



čəŋéłč (*chung-ae-th-ch*), Garry Oak Tree wondering what this tree remembers

by Pippa Davis

In October, a big Garry Oak tree fell beside the field near Sir James Douglas Elementary School. It was a big tree, with many branches, so the fall was dramatic. Luckily, no one was nearby, when its roots gave way, so it crashed down without injury or damage. Still, the sight of this giant, laying along the ground was quite a sight to behold.

With some investigating, measuring, and math, the tree is estimated to be around 200 years old. Garry Oaks are slow growing trees, adding only one to two

centimetres in diameter per year.

So, if we accept 200 years old as a close guess, when this tree sprouted from its acorn it would have been called čəŋéłč (pronounced *chung-ae-th-ch*), in the first language of this place, of the Lekwungen People.

Back then, when this tree was new, the area around the school field, our Fairfield, was all meadow and marshlands with two streams running through. Full of fish, ducks, geese and deer. There was hunting, food & medicine gathering, living and care-taking, here.

When our tree was about 20 years old, all trees of this kind were renamed “Garry Oaks” by botanist David Douglas to honor his friend Nicholas Garry, the deputy governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company. (David Douglas, catalogued many species, and impressed by fir trees, named those after himself).

When our tree was 25 years old, Sir James Douglas landed at what he named Clover Point, came ashore for the first time here, and things changed. Our tree saw the end of the marshlands, covering of streams. The clearing of farmland,

building houses, more houses, a school. This tree holds a long memory of this place, cut crosswise for all of us to see, recorded in wooden rings.

Now fallen, this tree sparks a remembering, an acute sense of time, how it passes and the stories we tell, where we have been. And the small trees all round, still growing, adding their centimetres year by year, what stories will they tell of this place, in 200 years when they fall?



FAIRFIELD GONZALES
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Observer

Published by the **Fairfield Gonzales Community Association (FGCA)**
4 issues per year
Issue #48 March 2026
ISSN 2292-2237 print
ISSN 2292- 2245 online

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RECEPTION HOURS

9am—4:30pm Mon to Fri
Closed Sat, Sun, Stat holidays

Want to stay up to date with neighbourhood news and events?

Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at fgca.ca

Our neighbourhood of Fairfield Gonzales is located on unceded (never surrendered) territories of the Lkwungen peoples, now known as the Songhees Nation, the traditional stewards of this land. Our centre is committed to expanding our understanding and actions relating to truth and reconciliation.

BECOME A MEMBER

Membership is free! As a member you will; have a say in who is elected to the Board, how the FGCA is governed (constitution and bylaws), be eligible to run for the Board and serve on committees. Visit our website and fill out our online membership form.

CONTRIBUTIONS & ADVERTISING

If you would like to contribute an article, artwork, ad, idea or something else, email office@fgca.ca

The views expressed in the Fairfield Gonzales Observer do not necessarily reflect the views of the FGCA.

Our Neighborhood Needs...what?

Take our Neighborhood Needs Assessment survey

Hey neighbours! Here at the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association we are always looking for ways to better serve our community, though our programming areas like recreation, childcare, food access, community events, family drop-ins, youth programs, garden activities, volunteer opportunities, the list goes on!

We want our centre to be a place where folks feel connected and welcome. In order to do that, we need to hear from you! Whether you're a frequent flyer at the FGCA or have only attended a couple events in the past, let us know what you want to see from YOUR neighbourhood house!

Scan the QR code on this poster and let us know your thoughts! To be entered to win 1 of 2 Root Cellar gift cards, be sure to enter your name and email at the end of the form.

Survey closes March 18th.

TELL US WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE AT THE FGCA!

share your thoughts & be entered to WIN a \$50 Root Cellar gift card!

SCAN QR CODE

fgca.ca | 250-382-4604 | 1330 Fairfield rd.



Fairfield Artists Studio Tour: May 2&3

A favourite annual event for many years, the Fairfield Artists Studio Tour kicks off spring in Victoria. Over 40 artists, including new and returning ones, will show their paintings, sculpture, jewelry, wood work, clay art and more in their studios and gardens. The quality of the work never fails to amaze the hundreds of people who attend. See you there! fairfieldartistsstudiotour.com

ROOM RENTALS

Our community centre has several spaces to rent including a few classroom sized rooms, our large Garry Oak room for up to 100 people standing, and a commercial kitchen.

