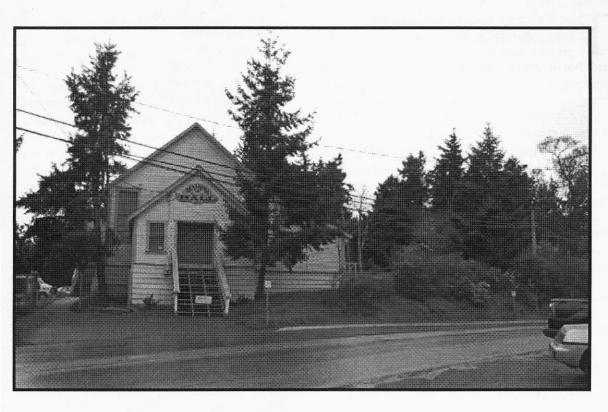
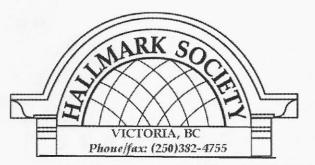


# **Dedicated to Preserving Historic and Architectural Landmarks**



Your voice in heritage preservation in the Capital Region since 1973



Administrative Director: Helen Edwards Hours: Wed. 8:30 am - 12:30 pm, Thurs. Noon - 3:00 pm Location: #10 Centennial Square Phone/fax: (250) 382-4755 office@hallmarksociety.ca http://www.hallmarksociety.ca

### Mandate

The Hallmark Society was formed in 1973. Our mandate is to encourage the preservation of structural, natural, cultural, and horticultural heritage within the Capital Regional District. We accomplish these goals through education, public speaking, advocacy, tours, exhibitions, and the annual Awards Night. We are a non-profit society, financed principally by membership dues and members' contributions.

386-6598

# Board of Directors

John Edwards First Vice-President Nicholas Russell Corresponding Secretary Cornelia Lange Treasurer Ken Johnson Directors Judith Andersen Russell Fuller Tim Lomas Davyd McMinn

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### **Cover Photo**

Mahon Memorial Hall, Salt Spring Island, a century old and still serving Islanders.See page 8 for story. Jonathan Yardley photo.

#### Deadline for Winter 2004 newsletter: October 31, 2004.

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#### President's Message

by John Edwards

The issue that is starting to cause a lot of concern is the insurance of heritage properties., In the last newsletter we asked for input, but to date we have received very little feed back.

While some property owners are not having any problems with their renewals, some horror stories are starting to surface. Two owners in Fernwood on the same street were almost to the point of asking that they have designations removed. Since 9/11, the insurance industry seems to have become very selective, and one can only assume that they are scared about the Replacement Cost Coverage. We all know that some heritage homes can never be replaced.

The companies do not want big claims as they eat into corporate profits. It's a crime that 9/11 is being used by these large corporations as a vehicle to record super profits, which some are reporting. It is essential that as much information as possible be forwarded to us, so we have some cases to bring forward.

On the plus side, owners dealing with Coast Capital and Canadian Northern Shield, to date have not had a renewal problem. Also, starting to be an insurance problem are oil tanks over 25 years old.

We are still hoping that a solution can be found with B.C. Hydro to restore the 1892 Victoria Gas Works building at 512 Pembroke. In the July/ August insert with our hydro bills was a write up on Stave Falls becoming a National Historic Site of Canada. This is a 1912 generating station and only 70 minutes from Vancouver, and they are asking people to visit and examine the original generators and turbines. Could 512 Pembroke also become a B.C. Hydro exhibit?

It was very rewarding to see that projects nominated by Hallmark for provincial awards at the June 4th B.C. Heritage Society Awards Ceremony in Burnaby were recognized. The Outstanding Achievement Award for Advocacy went to the Sooke Regional Historical Society for the Muir Cemetery. An Award of Honour for Projects went to Lombard Properties for the Temple Building on Fort Street. Recognition Certificates went to Jack and Heather Waters for 1189 Mount Newton X Road, Davyd McMinn and Robert McMinn for the Highland School House, and Royal Roads University for the Grant Block.

The City of Burnaby has had the foresight to put a levy on such developments as Metro Town, and other high rise buildings, creating funds to acquire almost all of the property around Deer Lake, and many assets including a carousel and several vintage cars owned by former Burnaby residents. This was a great idea picked up at the Conference.

