March Festivals

by Erin Ewart

St. Patrick’s Day

Four-leaf clovers, leprechauns, the color green, “Erin go bragh” (Ireland forever) and Ireland. All these things have one event in common and seem to emerge all together on one day. The event: St. Patrick’s Day, the day: March 17th every year. It is celebrated on the 17th because that was when St. Patrick died. He was a missionary in the 4th century. When he was 16 he was kidnapped by a group of Irish raiders and sold into slavery in Ireland. During his six year captivity as a shepherd, he began to have religious visions and found strength in his faith. He finally escaped to France and became a priest, and later a bishop. When he was about 60 years old, Saint Patrick returned to Ireland to spread the Christian word. He used the shamrock, which resembles a three-leaved clover, to explain the Christian concept of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Holi

One of the important festivals of North India, Holi - the festival of colours, is celebrated with gaiety and exuberance March 6th. It marks the end of winter and greets the advent of spring. According to legend, Holika was a demoness who was vanquished by Prahlad, her virtuous nephew. The heroic deed is commemorated with a bonfire on the eve of Holi and the next morning, the young and the old take part in boisterous singing, dancing and smeared each other with Abir - coloured powder, or Gulal, spraying coloured water. This is a day to forgive and forget and to repair ruptured relationships.

There is a lot of informal feasting, some people enjoy the heady effect of an almond flavoured milk drink Thandai spiked with Cannabis. The sweetmeat popularly exchanged on this occasion is Gujiya - a half moon pastry filled with condensed milk, dried fruits and nuts.

In Punjab, Hola-Mohalla is celebrated the day after the Holi. On this day the blue and saffron dressed Nihangs regale the onlookers with a breathtaking display of fencing and archery, acrobatic riding and mock combat.

International Women’s Day

Did you know that International Women’s Day is March 8th? Established in 1977 by the United Nations, this special day provides an opportunity to celebrate the progress made to advance equality for women and to assess the challenges that remain. This day also provides an opportunity to consider steps to bring about equality for women in all their diversity.
UVic Family Residents of House #39 Meeting
by Tomoko Okada

The first meeting of the UVic student family residents House #39 was held on February 18th. Eight residents actively participated in the constructive discussion of their experiences in Family Housing. The main purpose of this meeting was to get to know the neighbours and sharing experiences. The following valuable points for consideration of the UVic Family Housing and the activities the residents want to plan in the near future were addressed by the participants.

Things the residents like about living in the complex
- Close to campus, childcare services, kindergarten, all public schools, parks, play grounds, beach, and bus routes
- Affordable and spacious housing units
- Good, healthy environment
- Easy access to and excellent assistance from the Family Centre
- Residents have a mutually bonding characteristic as students with families
- Residents are from culturally diverse backgrounds, an environment much liked and therefore share “mini United Nations”

Challenges and Barriers
- Need free visitors’ parking spaces
- Need more interactions within the group
- Need closer shopping
- Need better moving arrangements
- Coping with stress management
- Need to deal with appropriately disruptive noise level
- Many are English as second language speakers

Activities the residents want:
- Need more communication among the residents
- Make the front foyer area more attractive for a place of communication
- Organize a giant garage sale (Proceeds to the Family Centre)
- Host monthly meetings and potluck dinners
- Collect ideas of community events
- Share and celebrate cultural holidays together
- Joint picnic and walking tours
- Organize mini-lectures from community resources such as emergency preparedness, fire drills, Tenancy Act, and power failure
- Organize volunteers for assisting in Income Tax Return forms.
- Help with car pools, providing transportation and emergency babysitting
- Establish Advisory Committee to assist in determining a detailed plan of activities and to work with dispute resolutions

Family Centre Program Changes

Attention Swimmers!
Just a quick note to let anyone who has been attending the swimming at McKinnon pool Saturday’s and Sunday’s that it will be canceled March 18th and 19th because Erin is going out of town. Swimming will, however resume as normal the following weekend.

Programs Canceled
Unfortunately, the Monday night cooking co-op and super Saturday mornings have been canceled until further notice.

We Need Your Input!
The Family Centre is looking for program ideas from the UVic Family Housing community for a new Thursday evening program from 6-8pm. Some ideas that we have received so far include: cooking, book club, parenting, and yoga. We are interested to hear if any of those ideas appeal to you or if you have any other new and exciting ideas. Please pass on any program ideas to Kelly Peck at kpeck@uvic.ca or come by the Family Centre and share them with one of our volunteers or staff. Thank you -- your input is very valuable to us!

