ECONEWS #211

EcoNews is a free monthly newsletter, funded by your kind donations. It dreams of a world blessed by the harmony of nature, the pleasures of community, and the joys of personal fulfillment, guided and protected by our active citizenship.

To receive EcoNews by email, sign up at www.earthfuture.com/econews. To receive it by mail send your address to Guy Dauncey, EcoNews, 395 Conway Rd, Victoria V9E 2B9.

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The Money	Jan	Feb	March
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Donations	\$425	\$1035	You?
Advertising	\$30	\$100	
Balance	\$1246	\$1047	

THE ECO-PERSONALS

\$1 a word. Max 5 lines, non-profits, low-income free. 1" box ad \$50

- * Lovely room to rent, close to ocean, downtown, cooking facilities, \$35/night, weekly and monthly rates 250-382-3810.
- * Unused letter-sized envelopes still needed for EcoNews. Guy, 881-1304

COHOUSING AT MARY LAKE

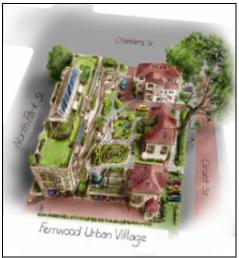
Mary Lake is a beautifully tranquil 107 acre property in the Highlands of Victoria that faces market development as 12 lots see www.savemarvlake.com. It is a valuable dry coastal Douglas ecosystem, providing habitat for hundreds of plants and creatures. It is also mid-way between Gowlland Tod and Thetis Lake Provincial Parks, and could provide a critical trail link. The property has an assessed value of \$4.9 million, and thanks to incredible efforts over the past two months, people have donated almost \$250,000, buying square meters for \$10. \$1 million was needed by the end of January, however, with an extension granted to the end of February.

The Mary Lake Conservancy team has looked at every possible way to save the property, and given the failure to raise the \$1 million, and the urgency of the situation, has given its blessing to Plan B, which would see 10 acres developed in the northwest corner as a clustered cohousing project, providing 20-24 units of community shared living built to the

highest standards of green sustainable development - enabling 97 acres to be protected. Would you like to live in community, surrounded by friends and nature in the heart of the Highlands? The immediate goal is for 10 people to make a commitment, signing a non-binding MoU. Vancity Savings has also expressed an interest in helping. If you want to learn more, email Koi Neah now at savemarylake@gmail.com.

FERNWOOD COHOUSING

What is cohousing? It is collaboratively planned intentional community where you own your own home, and a stratatitle share in the land and community facilities including a shared kitchen, meeting rooms, a food garden, and anything else the group desires. There are several successful projects in BC, including Creekside Commons in Courtenay, Cranberry Commons in Burnaby, Pacific Gardens in Nanaimo, Roberts Creek on the Sunshine Coast, Windsong in Langley, and the Yarrow EcoVillage in the Upper Fraser Valley see www.cohousing.ca.



An exciting new cohousing project is being planned in the heart of Fernwood. where four lots have been assembled on the corner of North Park and Chambers. The architect-designed 31 small studio and 1-2 bedroom strata units will create a friendly and communal pocket neighbourhood for adult singles, couples and empty nesters who have their own private living spaces, while sharing common facilities. The project will have many green features, including shared cars and bikes. They have ten members now, and are looking for more to join - there's a Potluck and Celebration on March 12th (see Green Diary) where you can learn more. See www.fernwoodurbanvillage.ca

GREAT NEIGHBOURHOODS

What makes a great neighbourhood? We do. When I lived in Oak Bay, a neighbour told me that one day she saw a furniture van across the road, so she went over and said "Welcome to the neighbourhood!" They said "That's very kind of you - but we've been living here for seven years, and we're just moving out."

Sustainability begins on the street where you live. If we don't make the effort to feel safe, secure and friendly among our neighbours, how can we expect the world to? It is simple effort that is involved to speak to your neighbours, invite them in for a coffee, or organize a street party. The fewer and the slower the number of cars on your road, the easier it is to do so.

For inspiration and great ideas I recommend The Great Neighbourhood Book, by Jay Wallasper, editor of Ode Magazine. (New Society Publishers). It's an easy read, packed full of ideas to make your neighbourhood more friendly, sustainable, traffic-tamed, and a great place to hang out. It's got inspiration in its pages for joint projects such as painting out graffiti, planting fruit trees in the boulevard, planting a community garden, forming an eco-team, making a community bench - everything, in fact, except how to organize a street party - a strange omission! For advice on this, ask the British, who are big street partiers experts - see www.streetparty.org.uk. So treat yourself to a copy, and ask "How can we make our street more sustainable?"

COLWOOD'S GOING GREEN

Thanks to the persistence of councillor Judith Cullington, and a \$3.9 million federal grant, Colwood is embarking on four major new projects. The first will help 1,000 local residents install solar hot water systems, with very generous incentives, and support other sustainable technologies including smart meters and mini-split heat pumps for homes that lack a duct system for a central air-source heat pump. There will also be solar hot water, solar heating and solar PV on Colwood Fire Hall; a "zero net energy" approach for the new 70 unit Colwood Corners project; and rapid charging stations for electric cars in Colwood, creating a "green corridor" for EVs. The project is expected to generate work for 8-12 full time solar installers. For details, www.solarcolwood.ca

GROWING YOUNG FARMERS

Dave "Mr. Organic" Friend grew up in a small farming village in Yorkshire, England, where all the food effectively organic. Arriving Vancouver Island in 1998, he became a commercial organic grower, and the champion for a number of summer camps and initiatives for young people. In his new program, "Growing Young Farmers', he and his team will operate a professionally managed program for schools and growers in which students will work on organic farms at least once a week for a school term. They will learn the principle, practices and procedures of growing healthy organic food under the supervision of an experienced foodgrowing mentor, on a larger scale than a school garden. Can you help make this happen? Dave needs gifts of:

- * Volunteers to help supervise students;
- * Organic soil or compost, for farms that need the existing soil to be improved;
- * The free loan of a rototiller;
- * Organic seeds and starter plants;
- * Used spades, forks, rakes, hoes, trowels, wheelbarrows, watering cans, hoses, potting trays, work gloves and boots;
- * Sponsorships from local businesses, organizations and private individuals.

