

Hastings North Community Policing Bulletin

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Summer 2005

Face lift for Pandora Park is much needed

BY CHESTER GRANT

Pandora Park got its name from an ill-fated British warship, but the park's neighbours want to make sure that it won't meet a similar rocky fate.

They are helping the Vancouver parks board and landscape architects plan changes that will enhance its play areas and – they hope – deter the drug dealing and other crime that has hampered full enjoyment of the four-acre park.

Like Pandora Street, which runs across its north end, the park was named for HMS Pandora, the name given to five Royal Navy ships since the 18th century. The original Pandora was sent from England in search of mutineers from the famous Bounty in 1790. After capturing 14 Bounty crew in Tahiti, it struck a reef and sank, with the loss of a quarter of the crew and prisoners.

Neighbours envision smoother sailing for Pandora Park. The first steps, scheduled for August and September, would replace and relocate play equipment. Also targeted for change is the park's broad central boulevard, sometimes used as a marketplace by drug dealers who can easily see and evade police cars on the perimeter.

Among those monitoring the upgrade is Michael McKinley, president of the nearby Hastings North Community Policing Centre (HNCPC). Proximity to the park was a



Photo: Rachel Garrick

GO PLAY OUTSIDE

Darius and Michael spend some quality time in the neighbourhood's much loved Pandora Park. A new park design could mean better amenities for all the park's diverse users.

major factor in his purchase six years ago of a century-old house overlooking it.

"We've watched the park receive greater use from children and families who use the wading pool and children's play area, as well as tennis players, tai chi practitioners who show up at dawn, and dog walkers who use the west end of the park as a canine conference centre," said Michael.

"Thanks to the efforts of HNCPC volunteers, people are also playing soccer in the park every week. They're also starting to use

Pandora Park for evening picnics, and on nice days you can see a great sunset over the downtown skyline from the park.

"Unfortunately," said Michael, "drug dealers have also discovered Pandora Park's pleasures. There have also been more incidents of people drinking and doing drugs in the park, and in late May three young men sitting in the park were threatened by a machete-wielding man who then pepper-sprayed them – in the middle of a fine spring afternoon.

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Seniors team up with CPC to tackle senior safety

BY RACHEL GARRICK

The Hastings North Community North Policing Centre and a local senior activist, Mary Bosze, are teaming up to translate BCHydro's senior safety booklet into Chinese with the help of a Small Neighbourhood Project grant.

The booklet is accompanied by a series of workshops, hosted by BCHydro's Power Pioneers. The first such workshop in Hastings Sunrise will be held at Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, at 2525 Oxford St., Friday, June 24th from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. It will cover the topic of street sense and personal safety. "A lot of our

seniors here live alone in the community and they go out walking a lot, so we thought street sense and personal well being would be a good place to start" said Mary.

Mary became involved with the CPC after applying for a Small Neighbourhood Projects grant to start up a senior's outreach

program. Mary approached Patricia Barnes of the Hastings North Business Improvement Association about using a corner of the office as a drop-in space before applying for funding. Initially, twelve volunteers were trained as senior outreach workers, but the numbers have since declined. "We had twelve, and now we've

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Volunteer Focus: Dave Ao

BY BILLY WONG

If there was ever an individual at Hastings North Community Policing Centre (HNCPC) who exemplifies the strong, silent type it would have to be cornerstone volunteer David Ao. 'Silent Dave', as he is affectionately known, has been a main contributor to the organization's success since he began volunteering at the CPC two summers ago.

Dave decided to volunteer after noticing a CPC patrol wearing yellow 'Community Policing' jackets. "I walked in and Clair (MacGougan) greeted me with his usual enthusiastic self. I filled out an application and the next week I was doing my first assignment, a community paint out."

Born and raised in Vancouver, Dave neatly juggles a barrage of classes, homework, athletic activities, a job at London Drugs Distribution Service Centre, and his volunteer work for the HNCPC. Recently graduated with a Business Administration Degree from Capilano College, Dave's future career will utilize the skills he's learned through school, work, and volunteering.

