

Strong Support for Looking at Governance

UEL residents show their support for moving ahead with an application for a consultant's study to examine the options

by Ron Pears

About 65 UEL residents showed up June 10 to discuss the important issue of the future of the UEL. The presentation and discussion covered a wide range of topics, from the history of the UEL and its unusual system of administration to our current situation and the possibility of municipality status. The consensus seemed to be that we need to govern and manage ourselves in a way that can respond to the changing needs of our changing community rather than relying on Victoria to make decisions.

Change is happening fast. The UEL has expanded from 2,200 people living mostly in single family homes to a diverse community of 4,150. The majority of UELers now live in apartments and townhouses.

Our population will double again with the upcoming development at Block F. UBC is predicting a population of 25,000 and the University Golf Course will probably be developed in time.

With these events in mind, the benefits of truly democratic, locally-based government were discussed. Issues included looking at the UEL as a community, not just a collection of homes and businesses, controlling our finances locally, having an elected council that is effective and accountable, and managing and directing our own staff.

The rebuttal to the common comment of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is that our system no longer applies. It is not broken but it is woefully inadequate,

underpowered and too distant from the people to serve us well any longer.

The first step in addressing these big changes is to analyse our governance. The meeting attendees discussed in particular whether the CAC should apply to the BC government for approval and financing for a governance study. Only two people opposed the vote on this. The governance study may or may not result in a referendum.

This level of general agreement that the CAC should proceed with work toward a governance study confirms the almost 100% support received at the December and April town hall meetings.

To get an idea of the level of community support for adopting municipal status we also took a show-of-hands vote on the question of whether people agreed with becoming an incorporated municipality. The vote was:

- 52 in favour
- 4 opposed
- 8 unsure
- 1 in favour of joining the City of Vancouver

There was broad representation from all four UEL areas and both long time and new residents.

People had a number of concerns including the effect of a change on property taxes, including the cost of a mayor and council, problems with getting citizen involvement as evidenced by low voter turnout in local elections, the timing of this study, and the possibility of losing control of the process and being forced into something we don't want.

To the extent possible, these questions were answered. But it was stressed that one purpose of the study process is to identify community questions and concerns and to deal with them. The study process will seek to remove unknowns and present to the public viable and responsible options in a referendum, if in fact the process does lead to a referendum. There will be numerous opportunities for citizen involvement during the study process, including a broadly-based study committee of UEL residents that will be closely involved in the work.

There is no assurance that the minister responsible for local government will approve a study. There is competition for the limited funds for restructuring studies and the minister will decide the reasonableness of the request and any relevant issues that might affect the timing or scope of the study.

It is expected that the application process will take several months after the CAC approves a move forward. The whole process from now to a referendum could take up to two years.

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University Hill: Building a Better Community

What the city of Vancouver discovered

In May 2013, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson released an official report that identified sixteen “quick start” steps to strengthen civic engagement in Vancouver. The recommendations were the result of a 22-member task force that focused on “do-able actions” that, if implemented within the next six months, could produce many positive effects on resident’s lives.

What we in the UEL already knew

Interestingly, in May 2012, the University Hill Community held its first “Building a Better Community” workshop, in which fourteen community residents met for three hours to discuss how we in the UEL could strengthen our community ties so that living here becomes an even better and richer experience.

Guess what? Mayor Robertson must have taken a page from our community vision!

Communications are key

Both Mayor Robertson and the UHill Community group highlight the importance of communications as necessary tools that allow and encourage residents to express their thoughts and concerns. These include multi-platform print and web-based communication tools, holding neighborhood events such as Open Houses and information sessions, and creating an email list of those wishing to stay up-to-date on community events. A broad range of communication options increases the likelihood of in-depth feedback and helps ensure that responses are demographically representative.

Guess what? The CAC’s Communications Working Group, with the assistance of many UEL resident volunteers, has developed a website, published three newspapers and held three Open Houses, in addition to other issue-specific meetings over the past year.

Budget? what budget?

In a recent document concerning budget consultation, Mayor Robertson notes that residents should be allowed to participate in determining how money is spent in their neighborhoods, and which neighborhood amenities should be supported.

Guess what? The CAC and ADP are striving hard to achieve just this! We are exploring how best to strengthen our community’s political voice.

Block parties: not just a whole lot of fun

Mayor Robertson also observes that fun events like a city-wide block party can help stave off the loneliness and isolation most keenly felt by residents in high density housing.

Guess what? Last summer, Area C organised a successful block party and the CAC hosted a Christmas Open House. Moreover, we now have a community space of our own: Suite 300. (For contest details regarding this space read article below.) Future social activities are being planned to help bring our community together.

Tell me a story

According to Mayor Robertson, storytelling could be used to help residents learn more about the behind-the-scenes work done by city staff, in an effort to demystify the process and improve awareness about how the city operates.

Guess what? The CAC has become increasingly proactive in its efforts to inform residents about what is going on and what will be happening in our neighbourhoods. A major concern has been that our local administration lacks a mandate for community development. Sadly, UEL staff have been discouraged from participating in our Newspaper and from actively participating in our community meetings. Providing earlier opportunities for public input on major developments will strengthen public trust in the planning process, create better conditions for dialogue and feedback, and help avoid misunderstandings.

How to respond?

It is vital that we become more engaged with our community as a whole, and that we attend not simply to one other, but to the changes that are rapidly being thrust upon us. How would you like your community to respond to future change? What issues concern you most? When was the last time you attended a community meeting or volunteered to contribute to them? We need your involvement to help make the University Hill a stronger community!



April 22nd Town Hall Meeting

Second in a series

The CAC’s April meeting drew more than 60 residents to our new community space at Village Square. This was our second town hall meeting and all CAC members attended. CAC President Ron Pears led the meeting, and first introduced new Area D representatives Hillary Li and Hong Chen.

Ron also introduced Kim Smith as editor of *Connections*, our community newspaper. Kim has a number of residents who help put the newspaper together, published three times a year.

Community space, heritage firehall, library

We heard about local issues such as the Firehall, access to Vancouver’s library system and our new community space. The second phase study of the heritage Firehall is finished but the project is on hold because of land tenure and financing concerns. Our community space, Suite 300, is now available for regular community activities such as bridge, yoga or community-related meetings. And the possibility of obtaining access to the city’s excellent library system under the similar terms as the UNA is being investigated.

Restructure study

Attendees were told of work so far in beginning the study process toward restructuring the UEL. Generally, the Provincial Government approves and pays for the necessary studies (usually two stages) and has to agree that such studies are appropriate. To do this, the Province needs to know that there is sufficient community interest and support and that the surrounding “big neighbours” (Metro Vancouver, City of Vancouver and UBC) would not oppose the studies. There was discussion about the inadequacies of our current administrative arrangement. The failure of the 1995 referendum was also discussed, including the unfortunate inclusion in the vote boundary of the

then new Hampton Place UBC housing. Hampton residents voted strongly against incorporation out of fear they would get stuck paying for the UEL’s older infrastructure while UEL residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of incorporation. The Hampton vote was enough for the initiative to fail. Several persons present asked for a town hall meeting specifically to talk about the restructuring issue, which was subsequently held on June 10th.

