is free, perpetual and open to any adult residing or owning a business inside the Fairfield Gonzales neighbourhood boundaries. We are currently actively seeking individuals with an interest or background in board governance, fundraising, special events and succession planning.

Our AGM will be held on Saturday October 27th 2pm at the Fairfield Community Place.

If you are interested in joining the Board please email volunteer@fairfieldcommunity.ca or call 250 382-4604



The FGCA invites its members, residents, program participants and community partners to our AGM

Come out to learn how FGCA programs and projects enhance community life for all ages! Celebrate our past year of work and share in the pride of our active, engaged neighbourhood.

ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING

Saturday
October 27th
2:00-4:00 pm

Garry Oak Room
1335 Thurlow Rd.

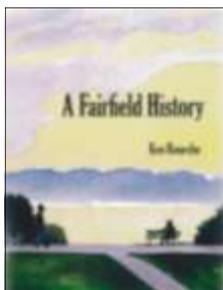
Join us for ...

- Electing the Board of Directors
- Launching of our new logo!

STREETCARS IN FAIRFIELD *a chapter from* *'A Fairfield History' By Ken Rouche*

Electric street cars first arrived in Victoria in 1890, a year before they came to Vancouver. Service started with four cars and soon the rolling stock expanded to fifteen cars, with lines extended west to the Royal Navy Base in Esquimalt, east up Fort Street to the Royal Jubilee Hospital and south to James Bay. In 1903 work began on a line south on Cook, from Fort Street as far as Pakington. According to Emily Carr, south of **Pakington was "...a streak of skunk cabbage bog running between two dairy farms."**

In due course the Cook Street swamp was drained and on March 21, 1909 the No. 6 Foul Bay Line opened, with a two mile extension down to May Street, over to Memorial Crescent, up to Fairfield Road and to a loop at what is now the play field at Margaret Jenkins School. Victoria was also in the midst of the greatest real estate boom in its history. At the turn of the century building permits were less than half a million dollars per year; by 1912 they rocketed to over \$8 million. There was a massive suburban development as the City pushed out from its early boundaries into Fairfield. As Terry Reksten **noted, the boom "...swept away the cow-yards, the Chinese market gardens and the skaters' pond. Solid Edwardian houses replaced Trutch's orchards and marched down Cook Street all the way to the sea."** The Mayor proclaimed that streets should be paved and trimmed with boulevards, instead of unkempt grass.



Get your own copy of
A Fairfield History
Available for \$20 at the Fairfield
Community Place. For every purchase,
a donation is made to the FGCA.

Corner of May
& Moss 1944
City of Victoria
Archives .



A number of developers were building houses on a speculative basis. These were the days before banks and trust companies were permitted to issue home mortgages. The developers would build and finance the deals on the basis of a ten percent down payment with the balance paid in monthly installments over seven years. The buyers were typically young families who had previously been unable to afford their own homes. Developers included Alexander McCrimmon, British Canadian Builders and The Bungalow Construction Company. The latter built many of the homes on Linden Avenue, Durban Street, Clover Street and lower Moss. Many of these homes, for example the homes on Durban, were five and six room California style bungalows. Another developer, William Dunford & Son, built 150 bungalows during the boom, completing them at the rate of about one every nine days. Prices ranged from about \$4000 to \$10,000 and three hundred real estate firms were vying for business in a city of 32,600 residents. Modern Homes Limited, which was also active in Fairfield, built many of the homes on Wildwood Street. The Ward Investment Company built homes on Linden Avenue and on Cambridge Street.



