

Leaves

March 2004

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Riverview Lands Centennial Year

2004 is the Centennial of the land acquisition to provide facilities for the care of the mentally ill of British Columbia. 1000 acres were purchased; today only 244 acres remain. Riverview still performs a health care need and one of the finest collections of trees in the nation thrives here. Riverview Horticultural Centre Society's Centennial Tree Tour, and our first opportunity to celebrate with the community, is on March 21st, our first Tree Walk.

Throughout 2004 RHCS plans to feature different aspects of the beautiful lands during the regular escorted walks. Many flowering trees will be blooming in the spring and summer - the Lindens are special in the early evening in late June and early July. Watch for the Linden Walk when we serve a Linden Tea and enjoy the scent of the trees and the fellowship. Celebrations will go on until Treefest in September when there will be numerous walks.

CELEBRATE CENTENNIAL YEAR!

(revised from February BMN Newsletter) One hundred years ago in 1904, the province of BC formally dedicated approximately 1000 acres of land at Essondale to provide treatment facilities for the mentally ill and agricultural fields to sustain them. Soon after Essondale was established, John Davidson, the province's first botanist, arrived from Scotland to establish an arboretum and botanical garden with the help of the patients. Apparently some of these patients were former miners suffering from heavy metal poisoning, but they still knew how to build rock walls - many of which can still be viewed on site today. A few years later, Davidson moved to the newly formed UBC taking his botanical garden with him. Left behind was his legacy of the tree collection and gracious landscaping which.....

appears to follow the naturalistic designs of F.O. Olmsted (North America's greatest landscaper who designed New York's Central Park and Montreal's Mont Royal Park). This magnificent collection of trees from around the world has now grown to splendid maturity and at present constitutes western Canada's most significant arboretum. Since 1904, the lands have evolved to become the Riverview Hospital Site, Colony Farm Regional Park and Riverview Forest or have been lost to residential development (the 150 acres now known as Riverview Heights). Today, only 244 acres remain both as a home for the mentally ill and site of the arboretum. According to the enabling legislation that Linda Asgeirsson is locating for us, the act to establish Essondale was apparently passed in September of 1904. If so, this means a big birthday party for Riverview at TreeFest this fall! And we should celebrate Riverview's Centennial throughout this entire year. Ironically, the future of the Riverview lands appears even more undecided with the continuing down-sizing of facilities just as the site finally reaches its centennial year. If the legacy of previous generations was to establish the arboretum, then surely it is our obligation to ensure that it will endure for future generations.

John Davidson was a major force in developing public interest in and appreciation of B.C.'s botanical diversity. The creation of a Horticultural and Educational Centre that would increase public awareness of the great range and beauty of B.C.'s flora and if established on the grounds where Davidson planted trees over ninety years ago would be a true fulfilment of Davidson's early vision. It would also be a great benefit to both B.C. residents and visitors.

Katherine Steig: Chair Vancouver Natural History Society, Conservation Section

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

We have two new addresses to tell you about. Both should make it easier to find Riverview Hospital and Lands.

The Hospital has now got a street number that makes more sense if you are looking for it on a map. It is 2601 Lougheed Highway, Coquitlam.

The Society decided to change from our PO Box number in Port Moody, to one which would give us a Coquitlam address, and still be handy for picking up the mail. It is now:

**PO Box 64616, 1942 Como Lake Avenue,
Coquitlam, BC V3J 7V7**

VOLUNTEERS

If anyone is interested in getting more involved with the Society, but cannot attend a meeting please contact Norma at 604-942-7378 or Mary at 604-939-7769, or leave a message at trees@rhcs.org We would love to hear from you. Opportunities are endless - writing letters to politicians, bringing friends to walk the Lands, gardening at Finnie's (join the Friends of Finnie's for that, contact Norma), putting up posters, joining the Board (we need a minute taker), co-hosting a walk, leading a walk if you are an arborist, and so on

THE GREAT TREE HUNT

The City of Coquitlam is now accepting nominations for the Great Tree Hunt 2004. This event was first held in 2002, and resulted in posters and a book showing the top rated trees, many of them from Riverview. If you know of a great tree that you would like to nominate, you can get forms from the City, at 604-933-6036, or from the Society.

Great is being defined as "Significant and unique, all shapes and sizes, species and colours" and if you have a story about the tree, so much the better. We are invited to say what might be the preferred time to take a photo of the tree, so if you are thinking blossom there is no time to lose. "Our Magnolias" up by East Lawn are already showing white buds. We were encouraged not to nominate **just** Riverview trees, but they do seem to have a head start on most of the other areas of Coquitlam. Look around and see what you can find.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

We invite you to join us for our regular monthly meetings. They are held on the first Thursday of each month (except July and December) at 7.15 pm in the Henry Esson young Building (HEY) at Riverview.

Tree Walks are on Sundays at 1 pm on: March 21st, April 18th, May 9th, June 20th, July 18th, August 15th and October 17th.

The Linden Walk will be on Tuesday, July 6th at 7.30 pm. We always enjoy the perfume of the linden flowers and have a wee picnic under the trees if the weather allows.

Treefest 2004 will again be held Sunday, September 19th near the HEY building. We were pleased with the new location last year, and the few glitches we hope to iron out.

Nature Walks will be held Sundays April 25th, June 27th and August 22nd at 1 pm. These are led by Burke Mountain Naturalists and go through the Backyard, native plant area and Finnie's Garden.

All walks start from the front door of the Henry Esson Young Building.