See our website for room options, rental rates and availability : fgca.ca

FREEBIE NIGHT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

If your workshop, meeting, event, gathering or info session, is public and free to attend, you can book for free. Rooms are classroom sized and can accommodate up to 30 people
1330 Fairfield Rd.

6-9pm

Dates for 2026:

March 9, April 20, May 11, June 8 & 15

250-382-4604 to inquire

neighbourhood-wide

YARD SALE DAY

Register to put your sale on the map! Opens April 15th

SATURDAY • MAY 9 • 10 AM-2PM
Glenlyon Norfolk School (781 richmond ave) +
Fairfield & Gonzales neighbourhoods

FGCA.CA

Fall Down Tree

The Land Teaches: Children's Encounters with a Fallen Garry Oak

By Madeleine Berryman, Moss Rock Preschool Lead Educator

In late October 2025, a large Garry Oak tree unexpectedly fell in Porter Park. At Moss Rock Preschool the children immediately named it the "fall down tree", which sparked an ongoing inquiry that has shaped our learning over the last few months.

After the City of Victoria removed a portion of the tree for safety, the main trunk and exposed roots still remain. Rather than treating the fallen tree as an ordinary natural event, we approached it as an opportunity to engage with the environment openly. We offered the children microscopes, magnifying glasses, tape measures, clipboards, and a community tree journal. These materials supported the children's observations, but ultimately, the children's intense curiosity carried the learning in many directions. At the same time, the children noticed the construction across the street from the park, where houses and trees were being taken down. Their attention in that moment expanded beyond the "fall down tree" and towards something much bigger. The children's responses included confusion, some sadness, and a desire to understand why they were

cutting down trees when "spiders and squirrels lived there!"

As time went on, our weekly visits to the "fall down tree" led to a natural evolution in our learning with the tree. We offered invitations to art, songs, and stories that encouraged the children to think with the tree rather than simply learning about it. The inquiry also allowed for speculative thinking and practices where the children imagined the tree's past and future. This was made visible through drawings and conversations that were beautifully captured on audio recordings.

This project has been an example of what living, inquiry-based early years education can look like, and we invite the community to witness this learning. Throughout May and June, the foyer of the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association will feature a pedagogical narration of this multi-month inquiry. The display highlights the children's artwork and photos, and will include an interactive component that we invite community members to contribute to, in order to keep this inquiry living.



How We Can Help

Advocacy

on policy issues that affect our lives & communities

Assistance

navigating provincial government & community resources & services

Information

on provincial government policies & services

Outreach

by promoting, attending, or speaking at community events

Recognition

of unique contributions or milestones with congratulatory certificates & letters

We'd love to hear from you!



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Grace Lore MLA for Victoria Beacon-Hill Community Office

1084 Fort Street Victoria, BC V8V 3K4
250-952-4211 Grace.Lore.MLA@leg.bc.ca



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

at the FGCA

EVENTS & WORKSHOPS


at the FGCA

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	WEEKEND
* All weekly Drop-in Programs are closed during School District 61 Pro-D days, statutory holidays and breaks, including: Spring Break March 16-27	Drop-in Playgroup 9:30-11am Drop-in*, by donation 1330 Fairfield Rd. No sessions March 16-27	Drop-in Playgroup 10am-12:30pm Drop-in*, by donation 1330 Fairfield Rd. No sessions March 16-27	Kindergym 9:30-11am Drop-in*, by donation 1335 Thurlow Rd. No sessions March 16-27		Moss St. Farmers Market Saturdays 10-1pm Nov-April 10-2pm May-Oct Thurlow & Moss St mossstreetmarket.com

For registered classes see our website for course details

REGISTER ONLINE

fgca.ca

The City of Victoria's Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) program improves access to recreation programs & services for folks living on a low income. To apply email crystalpool@victoria.ca