Block F

The big issue of the evening was the massive Block F development. Topics touched were:

- **Density:** what is the developer seeking? What is currently zoned?
- The developer’s request for a bonus of 100,000 square feet for commercial and hotel was discussed. Attendees voted overwhelming against the idea of a hotel as a benefit to the community in a show of hands vote.
- The difference of the calculation of allowable building area based on total site area, including roads, was discussed versus the more normal method of excluding roads. The additional maximum permitted floor space was also discussed.
- **Building heights:** Generally, people feel that 22 storeys is too tall. One person pointed out that some presentation illustrations were misleading in that they showed trees taller than the 22 storey towers. It was noted that if the 100,000 s.f. commercial bonus space is denied, that saving could be used to reduce the height of the towers.
- Does the UEL have power to influence this development? The development process, right to develop at existing MF-1 zoning and the rezoning process were explained. After the application for rezoning is submitted, the UEL’s own process for review and public consultation begins.

Block F Update

At the time of writing, the Block F project is in the hands of the developer. It is expected that a formal submission for rezoning will be made in the coming weeks or perhaps months. At that point control of the process shifts to the UEL administration and their planning consultants.

Our bylaw allows for up to two months for the administration to request further studies and information from the applicant. Once all the information is in place the technical analysis will start, looking at such aspects as transportation, environment, tree retention, amenities and so on. The community consultation process will also begin. The total time that all this will take is not currently known, but there will be adequate time for proper consideration of the rezoning application, and it will include opportunities for the community to have input.

- **Impact on schools:** this has not been addressed by the developer but the continuing overloading of the elementary school is an ongoing UEL concern.
- **Parking is a worry:** it was explained that most parking will be underground and was not included in the calculation of allowable floor space.
- **Will the rezoning of Block F set a precedent?** It was explained that rezoning is always property specific and that rezoning Block F would not lead to massive reclassification of other properties.
- **Amenity charges:** The usual amenity charges by UBC and development cost charges by municipalities to help build healthy communities do not apply here. It seems this developer is getting a free ride compared to what it would experience anywhere else. The UEL administration office, however, has commissioned a community amenity study and this may identify our needs now and in the future.
- The lack of contribution to community amenities by this development, especially the rezoning, was noted, and more than one citizen asked “what’s in it for us”.
- Design and landscaping: How can we ensure that the individual developments within Block F have a high level of design and landscaping. Since parcels will be sold off to various developers, who will safeguard quality and consistency?
- Phasing was questioned and it was explained that the developer plans about a 10 year build-out period with work starting at the north end of the site.
- **Construction period:** Residents are concerned about the impact of construction, especially about truck routes – a big problem with work at UBC – noise and the safety of hundreds of school children who will pass the site each day.
- The suggestion was made that the UEL require a zero “cut and fill” approach to site work to minimize the dump truck loads.
- Effect on the tax base: it was agreed that information was needed on this and should be provided to the community.
- **The review process:** Who controls it and can they could be trusted to accurately represent UEL citizens’ concerns? How do we know the developer is listening to our concerns?
- We must speak out to be heard! All UEL residents are urged to express their opinions on the Block F development. Here are the contact points:
 - UEL administration: marie.engelbert@gov.bc.ca
 - Your Community Advisory Council: council@uelcommunity.com
 - Your newspaper: uhillconnections@gmail.com
 - PlaceSpeak: <https://www.placespeak.com/topic/508-community-consultation-on-uel-block-f/>
 - You can also write the CAC President directly at: ronald.pears@gmail.com

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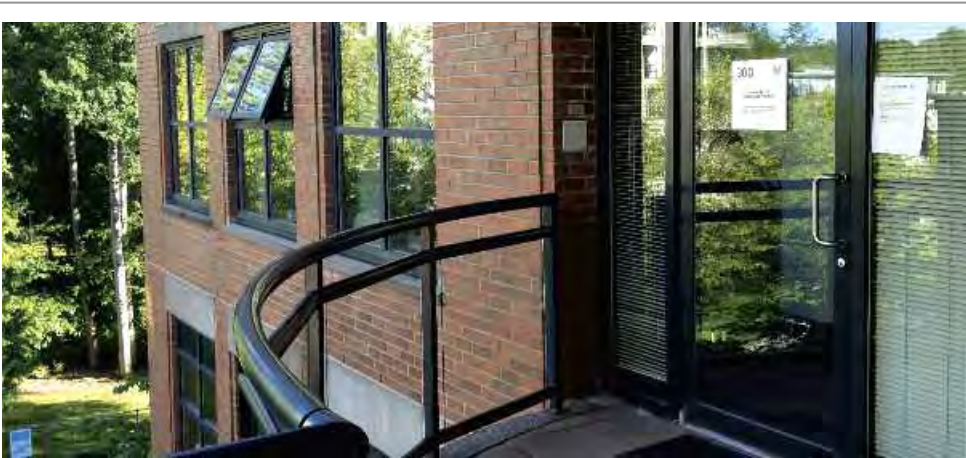
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Attention Readers!

Please send us your comments, ideas for future articles, events and news we could use in *Connections*.
Send to: uhillconnections@gmail.com



Name that Space Contest!

by Tamara Knott

Our new community space at 300-5755 Dalhousie Rd in the UBC Village is now ready for use. At long last, members of the UEL have a venue for gatherings, meetings, and other community events. But one essential component is still missing: a name for our new 1,000 square foot suite!

UEL residents are hereby invited to submit potential names for this special space. Entries will be published

here and following an on-line ballot, the winning selection will be posted for all to see.

Email me your suggestions! Please include “Name that space” in the subject line of your email, along with your name, contact details, and entry suggestion in the body of the text.

I look forward to your ideas! You’ll find me at: tamara@telus.net

Where Are We Going and How Will We Get There?

Some thoughts about the status of the UEL
by Michael Karton

The background

Let's begin with some history: just what "is" the UEL? From a legal perspective, it – and by extension, us – is nothing. The University Endowment Lands (UEL) was established in 1907 as a means to fund the new university the Province of BC wished to create. Lacking the finances – that is, the "endowment" – either to build or operate such an institution, the provincial government gave the new university large tracts of land. Thus, proceeds from the sale of individual properties generated the funds necessary to construct buildings, endow chairs, pay salaries, etc. In other words, the BC government "endowed" UBC with land.