Dave's goal is to get his program into every local school, starting with Claremont Secondary. All of his work and time on the project are voluntary. Can you help? www.friendlyorganics.ca, and call Dave at 250-655-9156.

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LIFECYCLES

LifeCycles has been a vibrant presence in Victoria since 1994, and they have been in instigators of many successful community gardens such as the Michigan Street Community Garden, in James Bay. They also created the Fruit Tree Project, whose 70 volunteers gather people's surplus cherries, apples and pears and distribute them to local community centres and food banks. Last year, they gathered 28,000 pounds of fruit that would otherwise have rotted on the ground.

Their Growing Schools program has worked with over 1,000 kids and created gardens in 12 elementary schools, using

20-40 volunteer educators, and they have 15 schools on their waiting list. LifeCycles also runs the Urban Agriculture Hub, promoting local urban agriculture, connecting residents to each other, and to the resources, workshops and tools we need to grow food in the city, including a great Calendar of events. www.urbanagriculturehub.ca

All this takes money, and LifeCycles is facing a financial crunch - so there are not one but two fundraisers coming up. On Thur March 3rd there is a benefit concert for LifeCycles at the Victoria Event Centre, with a movie, a great line-up of local musicians, and dancing until late. Tickets are \$15-\$100, depending on how generous you can be to help LifeCycles through their crisis. See www.HomeGrownCollective.ca.

Then on Tuesday March 8th there's "Get Fresh In Fernwood" organized by the Transition Victoria Food Group, with a movie, speakers, refreshments and an auction. Tickets are \$10 at the door, 6:30pm at 1923 Fernwood Ave. For details see www.lifecyclesproject.ca



THE PENINSULA CO-OP

Do you want to play a governance role in the very successful Peninsula Co-op? The Co-op is owned and operated by its 54,000 local members, and employs 300 people, making it an important breakaway initiative from distant corporate control. Founded in 1977, it runs 12 gas stations and supplies six Save-On Gas stations with fuel. It also owns the Co-op Food Centre at Keating X Rd; sells home-heating oil; and nine commercial operates diesel cardlock locations from Victoria to Ucluelet. In 2010 it had a net profit of \$6 million, enabling it to donate \$400,000 to a variety of worthy causes, and give a 3.5 cents/litre discount to its members - ten times more than the reward programs offered by Shell, Esso and Petro-Canada. As a Co-op, we the members are its shareholders.

In any large organization, there will be times when members have different visions of the future, and now is one such time. One group of members wants to carry on with business as usual, which includes developing a new 35,000 sq ft Co-op Food Store outside the urban containment boundary on farmland on West Saanich Road, while another group, the Co-op Action

Network, wants to guide the Co-op in a more sustainable direction. The Co-op could provide more support to local farming; the gas stations could become a focus for leadership on biodiesel, electric vehicles, ridesharing, and other green transport initiatives without compromising its core profitability, and the Co-op could be run in a more democratic manner, with plenty of consultation with its members.

Six of the nine seats on the Board are up for election: might one have your name on it? It's a great way to serve the community. If you become a member by March 31st (\$27), you can vote in the election that will take place this Spring. For the Peninsula Co-op, see www.peninsulaco-op.com. For the Co-op Action Network, see www.coopactionnetwork.ca, and email coopactionnetwork@gmail.com

ACTION OF THE MONTH THE JUAN DE FUCA TRAIL

If you live locally, and have not hiked the Juan de Fuca Trail, you have a treat in store. HOWEVER, the popular trail is threatened by plans to build a tourist resort next to its most scenic part, with 257 tourist vacation cabins and a lodge stretching along 7 kilometres of the trail. The CRD planning staff have recommended the plan, and the Juan de Fuca Land-Use Committee (representing just 1.2% of the CRD's population - 4,500 local residents out of 373,000) has voted 5-2 to move it forward. The next step is a CRD Open House on the proposed development at 7pm on March 3, at Edward Milne School in Sooke.

This is a public park, and a treasure that belongs to us all, so any decision surely concerns us all, not just the local communities - so we must ask the CRD Directors to vote on it as a whole. Visitors come from around the world to experience such stunning wilderness and beauty; they won't want to walk past the backyards of vacation homes, with their cars and satellite dishes. Protect the Trail!

Action: Write with your views to -

- * Geoff Young, chair of the Capital Regional District gyoung@victoria.ca
- * Graham Hill, Chair of Planning committee grah@shaw.ca, and
- * Mike Hicks, Director, Juan de Fuca regional district directorjdf@crd.bc.ca By mail: By name, at CRD, PO Box 1000, Victoria V8W 2S6

To learn more, visit www.wildcoast.ca