

Knockan Hill Park News

F R I E N D S O F K N O C K A N H I L L P A R K S O C I E T Y

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **June 9** and **June 11**—come out and help
- Global Bee mystery explained
- Wives of the stars—not a Hollywood story!
- How the park got its name
- Good Neighbours

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Some of you may have noticed the “no cycling” signs that have been installed on the Saanich park entrances. This small, ecologically sensitive park cannot sustain heavy cycling use. The hilly trails make it hazardous when cyclists surprise pedestrians which has led to some risky situations in the past. All park users should stay on the trails when in the park.

When you are in the park, please take care not to pick any wildflowers, leave them for everyone to enjoy. If you take a picnic along, please carry out any garbage and scraps. Please don't litter, and for everyone who picks up after others, a big thank you.

Please come and join in on **Saturday morning, June 9th from 10:00 to noon**, or alternatively on **Monday June 11th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** to help with park maintenance activities. Meet at the High Street entrance to the park. Wear long sleeves, bring some pruners and gloves. Most years these volunteer work parties have focused on removing scotch broom and other invasive

PARK NEWS

The Strawberry Vale Community Club Association is looking for new members. This local non-profit society runs the Strawberry Vale Commu-



nity Hall at Burnside and High Street. They meet on the second Tuesday of each month (except for July and August) at 7:30 p.m. in the hall. Visitors welcome.

Rex Welland, our knowledgeable and resourceful news-

letter publisher and distributor, has been ill and unable to participate in community activities lately.

Rex has been a dedicated and hard-working member of The Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society since it began in 1990. He has advocated on behalf of conservation in our neighbourhood. He has helped save and restore the cottage and gardens at Stranton Lodge and last fall he successfully campaigned to save three Garry oak trees on Burnside Road during installation of the new water main.

He also worked on the new trail, which could not have been built without him. We know that all members wish him well and as quick a recovery as possible.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

species, however because of the extreme winter storms this year we will be focusing on trail maintenance. In particular, there are a large number of branches that have come down and are lining the trails. As the summer progresses it is feared that these will present a fire hazard. In order to mitigate the risk we will be clear-

ing the areas adjacent to the trails. Depending on the number of volunteers some invasive species removal may also take place. Volunteer efforts like this are a great way to meet your neighbours and to make a tangible difference in the ongoing efforts to maintain and protect Knockan Hill Park.

COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER

Much has been made of the mysterious disappearance of millions of the world's bees. All over the place, beekeepers are finding their hives empty, with no sign of the bees besides the honey they left behind. Bee die-offs are a fairly common thing – it's just that most of the time it's only 10-20 per cent of a colony that disappear. This winter, beekeepers in 24 states and parts of Canada and Europe have reported losses between 50 and 90 per cent of their bee populations. Those are pretty staggering

*His labor is a chant,
His idleness a tune;
Oh, for a bee's
experience
Of clovers and
of noon!
- Emily Dickinson*

numbers no matter how you cut it, but the truly amazing thing is that no one is quite sure why this is happening.

There have been about as many theories buzzing around about why the bees have vanished as there are vanished bees. An obvious villain is global warming, but that seems like almost a given at this point. Others point to pesticides or pathogens infecting and killing the bees. Some think GMO crops are to blame. It could be the fact that we truck beehives all around the country, undoubtedly an undue pressure for environmentally sensitive organisms. One of the most interesting theories – one the press is pretty excited about – is that electromagnetic radiation from cell phones is what's really to blame. It's probably safe to say that all of these things could be contributing to what's been deemed "colony collapse disorder". It's a controver-

sial term because not everyone is yet willing to admit that it is actually happening. But the fact that this thing has a name suggests (to me anyway) that it's a serious affair. We are dependent on bee pollination both economically and nutritionally; bees accounts for \$14-\$15 billion dollars worth of produce and as much as every third bite of food we put into our mouths. But it could be worse than that. Albert Einstein apparently said one time that if the bees disappeared from earth, "man would have only have four years of life left. It is important to realize how fragile our complex civilization really is and to try to appreciate what we have. Knockan Hill Park is small, but serves as a local connection to issues that are making news worldwide. There are several beekeepers in the area and without the bees, the Park would not survive in its present state. From the blossoms to the birds and insects there could be significant impacts.

