



# GORGETILLICUM

# Neighbourhood

# NEWS



*Some of the group receive their instructions . . .*

## *Another Great Day in Gorge Park*

**AGM**  
*Please see page 2  
for details*

Those of you walking through Gorge Park, shaking your head over the amount of damage caused by the recent storms, will be happy to note that the 22 big-leaf maples, planted on November 18th for our Centennial celebration, are so far unscathed. Of course, they are still just twigs, but hopefully they will survive the uncertainty of weather and grow into the tall, beautiful trees they are meant to be.

event, Quenton Lehmann from Pearkes who lent us tables, and the people at Tim Hortons who provided tasty treats.



*. . . and then get to it with a will.*

We had a great day planting them. Even the weather cooperated! The GTCA Board wishes to thank all who supported this tree planting project. Special thanks go to Susan Brice, from Saanich Council, and

And we can't forget all of you who came out for your encouragement, support, hard work, and good wishes: thank you all!

Leslie McGarry, from the Native Friendship Center, who began the day with their opening remarks. Thank you too to Dennis Minaker for filling us in on the history of the park. More thanks go to Rae Roer and David Hill from Saanich Parks, the Saanich Parks workers who prepared the site and assisted with the planting, and Dianne Murray for her work with the picnic table and plaque. We are also grateful for Donna Vogler and Jocelyn Farmer who represented the community at this

You will find us again in the park to celebrate Earth Day (albeit one day early). We will meet in the usual place -- across from Fairway Market -- on Saturday, April 21st, 9am-1pm. We look forward to seeing you then, and, in the meantime, please enjoy walking in our beautiful and promising park.

## Inside This Issue

- 2 President's Report & AGM details
- 3 Of Days Gone By  
New Neighbours, Good Neighbours
- 4 Saanich Emergency Program  
The Storm
- 5 The Friends of the Gorge Project  
Letter to the Editor
- 6 Call for Artists  
Safer Biking  
Local Heroes  
Snippets
- 7 Upcoming Events  
Target
- 8 GR Pearkes Recreation Centre  
Planning for the Picnic

## Notice is hereby given

The Annual General Meeting of the Gorge Tillicum Community Association will be held at:

**7:30 pm. Wednesday  
March 21, 2007, in the Lam  
Room at G.R. Pearkes Arena.**

All members and prospective members are encouraged to attend.

The guest speaker will be local historian and author Dennis Minaker.



### GORGETILLICUM Neighbourhood News

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

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#### Published Quarterly:

Winter (Jan/Feb)  
Spring (April)  
Summer (June/July)  
Fall (Oct/Nov)

Unsolicited Articles Welcome.

The deadline for submissions and advertising for the next issue is March 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### Graphic Design:

Go West Group  
www.gowestgroup.com

#### Advertising Inquiries:

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#### Distribution:

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

# a word from the president

*Your GTCA board  
members had an  
incredibly busy 2006!*

Our Social Issues Committee hosted a very successful public forum on homelessness in March. As a result, the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (231 Regina Avenue) has been designated as a Stage 3 Extreme Weather Shelter, with a capacity for 25 persons, to be used in cases of severe cold weather when other shelters are full. The GTCA would like to thank Saanich Municipality for their donation of 25 cots and blankets for the facility, and Bruce Parisian and the VNFC for the use of their space and for providing trained staff members.

The GTCA supported the change of designation of Tillicum School to Community School status after Burnside Community School was closed. Supporting funding and programs were transferred to Tillicum, as well as many previous Burnside students.

The GTCA hosted another very successful 8th Gorge Canada Day Picnic on July 1st. Thousands of visitors and residents enjoyed our community celebration.

The Environmental Committee held two clean-up days in Gorge Park and Cuthbert Holmes Park, clearing invasive species and underbrush. We also participated in the Gorge Waterway Initiative with other stakeholders dedicated to environmental management and stewardship of the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet. We also continued the "Adopt an Outfall" program to monitor stormwater quality flowing into Colquitz Creek.

The GTCA, Saanich Parks Dept. and RioCan representatives held meetings regarding the retention pond behind Silvercity, resulting in a new standpipe being installed that will stop pollutants going into Colquitz Creek.

The GTCA was awarded Saanich Community Matching Grants to purchase broadleaf maple trees which our volunteers planted in Gorge Park. We also installed a new picnic bench

Traffic pattern surveys in the Tillicum / Gorge / Admirals / Colquitz Creek area were conducted, and two well-attended community meetings were held on the matter. Saanich Engineering is studying the responses before a final plan is submitted to Saanich Council.

*continued on page 7*

### Gorge Tillicum Community Association www.



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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!



## Call for Artists and Artisans in the Gorge/Tillicum Area:

The 4th Annual Gorge-Us Art Tour will be held May 26 and 27, 2007 11am – 4pm. We are an enthusiastic group of artists/artisans looking for new members to fill out our tour.