Not one to mince words, Dave's quiet and humble demeanor is complemented by actions that speak volumes. Since becoming a volunteer, Dave's impact has been phenomenal and he has "been involved in pretty much every program at least once." Dave currently operates a regular shift at the Hastings Street CPC office on Saturdays, manages the impressive www.hastingsnorthcpc.com website, maintains the computers, designs media content, provides Chinese language translation and engages in outreach events.

An admired shift leader for Citizens Patrol, Dave rarely misses the weekly outings on bike or foot to provide a positive



Photo: Jessica Wei

DYNAMIC DAVE

Dave Ao provides tech support to the CPC office and maintains and designs its website. He is also a shift leader for the Citizen's Patrol program.

presence in the neighbourhood. "Dave is a definite asset to the CPC and its various programs. He's so versatile and knowledgeable in different areas that he can be called upon to do just about anything we need. It's what makes him such a unique volunteer," HNCPC Program Leader Zaheer Abdulla points out. Asked to comment on Dave's moniker, Zaheer quickly adds, "Don't be fooled by his quiet demeanor. Like his idol (NBA basketball star) Yao Ming, he rises to the occasion when he has to."

Having lived eight years in the neighbourhood, Dave holds a special connection to this community. "The Hastings-Sunrise area has been my home for many years as I grew up, made friends, went to elementary and high school here. Even though I've moved away, I still feel close to the community and want to give something back."

Up and Coming ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

* STREET HOCKEY TOURNAMENT AND SAFETY FAIR

This popular annual event will be held **Saturday, July 9th** this year at Sunrise Square (behind London Drugs). The event is free of charge and is open to all kids from kindergarten to grade 7. Space is limited, so register early at the Hastings North BIA or CPC office at Hastings and Nanaimo. London Drugs will be hosting an Operation Family Identification booth (Childfind). Members of the Vancouver Police Department and the Fire Department will also be present.

* COMMUNITY CLEANUPS

Join us for local litter clean-ups and graffiti paint-outs **Saturday, July 16, & Saturday, August 27**. There will also be a local litter clean-up **Saturday, August 13**. All events run from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and start at our Hastings street office. A pizza lunch is also provided.

* COMMUNITY FORUM PLANNED

The HNCPC is planning a community forum in September to address crime and safety concerns of residents living in the area west of Nanaimo between Hastings and Wall Street. The forum will host representatives from various levels of government and the Vancouver Police Department. Please contact Clair at 604-717-3584 if you are interested in participating.

