



Affordable Housing...

Thousands of people in our region are on wait-lists for affordable housing. They're not looking for anything fancy – just a place to call home. A place that's clean, safe and affordable.

Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberal government policies have contributed to a decrease in affordable housing and an increase in homelessness. The Campbell government cancelled BC's ongoing housing program, *Homes BC*, in 2002 with the expectation that municipalities will

fill the void the government created.

In Langford, both the municipality and the non-profit sector are stepping up and creating solutions.

Four years ago, Langford developed an affordable housing program, requiring developers to include at least 10 per cent affordable single family housing in all new subdivisions.

Eligible applicants purchase the home for \$160,000 and tough restrictions apply on re-sale. Dozens of families are now home-owners and Langford's model is now being copied throughout our country.

M'akola Housing Society is another example of a group using imaginative and innovative ideas to increase our affordable housing stock. Kevin Albers, Executive Director of M'akola, is planning to build 46 rental apartments on Goldstream Avenue.

... just a place to call home... clean, safe and affordable

Rent will be 80% of average market rates (for example, a \$1,200 apartment would rent for about \$960). M'akola is hoping construction will start later this year.

Low vacancy rates, high rents and expensive house prices have created a crisis for many families struggling to make ends meet. Gordon Campbell is quite willing to give his friends and insiders tax breaks but he's doing nothing to protect working families. Communities like Langford should be applauded for the ongoing leadership they're showing. When will the province show its leadership?



John, with fellow congregation members of Pilgrim United, at a STANDs for Housing protest—a group organized to call on federal, provincial and municipal politicians to fund affordable housing.

Community Offices

WEST SHORE

Mon-Fri 10am-4pm
800 Goldstream Ave.
Victoria, BC
T: 250 391-2801

SOUTH COWICHAN

Tue-Fri 11am-3pm
17-1400
Cowichan Bay Rd.
Valleyview Centre
Cobble Hill, BC
T: 250 733-2521

Toll-free
1 877 391-2801

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

May 30—June 1 *Fired Up in Metchosin.* A show of contemporary works in Clay at the Metchosin Community Hall, 4401 Williams Head Road. Info: www.firedup.ca.

May 31 *Luxton Station Market* opens for the season and runs until October. Every Saturday from 10 am–2 pm at the Luxton Hall, 1040 Marwood Avenue. Info: www.luxtonstationmarket.ca

June 8 *Kids Nature Hike in the Highlands.* Info: Marcie 250-474-4725 or Warren 250-478-7317

June 8 *Wheels in Motion.* Rick Hansen's 6th Annual Fundraiser helping those with spinal cord injury. In Victoria at Willows Beach from 9–11 am and in Duncan at the City Square. Info: www.wheelsinmotion.org

Moving Transit Options Ahead

As world supplies of crude oil diminish, prices at the pump continue to soar. Low cost and environmentally sound transportation alternatives are more important than ever.

We can't continue to make-do with our existing infrastructure. We

need options for getting to work and recreation. I have been calling for decent transit options and a modest commuter rail system.

After two years of raising the commuter challenges in our community, the

government has finally announced a commuter bus on the Malahat. Yes, we need a way to get people from the Cowichan Valley to downtown Victoria. But just providing buses—with insufficient operating costs—won't help solve commuter problems.

A transit plan must include

a realistic look at commuter rail on the E&N corridor. Why is the train idea still stuck in the station? Without funding from senior levels of government for improvements to the railbed and environmentally sound rail cars and engines, the project will continue to be stalled in the planning stage.

I've been working with local groups to move these projects ahead.

It's time for all levels of government to work together and focus our tax dollars to deliver real alternatives.

The West Shore's Super Kid

Meagan Blaquiere, a 17 year old Belmont High School student, doesn't just wish the world could be a better place. She spends her time doing something about it. Meagan was recently named the CFA Youth Leader of the Year Runner-up.

Among other things, Meagan has > co-organized very successful food drives in the West Shore, the "10,000 Tonight Food Drive",

Hospice Expansion

Over 100 people attended the Cowichan Valley Hospice Open House, celebrating their recent expansion. The Open House was a chance for staff to say thank you to everyone who helped make it possible.

The new space offers a beautiful and comfortable area for support groups and expanded space for volunteer training and staff offices. It was made possible through the contributions of many, including those who volunteered their services, donated goods or contributed funding. A special note of thanks to the Duncan Lions Sassy Lion Store, who made a \$7,000 donation to help replace the heating system. Contributions from the South Island Rotary helped Hospice pay down their mortgage, which also helped make the expansion possible.



John chats with Mary Ann Deacon, Hospice Board secretary.



- collecting more than 35,000 food items for the Goldstream Foodbank,
- > organized "Taste for Justice", raising \$3,000 for violence against women and women's rights projects sponsored by Amnesty International,
- > been active on the Westshore's Active Communities Council, the Community Police Advisory Council and Belmont's School Planning Council,
- > worked as an afterschool care

instructor and birthday party hostess at Juan de Fuca Recreation, and runs a girls youth drop in program. Meagan is moving to New Zealand this summer to be a nanny and plans to travel before heading to UVic or Camosun in 2009 to study Political Science and French.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

June 13–14 Relay for Life for the Canadian Cancer Society. Take turns walking, running or strolling the track in a non-competitive relay at the Juan de Fuca Velodrome. Give 12 hours for the fight against cancer. Team registrations and donations can be made at www.cancer.ca/relay

June 14 Survivor—Fun Factor. Think you have what it takes to survive? Put those skills to the test in our very own survivor challenge! Rescue yourself from the raging river, swim through the storming sea, and dive into a Shark Tank. 1:30–4 pm at Juan de Fuca Pool. Regular Admission

June 15 Sooke Region Museum is having a Commemorative Open House, unveiling a series of historical murals, portraying four early chapters of Sooke history. Info: 250-642-6351

June 26 Canadian Blood Services is having a blood donor clinic Shawnigan Lake Community Centre, 2804 Shawnigan Lake Road, June 26, August 21, October 16 and December 11. Appointments to donate: call 1-888-236-6283 (1-888-2DONATE). Clinic hours 2:00–7:00pm.