



# Victoria NIKKEI FORUM

Volume 20 Issue 6 January/February 2013

[www.vncs.ca](http://www.vncs.ca)

The Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society, the Japanese Friendship Society and the Victoria Japanese Heritage Language School are pleased to present the annual

## MOCHI-TSUKI SHINNEN KAI POTLUCK DINNER

**Sunday, January 20, 2012 3:00 - 6:30 pm**

Join us for our annual tradition of mochi-pounding and potluck dinner to celebrate the New Year.

**Doors open at 2:30 pm** on Sunday, January 20th at the Esquimalt Rec Centre. (site of the VNCS Cultural Fall Fair.)

ADMISSION IS FREE FOR MEMBERS OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS.  
BECAUSE OF AN ANTICIPATED LARGE PARTICIPATION, **THIS EVENT IS OPEN ONLY TO ACTIVE MEMBERS.**

Please bring a main course sufficient to feed your family plus two others. Salad, drinks and dessert will be provided.

Please label your dishes and serving utensils and if you can, please prepare a tent card describing your entrée. (and ingredients)

**\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT NO ONE WILL BE ADMITTED WITHOUT FOOD\*\*\***

In addition to mochi pounding there will be plenty of activities to keep everyone entertained. The Kohaku (Red and White) program will be very interactive with different activities pitting Red (female) vs White (male).

To help defray costs of this free event there will be a 50/50 draw, a Dutch raffle and mochi sales so please help support your event.

As always, there is plenty of work to be done on the part of preparation and organization. If you can assist please contact Michael Abe at [mkabe2011@gmail.com](mailto:mkabe2011@gmail.com). Kitchen set up starts from 1:00 pm and the hall is available for set up from 2:00 pm. Help make this event a success by lending a hand: We need volunteers for set-up, kitchen crew, reception desk, mochi seller, and clean-up crew, etc.

We are also seeking donations, big or small to add to our Dutch raffle prize packages.

**See you there!**



**Year of the Snake (*Hebi*) 2013**

Ann-Lee Switzer

Last year's mythical Dragon has vanished in a puff of smoke, but look downward, as Snake slithers in for the year 2013, the sixth symbol of the Japanese Zodiac.

The Snake is familiar to us from nature and myth. A limbless reptile, the snake fascinates and unnerves us with its quick darting tongue, sharp fangs and its ability to move rapidly by undulating its body. Born live or from eggs, baby snakes wiggle into the world on their own, shedding their outer skins as they grow. The amazing snake smells with its tongue and hears with its whole body. Its jaws unhinge to enable it to swallow whole animals often larger than itself (mice, frogs and even rabbits). This fascinating creature sports a tremendous variety of colours and patterns. The garter snake is friend to gardeners, but rattlers are dreaded for their poison-injecting fangs, while boas kill with deadly grip. Ancient Aztecs revered Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent, while in the Bible, Snake got a bad rap for the apple incident. In the Greek tale, evil Medusa's snaky bad hair turned viewers into stone. In the Japanese legend, when a fisherman saved a white snake, it repaid him with jewels and precious metals.

The Snake brings both good and bad fortune to those born in its reign, that is, in the cycle going back every twelve years: 2001, 1989, '77, '65, '53, '41, '29, and so forth. Snakes tend to be deep thinkers, wise and meditative, including the likes of Charles Darwin, Frank Lloyd Wright, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Martin Luther King. They tend to avoid conflicts, leading to stress. In addition they can be a little vain, spiteful and selfish—but also good-looking, attractive, graceful, even sensuous.

Among the Snakes of history we find the literary womanizer Casanova, and the actor Greta Garbo. Snake people are determined, self-assured and hate to fail; Snakes in the public eye can be entertaining—and presumably musical, as were Cole Porter, Tommy Dorsey and Harpo Marx (who knew that Snakes were often the silent type). In their private lives, Snake pairs can really stir up the dust, leading to marital troubles. Snakes would be better off choosing an Ox or Rooster; a Monkey can be compatible, too . . . never a Tiger or Boar.