THE ORIGIN OF KNOCKAN HILL'S NAME

The origin of the name of the hill is a wonderful example of the serendipitous nature of language. The early Scots pioneers called it "Gnocan", a Gaelic word for knoll or hill. The indigenous Songhees people already knew it as "Nga'k'un", meaning coiled up. Thus, what was

nearly the same sound was used for the same place by two widely separated cultures. However you spell it, Knockan Hill is a hidden jewel.

Quotes to ponder:

"I like trees because they seem more resigned to

the way they have to live than other things do."
Willa Cather

"You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters."
St. Bernard



"Knockan Hill it is!"

THE WIVES OF THE STARS

There once was a chief who had two daughters. During the summer the people moved to a camp where they fished for salmon. One day the girls went into the forest. At night they lay down among the trees and looked at the stars. The elder sister said, "I wish the big star up there (Jupiter) would be my husband." And the younger said, "I wish the red star there (Mars) would be my husband." Then they fell asleep. When they woke again, they found themselves in a strange land. The stars had taken them into the sky. Now they saw that the stars were men. What they wished for had come to pass and the stars became their husbands.

The following day, their husbands told them to go out and collect camas. But they forbade them to dig up the bulbs as is done on earth. Instead, they were only allowed to cut off the stalks. To start with, the women obeyed, but one day the older sister said, "I must eat a camas bulb again!" She dug one up and, to their amazement, they were looking down upon the earth through the hole. When they arrived home, they didn't say anything about this. They still went to the forest as before to gather camas. But now they made a long rope there, without anyone knowing about it. When they thought that it was long enough, they made a big hole in the ground and the eldest daughter crawled down. She said to her sister, "You wait here. When I have arrived down there safely, I'll shake the rope. Then follow me down. Otherwise, assume that I've fallen into the sea." The younger sister held the rope as she went down.

The woman landed on Knockan Hill. There, she walked back and forth over a long distance and pulled the rope to and fro. Thus, she was able at last to shake it a little bit and her sister in sky felt some very weak movements. She tied the rope to a tree up there, clasped it with her hands and legs and climbed down. The elder sister sat down be-

low and looked up. Finally she saw a small moving dot. It grew bigger and bigger and then she recognized her sister. Her legs had become quite crooked from climbing so long. She had scarcely arrived at the bottom when the rope fell down. The people in the sky had missed the women and when they discovered the rope, they cut it. Then the women went back to their home and everything was the way it was before.

Some people say that the rope has turned into the rocky outcroppings around the hill, while others say that the rope is invisible except to the pure of heart.



"I must eat a
camas bulb
again... shake
the rope...
follow me
down."

(A version of this local myth was recorded and published by pioneer anthropologist Franz Boas in 1895.)

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

The Habitat Acquisition Trust's Good Neighbours projects reach neighbours of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) in the region. Projects encourage private protection of habitats within and around protected areas by raising awareness of ecological values, threats to ecosystem health, and best environmental practices for land

management. To date, they have completed several projects as part of the Good Neighbours Strategy Program. HAT is currently working on the Rithet's Bog Good Neighbours Project and planning for an upcoming Knockan Hill Good Neighbours Project.



Where the
view is
really royal

THINKING GLOBALLY,
ACTING LOCALLY

**F R I E N D S O F
K N O C K A N H I L L P A R K
S O C I E T Y**

The Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society is a volunteer non-profit society dedicated to serving the interests of the park. Some of the ways you can help include:

- Become a member of FKHPS
- Serve on the Board of Directors
- Assist with removal of invasive plant species
- Help with the upkeep and restoration of the Stranton Lodge garden
- Assist with newsletter production and distribution

F K H P S

Executive Board:

President: June Rogers 479-2538

Vice President: Andria Tetlow 479-1947

Secretary: David Trudel 479-2778

Membership/Treasurer: Jean Screech
479-1782

Director: Bob Burow 479-3086

Director: Rex Welland 479-2063

Memberships

Send \$5.00 along with your name, address and phone number to:

FKHPS c/o Jean Screech
1256 Burnside Road West,
Victoria, B.C. V8Z 1N8

This newsletter is published by the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society.

