

Message from the President

What a lovely hot summer it has been. Now we are moving into autumn and the kids are back in school. We may wish for the good weather to continue but we do need some fall rain to make up for the dry summer.

Our summer event, the community picnic at Falaise Park, saw a great turnout. The large number of kids turning out to get their faces painted and to be entertained by the magician reflects the newcomers in the neighbourhood and changes that are happening. New families are moving into just about every street in the community. Our next event will be Family Day in February. If you have new neighbours, please make them feel welcome.

More people seem to be using the buses and walking to the shops at the Broadmead Mall these days. Bike riding also seems to be gaining in popularity. Safety when walking on the roads remains a concern, particularly on Falaise Crescent. Despite our appeals to Saanich to erect more eye catching Slow Down safety signs, there is no progress on that front. We might have to ask for speed bumps to be installed to encourage traffic to slow down before the playground entrance.

There is much talk of Saanich dropping rezoning requirements to enable construction of more multi-family dwellings and to relax public input requirements on proposed development. We are monitoring this initiative, although I believe Falaise will retain its single family dwelling character.

Please note the following article about the AGM. I encourage all of you to attend and show your support for the hard working board of directors. Some of the directors feel it is time for them to move on, so please consider serving on the board. I know that, for me, it has been a pleasure to serve the community and to contribute to the achievements of the board. We need new energy and new ideas.

Please feel free to contact me any time at president@falaise.ca. (Stuart Macpherson)

Upcoming Events

Annual General Meeting:
Thursday, November 30th
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Cedar Room, Commonwealth Place

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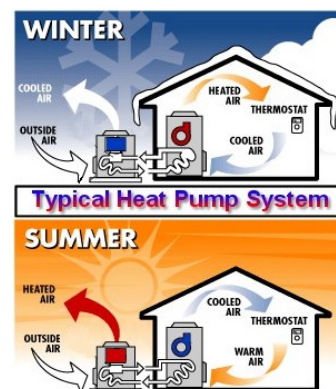
This newsletter is available on our [website](#) where you can click on the links (blue text).

2023 Annual General Meeting

The FCA annual general meeting will be held on Thursday, November 30th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Cedar Room at Commonwealth Place.

Please attend and learn about what has happened in the past year and give your input on what should be the focus for 2024. Come out to vote for the board members and please consider joining yourself. Your commitment can be a little or a lot. In either case, new energy and new ideas are welcome.

We plan to have treats, door prizes and a guest speaker on the subject of heat pumps.



Annual Summer Picnic

The FCA annual summer picnic was held on Sunday afternoon, September 10th, at Falaise Park. This was one of our most successful picnics with attendance well over 130, including more than 50 children. Outdoor picnics are a great way to bring neighbours and families together to enjoy each other's company and have a bite to eat. Guests could choose from barbecued hamburgers or hot dogs, chips, a variety of vegetables, cookies or bars and a wide selection of drinks. Entertainment was provided by a face painter, a balloon creation artist and a magician to delight young and old alike. Several of our local political figures attended, including MLA Lana Popham, Mayor Dean Murdock and Councillor Mena Westhaver.

Donations from local businesses helped to keep costs reasonable. Thrifty Foods in the Broadmead Mall provided a gift certificate while Thrifty Foods in Saanichton donated three tents. As well, The Real Canadian Superstore provided a gift certificate and Starbucks in the Broadmead Mall donated coffee. Many thanks to Glen Schoepp for agreeing to man the BBQ once again this year. Many compliments were received during and after the picnic about the high quality of the food.



Two items left behind at the picnic. To claim, contact Stuart Macpherson.

Sequoia Centre Jazz Nights

McCall Gardens is proud to present a monthly Jazz series at the Sequoia Centre. [Pablo Cardenas](#) will be featured on Sunday, October 22 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20 at sequoiacentre.ca or \$25 at the door.

Pablo is a versatile Cuban pianist whose musical journey began at age five. His repertoire spans jazz, fusion, Latin jazz, and traditional and contemporary Cuban styles. Pablo has performed in iconic Cuban clubs and at prestigious events like the International Jazz Plaza Festival. His charisma, charm, and exceptional piano skills continue to captivate audiences across various music genres.



Park Picnic Table: A number of residents suggested that we should have a picnic table at the top of the hill in the Park. We had made the case to Saanich more than a year ago and had expected a decision in the spring. Unfortunately, they have recently informed us that they will not support the addition of a second picnic table.

A Heritage Gem

Perched high above a purple lobelia-covered stone wall, sits a magnificent heritage home fondly referred to as the Heal House.