The Historic Places Initiative is expanding to include some more communities, and promoting the creation of heritage registers in others. Still to come are grants under the Commercial Heritage Property Incentive Fund

Just a few up dates to keep you informed. 🕰

John Shwards

### Heritage Updates Rock Bay

Shortly before the federal election, funding was approved for the remediation of the Transport Canada/BC Hydro site on Rock Bay. According to the draft Rock Bay Plan, "the site is proposed to be remediated and then transferred to a new owner." The 2.8-hectare site contains three heritage registry buildings, including the 1862 Victoria Gas building at 512 Pembroke Street. One of the objectives of the plan is the "rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the heritage buildings." Further, these buildings are to be considered a "community amenity." In order to have a successful rehabilitation, the City will likely offer financial and economic incentives as necessary. We can be cautiously optimistic for the future of this site.

#### **Cook Street Village**

A lthough Victoria City Council defeated the original proposal in October 2003 following a marathon two-session public hearing, the developer has presented a re-worked project. It is currently on its way through the process. Despite changes, the development is still unacceptable to the heritage community. The three homes on Sutlej Street as well as the heritage apartment block on Cook Street will all be sacrificed in the name of "progress."

### **Ross Bay Cemetery**

The City has released the details of the proposal for the southwest quadrant of the cemetery (the information is also available on the City's website at http://www.city.Victoria.bc.ca.). Staff will be preparing a report to Council on the results of the June 29<sup>th</sup> Open House, then a Heritage Alteration Permit will be submitted to the Heritage Advisory Committee.

### Chinatown

The ambiance of this National Historic site will be changed forever if the controversial Bambu development is allowed. The problem with this site is that the City rezoned the site several years ago to allow a seven-storey development; the right to build was sold to the Amadon Group along with the property. If Council does not allow Amadon's proposed higher development, the site will be developed in accordance with current permissions. Several amenities have been proposed to "sweeten the pot." The fact remains that any development higher than three or four storeys is unacceptable in Chinatown; once the heritage integrity of an area is compromised, it is difficult, if not impossible, to force future developers to respect the existing structures. We will be watching this development with interest.

#### 1400 Government Street

This historically significant site, for years the location of Mac and Mac Hardware, is scheduled to be converted to residential use with retail on the main floor. The building is a key to link Old Town to Chinatown, and should be at least partially restored with heritage components. The developer is committed to restoring as much of the original façade as practical. Further plans will be presented to the Heritage Advisory Committee once a detailed examination of the facade has been made. This development will be a definite improvement on the current condition and positive for the area.

### **Beacon Hill Park**

The heritage management plan has been completed. It remains to be seen how many of the recommendations will be implemented.

### Hallmark Society Board Members Wanted

E lections for positions on the Hallmark Society Board of Directors will take place at the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, September 28, 2004. Elections are arranged so that one-half of the positions are available each year, thus ensuring continuity between Boards. There are several opportunities for new Board members.

Duties of Directors include membership coordination, special projects, awards night planning, and special tours. Responsibilities vary from year to year depending on need. Board meetings are held monthly, with general meetings quarterly. Board members are expected to take an active part in the Society's activities including Members' Night, Awards Night, and special tours.

If you would like to serve on the Board, or wish to nominate someone for a position, please contact the office (office@hallmarksociety.ca or 382-4755). Please note there are one-year terms if you are not willing to make a long-term commitment. If you have any questions, call Helen Edwards @386-6598.

Two-year terms: Vice-President 4 Directors One-year terms: 3 Directors

There are also 2 Trustee positions available with the Heritage Building Foundation of the Hallmark Society. If you are interested, please let us know.

### **Attention Heritage Homeowners**

s government money is no longer readily available, the Hallmark Society is considering a heritage house tour as a means of raising the funds necessary to continue our work. We are looking for members who would be willing to have their homes open to the public for a 3-4 hour tour. Society volunteers would ensure the security of your possessions and we would carry adequate insurance.

