

James-Alexander Neighbourhood Newsletter

April/May 2008

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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The James-Alexander Newsletter is published bimonthly. If you would like to contribute an article about the James-Alexander Community please contact **Veronica Scott: 733-2441** or verscott@telus.net

DO YOU KNOW?

MILITARY ON THE MOUND

A long time ago, sometime between the two world wars, we had an agricultural hall near the mound. The military still kept horses there to pull the field artillery during the war. Back then, two young boys were riding their bikes near the Somenos Marsh when they heard a loud rumbling sound. They got off their bikes and could feel the ground shaking. They ran over to where they hay is now cut on the marsh. What they saw were soldiers playing polo using the army horses. Was this the only time polo was played in the Cowichan Valley? Does anyone know? Please call **Veronica Scott at 733-2441** if you have any information. Thanks!

Genny Boden
Community Resident

OPEN HOUSE FOR HOUSING RESOURCE CENTRE



Members of the James Alexander Working Group share a moment at the Housing Resource Centre Open House. From left to right: Ray Hitchin, Veronica Scott, Genny Bowden, Kim Burt, Laurie Williams.

On May 6th about 25 people attended an open house at Quamichan School for the Housing Resource Centre (homeless shelter and transitional housing) to be built on Lewis Street. Several architectural drawings were displayed to give people an idea of what the building will look like. Although a firm date for construction hasn't been set yet, the sod turning will likely happen in the middle of next month (June).

Christina Martens and Anne Balding from the **Canadian Mental Health Association** were on hand to answer questions along with representatives from BC Housing, Safer Futures, the Neighbourhood Working Group and H2O. The complex will have 15 apartments and 24 residences for transitional housing (to help people to move back into the community on a more permanent basis). There will also be space for community meetings and activities.

Plans are underway for the Neighbourhood Working Group and members of CMHA to co-host a community BBQ in the weeks to come. Stay tuned.

If you would like to know more about the Housing Resource Centre, please contact either **Christina Martens** or **Anne Balding** at **746-5521**.

MOTHER GOOSE PARENT/INFANT PROGRAM

For ages 6 months to 2 years

Wednesdays, May 7 – June 25, 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Cowichan Family Life Association, 2C – 2753 Charlotte Rd., Duncan

This is a group experience for parents/caregivers and their babies focused on using rhymes and songs. Parents gain skills and confidence that can enable them to create positive family patterns during their child's critical early years, and give their children healthy early experiences with language and communications.

Pre-register by calling **748-8281**.

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Municipality of North Cowichan: www.northcowichan.bc.ca

Safer Futures: www.saferfutures.org

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The Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre is a partner in this initiative.



LOTS OF FOOD FOR THOUGHT AT CITY REPAIR PROJECT WORKSHOP

We recently attended a fantastic workshop put on by **Mark Lakeman** from Portland, Oregon. It was held at O.U.R. Eco Village in Shawnigan Lake.

The workshop was all about how to make our neighbourhoods into community-centered, environmentally better and more beautiful places – and it's not difficult. Mark talked about how communities in Portland did little things like painting murals in intersections; they call this Intersection Repair. Members of the neighbourhood close off the street for an afternoon and paint the pavement, creating a "community gathering place." People of all ages have fun painting the design and the space is then used for events such as Earth Day celebrations, street parties, even weddings. Other projects have included outdoor teahouses, bulletin boards, book sharing cupboards and the perpetual chalk station where in one neighbourhood, a resident provides sidewalk chalk for children to gather and draw on the sidewalks in front of her house.

Intersection repair helps people get to know their neighbours, increases pride in the neighbourhood, slows traffic and in the end has resulted in crime reduction. There are now over a dozen intersection repairs in Portland and the idea has been copied by other cities in both the USA and Canada.

Mark, who is an architect and one of the founders of the City Repair Project, talked about how Oregon has the most bicycles of any city in the United States. The city does everything it can to encourage people to ride their bikes and reduce pollution. He also explained how the 'grid pattern' of streets came about, to help the Roman armies march from one place to another. Prior to the grid, villages were built around central meeting places.

Would you like to learn more about City Repair? We would like to hold a community 'pot luck supper' or a 'tea and dessert' in the near future to watch a video about the projects in Portland and to talk about how the ideas can be applied to our James – Alexander neighbourhood. What could we do to create more of a sense of neighbourhood? Please call **Thanya Al-Saadoon** at **Safer Futures 748-7000 extension 229** to learn more.

Genny Bowden and Laurie Williams
Community Residents

MYSTERY OF CAIRNSMORE FARMER FONS SOLVED!

In our last newsletter Genny wrote about Mr. Fons who had a farm on Howard Street. She wondered whatever happened to him. Well Pauline Belanger, who lives in the James–Alexander community, called to say that she provided home nursing for Mr. Fons well into his old age. She describes him as a kind and generous gentleman who sold garden vegetables and hazelnuts. He wanted his farm land to be used for something worthwhile after he had passed away. Mr. Fons would have been proud to know that his former farm is now the site for M'akola Housing. Thanks for the information Pauline – and thanks for the picture Norm!



Above is a picture of the hazelnut trees on Howard St., at the back of Mr. Fons' property. You can see the M'akola Housing in the background. A neighbour says that she remembers Mr. Fons. He sold the nuts from his hazelnut trees.

LOOK FOR SAFER FUTURES ONLINE!

Surf to www.saferfutures.org, click on Neighbourhood, and browse the information about your community. You can even read current and back issues of the newsletter by clicking on Community Publications.



WHAT IS SAFER FUTURES?

Safer Futures is a program of Cowichan Women Against Violence Society (a non-profit organization) that works with people in the Cowichan Valley to create neighbourhoods that are safe, healthy, and offer equal opportunities for a good life. A safe and healthy community is one that works to connect people, community organizations, business, and local government to narrow the gaps between advantage and disadvantage, and to ensure healthier, stronger, and more cohesive communities.

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