

An exclusive magazine for the residents of Dundarave, Ambleside, Altamont, Westmount, West Bay, Bayridge, Caulfeild, and Eagle Harbour

NEIGHBOURS OF

OCTOBER 2026

DUNDARAVE

The Joe-Dooner Family

Holding Hands Through
Every Chapter



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Cover Photo by by Persia Anjam-Campo | Simayatography

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The Joe-Dooner Family

Holding Hands Through Every Chapter

◆ By Patricia Barnes

Photos by Persia Anjam-Campo | Simayatography

For the Joe-Dooner family, life in West Vancouver is a blend of family, friendship, adventure and community, and this milestone year is bringing a little bit of everything.

Nearly 30 years ago, during Susie Joe's first year at UBC, she and Paul Dooner met at a casino-themed residence party. And, as Susie likes to put it, "We instantly knew we hit the jackpot!"

Their first date, however, almost didn't happen.

They agreed to meet at the Starbucks at Robson and Thurlow, unaware that there were two locations directly across the street from each other. Extroverted Susie chose the bustling patio, while Paul settled into the quieter branch across the road. After waiting an hour, each concluded they had been stood up. Then, on their respective trips home, they crossed paths at the intersection.

Fortunately, laughter won out.

That near-miss became the beginning of a relationship that would weather years of distance. With Paul serving in the Navy, the couple spent seven years maintaining their romance through handwritten letters, costly long-distance calls, flights to the East Coast and regular Pacific Coach Line bus trips between Esquimalt and Vancouver.

Next year, Susie and Paul will celebrate 30 years together. "We are just as much in love and holding hands today as we were back then," Susie says.

Today, the couple shares their Ambleside home with their 14-year-old daughter, Dominique; Susie's parents, Ian and Kim Joe; and two Standard Poodles, Biscuit and Ben.

A Full House and a Full Life

Multi-generational living has become an important part of the family's story. Ian, 72, and Kim, 70, moved in during the pandemic and bring plenty of energy and adventure to the household.

Both are enthusiastic long-distance trekkers. To celebrate Ian's 70th birthday, they completed the Camino Francés and Camino Finisterre-Muxia, hiking more than 800 kilometres. More recently, they completed the Camino del Norte for Kim's 70th birthday. The Tour du Mont Blanc and Alta Via 1 are next on their list.

When they aren't trekking, Ian and Kim can often be found staying active at the West Vancouver Community Centre or tending their garden. When the couple leave on extended adventures, Paul's parents travel from Ottawa to help hold down the fort, meaning Dominique has grown up surrounded by grandparents from both sides of the family.



That support has also played an important role in Susie and Paul's careers. Paul transitioned from the Navy to a career as a software and AI engineer, while Susie moved from high school teaching to executive leadership roles at fast-growing technology companies. Their work took the family on living assignments in India and Prague, as well as extended stays in Europe and Australia.

This year, Susie is making a significant change of her own, taking a career break from high-tempo executive roles to focus on health, family time and planning the family's next chapter.

Dancing, Robots and a New Chapter

Dominique is beginning Grade 9 at West Vancouver Secondary School (WVSS), bringing with her an impressive combination of creative and technical interests.

After 10 years as a competitive dancer, competing at the provincial and national levels in lyrical, jazz, contemporary, tap and ballet with Dance Co, she is moving to Shift Dance Academy this season. The change will allow her to continue dancing while finding more balance for school, friends and life closer to home.

She has also been passionate about robotics since Grade 5, competing with Ten Ton Robotics and reaching Provincials last year with her all-girl team. Now she is moving into VEX V5 robotics, where she will learn new tools and tackle a new level of building and competition.

Consequently, robotics has become a family affair of sorts, with Dominique's teammates gathering regularly at the Dooner home. The sessions involve building, coding and planning, but also kitchen raids and enthusiastic Taylor Swift singalongs.

For Susie, the noise is part of the joy. "I love having a home filled with bright, determined girls learning, problem-solving and encouraging one another," she says.

