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PAGE 16

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GULF ISLANDS

Driftwood

Wednesday, December 16, 2015 — YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS PAPER SINCE 1960 55TH YEAR — ISSUE 50



PHOTO BY JEN MACLELLAN

PECKING ORDER: A chicken named Fancy gives Santa Claus a Christmas list while attending the BCSPCA's popular pet-photos-with-Santa fundraiser at Mouat's on Saturday afternoon.

WINTER WEATHER

Storm swamps Aaftink boat

Winter port sought for local man

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Saturday's massive storm nearly ended in calamity for one local man who lives on a boat on Ganges Harbour, but the near sinking of his vessel has produced an outpouring of community support instead.

Reg Aaftink is a familiar sight in Ganges village on drier days, when he can be seen picking up litter and keeping streets clean on a by-donation basis. Aaftink doesn't run his well-regarded

business venture on stormy days, but he was in town when the high winds hit. Top speeds of 110 kilometres per hour during the worst of the action prevented him from taking his skiff back into the harbour for more than eight hours. When he finally arrived it was to find his 11-metre wooden fishing boat listing to the bow and with over half a metre of water inside.

"If I'd been there an hour later, I don't think I would have saved it. It was coming in that fast," Aaftink said.

The source of the problem was waves reaching close to two metres in height, combined with the fact that Aaftink's bilge pump had become clogged. He put in a call to his friend Gary LeMarchant and then to the Ganges Coast Guard station. He got a response from LeMarchant, as well as Bellavance Welding, Eagle Eye Marine vessel assist and the local Coast Guard unit, who all put their pumps to work.

REG'S BOAT continued on 2

FEDERAL POLITICS

Duffy trial allegation hits local riding

Senator reveals robocall talks from 2008 election

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The riding of Saanich-Gulf Islands figured prominently in the ongoing trial of Senator Mike Duffy last week with allegations that Conservative party staffers purposefully used robocalls to mislead voters ahead of the 2008 election.

"Basically what happened was that they used robocalls to misdirect NDP voters, to split the vote and allow Gary Lunn to win," Duffy testified in an Ottawa courtroom on Thursday.

The closely contested 2008 federal election featured Lunn as the Conservative incumbent against Liberal candidate Briony Penn and NDP challenger Julian West. The contest essentially became a two-way race when West withdrew following accusations he had removed his clothing in the presence of minors at an environmental retreat in the 1990s.

Though West had withdrawn, his name remained on the ballot, and the NDP collected more than 3,600 votes. Lunn defeated Penn by 2,625 votes to win the seat.

"He'd had a close call during the previous election, and it was only through the divine intervention of [late campaign manager] Doug Finley's black ops group at Conservative headquarters that he managed to get himself re-elected," Duffy said.

Duffy faces multiple counts of fraud, breach of trust and bribery connected with questionable expenses associated with his duties as a senator.

DUFFY continued on 5

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INDEX

Arts.....	10	People & Community.....	14
Classifieds.....	17	Sports & Recreation.....	20
Editorial.....	6	What's On.....	12
Letters.....	7		

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Community aids vessel owner's recovery

REG'S BOAT

continued from 1

"The Coast Guard is there for us. They came through; they were wonderful," Aaftink said.

A Coast Guard crew towed the delicensed fishing boat back to Centennial Wharf, where Aaftink is currently enjoying emergency mooring. Eagle Eye Marine lent Aaftink a pump to help get the rest of the water out.

The storm was the third in a week to wallop the coast, and one of the worst Aaftink has seen in five years of living in Ganges Harbour. It caused the cancellation of BC Ferries runs from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay and to the Gulf Islands, and put a damper on Christmas celebrations since the Lions' annual Santa ship visit was also cancelled.

The loss of visiting Lions members meant the opening of a temporary refuge on Salt Spring, however. With Santa and his friends no longer needing accommodation, the Harbour House Hotel offered its rooms to anyone living on boats or otherwise put in danger by the storm.

Aaftink appreciated the offer, but stayed up all night watching his now restored bilge pump. He said the turning point when he was sure the water was actually going down came around 8 p.m., although the effects of living through the harrowing adventure lasted longer.

"It's an awful experience. It is traumatizing," Aaftink said, adding he didn't lose much in terms of belongings. Fortunately he keeps most of



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH NOLAN

Reg Aaftink, well known as the man who keeps Ganges clean by picking up garbage on a by-donation basis, with the boat he lives on rescued from Saturday's storm. It is temporarily moored at Centennial Wharf.

his important things above deck.

The community continues to offer extraordinary support. Island Variety Shop is accepting donations on Aaftink's behalf and by Monday morning he had enough money to buy a second and more powerful bilge pump to prevent any similar occurrences in the future.

He lost three expensive house batteries, which were replaced through a donation by Shaw Cable.

TJ Beans, Aaftink's favourite coffee shop, immediately handed over a \$100 coffee card and other community members have offered cash and groceries.

"The reaction of people around town has been 100 per cent. I just have to walk downtown and people are giving me gifts. Every time I have an expense I have the money in my pocket. This is the best place I've ever lived for that kind of stuff," Aaftink said.

The only thing missing now is a safe place to moor his boat for the winter. Aaftink feels the El Niño season will bring more fierce weather, and he can't work at his litter picking business if he has to be constantly recovering from storm damage. He has missed a chance to join a reservation waiting list for limited

spaces at Kanaka Wharf.

"The environment did it to me more than anything else," Aaftink said.

"I just don't want to go back out there. I just don't trust the winter."

So far the harbour authority has agreed to give him a few emergency days at Centennial Wharf and no more. Aaftink would prefer to stay there, but would accept a place at any dock that is safe and nearby.

Anyone who would like to help can contact Meghan MacFarlane at Island Variety Shop in Ganges or look for Aaftink at the Centennial Wharf.

EDUCATION

School district offers beer garden reprieve

Spring break also extended

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Soccer players and people who enjoy having a cool beverage while watching an outdoor game will find it's business as usual next May long weekend, thanks to a shift in policy wording by the Gulf Islands Board of Education.

The board's policy committee had announced last June that it planned a policy amendment that

would forbid consumption of alcohol on all properties owned or operated by the school board. Following public consultation, the amended wording allows alcohol use by special permit issued by the board.

While the Salt Spring United soccer club was the organization most likely to be affected by a liquor ban, with its beer garden located on the high school fields, Mayne Island School is also sometimes used for community events where alcohol is served.

The board passed the motion, noting the updated policy will allow existing functions to continue, but is not meant as a method of facilitating new private events at schools.

A motion made by programs committee chair Nancy Macdonald was also approved, and will help the district undertake a review of all its different programs. The motion directs superintendent Lisa Halstead to create a format and schedule for presentations to take place at the programs committee meeting.

Macdonald said the presentations will be a chance for people leading various programs to celebrate their successes, discuss challenges and make recommendations. It's also a way to see how costs are distributed and for the district to consider how a program fits into its current mandate.

The board also reviewed a change in the 2015-16 calendar that will mean SD64 students have a two-week spring break in March. The previously approved calendar had classes resuming on

the Wednesday of the second week in order to meet teacher contract conditions and the specifics of final exam week. The change came about because the Ministry of Education ordered that two non-teaching days be put into the calendar for staff to work on the transforming curriculum objectives.

Spring break will now run from March 18 to April 3. An extra instructional day has been added on Friday, June 17. A district planning day was moved to April 1.

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INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

PARC dismisses Trust plan for Mouat Park rezoning

Proposal could ensure recycling operations

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Parks and Recreation Commission members oppose a plan to reconfigure lot lines in Mouat Park that would enable use of land for waste management.

Commissioner Brian Webster called the proposal completely ridiculous and unsatisfying at PARC's monthly business meeting in November.

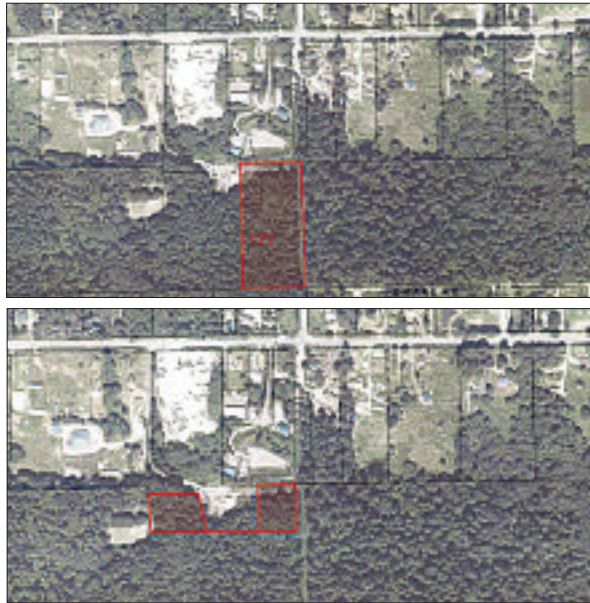
"What we are talking about is converting park into industrial land," he said. "The case presented to PARC does not justify the request and the PARC commission does not support increased industrial uses on parkland."

Noting the need to rearrange lot lines in the park wasn't sufficient to override parkland enjoyment, members voted against the Islands Trust recommendation.

PARC commissioners suggest the Islands Trust look elsewhere to accommodate community waste facilities.

The decision followed an October presentation to PARC members by Islands Trust regional planning manager Stefan Cermak and staff from the CRD's environmental resource management division.

According to current zoning, Mouat Park is bisected by an anomalous five-acre rectangle of



From top: Community Facilities-zoned land within Mouat Park as it currently stands (outlined in red); the swap for parkland proposed by Islands Trust staff (also in red).

land zoned Community Facilities 2. The Islands Trust wants to transfer the land to parkland next to the Rainbow Road Recycling facility at the end of Tin Can Alley.

Much of PARC's reluctance to support the plan is the view that any proposal to build a waste facility on the rectangular swathe

that currently crosses the park would meet severe resistance from community groups and neighbours.

"I just have a sense that there must be a better argument, because, on the face of it, it seems like such a crazy thing to bring to PARC," Webster said.

Proposal part of industrial lands review

The parkland realignment proposal is part of the Islands Trust's ongoing plan to increase access to industrial land on the island. The recommendation to reconfigure lands within Mouat Park was among 15 points made in the Industrial Advisory Planning Commission's final report in December 2014.

According to Cermak, the Mouat Park lot was originally owned by the CRD and zoned for long-term waste disposal before 2000.

"It was not a park," Cermak wrote in an email.

The CF-2-zoned property was amalgamated with Mouat Park when the province transferred the former provincial park property to the Capital Regional District in 2000.

"The proposal would remove CF2 zoning from the middle of the park, logically place it [on CRD parkland] directly adjacent to Knott Place, the Farmers' Institute and the cement plant," he said.

Cermak said the rezoning would tidy up the confused patchwork of zoning boundaries that exist around the Rainbow Road recycling facility and Mouat Park.

