



# West Bay Residents Association

Community Update June 2022

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## West Bay Harbour



*Strong connections to the harbour make West Bay a truly livable neighbourhood and a popular destination for locals and visitors. Looking out over the harbour from the West Bay Walkway or Captain Jacobson Park it's clear that the West Bay harbour is a distinct place. A place shaped in part by the natural and human history that relate to the harbour. This edition of the **WBRA Update** focuses on the West Bay harbour, its waterfront ecology, colourful history, interesting places and the special people who choose to live there.*

**E**squimalt's West Bay neighbourhood was formed by significant periods in its history. These periods lie at the heart of its local vibe and distinctive sense of place that make it a favourite destination for locals and visitors alike.

*"You will see ancient shorelines, intriguing trails,*

*Garry oak forests, incredible glimpses into our maritime and military past, heritage homes designed by renowned architects, and coastal and upland parks that are the envy of the region."* (Township of Esquimalt Walking Tour #1 West Bay.)

For 4,000 years the Lək̓ʷəŋən People (Esquimalt and Songhees Nations) harvested shellfish and had fishing camps on the shores of West Bay. Work Point Barracks, established in 1887, is one of the oldest landmarks in Esquimalt. Many unique heritage homes, some designed by well known architects, bring a rich historical character to the neighbourhood. The numerous small

wartime homes in West Bay were built to house labourers for Work Point installations and shipyard workers brought in to build ships for the war effort. The West Bay Walkway is part of a regionally significant linear park that brings you to the Matson Lands, home to Victoria harbour's last patch of rare and endangered Garry oak ecosystems that lies within the first migratory bird sanctuary established in Pacific Canada.



The West Bay basin is not only Esquimalt's gateway to the Victoria harbour, it also provides a safe haven for mariners, and offers opportunities for a wide array of water-based activities and commercial enterprises. There are three marinas in the West Bay basin: Sailor's Cove at the entrance to the West Bay Walkway, Hidden Harbour Marine Centre in front of Captain Jacobson Park, and West Bay Marina next to the Salish Seaside RV Haven.

West Bay is also home to our nautical neighbours, residents aka 'floaties' who choose to live on the water.

Whether you live on a float home, a house boat, or live aboard a sail or power boat, your dwelling will rise and fall with the tide, and rock and roll at times due to inclement weather. All of these floating abodes come in a variety of shapes and sizes with varying levels of comforts and conveniences that most upland residents tend to take for granted

In this edition you'll get a glimpse into what it means to live on the water, and meet some of the diverse group of people who make that choice. There is no doubt that the 'floatie' lifestyle adds to the distinct visual and social fabric of West Bay.



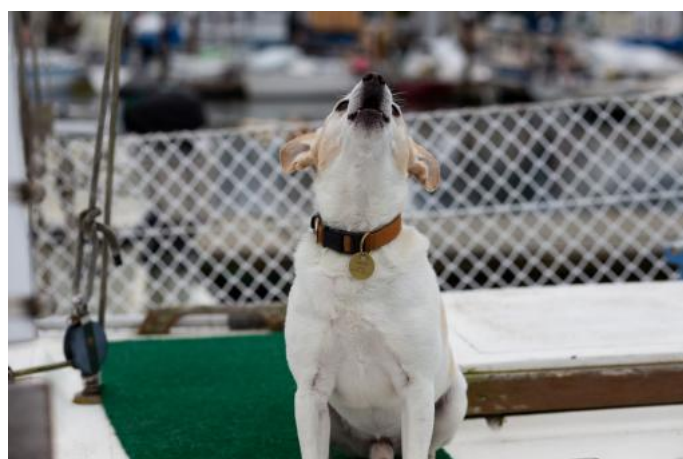
**WEST BAY  
RESIDENTS  
ASSOCIATION**



**Doug** is a retired Canadian Military Fighter Pilot. He and his wife Carol live on their float home with their dog Penny at West Bay Marina. It was after watching the movie 'Sleepless in Seattle', that the concept of a house and cottage in one resonated with their vision of a dream home. What's not to love about coffee on the decks in the morning, kayaking and boating at your doorstep, and the close-knit marina community. Even the rocking and rolling that comes with certain combinations of wind and waves is not a problem for Doug and Carol. They love their unconventional lifestyle on the water in West Bay!



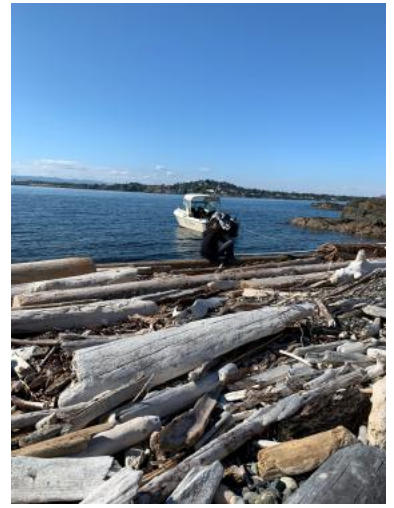
**Stephen** works at the University of Victoria. He lives aboard his 32' bluewater sailboat at Hidden Harbour Marine Centre with his two super friendly rat terriers Sandy and Jules. Being on a completely self-contained sailboat gives Stephen options that most of us don't have. He is free to cast off his home from the dock and go set anchor in any number of beautiful spots that our surrounding cruising grounds have to offer. Despite the many compromises and mixed bag of challenges that come with living aboard, Stephen loves his self-reliant and uniquely rewarding lifestyle.