NO FOOLIN’ EVENT

It's that time of year again! Our third annual No Foolin’ Event is happening at the Family Centre on FRIDAY MARCH 31st from 7:30-9 AM. Come by on your way to school or work for some pizza and ice cream for breakfast! It’s a great chance to win prizes, meet other student families, hear some music, and lots more! This event is free, and everyone is welcome. If you would like to help by volunteering, please come and see Andrea at the Family Centre.

FREE STUDENT FAMILY RAFFLE TICKET
Fill out this ticket and bring it to the No Foolin’ Event for a chance to win one of our many prizes!

FAMILY RAFFLE TICKET

NAME: ____________________________
PHONE NUMBER: ___________________
EMAIL: __________________________

*This ticket is only for student families. Limit one free ticket per family. More raffle tickets will be available to purchase at the event.
Our Family Suggests...

In this recurring column, we will hear about activities and events suggested by residents of Family Housing. Is there something that your family likes to do? Send us your recommendations!

Waterfront Walk

Here's a downtown waterfront walk we love to do on a sunny day. Follow the Lower Causeway in front of the Empress Hotel to the Coho and Clipper terminals, then pick up the sea walk around Laurel Point Inn and out to the street. Keeping the sea glimpses to your right, continue on Belleville to Fisherman's Wharf. Take a discreet peek at the floating homes before heading off toward the top of Dallas Road. Stop to gander at the Coast Guard base from the lookout and then head on to Ogden Point. Soon, the cruise ships will be in -- it's very fun to see a floating city up close! Hike out the breakwater and back, then stop for a tea or snack at the Ogden Point Cafe.

Don't Forget the Children's Farm!

If you're coming back through Beacon Hill Park, note that the Beacon Hill Children's Farm is back in operation after the winter break! You can visit the rabbits, ducks, sheep and other critters -- there are lots of baby goats on the way at this time of year!

The farm's spring hours (March 15 - April 30): 10:00am - 4:00pm.

Food Matters

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with this traditional Irish recipe!

One hundred fifty years ago it was common to make bread using baking soda rather than yeast in parts of rural Ireland.

That's where Irish soda bread gets its name.

The practice of using baking soda started out of necessity. Yeast won't make dough rise unless the baker uses "strong" flour, which was scarce in parts of Ireland. Baking soda, however, could be counted on to leaven bread. The baking soda has to be combined with something acidic in order to do its magic. In this case, it's used buttermilk.

**Irish Soda Bread**

- 2 cups white flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 cups whole wheat flour  
- 4 tbsp. butter, chilled
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup raisins
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk or plain yogurt

Heat the oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl, combine the dry ingredients.

Cut in the butter until it is pea-sized. Stir in the raisins and buttermilk or yogurt. Turn the dough onto a floured surface, knead 1 minute, and shape into a disk.

Cut an "X" in the top and bake on a greased baking sheet for 45 to 50 minutes.

Makes one 8-inch-wide loaf.

*recipe from FamilyFun.com*

Reading Buddies  Nellie McIlung and Emily Carr Branch Libraries, April 1 - May 20. For children in grades 2-4. Does your child need a little help with reading? Reading Buddies provides regular one-on-one reading practice with a Big Buddy; fun, reading-based activities; increased confidence and motivation. Space is limited, in-person registration begins March 13.

Children's Corner  Don't Lose Your Marbles!

Kids have been playing marbles and marble-like games for thousands of years. It is thought that marbles began with cave people playing with small pebbles or balls of natural clay. Clay balls have also been found in the tombs of Egypt, and in Native American burial grounds as well as the ancient Aztec pyramids.

Players: 2 to 6 players -- Needed: Marbles (13 mibs and 1 shooter per player minimum) and a circle.