"Current waste management zoning is a mess," he said.

The planning map for the area shows most of the Rainbow Recycling area zoned as parkland. The parking area, and glass and metal recycling bins fall under agricultural zoning.

Fixing things up, Cermak added, could offer some reassurance for the future of recycling on the island over the coming quarter century.

"Proper zoning for waste management may become increasingly critical to secure, considering the provincial changes to recycling and the potential loss of CRD funding in 2019 to keep recycling alive on the island," Cermak wrote in an email. "Planning takes time; the time to plan is now."

Consultation will continue in 2016

Cermak said the land around the recycling facility is one of many areas on the island to address waste management. Discussion with government departments, neighbourhood groups and transfer station operators is ongoing.

He said PARC's response is understandable.

"PARC members are there to secure parks," he said. "Of course they would object to any loss of parks to non-park use."

Cermak said he's initiated the discussion with PARC and CRD staff in Victoria to solve an inevitable issue. He hopes further talks can result in a solution.

"I would, and have, asked them to keep an open mind, raise issues and see if there are win-win solutions," he added.

The next PARC meeting is on Monday, Jan. 18, 2016.

NEWS BRIEFS

Meters being checked

BC Hydro customers on Salt Spring Island can expect a visit from meter technicians as the utility begins an extensive province-wide inspection process.

The work has been contracted to Corix, an energy infrastructure firm whose

vehicles and staff have been spotted on the island for the past few weeks.

"The reason we are over there is because, over the next five years, we are visiting every BC Hydro customer's meter at least once to ensure our equipment is operating in a safe and reliable manner," said Greg Alexis, a BC Hydro spokesperson.

Alexis said the inspectors

are looking for broken seals, unsafe conditions around the customer's meter socket and signs of tampering with the devices.

"Before smart meters [were installed], this type of work was done regularly by our meter readers, but now with remote meter reads we no longer have this visibility to our equipment," Alexis added.

R&R program review stalled

School District 64's planned joint review of SWOVA's Respectful Relationships program has been put on hold with no word on when the offering might return to Grade 9 and 10 classes.

A press release issued by

the school district on Tuesday states the consultant contracted to conduct the review can no longer continue with the work.

"While the delivery of the Respectful Relationships program at Gulf Islands Secondary School has been suspended at this time, the district will be working with SWOVA Community Develop-

ment and Research Society toward adapting the delivery of the program at the middle-years level during the upcoming term," the press release states.

In the meantime, SWOVA has received Status of Women Canada funding for a three-year project exploring issues of sexual assault and consent. (See story on page 4.)

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ISLANDS TRUST

Playing fields, abattoir on next LTC agenda

Final Trust committee meeting of the year on Dec. 17 at Lions Hall

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's Local Trust Committee is ending the year with a full slate of topics lined up for its Thursday business meeting. The morning's agenda, which gets underway at 9:30 at the Lions Hall, includes updates on the Manzanita Ridge Nature Reserve's management plan, coastal Douglas fir conservation strategy and implementation of minimum setbacks between drinking water wells and septic fields.

The meeting's town hall session, where audience members are invited to address trustees about land-use issues, follows trustee updates at noon. For more information about the meetings and a copy of the agenda package, follow the links at www.islandstrust.bc.ca. Other Thursday afternoon business includes:

Playing field negotiations begin

Participants at Thursday's meeting can anticipate more discussion about the Parks and Recreation Commission's Brinkworthy playing fields proposal.

Staff recommend PARC's application for non-farm use of 15 acres of land within the Agricultural Land Reserve near the end of Brinkworthy Road be deferred to allow the applicant to revise the application.

Opposition from the agricultural community, including the Trust's own Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission, has encouraged PARC to consider amending the application to benefit local agriculture. PARC has indicated a willingness to

rezone parkland at Duck Creek and the Burgoyne Valley to agricultural land as part of the deal, according to a staff report prepared for Thursday's meeting.

Despite opposition from the agricultural community and many residents of the Brinkworthy neighbourhood, PARC's playing field proposal has attracted significant support from soccer and baseball associations on the island. A Facebook page called Support of New Baseball & Soccer Fields on Salt Spring Island has attracted nearly 700 followers and an online petition at thepetitionsite.com has gathered 215 names by Tuesday.

Abattoir application faces delays

Trust staff recommend trustees defer consideration of the Salt Spring Abattoir Society's application to enable permanent use of its location at 1447 Fulford-Ganges Rd. until a review of slaughter waste disposal is complete.

The application was delayed at the LTC's November meeting for staff to gather details about where and how the abattoir disposed of offal generated at the facility.

A staff report prepared for Thursday's meeting states bones and offal from the plant are transported to a 113-acre farm at 1707 North End Rd., where it is mixed with hay and composted. Hides are collected by local residents for tanning use or as moisture absorption in garden beds.

Although on-farm production of compost using slaughter waste is a designated farm use, staff are unable to confirm if the waste meets requirements set out in the province's Organic Material Recycling Regulation.

"The owners of the operation indicate they have not notified the Ministry of Environment or Agricultural Land Commission as required under Section 25 of OMRR," reads the Dec. 10 staff report.

Staff recommend the application be deferred until the abattoir society has had a chance to review waste disposal options.

TRUST COUNCIL

Grace Islet group urges action

Appeal made to Trust Council

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Members of the group that worked to protect a First Nations burial islet in Ganges Harbour want the Islands Trust to pick up the pace when it comes to working with the region's original inhabitants.

"We call on you to do all you can to ensure we never see another costly and culturally insulting conflict such as occurred with Grace Islet," said Jean

Wilkinson, addressing Trust Council in Victoria last Wednesday afternoon on behalf of the Protect Grace Islet group.

The group says failure to strengthen the province's Heritage Conservation Act, identify and catalogue culturally significant sites, and consult more closely with First Nations groups in the Gulf Islands will mean residents can anticipate further disputes.

"It is abundantly clear that the potential for another conflict of this type is huge, especially within the Islands Trust

region with its many miles of shoreline and numerous islands, large and small," Wilkinson said.

Trust Council has already set out to work more closely with First Nations, promote training for staff and elected representatives, and take on a stronger advocacy role to defend areas of cultural significance over the coming five years.

Despite the promise of action, PGI members want to see steps taken sooner rather than later.

Salt Spring trustee George Grams acknowl-

edged a need to address the issue. He suggested the matter be referred to the Trust Executive Committee for advice on appropriate measures.

"At the next executive meeting in January I will seek staff advice on what advocacy options are open to us in the pursuit of protection of First Nations historical sites," he said. "Following receipt of that information from staff, I expect further action by the executive or that the topic will be returned to council to seek additional direction."

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SAFETY

SWOVA gets new project funds

Consent and sexual assault topic is the focus

A new Gulf Islands project aimed at preventing sexual assault has received funding from Status of Women Canada.

"Statistics tell us that one in three women and one in six men will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime, while less than one in 10 assaults are reported to the authorities," explains a press release from SWOVA Community Development and Research Society. "Most sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone the victim knows."

For the next three years, SWOVA will look more closely at these issues with a new project titled Consent and Sexual Assault - Prevention and Response. Project coordinator Sharyn Carroll will focus on awareness and response to these issues on Mayne, Galiano, Salt Spring, Saturna and Pender islands.

The venture will conduct a review of community knowledge for prevention of and intervention in sexual assault for youth and adults. Its goal is to facilitate shared, consistent language regarding what constitutes sexual consent and sexual assault under Canadian law. The project will explore inter-agency protocols, policies and procedures for victims of sexual assault, and will include community involvement.

A needs assessment survey and forming of an advisory committee are the first stages of the project.

SWOVA says it is excited to partner with the RCMP, Victim Services, Options for Sexual Health, Island Women Against Violence, Island Health, School District 64, Gulf Islands Secondary School Parent Advisory Council and other key organizations on the project.

"We are grateful for the support of our federal government in providing funding for this three-year project."

PARK LAND

Tree vandals strike Douglas firs at north-end park



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Salt Spring PARC and the RCMP are seeking information about who may have illegally felled several large firs in Sun Eagle Trail Linear Park in November.

PARC staff, RCMP look for clues

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's parks and recreation staff want the public's help to solve a tree-cutting whodunit along a secluded north-end trail.

Whoever is responsible for the carnage felled at least five Douglas fir trees on public property near the North View Place entrance to the Sun Eagle Trail Linear Park in November.

"The property line is right there, and the trail is clearly marked," said Kirk Harris, a park maintenance worker.

Harris has reported the vandalism to Salt Spring RCMP, who ask anyone with details about the offence to come forward.

Harris said it seems the trees were felled by a professional and left in place by the side of the trail. The trees were about 20 metres (60 feet) tall and roughly 45 centimetres (18 inches) in diameter.

Harris said this is the first time he's seen such wanton destruction of trees on PARC land. He encourages park users and neighbouring residents to stay vigilant to deter similar actions elsewhere

on the island.

"We're watching our parks and don't want this to happen again," he said.

The Sun Eagle Trail is a challenging 300-metre route that connects the vast Channel Ridge trail network to little-used roads near the island's eastern shoreline. The trail can be accessed from the end of Sun Eagle Drive or between 255 and 285 North View Place.

Salt Spring RCMP can be reached at 250-537-5555.

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Robocall re-investigation supported

DUFFY

continued from 1

He testified that Lunn knew nothing about the plan to misdirect voters.

Lunn told reporters he is unaware that his party used robocalls or other tactics to sway 2008 election results, but did not return the Driftwood's request for an interview.

Green party leader Elizabeth May defeated Lunn in 2011. May, who was handily re-elected in October, wants Elections Canada to investigate the matter based on Thursday's testimony.

"There is a strong case here for re-opening the investigation. I will pursue it with Elections Canada and the RCMP once I am back in Canada," May said from Paris, where she just finished attending the COP 21 climate talks.

"My main interest is in uncovering the use of robocalls in 2008 and 2011. If the Conservatives — and I do mean 'if' — had a 'black ops' group, we need to make sure there are ways of preventing such dirty tricks by any party in the future."

"There is a strong case here for re-opening the investigation."

ELIZABETH MAY
Saanich-Gulf Islands MP

Briony Penn, who has since withdrawn from political life, said she and her team gathered plenty of evidence about questionable tactics used by Lunn's campaign team in the 2008 election.

"The additional activities coincided at the same time as the 'black operatives' moving in to the campaign office," wrote Penn in an email. "Taken as a big picture, all these actions certainly provid-

ed some grounds for investigating. "Elections Canada never investigated any of them."

Penn said she's suspicious of Lunn's claim to have been unaware that illegal campaign tactics were in play.

"If I had had a team of 'black operatives' arrive at my campaign office, I'm sure I might have noticed them and wondered what they were up to," she added.

Penn supports an investigation of the matter, adding that voter suppression tactics extend well beyond the use of robocalls.

"I would love to challenge Mr. Lunn again, but this time in the witness box where hopefully evidence will be examined and rules will be obeyed," Penn said.