**Kim** (an accomplished artist) and her husband (a mostly retired physician) live north of Duncan. They moor their power boat at the West Bay Marina to use as accommodation when her husband is working shifts at medical clinics in our area.



**Bob** is a youth and family counsellor. He lives on a house boat at Hidden Harbour Marine Centre with his wife (a school teacher) and their young son who enjoys heading out on adventures with his dad in their motorized skiff. The ability to head out on the water in search of dinner or just for the fun of it is something that Bob values each and every day. Safe haven for vessels and the close connection to the natural world is what makes West Bay harbour so special. For Bob it's a magical place, his sanctuary.



**Beth** is a school teacher in School District 61. She lives in a 16'x32' float home called the Admiral's Boathouse at Sailors Cove Marina with her husband Jesse (a retired shipwright) and their dog Sally. Their classic 40' gaff cutter wooden sailboat was their original home and is moored alongside and ready to go at a given moment, and her rowing shell sits on a rack near by waiting for a sunny day. Beth and Jesse have been 'floaties' at the marina for over 12 years. Beth says "This is the best lifestyle in the world. Living on the sailboat was good but the float home is heaven. We have the very best of everything."



Jesse's pet pelican



## At Your Serice in West Bay

**NuMan groomed at West Bay Marina** – Hey guys, this floating location at West Bay Marina is a picture-perfect venue for an appointment-only barber shop and spa service. You can reach Ashe Levesque and his pup Yoda at 514-577-5371 or [www.NuMangroomed.com](http://www.NuMangroomed.com), or email at [NuManspa@gmail.com](mailto:NuManspa@gmail.com).



**Salish Seaside RV Haven** – The Salish Seaside RV park, owned and operated by the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, is a premier motorhome park beautifully situated on the West Bay harbour waterfront. Their office and shop at 445 Head Street is full of many unique pieces for purchase, including artwork, jewelry and clothing. Bailey Stuart, Sales and Inventory Manager, advises that “*as an indigenous owned business, we are always looking for local indigenous artists to support and showcase in our shop.*” They are also working on having their online shop up and running come September. Contact information is 250 590-5995, <https://www.salishseasidervhaven.com> .



**Gord** has been running his fishing charter business out of Hidden Harbour for 15 years.



**Victoria Harbour Ferry** - Get a unique view of the West Bay harbour on a Victoria Harbour Ferry, or take a ferry for a night out in Victoria. Pick ups and or drop offs in West Bay and other Inner Harbour locations. Call 250-514-9794 for information.



## Waterfront Ecology and Ecosystems in West Bay



**Matson Conservation Lands** - Head down the West Bay Walkway and you will find this precious protected place nestled at the water's edge. This last Garry oak meadow on Victoria's Inner Harbour also falls within the Migratory Bird Sanctuary.



**Victoria Migratory Bird Sanctuary** - Several marine bird species call West Bay home - The migratory bird sanctuary was established by the Government of Canada, October 27, 1923, making it the oldest Migratory Bird Sanctuary (MBS) in Pacific Canada.





**Purple Martin Houses** - Even some purple martins have their homes on the water in West Bay.



For many years Captain Victor Jacobson lived aboard with his family on the sternwheeler, Distributor, tied up alongside the Captain's wharf in West Bay



Early West Bay photo

**West Bay Walkway** -The West Bay Walkway is a walking path and boardwalk that connects Esquimalt (from Head Street at Sailor's Cove Marina) to downtown Victoria (Johnston Street Bridge). It was built as a joint project with the Provincial Capital Commission and the City of Victoria. The pathway is approximately 5 km and connects with Victoria's Westsong Walkway.





## Is it a float-home, a house-boat or just a boat?



**Float Home** - A float home is built on floats and is stationary. Having no propulsion of its own, it requires assistance to move it.

**House Boat** - A house boat is a vessel typically built on a hull of sorts. While it does have its own means of propulsion, it is not particularly seaworthy and rarely leaves the dock.



**Boats** - Sail and power boats that people call home are referred to as live-a-board vessels. They offer varying levels of sea-worthiness, with some being capable enough to sail around the world.



**Margaret with Mike**, Saxe Point residents, rowing in the harbour on a beautiful sunny day.



**Life Style** - Check out the living space in this small but cozy float home.



West Bay residents **Chris and Nareela** are joined by family members for a paddling excursion in the harbour.

