



# FRIENDS OF BEACON HILL PARK SOCIETY

March 2021

## Friends of Beacon Hill Park Annual General Meeting

March 22nd, 2021 at 7:30PM via Zoom/Conference Call

The meeting is members only and only members-in-good-standing are eligible to vote. If you are a member, you should have received the Zoom/Conference Call invitation with the meeting id and passcode. There is much to discuss so the directors are getting up to speed with Zoom to make sure there are no technical glitches.

The Friends of Beacon Hill Park is a registered society dedicated to preserving the natural and cultural features of Beacon Hill Park and promoting appropriate uses in keeping with its Trust (1882). We count on your support to help us protect the park.

As well as receiving the newsletter, benefits of membership include the satisfaction of helping preserve the park, input into the management of the park and participating in the Society's activities. You are welcome to attend the monthly directors' meetings. Please call for date and location.

Annual membership is \$10.00 per household and is due on Jan. 1..

### A Very Stressful Year

A pandemic, campers in all areas of the park, road closures that affect access to the park, warming tents, the passing of a founder of FBHP and now (see inside) the passing of two more people who have had a very great effect on efforts to keep BHP from sliding into just another large urban park with human interventions dominating every square foot of the park.

We have to have an AGM, and that means online via Zoom or phone conference calling (see inside).

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### It's The Roots That Make The Fruits (by Roy Fletcher)

This short essay is not intended to be an exhaustive study of tree roots or bio-energetics. A line from a Willie Dixon tune.

Human traffic around trees always has some effect on the tree roots. The question is how much traffic and what degree of damage. Soil compaction is the main effect of human activity in root zones but human footsteps can also transmit pressure waves into the soil and damage root tips and the hyphae of mycorrhiza (more later).

The root tips of feeder roots take up mostly inorganic compounds. The whole root takes up oxygen and water. Complete water saturation of the soil and compaction of the soil decrease the oxygen uptake by the roots and decrease

## **It's The Roots That Make The Fruits (cont.)**

the nutrient uptake.

The inorganic compounds and oxygen are necessary for the Krebs citric acid cycle which provides the main source of energy to build root structure. This process is known as oxidative phosphorylation (adenosine triphosphate). If phosphates, water or oxygen are in deficit in the roots, root development suffers. Compaction of the soil will cause a deficit for oxygen and nutrients.

The feeder roots of trees seldom extend down greater than one metre into the soil.

It may come as a surprise to gardeners that roots take up mainly inorganic compounds. But that was discovered nearly two hundred years ago by a scientist Justus von Liebig.

In recent years it has been discovered that roots do take up organic compounds, but that is mainly by mycorrhiza (fungi) that live in symbiosis (mutually beneficial co-living) with tree roots. The fungi produce hyphae that either enter into the cells of roots or surround the root tips. The fungi provide the

roots with organic compounds and phosphates and the roots provide the fungi with carbohydrates.

Both root tips and the hyphae of mycorrhiza are very fragile structures. The hyphae can be one-tenth or less the diameter of roots tips and were only discovered when electron microscopes became available. They are easily disturbed and easily damaged.

Not all fungi are beneficial. Some enter into the cell structure of roots and do damage to the root structure, extending up the roots toward the trunk of the tree. Trees have some protection against these parasitic fungi by compartmentalization, a physical and chemical barrier to fungal infestation. This process puts a great demand on the nutrients of the tree, and any human or other traffic around a tree that decreases the available nutrients will effect the success of the process.

It is not possible to prevent all human traffic into the feeder-root zone of a tree. However, intensive human activity like establishing campsites in the root zone must be ceased if trees are to survive.



### **Fred Hook 1951-2021 : Environmental Technician (a reprint from the Times-Colonist Obituary Feb. 20, 2021)**



Fred Hook as we remember him

HOOK, Frederick George August 1, 1951 - February 6, 2021 Fred Hook passed away suddenly at his home in Cherryville, BC on February 6, 2021. Fred was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and moved to Crofton, BC at a young age. He attended schools in Duncan, and then graduated from UVic with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Diploma in Education. He also held a diploma in Cultural Resource Management. Fred worked for the City of Victoria Parks for more than twenty-five years, retiring from the position of Environmental Technician in charge of Victoria's natural areas in 2012. A keen plantsman he particularly enjoyed plants in their natural habitats. His diverse interests were also reflected in his memberships in the V.I. Rock and Alpine Garden Society, the Old Cemeteries Society and the Victoria Handweavers and Spinners Guild.