Dominique has also served on WVSS Student Council and plans to volunteer with the student-founded Cyber Security & AI Forward Initiative, helping spread cybersecurity and AI literacy among students and local seniors.

Finding Community Close to Home

The family first moved from Vancouver's West End during the pandemic, where they fell in love with the Caulfeild community and surrounding forest trails. Last year, they relocated to Ambleside and quickly embraced its walkable lifestyle.

After living and travelling around the world, the family has developed a particular appreciation for what is available right outside their door.

"West Van is an unmatched gem," Susie says, pointing to the combination of beaches, mountains, schools, neighbourhood businesses and a close-knit community atmosphere. She goes on to say, "We love seeing community events like the Dundarave Hoedown and






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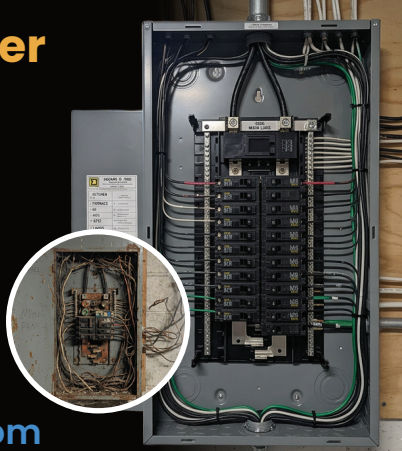
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resident feature

Harmony Arts Festival alongside great new local businesses like Grayson Cheese Shop, Saal Korean, Bubble Waffle Cafe, and Big Way Hot Pot."

Their connection to the community extends beyond enjoying it. Paul serves on the executive of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 060 in West Vancouver. He particularly values the Legion's role as an open community gathering place and its support for local initiatives, from students and youth programs to food banks, seniors and sports.

This year, he is helping with the branch's centennial Poppy Campaign.

Susie, meanwhile, mentors university students and early-career professionals through Beedie Luminaries and personal outreach, while Dominique continues to find ways to contribute through school- and technology-focused initiatives.

Two Poodles on the Seawall

No introduction to the family would be complete without Biscuit and Ben.

Biscuit, their six-year-old Standard Poodle, joined the family during the pandemic and has since become something of a neighbourhood personality. He has been a familiar face around local trails and the Legion patio, and his photo once hung at Squareriggers.

Ben is the newest member of the household. The eight-year-old rescue Poodle arrived from California only recently and is settling into life with his new family and his new canine brother.

Neighbours may recognize the pair by their size and, Susie jokes, their "slightly questionable haircuts," thanks to her adventures in DIY dog grooming.

The dogs are also a reminder of the kindness the family has encountered locally. A former Cypress neighbour helped keep watch for the right rescue



dog. Their current Ambleside neighbour invites them to cut fresh flowers from her garden and join her for dinner. Legion regulars even bring extra treats for Biscuit despite not having dogs themselves.

Those small gestures have helped make West Vancouver feel like home.

Intentions for the Next Chapter

The family's New Year's tradition captures their approach to change particularly well. They once wrote their intentions, or a "word of the year", on paper and burned them in the fireplace. After moving to a home without a suitable fireplace but with a natural creek running through the yard, they reinvented the ritual.

"Now, everyone writes their hopes on smooth creek stones and casts them into the water together," Susie says.

It feels especially fitting this year.

Dominique is advancing in robotics, starting at a new dance studio and exploring new passion projects. Susie is stepping away from corporate life for a season. Ian and Kim are embracing retirement and their next adventures. Biscuit is learning to share his home with Ben. And through all the transitions, Paul remains a steady presence.

After years of far-flung travel, the family also spent this past summer closer to home and discovered a renewed love for British Columbia summers. More exploration of their home province is now high on the agenda.

For all the places they have lived and travelled, however, it is the people around them who have made Ambleside and West Vancouver feel special.

Their message to neighbours is simple: if you happen to spot two giant Standard Poodles, and the family walking behind them, along the seawall or local trails, stop and say hello.

They'll be happy to meet you.