Cook at Oliphant 1946. The house and shop at the corner is the current location of Oxford Foods. Photo courtesy of Bob Webster

The streetcar system was carrying almost 11 million passengers annually along its 29 mile length. In 1913 a siding was added at Arnold Street which helped to increase frequency on the Foul Bay Line to accommodate the growing population in Fairfield. The Cook Street shopping area also grew rapidly. By 1914 twenty-six buildings were in place, including the Hampton Court, one of the first apartment buildings in Victoria. The shopping area included Pantorium Cleaners, Fairfield Meats, Fairfield Grocery and Post Office, and Fairfield Cleaning and Pressing. That year also heralded the collapse of the real estate boom in Victoria, sweeping away the dreams and savings of many. The prices of 1912/13 would not return for over three decades. And, the grid pattern of much of Fairfield, established by the arrival of the streetcars, would take another thirty-five years to fill in. About the same time car owners started a new informal and faster mode of transportation by cruising the streetcar stops, offering rides to impatient passengers for a **nickel, or a "jitney"**. **Jitneys were often seven passenger touring cars or just old rundown Model T Fords.** By 1915 up to sixty jitneys were in play in Victoria. Many of the drivers were returning war veterans and unemployed family men.

By 1921 the streetcar company had determined that the best response to the jitneys was to invest in the one man Birney streetcar, replacing the two man streetcars. At twenty-eight feet and with seating for thirty-two passengers they were smaller, rougher-riding than their predecessors. However, they kept operating costs down and allowed for improved frequency. Growing up on Wellington Street in the **1930's, Hal Yardley rode the Birneys to Vic High.** Hal and some of his friends would sometimes start the car bouncing to such an extent that it would derail, providing an airtight alibi for being late for school. They would then dutifully help the driver shift the streetcar back on to the tracks. The Birneys would be the last new equipment purchase for the Victoria system.

The No. 6 line remained popular with both commuters and with cottagers on Foul Bay, a favourite summer swimming hole. Shops were popping up at each street care stop. Mrs. Leeming opened a confectionary at May and moss, where there was also a butcher shop, a Piggley Wigglely grocery store and a shoe repair shop. Over at Arnold and Fairfield, there was another grocery store.

Throughout the Depression and the Second World War no funds were available for new streetcar equipment. However, both the streetcar company and their competitors, Blue Line Transit, expanded bus service in some areas. With gasoline for private cars in

short supply, the war years proved profitable for the streetcar company.

By 1945 streetcars were still the backbone of the local transportation system. However, big changes were in the wind. In the spring of 1946 Blue Line Transit took **delivery of the first of its fleet of "New, Postwar, Streamlined, Air-Conditioned Coachs"**. Meanwhile, the streetcar company had signaled its intent to close the No. 6 Line beyond Joseph Street and replace it with a bus service. Just in time to be too late, City Council approved a speed limit increase to twelve miles per hour, to help the system compete with buses. The increase in speed didn't seem to slow down a seventeen year old raga-muffin who staged an armed robbery of passengers on the No.6, near Cook and May. Not only was he named in the daily papers, front page, but was sentenced to three years 'hard labour'.



B.C. Archives

By 1948, the process of surrendering urban transportation to the bus commenced, with the pulling up of the tracks and pulling down of the overhead **wires.** Using **Bill Broadfoot's Atlas Service Station** (currently the home of Pic-a-Flic), as a base of operation, crews proceeded to remove all signs of the No. 6 Streetcar Line. The Birneys were sold off for a hundred bucks a piece for use as trolley diners. Art **Stott wrote of the streetcars' passing** "...though its departure may add something to urban tranquility it leaves its former patrons not without wistfulness for **the clanging banging times in which it ran."**

LOCAL BANK SUPPORTS YOUTH

By Thomas King

Community members were joined by a volunteer team from the RBC in Cook Street Village to take part in the City of Victoria sponsored program called VTAG - Victoria Together Against Graffiti. Thirteen volunteers took to the streets surrounding the Fairfield Community Place, at 1330 Fairfield Rd, to remove graffiti and to repaint hydro poles. The RBC team used this volunteer opportunity to access their Community Service program and raised \$2000 for the FGCA's youth programs!