Peter Smoczynski is a journalist who has been examining electoral suppression tactics for his upcoming film called Election Day in Canada: The Rise of Voter Suppression. He travelled to the Saanich-Gulf Islands riding earlier this year to investigate the swirl of allegations from 2008. He believes Saanich-Gulf Islands may have been a staging ground for more elaborate voter suppression campaigns elsewhere in Canada in 2011.

Though Smoczynski acknowledges the presence and effectiveness of highly paid professionals who can implement voter suppression strategies, he's not optimistic about the prospect of any investigation.

"I don't hold out too much hope. Elections Canada has shut down all robocalls investigations," wrote Smoczynski from Ottawa. "Elections Canada has been shut down, and the Trudeau government has yet to say a word about restoring Elections Canada to its former status."

"It's over, sunny ways are here, the witch is dead, and, of course, why worry about our democracy?"

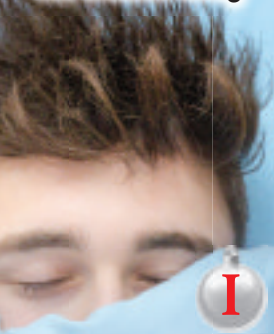
Though the national press may

have lost interest in Duffy's robocalls allegation since news broke on Dec. 10, Smoczynski said an important unasked question is why Duffy, a former journalist, waited until now to reveal what he knew about robocalls.

"If what Mr. Duffy says is true, then what does this say about Mr. Duffy? He had knowledge the Conservative party was, by his account, responsible for electoral fraud of such an offensive nature and yet he did nothing? Said nothing?"

"Where was his sense of journalistic integrity that had supposedly served so well for so long? Where was his loyalty to the voters of his country, his sense of right and wrong?"

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OPINION



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2015 BCYNA Awards
Gold - Environmental Writing (Elizabeth Nolan & Sean McIntyre) | Bronze - General Excellence



EDITORIAL

Bottom of the ninth

It's been 12 years since the Parks and Recreation Commission pinpointed a need for more playing fields on Salt Spring.

Now, with a winning solution in sight, opponents are rallying to send the debate into extra innings.

Multiple incarnations of the PARC board have taken on the challenge. Members past and present have assessed countless options; there have been many long balls, but all have fallen short of success, arrested by the warning track of public concern over traffic, noise, cost and loss of farmland.

Commissioners have reviewed islanders' needs through a series of surveys and other public engagement campaigns. Regardless of how many times they update PARC's strategic plan for the future of recreational facilities on the island, a need for more soccer fields and baseball diamonds always lands near the top of the list.

THE ISSUE:

PARC playing fields

WE SAY:

Brinkworthy site a good one

contribute meaningfully to the island's agricultural revival. PARC and the Capital Regional District could choose to offer land, infrastructure facilities, additional community garden plots or a combination of all three.

Other playing field opponents say the project will decrease property values, quality of life and calm for neighbourhood residents. Let's remember for a moment that this is Salt Spring, far from the drunken rowdies who may stream from sporting events in urban areas. We're talking about peewee ball players, not playoff hockey riots.

Neighbourhood residents stand to benefit from such a resource in their neck of the woods. Research shows the property value of homes adjacent to green space and recreation facilities rises rather than declines. The decision would turn 15 acres of private land into a shared space with playing fields, trails and a playground.

Access to more recreation opportunities gives us all, young or old, the opportunity to get off the couch and become engaged in an active, healthier lifestyle.

Done properly, with room for compromise, this project can make everyone a winner.

PARKER

SO, YOU'RE SAYING YOU DIDN'T CUT DOWN THE NEIGHBOURS' TREES TO IMPROVE YOUR VIEW BUT RATHER BECAUSE SANTA CALLED AND SAID HE NEEDED A NEW LANDING PAD?



VIEWPOINT by ALLAN CREASEY

Harbours belong to the community

In your Dec. 9 "Harbour Authority AGM upsets members" article, Bart Terwiel says he believes the local harbour authority, with the acronym HASSI, isn't inclusive enough. He takes issue with the harbour authority's board being lopsided, and not representative enough of the entire boating community.

The last time we heard from HASSI was in its mean-spirited approach regarding Tree House. The other item mentioned, both in this article, and the editorial, is one of a lack of transparency. Something is amiss when a community organization receives this much flack. But why?

The HASSI website states: "The Harbour Authority is locally controlled. To participate in the running of the Harbour Authority of Salt Spring Island, membership is required in the Harbour Authority of Salt Spring Island Association. The membership is approved by the board of directors."

As with most organizations, the board is elected by the membership at the AGM. And in this instance, as stated, membership in the association is at the discretion of the board, which complies with rules set out by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for harbour authorities.

But it appears HASSI has gone over the requirements very carefully and, in doing so, has limited possible input from the community. This is what has brought allegations of non-transparency and secretiveness.

They have complied with certain regulations. But... exactly how does this work in real life?

Say, for instance, a certain group of people, who are members, elect at the AGM specific people to be board members. These people may not be representative of the community but may only

represent the wishes of the aforementioned group. You can see where this could possibly lead to a kind of closed, self-perpetuating, undemocratic organization.

Here is another problem. After applying for membership in the association, and being pre-approved by the board, you must also agree to abide by the bylaws and "further the object of the corporation." What are the HASSI bylaws? They are not listed on the website. But they are available, at certain times, in the harbour office. They must remain in the office, and they can't be copied.

These harbours belong to the community. Why make it so difficult? Unless HASSI has become confused, or become too full of itself and lost direction.

You could perhaps attend one of the meetings. Unfortunately, only members can attend. Not the public. Nor the press. Perhaps that's covered in a bylaw restricting access, or national security, thus the doors that appear to be locked.

If you do manage to become a member, and agree to the prerequisites, you will be notified of the place and time of the AGM—the purpose of which is to vote for board members.

Of course, the existing board members must first have approved of your membership based on criteria known only to them. Get it? As it stands, I'm sure Dan Brown could find a book in this.

Salt Spring has recently celebrated diversity. It would be very nice and a relief if HASSI adopted that too. There are rules, but there is also the spirit of what a community organization should be.

The writer is a shipwright, carpenter and sailor who has lived on and off Salt Spring Island for 11 years.

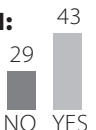
THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

Should the robocalls probe be re-opened? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Cast your ballot online at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com before Monday at midnight or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 4:30 p.m.

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Are you concerned about the diving dollar?



Driftwood

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ISLAND VOICES

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: "I just don't want to go back out there. I just don't trust the winter."

REG AAFITINK, GANGES HARBOUR BOAT DWELLER

SALT SPRING SAYS

We asked:
Christmas trees:
real or fake?



SAGA BRIGGS

There's no doubt in my mind that real is the way to go for atmosphere.



ALBERT KAYE

Fake. It's just more convenient and cleaner.



BRIAN MARSHALL

I think real because of the smell.



WAYNE MCINTYRE

In reading different assessments, the impact on the environment is less with a real tree depending on where it's grown.



OLIVIA RAKHIT

Probably real because of the smell.

Letters to the editor

Hat's off to good service

We all grumble from time to time about the service from BC Ferries. However, I would like to pass on a rose to the crew on the Spirit of British Columbia 7 a.m. sailing on Dec. 8.

As my partner and I were walking on the ferry at Tsawwassen on our way home from a fabulous two weeks in Sayulita, Mexico, a sudden gust of wind caught the hat I had bought there and tore it from my head. It went tumbling down onto the road below in the pouring rain and I thought it was gone for ever.

But as we were seating ourselves in the buffet room for breakfast we overheard the staff saying that the third officer had recovered a customer's hat. My partner told them

it was probably mine. The server said she would be glad to fetch it for me and bring it to our table — and within 10 minutes she did!

I was delighted and let her know that she and the other crew member involved deserved some public recognition for going beyond the call of duty.

Thanks, guys!

ROB GOODDALL,
SALT SPRING

Let kids play

I have neither children nor grandchildren living on Salt Spring, so, except as an occasional observer of events, I do not have a direct involvement in our community sports facilities.

However, it seems to me that for the past 10 or 15 years PARC has been trying to develop a few additional and, I suspect much-needed,

playing fields on Salt Spring.

But in each instance PARC's efforts have been stymied by the local agricultural community. I am likely missing the important principle here, but on the surface it appears that it is more important to leave the subject properties basically under-utilized than to allow kids to play on them.

I understand the agricultural folks' desire to preserve farmland, but a community also needs sports fields on flat ground and in reasonable proximity to the population centres. Besides, if at some point in the future we are running out of food on Salt Spring, it would take two good Irishmen (if that many could be found) or four questionable ones (these are in plentiful supply) no more than a week or two to turn Portlock Park, Centennial

Park and all other open space into glorious potato patches.

Don't worry, we are not likely to starve on Salt Spring because we allowed some kids to play soccer on a bit of property.

KEVIN BELL,
VESUVIUS

Robocall questions

The following was sent to the Canadian Senate ethics officer and filed with the Driftwood for publication.

As a supporter of Liberal candidate Briony Penn in the 2008 federal election, I am deeply disturbed by statements made under oath by Senator Mike Duffy on Dec. 10 in an Ottawa courtroom.

In his sworn testimony, Duffy indicated that "black ops" from the Conservative Party of Canada were active

in the Saanich-Gulf Islands riding prior to the election, and that "they used robocalls to misdirect NDP voters to split the vote and allow Conservative candidate Gary Lunn to win."

Aside from being angry about possible election fraud, I am now wondering why Senator Duffy did not immediately contact the RCMP or Elections Canada in 2009 when he ostensibly became aware of unlawful attempts to interfere with the election. He has had plenty of opportunities since then to come clean and help Elections Canada in their investigation of robocalls scandals.

If Canadians cannot count on appointed senators to protect their democracy, who can they count on?

I note that it is the role of the Senate ethics officer "to maintain and enhance

public confidence and trust in the integrity of senators and the Senate." I therefore call on you to investigate this matter fully and to take all appropriate action if you deem there has been a breach of ethics by a Canadian senator.

FRANTS ATTORP,
MEADOW DRIVE

Check expiry dates, please

The Salt Spring Food Bank greatly appreciates everyone's donations, but . . . when donating food, please make sure to check the "best before" dates. We cannot give out anything that is expired.

Thanks very much and happy holidays!

SALT SPRING FOOD BANK VOLUNTEERS

MORE LETTERS continued on 9

AGING with GRACE: Final gifts and grieving

"Your father is dying," the voice announced. "You must come at once."

It was December 1984, and I'd been dreading that phone call since visiting Dad the previous summer in Oaxaca, Mexico. It was my first visit in eight years, so how was I to know he was living in a jam-packed hovel, surviving on little more than two glasses of clear liquid, one labelled "Drink," the other "Sip"? It would take a book to explain how my father ended up in Oaxaca, and why it felt to me to take care of him; it's enough to say I'd confined my role to sending money and angry letters.