For decades, the province sold residential lots on behalf of UBC, thus allowing private citizens to be resident in this community. Once sold, a property was no longer part of the UBC endowment, yet the very name of our neighbourhood – the University Endowment Lands – recalls the history of this arrangement. In the 1970s and 80s, public sentiment supporting the ongoing sale of property took a dramatic shift, culminating in the 1988 decision to transfer the remaining University Endowment Lands into the regional land reserve now known as Pacific Spirit Park.

No legal status... or power

For the purposes of this discussion, the critical point is that the legal status of the property sold on UBC's behalf was never addressed. The lots were not included within the City of Vancouver, nor were they incorporated within a new jurisdiction of their own. Thus, today we live in an "unincorporated area." We have no powers of self-governance, such as the ability to pass zoning, taxation, or any type of regulatory bylaw. We cannot create budgets, build libraries or recreation centres, nor can we decide when to repave our roads, repair our sewers, or plant trees. We cannot enact parking restrictions or even enforce those regulations that the Provincial government has passed. We may only request that the government attend to our concerns, and hope that these are respected. We pay our taxes directly to the provincial government, which in turn purchases water, police services, garbage collection, and other such amenities on our behalf. Our taxes also support the UEL Administration Office. These capable individuals deliver services to our community but we cannot direct their efforts; instead, they are answerable to the BC government.

Limited input

Two committees permit citizen "input": the Advisory Design Panel (ADP), most of whose members are either architects or landscape architects, with the remainder comprised of elected UEL residents, and the Community Advisory Council (CAC), all of whose members are elected UEL residents. These committees exist only to "advise": they possess no power whatsoever.

Differences between UEL and UNA

The structure and function of the UEL is sometimes confused with that of our neighbour, the UNA (University Neighbourhoods Association). While these groups share many concerns, especially regarding development, they operate independently of one another. UNA residents lease their properties on a long-term basis from the property owner, UBC; generally speaking, UEL residents own their properties outright. It's important to recall that as a major property owner and developer, UBC answers only to the province of BC.

The past versus the present

For many years, the UEL remained a quiet suburban area, characterised by stable, long-term residents, many of whom raised children in what was a safe, perhaps even insular, village. The one small shopping area had restricted hours and evening/weekend noise was unusual. Some twenty years ago, this began to change, at first slowly, then with an ever-quickenning pace thanks to a willingness to grant rezoning permits. Now the residential population has more than doubled from that of two decades ago, primarily as a result of multi-family building developments. Furthermore, commercial space abounds, whether at the UBC Village, Wesbrook Village, University Marketplace, or the re-developed Student Union Building, and much of this development caters to a student population.

Block F

The Block F development encompasses a 23-acre site that will add at least 1,200,000 square feet of residential space to the UEL. This is equivalent to approximately 13 twenty-storey apartment towers, with an expected population increase of some 75%. This development is permitted under a rezoning application granted by the Province, unfortunately in the absence of any input from the UEL. Current zoning permits 4-storey buildings, and excludes commercial use. As many readers know, the Block F development company has indicated, through a series of three public meetings, the intention to apply for a further rezoning via a variance to permit the construction of several high-rise (18 – 22 storey) apartments, retail space, and a hotel.

Add UBC to the equation...

It's worth noting that UBC's present enrollment includes some 42,000 students – approximately 10 times the population of the UEL – in addition to thousands of employees. UBC has expressed plans to expand the student body to 60,000 within 15 years; the number of new employees required to service this burgeoning population is unknown.

Where we are

And so to the present time. We live in a neighbourhood that is unique in its setting, ringed as it is by ocean and forests, where residential streets remain uninterrupted by commercial thoroughfares. We live apart from the City of Vancouver, and are un beholden to large industries that might wish to impose their will upon us. Some might argue that we live in the most beautiful urban environment in the world.

Where we're going

Yet we cannot thumb our noses to our two million neighbours to the east, and claim that they must bear the brunt of the increase in population and business that appears inevitable. It is not reasonable to believe that we might hide ourselves from the rest of region and simply tell everyone else to go away. What we can, and must, do instead is to think about where we want to go and how we intend to get there.

Soon, three applications requesting rezoning for commercial development will be presented to the UEL Manager's Office. If granted, our neighbourhood will undergo even more dramatic change in the shape of hotels, shopping malls, offices, and high-rise apartments.

How to get there

What do we want? It is not inconceivable to imagine that we in the UEL might incorporate, and thus gain a measure of control over the future of our neighbourhoods. Feeble though they be, the CAC and the ADP both need your input. Take a few moments to write and express your thoughts and ideas.

In any event, the future will not evolve by itself. Either we direct our evolution or others will do it for us.

The Ward System Does Us a Disservice

by Ron Pears

UEL citizens elect their representatives to the Community Advisory Council and the Advisory Design Panel under a ward system. You can run and you can vote only within the area in which you live.

I was part of the committee that drafted the current rules, but I now see that it was a mistake, and a serious one. We included area representation in the rules mainly because under the old system, before we elected our representatives, the UEL manager used an informal process of seeking to engage people from the four areas within the UEL on the various committees that he, the manager, created to provide community input and advice. But what worked informally under the leadership of a manager who knew us well does not work as a formal structure.

Many people think I am wrong, that having dedicated representation is good. I agree, it does make sense, until you consider things closely.

It is not certain that wards work even for a big area, but I am certain they don't work for a small one. Vancouver has over 600,000 people and used to

have a ward system. This was abandoned in favour of an "at-large" system and when the question was put to the electorate in 1990 and again in 2004, wards were turned down. The citizens of Vancouver know that the best way to ensure good government is to select from the biggest pool of

... the pool of interested and willing people in each tiny ward is limited and varies from election to election. This means we cannot get the best candidates.

potential representatives and to make them responsible to the entire electorate. In almost 25 years of working on various UEL task groups and committees, I have never, not once, seen a representative from one area act without sensitivity and responsibility to the interests of another area. Ward by ward representation in our small enclave is simply not necessary and provides no value.

In a small area like the UEL, wards become very counterproductive. First, the pool of interested and willing people in each tiny ward is limited and varies from election to election. This means we cannot get the best candidates. For most of the past 10 years the area with the largest allocation of

would now get an absolute majority of members further weakening the CAC. When Block F is completed there will need to be a complete rethink of the ward system, assuming we keep it. Block F alone will get almost 50% of the member allocation. The areas of single-family housing will have perhaps two members to share among Areas A, B, and C. If recent history is any guide, this could result in a disastrously weak and unsupported CAC. I would go so far as to say that it would guarantee failure of our electoral system.

The real objective of our electoral system is to promote and support excellent government. The best solution is to simply abandon the ward system in favour of an at-large system. This will allow the most enthusiastic and committed people to run for election and all UEL residents to vote on all CAC members. We should ask the Minister in charge of the UEL to initiate the change as soon as possible, and hold the next election in November 2014 under an at large-system.