Cathy Cox RBC manager (L), RBC staff, and FGCA Executive Director Joan (R) Kotarski accepting RBC's donation

RBC volunteers (L-R) Cathy Cox & Deb Linehan



Some feedback from Youth Programs participants:

My son has really enjoyed his afternoons [at Youth Zone]. It gave him some time with his peers to become a more independent person. He gained responsibility and learning new things that we couldn't teach him" - Parent

I appreciate all of this because it built my friendships and trust and most of all because I had fun" -Youth Zone Participant



RBC volunteers (L-R) Allan Balladares, Inga Shedlock,

WARM YOUR BELLIES

Historical shifts in land use are important to remember and honour as we live and gather on these spaces today. Victoria's 150th birthday marks a history of colonial development of the Coast Salish people's land by European settlers which brought many changes to land use, land identification and community spaces.

Let's remember Meegan. Beacon Hill Park was once known as Meegan to the Songhees Nation people. Meegan means 'warmed by the sun'. Among other things, Meegan was a place where the Songhees sat to have their bellies warmed by the sun. Next time you're in the park, warm your belly in honor of the people who assembled and preserved the land before you.

To know more about the Songhees Nation and the history of land use in the area, visit the Songhees Nation website at: www.songheesnation.com

GROW A STREET COMMUNITY

A FAIRFIELD GONZALES STREET PARTY KIT

By Moss St. Village volunteers

Street parties are a wonderful way to have fun and bring neighbours together. Getting to know each other better through such events can lead to many good things!

DID YOU KNOW?

In Victoria, the City provides block party permits and delivers barricades for free.

Several streets in Fairfield and Gonzales have traditions of annual street parties, including Carnsew, Chapman/Linden, Cornwall, Howe and others. The purpose of this kit is to share some tips and ideas based on local experience.

HOW TO GET A PERMIT FROM THE CITY?

In the first year, you need a majority of residents to sign in support of the street party, and in subsequent years, you only need to submit the application form. Application must be submitted four weeks in advance.

Find the needed forms on the City's website, including a neighbour sign off form, block party guidelines and an application form. Find the needed forms on the City's website, including a neighbour sign off form

<http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Parks-Rec-Culture/Recreation/Documents/block-party-sign-off.pdf>,

block party guidelines, <http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Parks-Rec-Culture/Recreation/Documents/permits-block-party-guidelines.pdf>

and application form. <http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Parks-Rec-Culture/Recreation/Documents/permits-block-party-application.pdf>

ORGANIZING TIPS

Tip#1: When you're getting your neighbours' sign off to have a street party, ask them about what they'd like to see at the event and what they are able to contribute. This can include anything from kids activities to performances and workshops. If someone suggests an activity, ask if they are willing to coordinate it. Musicians that neighbours know may be willing to come and play for free or for donations by 'passing the hat'.

Tip#2: Collect donations from local businesses. For example, music stores may be willing to loan equipment, like the 2008 Chapman/Linden street party which got Larson Music to donate the rental of a PA system.

Tip#3: Put out a reminder about 2 days before. Provide a schedule of activities, and ask people to park their cars off the street for the day. This is also a good chance to ask for any last minute volunteers you need.

Tip#4: Make sure to organize a clean-up crew. At the ending time, the clean-up crew makes sure the street is clear and places the barricades back where the City delivered them to. Leaving the street pristine will build support for future street parties.

Tip#5: Take pictures!!! Documenting the fun with photos and/or videos is a great way to capture some of the memories. The images can also be used in flyers for future street parties and other community building activities.

HOW TO BE IN TOUCH

This document, available online at www.fairfieldcommunity.ca, was prepared by Moss Street Village volunteers. Moss Street Village is a neighbour-driven initiative, supported by the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association through its Streetlife Committee of the Board of Directors.



