

November 30, 2020

The Friends
of the Public Gardens



Newsletter

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Wishing you good health and a Happy New Year!

In 2012, then Halifax poet laureate Tanya Davis created a poem to celebrate the unveiling of the newly restored Victoria Jubilee Fountain.

We are featuring the poem this month.

We have also developed some entertaining COVID-19 safe activities in place of our annual Hort Hall get together.

We hope you find them enjoyable.

Test your knowledge of the Victorian Era by entering our Contest to win one of 2 \$50 gift certificates.

See page 5 for details.

Check out our digital Victorian History Advent Calendar starting **December 1st, 2020** on our website.

More details on page 6.

Join Neptune's Childrens' Choir, The Berkeley, Parkland and The Friends for a virtual **Holiday Sing-along** December 17 at 7 pm.

Page 7 has the details.



Frost defined reeds and trees graced the cover of The Friends 2015 Calendar.
Photo by Darryl Robertson

Water Wisdom by Tanya Davis * October 13th, 2012

Do you remember a long time ago when we would watch the water flow
from springs up from the earth, cascading over waterfalls
the rivers running through it through it
leading us all to it
we'd view it
and the renewal could move us
closer to *our* source

Do you remember when we weren't cruising at high speeds towards anything
neither altitude nor finishing
rather steady climb and steady living
like the water that ran beneath things

Admittedly, I daydream
of simplicity with less machines
basic living at a slower pace
to contemplate the meaning
- like when standing by the stream, watching water flow on by

And these days we build monuments to older times
but we trade stream for streamline
we study craftsmanship but keep it within budgets
make arguments for beauty while citing statistics
something like: studies show the sounds of flowing water
help the people relax

Yes. We know that. So it's been made into fact
Is that what we need, then, to keep leisure intact?
To keep an aspect of soul on our urban maps
to give modern day humans
a source for their musings
a wellspring to tap?

I, for one, wouldn't mind trading in some science to get some more myth back.

I wouldn't mind if Haligonians made pilgrimages to sacred groves
and asked invisible nymphs for advice on their woes
wouldn't mind if more kneeled at waterside
so as to yield to nature
to beg the favour
of counsel
in exchange for their prayers

Remember when places of worship were in the outside air?
And we sought counsel from stars as much as people
when wisdom was a mythical creature
was a priestess
was a bubbling brook
was a nymph with flowing hair?

We are lucky, now, for technology
for comfort
for industry that brought us heat and lights and comfort
for all of our achievements and how our wonderings brought so much into
being

But we traded growth for growth
soul for luxury
and not so many of us visit sacred groves anymore

And so, the fact that our city even has a fountain to begin with is, indeed,
significant

So, then, let's take advantage of it
let's notice it
let's sit by it
and on this momentous occasion let us celebrate stone and flowing water
how beautiful!
Let us celebrate craftsmanship and stonecutters, down from the ancestors
how useful

we celebrate places to sit and be peaceful
we celebrate the public gardens, its friends and keepers
who work to make this possible..

It's pretty but it's also more than that
lest we forget the history from which fountains sprang
the mystery people pondered before we knew how water came
back when it was gods who gave it
and nymphs in sacred spots who blessed it
when we gave offerings to appease it
when we took to our knees to thank it

If you see, someday, a stranger, praying by the fountain
consider yourself lucky to witness this subtle power
if you see an acquaintance, listening to the water
pondering the cosmos or what they'll make for dinner
remember water has always been wisdom
and we have a wellspring, too!
We have fountain to contemplate beside
running water to listen to.

Thank you, friends and workers and worshippers of all kinds
now, and then
for soul as well as science
for the water that flows around, ahead, and in behind us



The Golden Elm (*Ulmus glabra* var. *lutescens*) glowing by the Victoria Jubilee Fountain featuring Egeria and cherubs Photo by Serena Graham-Dwyer

HOLIDAY CONTEST

Welcome to The Friends of the Public Gardens Happy Holidays contest!

