

Awakening of the Dragon Ceremonies, featuring First Nation Welcome Ceremony, Taoist Priests, Dotting of the Eye Ceremony and Chinese Lion Dance – sponsored by Impact Visual Communications

Date: Friday, July 9th

Time: 1:30pm

Location: Swy a Lana Lagoon

Awakening of the Dragon Ceremonies

Every Dragon Boat Festival in the world honours its roots - especially through one crucial ceremony that must take place before the first boat's paddles slip into the water.

In Nanaimo, Taoist Priests will perform the 'Awakening of the Dragon' ceremony in Swy-a-Lana Lagoon. This ceremony awakens the dragon and brings out its fire, which gives the Dragon Boats and their crews the strength of the dragon. The ceremony's climax comes shortly after, with the Dotting of the Eye ceremony, which is when the spirit of the dragon is 'awakened'.

Chinese Lion Dance

Performed by the Pak Mei Hup Ging Do Martial Art group

The Chinese Lion Dance dates back more than a thousand years and has always been an integral part of Chinese culture. The lion itself is regarded as a guardian creature to drive away evil spirits and although there are many stories on how lion dancing came about, most will agree that the dance is said to bring good luck and prosperity. For this reason, it is very common to see the lion dance being performed on special occasions, such as festivals, birthdays, weddings, opening of businesses and the Chinese New Year

Woodgrove Centre Candles of Courage Ceremony

Date: Friday, July 9th

Time: 9pm

Location: Swy a Lana Lagoon

The Candles of Courage ceremony is an opportunity to honor anyone you know who has been affected by cancer.

A lone piper leads a procession of breast cancer survivors, each carrying a lit pink candle, to the edge of the lagoon where their candles are placed in the water.

The reflection of the candles adrift in the waters of the lagoon is symbolic in that it offers an opportunity to reflect on someone or something meaningful in your own life.

Candles are sold throughout the day prior to the ceremony and members of the public are encouraged to participate.

Dairyland Carnation Ceremony

Date: Sunday, July 11th

Time: noon

Location: Nanaimo Harbour

Breast Cancer Survivor teams are recognized with a Carnation Ceremony to show support for their courage and spirit. A celebration of life and hope, the Carnation Ceremony is a highlight of the Save On Foods Nanaimo Dragon Boat Festival.

We recognize the importance of celebrating the lives of survivors, of offering hope to those still battling cancer, and of honouring those who tragically have lost the battle to this disease.

The carnation ceremony has become a very meaningful ritual for paddlers and audience alike.

Dragon Boating: An Ancient Tradition

The origin of Dragon Boat Racing can be traced to events that took place in southern China over 2,000 years ago. Dragon boat racing, within the context of a festival, became much more important in Chinese culture with the tragic events surrounding Qu Yuan (pronounced Chu Yuan) around 277 B.C. Qu Yuan was a statesman and poet in the feudal kingdom and as a man of wisdom and integrity, he provided truthful advice to the King. This advice angered his political rivals and as a result, they persuaded the King to banish him. Despondent over his exile and the subsequent decline of the government, Qu put stones in his pocket and drowned himself in the Mi Lo River. When local fishermen raced out to rescue him, they beat their drums and splashed with their paddles to scare the fish and water dragons away from Qu Yuan's body.

To commemorate their beloved Qu Yuan, the people of southern China staged Dragon Boat races to remember the day when they raced into the river in an

attempt to save him. From this point on, Dragon Boat races became an annual event. Preceding the actual races, some festivals still practice the ancient ritual of "Awakening the Dragon." An eye-dotting ceremony awakens the dragon and brings out its fire, which gives the boats and their crews the strength of the dragon.

Little Dragon's Fun Zone

Children will love the Dancing Bear Story Theatre! Gaia-Belle is an inflatable whale theatre that holds more than 50 children. Gather inside for original, interactive and hilarious story performances by Dancing Bear!

Ride the rails on the El Paso Train Ride! Children will enjoy a realistic train ride around the tracks in the All aboard at the El Paso Train Station!

Then they can step right up to the Dodge City Saloon Laser target gallery, where they can try their luck to score high points and maybe, win the sheriff boot necklace.

Children can also enjoy the Buzzin' Bee Hive Game. Try to catch the Queen Bee and win the top prize. But if you're not successful, don't worry - all game players get a prize every time, just for playing!

For the young and energetic crowd, we've got the bounciest castle in town. Lots of fun for everyone with a special bouncy castle just for the wee ones!

Cyber City Adventures is providing a full range of games and activities for the younger crowd. Test your skill and have a lot of fun at the Little Dragon's Fun Zone!

Event listing from harbourliving.ca

2010 Save On Foods Nanaimo Dragon Boat Festival

Recognized as Nanaimo's most spectacular summer festival, the 8th annual Save On Foods Nanaimo Dragon Boat Festival will be a true celebration of our diverse and beautiful city, attracting over 50,000 people and more than 80 dragon boat teams from across North America.

Beginning on Friday afternoon with the colourful Awakening of the Dragon Ceremony and Chinese Lion Dance, the Festival will continue with two more days of non-stop entertainment on the Main Stage, fabulous food and shopping, and of course, Dragon Boat racing of the highest caliber.

Admission is free to the general public so what's stopping you? Come on down to the waters of Nanaimo Harbour and celebrate with us!

- 3 Days of Unique Culture & Sport with Something for Everyone!
 - Thrilling Dragon Boat Races
- Live Main Stage Entertainment Friday, Saturday and Sunday
- Mini Show 'n Shine with members of the Smokin' Oldies and Nanaimo T-Bird Club
 - Shriner's Pancake Breakfast
 - Labatt's Beer Garden
- Activities for the little ones in the Little Dragon's Fun Zone