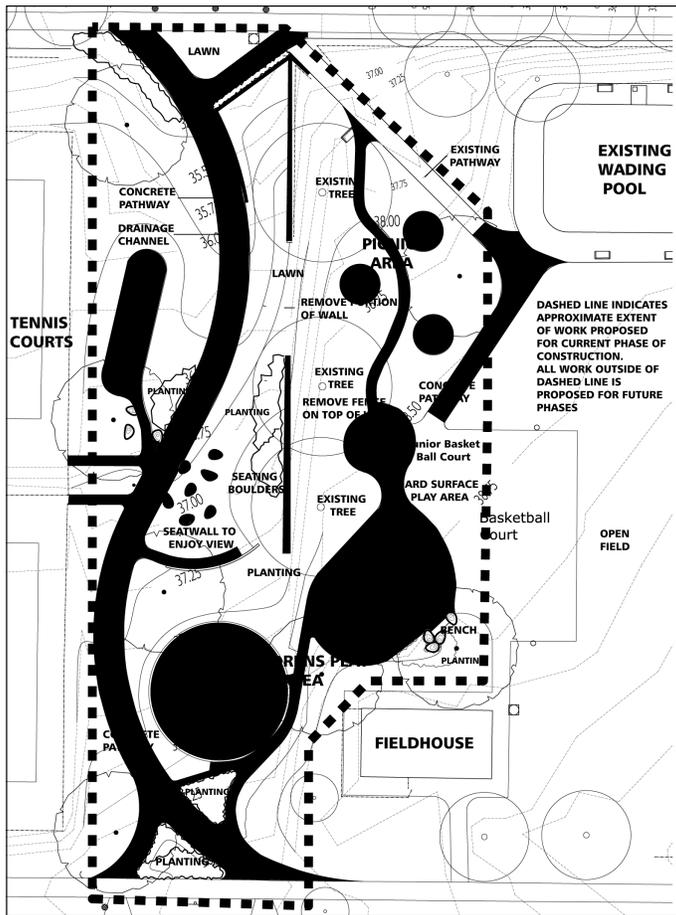
Leeside Tunnel Project seeks input

BY MATT SMED

Leeside Tunnel is a space that connects the Empire Bowl area of Hastings Park to the east end of East Pender Street, behind the E-Comm building. Two years ago, the Leeside Project began as a grassroots community project to find out which groups

were using the tunnel, and which groups held a stake in its future. This summer, stakeholders will be consulted to find out what the community wants to see Leeside become, so there can be a plan to improve the tunnel into a well-utilized community space.

If you would like to become involved, please contact: leeside@vcn.bc.ca



BIG PLANS FOR A SMALL SPACE

This design proposal for Pandora Park (courtesy of space2place design) is on the table for community discussion.

“At night, Pandora Park becomes a threatening place – loud, profane arguments in the middle of the night are not uncommon,” he added.

Proposed changes would mean more grass and trees, and less hard surface area. The tennis courts, wading pool and basketball court would stay. A curved path would replace the present wide boulevard bisecting the park. It is a modest plan, but one that could begin to buff the park’s tarnished image.

Ideas for possible future improvements are already emerging. Runner Lucy Pepe of Olympia Tailors, who has finished the last 26 Vancouver marathons, suggests a jogging track encircling the park would attract runners and walkers and discourage criminal activity.

Added Michael McKinley: “I hope that the planned improve-

ments to the park increase its use by people who wish to enjoy its pleasures. I hope that any attempts to make the central thoroughfare more ‘rustic’ with meandering paths and more trees do not provide the criminal element with a more secure place to do business.

“Pandora Park could be one of the city’s great spaces – clearly law-abiding people want to use it, and I hope that the more that do so, then the greater our practice of zero tolerance toward crime in and around it.”

HNCPC co-ordinator Clair MacGougan hopes future changes will not only draw legitimate users to the park, but also allow park users to take ownership of the area. He urged citizens to report all law-breaking there, big or small, by calling 911 and then the CPC at 604-717-3584.

President’s Progress Report

New funding from the city makes new programs possible

BY MICHAEL MCKINLEY

It gives me great pleasure to write my first president’s report since I was first asked to take on the position after the departure of our previous president, Faye White, who has since moved away from Hastings Sunrise.

It’s an exciting time for the HNCPC, and with continued committed funding from the city, we have great hopes to build our CPC into an even more successful institution. The final zeroes on the cheque haven’t been counted quite yet, but the HNCPC is eligible to receive up to \$100,000 from the City of Vancouver, and we’ve made an excellent submission to receive the entire amount.

Thanks for this must go to our extraordinarily talented and hard-working team, who spent many a late night crunching numbers and polishing words so that we could present a compelling case for full funding to the city. This tantalizingly close funding increase will mean stability to our CPC, which, since its inception in June 1999, has often walked – or hopped, on one foot – the thin line between black and red in the financial ledger.