How much do you know about the Public Gardens? This contest is meant to make you think back, way back to the Victorian Era when our wonderful Gardens were designed, and to link the past with the present.

How the contest works:

Answer all of the five (5) questions given below. Include answers to either or both of the two (2) bonus questions if you can. You must correctly answer at least 5 of the 7 questions to be entered in the draw for one of two prizes of a \$50 gift certificate to the local store of your choice. **Enter the contest by emailing your answers to: infohalifaxpublicgardens@gmail.com.** Be sure to include your telephone number and the store you want to shop at. The contest starts December 1st and ends at midnight on December 15th and is open to all current membership holders.

Good luck! Have fun digging into Victorian history. And thank you all for supporting The Friends with your membership.

Question #1

Which Victorian Era company started in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, revolutionized a product that was commonly worn by people in the famous Public Gardens skating rink? Please name the company and the product.

Clue: This company closed its doors permanently in 1996.

Question #2

What symbol of luxury and affluence in the 1700s and throughout the Victorian Era is grown in the Public Gardens greenhouses and transplanted outside in summer for everyone to enjoy? This item is today widely available at an affordable price.

Clue: It can also be found incorporated into the wrought iron of the main gate of the Gardens.

Question #3

Who was the prominent individual born January 6, 1826, in Germany who designed one of the most iconic and well-used structures in the Public Gardens to this day? Please name the person and the structure.

Question #4

What three famous beauties arrived in 1874 at Corbett's Wharf in Halifax, and still charm visitors to the Public Gardens with their everlasting grace and stature? You must name all three.

Bonus Question: Can you name the individual who paid for their journey to Halifax?

Question #5

What individuals were tasked with clearing snow from the outdoor skating rink originally on Griffin's Pond?

Clue: A certain store on Windsor Street takes its name from a Victorian Era structure and is in the business of selling "merriments".

Bonus Question

Which relative of Queen Victoria (whose namesake is in the Public Gardens) visited the Maritimes for a short period of five weeks? Name the individual and who 'he' was.

Clue: He was not her husband.

Winners will be notified by phone and announced on The Friends website by December 18th. The answers will also be posted on the website on December 18th.

VICTORIAN HISTORY ADVENT CALENDAR



The board of The Friends of the Public Gardens proudly presents to you a Victorian History Advent Calendar to showcase some of the events and customs of the Victorian era that perhaps we have forgotten or never knew.

Though this Victorian Calendar will give you lots of information, there is lots more to discover.

We hope you will be encouraged to dig deeper into where so much popular culture comes from, and realize how some things remain the same.

Best of all, instead of chocolate calories, we will load your souls and minds with knowledge and perhaps a few eyebrow-raising surprises.

On each day of December from the 1st to the 25th you will find a new interesting fact about Queen Victoria, Victorian recipes, book information, the secret language of flowers, some odd facts, and so much more.

We sincerely hope this first time effort informs your minds, lightens your souls, and brings a little extra mirth to the end of this long and tumultuous year.

Happy Holidays and happy exploring back into Victorian era history!

Visit the homepage on our website to see the Victorian History Advent Calendar, and click on a numbered day.

www.halifaxpublicgardens.ca



NEPTUNE THEATRE PRESENTS.....

WINTER GARDEN SING-ALONG

A VIRTUAL HOLIDAY GATHERING

We may have to stay inside our homes but that doesn't mean we can't sing from the rooftops! "The fire is so delightful" so grab your eggnog or mulled wine and join Neptune Theatre students and staff as they lead you in a holiday sing-along everyone can enjoy.

Thursday, December 17th at 7pm (FREE)

You can join us on the **Neptune Theatre Facebook Page** or the **Neptune Theatre YouTube Page** to see our live-streamed virtual singers.

Lyric sheets are available by visiting neptunetheatre.com/sing. All links to the broadcast will also be posted there.

Hope you enjoy the winter scenes of the gardens on the following pages.

Photo credits: Jim Dummit, Serena Graham-Dwyer and Nova Scotia Archives