RV Parking a Problem on Blanca Street

For some years now, a few of our neighbours on the east side of Blanca have been trying to solve a problem. As you may recall, the east side of the street belongs to the City of Vancouver, while the west side is part of the UEL. The problem is this: the west side of Blanca, between University Blvd and 16th Ave, has become a long term parking lot for camper vans and RV units. Sometimes vehicles are simply parked and left; sometimes there are people staying in them. Since this side of Blanca is UEL territory, the City cannot enforce its bylaw preventing the street from being used as a long term parking lot or RV campground. It is up to the UEL to stop it.

Residents along Blanca have complained to both the UEL administration and the Minister in Victoria. Each

responded with hopeful words, but nothing has been done.

Complainants have been told that the UEL needs to tweak the bylaw prohibiting RV and campers from overnight street parking. Or that perhaps this stretch of road could be signed to prohibit overnight parking completely. Whichever way, the residents would like to see the situation resolved.

Enough is enough

On the day that your *Connections* reporter inspected the situation, there were four such vehicles, one of which has not been moved since September, 2012, according to residents living across the street.

Can't we do better than this? How difficult is it to solve this problem?



Catherine and Gordon McCauley with camper parked since September.



Sun Spots is 12' by 6' tapestry by Barbara Heller

Acclaimed Tapestry Artist in Our Neighbourhood

by Cathie Gourley

Barbara Heller, who lives in the art-filled UEL home her parents built, is a celebrated, internationally known tapestry artist. Her highly acclaimed work is hung in dozens of collections and galleries, and she has been honoured by numerous arts organizations.

She has been credited for helping revive this ancient art form on an international plane.

Barbara discovered a passion for tapestry soon after starting out as a painter and fibre artist. An unfortunate allergy to chemicals used in print-making, her first love, prompted a shift to the ageless practice of tapestry-making. It is painstaking work. A single piece can take up to a year to complete, beginning with preliminary drawings and design work, to material preparation, and finally, to actual weaving. She hand-dyes her wool, producing the extraordinary vibrancy and depth that characterize her work.

An ancient artform

Barbara says tapestry, with its links to medieval religious or political art and its physicality, is the medium that best suits the expression of her concerns about modern issues.

“I combine this ancient art form with modern symbols and metaphors [...] to reach people on an intuitive, emotional level,” Barbara writes in her artist’s statement. Tapestry has a familiar and non-threatening quality that draws viewers in and encourages them to think about what they see.

Provocative and demanding

Her work requires careful study. Each piece, some subtle, others less so, includes a statement about a topic of particular concern; often, Barbara creates a series of tapestries centred upon a single theme. She addresses serious issues – war, environmental degradation, the alienation of modern life, Chernobyl. Through her work, Barbara shares her fears for the future of the world: “I am concerned with humanity and its relationship to the environment, and to itself. I am concerned with our current worship of technology and how it affects our daily lives.”

A recurring image is that of a dead bird, a personal symbol for Barbara that represents the senseless killing of war. Next spring, these works will be featured in a solo exhibition at the new art gallery in Maple Ridge.

Currently entitled “Falling from Grace,” the show will include at least 20 pieces, comprising a sequence started in 1990 during the first Gulf War. Barbara recalls photographing a dead bird her cat had brought in; later, she realized that just as the camera lens had distanced her from the death, so too modern technology distanced those bombing Iraq from those they were killing. “Technology is distancing us from ourselves,” Barbara notes.

Surprise... and engage

Her interest in technology takes a lighter tone this summer with a show of small works at the Craftware Gallery. Each image represents a gold hand, with each in a different pose – as a reliquary or an Indian Mudra – upon which are stitched various unexpected objects: pieces of a computer circuit board, wires, or a toy. Entitled “Integrated Circuits,” it’s a comment upon connecting and transferring energies. The show opens July 4th.



Eritrean Refugees 2001

The bird image, however, remains a constant in tapestries exploring crises such as war, the attacks on 9/11, or landmines. Barbara says that as world news becomes increasingly upsetting, her themes become more demanding and the tapestries more explicit.

One example is the final work planned for next spring’s solo show that features a decaying baby bird. Entitled “Midway Albatross,” it references the plastic pollutants being ingested by the albatrosses which nest on the mid-Pacific island of Midway, also remembered as the site of a bloody WWII battle. “This will be difficult viewing,” Barbara concedes.

Barbara is currently finishing another piece exploring environmental degradation and death, one that incorporates small plastic bits collected from beaches with a large feather. Another stunning tapestry shows an oil-drenched pelican in an apocalyptic scene with small images of hermaphroditic fish, milfoil, and zebra mussels along the bottom.

Ironically, even with such frightening images, these works are beautiful.

Challenging ideas and beliefs

The bird tapestries appear in “Cover Ups,” a series of nine tapestries representing masked individuals ranging from Bedouin women to a Canadian Klansman. Barbara says the impetus for this series was the rise of racial profiling. Here, eyes are hidden, forcing viewers to interpret the figures based solely on costume. “We all make judgments. We judge people by their appearances,” Barbara asserts. The works challenge common assumptions by including contradictory information: a paunchy Klansman sporting a Canadian Maple Leaf badge, or the regal, magnificently garbed Eritrean refugees (shown here).

An early work, entitled “Sun Spots,” is a 12' by 6' tapestry piece commissioned by the VGH Eye Care Centre. It hangs along the clinic entry’s back wall. Almost 30 years later, its stylized retinal rods and cones, looking like a sun-dappled tree, still glow.

Barbara invites you to visit her website, www.barbaraheller.ca as well as her studio, Fibre Art on Granville Island.

Blurring boundaries with artistic vision

Nüshu, a secret written language created and exclusively used by peasant women in Jiangyong County in China’s Hunan Province, was discovered in the early 1950s. This centuries-old language was taught to uneducated young girls by their mothers and grandmothers to create a way for these young women to continue to communicate privately with one another after they were married.

One method of exchanging messages was to write Nüshu on the panels of a folding fan. Throughout their lives they could express their secret thoughts and feelings of oppression, anxiety and suffering to their dear friends.

Victoria Chang’s artwork blurs boundaries and cultures, and in the process, creates new streams of communication across time. When Chang discovered this language in 2001 it touched a place in her heart. Chang’s three years of



training in Chinese calligraphy and her western education in art became a jumping-off point to blur the lines between eastern and western traditions. Chang explores the beauty of Nüshu characters using the gradation of Chinese ink on paper. Although this language is now extinct, women worldwide still suffer oppression and pain, and continue to find solace in communicating with other women.

“My art is a reflection of my identity, non-traditional and hybrid. Being an Asian woman who grew up in western culture has brought a unique perspective to my life, that accentuates both the paradox and synergy between Asian and western influences. It is from this hybrid concept that I draw my inspiration.