## **Fred Hook 1951-2021 : Environmental Technician (cont.)**

Fred was such an inspiration and a mentor for Friends of Summit Park. He educated and encouraged us, as the natural areas go-to person for Victoria Parks, in ways to protect the Garry oak ecosystem of our hilltop city park. He was delightful to work with, always full of ideas and answers and keen to engage volunteers in projects - like planting 50 Garry oak seedlings at Summit. At his monthly meetings for city parks volunteers we had slide shows, discussions, guest speakers and found a camaraderie with others focused on native plants. We all missed him greatly when he left for the Okanagan. He certainly did leave a legacy - a respect and concern for native ecosystems in the Parks system and beyond, and in Summit Park, the interpretive sign project that he shepherded along. A lovely man!  
Deirdre Gotto

I had the great fortune to have Fred as a mentor at City of Victoria Parks for 5 years, before he retired as Environmental Technician. Fred was a wealth of

knowledge about all things botanical and in the natural world. He was a good teacher, a good observer of nature and a good person in all respects. Fred and his wisdom will be sorely missed.  
Thomas Munson Victoria, BC

I miss Fred every single day. He was my eight-year-long email buddy, we emailed every day since he and Jennifer left Victoria. When he worked for the Parks Dept. in Victoria, he was a major source when I was researching and writing the Beacon Hill Park History. He read each chapter before we put it online, suggesting additions and improvements. He was my mentor. He let me follow him around the park learning about plants and trees, for example, how he collected native plant seeds to use in the nursery. I admired him so much. Fred was a very generous, patient and smart person, kind and helpful to everyone. I don't know one negative thing about him. That is very rare.  
Janis Ringuette Friend



## **The Court Case Against Camping in Beacon Hill Park (by Roy Fletcher)**

The court case progression :  
BHP is Beacon Hill Park, FBHP is Friends of Beacon Hill Park, CofV is City of Victoria, BCSC is BC Supreme Court, NOCC is Notice of Civil Claim in BCSC.

-March, 2020 the pandemic hits. CofV declares an emergency, homeless camp is proposed for the gravel playing field in BHP, as well as Topaz Park and Pandora St.

-late March - the Medical Health Officer Richard Stanwick takes BHP off the list of parks to be used for homeless camp.

-late March - the Provincial Govt. declares that they

alone have the right to enact emergency legislation. They declare all municipal emergency measures null.

-campers begin setting up unauthorized camps in BHP.  
-the Provincial Govt. closes Topaz Park and Pandora St. and purchases motels to house the people.

-mid July, 2020 - the City of Victoria seeks an injunction to move campers from the natural areas to the cultivated areas of BHP.

-late July - the injunction hearing is held in BCSC and FBHP seeks status as intervenor. Intervenor status denied. CofV gets injunction to move campers.

## **The Court Case Against Camping in Beacon Hill Park**

(cont.)

-mid-August, FBHP starts a GoFundMe page to finance further court action.

-late-September, FBHP files pleadings in BCSC to be an intervener in the already-granted injunction.

-mid-October, court hearings are held in BCSC regarding the FBHP pleadings in front of Justice Jeffrey Gaul.

-Justice Gaul rejects FBHP request to join the injunction stating that the injunction is a statutory injunction not an equitable injunction. Justice Gaul suggests that the FBHP could proceed with a full litigation under the Trustee Act.

-late-November - FBHP files a Notice of Civil Claim in BCSC against the CofV to stop camping in BHP as being in violation of the Trust.

-mid-December - CofV responds denying that FBHP has status as a respondent under the Trust.

-mid-December - negotiations begin between FBHP

and CofV over the NOCC.

-late-December - FBHP offers to suspend the NOCC if the CofV agrees to submit the question of camping in BHP to the BCSC as an Application for Direction under Sec. 86 of the Trustee Act of BC.

-late December - the CofV agrees to the Application for Direction and begins formulating the question.

-early March, 2021 - the CofV finally files with the BCSC for the Application.

What happens next.

In early April, CofV and FBHP will have a short hearing in BCSC to formalize the process and decide who can submit, who can present orally and who has responder status. Presumably, anyone can apply for intervener status once this initial hearing is over.

The question "Can the land known as Beacon Hill Park, held in trust by the City of Victoria, be used by persons experiencing homelessness for temporary sheltering" will then go to a full BCSC hearing which may take three or more days.



## **Beacon Hill Betty - Betty Gibbens (Deceased 2020)**

(By Hennie Stibbie)

The first time I met Betty Gibbens (from then on I called her Beacon Hill Betty and, no, she did not mind) is a day I will never forget.