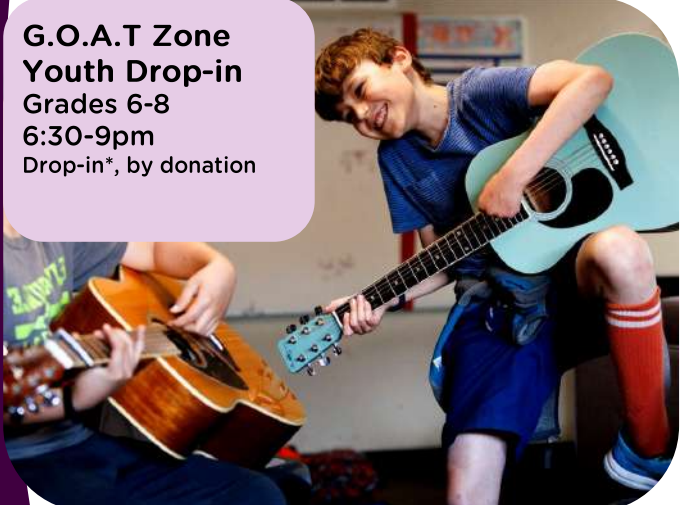
Craft Social 10:30am-12pm* Drop-in*, by donation 18+ Use our supplies or bring your own project. No sessions March 16-27	Tiny Tempos 9:30-11am Birth-5 years Movement & Music Drop-in*, by donation 1330 Fairfield Rd. No sessions Mar. 16-27	Tiny Tempos 9:30-11am Birth-5 years Movement & Music Drop-in*, by donation 1330 Fairfield Rd. No sessions Mar. 16-27
Iyengar Yoga Support & Restore 11:45am-12:45pm April 16-June 25 11/\$132 Registered class	Iyengar Yoga Beginner 1-2pm April 16-June 25 11/\$132 Registered class	Sunday Kindergym 9:30-11am Drop-in*, by donation 1335 Thurlow Rd. No sessions Mar. 16-27




BADMINTON

WEDNESDAYS
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM 1/\$5
IN THE SJD SCHOOL GYM
(ENTRANCE FACING THE SCHOOL PARKING LOT)
VISIT: FGCA.CA TO PRE-REGISTER

Zumba 5:30-6:30pm April 13-June 22 \$90 Early bird rate until April 1 10/\$100 Registered class	Iyengar Yoga All Levels 5:30-7pm April 14-June 23 11/\$165 Registered class	Zumba Toning 5:30-6:30pm April 15-June 24 \$99 Early bird rate until April 1 11/\$110 Registered class	Hatha Yoga 5:45-6:45pm April 16-June 18 10/\$110 Registered class
SoQi 6:30-7:30pm April 13-June 22 \$90 Early bird rate until April 1 10/\$100 Registered class	Unwind Knitting Club 7-8:30pm Come knit with us! Free	Somatic Yoga 6:30-7:30pm April 15-June 24 \$99 Early bird rate until April 1 11/\$110 Registered class	Spanish for Travellers 6:30-8:30pm April 30-June 11 6/\$105 Registered class
Royal Astronomy Society Club 7-8:30pm Wolf Den, back of the FGCA, Free pastpres@victoria.rasc.ca	Beginner Hand Drumming 7:30-9pm Mar 17-Apr 21 6/\$120 Early bird rate until Mar.10, \$6/150 after Registered class	Badminton Social Play 7-8pm 1/\$5 SJD gym Register to save your spot. Bring your racquet. Does not run during school breaks.	Level 2 Hand Drumming 7-9pm Mar 19-Apr 23 6/\$150 Early bird rate until Mar.10, \$6/180 after Registered class



CHILDCARE

Huckleberry Infant Toddler
10-36 mths | Full Day | \$10/day

Camas Early Years Centre
2.5-5 yrs | Full Day | \$10/day

Moss Rock Preschool
3-5 yrs | Half Day | \$10/day

Before & After School Care
Grades K-5
Fairfield-Sir James Douglas & Margaret Jenkins Schools
Cost varies based on enrollment

Courage to Change
7:30-8:30pm
Drop-in, Free
Narcotics Anonymous
Everyone welcome

SUMMER CAMPS

at the FGCA

The FGCA Wolf Den Summer Experience:
Perfect for youth entering Grades 5-7 in September!

Looking for an action-packed summer catered to mature explorers? The FGCA offers a unique program for Grade 4-5 campers (9-11yrs), featuring trips to local attractions, exciting activities, and plenty of adventure. From swimming and team challenges to creative arts, your child will thrive in a fun, safe, and encouraging environment.

Registration opens April 7th. Visit our website www.fgca.ca for more details and specific week themes! Hope to see you there!



Clothing Swap
First Saturday of the month
MARCH 7
APRIL 11
MAY 2
10am-1pm
By donation
1330 Fairfield Rd.
Give away clothes, pick up new ones!