“As an Asian and a woman, Nüshu is close to my cultural background. Considering that around the world women are still battling oppression, the discussion of this creative aspect of an age-old society’s circumstances seems to be an obligation to our society. Through my art, I hope to bridge cultural divides and promote constructive artistic dialogue as the rich cultures of Asia and the West continue to converge.”



From *Blurring Boundaries* exhibition (close-up of Nüshu writings).

Victoria Chang has lived in the UEL for 35 years. She spends summers in UEL and the fall and winter in New York City where she teaches in continuing education at Pratt Institute. Chang has a BFA in Studio Art and a BSc in mathematics from UBC. She completed a Post-Baccalaureate in Studio

Art at Brandeis University, and in 2007, completed a Master of Fine Arts at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn. Chang has had solo exhibitions in Vancouver and Brooklyn, NY, and has participated in many group exhibitions in Chicago, Vancouver and New York City.

Our Cherry Blossoms: More than Just a Passing Glance

by Bannister Bergen

How many, many things They call to mind These cherry-blossoms

– Matsuo Bashō (1644 – 1694)

At one time or another, you have, no doubt passed beneath one of the thousands of cherry trees lining the streets of the UEL. Some of you may have looked up on a warm day in April and marveled at the canopy of pink blossoms above, or perhaps glanced down in wonder upon the millions of fallen petals that speckle the asphalt after a spring rain. Whatever your experience may be, through the act of a mere glance, you have inadvertently partaken in a tradition dating back over 1300 years.

Some history

Introduced by Emperor Saga (the 52nd Emperor of Japan), *hanami* (flower viewing) honoured the advent of the rice-planting season as announced by the blooming ‘ (cherry blossoms) which peppered the country. During this time offerings were made to the gods and *sake* was shared in celebration beneath the trees.

Today, the *sakura* bloom in Japan is equivalent to the Stanley Cup Finals, and like seats to a Canucks game, a



simple picnic spot beneath a blossoming cherry tree requires a reservation. The common practice is to arrive in the wee hours of the morning before crowds of thousands pass through the parks. The day is spent with family and friends, eating, drinking *sake* and appreciating the beautiful blossoms.

How they came to Vancouver

What many of us do not know is that the majority of Vancouver’s own *sakura* were gifts from Japan herself – some 37,000 of them, depending on your source.

During the 1930’s the mayors of Kobe and Yokohama presented the Vancouver Park Board with 500 Japanese cherry trees to be planted around the cenotaph in Stanley Park to honor the Japanese Canadians who served in WWI. The gift was repeated in the late fifties when the Japanese Consul donated 500 more as a sign of friendship between our two nations. These gifts have had an indirect hand in shaping Vancouver into one of the few cities in the world recognized for its cherry blossoms and since its inception in 2005, the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival has grown in size and attendance every year.

Many of the *sakura* around UBC also have origins in the land of rising sun. Some have stood for fifty years and hold a place of honour within Nitobe Memorial Garden, inspiring the Emperor himself to state “I am in Japan” when he visited Vancouver as the Crown Prince. Others make up the hundreds that line the residential streets of the UEL, which some of us (myself included) have a tendency to take for granted.

A brief connection

Next spring when you pass beneath our blooming cherry trees, take a moment to stop and smell the *sakura*. For behind their beauty is a rich history. They are honoured gifts from a country that regards them as far more than mere trees, where the blossoms themselves are seen as a metaphor for life: bright and inspiring, yet fleeting and ephemeral.

No one can argue that we aren’t lucky to live in the UEL, and I for one am honoured to share my home with so many of the city’s cherry trees. A flower that blooms for one short week each year deserves more than a just a passing glance.

So grab your picnic basket, blanket, and *sake*, the next time the cherry blossoms bloom!

Maintenance of Our Public Realm is Not Up to Snuff

We live in a beautiful area, but...

Over the past few years, many citizens have complained to both the UEL office and the CAC regarding the deteriorating state of our streets and sidewalks and ineffective enforcement of our bylaws. Issues include:

- Hedges that overhang sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk in the mud or take to the street;
- Heavily-mossed sidewalks which become slippery in the rain, resulting in slips and falls;
- Uneven or missing sidewalks, which are hazardous even in dry conditions;
- Missing boulevard trees, particularly in Area D;
- Construction site work (holes, rebar, hoses, materials, portable toilets, etc) that flows as an unsightly mess onto sidewalks and streets, sometimes presenting significant hazards to pedestrians, young and old alike.

Citizens are frustrated

Citizens report that presenting such issues to the UEL office can be frustrating, and that any resolution of these problems seems very slow in coming. At least on the face of it, most complaints are pretty minor and should be able to be remedied with little effort. Why do some of these conditions persist? Is it lack of care and attention from UEL staff? Is the administration understaffed? It seems odd that they just don't get to work and solve these problems, which would surely be better in the end for our hardworking staff than the nagging calls and letters from irritated citizens.

All municipalities have problems with bylaw enforcement. Our peculiar governance structure does not make it easier and does not permit effective enforcement of bylaws without resorting to asking that the Attorney General in Victoria take legal action. Guess how interested the AG is in doing that? Letters are written to property owners, but often go unanswered. There has to be another level of escalation, including the UEL having either staff or contractors cut hedges.

What the administration said

Connections asked the UEL office to respond, and here is what we learned: **Sidewalk surveys:** At the urging of the CAC, the UEL administration is in the process of resuming the "sidewalk surveys" that were done routinely some years ago. This process will work its way through the UEL looking for sidewalk and hedge problems. This is a positive move that we hope leads to prompt remedial action. **Trees:** Over the past few years the UEL has replaced several dead and dying boulevard trees and is aware that a small number of locations need attention. The health of the existing tree population has been a primary focus. The office is committed to looking at Area D conditions, but is unclear whether trees will be planted in all currently unplanted locations. Our suggestion is that Area D residents should let the CAC and the administration know if they believe street trees are important.