If you would be willing to offer your home, please let us know at the office. Also, if you would be interested in working as a volunteer, let us know that as well.  $\underline{\omega}$ 

### Local Hotels Threatened Oak Bay Beach Hotel

Ak Bay Beach Hotel on the Oak Bay waterfront is under threat of demolition. The current owner wishes to build a new, larger and more economically-feasible structure. Rumours are flying thick and fast, but, to his credit, the owner has assembled a panel of Oak Bay citizens to act as his advisors. In this time of escalating prices for waterfront properties, are we unreasonable to expect the retention of a local landmark? The hotel was not always considered outdated. In a November 6, 1982 newspaper interview, the then-new owner said; "This was exactly my image of what a Victoria hotel should be like. I was determined to buy it."

Built in 1928 by Major William Merston, who lived next door, the Oak Bay Beach Hotel began with 36 rooms. Several rooms were occupied by permanent residents – a practice which continued until 1981. Over the years, the original building has been renovated to increase the number of rooms and to add amenities. Local citizens have memories of dining and theatre shows at the hotel - not to mention generations of imbibers at the Snug.

Perhaps this hotel best exemplifies the commonly-held idea that our landmarks are secure. This building was not listed in the early inventory publication of Oak Bay's Heritage Buildings: More than Bricks and Boards and has been missed in subsequent inventories. Of course, it is now too late to press for a voluntary designation. Is this a wake-up call for us all? Think about your local landmarks – what buildings do you think MUST be saved. Check with your municipal offices - are they protected? As is the usual case, citizens are given statistics and tables of estimated costs to demonstrate that the building can no longer afford



Brochure, date unknown. Hallmark Society files.

to operate. All we can hope for at this time is that the heritage representatives on the committee will be able to exert some influence on the owner. Only time will tell.

### **Cherry Bank Hotel**

The Cherry Bank Hotel at 825 Burdett Avenue is also threatened. Citing declining patronage by visitors and local citizens alike, the owner wants to demolish the historic hotel and redevelop the site.

Built as a residence and guest house for architect James Graham Brown in 1897, it was named for the cherry trees that once graced the landscaped grounds. Brown lived in the manor with his wife and three children. In 1906, he added a wing and, as the children grew and left home, the manor became more and

more a guest house. The building changed hands several times in the 1940s; a coffee shop was added, and the transformation from boarding house to hotel began. During WWII the primary residents were military officers.

With the 1950s, liberalized liquor laws meant that bars were again legal in BC and a new addition to house a liquor lounge was added to the rear of the building. This lounge was second only to the Strathcona which had opened earlier in the same year. Dexter Lewers opened Dex's Spare Rib House in the dining room of the original guest house. It was an instant success. In the summer of 1955, Bert Thomas stayed at the hotel while preparing for his fifth attempt to swim the Strait of Juan de Fuca. On completion on his swim, he was feted at a cavalcade through Victoria while a victory celebration was hosted at the Cherry Bank. The business gradually declined, and by 1964, the hotel was in financial trouble. The Bowman brothers purchased the building and brought new life into the old establishment. Over the years there were sing-alongs in the restaurant, a "roaring twenties" lounge which later became a Trivial Pursuit Lounge while the spare ribs continued to draw customers.

Changes in the demands of the travelling public have not been kind to the old hotel, while the move to "healthier" eating with a reduction in red meat consumption have impacted the restaurant.

Is there hope for the old manor? As the building is not protected by municipal by-law, any future changes will have little to do with its heritage status. If you are concerned about the potential loss of this local landmark, contact the City of Victoria to make your views known.

# Hallmark Society on Tour

More than the second se

On Sunday, August 7th, we toured the Wrinch farm and helped Jackie Wrinch to celebrate her birthday. The family has done a tremendous amount of work since our last visit, and there is more to come. The windows from the now-demolished Point Colville House have found a new home at the farm and will be incorporated into the new conservatory rising in a clearing to the south of the farmhouse. In honour of the occasion, we celebrated with cake and lemonade.

# Memberships due

A ll members, with the exception of life members and those who have prepaid must pay membership dues by the end of September. The coloured insert advises the current type of membership you hold. Please complete it, noting any changes, then bring it to the AGM with your payment. You may also send it to the office or bring it in during regular office hours. Receipts and membership cards will be mailed with the next newsletter.

### Mahon Hall - Past, Present and Future

with notes from Gulf Islands Driftwood and Jonathan Yardley, Architect

For over 100 years the Mahon Memorial Hall in Ganges has served Salt Spring Islanders according to the needs of the community with the use of the building reflecting changes in the social and economic fabric of the island.