If you are an artist who values community and lives in the area, please submit your name and contact information. Please also send a digital image representative of your work (jpeg) or a web site address where your work is displayed, and a short statement describing your specialty (max 40 words).

Deadline for submissions is March 15th. You may email [chelminka@hotmail.com](mailto:chelminka@hotmail.com) or call Christine at 382-5239 for more info. All entries will receive a response by March 31st.

## Snippets

**Kudos to Saanich** for the prompt clearing of the roads after the recent dumps of snow, and also for the clearance work done in the parks to make the paths and trails passable. We are inclined to expect such things to be done forthwith, to complain when they aren't, and to consider that 'our street' should always be done first, but in this case Saanich served us very well and quickly.

**The Grand Opening** of the new Pearkes Fitness Centre was held on Saturday, January 13th, 2007. The new center, located in the old upstairs lounge, offers 3,200 square feet of space for the new weights and machines. The gym is a part of a \$2 million renovation will see the new 1280 square feet Teen Centre (relocated to the old weights room), new washrooms, and new shower facilities.

## LOCAL HEROES

In this column, I want to recognize the Local Heroes who are collectively responsible for producing and delivering this fine, free, community publication.



When the Gorge Tillicum Community Association emerged from the old Ratepayers Association 8 years ago, we acknowledged that the newsletter needed to be improved, and we also felt it should be delivered to all residents. Since then, we have seen the newsletter grow to eight quality-rich pages of opinion, articles, photos, and information. The addition of local

business advertising has helped to offset the costs of producing the 4,000 copies we require for mass distribution.

There are those who write articles and take pictures, others who solicit advertising, and those who plan, edit, and mold the final product before it goes to the printer. When the newsletters return from the printer, the distribution arm moves into action; an 'infantry' of around 30 people is mobilized to get the newsletters to you four times a year!

*We pride ourselves on producing one of the best community association newsletters in Victoria,*

so let's recognize and thank those volunteer Local Heroes who do such a great job. In particular, thanks go to John Hoole, Kristine Kerins and Arden Little (pictured). Of course, we are always in need of new blood, both in the writing department and with delivery, so if you would like to become a Local Hero too, come join the team!

## Safer Biking

Since Saanich Engineering completed the Gorge Road bike lanes east of Tillicum Road, we all have a safer road to cycle along while we enjoy the beautiful Gorge. Please keep in mind, however, that parking a vehicle over the bike lanes is not allowed; when cars block the bike lane it endangers both cyclists and vehicles.

Now that this section of bike lanes is complete, we would like to hear which cycling area in our neighborhood next needs attention.

Is there one section of road that stops you from cycling to work for want of a bike lane?

Is there an area in which you find riding particularly hazardous?

Do some traffic lights never get triggered by your bicycle?

Would you like to see a bike rack somewhere?

Send us an email and let us know; we will pass the information on to Saanich. [kmbrandt@islandnet.com](mailto:kmbrandt@islandnet.com)



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Serving the People of Saanich South



# Of Days Gone By



At last November's centennial tree-planting in Gorge Park, Saanich council was represented by acting-mayor Susan Brice. Susan was a fitting choice for this event as she is the direct descendent of Robert McMicking who built a grand house next to the park site over a century ago.

Born in Ontario in 1843, McMicking joined the Cariboo gold rush of 1862. Soon after, he settled in Victoria and left his mark upon the city's early history by introducing two remarkable new inventions: the telephone and electric street lighting. In 1885, he purchased shoreline property along the newly-opened Gorge Road West. There he built an Italianate villa called Boxwood. Four years later, McMicking sold the one and a half acre property to David and Mabel Eberts who renamed the house Hopedene. For a long time, the adjacent slope of Gorge Road between Qu'Appelle and Harriet was known as Ebert's Hill. David Eberts, a close friend to Premier Richard McBride, was prominent in provincial politics. He served as Attorney General and House Speaker before accepting an appointment to the Supreme Court in 1917.

## *One hot summer's day in 1923, firemen rushed to extinguish a roof fire at Hopedene.*

Understaffed, they enlisted the help of some boys who had been swimming nearby, instructing them to wet down a threatened wall with a steady stream of water. Seventy years later, one of those boys told me about that day: "The hose they gave us had a lot of pressure. We kept the wall wet all right but also blew off all the shingles and everything else, including a window or two." Fortunately, the house survived to become part of the San Sebastian Auto Court in 1941. Demolition occurred 30 years later, making way for today's Cedar Shores condominium complex.

— by Dennis Minaker, author of "The Gorge of Summers Gone"

## **New Neighbours, Good Neighbours**

The building that was once Kan's Food Market has sat empty and forlorn for many years, but it has recently been resurrected to serve a vital function within our community. From Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 2:30 pm, it is now the hub of activity for adults with developmental disabilities. This is part of the Good Neighbours Program, which is run by Integra Support Services through Community Living B.C.