The Snake casts its imprint on the year 2013 for us all, bringing its power and spirit. We could all use a little elegance, even if we have to improvise. Certainly the tendency to avoid conflict can serve us all, provided we have something positive to put forward. In our personal lives, like the Snake, we can slip out of old routines and habits into new ones with a flip of the mind—but we should remember to lay low for a while until we get used to our new skin.

HAPPY YEAR OF THE SNAKE ! !

## **Snakey Sweets for a Green New Year**

### **Double-Snake COOKIES**

1 cup sugar  
1/2 c. softened butter  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 beaten egg  
1 3/4 c. flour  
sifted with 2 tsp. baking powder  
& 1-2 Tbs. matcha  
1 oz. unsw. chocolate melted over hot water

Set chocolate in a heatproof dish in a pan of simmering water to melt. Remove from heat as soon as melted.

Cream butter and sugar thoroughly then beat in egg and vanilla until well-combined. Divide the whole recipe in two equal parts, using two bowls. Blend the melted chocolate into one of them. Gradually work in sifted flour into each of the bowls, until the dough can be formed into a ball. Wrap each dough-ball in waxed paper or plastic and chill for several hours.

Remove dough from fridge. If it is too stiff, let it sit for a while. Flour a board and roll white dough into a large rectangle. Slip it onto a piece of waxed paper. Form the chocolate dough into an equally long but slightly narrower rectangle. Place white dough on board. Sprinkle or brush with a little water to ensure adhesion. Place the chocolate on top of the white dough and roll up firmly along the wide edge, sealing well, using a little water if needed. Wrap and chill again for several hours. Dough may also be frozen until needed.

Preheat oven to 375°. Remove rolls from fridge and slice about 1/4" thick. Bake on ungreased sheets for 10-12 minutes until lightly browned.

## **Snake's Best Green Tea Shortbread**

back by popular demand

2 c. flour (unbleached white)  
1-2 Tbs. cooking grade matcha  
1/2 lb. (1 cup) unsalted butter  
1/2 c. (white) sugar

Sift flour, matcha powder.

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Work in flour and green tea, just until combined. Do not overwork dough. Chill about an hour, wrapped in wax paper or plastic wrap.

Gently roll out dough on a floured surface. Cut in rounds.

Bake at 325° for about 10 minutes, or until just slightly coloured. Watch carefully so they don't brown.

Recipes submitted by Ann-Lee Switzer

Sunday, February 3, 2012

### ***The VTF Organizing Committee***



新年明けましておめでとうございます。  
皆様のご健康とご多幸を心よりお祈り  
申し上げます。  
本年もどうぞよろしくお願い致します。

Craig, Kana, Yuki and Haku Mercer

**Susan & Tsugio Kurushima**

Wish all good health, much  
happiness and prosperity in the coming  
year.

**Akemashite Omedetou Goziamasu!**

明けましておめでとうございます。  
今年もよろしくお願いします

Ken Watai and family

### **Greetings of the Season and All Good Wishes for the New Year**

Diane McNally, School Trustee  
Board of Education SDBG Greater Victoria  
(Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, View Royal, parts of Saanich)  
Website / Blog: <http://lined-paper.com/>

Winter well  
A bucketful  
Of starlight  
~ Horiuchi Toshimi

<http://www.upli-wcp.org/poetryinjapanese/toshimihoriuchi.html>

### **Wishing everyone the best in the New year**

**Amy Kawano**

Due to bereavement in the family  
Season's Greetings will be omitted

The Abe family

迎春

**Henry and Joan Shimizu**

## Hatsumi – One Grandmother's Journey Through the Japanese Canadian Internment

Victoria Screening with special guest, director  
Christopher Hope

**Sunday, January 27, 2013**  
**2:30 - 4:30 pm**  
**University of Victoria**  
**David Strong Building Room C122**  
**Free admission and parking**

The University of Victoria (Departments of Sociology and History) and the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society are pleased to present the Victoria premiere of *Hatsumi*, a documentary by Nikkei filmmaker, Christopher Hope.