Chapman/Linden Street Party, September 2008

FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY PLACE HISTORY

By Simon Munn, FGCA Volunteer

The Fairfield Gonzales neighbourhood community centre, known as the Fairfield Community Place, at 1330 Fairfield Road, is a unique building with a strong history in place-making and community building in the area. It all started in 1919 when the annex was built as an additional set of classrooms for the Sir James Douglas School. It was constructed to meet the demands of a community that was growing after the return of Canadian soldiers from the First World War. The wooden frame of the schoolhouse sets it apart from the old main school building on Moss Street, which was made of brick. The 'shingles' building, as it is called, may have looked like the more temporary and modest of the two structures but it is the one that remains while the large brick school was torn down over a decade ago. In fact, of all the early structures associated with Sir James Douglas School, which included the old school building, the Manual Arts building and the gymnasium, the annex is the only one that is still in existence. This is a testament to the members of the community who advocated for the **building's preservation and heritage status. It is also a tribute to the students that filled its classrooms for the first two-thirds of the twentieth century.**

When it was used as a classroom, the annex housed grades 1 through 3. Not only was it structurally separate from the rest of the school, there was also a geographical division. It was up a hill, which made it harder to get to from the main building, and on the other side it appears to be buttressed by rocks. Laurel Way, who attended in the early 40s, remembers feeling protected from the intimidating aspects of the old Edwardian school building, giving them a sense of ease as they entered into the public school system. Teachers in the middle of the last century were notably more severe than most teachers now. The parental involvement in the lives of the students while they were at school was minimal. It was unusual for parents to drop their children off at the annex; most students walked. Jane Barrett, a student from the late 40s and early 50s, remembers only one parent-teacher **meeting each school year. Teachers didn't call home** either, likely because not everyone owned a phone at that time.

Culturally things were different as well. For example, **everyday classes took part in the Lord's Prayer and Bible readings.** Also, in the 1940s at least, there was very little cultural diversity in the annex classes.



1940's class photo by the rocks behind 1330 Fairfield. Photo courtesy of Laurel Way



1909 Sir James Douglas School main building. Photo courtesy of Syd Langhelt

Road was still relatively busy in those days and there were still crossing guards at the intersection of Moss Street and Fairfield Road. Funeral processions regularly traveled up Fairfield Road in those days. If the students were out front of the building for recess when this happened they were required to stand in silence until the procession passed.

The annex stands largely as it did almost 100 years ago. There have been a few internal alterations but the classroom layout is still as it was. It is a reminder of its original purpose and the children that were taught there. Among the more modern structures that now **surround it the 'shingles' annex remains an asset to the community, both as a centre for community development and as a window into that community's past.**



BONNIE & LOUISE TWO DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

By Julie Cormier

Two women are helping out at the FGCA office these days. Bonnie and Louise are two volunteers who dedicate weekly hours to support the operations of the community association. Both living in retirement, these women know how to keep busy while giving back to the community they live in.

Bonnie is a new resident who moved from Canmore, Alberta. Joining the FGCA team as a volunteer was a way for her to get further integrated into the neighbourhood community. She shares her skills and evolving interest in writing and editing, by proofreading material and offering a fresh perspective to our communications. Her contribution to the staff team is invaluable, especially since most non-profits cannot afford a communications officer.

Louise is a long-time resident of Fairfield who joined the FGCA in February in search of a way to give her time to a local cause. She revived our membership program by updating our database and offering new ideas on how to engage current and potential members. Her willingness to facilitate ongoing data entry and maintenance is greatly appreciated, as well as her French Canadian flare.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to both Bonnie and Louise for all the work and support they give to their local community centre.

The FGCA has many volunteer opportunities including: helping out with special events, serving on the board of directors, lending a hand at our plastic recycling depots, digitizing our archives & much more!

For more info email volunteer@fairifeldcommunity.ca

A PLACE TO ORGANIZE

By Stephan Fortin, FGCA Volunteer

The FGCA is currently an organization and community space with many roles in the neighbourhood, many purposes and services for many people. These include childcare and education, recreational activities, facilities rental, community events, a place to connect, and a place to talk and organize in the neighbourhood. The community association and its diverse services did not appear fully formed in 1975. It grew bit by bit, one service at a time, with priorities which changed to suit whatever needs the neighbourhood had. In the earliest days of the community association (and at various times during its growth and development), the neighbourhood needed a space to discuss and consult about neighbourhood building, planning, and zoning issues, so these concerns were at the forefront.