My late husband and I had just retired to Victoria in late August 1987. We bought a townhouse on Richardson St. and were staying at a motel until our stuff arrived from Edmonton. To get to know our new neighbourhood we'd drive to Richardson each day, park the car and start walking.

One day we found ourselves on lower Cook St., heading for Dallas Rd., when we were approached by a non-nonsense, stern-looking little lady with a clipboard and a sheet of paper under her arm. "I'm canvassing the neighbourhood", she told us. "Do you live around here?" We told her we were new in town.

"Good", she said. "I'm Betty Gibbens and there's a few things we need to discuss".

She proceeded to give us a most interesting brief history of Beacon Hill Park, talked about the need for people to get involved and help protect this jewel. We were hooked! In the ensuing years it was our honour and privilege to work with Beacon Hill Betty.

To hear her address Council and community meetings was something to behold. She never wavered. This little lady was a GIANT in our community.

Thank you, Beacon Hill Betty...A LIFE DEDICATED TO OUR BELOVED PARK.



**Renata Varwig  
(by Roy Fletcher)**

After 20+ years as a director of Friends of Beacon Hill Park, Renata has decided it is time to retire.

Renata has a long and storied history.

Born in Prussia in the 1920's she has seen more of the world than most people would see in three lifetimes.

She escaped to Bavaria as the Russian army advanced.

She took a medical degree at Heidelberg University. She emigrated to Canada with her husband in the early 1950's and eventually got on staff as a medical

administrator.

She was assigned to Riverview Hospital. When that was closed, she was the director of three group homes in the Greater Vancouver area.

Most of her medical practice was in the area of psychiatric medicine administration.

After retirement, she moved to Victoria, where she has been for 37 years.

Besides the FBHP, Renata was active in the Fairfield Community Association and the Old Cemeteries Society.



**FBHP Annual General Meeting  
March 22nd, 2021 7:30PM**

The FBHP AGM that was scheduled for Sunday, November 22nd, 2020 had to be cancelled. It is re-scheduled for a Zoom/conference call at 7:30PM, March 22nd, 2021.

We hope to have one or both of the lawyers representing FBHP do a short presentation near the beginning of the meeting.

We are currently looking for people who are interested in serving as a director. If you think that may suit your interests and you have the time available, do contact the directors via email at

[info@friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca](mailto:info@friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca).

Ideally, candidates would have contact with one or more environmental and community groups but not be a director of any other society that FBHP may be interfacing with.

We are a charitable society, so partisan or non-partisan political activity must be very limited.

We strive to keep the number of directors at 6 or less.



**Herb Warren**

From 1931 to 1971, Herb was the Superintendent of CofV Parks, a job he held for 40 years - his entire working career. His influence is everywhere in the park. He was the last complete naturalist to serve as head of parks. All others have been recreationists with occasional naturalist policies.

On his retirement in 1971, he was quoted in The Daily Colonist : "If it hadn't been for the original terms of the trust deed, there would be no park today." (The Daily Colonist, July 31, 1970, p. 21)  
The Trust and Herb's quote are FBHP's guiding documents.

## The Friends of Beacon Hill Park

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As well as receiving the newsletter, benefits of membership include the satisfaction of helping preserve the park, input into the management of the park and participating in the Society's activities. You are welcome to attend the monthly executive meetings. Please call for date and location.

Annual membership is \$10.00 per household and is due on Jan. 1. Any amount over \$10.00 will receive a tax receipt.

## FBHP Directors

Friends of Beacon Hill Park  
#101-1041 Richardson St., Victoria, B.C. V8V 3C6  
[www.friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca](http://www.friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca)  
[info@friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca](mailto:info@friendsofbeaconhillpark.ca)

Chairperson:

Roy Fletcher (250) 380-5023  
[uy205@victoria.tc.ca](mailto:uy205@victoria.tc.ca)

Membership Director :

Maureen Applewhaite

Newsletter editor : Roy Fletcher (250)-380-5023

Treasurer and Secretary :

Joan Halvorsen

## *Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society*

### Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address:

#101-1041 Richardson St.  
Victoria BC  
V8V 3C6

I wish to join the Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society for a fee of \$10.00

I wish to renew my membership for another year for \$10.00

I wish to donate to the Friends of Beacon Hill Park \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I only wish to receive the newsletter for an annual fee of \$10.00

I am interested in volunteering