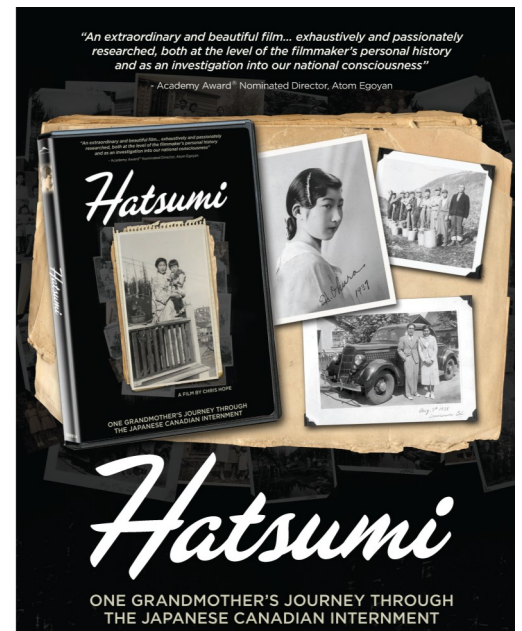
George Jamieson, former producer of CBC's *As It Happens*, will lead the Q and A with Chris following the screening.

Chris's first exposure to the internment was through the grade ten history book version, which he found detached and remote. Turning to his family, Chris learned that Nancy Hatsumi Okura, his grandmother, and other members of the Japanese Canadian community were reluctant to discuss their personal internment experiences due to *shi kata ga nai*; the traditional Japanese philosophy that emphasizes only looking forward since the past "can't be helped".

The film project ultimately documented two stories; Nancy's journey through the internment, and Chris's struggle to assist her to get over her reluctance to speak about it.

2012 is the 70th anniversary year of the internment, and it is an important year to commemorate, as it marks the last significant anniversary that many who were adults during the internment will live to see.

[www.hatsumifilm.com](http://www.hatsumifilm.com)



Photos: Henny Schnare, [www.henny.ca](http://www.henny.ca)

Mary O'Hara (centre of photo) received her high school diploma on November 14 at the Galiano Island Community School. Mary was born on Galiano in 1929 and went to high school on Salt Spring, but her schooling was interrupted by the Second World War when the Canadian government interned all Japanese Canadians. Bonnie MacGillivray of School District 64 presented Mary with an honorary diploma to acknowledge the passion she had for her studies, and to help right the injustice that she experienced.

"This article was published Nov. 29, 2012 in 'Island Tides', an independent, regional newspaper distributing across the Southern Strait of Georgia from Tsawwassen to Victoria to Nanaimo."

# 海鳴り太鼓

## Uminari Taiko

Jacob Derksen

Akemashite omedetou gozaimasu! Happy New Year!

The end of the year is always a great time to reflect on accomplishments and milestones passed, and the start of a new year is always a great time to make resolutions and preparations for the year ahead.

Uminari Taiko marked our official ten year anniversary in late January 2012 and commemorated that with a sold out performance at St. Ann's Academy in late September. At the VNCS Fall Fair in October we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our inaugural performance, and we performed at the City of Victoria's 150th anniversary celebration as well as Esquimalt's 100th anniversary celebration and the 100th anniversary of The Old School House in Qualicum Beach.

We introduced another new song to our repertoire, we travelled to Portland, Oregon to participate in the 2012 Regional Taiko Gathering, and we took on new apprentices.

Collectively we have not yet made concrete resolutions but it's safe to say that improving our skills remains a priority. We have started to make some preparation already to introduce several new works and re-invigorate at least one of our standards and we look forward to presenting that to audiences in 2013.

Our first workshop of the year is on January 13 and a six week series of classes begins on January 20. It's tough to be in two places at once but a contingent of us will also be performing at this year's Mochi Tsuki Shinnen Kai on January 20 and we look forward to seeing you there.

As always, VNCS members qualify for a discount on our workshops and classes and we look forward to seeing you at our performances.

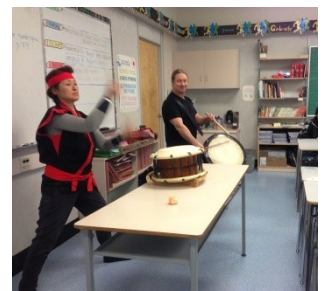
All the best in 2013!