One of the main goals of Good Neighbours is to advocate inclusion. A manager, six staff members, and a modified van are helping achieve this goal for a regular group of thirteen adults who have been active together for five years now. The new facility on Dysart provides them a homey meeting place, a starting point for their many activities. It has a sitting room, an Arts and Crafts room, and a Music and Games room. The site offers gardening and outdoor sports space too. There is also a kitchen where the group can spend time cooking or enjoying the hot lunch that is offered on Fridays.

Beyond socializing, this group uses their new space to promote community involvement, increase awareness of accessibility issues, and find ways to get involved in community events. They work on projects such as the Gorge Cleanup and recycle programs, and they help neighbours with yard work or area maintenance. They are presently working towards an "Adopt A Street" program which would aid in the beautification of our roadways and boulevards. These and other activities provide an opportunity to enrich both their lives and the lives of people in our community.

I had often reflected on what might be done with the old market building, but nothing I could have imagined would have been as great a use as what Good Neighbours has created. I had the pleasure of visiting our new neighbours, and I hope you too will stop in to say hello. I am sure you will be rewarded with a friendly and heartfelt welcome.

— by Russ Leech



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## THE STORM

It came down in torrents, hard and cold

Breaking through the evergreen canopy

Rivers of water poured

along the forest floor

over his tarp

through the holes in his jacket

deep into the layers of clothes

thinned by days of wearing

It was a force of nature

Harsh in its lack of awareness

There, hunkered down a huddled mass,

Soft breathing deep in a fortified sleep

The fates conspired against him that night

Cold seeped in with the rain

His death dreamed as an imagery of longing

Memories of sun and beaches, bare skin and youth

Then a drop into a long, dark hole

Even the coffee he drank was ice.

He was found the next day

Unknown to police searching his clothes

No way to know who he was

Before his life dropped out of sight

And he, fell like leaves scattered in the wood

A haphazard leap into the unknown.

The storm was all over the news

Captured in pictures to discuss at dinner

The man who died in the park

A small item, briefly noted.

— by Judy Sigmund

# Saanich Emergency Program & Neighbourhood Preparedness

The recent storms and associated power outages across the region serve as an excellent reminder of the importance of individual and neighbourhood emergency preparedness.

*The Saanich Emergency Program is managed by the District of Saanich Fire Department. This group is working with the Gorge Tillicum Community Association to improve quality and delivery of emergency preparedness service.*

The Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness teaches residents the basic skills of preparedness and survival, enabling them to protect themselves, better respond in times of crisis, and care for their own needs after a disaster.

Beyond individuals, the community as a group also needs to be prepared. This requires organization, a coordination of efforts, and an inventory of skills and abilities. Saanich is further committed to providing training and support so residents may develop the necessary skills and expertise to integrate their preparedness, response, and recovery roles with those of their neighbours.

### Program Goals

#### For each family member:

- Knowing what to expect and how to act before, during, and after a disaster.
- Being able to identify and reduce hazards in the home.
- Planning ahead for evacuation and family reunification.

#### For each household:

- Stockpiling of food and water supplies for up to 7 days.
- Assembling emergency supplies.
- Implementing household safety measures.

#### For each neighbourhood:

- Networking of neighbours for emergency preparedness and response.
- Identifying local hazards, needs and resources.
- Planning for evacuation, family reunification and information sharing.

If you are interested in learning more about Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness visit the website at [www.saanich.ca/resident/safety/prep/program.html](http://www.saanich.ca/resident/safety/prep/program.html)



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## The Friends of the Gorge Project



**Do you Live on the Gorge Waterway or Portage Inlet?**

*If so this project is for you!*

This photo of a Barred Owl in an arbutus tree was taken by Frank Geenen on an early December morning in the Maddock/Wascana area. According to bird expert Bruce Whittington, the very adaptable Barred Owls arrived in Victoria in the 1960s and are now the most frequently sighted owl. [www2.biology.ualberta.ca/uamz.hp/Barred.html](http://www2.biology.ualberta.ca/uamz.hp/Barred.html)

The Gorge Waterway Action Society (GWAS) is a non-profit society that has actively worked, since 1989, to improve the environmental quality of the Gorge Waterway. In 2005, the GWAS initiated the Friends of the Gorge Project.

*This project provides free site consultations and waterfront restoration plans for homeowners, condominium properties, and public lands along the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet.*

Waterfront property owners can contact our biologist to discuss environmentally friendly ways to help prevent shoreline erosion, improve wildlife habitat, and also save time and money on yard maintenance.