Sited on an historic location overlooking an ancient aboriginal canoe portage that once linked Ganges Harbour to the head of Booth Canal, it was included in one of the original lots of the 1859 Ganges Harbour Settlement and was occupied by William Issac, a black settler from the United States. The land changed hands and by the late 1890s it was owned by Frank Scott, one of several brothers recently immigrated from England.

First conceived as an "Agricultural Hall" for the sole purpose of promotion and display of small scale agriculture and orchard produce from all of the Southern Gulf Islands, the Hall was first discussed at a July 2,1898 meeting of the Islands Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association (IAFGA). In 1900, following a very successful Show Fair held outdoors at Joe Nightingales' farm in the Burgoyne Valley, the fifth AGM of the Association decided, "that the time had come to build a Hall of its own." Frank Scott a member of the original planning committee, offered "a piece of ground 35 yards by 70 yards for \$40" at the base of a rocky knoll on his Ganges Harbour farm. The directors of the IAFGA were "empowered to go ahead with the building, acquire the site offered by Mr. Scott.. open a subscription list and to do whatever was necessary to build the Hall." Work on the hall may have begun as early as November 1900.

There were delays in construction and by the fall of 1901 the building remained unfinished with a balance of \$112.00 owed to the contractor Reid Bittancourt and Victoria lumber magnate JA Sayward. At the October 26,1901 meeting of the

IAFGA, it was learned that in addition to this debt, a further \$144.25 was required for siding, eight large windows and a double front door. Henry Caldwell donated \$50 and other directors came forward. Two weeks later, the Board of directors held their first meeting in the new, still unfinished, building. A new committee was created "to raise the money necessary to … finish the hall." Ross Mahon, a recently arrived immigrant – the bachelor son of a wealthy Irish family – agreed to give a \$1,000 mortgage at 6 % interest. The Hall, finished with fir dropped-siding and painted red - the traditional colour of European-American barns, was officially opened at the 1902 Show Fair.

On June 9, 1903, Ross Mahon drowned while swimming in front of his property. The mortgage was turned over to his estate and, in October 1904 the IAGFA received a letter from the executors of the estate advising that his heirs had given them authority "to make a present of the Mortgage on the Hall and grounds" with the condition "... that a brass plate bearing the words 'Mahon Memorial Hall' be placed on the building."

Outbuildings, including a poultry display building adjacent to the Hall, and a long series of sheep and cattle sheds along Rainbow Road were built. Under the guidance of the IAFGA Board of Directors the hall was regularly used by a variety of local and visiting theatre and musical groups as well as other groups and individuals for a wide range of activities ranging from private parties to political meetings. The Show Fair enjoyed great success in the years prior to the Great War drawing up to a thousand visitors from all over the Gulf Islands and beyond. By 1918 the IAFGA amalgamated with the Farmers' Institute.

A major addition was added to the Hall in the early 1920s with the construction of an elevated stage on

the west side of the building, and, in 1926, the Association permitted the School Board day to use the poultry display building as a high school. For the next 13 years Mahon Memorial Hall served as the high school gymnasium, theatre for school productions and washroom. Other community activities continued when school was not in session. School activities continued but the Depression years witnessed the end of the annual Show Fair as many island farms moved from commercial mixed farming to subsistence farming. A new Consolidated School (now Salt Spring Elementary) to amalgamate five out of the perhaps seven schools on Salt Spring Island was completed in 1940 on a portion of the land and housed grades 1 through 12. The construction of the school was a community project with half of the cost provided through volunteer labour. Shortly after the school opened, a special meeting was held on April 25, 1940 to discuss the sale of the Mahon Memorial Hall to the United School Board; a motion at a later meeting to sell the Hall for \$700 was defeated. The familiar brick red of the building was re-painted a cream colour with brown trim to match the Consolidated School.

In 1968, with the influx of urban refugee newcomers, Mahon Memorial Hall took on a new lease in life as a venue to showcase the arts and crafts of talented islanders. The annual sale is now a four-month exhibition by over two hundred artists from all over the Gulf Islands. Commissions from sales benefit arts organizations, including significant seed money for ArtSpring, and assist in the preservation of the hall with renovations and maintenance, carried out by the tireless dedication of a handful of volunteers led for many years by Laurie Neish.