October Events

Wed 30 Sept

Spirit to Live presented by Orange Shirt Society & Park Royal

@Park Royal

Live readings by Phyllis Webstad, traditional Coast Salish and modern performances, interactive cultural and healing stations, and an Indigenous arts & crafts market.

Time: 11am-7pm | Cost: Free
Details: orangeshirtday.org

Thu 1 Oct

North Shore Art Crawl Kickoff Party

@The Pipe Shop

Enjoy live performances, a DJ set, snacks, door prizes and plenty of opportunities to meet the talented artists participating in this year's Art Crawl.

Time: 7-10 pm | Cost: \$20
Details: northvanarts.ca

Sun 4 Oct

Step Up for LGH

@Millennium Park, Ambleside

Our biggest fundraiser of the year is back! It includes a 5km walkathon, free treats, music, an obstacle course, hands-on activities for kids, and health and wellness checks.

Time: 10am - 1pm | Cost: \$35
Details: lghfoundation.com

Sun 4 Oct

Enhance West Van's PumpkinFest

@West Vancouver Community Centre

This old-fashioned, community-style day features live music, a pumpkin patch, a pony and petting farm area, and delicious treats. Whether you're bringing young children, meeting with friends, or enjoying a day out, there's something for everyone.

Time: 10am-2pm | Cost: Free
Details: westvanlibrary.ca

Mon 5 Oct

Quantum Computing for Curious Beginners

@West Vancouver Library

For curious minds with no technical background required, this session will introduce the big ideas behind quantum computing, explain how it differs from everyday computers, and look at what it could mean for the future of science, technology, and daily life.

Time: 6:30-7:30pm | Cost: Free
Details: westvanlibrary.ca

Thu 15 Oct

Global Journeys, Coast Salish Roots

@Ferry Building Gallery

An illustrated talk on Coast Salish art, story, and cultural practice. World-renowned Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation master carver Xwalacktun will share how his work remains grounded in Coast Salish teachings while connecting with communities around the world.

Time: 7-8:30pm | Cost: \$15
Details: ferrybuildinggallery.ca

Fri 16 Oct & Sat 17 Oct

Red Bull Hardline

@Cypress Mountain Resort

The planet's most elite riders tackle a course so steep, rugged, and technically demanding that simply finishing is considered a feat. With massive jumps & gap sections, sheer drops exceeding 10 metres, technical rock gardens, and descents steep enough to make even seasoned pros think twice.

Time: 10am onward
Carpool Vehicle Ticket: Parking & entry for up to 8 people: Fri \$77; Sat \$177; both \$225
Bus Shuttle & Entry Ticket: Includes round-trip on the shuttle bus; \$50 per day.
Details: cypressmountain.com

Sat 17 Oct

Sip and Paint

@Bella Ceramica, 1475 Marine Drive

Enjoy a relaxing evening as we paint an autumn scene featuring a glowing sunset, rich red and orange trees, a peaceful bridge, and a cascading waterfall. This workshop is BYOB and for guests 19+ only

Time: 6:30-8:30pm
Cost: \$45 | \$55
Details: bellaceramicastudio.com

Tue 20 Oct

Art Café: Hiding in plain sight

@Ferry Building Gallery

Discover the hidden images and secret messages artists have tucked into their works for observant viewers to find. What do these clues mean, and why were they included? No prior knowledge necessary, just curiosity and an interest in art.

Time: 2-3:30pm | Cost: \$15
Details: ferrybuildinggallery.ca

Wed 28 Oct

You've Been Named Executor: Now What?

@West Van Seniors' Activity Centre

Join lawyer and trust company president, Nicole Garton, for a clear, practical roadmap through the entire executor process.

Time: 2-4pm | Cost: Free
Details: westvancouver.ca

days to remember

Women's History Month

German Heritage Month

Canadian Islamic History Month

Latin American Heritage Month

4th Oct: Sisters in Spirit Vigil

12th Oct: Thanksgiving

31st Oct: Halloween

At the time this magazine went to print, all event details were accurate to the best of our knowledge, but please check event websites or call ahead for the most current information.

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