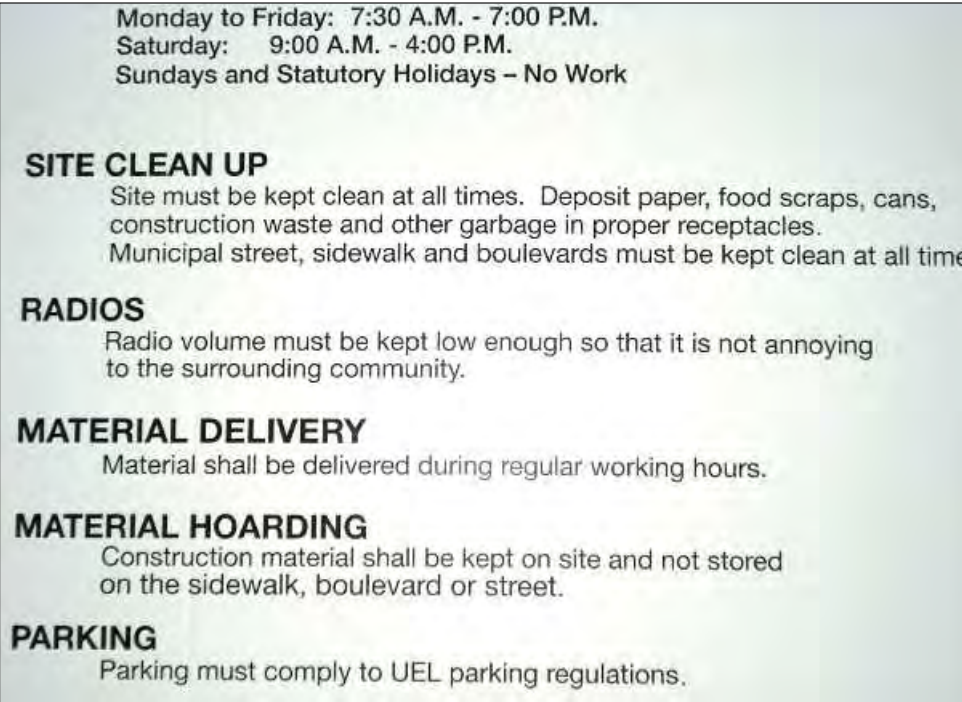
Hedges taking over sidewalks force pedestrians to walk along the grass or mud.

Construction sites: The UEL administration is concerned with any unsafe situations and will attend to sites when problems are brought to their attention. The administration distinguishes between unsafe conditions and unsightly or messy situations, and notes that some spill over onto public property is inevitable, notwithstanding the prohibition noted on the required Site Rules board posted at each property.

The administration does not and cannot, they say, have a zero tolerance approach to a certain amount of mess and clutter.

Let us know

If you have a comment on this story, or identify something of concern please take pictures and send a message to the *Connections* editor: uhillconnections@gmail.com.



Site rules.



A construction site not complying to Site rules.



Some sidewalks are becoming dangerous with missing portions, uneven surface or slippery with heavy moss.

A New Look at Spring Cleaning

By Kim Smith

Late spring and early summer are finally in the air: the days are longer, and blossoms continue to delight. As the natural world renews and refreshes itself, so too do we, as we turn to the annual rite of "Spring Cleaning."

I confess that tidying the basement is among my least favourite activities. Yet once started, I feel an odd sense of satisfaction with the boxes of newspapers, magazines, glass jars and plastic containers that quickly accumulate. Happily, a trip to the UEL recycling depot will make quick work of this debris.

Some things are just harder to deal with

But what of the more troublesome items I've discovered? Tins of long-forgotten paint stand beside cartons of now-illegal herbicides and pesticides, while another crate holds a nest of electric cords and cables, and other evidence of generations of electronic equipment. I've even amassed a sizeable

pharmaceuticals, solvents), electrical (small appliances, CDs, DVDs, computer materials), or auto-related (tires, anti-freeze, or batteries). Safe disposal of such items requires a visit to a designated disposal site, such as the Vancouver Transfer Station, at 377 West Kent St. North. Another option is London Drugs, which accepts a variety of objects for disposal or recycling, from batteries and lightbulbs, to old medications and mobile phones.

The regional concern

The Board of Metro Vancouver is very much concerned with garbage disposal, including both organic material such as kitchen scraps and lawn cuttings, as well as the harmful materials mentioned above. In fact, the Board is committed to diverting 70% of the material that currently ends up in landfills to more environmentally-sound disposal methods by 2015.

Another option is London Drugs, which accepts a variety of objects for disposal or recycling, from batteries and lightbulbs, to old medications and mobile phones.

collection of expired medications, ointments, and drops. I know these materials should not be included in the regular garbage stream, but where should they go?

The answer is a story of both "good news" and "bad news." First, the bad news: we in the UEL do not have a facility that accepts much of our modern refuse, whether chemical (paints,

Even more ambitious is the plan to ban the inclusion of compostable materials within regular garbage. In practice, this means that all those carrot peels and onion skins that we currently toss in the garbage will no longer be welcome. Instead, each municipality – or in our case, the UEL – is expected to implement a coordinated system of organic waste collection. By now, most

of us know that it's a bad idea to pour toxic liquids such as paint or turpentine down our drains or storm sewers, but what should we actually do with these materials that clutter our storage shelves?

Twice a year

Here's where we come to the "good news" part of the story: we don't have to look very far for some possible answers. Our neighbours in the UNA have made significant progress when it comes to the disposal of old computers and small appliances by holding twice-annual, planned drop-off events. On a specific date and time, community residents are invited to "do the right thing" with old electronics by depositing them at a central location; once collected, these items are taken to a safe disposal site. It's good for the environment, and it's good for us, too, since it makes spring cleaning that much easier, regardless of the season.

Time for us to move ahead

Isn't it time that we in the UEL begin to re-engage with the problem of garbage disposal? Not too many years ago, it was normal practice to put anything and everything into the garbage, and I shudder now to think of the toxic mess that will easily out-last our children, grandchildren, and even our great-grand children. We can, and should, do better. Could the property on which the UEL recycling depot sits be expanded – on occasion – to accommodate a UNA-style drop-off event? Might we coordinate such an event with the UNA? If you've got ideas, I'd like to hear them. Email me at jkimberlysmith@gmail.com



A Chat with Our Top Cop

By Kim Smith

Many readers already know that Staff Sergeant Darren Malcolm has recently assumed the top job within the UBC RCMP detachment. He brings a wealth of both small-town and big-city experience from across Canada to the position, along with a palpable sense of interest and enthusiasm for our community.

Getting to know us

One of S/Sgt Malcolm's first priorities has been to identify community needs, which will help guide proposed staffing levels. To this end, he sits on a variety of committees, meets with various individuals and groups, and perhaps most importantly, keeps in very close contact with his officers. "I'm not one to sit in an office," he admits, "I like to know what's going on around me, both in the office and out on the streets."

What's the scoop?

Property crime, especially bicycle, cellphone, and laptop thefts, remains a major concern on the UBC campus, whereas the UEL reports relatively infrequent break and enters, or thefts from cars. Recent

successes include the following arrests and subsequent charges that are now before the courts:

- Andrew Vandal, regarding four commercial break and enters;
- Joseph Onam, regarding sexual touching on the UBC campus;
- Douglas Werner, regarding a bank robbery in the UBC village.

Slow down!

It comes as no surprise to hear that traffic concerns, particularly speeding, present a major problem in the area as a whole. The frequent RCMP presence on Chancellor Blvd near University Hill Elementary school reflects the seriousness of the issue along that stretch of road. Note to all drivers: take it easy out there!

