

# James-Alexander Neighbourhood Newsletter

March/April 2009

## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

**Thanya Al-Saadoon • Norm and Genny Boden • Kim Burt • Chris Hall • Veronica Scott • Laurie Williams**

Safer Futures is a three-year federally funded project which officially draws to a close on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Over the years, we have enjoyed working with residents and members of the James-Alexander Neighbourhood Working Group to improve neighbourhood safety – and to establish closer working relationships with community agencies, institutions and local government. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved.

Unfortunately, this will be the last issue of the newsletter to be published by Safer Futures. Community feedback both from residents and agencies shows the newsletter has been well received. It serves an important purpose. If you would like to become involved in keeping the newsletter going, please contact us.

**Pam Alcorn  
Supervisor  
Safer Futures  
250-748-7000**



## HOLDING YOUR OWN IN A RELATIONSHIP

Cowichan Women Against Violence Against Women counselling service is offering an eight-week education and support program for women who are experiencing, or who have experienced, relationship conflict, abuse and/or violence.

**When:** Thursday mornings starting on May 7 (attend any or all sessions)  
**Cost:** FREE

**Topics:** Dynamics of Relationship Violence; Impact of Abuse; Self-care; Guilt and Manipulation; Shame and Isolation; Healthy Coping Strategies ...and more.

For program and registration details please contact: Cowichan Women Against Violence Society **250-748-7000**

## CULTURAL DINNER AND DANCE HUGE SUCCESS!

What started as a simple idea to bring people together resulted in fun-filled community event that surpassed everyone's wildest dreams.

On Friday, February 27, approximately 275 people – double the number expected – joined friends and neighbours in the Alexander Elementary School Gym to enjoy supper, music, dancing and all types of craft making.

The idea originated with the James-Alexander Neighbourhood Working Group. Members were keen to continue the enthusiasm and cultural awareness generated by last summer's Northern American Indigenous Games. The group especially wanted to acknowledge their First Nations neighbours.

Cowichan Elder and Working Group member Gus Williams played a key role as the group's cultural advisor and guide. Catering was provided by Stu'ate Lelum Secondary School. Food and coffee was also provided by The Cowichan Inter-cultural Society Youth Group, Serious Coffee and several community members.

People of all ages and backgrounds, including several politicians, were delighted by the sounds of the Spirit Drummers and a local marimba band. And, in the true spirit of a 'community,' Canadian Mental Health's U-Fix-It Bikeworks gave a bike demonstration, and the Success By Six Program hosted a craft table for children to make their own musical instruments. The Cowichan Inter-cultural group set up a beading table so people could make their own bracelets and Cowichan Family Life opened Beverly's Boutique, a free clothing store that operates on weekdays in the school gym.

"On behalf of the Working Group, we extend our warmest thanks to all those who volunteered their time. We had the times of our lives," said Thanya Al-Saadoon of Safer Futures. "It was an evening of joyful, pure unadulterated fun. Most importantly, it brought people together which is one of the most effective ways of promoting community cohesion and safety."

## DID YOU KNOW?

Long before we had TV, computers, or washers and dryers, moms worked at home and looked after their children at home too.

Many people delivered things or sold items from door to door. Milk and eggs were delivered in this area by Rob Roy. Groceries were delivered by the original owner of the now Coronation Market. Ice was delivered weekly to keep perishables cool in the ice box.

Firewood was delivered in early summer, and the children stacked it for winter heating. The Avon lady came to the door to sell beauty products and the Fuller Brush salesman sold all types of brushes. If you were sick, Dr. Coleman (for whom the Coleman clinic is named) would make house calls after regular clinic hours.

As long as there was someone at home to answer the door, there were door-to-door salespeople. I imagine that their visits were welcomed because mothers didn't have to go out for things they needed.

**Genny Boden  
Community Resident**

Newsletter sponsored by:

**Municipality of North Cowichan:** [www.northcowichan.bc.ca](http://www.northcowichan.bc.ca)

**Safer Futures:** [www.saferfutures.org](http://www.saferfutures.org)

**Vancouver Foundation:** [www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca](http://www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca)

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



### SAFETY TIPS: IS YOUR HOME SECURE FROM THEFT?

In response from concerned citizens, Cowichan Community Policing Programs and Block Watch are pleased to announce the revitalized Home Security Check program. Duncan and North Cowichan residents can take advantage of a free home security inspection to help protect their homes from break and enters and provide general safety tips.

Trained volunteer program staff and the RCMP Auxiliary Constables have been trained by the RCMP. They will walk with you through your property, checking lighting, windows and doors and other areas in and outside your home.

They will also provide you with tips and suggestions on how to make your home safer and more secure. At the end of the visit you will receive a completed home security checklist.

For more information, or to request a Home Security Check, please call Community Policing at 250-701-9145.

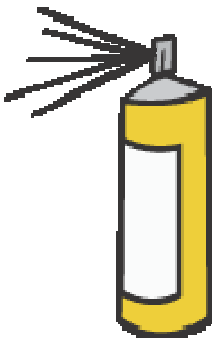
**Carol-Ann Rolls**

**Manager, Community Policing & Crime Prevention Programs**



### THE SCOOP BEHIND AIR FRESHENERS

Have you noticed signs in hospitals and medical offices asking people not to wear perfume? This is because many people have allergies.



Recent studies show that chemical air fresheners can be dangerous. The products don't do anything to improve air quality, they just add pollutants. Some deaden your sense of smell and with a toxic perfume. Some people get nose and lung irritations, causing serious problems.

A major ingredient of air fresheners is formaldehyde, one of the worst offenders for respiratory irritation and a known cause of cancer. Anyone with asthma, lung infections or other ailments can be severely affected by formaldehyde.

Remember – 'clean' does not mean having a scent. We have all been brainwashed to believe that clean means a toxic fragrance in the air, our clothing, and our bodies. But clean really has a neutral smell. Most importantly, it is non-offensive and non-toxic. Chemicals just hide the odour and create health problems.

**Genny Boden, Community Resident**

### ALEXANDER NEIGHBOURHOOD A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE!

As a long-time resident of the Alexander community and a member of the James-Alexander Neighbourhood Working Group, I have a few thoughts about an article that ran in the Leader Pictorial on March 25th.

The front-page article was called 'Raising Alexander – Take a Tour of one of Cowichan's poorest neighbourhoods and meet the people proud to call it home.' The article describes our neighbourhood as a poor inner-city area that is struggling with a number of issues.

The article was written because the Fraser Institute gave Alexander Elementary a low ranking compared to other schools in British Columbia. The report also says that the average parental income is below average.

Social and poverty activists in the community are pleased that the article drew attention to the need for affordable housing in the community. That's a good thing. However, some of us were surprised to see the statistics and the strong association with poverty. We are particularly concerned that the article perpetuates the stigma that people with less money are automatically criminals and low achievers. I would like to suggest another way of thinking about the words 'poverty' and 'poor.'

I have never felt that I live in a 'poor neighbourhood'. The place where I live is a rich, vibrant mosaic of people from all walks of life. You won't find any gated communities here. No-one gets locked out. My neighbours and I make a small carbon footprint on the earth because we don't depend on cars to get around. We can walk everywhere.

I love living in the Alexander area, where most people are friendly and caring. Like many other youngsters, my son attended Alexander Elementary and came away with a good education thanks to the dedication of the teachers and principal.

Many people in my neighbourhood are home owners and think of the Alexander community as a safe, pleasant and convenient place to live. While the article pointed out some positive attributes about this area, I think it would have benefited from a more balanced perspective.

**Laurie Williams, Community Resident**

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