Ideas like neighbourhood pride, character, and the preservation of those ideas can only come about when there is an organization or a forum where neighbours can meet and discuss them. Around the time of the beginning of the community association, neighbourhood action was being stirred up around the fast-tracked city approval of developments which often involved the destruction of heritage homes and the construction of condos and high-rises. Many neighbours objected to these changes, which they saw as transformative of a richly historical neighbourhood to which they felt a connection, as well as pricing out current residents and other families from Fairfield. Through the conversations facilitated by the early members of the community association these issues were given recognition and the neighbourhood was given an issue to organize around.

The work done by the planning and zoning arm of the community association helped residents articulate and realize their visions for the neighbourhood. In the beginning, this often meant protest and advocacy, from community meetings and letters to City Council, to street protests like the public wake held for demolished heritage homes. These days, the Planning and Zoning Committee of the FGCA continues to be a place for neighbours to consult each other on matters of property, seeking approval for variance requests and raising concerns about new developments and plans for Fairfield. In the time since the earliest incarnation of the community association, it has grown to encompass all the community services that the neighbourhood enjoys today, while keeping the conversation going about what the neighbourhood was, what it is, and how it should be.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF FAIRFIELD UNITED CHURCH 100 YEARS OLD

By Mary Doody-Jones, community member

The present United Church at Fairfield Rd. and Moss St. **began in April 1912, as “the Moss St. Mission”** from what was known as Pandora St. Methodist, then Metropolitan Methodist (now the Music Conservatory). Mr. Albert Schroeder was the first chairman of the Stewards group in the Fairfield mission and longtime leader. Mrs. Schroeder and the Jalland brothers were significant assistants. The minister from Pandora St. Rev. T. E. Holling was at the opening ceremony. The Rev. David W. Ganton M.A. was the first official minister. The first facility was a large white Sunday School tent with a wooden floor and sides near the corner of Moss St. and May St. (a site on the trolley route). Joseph Haegart was the first and only pupil at the first meeting; **according to his written “Memories,” he saw only men looking after the Sunday School that day. The site was “some hundreds of yards into a boggy field” “approximately where Oxford St. joins Moss St.,” surrounded by the two Smith brothers’ grazing cows.** At the beginning, there were 21 scholars and 6 teachers, including Mayor Noah Shakespeare.

In 1912, the three lots at the corner of Moss St. and Bond Street plus \$1000 were exchanged for two lots on the corner of Fairfield Rd. and Moss St. and an adjacent one on Moss St. The organizing committee had also given a contract to build a parsonage at 220 Moss St., likely to attract and keep incumbents, for \$3300. By November, a temporary framed building arose with volunteer labour at the new site, the first official church then called Fairfield Methodist Church. By this time there were 97 pupils. The tent was moved to the Moss St./Fairfield Rd. corner. Apparently, the frame building **was replaced, as Haegart’s account states that a new brick Sunday School faced east to west with a stage on the west side behind the site of the present church. This change likely happened in 1913 when a mortgage was taken on. This second Fairfield Methodist Church building was later demolished. Olive Holland’s “fond memories” included challenges on the church tennis court “where a bungalow now stands.”**

World War I interfered with revenues and more ambitious plans, so the present hall was built in 1921, mostly by volunteer labour as the third building used as a church, likely in the pastorate of Rev. Samuel Cook (1919 to 1923). During the building of the hall, the tent, moved to Sir James Douglas School, housed the Sunday School. Another account states that these pupils went

into the basement of the school. The parish became self-sufficient in 1924, under Minister Rev. W. Lee, and went into the Union between the Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists in 1925 to become the 1926 Fairfield United Church. A newspaper reference mentions the Rev. John Robson having ill health, hence the appointment of Rev. Lee in June 1925. In this pastorate, architect Major K. B. Spurgin designed the arts-and-crafts half-timbered church. At the time there were 140 families of 750 **persons.” On June 2nd, 1926, Lieutenant Governor Robert Randolph Bruce laid the cornerstone, under which in a hollow vault was a box containing records of the church’s history, a Bible, a copy of *The Times* and *The Colonist* for June 2nd and other documents. The President of B.C. Conference, Rev. Principal W. H. Smith officiated. Mrs. David Spencer, a dedicated Methodist and wife of the notable store owner, and Mr. John Murphy represented the congregation.**