## A Little Victoria Taiko History

Jacob Derksen

In October 2000 a highly regarded taiko group from Japan performed at the McPherson Playhouse. Onagawa Shiosai Taiko Todorokikai was their official name but they went by Onagawa Taiko. This was not the first time I'd seen taiko but it was the first time I'd ever had the opportunity to hit the drums. When they performed that year, there was no taiko group here; it would be over a year before there would be. (I've learned recently that at least one of the other founding members of Uminari Taiko was there as well. It actually marks the first time Brad Lewis and I ever played taiko together and definitely inspired both of us to learn the art.) As many VNCS members may already be aware, Onagawa was one of the towns that was absolutely devastated by the earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. A town with a population comparable to that of Nelson, BC lost no less than 3,000 of its inhabitants in that disaster. As I understand it, about half of the members of Onagawa Taiko perished. One of the survivors, Nobuko Kimura, returned to Victoria with her husband, Tadashi, and friend Keiko Sugawara in December 2012 and, thanks to Lily Yee, I had the honour of demonstrating taiko with her.

It was only after I made it out to one of the schools in Brentwood Bay that I learned about the horror Nobuko-san and her family and friends had lived through. Nobuko-san's house collapsed on top of her and she spent six days pinned under the rubble before she was rescued. Her leg had been broken in several places and she required a lengthy hospital stay and several operations to save her. She is grateful to be able to walk even if it is still painful for her. Nobuko-san's husband lost his parents in the earthquake. He was en route from one worksite to another when the quake hit and he described being on the road as like being on ocean waves. Keiko-san was at an elementary school when the quake hit. They got the kids to the upper floors before the tsunami hit but they were trapped for three days with little food or water and no heat, electricity or other amenities while they waited to be rescued.



Nobuko-san had not played taiko since the earthquake but was persuaded to pick up a pair of bachi during her visit here and I had the honour of playing a role in that. I must admit that

before setting out to play with Nobuko-san early that December morning I was feeling somewhat disinclined. I was tired and fighting a cold, and the prospect of carrying drums on a bus out to Brentwood Bay was de-motivational. Add to that cancelled buses and missed connecting buses and one's mood had the potential to spiral downward even though these are very minor things. It was only after my insignificant misadventures that morning that I learned about Nobuko-san spending six days pinned in the rubble of her house and I was instantly reminded how fortunate I am, and how fortunate we all are.

Jacob Derksen & Nobuko Kimura  
Photos: Lily Yee



# 故郷

## Furusato Dancers

Tsugio Kurushima

### Year in Review

Furusato Dancers had a very busy and successful year in 2012. We had 11 performances throughout the year at a diverse range of events.

- |           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| January   | - | Mochi Tsuki Kai; in addition to our own set we performed a dance with the Japanese Language School children Choir. |
| March     | - | Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Memorial at the Langford Legion.  |
| May       | - | Ethnic Dance Festival and Honours Concert.   |
| June      | - | North Park Neighbourhood Cultural Festival.<br>ICA's Volunteer Appreciation Celebration<br>ICA's Diversity Fair    |
| August    | - | Obon Matsuri<br>Victoria Dragon Boat Festival (two performances)   |
| September | - | Uminari Taiko's 10th Anniversary Concert   |
| October   | - | VNCS Cultural Fair including a set with the Japanese Language School children choir.                               |

Because of our busy schedule we only had 1 dance workshop with Hirano Sensei. That workshop took place in July at which we learned Heisei Ondo.

The highlight of the year was the Uminari Anniversary concert. Not only did we perform a number of dances from our repertoire we also learned the Morioka Sansa Odori. This dance was performed not to recorded music but to the accompaniment of drumming, singing and flute provided by Uminari Taiko, minyo singer Rina El-Nahas and flutist Ken Williams. It was a very special collaborative effort.

As you can see the Furusato Dancers are a very active group. We have lots of fun learning new dances, performing and socializing. We are always looking for new members. If you are interested in joining please contact

Tsugio Kurushima at [tsugukurushima@gmail.com](mailto:tsugukurushima@gmail.com)  
or Tomoko Okada at [tokada3@hotmail.com](mailto:tokada3@hotmail.com).

Happy New Year at all. Come see us at the Mochi Tsuki Kai.