Each player decides on how many marbles they are going to use in their game. Players begin by drawing a circle that is 3 to 10 feet in diameter. This is often determined by the skill of the players. The bigger the circle, the better the players. Players place 13 mibs (one of the thirteen smaller 5/8" marbles) in the center of the circle to form an "X" or a circle. The game begins by one player knocking down at the edge of the circle and flicking their shooter. The object is to knock out one or more of the mibs, without the player's shooter leaving the circle. If the player has been successful, then they can shoot again from the place where the shooter rested. If the player has missed and his/her shooter ends up outside the circle, then the player must leave the shooter inside the circle. The next player takes a turn. Each mib that was knocked out counts for one point. A player may also knock out any other player's shooter that remains in the circle. The game continues until all of the original mibs have been knocked out. The player with the most points wins.
This is YOUR Newsletter!
We were disappointed that not one of our feedback surveys got returned, but that must mean that we're doing a great job! But we can't do it without you -- submissions of all kinds are welcome. Send us your thoughts, opinions, suggestions, stories, poems, recipes, tips or ideas! The email is fcnews@uvic.ca, or you can drop your submission off in the envelope on the board outside the Family Centre.

Family Centre Programs

Check our website for full program descriptions:
http://web.uvic.ca/family-centre/

Storytime & Playgroup
Tuesdays, 10am to 12pm.

International Community Kitchen
Tuesdays 4 to 6pm.

Playgroup
Wednesdays, 10am to 12pm.

Breakfast Club
Wednesdays & Fridays, 7:30 to 9am.

After-School Club
Thursdays, 4 to 5pm.

Knitting Night
Second & Fourth Friday, 7 to 9pm. (Contact Family Centre for March dates.)

Ladies’ Running Group
Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6:30am. Walkers welcome!

Swim With Erin
Saturdays and Sundays 2-3pm, McKinnon Pool
The Family Centre is starting a new program which would enable kids to learn various aspects of water sports and to just come out and enjoy getting wet in a supervised area! Ages 8 and over may come alone while all those under age 8 come supervised. We also encourage that participants are very comfortable in water and are able to support themselves without an aid. Erin is a certified lifeguard and instructor and was a competitive swimmer for 15 years.

International Grad Student Breakfast: Filing Your Taxes
Join us for an informative breakfast with Robert Mitchell from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, as he offers international grad students a free workshop on how to file your taxes. Coffee and muffins provided.

Community Programs

Swan Lake Events
All events take place at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. 3873 Swan Lake Rd., 479-0211 for more info

Night Eyes for Night Skies
Friday, March 10, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. OR Wednesday, March 15, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Come to Swan Lake for an evening stroll, and learn how our nocturnal animals are adapted for night life. Suitable for ages 6 and up. Warming refreshments afterwards, please bring a mug. Pre-registration required, limited space. Cost: $3 per child, accompanying adults free.

Swan Lake Trails
Mon, March 13, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. OR 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Play bingo as you walk around the lake trail... prizes and surprises at every turn. Dress for the weather and bring a snack. Suitable for ages 5 and up. Arrive by 10:30 or 1:30 for the 2.5 km. walk around the lake. Donations appreciated.

Wild and Crafty
Tuesday, March 14, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Colourful fish, beastie blocks, quacking ducks and more. Make them all for a nominal fee of $3.00 per child. Drop-in program.

Picnic on Christmas Hill
Wednesday, March 15, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Count the stone steps to the top of Christmas Hill, where you’ll be in the midst a Garry Oak Meadow. Bring your own picnic, sit in the glacial grooves, and enjoy the best viewpoint in Victoria. Family drop-in program. Donations appreciated.

Tarantulas 101
Thursday, March 16, 10:30 a.m. OR 1:00 p.m.
Jason Smith, our guest presenter, will introduce you to his live tarantulas including the largest spider in the world. Make a tarantula craft and a booklet to take home. Ages 7 and up. Pre-registration required, limited spaces. Program fee $5/child, accompanying adults free.

Animal Crackers
Friday, March 17, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Animals eat the weirdest things. Meet our turtle twins, Buffy, Chocolate and the Bee Sisters and find out what we feed them. Drop-in, suggested donation $1.00 per child.

Free Swims!
The following pools have scheduled free family swims!
Crystal Pool: Wednesdays 7-9pm April 5 & June 14
Gordon Head: Fridays 7-9pm March 24 and May 15
Esquimalt: Sundays 12-1:30pm March 26, April 30, May 28 and June 25
Juan De Fuca: Tuesdays 7-8:30pm April 25 and May 23
Oak Bay: Sundays 9-11am March 5, May 14 and June 18