According to the United Church *New Outlook*, the church, which could hold 550 people and cost \$30,000, officially opened on Oct. 14, 1926. Mrs. David Spencer opened the church, while Dr. W. H. Smith conducted the service, Dr. A. M. Sanford preached the sermon with J.W. Ogden as special preacher on the following Sunday.

Albert Schroeder gave the pulpit for the present church. The first pulpit, made by Mr. John Speir, is now a lectern in the Sunday School Room with a tiny tent-organ, as reminders of the tent beginnings. The information for this account comes from a variety of **accounts; notably Joseph Haegart’s “Memories”** especially about the tent and hall. The writer also met Joseph Haegart back in the 1980s when he told some of these stories.

A typed unsigned **“A Short History of Fairfield United Church, Victoria, BC.”** contains lists of facts. Documents include: **“The Laying of the Foundation Stone” (typed 2 pages); “Mother Church Has maintained Growth Sixty-seven Years” with a description of the United Churches in Victoria; and a typed article “The Laying of the Cornerstone;” “70th anniversary Notes” with seven articles; copy of pages from United Church *The New Outlook*; and excerpts from Olive Holland’s letter “Fond Memories of Fairfield Church Since 1920.”**

HONORING THE CREATIVE AND THE CREATOR

By Marianne Kettlewell, Fairfield United Facility Coordinator



On April 14, 1912, Victoria Methodist Church set up a tent in a field in the centre of a growing Fairfield neighbourhood. A more permanent building was erected in 1921 (Fairfield Hall) and the cornerstone of our main building was laid in 1926. Tight community connections were formed right from our first days when we held Sunday School classes in the Community Centre's basement and the community rallied around the church's fundraising efforts.

Today, Fairfield United is a proud and active member of the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association, offering input and space for events honouring both the creative and the Creator. We have our own groups, open to all, and we reach beyond our doors to support our multi-faceted and multi-cultural community through groups like LifeRing, Alcoholics Anonymous, Al Anon, Our Place, the Bodhichitta Buddhists, and an Eckhart Tolle group. Fairfield Hall, formerly a Scout Hall, brims every day with dance

groups: African HandDrums, ballet, therapeutic dance, and Folk Dancers. On weekends, the hall echoes with the laughter of children's birthday parties, charity fundraisers, Youth Group and theatrical events.

We are blessed with a musically talented congregation who enjoy sharing the Sanctuary and its wonderful acoustics. We host many jazz, folk and classical concerts, soloists, choirs and musical fundraisers. The Victoria Fiddle Society, House of Music Gospel Choir, Brownies and Folkestra call us home and there is much crossover between our congregants.

Recently, the community rallied once again around our efforts to create the "Phil Fawcett Community Garden" A lovely spot with benches, gardens and cherry trees, it has become a popular spot for repose during community events such as Moss Street Markets. Our welcoming church, at Fairfield and Moss, is truly the physical "heart" of Fairfield. We strive, through our community outreach, to also be the "spiritual heart."

Fairfield United Church 2011

*Join us for the start of Funday School on
Sunday, September 9th
for worship at 10:00 am
and a hot dog lunch to follow!*



ST. MATTHIAS ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

A CENTURY OF SPIRITUAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

By Mary Doody-Jones, community member

After the 1909 trolley line into Fairfield, the increase in population led to mission work from Christ Church Cathedral through home groups around 1911. With 125 Anglican families, the original boundaries were west by Moss St., north by Chandler Ave., east by Foul Bay Rd. and south by the sea.

