

EnviroNews

Whispering Woods goes national – local youth wins national awards for local environmental project!

Aliens Amongst Us!, by Rowan Cockett, is a three-year study of the smooth brome and creeping thistle invasions in Whispering Woods Natural Area Park in Brentwood Heights. You can view this award-winning project on the Canada Wide Virtual Science Fair web site (and get inspired to participate in local stewardship!), at www.virtualsciencefair.org/2006/cock6r2/. This project also went to the Calgary and Canada-Wide Youth Science Fairs.

Call for community input regarding interpretive signage in Whispering Woods

We are still looking for local artists, poets, writers, scientists, photographers, historians and nature aficionados! We'd love your contributions to a community-based project involving interpretive signage in Whispering Woods. All those who live, work, attend school, pass through or play in Brentwood are invited to participate in the creation of educational public signage for this special grassland and parkland environment.

Pathway update in Whispering Woods

Pathways in this natural area are now complete. All soil removed for pathway construction was left on-site and distributed in the southwest corner of the park. A native seed mix was then added to increase the biodiversity of this currently fenced area. The western path will now provide users with a safe way down the northwest corner's slope, thus allowing that perimeter area to recover from overuse, erosion and root exposure. The gravel path from the northeast corner has been extended from the park's centre all the way to the southwest, where it joins the walkway between the houses. Thank you all for keeping to the pathways, especially in the vulnerable grassland areas.

Attack those invasive alien species!

The June 12 Weed Awareness Day with Andrew Stiles of Nature Calgary, sponsored by The Friends of Dr. Coffin Society, was a great success. Students and members of the public learned about the threats to biodiversity in our special parks in Calgary. We found out more about alien invaders, what a weed really is, how to manage the worst offenders in a timely manner and why we must re-think daisies and other escaped ornamentals. With great enthusiasm, we hauled a small mountain of weeds out of the area. Whether toiling in your own garden or

when helping in the Natureground or Whispering Woods, there are several plant species that you are encouraged to pull out at will. Thistles, smooth brome, goat's beard, creeping bellflower and dandelions are just a few. There is also troubling scentless chamomile, oxeye daisy and toad-flax to deal with, as well as a host of other pesky weeds like hound's tongue, stinkweed and shepherd's purse. All are threats to the well-being of our native species.

Calling all summer stewards! Volunteers and youth wanted and welcome.

The Friends of Dr. Coffin Society will be hosting regular gardening bees throughout the growing season in Whispering Woods and the Centennial Natureground. To be notified about the schedule, learn more about native plants, weeds and grassland conservation and to keep up with impromptu gatherings, please sign up for our mailing-list. Contact Polly, as below.

Please join us during any or all of the following weekly events during July and August:

- Weeding Wednesdays: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Refreshments provided.
- Youth Gardeners: Fridays: 9 to 11 a.m. Training, honorariums, refreshments provided.
- Sunrise Saturdays: 8 to 10 a.m. Followed by potluck brunch and coffee.

Meet at the Prairie Amphitheatre in Whispering Woods, just off Brenner Drive N.W. or in the adjacent Centennial Natureground on the west side of Dr. Coffin School, at 5615 Barrett Drive N.W. Dress for the weather and for gardening! Although there will be some gloves and hand tools available to share, it would be helpful if you brought your own. We welcome you to our growing circle of neighbours as stewards of our local spaces.

Fresh Market Tuesdays are back again!

Grassroots Northland Farmers' Market is now open every Tuesday from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Northland Drive N.W. This non-profit market is hosted by Grassroots Northwest Environmental Awareness Society and all proceeds go back into the community for environmental education initiatives.

Environmentally yours,

Polly Lee Knowlton Cockett,
282-2014 or environews@shaw.ca

Brentwood Community News

Local artist DESIGNS mural

Brentwood is home to several artists, and one of the most colourful of these is Lettering Artist and Illustrator, Kirsten Horel. If you've ever chatted on the street with a neighbour wearing red high-top sneakers and a big smile, you've met Kirsten. From a cozy studio looking into her backyard, she produces book covers, magazine illustrations, greeting cards and "artsy" business cards. Most recently, she was convinced to try her hand at mural painting at Nose Hill Library, and it was there that we had the chance to chat with Kirsten as the mural took shape.

When asked if she studied art formally at school, Kirsten tells us, "I took anthropology and some art here and there and picked up some courses at ACAD (Alberta College of Art and Design)." After graduating, she did graphic work for a landscape architect, which is where her love of her signature "dots and lines" first took hold.

Kirsten took up lettering a few years later, after her two kids were born and joined the Bow Valley Calligraphy Guild. She remains an active member of the Guild and has participated in a number of workshops throughout her career – both as a student and an instructor.

It took nearly a year to bring Kirsten's quirky mural map of Brentwood to life. Originally submitted as a design for one of our outdoor murals, Kirsten agreed to paint the mural at the Nose Hill Library with help and support from the Brentwood Community Mural Committee. Ann Lidgren, Customer Service Manager at Nose Hill Library, loved the idea and set about getting permission from the Calgary Public Library, having the

boards installed for the mural and generally doing everything possible to accommodate and support the project. With help from a neighbour, Kirsten's funky and dynamic view of our community was painted and embellished over the course of a week.

Asked what Kirsten loves most about working as an artist, she pauses for a moment to reflect and then answers, "being in the moment. When I'm doing art, there's just nothing else." She then bursts out laughing and adds, "My poor family!"

Kirsten goes on to say that she uses her friendly art to help others decipher the world and nowhere is that more true than in her latest and most public piece of art to date. A riot of colours, dots, squiggles and quirky details, Kirsten's mural design at the Nose Hill Library shows us all the best that living in Brentwood has to offer. It is Kirsten's gift to the community that she clearly loves – the one in which she raised her kids (now young adults) and where she still lives with her husband, Doug. Thanks, Kirsten, for the colour that you bring to our neighbourhood.



Left to right: Kirsten Horel, Cheri Macaulay, Lee Hunt, Polly Knowlton-Cockett and Ann Lidgren.



Brentwood Community News

The murals are finished, but the street party lives on!

How much fun did you have at our last two September street parties?*

If you answered, "Street party? What street party?," then there's great stuff going on in our neighbourhood that you've been missing. Circle Sunday, September 17, 2006 on your calendar and join us this year.

If you said, "I had heaps of fun last year," then we're delighted you enjoyed yourself. And if you're willing to take on even one small volunteer task to help us, we can guarantee you will have heaps of fun again this year.

And if you jumped out of your chair and said, "I had so much fun I can't wait to help with the next one," call Cheri at 220-1219 and find out how you can help to make this an annual event for the whole neighbourhood to enjoy.

*The first two street parties were held to celebrate our anti-graffiti murals at Brisebois and Northmount Drives and Charleswood and Northmount Drives, but we'd like to carry on the tradition annually.