Caregiving from a distance is stressful, especially if the caregiver is preoccupied, either with job or other essential responsibilities. For the past 10 years, I'd been working in Washington, D.C. at the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. When the phone rang, I was heading the Office of Program Planning. For several years, I had overseen proposals for new research projects; my

recommendations were due in early January, so I always found it impossible to fly down to Oaxaca in December.

But 1984 was different. The Reagan administration, intent on defunding the commission, had recently employed a new staff director who had taken over my planning role. I took a break from job hunting, and arrived in Oaxaca on a Thursday night to begin climbing the steepest learning curve of my life.

With the help of Chris, my Spanish-speaking brother, I located Dad's doctor, who admitted him to hospital late Friday evening while I signed away my financial life. After 14 years in Mexico, Dad still wasn't a legal resident. Chris and I decided to bring him back to California where medicare could cover the bills. On Saturday afternoon we asked whether he could make the trip.

"Of course!" his doctor replied. "But not until Tuesday. He needs a blood transfusion first."

"I won't go unless it's in a pine

box!" Dad put in, but nobody was listening.

In 1969, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross published her groundbreaking book, *On Death and Dying*. Chris and I had never heard of her five steps of grieving. We experienced them anyway.

Denial. It should have been obvious not only to us but also to his doctor that no half litre of blood was going to make Dad well enough to travel. On Saturday night, Chris' blood started entering Dad's veins while we went out to eat our first meal in 11 hours. The next morning we discovered blood all over the place.

Anger. We were furious. "Why wasn't he more careful?" we fumed. "And where were the nurses?" we grumbled.

Then we learned Dad had stopped paying his medicare premiums. "I wanted to save money," he admitted.

I was livid: "But I was sending you more than enough to cover them."

Chris was scared: "His California hospital bills will bankrupt me."

"I never said I'd go," Dad declared softly.

"What about his hospital bills in Mexico?" I snarled.

Reality check: he was going to die, so why all the anger? Maybe because we were still in denial.

Bargaining. Chris had to return home, and I had to get a grip. "Before you go, let's clean up his room," I suggested. "Then Dad can return there to die in peace."

But deep down, I was sure that if I took care of him, he'd get better. I prepared myself for several months of caregiving. Chris and I found a care facility for when Dad was back on his feet again.

Depression. "Nobody knows the troubles I've seen," Dad had sung into his tape recorder on his 65th birthday. He wanted us to know his 68th, just three days away, was not to be missed. Tears welled; guilt swelled. I reminded Chris that I'd offered to pay Dad's way to California so he could celebrate with his grandchildren, but he'd said no.

Next morning, Chris

announced, "I have to split."

Dad said, "I know."

Tearfully, I wondered how I'd carry on alone. Acceptance. That night diarrhea flowed. As the nurse and I turned him for the 20th time, he announced, "I'm working too, you know." Next morning (two days early), I organized two of his neighbours to buy balloons and a cake. That night, he said, "That was best birthday party I ever had!"

I buried him on his birthday. Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley, two hospice nurses, published *Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communications of the Dying* in 1993. Too late for Dad's passing, but now I understand everything better. And I appreciate the extraordinary gifts that quickly followed. For one thing, I met Donald the day I left Oaxaca. He owned property on Salt Spring Island and I'm still here, forever grateful.



HELEN HINCHLIFF

BY HELEN HINCHLIFF

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Until December 31

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Friday Dec. 25th Christmas Day Closed

Saturday Dec. 26 Boxing Day Closed

Thursday Dec. 31 New Year's Eve 9am-10pm

Friday Jan 1st New Year's Day

Brunch 10am-2pm • Lunch 2pm-5pm

Dinner 5pm-10pm

Christmas Season ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Please note the Gulf Islands Driftwood will be closed
on Friday, Dec. 25 - Christmas Day
Open for usual business hours on Monday, Dec. 28

ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR THE DEC. 30TH PAPER:

Display Advertising Deadline: Wednesday, December 23, 4pm

Classified Display Deadline: Monday, December 28, 4pm

Classified Word Deadline: Tuesday, December 29, 9am

Please note the Gulf Islands Driftwood will be closed on
Friday, Jan 1 - New Year's Day and will reopen for usual
business hours on Monday, Jan. 4.

ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR THE JAN. 6TH PAPER:

Display Advertising Deadline: Thursday, December 31, 4pm

Classified Display Deadline: Monday, January 4, 4pm

Classified Word Deadline: Tuesday, January 5, 9am

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RANTS and Roses

Rants

Last Monday at around 3:20 p.m. a guy nearly hit a person walking across the road from Thrifty's toward the post office side of the lot. The pedestrian was lucky and able to jump out of the way. She could have been hit had she not moved quickly. The driver was a young man in a black later-model Toyota Echo. I hope someone knows this person and can give him a piece of their mind! N. Kosteljik

Roses

Trailers full of roses to the knights in shining armour (Tom, Kelly, Dave and Bill) who saved me from potential disaster when the truck and trailer I was driving began to slip backwards down the Fort Street hill on Saturday. You are my heroes! Kim

A sleigh full of Christmas cheer to the nearly 200 islanders who braved the stormy weather to taste, vote and enjoy Saturday's 4th Annual Chili Cook Off and Light Up. Thanks to: PARC for letting us do our thing and adding even more lights to the promenade; BC Hydro for hanging the lights in the big tree; Salt Spring Fire Rescue for rolling up the doors to let us in and saving the day; sponsors Country Grocer, The Rental Stop, Seafirst Insurance, Mouat's, Pharmasave, Auntie Pesto's Café, Salt Spring Inn, The Oystercatcher, Contour Grafix, Tourism Vancouver Island, Accommodations Group of Salt Spring, The Fishbowl Magazine, Stefich Fine Art, Purely Salt Spring, Tree House Café and Island Savings Credit Union. And a very merry thanks to all of our volunteers and the planning committee. We couldn't have done it without you. Christmas on Salt Spring committee

Santa has been asked to deliver special Christmas roses to the wonderful volunteers who helped to make the

Fulford Craft Fair such a great success. Your generous donation of time and hard work helped to earn enough funds to keep our community hall operating for another year. Thanks also to those wonderful folks who donated special desserts for our café and for the snack area. And very special thanks to the young folk who stepped up. We could not have done it without you. Karmen O'D and her friends Annie and Julia were amazing, delivering food to hungry vendors and visitors. The two Liams (Liam C and Liam Mc) and friends Jessie and Cameron, who welcomed folk at the front door and mastered the mysteries of the dishwasher, were also wonderful. And who can forget Emily, Safiya and Rachel? This is your hall and you have helped to make sure it continues to be available for your gymnastic programs and other community activities. You truly make it all worthwhile! Happy holidays, everyone. The Fulford Hall Committee

Choices Clothing Store would like to send Dennis Marshall a big bunch of roses as a thank you for the beautiful handmade wooden bench that he donated. Your special creation brings a lot of natural feeling to our new changes in the store.

A festively decorated holiday wreath to Sue Good and Vaughn Fulford for their enthusiastic participation in a Tuesday, Dec. 8 Salt Spring Ground Search and Rescue exercise in Ganges. These convincing (and patient) actors braved heavy rain and wild winds to make the scenario a runaway success. Thanks to both of you.

A Christmas rose for Karen H. Thanks for helping bring us home. K&D

An overflowing Christmas hamper of roses to all of those generous Salt Springers who took the time and gave money to donate to our Fill the Fire Engine Food Drive; with special thanks

going to Imagine That Graphics, the Driftwood, TNT Signs, Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue and the Salt Spring Island Volunteer Firefighters Association. Your support and dedication to our community has made this event a huge success! Thank you, Salt Spring!

A big bunch of Christmas roses to all the wonderful, hard-working volunteers who put on the Thursday lunch at Salt Spring Seniors. Thank-you to all of you. Also, thanks to Country Grocer for their help. Have a happy Christmas and we'll see you in the new year. Joan Dennis

A big bouquet of roses to my friends and colleagues in the food service business who ran to help the young woman in danger in Centennial Park on Saturday afternoon. It was a dark and stormy day but it was brightened by your brave and selfless actions. It seems you saved a life that day and are true community heroes. Thank you. Al

Thanks to the captain of the 9 a.m. Sunday sailing of the Skeena Queen who waited for all the weary, stranded Saturday travellers to make the turnaround and get on the ferry. Your 10 minute wait for us was greatly appreciated!

Thank you to the incredible team of volunteer elves and to the local businesses that made the annual Salt Spring Arts Council-Driftwood Santa Day such a success. Santa Day elves made sure every young participant could decorate a cookie and make one, or many, crafts to take home. Thanks to all the families that gave financial and non-perishable contributions to the food bank. Heaps of roses to the local businesses that contributed: SS Air, SS Fire Department, SS Coffee, Country Grocer, Apple Photo, Mouat's and Barb's Buns. Thanks for making Santa Day such a joyful and creative tradition.

Gratitude wheel keeps turning

BY JIM STANDEN

If you practise gratitude and kindness, it just might be paid forward.

My wife, Sheri, and I were vacationing in Victoria and watching the annual Christmas parade amongst the dense crowds. When she returned home, she received an email from someone claiming to have found her MasterCard.

Was this a phone scam or some other devious scheme? (Such are the examples of where our fear brains lead us.)

It turns out that the card fell out her pocket and was picked up by a kind lady who then went home and searched for Sheri on the internet, found her old dog training web page and emailed her. We found out later this was a mother of several kids who had a really busy life.

We drove to her house the next day and retrieved the card out of her mail box and left one of Sheri's hand-painted Christmas cards as a thank you. That was gratitude #1.

A week later I was walking down a nearby street and found another card on the sidewalk. It looked like a credit card, but it was strange because it had no name on the front of the card and no confirmation numbers on the back. But it did have the RFID chip, so I decided to bring it home.

It turns out it was a debit card (I had never seen one like this before.)

INDEPTH

The signature could be read on the back, so I did some internet searches and found it belonged to a lady who lived a block away. I phoned her and asked if she had lost her card, which initiated a relieved "yes."

I walked the card over, and had a nice conversation about life and, of course, the previous event of my wife losing her card and how we were able to get that back and could now return the favour. A reward was offered (which I declined) and a big thank-you and hug. That was gratitude #2.

As my wife and I discussed this remarkable coincidence and the joy it brought to strangers, she thought it might be nice to let the original card-finder know of the event that followed.

Sheri emailed her and told her that we had passed her generosity on to another person. We received a reply that "this had made her so happy and had made her Christmas." That was gratitude #3, so a full circle.

It's so nice to have random events in your life lead to joy and happiness. We will likely never see these folks again, but our lives are a tiny bit happier for having done the right thing.

Oh, and I guess I can't count. Gratitude #4 is sharing this story with others.

The writer is a Salt Spring resident.

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MORE LETTERS

continued from 7

HASSI AGM report

Salt Spring Harbours (or the Harbour Authority of Salt Spring Island) is pleased to share the results of our annual general meeting held Dec. 8 at Meaden Hall.