Mama's Dance
Saturday
MARCH 28
APRIL 11
MAY 9
6-8pm, closing circle 8:30
1335 Thurlow Rd.
1/\$5 For ALL those who mother. Let's Dance! Babes in arms welcome.



Paint Night
Thursday
APRIL 16 Air Plant Art
MAY 14
Crushed Glass Jellyfish
JUNE 18
Butterfly Mushroom Painting
6:30-9pm 1/\$40
Registered class



Get Growing! Soil Distribution
Saturday
MARCH 14
1pm-until material is gone
Porter Park
Bring your own shovel and bucket and grab compost, leaf mulch, and wood chips to prep your garden for this growing season



Meet A Stranger
Saturday
MARCH 21
APRIL 18
2:15-3:30 pm
Free. 1330 Fairfield Rd.
A chance to chat with a complete stranger.
www.meetastranger.ca



Community Dinners
2nd Friday of the month
MARCH 13
APRIL 10
MAY 8
6-7:30 pm
1335 Thurlow Rd.
\$5 suggested donation.



Ross Bay Native Plant Garden
Saturday 1-3pm
MARCH 21 Work Party
Sunday 1-2pm
MAY 3 Garden Tour
Memorial Crsnt & Dallas Rd.
Everyone Welcome



Art at the Place
Madeleine Dupuis
MARCH-APRIL
Moss Rock Preschool
MAY-JUNE
9am-4:30pm Mon-Fri
1330 Fairfield Rd.
Visit our foyer to view work by local artists.



Food Forest
Sunday 1-3pm
MARCH 22 Work Party
Sunday 1-2pm
APRIL 26 Garden Tour
At Robert J. Porter Park
Help us grow the garden, learn about plants and sustainable harvesting.
Everyone Welcome!



Repair Cafe
First Saturday of the month
APRIL 11
2-5pm, By donation
1330 Fairfield Rd.
Drop by and get your broken items repaired by volunteer fixers!



Get Growing! Seedling Distribution
Saturday
MAY 16
1-3pm
Porter Park
Pick-up free vegetable and herb seedlings and grow your own food.



Yard Sale Day
Saturday
MAY 9
10am-2pm
Put your Sale on the map (registration opens April 15) or go out treasure hunting at 50+ sales all over Fairfield & Gonzales.

Vanessa, serving up community spirit

A shout out to one of our amazing volunteers

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month, and here at the Fairfield Community Place, we love a chance to celebrate all that they bring. From serving community dinner to serving on our board of directors, there are so many ways for folks to contribute and connect with community. Vanessa is a volunteer that has found many ways to help at the FGCA and we appreciate her skills, dedication and enthusiasm to all that she does here.

How did you come to volunteer with the FGCA?

It started with helping out at a seedling distribution event a few years ago. In 2023, I joined the Board of Directors, first as Secretary, then moving into the role of Treasurer. Since then, I have served on a variety of standing committees and working groups, supported the Gonzales Sunset Beach Party, Fall Fairfield, more seedling distributions, Fairfield Flourish Fest, Music in the Garry

Oak Room, and Community Dinners. There are so many ways to get involved - regularly or as a one-off. You are likely to find me at FGCA's next event.

What motivates you to keep contributing to your community?

Having worked exclusively in non-profit organizations, I know the essential role volunteers play in helping an organization achieve its mission and deliver its services. As a board member, I'm able to support FGCA's long-term health, resilience, sustainability, and its role as a thriving neighbourhood hub. As an event volunteer, I get to chat to my wonderful neighbours from across Fairfield and Gonzales, share a laugh and a meal, and see first-hand the impact we are having on the community on top of that. What's not to love? Smiles, a warm hello, and friendly, familiar faces are what makes our neighbourhood special and I feel incredibly fortunate to be a part of it.



Vanessa (right) dishing out meals at our Community Dinners

What would you say is the best part about volunteering?

The amazing staff work very hard behind the scenes to make our jobs easy. They provide support, clear instructions, the right amount of

autonomy, good communication, and snacks. Volunteer work here is easy, fun, and never boring.

If you are interested in volunteering contact Ashley Chun event@fgca.ca



Tom, (far right) leading the fun at Out of School Care.

Staff Spotlight: Tom

He will laugh at your jokes

May is Childcare Appreciation Month! We're thankful for all the amazing staff at our community centre who make our childcare programs so special.

