
*The Friends of Mount Douglas
Park Society*



February 2003



FRIENDS OF MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK

**The Annual General Meeting
of the Society
will take place**

7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 9

**McMorran's Seaview Room
5109 Cordova Bay Road**

Speaker: Dave DeShane, retiring Parks Manager, Saanich

The nominating committee is made up of

Kay Porter, 658-5792

Jane Owen, 477-8963

Lori Vaninsberghe 472-1638

If you wish to nominate someone for a place on the Friends' executive,
please get in touch with one of the above.



President's Foreword

Greetings for 2003! Why so long since our last newsletter? Our plan was to bring one out in December last year. However, for better or for worse, there were too many rather critical issues still in an unsettled state when that time came around to make a progress report seem practicable.

We began the year with a new municipal Council. Happily, within our Society's lifetime councils in Saanich have become increasingly sensitive to, and protective of, community interests where those have run counter to others of a private, mainly lucrative kind. We are fortunate also that the composition of the incoming Council gives promise that this salutary trend will continue and improve.

Braefoot—Sadly, however, the previous Council took a retrograde and deplorable step in the final weeks of its office. One of our concerns has been that the approaches to the Park should blend appropriately into its natural features. A particularly appealing example of this type of blend could previously be enjoyed in the approach from Braefoot along Glendenning. While the last Council seemed to find the pressure to develop from property owners along Braefoot to be irresistible, it at least had the opportunity to moderate some of the predictable scenic degradation by ensuring that the forested portion at the corner of Mount Douglas Cross Road should be left more or less intact. Its evasion in this matter has now been well publicized. Apparently the developer didn't even abide by the rather meagre measures for tree preservation and habitat protection that Council had approved. Because of overcutting the windshield for trees was removed. One tree was blown down, causing an 8-hour power outage in part of the neighbourhood, with the further consequence that BC Hydro insisted on the few remaining companion trees being removed as well. This, of course, was very similar to what happened not so long ago at Vantreight Drive after the Glencoe Cove development. There a whole row of trees fell down because of the removal of established winter protection. How many times more, then, must such disasters occur before sanity commands a safe majority on Council? Oh sure, such and such a number of trees can be planted to replace every one that should not have come down. Oh sure, that would be better than making no repair at all. But even if the replacement is ultimately a benefit to our children or grandchildren, why should a whole generation have had the amenity of their neighbourhood blighted?

Habitat Acquisition Trust—On a happier note, Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT), a local non-profit land trust organization, will very soon embark on a project of benefit to

the Park. This will be one part of a Good Neighbourhood program that it has begun to operate for natural parks in our region. The aim is to provide residents in the proximity of Mount Douglas Park with an evaluation of the environmental amenities of their property, and assistance in achieving the conservation goals they may set. After making an appointment by telephone, two personable young women from HAT will be visiting any resident in this category who is interested. They have already completed a similar project for Oak Haven Park in Central Saanich.

Traffic control and distribution—On the main front we continue to engage the municipality in discussion of traffic control and distribution in our area. What we have endeavoured to impress on the decision-makers in these matters is the need to address the problems specific to the road through the Park in the context of the capability of the whole adjacent road system. These problems arise out of the road's potential instability and consequent limited lifetime. Inseparable from this, of course, is the protection of the beach against band-aid measures designed to allow the road above it to carry the present and ever-increasing volume of traffic. More on this further into this newsletter.

Another Subdivision

Long rumoured and now due to begin. The area is within the old orchard that is bounded by Parkside, Cedar Hill Road and Mount Douglas Park. Inevitably this subdivision will have implications for the Park, and we have written to the municipal planner to draw his attention to these implications, under five main headings.

Buffering—Unless the lots proposed for the north side of the orchard are sited far enough away from the edge of the Park, sooner or later some of the new residents will be pressuring the municipality to cut down trees for reasons of safety. If they were to get their way, that in turn would expose trees further into the Park to weather conditions against which, without their former shield, they would have no defences. The initial plan for the subdivision does, indeed, provide for the drive that at present leads from Cedar Hill Road to the dwelling at the northwest corner of the orchard, by skirting the edge of the Park. This would distance the north edge of the new properties from that side of the Park, but at an insufficient width to allay the fears of the adjacent residents.

Stormwater detention—Stormwater control at the edge of Cedar Hill Road opposite Elnido has off and on presented problems. There has been quite frequent flooding at that point in the past. Hence unless some detention device is programmed for the development within its boundaries much trouble will be created for the future. Without such a device, furthermore, there will be an increase in the pollution of runoff into Douglas Creek.

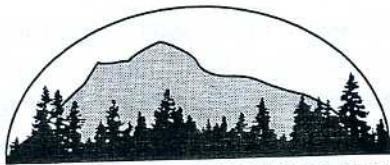
Protected streetscape—The protected streetscaping of Cedar Hill Road stops short of the Park, somewhere near Parkside. It is, however, desirable that it should extend all the way to the Park to prevent an over-harsh contrast between built-up conditions and the Park's natural aspect. We hope that trees will be planted to replace the hedge on the eastern side of the property, if that hedge is due to be removed.

Park access closure—By some strange anomaly, main access to the present dwellings at the top of the orchard has so far been permitted through a fire road within the Park, even though these dwellings are also serviced by two drives that go through the orchard. Thus the present owners invariably take their cars through this Park access, to the inconvenience of other Park users. From our point of view, the only saving feature of the subdivision proposed is that it would provide the occasion for that practice to be stopped by means of some barrier between the fire road and these dwellings.

Traffic—Though much of the traffic increase resulting from the subdivision would be to and from places within the main city, some of it is likely to be in the direction to and from the Pat Bay Highway. That, accordingly, will increase the traffic stress on the part of Cordova Bay Road that runs through the Park. Given the current lack of urgency with which the municipality is treating the need for traffic calming, the proposal for subdivision is therefore premature.

We have had an acknowledgement from the municipal planner to the effect that he has taken note of these five points and that they are under his consideration.

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SEND US YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS AND WE'LL LET YOU KNOW
WHAT'S CURRENTLY GOING ON.



FRIENDS OF MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK

Mt. Douglas Park at the crossroads once again

Welcome to 2003: the year of the road

In the following pages, you will find a summary of the changes that are scheduled to take place in this part of Saanich. All of them will increase the traffic flow through the Park and neighbouring communities unless steps are taken now to alleviate the traffic effects of the planned developments.

What can you do to help your community and the park?

Please read the summary and the suggestions for calming traffic (in the whole area as well as in your own) and then contact your Community Association or the Society and let them know your views.