"A garden may be defined as an asylum for plants, and the more a gardener knows about his patients the more successful will be his results"

John Davidson

ACTION UPDATE MARCH 2004

As Riverview Hospital continues to downsize, community interest in the future of Riverview Lands heats up. The first meeting of Coquitlam's Riverview Task Force in February, saw all fifteen members agree that the entire site should remain publicly owned and that the needs of the mentally ill should have first priority. In addition to Sue Habeger representing RHCS, Task Force members represent community groups focussing on Arts, Heritage, Environment, Health and Education. Coquitlam councilors, Mae Reid and Finbar Donnelly chair the committee while city Economic Development Manager, Al Ordge and Tourism Director, Barb Stegemann provide staff support. The mandate for the Task Force is to create a vision and comprehensive plan for the Riverview Lands that is realistic, sustainable and consistent with the values and goals of the community. Because RHCS has already done a great deal of work in this direction, we have been invited to present our Vision document at the March 17th meeting.

The 2003 Vision has been broadened with an added section on Heritage and is already endorsed by many of the community groups as a result of our work with the ad hoc community task force over the past year. I am optimistic that the Task Force will be able to agree on a vision and move to examining feasibility and sustainability issues surrounding the its ideas. The public is welcome to observe Task Force meetings, which are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Coquitlam City Hall..

Meanwhile, RHCS continues to meet regularly with BCBC to discuss ongoing stewardship of the lands. The construction of another building adjacent to Connolly Lodge has been a major focus of these discussions. While we support new and better facilities for the mentally ill, RHCS continues to maintain that with many buildings on site vacant or underused, it makes no sense financially or ecologically to dig up green space and build a new building. BCBC is determined to proceed with the construction and held a public Open House in February to present their plans.

Thank you to all RHCS members who attended and who filled out response forms. (BCBC informs us that a summary of public comments will be on their website eventually.) We continue to monitor the construction site to assess the impact that the excavation will have on the mature Linden trees in the area. The building footprint has been shifted twice as a result of our input. However, four Black Locust trees will be removed to allow for the construction and concerns remain about the effects future road work and possible paving will have on the trees lining the gravel road leading to the site.

We are now attempting to convince BCBC to work with RHCS and the City of Coquitlam towards the development of a clear set of guidelines that will protect Riverview Trees during any future ground disturbances. We are very pleased that Susan Murray, a well-known arborist from Kwantlen University College, has agreed to advise us in this endeavour.

Once more, I remind you that public opinion is our strongest ally in our struggle to preserve Riverview's magnificent trees, heritage landscapes and buildings. Every letter, e-mail or phone call made to politicians or the media moves us a step closer to realizing our vision of a major Horticultural Centre on the site. Observe the development at the

former Woodlands site in New Westminster over the next year to understand what will happen if we let up!

Sue Haberger, Director of Political Affairs

RHCS 2004 Annual General Meeting:

Thursday, June 3rd
7.30pm in the Henry Esson Young
Building
at Riverview Hospital

Please plan to attend. We always enjoy
food and fun!

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Many good letters have been appearing in local newspapers, and I would like to thank all of you who have written. If you have not taken the time to write please do so. Some points to mention:

- That the present 244 acres remain in the public trust.
- That any new construction take place in the foot prints of existing buildings.
- Five buildings have high heritage status, and many have a good heritage rating. Architectural Heritage should be given respect and protection.
- The trees **and root systems** throughout the site must be protected.

If you have any questions please call RHCS at 604-290-9910 or call Norma at 604-942-7378

While you're visiting the trees at Riverview pick up a copy of Val Adolph's book "Tales of the Trees". Based on the tree species at Riverview and written by one of our members, It's full of tree lore and makes a great gift for a tree lover. Cost: \$13.95. Proceeds help to preserve Riverview Lands.

Leaves is the newsletter of the Riverview Horticultural Centre Society (RHCS), 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. The RHCS address is: PO Box 64616, 1942 Como Lake Avenue, Coquitlam, B.C. V3J 7V7



Re-New NOW!!
Due April 1, 2004

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Hello Everyone,

It is that time of year again. April 1st, 2004 is the beginning of a new year for RHCS.

The RHCS invites you to join us again in supporting our efforts to keep the site of British Columbia's first botanical garden, the Riverview Hospital Lands intact.

Your Membership dues support many activities by the Society including *public awareness, presentations, displays, etc.* **These dues are especially helpful for the production of our Newsletter "Leaves"**. This *Newsletter* is produced Twice yearly to keep you up to date and in touch with what is happening currently with RHCS and the Riverview Lands.

If it is important to you to continue receiving our Newsletter and/or Continuing your Support for the Preservation of the 'Riverview Lands' - NOW is the Time to send in your Membership dues and/or Donations to the 'Riverview Horticultural Centre Society'.

In this time of change on the lands we really need your support more than ever before.

We Value your continued Support & Appreciate all the help you have given over the years.
If you have already mailed in your membership dues we thank you.

REGISTRATION FORM

The RHCS invites you to join us in supporting our efforts to keep the site of British Columbia's first botanical garden, the Riverview Hospital Lands, intact.

Membership Classification:

Yearly membership is due on **April 1st**:

New Membership or Renewal

Student: \$5 Senior: \$5 Adult: \$10 Family: \$15 Corporate: \$25

You are invited to make an additional contribution to support the Society \$ _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

(Please make cheques payable to: *Riverview Horticultural Centre Society*)

RHCS is a registered charitable organization #3771 0893 RR0001

Choose to receive your 'Newsletter' by: email or Canada Post

Membership Application:

First Name(s): _____ Last Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____ email: _____

Please Mail to:

**The Riverview Horticultural Centre Society
P.O. Box 64616, 1942 Como Lake Avenue
Coquitlam, BC, V3J 7V7**

New Address