Tom, one of our wonderful Out of School Care Leaders, has worked with us since 2018. He brings a genuine, happy energy to his work, making kids feel immediately welcome and at ease. Usually at our Margaret Jenkins site, he also makes appearances in our Camps, Youth Programs, and sometimes even pitching in at our community events. Soon he will be moving to Australia, so we will miss everything he brings, and wish him the best in his next adventure!

We had a quick chat with Tom about his time as an Out of School Care Leader.

What's great about working in childcare?

Childcare is great because it is different every day, and everyday rewards you in a new way.

What special skills, interests, talents, have you brought to your work that has landed well with the kids?

In life it is so easy to develop absolutely useless skills. Childcare is the perfect place to flaunt these. Who would have guessed that beatboxing (making weird noises with your mouth) would impress people so much? Or being able to yell and be heard a mile away? Or being tall enough to put googly eyes on things that look unreachable?

What is next for you?

Checking out childcare in Australia!

What the kids in Out of School Care have to say about Tom...

Tom is funny and nice
He laughs at our jokes
He plays with us: Games, DND, Manhunt, Gagaball
Does not get mad easily
Runs fast
A lot of kids have known him for a long time

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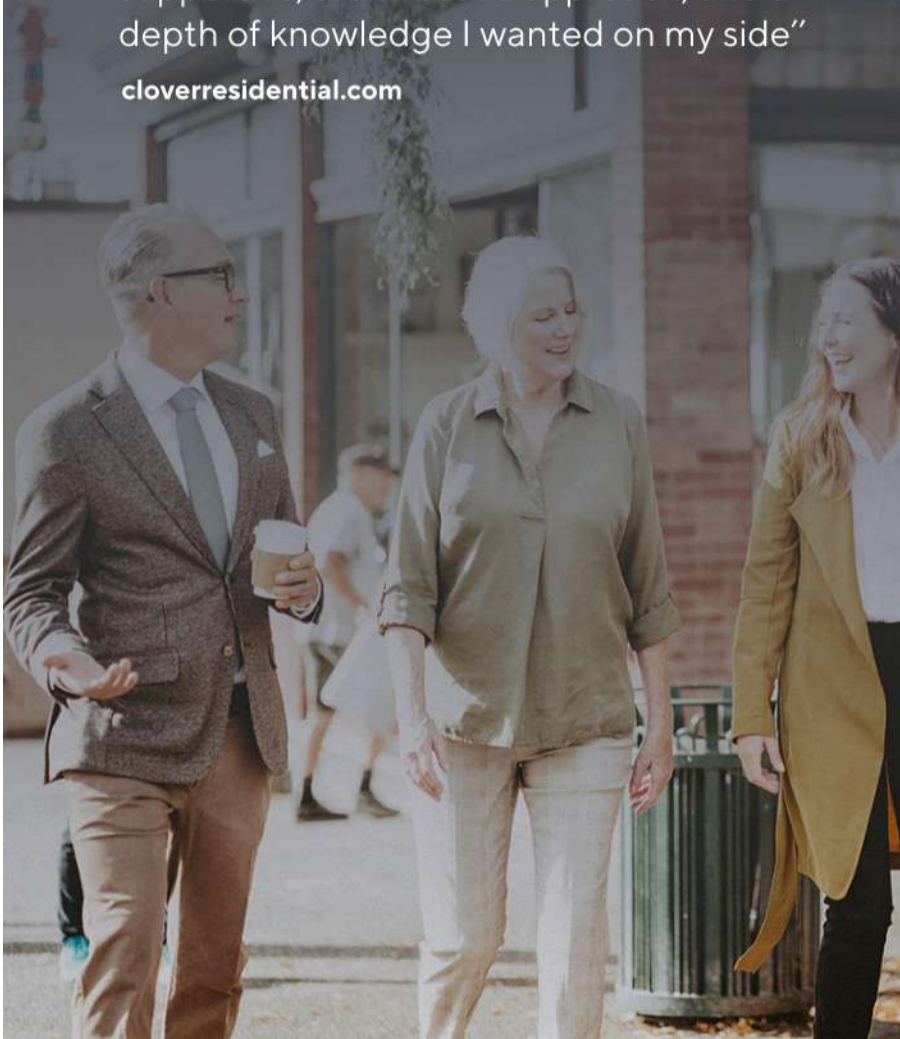


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Come share a meal with friends & neighbours

Community Dinners

March 13 April 10 May 8

6:00-7:30 pm 1335 Thurlow Rd. \$8 suggested donation



Photos by Larry Koopman