

Leaves

August 2002
Volume 10 Number 2

Action Update: August, 2002

The Provincial Health Ministry's recent announcement about continued downsizing of Riverview Hospital has again raised concerns about the future of the remaining property. According to the news release, in three years there may be only 125 patients housed on site instead of the current population of 800.

This will mean that several more buildings will become vacant and funds available for their maintenance and the property will dry up. Depending on what direction plans for rapid transit in the area take, there may be huge pressure to sell off the Western end of the property for high-density housing.

Already West Lawn, Crease Clinic, and Crease Cafeteria are empty and a recent announcement targets the magnificent former Nurses Residence (currently the Hospital Administration Building) for closure. Reliable sources add Penn Hall and Centre Lawn to this list – effectively emptying the western third of the property.

While the BC Building Corporation (BCBC) maintains there are no plans at present to develop the property, we can be certain that such planning will soon be underway. Through the Lands Stewardship Committee, we have enjoyed more open communication with BCBC over the past year and we expect to be kept informed as downsizing continues. We are encouraged by the support we have received from the Tri-Cities municipal governments and particularly by Mayor Kingsbury's recent comments about a possible city task force on the future of

Riverview and his hope that the community will be involved in the planning process. We are troubled, however, by the Provincial Government's lack of any stated vision or long-term plans for this valuable property.

Over the coming difficult period, the Riverview Horticultural Centre Society will continue to pursue its vision of an Educational and Horticultural Centre incorporating the heritage trees and gardens already on the property. We will also pursue the designation of the property as a National Historic Site by the federal government and will remain open to land-use ideas that may generate revenue without damaging the trees or the essential ecology of the area. We remain opposed to selling off any part of the remaining 244 acres – this unique property belongs to the current and future citizens of B.C. and it must stay that way.

One of the greatest threats to success in achieving our vision is public apathy and ignorance. Now, more than ever, we need our members to demonstrate their support by visiting the site, discussing the issues with friends and colleagues, and watching for local papers for developments. Consider becoming active in the Society by attending a monthly meeting and sharing your ideas for the future. Most important, write, e-mail, or call the news media and your political representatives. Democracy can work in such cases. Your opinion is important!

Sue Haberber,
RHCS Director of Political Affairs

From Our President

I'll try to be brief in this short newsletter. I would like to thank those who have taken time to write to their MLA and to Gordon Campbell to stress the need to preserve the Riverview Lands. Many people have sent copies of their letters (and the replies) to us and we were truly encouraged to read them. For those who have not yet written, please don't put it off - our provincial government needs to hear from all of you. Here are a few useful addresses:

Hon. Gordon Campbell, Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Hon. Christy Clark, Deputy Premier, 2186
St John's Street Port Moody, BC V3H 2B9

Richard Stewart MLA #102 - 1108 Austin
Avenue, Coquitlam, BC V3C 3P5

Harry Bloy MLA Unit E, 526 Clarke Road,
Coquitlam, BC V3J 3Z5

Kam Manhas MLA 6106 - 2850 Shaughnessy
Street, Port Coquitlam, BC

Norma Gillespie
President: RHCS

Membership

So far in 2002 we have 106 paid up memberships, nearly 40 more than last year. We are delighted to have heard from some of you who we had not heard from for a while. We also have collected a large number of e-mail addresses, and will attempt to send out this newsletter through cyberspace. If this does not work they will go by snail mail instead. Meanwhile we will be taking out some of the 300 plus people on our list that we have not heard from in the last five years.

Check out our web site: www.rhcs.org

TREEFEST 2002

Sunday September 8th, 11 am - 4 pm

Beside Crease Buildings at Riverview.
Please support us in any way you can. To help, please phone a member of our Treefest committee: Mary Brown 604-939-7769, Donna Crosby 604-939-4064, Norma Gillespie 604-942-7378.

Tree tours leave every hour. Backyard walks, led by Burke Mountain Naturalists, leave Finnie's Garden at 11.30 and 2.30. Blackberry Tea at Finnie's from 12.30 - 3.30, or as long as supplies last.

A wheelchair accessible bus will shuttle up to Finnie's Garden until 3 pm when it will be used for a guided tour of the grounds for people who find walking difficult.

Other features: Bagpiper! Art display! Food! MC - Tony Prophet! Kite making workshop! AND....Preview of what we hope will become an annual Fall Fair.

RHCS Executive for 2002-2003

President: Norma Gillespie
Vice President: Donna Crosby
Corr. Secretary: Donna Crosby
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Ron Javorsky, Joan Spira.

Leaves is the newsletter of the Riverview Horticultural Centre Society (RHCS). This is a non-profit society dedicated to preserving and protecting the Riverview trees and Lands.

The editor of this edition is Val Adolph. Opinions and ideas expressed are not necessarily those of the Society or the editor.

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