But with our sixth anniversary comes a brave new world. With increased funding, we have plans to expand the role we play to promote the health and safety of our diverse and colourful Hastings Sunrise neighbourhood. We plan to increase our office hours by 12 hours a month; increase our volunteers by 10% per year, and volunteer hours by 20%; and to expand our outreach programs by holding a community forum to address issues of health and safety (our first coming this September). We will create programs to address the needs of our Chinese-speaking community, and our seniors, and expand our successful annual street hockey tournament, as well our participation in Keep Vancouver Spectacular, a neighbourhood clean-up initiative. We’re hoping to develop our Apartment Safety pilot project into a CPC core program with the support of local tenants, managers and building owners. We also intend to hire an administrative assistant and to increase the hours of one of our program leaders to serve these busy new realities.

As our many excellent volunteers already know, and those of you who might be thinking about volunteering will find out, together we can make our community a better place to live.

NO BREAK INS

No residential break and enters were reported in Hastings Sunrise from April 27th to May 3rd of this year. Congratulations to all CPC volunteers and Block Watch members.

MAYOR RECOGNIZES CLEAN-UPS

Mayor Larry Campbell officially recognized the HNPC’s clean-up efforts June 8 this year when he presented us with the Mayor’s Environmental Achievement Award for “contributions to the preservation, protection and enhancement of the environment in the City of Vancouver.” Congratulations all clean-up participants.

Seniors' teddy bears await adoption at CPC

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got one left," said Mary, who is looking for more volunteers to replace them. Senior outreach volunteers provide basic service information to local seniors. "Most of it is people just coming in looking for housing information or

someone wanting to know how to apply for disability or help with income tax," said Mary. If you are interested in volunteering with the Seniors' outreach program, please contact Clair at 604-717-3584.

Mary is also interested in

locating isolated seniors who would be willing to have CPC volunteers drop in on them from time to time. "There are a lot of seniors in this community," said Mary. "My real concern is about people who are deteriorating but don't take any action ahead of time." Mary suggests contacting the public health department if you become aware of a senior who does not seem to be coping.

In addition to co-ordi-

nating senior outreach, Mary and a group of other crafters at the Kiwassa Senior's Program are also responsible for making a beautiful array of handknitted teddy bears and quilted blankets, which are sent to needy kids around the world with the help of the Rotary Club. The adopt-a-teddy program costs \$2 per bear and teddies are available for adoption at the Hastings Street CPC office.

New members needed

BY BRENDA PENTON

Hastings North Community Policing Centre invites community residents to become members of our association.

HNCPC is a non profit community organization in partnership with the Hastings North Business Improvement Association and the Vancouver Police Department. We cover a large part of East Vancouver (see map, bottom right). Over the past 6 years, volunteers and staff have worked to make Hastings Sunrise a safer community. Now it's time for more residents to show their support by becoming a member of the association. It's a very simple commitment; no volunteer time is required.

Membership:

- ★ allows you to find out what is happening in the neighbourhood
- ★ is a simple way to invest in the development of our community
- ★ is a great way to meet your neighbours
- ★ will give you a say by being able to vote at the Annual General Meeting, held in November.
- ★ keeps you informed through our newsletter, which will be mailed to you quarterly.

Simply come to our office at 2401 East Hastings and fill out a form and pay a \$5.00 membership fee.

Pooches plan to sell 'dogs to raise funds

BY KATY GAMMI

The Hastings North CPC Pooch Patrol volunteers and their pooches will be selling veggie, turkey, and regular hot dogs, ice cold pop and water at the annual Hastings Sunrise Street Hockey Tournament and Safety Fair. We welcome you to stop by to visit us for some refreshments or just come to say hello.

The Pooch Patrol is a group of local canines and their owners who keep an eye out for crime during their daily walks. This group of dedicated residents helps make our community safe by observing and reporting suspicious activities. The proceeds from this sale will be used for continued development of the pooch patrol program. We hope you have a great time at the tournament and look forward to having you stop by at our stand.

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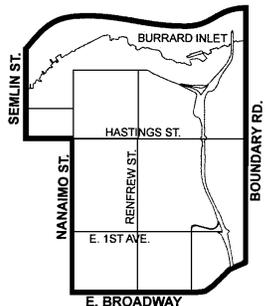
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