By 1915, the first St. Matthias church was built at the Lillian Rd./Richmond Rd. corner. The Cathedral paid \$3200 for the site and respected contractor and parishioner, George Lowe, who lived on Bushby St., supervised the volunteer labour. F. I. M. Owen designed the combined church and Sunday school. The **Cathedral's St. Agnes Guild of young girls and a newly formed Ladies Guild** sewed furnishings and donated organ, pews and a heater. The first church service was January 1, 1915. Additions include the belfry and Yates St. Fire Hall bell (1919) and a hall (1928). The Rev. F. H. Fatt became the first official part-time priest and later Rev. R. T. Hughes was the first priest-in-charge. **Eight years of work cleared the church's debt and the mission parish became "self sustaining" between 1945 and 1947.**

In the later 1940s, the removal of trolley tracks and the emphasis on cars for the suburbs led to another population increase. Parts of Fairfield, like the areas around St. Charles St. (which had been market gardens) then held housing. The church and hall were full to bursting so, by 1952, the necessity for a new church was clear.

Canon F.E. M. Tomalin was the priest-in-charge. The appointed architect Patrick Birley, designed a church with laminated West Coast beams and special features like the balcony and a versatile hall with facilities. Volunteers worked on this building also. George Lowe dug the first spadeful for the church on May 13, 1956. His daughter Margaret, for whom the Peg Lowe room is named, stayed in the church until her death. The laying of the cornerstone was on June 22, 1956. The last service in the old church was on January 6, 1957. The French Canadian Roman Catholic group bought the old church for the continuing St. Jean Baptiste parish.

The new church was full at its opening service. Interior features from the old church remaining in the chapel section are the pump organ, wooden background, altar and communion furniture. Stained glass windows were gradually added, including one for Eric Edwards, who was organist and choirmaster in 1938 briefly and again

between 1964 and 1972, the year of his death. By 1964, there were 119 children in Sunday School and large choirs for both children and adults continued into the 1970s. Music has been an important, skilled part of the ministry.



"Courtesy of St. Matthias Anglican Church of Canada."

The spacious new rectory, built by 1963 and designed by Patrick Birley, holds four bedrooms and a study. Roger's court, named for the retiring incumbent Canon Rogers, arose for low-cost rental housing on the site of a rose garden. Designed by architect Daniel Bong, this mission effort was completed by 1972.

Modifications to the hall in 1993 improved the quality and number of rooms available for parishioners and renters, including: classrooms, choir room, library, an upgraded kitchen, a self-contained nursery, handicapped accessible washrooms, an internal ramp and external elevator. The St. Matthias parish continued its tradition of spiritual assistance, outreach and caring in the era of churchgoing decline.

After a 2009 major schism, when a large group of parishioners left the Anglican Church of Canada, the reduced congregation reorganized and continues to grow. Cultural community contributions increased with art, ballet, and language schools as well as a music studio and venues for dance and concerts.

The tradition of spiritual life offers services on Sunday and communion on Thursday mornings, teaching of children as well as study groups and support for self-help groups. The kitchen, updated to CRD requirements, provides receptions in the milestones of **life and aid for the Rainbow Kitchen's work of feeding the hungry. Monthly recycling takes place in the parking lot and last year's environmental fair, put on by Creatively United for the Planet, was a major event on the extensive grounds. We follow the spirit of worship, music and service of the first builders one hundred years ago.**

Information sources include: Mabel Sadler's *Sixty Years to Grow On: a History of St. Matthias Church 1915-75*; conversations with older parishioners and Deacon Norah Hague, who had attended both churches; and the writer's 33 years of attendance.

HALLMARK HERITAGE SOCIETY

By *Helen Edwards*



Since 1973, the Hallmark Heritage Society has served as the heritage conscience of the Capital Regional District, Victoria, British Columbia. From its humble beginnings, it has grown to become an effective voice in the preservation movement. The most significant program of the past thirty-eight years has been the annual presentation of awards that acknowledge excellence in heritage restoration, preservation, conservation, scholarship, and leadership. The program has evolved from a simple ceremony at a private residence, to a gala event at a public venue, from an audience of a few in 1974, to a standing-room-only crowd in 2010.