The Community Arts Council and its later incarnation the Gulf Islands Community Arts Council (GICAC) has the distinction of holding the second longest tenure of any organization in the historic Mahon Hall, allowing it to be used by other groups throughout the bulk of



the year. The annual sale established Salt Spring Island as an artists' mecca long before the betterknown Saturday Market came into existence and permitted hundreds of individuals and young families to eke out a living as artists.

After a century of continuous use, the Mahon Memorial Hall needs an upgrade to allow it to meet the changing needs of the populace. The GICAC has identified the following needs in a rejuvenated building: move the washrooms from the front of the building; increase the number of meeting rooms; provide permanent storage space for guilds, files. performing arts costumes and equipment, chairs and tables , display units; rehearsal space; kitchen; studio space for large scale projects; small retail space; and smaller room than current ball for classes and intimate theatre.

These requirements will be met through reorganizing the division of spaces within the existing Hall ; re-supporting the building on a new foundation which would allow additional full-height basement space for studio and storage use; and the construction of a modest addition to the north side of the hall for a smaller meeting room and kitchen. In addition, the existing building will be brought up to modern code.

With these changes, Mahon Memorial Hall will continue to serve Salt Spring Island residents, continuing to change to suit their needs.

### **Ross Bay Villa Restoration Committee Garage Sale**

Date: Sunday, September 26, 2004

Time: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Location: Ross Bay Villa, 1490 Fairfield Road

Funds from this sale will be used to finance the restoration of this Fairfield landmark.

Check your attics, garages, dresser drawers, and basements – ask your friends and family as well – for saleable items. All donations welcome except contemporary clothing, canning jars, and obsolete electronics.

Donations can be dropped off at Ross Bay Villa on Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm (or call the office for pickup).

After donating your unwanted items, come to the sale prepared to buy replacment "treasures." Remembers, one man's junk is another's treasure.

### Bungalows and Before: Historic House Colours A lecture with slides, by Robert Schweitzer,

author of Bungalow Colors - Exterior [published by Gibbs-Smith]

Date: Wednesday, September 29, 2004 - 8: 00 PM

Venue: St. Ann's Academy Auditorium, 835 Humboldt Street, Victoria

Tickets: General admission \$10 Available at: • Ivy's Bookshop • Charles Rupert The Shop • Bolen Books •Cadboro Bay Book Co. • Munro's Books • The Bungalow

Robert Schweitzer has taught architectural history and historic preservation for over 25 years, currently at Eastern Michigan University in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is a columnist for *Victoria Homes* magazine, a former advisory board member for *American Bungalow* magazine, the Director of Research for the Arts & Crafts Society, and is co-author of *America's Favorite Homes*, a book on the "Kit" houses popular in the U.S.A. from 1900 to WWII. If members of the audience wish to bring their copies of *Bungalow Colors – Exterior*, Mr. Schweitzer will be available to sign them.

For further information: contact the Victoria Heritage Foundation by phone or E-mail

# **CFB Esquimalt Base Open House**

Forces Pacific. One of the principal objectives is to demonstrate the strong relationship between the base and community organizations.

We will be mounting a display of historic photographs along with providing information on our society and our services. As our focus shifts to education of the general public, this event will allow us to reach people who would never attend a "heritage" function yet might be interested in "old buildings" or landmarks. Join us at CFB Esquimalt on September 18, 2004 from 10 am to 3 pm.

# Meet the Speaker

Recuracy. She was a writer, then editor for *Beautiful British Columbia*, and has served as visiting lecturer at the University of Victoria's Creative Writing Department. She has several books in print including *A Traveller's Guide to Historic British Columbia*. Rosemary has won several awards for her books, all meticulously researched and skillfully written. She has the talent to make history come alive.

Her topic for our meeting is Seeking the Bones: Researching and Writing about British Columbia's Heritage, with a particular emphasis on visible history (buildings, historic sites, mouldering ruins, patterns in the underbrush) and what it tells us about the history of our province. Come prepared to be entertained, and bring your questions about BC's heritage.