The newly elected board members are Chris Acheson, Saint Clair McColl and myself, Per Svendsen. Thank you to those that put forth their names to serve on this voluntary, vital board.

In addition to announcing the 2016 board of directors, this letter also serves to correct some misinformation as reported to the Driftwood in last week's paper. The purpose of an AGM is to review the audited financial statements, elect the board of directors and to inform the membership of previous and future activities of the organization.

All members are invited to the AGM; the meeting is not a secret.

It was good to see the turnout of members who elected and approved their directors. The members also voted 74 per cent in accepting the new bylaws, which will give even more transparency to the organization's workings.

As the community rep for the past year, I would like to thank the members that have come to me with their concerns. I invite anyone that would like to discuss Salt Spring Harbours matters to contact me or another board member.

The purpose of the organization is to operate, maintain and manage the public fishing harbours of Salt Spring

Island. I personally applaud the board members for the great job, over the last 25 years, they have done in helping to make Salt Spring Island one of the most visited and enjoyed water destinations in this part of the world.

We appreciate the Driftwood's positive nod to our updated bylaws and comment on how well we have maintained and improved the facilities at Salt Spring Island's five harbours.

Best wishes for a safe holiday season to all, especially those travelling on and off our beautiful island.

PER SVENDSEN,
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE,
SALT SPRING HARBOURS

Feeble report

A good scientific investigation starts with a hypothesis, which we can think of as a sort of prediction.

Then the investigator goes on to collect some facts to test whether the prediction seems correct or incorrect. These facts might be obtained by some experiments. Or the facts might be obtained by collecting information that already exists. If the observed facts do not fit the prediction, then that prediction is clearly wrong. It must be rejected and replaced by a more likely prediction. This standard procedure has served us well in making solid scientific advances.

The Salt Spring Incorporation Study Committee has issued a report and made theoretical predictions about costs and taxes for an incorporated municipality. The predictions used various bits of data from CRD and elsewhere. However, the committee did not test the overall

predictions against any observed situation(s). There is a perfect way to carry out such a test: find out exactly what happened to costs and taxes since Bowen Island incorporated 16 years ago!

Why in blazes has the committee not done that?

JOHN SPRAGUE,
OLD SCOTT ROAD

Beaver benefits

Further to your Dec. 2 Strangers Among Us story about beavers, on an island where so many of us draw our water from wells, a major benefit of the beavers must be that increased standing water contributes to subsurface aquifer recharge. That makes our wells less susceptible to running dry during droughts.

Perhaps one of your readers more familiar with hydrogeology could comment.

DOUGLAS MACDONALD,
LONG HARBOUR ROAD

What about Salt Spring's forgotten?

Over the past number of years, I have helped package and deliver food hampers to those on the island in need of assistance. I had no idea of the number of families who are struggling to survive. I can only imagine how they manage for the remainder of the year.

I read with interest how a number of citizens have come together to raise a hundred thousand dollars for the benefit of a refugee family it wants to bring to the island, while on the same hand we have hundreds of forgotten

people who are struggling to survive in our own back yard. Could those same people of our island, who are collectively raising that sum of money, explain to me why we can't as a community generate the same monetary enthusiasm for our own needy citizens as we do for one Syrian family?

I have sympathy for all who have been displaced by world conflict, but I believe we need to direct as much effort in providing for our own forgotten as we do for the displaced of the world.

If we lived in a country where food banks and charity were not necessary, then I could understand the efforts being generated to this cause. When we have so many of our own residents in great need, a hundred thousand dollars directed towards one family seems excessive.

One hundred thousand dollars used for the benefit of those who are suffering on Salt Spring would provide for the many — not just one family.

We need to alleviate the suffering of our own citizens before we try to alleviate the world's.

D. PENHALE,
SALT SPRING

OUR LADY OF GRACE

Roman Catholic Church

135 Drake Road

Christmas & New Year Masses

CHRISTMAS EVE: Thursday, December 24th:

7pm Family Mass at Our Lady of Grace (Carols at 6:30pm)
11pm Mass at St. Paul's, Fulford Harbour (Carols at 10:30pm)

CHRISTMAS DAY: Friday, December 25th:

10am Mass at Our Lady of Grace

NEW YEAR'S EVE: Thursday, December 31st:

5pm Vigil Mass at Our Lady of Grace

NEW YEAR'S DAY: Friday, January 1st

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
10am Mass at Our Lady of Grace

Our Lady of Grace welcomes you to our Masses and would like to extend our prayers that your Christmas may be full of Peace, Love and Joy.

Choose positive

MP Elizabeth May is aware of the weaknesses of the new Paris climate accord but sees it as "an historic and potentially life-saving agreement."

Others disagree. Example #1: A Washington Times editorial of Dec. 13 states: "Nobody wants the inconvenience of a destroyed planet, but if the pope were paying closer attention to the debate he would see there's a growing body of perfectly respectable scientists who argue that science is never 'settled' and righteous skepticism is what propels true science."

Example #2: A Victoria Times Colonist letter writer argues, "Canada is back at a cost of billions." The letter-writer is heartened by a previous TC opinion piece by UBC professor Colin Dormuth, who argues, "If our own climate policies increase the spread in energy costs between us and the developing world, we could exacerbate GHG emissions by giving companies in energy-intensive industries incentive to leave for high-carbon-low-regulation economies. We have enshrined their right to do so in trade agreements."

Thankfully, the internet can provide us with arguments to counter such nonsense and defeatism. Let's remember that economic and political realities are human creations, which we can change.

Pembina Institute's Stephen Hui points out that "B.C. can reduce its emissions, help stabilize the climate and thrive in a lower-carbon world. The Ecological Commission's report on carbon pricing and economic competitiveness . . . is the latest piece of research to back this up."

And Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives researchers have dem-

onstrated that Canada could afford the "leap" towards climate justice called for in The Leap Manifesto.

The way our sovereignty has been undermined through various trade agreements is a serious problem, but not a legitimate reason to throw in the towel. Compare the self-satisfaction of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Hu Jintao, the former general secretary of the Communist Party of China, when they signed the FIPA

deal in Vladivostok, of all places, to the roomful of joy when the Paris climate agreement was announced.

See the choice we have before us: Do we choose the fear that goes with the goal of maximizing profits? Or do we choose the love and commitment required to protect the life systems that are the source of any wealth we enjoy?

JAN SLAKOV,
SALT SPRING

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PHOTO BY RICK NEUFELD

ALL IS BRIGHT: Valdy, with guitar, leads carol singers in the Salt Spring Mercantile parking lot for the annual Merry Monday event. Late-night shopping, Christmas goodies and community singing all took place in Fulford village.

HOLIDAY CHEER

Cusheon Lake carolling on tap

Canoe caravan and social this Sunday

One way to celebrate "the season to be jolly" is to sing some carols and then share warming beverages and appetizers with neighbours.

Community members will once again have that opportunity with the Cusheon Lake Caroling Caravan, which will circumnavigate the lake in boats, canoes and kayaks on Sunday, Dec. 20 starting at 1 p.m.

Anyone who knows and loves Cusheon Lake is invited to attend, with singers, crooners and croakers all welcome.

Boaters can either meet at the starting point at the public access dock off Cusheon Lake Road, catch up to the caravan from their own docks or meet in the middle of the lake. The paddle will end up at the Cusheon Lake Resort on Natalie Lane around 2:15 p.m. for refreshments and a social ending around 4 p.m.

Those planning to attend are asked to please bring a finger food appetizer or beverages to share.

Those who don't wish to participate can watch from the public beach or resort dock.

Attendees are asked to dress warmly and bring extra life jackets if possible.

BOOK REVIEW

Briony Penn uncovers 'The Real Thing'

Official biography of Ian McTaggart Cowan released

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

You can tell Salt Spring naturalist and writer Briony Penn has been very busy over the past few years just by weighing the heft of her new book, *The Real Thing*, the official biography of Ian McTaggart Cowan.

While doing her regular consulting work, forging a plan to get The Land Conservancy out of a financial nightmare and forming interventions against pipeline projects, Penn somehow found the time to put together a nuanced and extremely thorough picture of the "father of Canadian ecology." It's a story that's worth hearing, and one that Penn has shaped in a way to attract all readers, whether they have scientific backgrounds or not.

Born in 1910, Cowan was appointed head of UBC's zoology department in 1953. He pioneered nature television programming on CBC, paving the way for his student David Suzuki, sat on the board of governors of the Arctic Institute of North America and was chairman of the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council, and served as chancellor of the University of Victoria for five years, among his many accomplishments.

Penn creates a well rounded and thoroughly engaging picture of the man and the times, through firsthand sources, including interviews with Cowan and those who knew him, journal entries and letters. But she doesn't go into just her main subject's history, she writes about each supporting character's background and personality, from Cowan's Scottish enlightenment ancestors to his mentors and colleagues in the field.

"I think it's really a story about a network. Ian was always the first to say 'I was in a

lineage.' He was supported from the day he was 16 years old, and guided and mentored," Penn explained.

An interesting aspect of the book for local readers is how Salt Spring connects to this lineage. People who were strongly influenced by Cowan and now live here include Robert Bateman, Bristol Foster, Tom Bergerud and Peter Ommundsen. Bob Weeden was one of Cowan's students and carried his legacy to the University of Alaska.

Some of the people behind the scenes of Cowan's advancement were members of a secret organization of conservationists, who recognized an intrinsic value of nature above and beyond its resources. This group was called the Brotherhood of the Venerly — or just "the B" for short — and took their name from the more spiritual and ritualistic management of the hunt practised in medieval times.

An interesting aspect of the book for local readers is how Salt Spring connects to this lineage.

High-ranking scientists who were directors at places like the National Museum of Canada and the Royal Ontario Museum were part of "the B" and worked with their American colleagues against the forces of privatization, corporate ownership of lands and government policy that threatened animal and plant species.

Some of the specimens Cowan collected were the only known sightings of species in the area. His surveys also produced a baseline of what existed before and after industrialization, providing good arguments against it.

To advance conservationist goals, Cowan used all the tools available to him. He was savvy enough to create an economic reason for conservation, casting B.C.'s birds and animals as a commodity that should be preserved for profit, although that was not his primary belief.

"He had to turn game into a 'renewable resource,' but the writings of the underground society were all spiritual. They couldn't say that publicly. They would have lost their jobs," Penn said.

Moving as it does from before Cowan's birth through much of an incredibly active life (Cowan was a director emeritus of the Nature Trust of British Columbia when he died just shy of 100 years in 2010), the book covers a huge amount of material. This makes it difficult to sum up in a review or, as Penn has found, during a book launch.

Since Cowan did field work all around the province of British Columbia, Penn's strategy has been to introduce his achievements starting with how they relate to a given audience. During a recent reading in Williams Lake, for example, she began by talking about the work Cowan did documenting species in the Chilcotin and how that led to today's nature reserves.