For instance, the GWAS urges property owners towards:

- Establishing a buffer strip of native vegetation along the foreshore;
- Removing invasive species such as blackberry, ivy, Scotch broom and Daphne;
- Reducing contaminants entering the Gorge by minimizing the use of pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers; and
- Decreasing water use on lawns and gardens

After consultation, property owners receive a detailed plan (including “before and after” sketches), an extensive list of native plants suitable for their property, and a guide to local resources that will help in their waterfront restoration. They also receive an informative brochure that describes the unique ecological features of this beautiful inlet, with low-cost tips on how to improve the environmental quality of the waterway.

If you would like more information, want to help, or want to become a Friend of the Gorge, contact the Gorge Waterway Action Society: [www.gorge.ca](http://www.gorge.ca)

## Letter to Editor:

*Re: Streetscape Safety Projects*

During a Saanich Council Meeting in late 2006, some of our elected officials and Mayor Frank Leonard made a decision that will adversely affect us all. This decision is that Streetscape Projects currently on the books, as well as any future projects, will not receive funding to address beautification or environmental needs; such projects will only address vehicle traffic safety.

Ten years ago, a group of us began working on getting a Streetscaping Project approved for Harriet Road. This approval was finally achieved a year ago, and we all looked forward to having crosswalks with pedestrian refuges, planted medians, parking bays, and, finally, a sidewalk on the Saanich side of Harriet. Although planting trees and other foliage is not absolutely necessary to this or other streetscape designs, they do address environmental issues, such as pollution and drainage, as well as the attractiveness and comfort of the street, especially for those not in cars.

However, trees also help promote safety. Helmcken, between the Highway and 1A has undergone an amazing transformation with its Streetscape Plan. When I drive along, I actually slow down to admire the beautiful landscaping. I admire the foresight of View Royal in improving this road. I only wish that Harriet and other streets in Saanich could look like this and reap the same traffic calming benefits. However, our elected officials remain shortsighted, looking to only address the needs of motor vehicles while ignoring the safety of other users of the roads we live on.

— By Christine Helmink



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**Become a member of the Gorge Tillicum Community Association TODAY!**

**Why become a member?**

- Membership dues are still only \$5.00 per person.
- Members are eligible to vote at our Annual General Meeting in May.
- Your fee will help support our Annual Canada Day Picnic.
- Your fee helps fund the publication of this quarterly 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.
- And, if you renew your membership or become a new member by December 31st 2006 and all members are eligible to win great prizes at the Canada Day Picnic

**Don't delay; send in this form TODAY!**

Local businesses are also encouraged to become members at a cost of \$25.00

**2007 Membership Application/ Renewal**

Name(s) : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mail to:  
Gorge Tillicum  
Community Association,  
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V9A 2A0



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

A brand New Teen Lounge is slated to open this Spring at Pearkes Recreation Centre. This state-of-the-art facility is for local youth to 'chill-ax', inside and out. It will have comfortable furniture, funky décor, and an appealing patio. Teens and pre-teens are welcome to drop-in, after-school and in the evenings, to play pool, video or board games, or just hang out, all under the supervision of qualified staff.

*Do you know a young person who is interested in the outdoors and is keen to do something special over the March break?*

Outback Wilderness Outdoor Adventure Camp is just the thing to keep teens challenged this Spring Break. Disc golf, climbing, canoeing, hiking, camping and more is available on this 5-day, 2-overnighter program. Call Gaileen the Youth Programmer at 475-5462 for more information on youth programming or visit [www.saanich.ca](http://www.saanich.ca)

**FACILITY and REGISTRATION HOURS**

**Jan 2 to June 30/07**

Mon-Fri  
6:30AM - 10:00PM

Sat-Sun  
7:00AM - 10:00PM

**CLOSED:**

Good Friday, April 6  
Easter Monday, April 9  
Victoria Day, May 21



**PARKS & RECREATION**  
Pearkes Recreation Centre



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*Planning for the Picnic*

Given the recent snow that covered our neighbourhood, the Gorge Canada Day Picnic seems far away, but, by the time this newsletter is in your hand, the planning process for the 9th annual picnic on Sunday, July 1st will be well underway.

Last year, people from our neighbourhood and from communities beyond mingled at the mainstage, the craft market, the classic car rally, the seafood BBQ, the kids activity centre, the buskers corner, and even on the water (thanks to the Canoe Club). While our past success has been great, we certainly welcome fresh ideas to keep

interest and attendance up. There is a lot of space available along the Gorge, and there is a whole day to play there, so if you have a bright idea for this year, please come and share it with us.

Each year, I also face the challenge of finding enough volunteers to help put on this great community event. We do have a strong experienced team that I hope will step up again; however, the invitation to get involved is always open. If you would like more information about helping with the picnic planning team, please contact Harry Lewis at 384-8460 or [h.lewis@telus.net](mailto:h.lewis@telus.net)

— Harry Lewis