# Calendar

September 9 - 11, 2004	Heritage Canada Foundation annual conference "Stewardship of Heritage Buildings; Are We Committed?" Saint John, New Brunswick. www.heritagecanda.org
September 12, 2004	Newman Farm tour. See page 13 for details.
September 15, 2004	Lecture, 7:00 pm. Oak Bay Municipal Hall. Dr. Elizabeth Churchill: "Aboriginal History in Oak Bay" sponsored by the Oak Bay Heritage Foundation.
September 18, 2004	CFB Esquimalt Base Open House. 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Hallmark Society has an information booth with displays.
September 26, 2004	Ross Bay Villa Garage Sale, 1490 Fairfield Road. See page 10 for details.
September 28, 2004	Hallmark Society Annual General Meeting, 7:30 pm, James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street. Guest speaker: Rosemary Neering, author of several books on historical events and persons.
September 29, 2004	<i>Bungalows and Before: Historic House Colours, a</i> lecture with slides, by Robert Schweitzer, author of <i>Bungalow Colors – Exterior.</i> St. Ann's Academy, 8:00 pm. See page 10 for details.
October 1-2, 2004	Heritage Societyof BC Regional Meeting, Nelson, BC. Visit http://heritagebc.ca for details or call 384-4840.
October 8-10, 2004	Marion Dean Ross/Pacific Northwest Chapter Society of Architectural Historians conference and annual meeting, Eugene, Oregon. See http://www.sahmdr.org for details and registration materials.
October 20, 2004	Lecture, 7:00 pm. Oak Bay Municipal Hall. Dr. Larry McCann (Professor of Geography, UVic): "Uplands and its influence on Oak Bay" sponsored by the Oak Bay Heritage Foundation.
February 21-25, 2005	Heritage Week. Theme: Heritage of Faith: Sacred Buildings & Spiritual Places
March 17-20, 2005	Port Townsend 9th Annual Victorian Festival, Port Townsend, WA. See http://www.victorianfestival.org for details.
April 6-10, 2005	Society of Architectural Historians conference, Vancouver, BC. See http://www.sah.org for details.

# Newman Farm Tour

oin us on September 12, 2004 for the long-awaited tour of the Newman Farm in Central Saanich. As access to the site is limited, members are asked to meet at the Central Saanich Municipal Hall – 1903 Mount Newton Cross Road – at 10:00 am where Bonnie McKenzie will lead a car pool to the site. As there is a walk across fields, please remember to wear walking shoes.

This is a unique opportunity to view a virtually-untouched farm complete with outbuildings and to remember a pioneering Central Saanich family.

If you are planning to attend, please let us know via email at office@hallmarksociety.ca or telephone at 382-4755.

# Awards 2005 Promo

hat is going on in your neighbourhood? Is someone restoring their house? Awards Night 2005 will be here sooner than you think. We have booked St. Ann's Academy Auditorium for Tuesday, May 2, 2005.

If you have a suggestion for an award winner, please contact the office and we will help you with the nomination. If you wish our list of guidelines which will enable you to write your own nomination, please let us know and we will send it to you (the guidelines are also available on our website at http: //www.hallmarksociety.ca). We are adding sample "winning" nominations to our website to further assist preparation.

Remember, we cannot see everything. It is up to our members to act as "our eyes" in the neighbourhoods. Keep us informed! Thank-you.

# A Gentle Reminder

If you are planning to attend one of our tours or events, please let us know. In the event that you are later unable to join us, let us know that as well. We had an embarrassing situation at the Government House tour where we had 28 reservations, yet only 12 members attended. This does not look good for our credibility of our organization.

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# **Annual General Meeting Update**

Please note the change of date from our earlier notifications. Due to circumstances beyond our control, the AGM will be held on TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2004 at 7:30 pm.

On the agenda are election of officers, reports, and heritage updates. We are pleased to have Rosemary Neering as our guest speaker. She is the author of several publications which highlight local and provincial history and people. See page 11 for a short biography.

We will be holding a raffle with two prizes: a \$35 gift certificate from Bolen's Books and a copy of Robert Amos' *Victoria Sketchbook*. Copies of *This Old House Volume One* will be available at the sales table.



#### 4320 Torquay Drive

To inquire the house please contact: Daryl Clegg (250) 658-0082 daryl\_clegg@canadalife.com

More Pictures of the house are available at www.geocities.com/heritagemansion