"People try to rewrite history, but you can't really escape Cowan — and you can't let the love of this place," Penn said. "For me the most important thing is for the people of British Columbia and Canada to know that this is as much a part of our Canadian identity as the pioneers: another Canadian archetype is the people who valued the natural world as it was."

Getting to know the man who was "The Real Thing" among 20th-century naturalists is both a pleasure and an important lesson that might otherwise be lost. As species extinction escalates and economic forces put even more pressure on our remaining natural areas, that lesson is needed more than ever.

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SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

Sing-along and ballet at ArtSpring

Christmas events on tap at ArtSpring

Islanders are invited to celebrate the season at ArtSpring with two wonderful events for both the young and the young at heart.

On Thursday, Dec. 17 beginning at 7:30 p.m., ArtSpring hosts its annual free Christmas Sing-Along. Everyone is encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item as a donation to the local food bank.

The evening will be full of variety, including emcee Adina Hildebrandt, Santa Claus, Arthur Black, pianist

Don Conley, bassist Ian Van Wyck, sing-along carols, the Viva Chorale! choir, and singers Deb Toole, Rasma Bertz and Cicela Månsson.

Country Grocer will also host an intermission reception with treats like hot cider, hot chocolate and other goodies.

Community members are reminded to please check the expiry dates of any goods donated to the Salt Spring Food Bank. If the expiry date on the item has passed, it cannot be distributed to clients.

Then on Sunday, Dec. 20 at 10 a.m., ArtSpring presents the seasonal ballet The Nutcracker, a live broadcast of

The Royal Ballet from London, England. A young girl's enchanted present leads her on a wonderful adventure in this classic ballet, danced to Tchaikovsky's glittering score. The Nutcracker and Clara travel through the Land of Snow to the Kingdom of Sweets, where the Sugar Plum Fairy treats them to an amazing display of dances.

Tickets are available through ArtSpring.

In other ArtSpring news, paintings by the League 181 group are on display in the lobby areas until Dec. 20.

The arts centre will be closed for the holiday period from Dec. 21 until Jan. 4.

ART EDUCATION

Kids offered winter art explorations

Workshops on the Rock sessions

Island youth can immerse themselves in new artistic experiences through five workshops presented by the Salt Spring Arts Council.

The council's Workshops on the Rock group has created the "In House" Winter Workshops for Youth series,

which takes place in the Jan. 19 to March 4, 2016 period at Mahon Hall.

Parents can sign up their children now for the following sessions:

- Mask Making with Kaya Reiss, for ages seven and up. It runs for six Wednesdays from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m. beginning on Jan. 20.

- Write and Draw a Comic Book or Graphic Novel with

Jeannette Sirois, for ages 12 to 15. Runs for six Tuesdays from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m. beginning on Jan. 19.

- Draw and Paint with Earth and Heart with Lisa Lipsett for ages 11 to 13. Runs for six Fridays from 1 to 2:30 p.m. beginning on Jan. 29.

- Comic Book and Cartoon Illustration with Pat McCallum for ages 16 and up. Runs for four Saturdays from 10 a.m. to

12 noon beginning on Jan. 30.


- Intro to SAORI Weaving with Terri Bibby for anyone aged six or older. Two sessions (10 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 to 3 p.m.) on Saturday, Feb. 20.

For more information or to register, send an email to wor@ssartscouncil.com, phone 250-653-2330 or visit www.workshopsontherock.com.

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what's on this week


Wed. Dec 16
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Carols for Christmastide. Christmas concert and opportunity to sing carols at All Saints. 2 p.m. Followed by festive refreshments.

ACTIVITIES
The Seniors Christmas Party.

Enjoy the Lost Chords, and a performance by the Reader's Theatre along with your tea and goodies. Hosted by Vivian and Bryan Dawson. SS Seniors Centre. 2 to 4 p.m.

Celebration of Trees.

Enjoy nine beautifully decorated trees and add food donations for the Salt Spring Food Bank and Copper Kettle to your favourite. Salt Spring Golf & Country Club Clubhouse. Open daily from 10 a.m. on until Dec. 30.

Poker Night at the Local.

Hosted by Albert every Wednesday at The Local. Sign up by 6:30 p.m., start at 7 p.m.

SongJam.

A pub-style singalong to the soundtrack of our lives. Moby's Pub. 8 p.m.

www.driftwoodgulfislandsmedia.com/calendar/

Thur. Dec 17
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Open Mic with Ross & Dave. Every Thursday at Moby's Pub. 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES
'Blue Christmas' Service.

Annual seasonal offering at SS United Church. 2 p.m.

Christmas Sing-Along.

ArtSpring's annual tradition. Free with a donation to the food bank. ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.

Celebration of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.

SS Local Trust Committee.

Regular meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. at Lions Hall. Town hall session at noon.

Fri. Dec 18
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Jamie Harris.

Live music at The Local, with free appies from Dagwoods. 5 to 8 p.m.

Salt Spring Arts Academy
Annual Holiday Show.

Enjoy dance and theatre selections from academy teachers: Lisa Hall, Brendan Hardisty, Suzanna Laine, Rosita Larrain, Sue Newman and Amber Tuttle, plus guests. ArtSpring. 7 p.m.

Fri. Dec 18
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Viva Chorale! Food Bank Fundraising Concert.

Viva Chorale! carollers sing Christmas with director Caroni Young & accompanist Diana English. Holiday treats. Admission by donation to the Salt Spring Food Bank. All Saints Church. 7:30 p.m.

Soul Shakedown.

Live soul/blues band at Moby's Pub. 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES
A Southend Christmas.

Special service with Women of Note, readings and carol singing at St. Mary's Church in the Burgoyne Valley. 2 p.m.

Meat Draw.

Every Friday at the Legion. Starts at 5 p.m.

Celebration of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.

Sat. Dec 19
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
The Barley Bros.

Live music at The Local Pub. 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Cari Burdett & Lila Music
Centre's 5th Annual Winter Solstice Music
Cabaret.

Nationally acclaimed Canadian artists perform cabaret style show to celebrate the returning light. ArtSpring. 7 p.m.

Sat. Dec 19
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol.

Dramatic reading featuring Jan Rabson, Mary Lowery, Clark Saunders, Lynda Jensen and Chris Humphreys. SS United Church. 7:30 p.m. A Grand(m)others to Grandmothers fundraiser with proceeds to the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Angry Hippies.

Live band at Moby's Pub. 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES
Last Chance Community Christmas Craft Fair.

The ArtSpring gallery becomes a magical place for the day, complete with Christmas music and decor, and great last-minute gifts by local artisans. ArtSpring. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Christmas Market in the Park.

Vendors set up in Centennial Park from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Meat Draw.

Every Saturday at the Legion. Starts at 5 p.m.

Celebration of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.

Sun. Dec 20
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol.

Dramatic reading featuring Jan Rabson, Clark Saunders, Lynda Jensen, Rachel Jacobson and Arthur Black. SS United Church. 2 p.m. A Grand(m)others to Grandmothers fundraiser with proceeds to the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Sun. Dec 20
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Ugly Sweater Contest and Purple City.

Live music and fun contest at Salt Spring Inn. 6 to 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES
Christmas Bird Count.

Annual data-gathering project with volunteers out counting birds and reporting results to coordinators. To participate, email Tim Marchant at tim@timmarchant.com.

Live Ballet Broadcast: The Nutcracker.

Royal Ballet performs The Nutcracker in Peter Wright's classic production. ArtSpring. 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Cusheon Lake Carol Canoe Caravan.

Meet at the public dock, and then go caroling dock to dock around the lake by canoe or kayak. Bring snacks to share afterwards. 1 p.m.

Firewalking Workshop and Ceremony.

Workshop and ceremony with Liz Forrest, accredited firewalking instructor. Salt Spring Island Health Clinic, 2551 Fulford-Ganges Rd. 1 to 6 p.m.

Rollerblading.

Every Sunday at Fulford Hall from 2 to 4 p.m.

Unitarian Fellowship Winter Solstice Potluck Supper.

Songs, stories, good food and fun. Friends and families welcome. No more Sunday morning services until Jan. 3. Salt Spring Seniors Services Society. 5:30 p.m.

Celebration of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.

Mon. Dec 21
ACTIVITIES
Drop-in Pickleball.

Every Monday at Fulford Hall from 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Celebration of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.

Tue. Dec 22
ACTIVITIES
Celebration of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.

Wed. Dec 23
ACTIVITIES
Celebration of Trees.

See last Wednesday's listing.

Poker Night at the Local.

See last Wednesday's listing.

SongJam.

See last Wednesday's listing.

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Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol

Sat., Dec. 19 at 7:30pm

Sun., Dec. 20 at 2pm

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EXHIBITIONS

- **Gallery 8** presents its annual exhibition of **8x8 Christmas Small Works** daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Jan. 6.
- **WinterCraft**, the Salt Spring Arts Council's show and sale of work by Gulf Islands artists and craftspeople runs daily at **Mahon Hall** from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Dec. 22.
- **League 181** painting group members show work in the **ArtSpring** lobby through Dec. 20.
- **Mel Williamson** shares new paintings related to restaurants and food at **Auntie Pesto's** cafe for the month of December, in a show presented by **Steffich Gallery**.
- **Fred Ascott** shows paintings in the first We've Got Talent exhibition at **Greenwoods**, open daily from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. through December.
- **Howard Fry's** exhibition **Vanishing Landmarks: Photos of a BC Pioneering Heritage** runs at the **Library Program Room** through December.
- **Margot W. Chisholm** has an exhibit of paintings at **Country Roasters Cafe** at **Country Grocer** in December.
- **Beulah Gordon** shows mixed-media and glass work at **Island Savings**.

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MUSICIAN PROFILE

Violinist makes home on Salt Spring



PHOTO BY BERNADETTE MERTENS-McCALLISTER.

Violinist Joan Blackman enjoys an opportunity to perform outside at her new island home.

Joan Blackman adapts to island life

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's considerable draw for artists of all kinds has recently resulted in another choice musical acquisition for the island in the persons of Joan and Larry Blackwell.

Larry is a viola player with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and violinist Joan recently retired as the organization's associate concertmaster, a position that put her almost as close as one can get to the conductor. While her husband continues to commute to the city, staying work nights at a small pied-à-terre, Joan Blackman has embraced full-time island living.

Like many local inhabitants, it took just one visit for Blackman to realize Salt Spring was the place she'd always been looking for. A weekend on the island that included a night out at ArtSpring led to looking at real estate "for fun" — and that led to falling in love with and purchasing a home.

"It was just kind of a leap of faith. And it's crazy when you think of it," Blackman said. "Musicians live in cities, because that's where the work is... But somethings drew us here."

Indeed, city living has helped Blackman forge important connections. She has performed and recorded as soloist with the Vancouver Symphony, Victoria Symphony, CBC Radio and Banff Festival orchestras. She is also a member of the acclaimed American String Project, which brings together concertmasters and soloists throughout North America.