Tsugio Kurushima

## Sakura Fujinkai

Susan Kurushima

Happy New Year everyone!

We took December off as most were extra busy with shopping and cooking to prepare for the holidays. At the end of January we will meet up again at Senzushi and then in February at Chikara Sushi. I will email closer to the date to find out who will attend. If you would like to be included in our group for these dinner meetings please contact me to be added to the email list.



We completed the fall series of Ikebana lessons with 7 ongoing students. We will start up again on January 24 and continue until the end of May. We will be able to accept one or two new beginners or returning students. Preregistration is necessary so please contact me to save your space. We are looking for a new venue for these lessons because of rising costs at the Cook Street Village Activity Centre. Our ongoing students will be displaying their work again at the Art Gallery from the middle of February until the first week of June.

For more information about any of our activities please contact Susan by phone (250)384-2654 or email [sukurushima@gmail.com](mailto:sukurushima@gmail.com).

Blog post by Makiko Itoh Submitted by Diane McNally  
[Kamaboko, the Star of Year-End and New Year's Feasting](#)

Posted: 28 Dec 2012 06:08 AM PST

In the last column of the year for The Japan Times, I've written about the symbolic meaning of the many items in osechi ryouri, the traditional New Year's feast eaten in Japan: [Savor the symbolism at New Year's](#).

I've written about osechi on this site previously also - [Everything in osechi ryouri](#), where I also confess that I don't actually like most of the items in osechi that much personally! I've also written about [toshikoshi soba](#) or year-ending (or year-bridging) soba, which is eaten on New Year's Eve.

One item that's often included in both toshikoshi soba and osechi ryouri is kamaboko (蒲鉾 or かまぼこ), a rubbery and firm fish cake that also makes its appearance year-round in everything from ramen to bentos. While in its natural state it's a creamy white in color, it often comes dyed, pink being the most common coloring. It's also the forerunner of other types of food that have become more famous around the world.

Since red and white (kōhaku) is a very lucky color combination in Japan, alternating pink and white slices of kamaboko are seen often in osechi.



This is an ad from a high-end kamaboko maker, which puts gold leaf on their special occasion kamaboko. The brown color comes from lightly grilling the outside of a formed kamaboko cake.

Many regions of Japan has their version of kamaboko. It used to be made with white freshwater fish as well as sea fish, but nowadays it's mainly made with white sea fish such as cod and various cod substitutes, together with some kind of starch - usually potato starch, but sometimes other starches from corn or wheat are used too. Here's a type of kamaboko made in Toyama prefecture on the Japan Sea coast, which combines the white paste (called surimi) with konbu seaweed. The green coloring is pretty unusual too.

Most kamaboko has shaped like a half-moon or demi-circle on top of a small piece of wood. As a child I used to collect these bits of woods (called kamaboko-ita) and use them for school projects. I even once made a small bookshelf out of kamaboko-ita for my desk, although it and the desk are long gone now. Kamaboko comes in many other shapes too. When red and white kamaboko are formed into a rolled spiral shape before steaming, it's called naruto or narutomaki. You may have seen slices of naruto floating on top of a bowl of ramen. Some instant cup noodles even include freeze-dried versions. [This page](#) has a good picture of naruto. I don't think the anime Naruto comes from narutomaki though - naruto also means 'whirling water'.



Kamaboko is also the forerunner of crab sticks or fake crab meat, which is called kanikama or "crab kamaboko" in Japan. The same type of surimi or fish paste is flavored to resemble crab, extruded into crabmeat like strands, dyed and formed into sticks. Kanikama was first made by a fish processing company in Ishikawa prefecture, which neighbors Toyama prefecture on the Japan Sea coast, in 1973. Apparently it was never meant to be faux crab meat, but a different kind of kamaboko. I think that as long as you think of it as a kind of fish sausage and not as well, imitation crab, it's fine. But since it's become so popular worldwide there's a lot of really bad crab stick out there, so you need to shop around.

Getting back to kamaboko: Since it is so flexible and rubbery in texture, it can be cut into all kinds of decorative forms. This image is from the Kibun site. (Kibun is a major kamaboko and other processed foods manufacturer.)



