

**Newsletter June 2003**



**FRIENDS OF MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK**



## **A pat on the back**

In this year we can congratulate ourselves on having 120 fully paid up members, some of whom have even subscribed for a year or two ahead. Of course, over the past few years our membership has kept not far outside this range. That our numbers have remained fairly constant at such a respectable level is, indeed, a striking demonstration of the abiding importance that the Park enjoys in the lives of neighbouring communities. This, however, should not encourage complacency among those whose membership dues are in arrears. Though we have continued to keep in touch with you, we always appreciate tangible proof that you still share our concerns and that we represent your interests.. The label on the front of your newsletter will show your membership status.

## **Annual General Meeting, 2003**

The AGM was held on Wednesday, April 9 , at 7.30 , in MacMorran's Seaview Room.

- Reports on the transactions of the past year were presented by the office bearers.
  - Two representatives from the Habitat Acquisition Trust, Pauline Brest van Kempen and Jennifer Eliason, gave a brief account of the work they have been doing among home owners adjacent to the Park, in furtherance of the Good Neighbours Project for the protection of parks and green/blue spaces through private land stewardship.
  - Election of office-bearers followed. Sheilagh Ogilvie, Robert Bridgeman and Kenneth Rankin, whose terms as directors had expired, were re-elected to the executive.
  - Our guest speaker for the evening was the about-to-retire municipal Parks Manager, Dave DeShane. His address, entitled 'A Moment in Time' covered some of the remoter history of the Park as well as highlights in his own association with it during his term of office. After he had finished, the vice-president, Darrell Wick, presented him with a certificate appointing him as a lifetime member of the Friends, the first such membership the society has presented
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## Ivy pull

In the afternoon of Good Friday, April 18 of this year, about 140 young Mormon volunteers, mainly from the Mormon Church on Wilkinson Road but some from up island, came to Mount Douglas to pull ivy.

This activity was confined to the considerable expanse of ivy both on the ground and up trees in from the right hand side of the Glendenning Fire Road as you enter the Park. As you can imagine with the youthful energy of these numbers, quite a considerable inroad was made into the spread of this invasive species in that area, but a vast amount has still to be tackled.

Ron Carter, the Saanich arborist, deserves particular mention for giving up a day off in order to distribute the necessary tools and give some preliminary instruction to the volunteers.

## UVic campus development

You may have read in the Saanich News about the outcome of the three-sided negotiations between the University, Saanich Municipality, and a fairly loose association of other interested parties including students, over issues of building density and traffic control in the development plan that had been proposed for the campus.

Of particular interest to the Friends are the proposals for the control of traffic flow. In exchange for concessions made by Saanich Council over the amount of parking space serving multi-storied buildings the University, according to the Saanich News, is setting aside over half a million dollars to kick start measures to curb vehicular traffic to the campus. What the "kick start" effectively translates into has, however, still to be seen. Our ultimate interest, of course, is that the present flow of traffic through the Park should be reduced.

On a separate issue, the University has also undertaken to retain stormwater runoff entirely within the confines of the University's grounds. These, of course, fall outside the Douglas Creek watershed, but the general practice of stormwater retention is to be commended.

This is in contrast to the Municipality refusing to apply measures for complete stormwater retention, or the closest possible approximation, to the new Orchard Park development adjacent to the Park: it *does* lie within our Creek's watershed

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## **Mountain bike photo**

In its Capital Region Section on May 12, the Times Colonist featured a striking photograph of a mountain biker atop Mount Douglas getting ready to ride down a steep rocky face.

This seemed excellent evidence that the bylaw prohibiting mountain biking in the Park is being flouted. We contacted the municipal bylaw officer and also the staff sergeant in charge of the police bike patrol. As a result maybe the former also contacted the latter. In any case, the latter told us that the police could not lay charges against the biker unless there was someone to bear witness that he actually was where the caption said he was. That condition being unattainable, the staff sergeant undertook the speak very sternly to the young man.

Of the number of letters of protest that we are told were sent to the editor of the Times-Colonist, only one was published. Obviously the newspaper isn't aware that opposition to mountain-biking in the Park is considerable, not just an issue for a minor bunch of zealots.

What is particularly offensive about the photo and the caption beneath is that it glamorized mountain biking in the Park and completely ignored the environmental damage that it does.

We have written to Saanich Councillors requesting that the matter be brought before a meeting of the Committee Of The Whole so that more positive and effective steps can be taken to discourage the practice.

## **Membership renewals**

Please check to see that your membership is up to date by looking at your mailing label. The number in the top left hand corner should be '03 or higher. If it is, we would like to thank you for your support of the Society and we hope the work ahead will continue to hold your interest. If the number is less than '03 you are in arrears and we hope you will take this opportunity to renew your membership by sending a \$5 per person per year to Graham Shorthill, 4623 Cordova Bay Road, V8X 3V6.

Many people use the option of paying in advance and send one cheque to cover two or three years membership. We take this as an indication that we are on the right track and we look forward to receiving more votes of this kind after you have read this newsletter.

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