That doesn't mean she's left the world of music behind, though. From her Salt Spring home Blackman continues to run the Vancouver-based Vetta Chamber Music and Recital Society, which she has been artistic director for since 2007. She is also taking performance dates and offering her teaching services to stu-

dents up and down Vancouver Island. In fact, though her children have grown up and are living productive adult lives of their own, Blackman's edging into retirement is markedly on the hesitant side.

Hard work has always been part of Blackman's personality. After growing up in Edmonton, she studied music at McGill University and then went to Vancouver to study under Gwen Thompson, the noted violinist and educator. Though she had always played chamber music, she soon took on a new role with the VSO.

"I played in the second violins and was as proud as can be to be in the orchestra," she recalled. "I was kind of naive. I just sort of believed you could just keep working and move forward."

"For the past eight or nine years my chamber music has been the thing that's kept me going."

JOAN BLACKMAN
Professional violin player

In fact, it's rare for someone in the second violins to progress to the first, and even more unusual for someone to work up to the concertmaster level, but that is exactly what Blackman did.

"That was really fun for many years, and I miss it in many ways," Blackman said. At the same time, she noted, "For the past eight or nine years my chamber music has been the thing that's kept me going."

Blackman explained it's the intimacy and ability to share with the audience that makes the format so appealing.

"If I hear a sigh at the end of a movement, or make people cry, I know I've done my job," she said. "The orchestra is more about being part of a team and joining in a stream of music. You

have to subsume yourself a little bit, so you have to be really willing for the sake of the music and the sake of the team. And the orchestra, in a way, is for young people because it takes a lot of energy and a lot of hours sitting there. Chamber music is where you really have a voice."

Vetta Chamber Music is celebrating its 30th anniversary season in 2015-16. A reunion concert with the ensemble's founders took place Oct. 1 and 2 and Angela Cheng will join the group for a blow-out season finale in Vancouver in April. The ensemble will have another special anniversary concert at ArtSpring on April 27 that features collaboration with aboriginal storyteller Rosemary Georgeson.

During her years as Vetta's artistic director, Blackman introduced a few new ideas such as tango along with the standard repertoire, something her loyal audience has taken in good faith.

"I have to sort of introduce people gently to different genres, and what I like is the audience I have there trusts my programming. They're willing to come and give it a try," Blackman said.

Blackman is still trying to determine exactly how she can share her music best with the local community and connect with like-minded people while living on an island, but in the meantime she's enjoying the slower pace. She and her husband had a luxurious summer off together, and their dog couldn't be happier.

"For a musician for whom music means everything, it's amazing to take time to garden or go swim in a lake," Blackman said.

"Living on Salt Spring has opened up a whole new world to me. People have a willingness to engage with each other. I had that in music, and now I'm learning to have that with people."

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FINE ART

Best work wanted for EAT show

Submission call made with February deadline

Salt Spring Island artists working in painting, sculpture and photography are invited to make submissions for the 10th annual edition of the Easter Art Tour.

A group show will run from Friday, March 25 through Sunday, April 3, 2016 at Mahon Hall, highlighting the best fine art Salt Spring

has to offer.

"No work is too large or too small, too expensive or too cheap, too old or too new," states the call for entries. "The only criteria is that it must be your very best work ever!"

Artists should submit a clear image, the dimensions of the piece and the date of the work by email to ssieasterarttour@gmail.com.
Deadline for submissions is Feb. 1, 2016.

The Easter Art Tour is a sponsored program of the Salt Spring Arts Council.

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VALUED VOLUNTEERS: Longstanding members of the Lady Minto Hospital Auxiliary Society were lauded for their years of service at a Dec. 2 celebration. From left are Dennis Owen, Norah Lloyd, Verna Elliott, Sonja Baker, Merryl Cockett, Jean Williams, Margaret Monro and Jennifer Williams. Another highlight of the catered-by-Penny's lunch was the awarding of life memberships to Mary Neil, who has given 21 years of service to the auxiliary, Cockett (16 years) and Rita Robertson (23 years).

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RIDING

New group looks to find riding space

Gulf Island Horsemen's Association convenes

Fourteen people attended the inaugural meeting of the Gulf Island Horsemen's Association at the public library in Ganges on Monday night.

Members plan to form a non-profit society with the view to setting up a horse riding centre that would be open to everyone living on Salt Spring. The move comes after 22 horses were given notice to leave Blue Horse Equestrian Centre, which is shutting its doors by the end of February.

Elected officers for the new group are Jacky Cooper, president, Damian Inwood, vice-president, Laura Pearce, treasurer, and Lara Gossett, secretary, with Charley Miller, Kahsia Hartwell and Hannah Miller also elected as directors.

Anyone interested in becoming a GIHA member or who has land suitable to lease as an equestrian centre should phone Jacky Cooper at 250-537-2018.

NATURE

Imagination makes us what we are

The natural history of us, part II

BY BOB WEEDEN
DRIFTWOOD CONTRIBUTOR

While upright walking and social living were doing their evolutionary two-step, two other developments helped make us what we are today.

One was the deepening of consciousness. A lot of vertebrates, including humans, are aware of their internal state and their surroundings. A third-order awareness is less common, though you find it among birds and mammals, who sense what another individual, whom they can see, intends to do. Humans go another step, which is to say to themselves, "If he does what he seems to signal, I will do this and he might react like this."

As soon as "might" shows up, imagination is there. Imagination — making pictures in the mind of something not actually there — has been crucial to the development of human culture. We depend on it every waking hour as we "rehearse" the next activity. Reason is the disciplined use of imagination. All planning, whether by military commander, corporate head, scientist, or by you and me, is accomplished by imagining situations and preparing to respond when they happen. Art springs directly from the imagination.

When we are asleep or not paying attention, imagination and the whole "default mode network" swing into action. Hence, dreams, daydreams, and "out-of-the-blue" inspiration.

Anthropologists looking for the origins of the imagination have a firm baseline in the cave art of France and Spain, obviously the product of imaginative brains. These date from 35,000 to 15,000 years ago. Carved figurines found in Croatia are as much as 45,000 years old. Before then, who knows?

One current idea is that just as our ancestors were becoming human, changes had started in the basic architecture of the brain. Brain capacity increased. More importantly, neural channels opened between intelligence domains that before then had been isolated. By the time humans reached central and western Europe about 50,000 years ago they could intermingle thoughts among social, technical and natural history intel-



ligences, and had the language capacity to spread ideas to other people. Humans lived alongside of Neanderthals for over 15,000 years closely enough that we still carry some of their genes. (We must have gotten along OK!) We survived and they didn't even though they had big brains and lots of muscle. It's likely that their intelligence centres were isolated and their thinking more rigid.

One consequence of free-flowing thought — like city traffic without stoplights — is confusion. One scientist quipped, "Confusion is the original and permanent state of the human mind." You can tell. One of the child's first facial expressions is the puzzled frown. Adults get good at it from constant practice.

Before the mind can make virtual pictures or hear virtual sounds, it has to have something to go on. Children have very active imaginations, but they have only limited experience, a few picture books or digital screens, and adult conversations to prime the pump. We can guess that in the vastly simpler worlds of prehistoric societies individual imaginations similarly were sparse. However, the imagination shuffles images around as if it were a kaleidoscope. Something new pops up constantly. Imaginative ideas from individuals might be tried by the group, which would provide input for new images, and so on. This process isn't always progressive. It is a dance that has led off a cliff.

Since the technologically simple but enchanted world of Neolithic tribes, we've invented one new world after another. Early farming brought cultivated landscapes, a new theme in technology, and struggles to live in bigger communities. With the first cities came slavery, caste systems, concentrated political power, armies and money.

With monotheistic religions came visions of heaven and hell and a layer cake of robed representatives of god. Totally new consumer goods came with industrial technologies as well as massive social changes in city and rural places alike. Modern science revealed invisibly small and invisibly distant worlds; space exploration, and genetic manipulation. Planet Earth became an iconic unit of thought. Electronic devices flood us each hour with more images than a hunter/gatherer could experience in a lifetime.

One word can't characterize this 20,000-year sweep of time, but I'll offer one anyway: creativity, the process by which the virtual world of the mind is made real. Most of the time, the hand — that forelimb no longer used to get the body from place to place — is the midwife, although in dance and theatre the whole body is the instrument.

Although the imagination is extraordinarily innovative, it is neither moral nor practical. It does not assess the likely effects of novelty once it is loose in the world. Whatever comes in, whether violent or calm, monstrous or beautiful, good or evil, joins the free-flowing neural traffic. Guidance has to come from somewhere else.

"Somewhere else" includes our biological heritage, because the urges to cooperate, to empathize, to act altruistically and fairly, and to love, are in our genes. To those gifts we can add wisdom from our vast cultural heritage and from our own lives mindfully lived. We've got more than enough at hand to rein in our frisky imagination when we must — if we will.

For something like 95 per cent of our species' existence, biology dominated. After a lurching transition, about three centuries ago we turned our short-term destiny over to culture. Nature and natural selection are masked by the weight of artifice, but are always, unquenchably, part of us.

This is the final instalment of the Nature's Calendar column, which has run for the past three years. Most pieces were written by Bob Weeden, current president of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, a biologist and retired university professor. His most recent book is The Country of Heart, Eye and Hand, a collection of natural history essays.

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AGRICULTURE

Livestock survey counts flocks

Data will map island's agricultural future

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Salt Spring Agricultural Alliance has launched a barnyard census to better grasp the state of island farming.

Coordinators want livestock owners to share the number of animals waddling, grazing, clucking and snorting on island properties to update Salt Spring's livestock population.

"It's important for the abattoir and agricultural plan," said Windrush Farm owner Margaret Thomson, who is helping coordinate the survey. "What we really need to know is if things are going up, down, or changing in proportion."

The one-page questionnaire asks participants to provide details about the size of their breeding flocks or herds, the number of animals raised or marketed for meat in 2015, and include a prediction of what's ahead for 2016.

The document has been distributed through mailing lists of island organizations like the Farmers' Institute, Agricultural Alli-

ance and Salt Spring Poultry Club, but anyone who has yet to receive a copy can do so by getting in touch with Thomson at windrush4669@shaw.ca.

Anyone with livestock, including people with laying hens, is invited to participate in the survey. Formal membership in an island-based agricultural club is not required. Individual farm data will be kept confidential and only the total number will be published.

About 70 respondents took part in the 2008 livestock survey, when provincial meat processing regulations had sent a chill through the yards of livestock producers across B.C.

That year's results showed precipitous declines on Salt Spring for sheep, cattle, swine, goat and chicken populations over the previous four years. Total number of sheep, for example, dropped from 1,881 to 740 between 2004 and 2008. Cattle dropped from 207 to 48, swine declined from 86 to 16, and the number of chickens declined from nearly 5,400 to 2,633.