The bigger picture

S/Sgt Malcolm appreciates the small-town feel of neighbourhoods and actively seeks to foster good relations with the community. To this end, his

interest in community policing is overseen by Corporal Brenda Winpenny, whose role he describes as "a critical piece of the picture, in that we're a small town adjacent to a big city." Further support comes from Dev Fletcher, who coordinates Victim's Services for the detachment.

How can we help?

When asked how UEL residents might support local policing, S/Sgt Malcolm didn't hesitate: "Communicate, communicate, communicate!" Although still reasonably new on the job, he's been impressed by the high level of engagement he sees in the UEL, UNA, and from UBC. "Such attitudes foster high levels of accountability from both sides," he notes, adding, "Talk to us. Get to know us. Tell us what's going on around you." With a relatively junior crew of officers eager to learn and motivated to work hard, S/Sgt Malcolm seems a fine selection as new commander in chief.

Have something to report?
Call the detachment: 604.224.1322

UEL Gardeners Feed Three Food Banks

Readers might be surprised at what goes on in the backyards of some of our larger properties. Away from public view, one UEL couple work diligently from spring to fall, producing an impressive array of fresh produce for several Vancouver food banks. They do it anonymously, with an attitude that philanthropy is best when it does not highlight itself. This couple also believe that growing something is preferable to simply writing a cheque. It's hard to disagree with that!

This food garden is planned according to what its microclimate will best produce, and as you'll see below, the list of produce is impressive:

arugula	grapes	radicchio
beans	kale	radishes
blueberries	kohlrabi	raspberries
carrots	leeks	rhubarb
chard	lettuce	snow peas
cherries	mustard greens	sprouting broccoli
collard greens	onions	strawberries
gai lan (Chinese broccoli)	pak choi	summer and winter squash
garlic	peas	tomatoes
	plums	
	potatoes	

Whew! What a list. Some fruit and veg produce only small quantities, whereas some yield incredible results: over 1,200 heads of lettuce, grown successively over last season, for instance, and 530 heads of garlic. Others such as fruit trees and grape vines are relatively young and are just beginning to bear sizable crops. What a remarkable example of selfless and creative use of one's property!



History-makers in Our Midst

by Kim Smith

The Order of Canada is arguably our country's most cherished award, honouring a lifetime of outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation, and the UEL is home to several such recipients. One household in particular, however, boasts two such individuals, each of whom has made significant contributions to Canadian society. Verna and Dick Splane have been UEL residents for 40 years, drawn here by the rich international feel of the community and its proximity to UBC. "We love this community," notes Verna, "and like us, our many visitors take great pleasure in our beautiful surroundings. Living in the UEL is a delight."

Verna

Verna is modest about her accomplishments, but the list of her professional achievements is long. Born in 1914, Verna earned a degree in public health nursing at the University of Toronto in 1939, and embarked upon a career in community health. Later, Verna added degrees from both Columbia University and the University of Michigan. At a time when many women felt pressured to remain within the family home, Verna welcomed an invitation from the Canadian government to develop and implement community health programs, and to extend educational opportunities for nurses. Verna also worked hard to ensure that nurses were included within national departments of health and welfare, both in Canada and internationally. In 1967, Verna became the first nurse to directly help shape Canada's health policies. Later distinctions included senior roles within WHO, and a host of professional awards.

Dick

Dick grew up in the wilds of northern Alberta, and he credits three examples of quiet heroism as profound influences on his career path. First was Dick's father, a WWI veteran who survived mustard gas attacks in the French trenches, followed by two remarkable aunts who were missionary doctors in India. During WWII, Dick left his graduate studies to enlist with the Canadian Air Force, and after obtaining his pilot's licence, he flew many war-time missions over occupied Europe. After the war, Dick resumed an academic life focused on international health and welfare, first at the London School of Economics, and later at the University of Toronto.

Under Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, Dick was a key architect of Canada's "social safety net," the universal health insurance and unemployment assistance programs that have helped shape Canadians' attitudes both of ourselves and our role in the global community. Dick's wisdom and expertise led to senior postings with the International Social Service arm of the UN, where he helped bring health programs to third-world countries. Dick wasn't content to simply observe health policy in action; like Verna, he shaped policy and oversaw its implementation.

The uniquely collaborative nature of much of the Splane's research was formally recognised 1996 when they were the first-ever joint recipients of an honorary degree from UBC.

Now at the ripe ages of 98 and 96 respectively, Verna and Dick continue to live in their much loved home, where they welcome their many friends and colleagues on a regular basis.



Verna and Dick Splane receiving their joint honorary degree from UBC, May 1996.

Lutheran Campus Centre Redevelopment

The property owned by the Lutheran church at the corner of Wesbrook Mall and University Blvd. is being considered for redevelopment. The Lutheran Community would like to rebuild the structure, which is at the end of its useful life and they are now reviewing what functions and density would make sense.

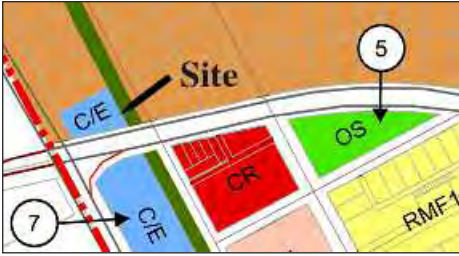
The site is now zoned as Institutional Church Educational. In order to justify rebuilding, the owners are considering applying for a rezoning to Comprehensive Development, which would need to include a greater number of uses and a higher density than now permitted. The church is looking at which uses might work. Their goal is to have a self-sustaining, non-profit facility that balances the needs of the various current and potential users of the Lutheran Centre. A process of community consultation is under way.



An aerial view showing the site at the corner of Wesbrook Mall and University Boulevard

The Lutheran Centre's representatives say they are sensitive to the issue of increased density on a site adjacent to a UEL single-family neighbourhood.

This project is in the very early stages of planning and it is expected to be some time before any ideas or alternatives are available for review.



Regent College Plans New Development

On May 21, 2013, members from the ADP/CAC and UEL administrative staff met with Regent College's vice president Kevin Unger, and architect Clive Grout, for preliminary consultation regarding Regent College's rezoning application. Regent College has applied to rezone its property at 5800 University Boulevard to expand its facilities with a mixed-use development to be built upon its existing parking lot. The proposed development would provide additional teaching and congregational space as well as dormitory accommodation for students and faculty in 72 non-market rental housing units. It would also include office and 11,300 square feet of retail space, an auditorium and underground parking facilities.

Current restrictions

Under current zoning, Regent College is not allowed rental housing and is limited to a building height of four storeys or 45 ft. The proposed rezoning would allow Regent College to build up to six storeys or 62 ft. No increase in site floor space ratio or allowable floor area has been requested. An OCP amendment is required to extend the existing designated commercial area to include Regent College which is located adjacent to the Village on University Boulevard. Regent College anticipates that revenue derived from retail space will help provide funding for the redevelopment, support housing costs, and future community needs.

