

# QUARTERLY



winter 2020

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS BEAUTIFUL PLACE WHERE WE HAVE CHOSEN TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY LIES WITHIN THE TERRITORY OF THE LEKWUNGEN-SPEAKING PEOPLE, KNOWN AS THE ESQUIMALT, SONGHEES, AND WSÁNEĆ FIRST NATIONS.

All of us have left behind much loved friends, family and places. With a little help from our VENC friends we are building new lives here in Victoria, while the lives of faraway family and friends also change.



Felicity Smith, VENC President, and granddaughter.

*In November, my sister and I travelled to New Zealand where my son and his family are now living. My granddaughter is growing tall and lanky, running barefoot in a beautiful country where she can play outside year round. I wish she were nearer, but I know that I can go back and forth. My Australian passport ensures that I can visit whenever I like for as long as I want; my Canadian passport brings me back home.*

Citizenship is an incredible privilege. An estimated 70 million

people worldwide are refugees, forced from their homes and unable to safely return. Gaining citizenship is cause for celebration. Last month, VENC member Reem Abazid and her children became Canadian citizens at a moving ceremony which conferred citizenship on people from 29 countries. Congratulations to Reem and her children!



Reem Abazid became a Canadian citizen.

Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS), it provides free workshops, garden resources, and a network of people to grow and cook food with.

Alternatively, if you have garden space available, consider offering it to others for growing food. Learn more about this programme on the VIRCS Welcome Gardens website.

If you are enjoying the novelty of plants flowering in February, you might want to participate in the very light-hearted Victoria

Flower Count 2020 which will take place between March 4 and 11. This annual event began in the late 1960s as a way to promote Victoria as a winter destination for people living in some of the coldest parts of the country and has been enthusiastically embraced by Victorians who enjoy bragging rights!

Sincerely, *Felicity*

Victoria winters are mostly green. Snowdrops have been brightening gardens since late December and blossoms are making their first tentative appearance. If all this is making you think of gardening, consider Welcome Gardens, open to all newcomers. Offered by the



## FAQ

### UPDATE TO VENC MEMBERS ONLY WEB SITE

Recently, a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section has been added to the footer of each page and the About tab. If you have particular suggestions about the web site, please forward them to the VENC Webmaster (VENCWebmaster@gmail.com).

The new year is a good time to log in to the VENC web site and review your personal profile. You can change your address, update your photo or adjust which groups you would like to participate in.

The mailing list for all activity groups is updated each month.

One month after joining a group, if you are not receiving invites, please contact the relevant Activity Leader ( <https://www.victoriannewcomers.ca/Activity-Leaders> ). In the meantime, you can check the Activity & Events Calendar and contact the Activity Leader directly.

## FOCUS ON

### USING VENC FORUMS:

**Have a question about where to find something in Victoria? Try using one of the VENC Forums.**

They are similar to bulletin boards, grouped by category. Under the Forums tab on the member's only web site, select the forum to which your question applies. Some forums correspond to an activity group, while others are more general. Any member may add a new topic to any one of the forums. Other members can respond to your question within the forum. Questions and answers, or notices and comments are grouped together as a conversation.

To receive an email alerting you to new postings in a forum, open the main page for the forum that interests you, then select "subscribe to forum".

If you are new to posting on forums, get detailed instructions in the VENC Forums Tip Sheet. There is a link to the tip sheet on the main Forums page: <https://www.victoriannewcomers.ca/Forums>

### SAVE THE DATE!

A DINNER AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO ELECT THE NEXT EXECUTIVE ON **JUNE 11, 2020**. NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO VOLUNTEER FOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS. IT'S A GREAT WAY TO IMMERSE YOURSELF IN VENC.

### Photo Editor, where art thou?

VENC is still seeking a Photo Editor to harvest activity and event photos posted by other members on Evite, or submitted by email. Decide which photos will be suitable for various locations on the web site, make size and quality adjustments if needed, and submit them to the Webmaster. There may also be an opportunity to take photos of sites around Victoria. If this creative task appeals to you, please contact Marianne Smith, Activities Coordinator: [vencactivity@gmail.com](mailto:vencactivity@gmail.com)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Two new VENC activity groups have started for Scrabble lovers (Activity Leader: Janine Czerniak [ja9cze@gmail.com](mailto:ja9cze@gmail.com)), and Board Games in general (Activity Leader: Julie Cohen [juliebcohen@gmail.com](mailto:juliebcohen@gmail.com)). Be sure to add these groups to your member profile if you want to receive invitations to upcoming game nights. If you are having trouble reading or printing this version of the newsletter, please request a PDF version from [VENCcomm@gmail.com](mailto:VENCcomm@gmail.com).