Indeed, decorative cutting of kamaboko is the forerunner of another kind of decorative food cutting that has become known worldwide these days - the decoratively cut weiner sausage.

The simplest ways to enjoy kamaboko are to just drop a slice or two on top of a bowl of hot noodle soup, or to enjoy slices like sashimi with plain rice. It is not something you can make easily at home (believe me, I've tried) so if you have a Japanese grocery store, buy a half-moon pack, slice it up and enjoy!

### **Thank you for your donations**

Michiko Warkentyne  
Barry Obara  
Daniel Cheung, Dorothy & Susumu Fukuyama  
Mary Saruwatari (Taber, AB)  
in memory of Akiko Anne Kamitakahara  
Michael Abe and family in memory of Ken Kiyokazu Abe  
Mary Oikawa (Hamilton, ON) in memory of Ken Abe  
Ken and Kaori Ujimoto  
Phil Argue and Dana Griffith  
Elaine Matsushita  
Tracel and Rudolf Carolsfeld  
Yumi Yanagizaki and Morgan Baker

### **NORI TORI**

**Sunday, February 17, 2013**

Held over due to popular demand! Sus Tabata has again kindly offered to host a potluck and Nori Tori at his cottage this year. It is a tradition that many have enjoyed over the years.

If you require maps and schedules, you can contact Mike Abe at [mkabe2011@gmail.com](mailto:mkabe2011@gmail.com) and details will be e-mailed.

Thank you Sus for your hospitality.

### **Welcome new member to the VNCS**

Mary Oikawa  
Robin Ellens

### **Correction:**

Photos provided in the last issue of the Victoria Nikkei Forum included contributions by Jeremy Kiffiak. We apologize for the omission.



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**Thank you for being a member of the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society. We encourage you to renew your membership for 2013 and remain informed about our upcoming events.**

**If you have already sent in your renewal, please consider passing this summary onto someone you know who might be interested in joining.**

### **Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society (VNCS)**

The VNCS was formed in 1993 specifically to establish a sense of community for those of Japanese heritage and/or those interested in Japanese culture.

As stated in our constitution the purpose of our society is to:

- a) Promote the awareness of Japanese culture for the benefit of its members and the greater community;
- b) Represent the Japanese community to the greater community;
- c) Support related Japanese organizations; and
- d) Identify and serve the needs of the Nikkei community.

Throughout the year the VNCS organizes social events for its members, often with a theme related to a Japanese holiday or special occasion. Our promotion of Japanese culture is not only for our members but is also open to the greater community. Our annual Fall Bazaar and Mochi parties are examples of our outreach efforts. Where appropriate the VNCS will act as a spokes-organization for the Nikkei community. We work with other similar cultural/ethnic-minded organizations such as the Victoria Japanese Friendship Society to promote Japanese culture.

The VNCS is registered under the BC Society Act and has charitable status. We are a member organization of the Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria and the National Association of Japanese Canadians.

### **VNCS MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss - First Name - Last name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address: Apt. #, Street # & Street Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**City & Postal Code**

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership for 2013:**

**Individual \$10\_\_ Family of \_\_ people \$15\_\_ Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Family member names** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make cheque payable to:**

**VICTORIA NIKKEI CULTURAL SOCIETY (OR VNCS)**

**Mail to:**

**Tony Ibaraki**

**4401 Tremblay Drive**

**Victoria, BC V8N 4W6**

**VICTORIA NIKKEI CULTURAL SOCIETY**  
**NOMINATION FORM for**  
**The Election of Officers at The Annual General Meeting**

POSITION	NOMINEE	NOMINEE'S SIGNATURE
<b>PRESIDENT</b>		
<b>VICE-PRESIDENT</b>		
<b>TREASURER</b>		
<b>SECRETARY</b>		
<b>DIRECTORS</b>		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

**\*\*NOTE:** Please have each nominee sign beside their names to show their acceptance of the nomination.

**\*\*NOTE:** Nomination forms may be mailed or delivered to the Nominating Committee  
c/o Cristina Shore 1226 Rudlin St. Victoria BC V8V 3R7 or  
turned in at the Annual General Meeting registration desk by  
10:30 am, Sunday, February 3, 2013.