As a result of a research project funded by the Hallmark Heritage Society, a small cottage at 1490 Fairfield Road was determined to have been built in 1865. The new owners were proposing a redevelopment that would be built in the front yard and would seriously compromise the heritage plantings. When the owners applied for a demolition permit, the City of Victoria entered into discussions with the property owners in an effort to encourage a more sympathetic design. On May 12, 1998, City Council voted for a demolition freeze, which was extended as talks were held between the owners, the City, and representatives of the Heritage Building Foundation. In June, Jennifer Nell Barr, Mary Doody Jones, and Helen Edwards published, on behalf of the Hallmark Heritage Society, The Winter House: Ross Bay Villa 1865-1998.¹⁴⁶ The property was purchased in early 1999 by The Land Conservancy (TLC). The work is still ongoing.

In 1993, the Society undertook an extensive review of its mandate and its activities. Activities that had been previously done by the Hallmark Heritage Society were now part of the duties of professional municipal staff. The new focus was to be on education of the public on the value of heritage and the need for preservation and conservation of heritage assets. The new mandate included natural, cultural and horticultural heritage for the first time.

The Society decided to mark the new millennium with an extensive inventory of the built heritage of the CRD. We were successful in gaining provincial support (the federal government turned us down) and were successful in receiving generous funding through the Community University Research Alliance at UVic. The students first took 6000 photographs of Fairfield,

Gonzales and Rockland then began research on their history. Over the next decade, summer students continued research on the properties with the idea of eventually mounting the entire collection online. A small exhibit was mounted and also placed online – it is still showcased on the UVic website and our own site. This was the foundation of our community outreach program that continues to this day.

In conjunction with the City of Victoria's 150th birthday celebration, the Hallmark Heritage Society has been attending neighbourhood celebrations, erecting a marquee filled with information on heritage preservation and what citizens can do to help. We are pleased to be attending the FALL FAIRfield on September 29th and hope that we can convince citizens to join us. There is security in numbers – and our efforts are needed now as much as they were in the past. The Hallmark Heritage Society – looking to the past while keeping an eye on the future.



HALLMARK HERITAGE SOCIETY

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*Dedicated to Preserving Historic and
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Fairfield Gonzales
Community Association

Sign up to have the
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Send any questions
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place@fairfieldcommunity.ca

FALL OFFICE HOURS

Beginning September 10th

Monday
9:00 am to 8:00 pm

Tuesday to Saturday
9:00 am to 2:30 pm

Sunday
Closed

We are closed all
statutory holidays &
Saturdays which
fall in a long weekend

SPONSORS



FAIRFIELD GONZALES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

FALL FAIRfield

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 29TH
Robert Porter Park & FGCA
1:00 to 5:00pm

Music
Blackangus live Celtic band
Mick Gorman solo Celtic performer
Hand Drum Rhythms hands-on African drumming
Local Buskers

Art
Harvest Hat Competition
Artists in Motion plein air painting
Salutations: A Community Card. Mark Victoria's 150 Years of Settlement by adding your comments to a community greeting card.

Food
Jam & Pickle Preserves competition
Wackiest Garden Veggie competition
"Snack on the go" By donation
International Woman's Catering Co-op
Local Food Vendors

By Donation
Drumming Workshops
Hand Drum Rhythms
Massage
with Kelly Yaskiw
Wellness Services by
Stephanii of Whole Approach

Dance
Contra Dance with caller Doug Paterson
Saanich International Folk Dancers

Activities for Kids
The Great Giffoni Magic Show & Calamity Circus
bouncy castle, face painting and more!

For more info: 250-382-4604 place@fairfieldcommunity.ca
parking is limited, please walk, bike or take transit!




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