Community consultation

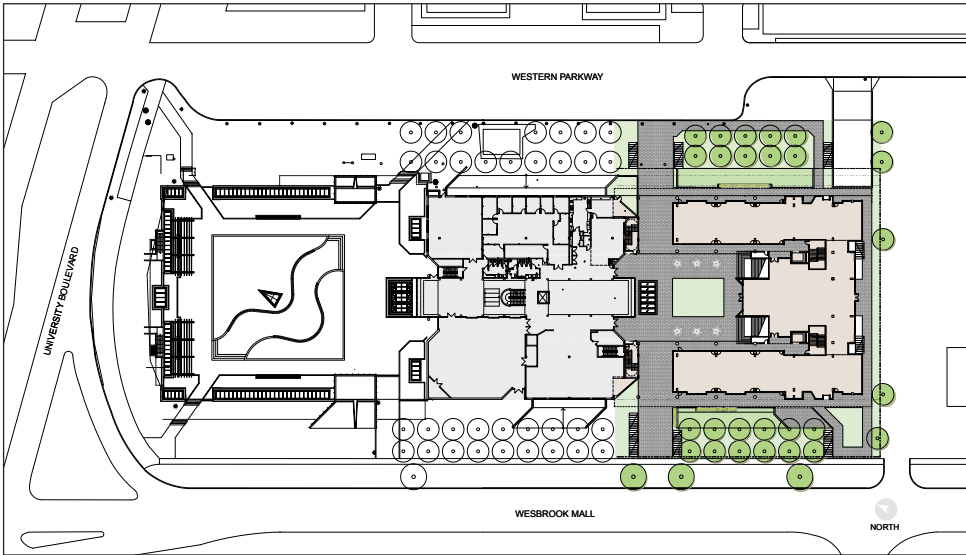
In June 2011 and October 2012, Regent College held two neighborhood meetings, primarily within the Regent College community, regarding this application. Preliminary consultations also occurred with UBC and Metro Vancouver (October 2012) and with both the CAC and ADP in May 2013. The next step in the process will be a public meeting and formal ADP/CAC consultation, followed by a Ministerial Decision.

Award-winning design

Regent College was founded in 1968 and moved to its present location in UBC in 1988. To date, it has completed two major redevelopments of its property, all designed by Clive Grout.

The current building/underground library received the prestigious Design Merit Award for Sacred Landscapes from the American Institute of Architects in 2009. Regent College is an international, interdenominational

graduate school for Christian Theological Studies with over 1,000 students from some 40 countries, representing 30 denominations.



Site plan of Regent College.



Architectural perspective drawing of Regent College.



Vancouver Public Library

Access to VPL a possibility

The Vancouver Public Library has responded positively to an enquiry about providing UEL residents with access to the excellent VPL system. Access would be on a fee-paying basis similar to the arrangement that the UNA has established. A fee is charged per library card and is based on the card count from the previous year. For year one, a special cost arrangement is made.

This would be a good opportunity for UEL residents to gain access to an excellent library system. While we can buy a card now, frequent renewals are necessary, and it is not cheap. If we move to a universal system, anyone could

obtain a card upon proof of residency; the cost of community access as a whole would be borne by the UEL in a single charge. Access to the VPL has been of interest to many UEL residents, and has been the subject of a number of letters to the editor of this newspaper.

Sadly, this change will not likely happen until next year. Our budget is now fixed for the current year; furthermore, the proposal must be approved by both the CAC and the UEL administration office.



Letters to the Editor

"Books are the treasured wealth of the world..." (Thoreau)

In response to the article "How do you get your books?" (*Connections*, Spring 2013 issue), I'd like to encourage the CAC to make the same arrangement with the VPL that the UNA has made in order that UEL residents would be able to get permanent library cards.

Jean Adler, Area C

My wife and I would dearly love to have full access to the VPL. At this time our card allows us to get books, but unfortunately, not ebooks. We hope this can be sorted out.

Sincerely,

Gordon Harris, Area B

We would love to have the same option The University Neighbourhood Association has with the VPL. The CAC should definitely move on this. We have a VPL card, but have always found it strange that there is no access to a library in our area.

Thanks for the good work you are doing.

Jennifer Buckland & Van Eriksen, Area A

Summer must be here – it's water restriction time!

Here's a reminder that until September 30th,
lawn sprinkling regulations are now in effect.
Lawns may be watered as follows:

Even-numbered addresses:

Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, from 4am – 9am.

Odd-numbered addresses:

Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday, from 4am – 9 am.

Did you know that using a spring-loaded sprayer
on your hose will save both water and money??
Give it a try!

UEL Taxes Increase by 2.78%

The numbers

UEL tax revenues for 2013/2014 will increase by 2.78% over the previous year. This modest increase reflects the high degree of continuity in spending patterns with the previous year and a continuation of the 2012/1013 commitment to funding an ongoing UEL capital programme. Capital spending for the year will come, in part, from in-year revenue, and in part from our capital reserve. These capital expenditures are part of the long term planned spending to maintain and upgrade our infrastructure.

The overall municipal tax requirement is \$2,588,745. This is for our municipal level of services only and does not include school taxes or levies from Translink, Metro Vancouver, RCMP, or the BC Assessment Authority, over which we have no control.

The reasons

Taxes on the average single family home (with a value of \$5,177,00) would see an increase of 5.8%, or \$242, while taxes on the average multiple family home (with a value of \$536,000) will see a decrease of 3%, or \$13. As explained in the last issue of *Connections*, a 5% increase in the price of an apartment worth half a million will be only \$25,000 while the same percentage increase in a house worth five million will be \$250,000. This results from a tendency for all residential prices to track upward by similar percentages. Property taxes are levied according to the value of the property; thus, escalating home prices tend to hit the high value properties much harder than the more modest ones.

Overall, the UEL administration and the CAC are both pleased with the budget arrangements for the coming year, with a good balance between financial prudence and getting the necessary things done.

POINT GREY FIESTA

Carnival rides: Friday - Sunday
★ **Parade: Saturday 10am**
★ **Trimble Park events: 10:30-5:00pm**

Carnival Rides!
FRIDAY TO SUNDAY IN TRIMBLE PARK

Please note:
the parade route ~ Blanca Street from 16th to 10th Avenue and
10th Avenue Blanca to Discovery ~ will be closed Sat. June 22 from 9am to Noon.

Your Editor is Listening! Please Write

Got a comment on something you see in this issue of *Connections*? Like it? Don't like it? Got a gripe about something? Got a story idea you want to pass on? Got a news item or notice about an upcoming event you want to share?

We like to get mail. Write us at: uhillconnections@gmail.com

