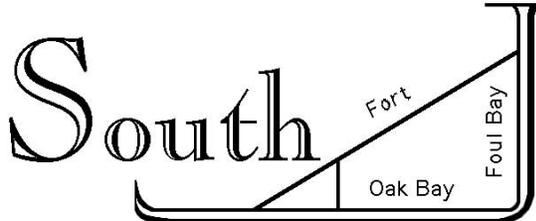


# South Jubilee News



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Feb 2009

## NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT:

### A PRESENTATION ON BOULEVARD GARDENING

The question of how to “green” our neighbourhood and our individual lives has been an ongoing theme at SJNA meetings over the past year. Therefore, we were very pleased to host a presentation from renegade gardeners Margot and Rainey, who shared wonderful stories of being boulevard gardening pioneers on Haultain Street in the heart of Fernwood. These gardens, which include tomatoes, pumpkins, beans and zucchinis among other items on a 16’ by 6’ area, produced over 300lbs of harvested food last year! Furthermore, these urban agriculturalists have declared their boulevard gardens to be “common lands” of the community – that is, anyone can plant and work the land, anyone can harvest. It is perhaps this notion – simply getting people to *believe* that anyone was welcome to harvest, that the notion of private property did not apply – that was the greatest challenge they had to overcome. Their presentation, full of great gardening and composting tips, information on local bylaws, strategies for dealing with City Hall, and fabulous anecdotes of the conversations and interactions that have sprouted from this imaginative and nurturing use of public land, was inspiring and surprising to all. Thank you so much to both Rainey and Margot for sharing your thoughts and your experiences. If anybody is walking down Haultain and sees the common gardens, stop in: they belong to you!

*More information and tips on boulevard gardening in our April newsletter!*

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### A NOTE ON OUR TRANSITION TOWN PRESENTATION

If

you are concerned about the environmental and economic crises that we face as a community/nation/global society, then the Transition Town presentation at our meeting may provide an opportunity to think about a process of re-envisioning our community – together – and taking action on our vision to meet these challenges.

**Come check out this positive and proactive model for envisioning and working towards a future we would like to live in.**

## NEIGHBOURHOOD

### MEETING

**Monday, Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm**  
**Victoria College of Art**  
**Bank and Leighton, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor**

#### Meeting Agenda

1. **Brainstorm possible webpage options for SJNA**
  - form small working group to proceed on issue?
2. **Discuss Gardening/Food Security activities**
  - past ideas include neighbourhood garden tours, seed exchanges, gardening and composting workshops, etc. – may also wish to form small working group of interested gardeners to organize these projects.
3. **Transition Towns Presentation by Jens Kiefer (“Kief”) and Denise Dunn.**
  - The Transition Town movement, which is creating and inspiring positive community action in Britain and around the world, is a model of change to assist communities in developing creative responses to the challenge of Peak Oil and climate change. Come and find out more – and prepare to be inspired! Please note that the presentation will be approx. 30 minutes long, discussion to follow.

*Come out and meet the people in your neighbourhood - ALL WELCOME!*

## THOUGHTS ON PLASTIC RECYCLING AND OTHER NEIGHBOURHOOD MATTERS

We (Ken and Denise Dunn) have been volunteering at recycling Saturdays for a while now and after two post Christmas sessions we are left with conflicting feelings about the whole process. It is good to see the diversion of massive quantities of plastics from the landfill and, hopefully, into usefulness. But it is not so great to see the amount of plastic our society accepts as normal and necessary. For us, it calls into question our volunteering efforts. Are we encouraging the use of plastic packaging by providing a ready and apparently honourable means of disposal? It certainly happened in our family. We used to make our own yogurt using glass jars and whole milk. When our source of whole milk dried up and almost simultaneously, a means of recycling of plastic containers came to the neighbourhood we didn't hesitate to start buying our yogurt in plastic tubs!

Having learned a little about the environmental and human health cost of the production and disposal of plastics I wonder if by our volunteering efforts we are merely perpetuating and encouraging the production and use of these substances that potentially will (if they haven't already) poison our grandchildren. I would like to see the costs of the damage done move to those who profit most from the use of plastics. I have heard that in Germany some packaging can be left at the place of purchase. Retailers are now passing the buck back to their wholesalers and manufacturers. It is said this is resulting in some reduction in packaging and some rethinking of what materials to use. Of course, there are many problems with and critics of the German system as one might expect with any innovation that might raise prices for the consumer or question the belief in unlimited profit.

Please bring only clean, sorted plastics to recycling Saturdays. If you cannot sort your plastics at home then please separate them at the recycling site but before coming up to the bins. Sorting at the bins slows down the whole process for everyone. We currently have bins for soft plastic, hard plastic, foil lined, Styrofoam (two kinds, I think) and returnables. **Next Recycle Feb 14 10-noon Bank St + Leighton**

On another topic, our house was broken into recently and our television stolen. Our neighbour's house was broken into at the same time. The intruder was disturbed by our tenant returning home. Our neighbour's home was accessed through a basement door on the dark side of the

house and ours through the back door on our deck, after the outdoor light bulb had been unscrewed. Glass was broken in both doors, using an old cardboard box and a rock, and then they were unlocked from the inside. The thief made his getaway over the fences of the backyards. Our tenant caught a glimpse. This is not the first break-in and theft on our block. I hope this information will help my neighbours protect themselves from similar invasions.

## A BASIC HUMAN VALUE: COMPASSION

A recent court decision granting Victoria's homeless the right to camp in city parks has drawn renewed attention to a not-so-new issue. While I certainly understand the impulse to pull up the proverbial drawbridge, I feel the urge to encourage us all to remember a basic human value: Compassion.

The gap between "us" and "them" is really not that big: If and when "The Big One" hits, many thousands of us will be homeless, and in the meantime it takes far less dramatic circumstances to put a person on the streets.

This is Canada. It is winter. Think about how scary it must be to live outside, day and night. Three hours without a coffee? Three days without a decent meal? Three weeks without a hot bath? And how does it feel to be met every day by suspicion and rejection from the community?

What these people need, is for us to acknowledge the individual and the story behind homeless anonymity. They do not need us to turn away, shrugging with indifference; they do not need us to fear them. They do not need their tents and sleeping bags taken without return, and surely they don't need to be dragged off a campsite by the arms, with their hands cuffed behind their backs.

What they do need: A place to sleep. Tonight. Not after yet another report, and the vague promise of shelter to be constructed somewhere, sometime - they need a place to sleep, tonight.

What we need is to realize that looking away will not solve the problem. As a first step, I recommend picking up a copy of the monthly "Victoria Street Newz" from one of the vendors around town. Learn about "their" side of the story - who are they? Why are they here? Where are they coming from? Why have their numbers been growing steadily in the last few years? And what can be done? Read the Street Newz for some insights and answers. Or visit Portland's Dignity Village (<http://www.dignityvillage.org>). Or attend a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee to End Homelessness, every Wednesday night at Silver Threads. And talk to the mayor and city council members about your concerns!

Thank you!  
Your neighbour Christina Nikolic