John Heal was one of the earliest settlers in Royal Oak. In 1860, he bought a 135 acre farm (Mount Pleasant Farm) and built a house on what is now 813 Royal Wood Place. After his death, his son, Walter, inherited the family home and 50 acres of the land surrounding it. Another part of his property was eventually sold to the Board of Cemetery Trustees of Victoria and this parcel of land became the Royal Oak Burial Park.

Walter and his second wife, Isabel, demolished the old farm house in 1914 and built a fine classical Edwardian home which has since then been designated a Saanich heritage home site. The classic hip-roofed house has large gabled dormers on all four sides. The front dormer shelters an open sleeping porch flanked by lathe-turned classical columns, complete with bases and capitals. The gables are clad in decorative fish scale shingles, complemented by the cedar shingle roofing of the house itself. John and Isabel operated Royal Oak's first post office from that home. The house remained in the Heal family until 1955.



The current owners, Jolene and Michael Lowey, love their home. In a recent interview with Jolene, she revealed that what initially attracted her to the house was the brightness of its interior spaces and the privacy their lofty perch atop a knoll affords them. Their particular heritage home designation allows them to make any changes to the interior of their home but any exterior renovations require consultation with the Saanich Heritage Foundation. It is interesting to note that the Foundation works more in an advisory rather than a censoring capacity. Theoretically, some deviances from the original exterior look of the house are permitted but, to discourage that, grants are only offered to owners who maintain the historical unique features of the house. Also interesting to note is that a few of the original interior spaces have not been redone. The dark wood panelling in the dining room, the radiators (albeit now natural gas fuelled), and the two fireplaces (also now gas), remain more or less as they were originally.

Many thanks to the Lowey family, [Saanich Archives](#), and the [Royal Oak School House Blog](#) for their invaluable input. It is definitely worth swinging by Royal Wood Place to admire this well-maintained and beautiful property. (Submitted by Barbara Ross)

Road Mural Repainting

After one year, the Falaise Community road mural was showing signs of wear. There was a small amount of money left over from the Saanich grant, as well as a good supply of yellow paint. It was decided to repaint the yellow and to add some purple camas flowers for additional colour.



The day for repainting was set for Sunday, August 20th and Saanich approval was obtained to block off a section of Falaise Crescent for a few hours. [Teale Phelps Bondaroff](#) brought his organizational skills, as well as some additional painters to complement those from the Falaise community. The FCA set up their tent and provided refreshments for all the helpers. John Cameron took a series of pictures during and after the painting and a small selection is shown on the [website](#).



Noise Cameras

Whether you are walking city streets, hiking near a country road or living close to the Royal Oak on-ramp to the Pat Bay Highway, sooner or later an excessively loud vehicle will roar by. Although the noise level may exceed allowable limits, it is difficult for law enforcement to identify the offending vehicle.

One option that is being promoted by Councillor [Teale Phelps Bondaroff](#) is the use of [noise cameras](#). They function in the same way as speed and red light cameras except they capture an audio recording along with the licence plate of

the vehicle. They are already in use in Paris and are being considered in other jurisdictions as well. Teale is presenting a motion to Saanich Council to explore the possibility of setting up a noise camera pilot project. The Royal Oak on-ramp would be an excellent location for such a pilot.



A noise camera mounted on a street in Paris.

Falaise Park Update

The park continues to be a favourite spot for families and residents within the community and beyond. We appreciate how diligent everyone has been in using the garbage can by the playground gate. As a result, we had to request an additional emptying by Saanich Parks garbage truck twice this summer. Well done!

We have been very lucky to dodge the fire hazard, despite evidence of smokers dropping cigarette butts along the trails. No Smoking signs were posted to remind everyone of the fire risk that smoking poses.

The long, hot, dry summer has taken its toll on some of our plantings, particularly the Garry oaks. The mortality may have been worse if it had not been for the scheduled watering by the Saanich watering truck, supplemented with hand watering by our park volunteers. The dead seedlings will be replanted next spring. And, as a bonus, the huge crop of acorns this fall will likely result in a carpet of young oak germinants beneath the oak trees in the spring.

Fall work parties will be taking place through October to ready the park for winter. These are usually held on Thursday or Saturday mornings. Our park volunteers will be winterizing the plantings as well as removing invasive grasses and blackberry. New volunteers, even if you only can spare a couple of hours, are welcome. Please contact the Park Steward, Stuart Macpherson, president@falaise.ca, if you would like to come out and help.



A new arbutus seedling in the Park.

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—Hardeep Kaur



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