Thomson suspects efforts to promote meat production and farming since 2008 will result in higher numbers for the 2015 animal census.

"Based on activity at the abattoir, I suspect the number of chickens is up," Thomson said.



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COMMUNITY

Dinner's a gift to and from the community

All welcome to attend
free event

BY KAREN MARTIN
SPECIAL TO THE DRIFTWOOD

This Christmas Day enjoy a free Christmas dinner at the Legion's Meaden Hall with your Salt Spring neighbours. Everyone's invited.

The doors open at 11:30 a.m. for coffee, tea and visiting with old and new friends. The full Christmas dinner is served by volunteers, buffet-style, between 12 noon and 2 p.m. There's also a musical program and an opportunity to sing a few Christmas carols.

This Community Christmas Dinner has been held for the past 16 years. Helen Hinchliff, a longtime island resident, recalls how it all started: "During the announcement period at a United Church service, Gary Fletcher stood up and suggested that we organize and provide a dinner — on Christmas Day — for anyone in the Salt Spring community who wanted one. Held in the church, the first dinner was a real challenge because none of us knew what we were doing or how many to prepare for." About 50 guests came that first year and there's been a festive dinner ever since.

There is no doubt that some folks just come for the food, but as John, a regular guest for the past several years, said, "It's more than a place to



PHOTO BY RAMONA LAM

From left, Ben and Mary Richardson, Blair Carley and Jacob Richardson, who all helped out at last year's Community Christmas Dinner.

fill your stomach. It's also a place to enjoy conversation, mingle with others and feel a sense of belonging. It's a place to feel the generous spirit of this community."

Last year close to 250 guests enjoyed this festive event. The many donors, media partners and volunteers who help to make this dinner possible are looking forward to welcoming this year's guests, providing them with a festive feast and musical program, and giving them a warm and shared sense of community.

Like he has for the past five years, coordinator John Lugsdin has been busy, approaching a variety of potential and longtime donors on the island, inviting them to contribute the goods, services and financial support needed to make this dinner happen again this year.

When asked why he and his com-

pany contribute to this event, Mike Stefancsik, a business owner, replies, "Because the community supports us, we support the community."

He adds, "Besides, everyone deserves a good Christmas."

Jason Coles, another business owner, says much the same thing.

"Being a part of this community means supporting events like this one."

It takes at least 70 volunteers from all walks of life, ages, skills, faiths and backgrounds to make this event happen on Christmas Day. There's lots of food to prepare and this year seasoned volunteers will be without their longtime kitchen managers, Richard Dick and Marina Roland, who retired last year.

Fortunately, under the coordination of Diane Lugsdin, others have been found to take their place. The

turkeys, hams, salmon, and the vegetarian lasagna, salads, and various vegetables, buns, and luscious desserts will be there again this year. You can count on that army of dedicated volunteers, seasoned and otherwise, to not only prepare and serve this meal but to clean up afterwards.

Like the guests, the volunteers all have their own reasons for being involved. Carol Williams, a senior whose family lives far away, says it feels good to "play a small part in creating a lovely Christmas dinner for others who are alone."

For those who are new to the island, helping with the dinner provides an ideal way to learn about this community and to meet a wide variety of people all at once.

For one entire family, getting involved was a way to do something together that created a new and simple kind of holiday, one based on service and the true spirit of Christmas.

As Mary Richardson put it, "It is a warm place to be on Christmas Day."

For volunteers who love to greet the guests; prepare, cook and serve food; put up decorations; or sing with and for others, there simply is no better place to be on Christmas Day. They'd love to see you there this year.

Got a question about this event? Call the United Church office at 250-537-5812.

The writer is a Christmas Day Dinner committee member.

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SELF-EMPOWERMENT

Firewalking workshop Sunday

Ancient practice
holds lessons

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Anyone looking for a significant life-transforming experience this season has a rare opportunity with a firewalking workshop and ceremony being offered by Liz Forrest for winter solstice on Sunday, Dec. 20.

Forrest is a former longtime islander. She now lives in Vancouver but still owns a house on Salt Spring and maintains many personal connections here. Many know her as a teacher of the Toltec spiritual path in the lineage of Don Miguel Ruiz Sr. and the Four Agreements.

Firewalking is not part of the Toltec tradition, although it has been practised in many different parts of the world, from Polynesia to Africa. Forrest learned the skill and was certified as an instructor at the Sundoor International Firewalking School. The California institution was founded by Peggy Dylan, the woman who brought firewalking to western culture.

"Firewalking opens the door of possibility in all areas of one's life and is the most immediate form of transformation I have experienced,"

Forrest said.

"People say, 'Why would you want to do that? Why would you walk on fire?' But if you walk on fire, what else can you do in your life? ... You can do whatever you decide you want to do, and work with your own energy to direct your life the way you want it to go."

According to Sundoor, the earliest record of firewalking is of two Brahmin priests in India around 4,000 years ago, although Forrest said there is evidence suggesting the practice may go back as far as 6,000 years. The historic uses have been related to healing and initiation rites as well as a means of absorbing energy, such as by warriors preparing to defend their tribes. The former tradition is perhaps most applicable today, although firewalking can meet many needs.

"People walk for all sorts of reasons. That's very powerful to see," Forrest said.

The major part of the five-hour workshop is devoted to teaching participants how to master their own intentions and energy. As Forrest explained, firewalking becomes possible once people learn to elevate their energetic vibrations to meet the heat produced by the coals. Maintaining that intention without being distracted

through strong focus is another key component.

"When you're walking down a bed of coals you want to get to the end — you don't want to jump off in the middle, and you want your feet to be very happy when you reach the end," Forrest said.

The experience can be applied to other life goals, as participants learn not to be pulled from their intended course or get away with telling themselves that something can't be done. One of the fascinating aspects of firewalking, in fact, is that it should be impossible. Forrest said science has no real answer as to how people can tread over a bed of hot coals and not get hurt.

"It's beyond our explanation, and those things really excite me," she said.

Although most people choose to walk at the workshop's culminating ceremony, the decision is completely up to the individual. Learning the skills and watching others firewalk can be just as transformative, Forrest said.

Sunday's workshop and ceremony run from 1 to 6 p.m. at 2551 Fulford-Ganges Rd.

Pre-registration is required by email to thekiva@me.com, by phone to 1-604-809-7349 or through Forrest's website at thekiva.ca.



PHOTO BY SEAN MCINTYRE

GLOWTINI GLORY: Clockwise from top left is, from left, Ayla Argo and Caitlin Kettlewell proudly displaying the Glowtini Champion trophy they won for the Salt Spring Inn at Thursday night's fifth annual Glowtini Contest; their finished cocktail; the Auntie Pesto's glowtini made by Alex Reid; the Salt Spring Inn glowtini in progress. Second place in the competition went to House Piccolo and third to Auntie Pesto's. The event, held at Oystercatcher Restaurant, saw \$1,100 raised for the Copper Kettle Community Partnership. As well, Copper Kettle will receive a donation for every glowtini sold at participating island establishments through December.

HEALTH CARE

Physiatry service now available

Nerve, muscle and bone experts to visit island

Survey results and other data collected by the Effective Access to Specialist Services project team have already yielded results in improving health care, with the introduction of physiatry services on Salt

Spring on Nov. 23.

Physiatrists are nerve, muscle and bone experts who diagnose and treat pain and can help patients restore function lost through injury, illness or disabling conditions such as amputation, brain injury, nerve pain, stroke, spinal cord injury, neuromuscular disease and concussion.

Formerly, island patients needing such

services had to travel off-island. Local services will now be provided on an ongoing basis every two months by a team of Victoria-based physiatrists who will see patients at Kings Lane Medical Clinic. The first clinic was held by Dr. Jacqueline Pierce.

The Salt Spring Island Chapter of the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice received

funding for the Effective Access to Specialist Services project through the Shared Care Committee, a partnership between Doctors of BC and the B.C. government. The project's goals are to improve access to specialist care and services while also, whenever possible, reducing the burden of travel for island residents in accessing care and support.

AWARDS

Garry Oaks wins big

Best light red award

A Salt Spring winery received an extraordinary distinction when it was judged one of the top 10 wines in a recent international competition put on by Vancouver Magazine.

Involving approximately 1,000 wines from around the world tasted blind by 17 expert judges, Garry Oaks Winery's 2013 Pinot Noir + Zweigelt

won the "best in category" award for all light red wines entered. It was one of only two B.C. wines to place as a category winner.

"Pinot noir and Zweigelt sizzle in this edgy, juicy, peppery, red-berried wine," remarked the judges.

All top-10 category winners will be featured at an exclusive wine and culinary event for 500 people to be held in Vancouver in February 2016.

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This Week's Horoscope

by Michael O'Connor

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TIP OF THE WEEK:

Christmas is just 1 week away. This time of celebration is linked to Winter Solstice which marks the beginning of the 'natural New Year' which can also be described as the mark of a new round of seasons. As well, this turning point can be described as a new cycle of the Sun's light on our planet and this specifically is what Western Astrology is based upon. This time-honored event actually reaches as far back to the very inception of solar calendars which go back thousands of years and is shared cross culturally and internationally. That this time of cyclic renewal has become a time of giving gifts is linked to the story of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth and the story of the 3 Wise Men who, as the story goes, having observed the rare 'signs' in the heavens, travelled far distances bearing gifts in praise and honor of this sacred event. Some scholars and historians have challenged the details of this story quite significantly. Also, the commercialization of this 'spiritual' event does have its share of pitfalls. Yet there is something very special, magical even, in this darkest time of the year up here in the Northern Hemisphere and the exchanging of gifts, feasting and merry making also has its many merits as it evokes a spirit of love and selflessness in the hearts of people the world over. Gift Certificates are easy to purchase and can be sent to you by mail or email. sunstarastronomy@gmail.com.

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Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 20) You have begun to see the truth of matters more clearly. This is also activating you to pay closer attention to the details. Your focus will become even sharper this week. While you want to be diplomatic, an emerging aspect between Mercury and Mars could lead to debates and even arguments. While it may not exactly be 'battle stations', you are on full alert.
Taurus (Apr 20 – May 21) The past few weeks have likely coincided with some deep and powerful shifts and changes, some outer, some inner. Positively, circumstances are inviting you to lay claim to your creative gifts. This invitation might otherwise feel like a big push. Relationships dynamics are featured and the indication is that you have to work hard to achieve grace under pressure.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 21) New and important relationships have begun and are demanding your full commitment. With your confidences on a steady rise you feel increasingly able to answer this call. You are willing to give more but you also want to be supported. Although 'is the season', you may feel challenged to let loose and have fun, even though you might like to. This is a call to play hard.

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22) You have entered into an important period of learning. There will be a variety of fronts to attend to. Learning new health philosophies and strategies is likely. Generally right now you are in a cycle requiring you to dig deep. This may include deep cleaning and even renovations. While attending to your home is quite possible, this focus may be directed to psychological states and attitudes.

Leo (Jul 22 – Aug 23) You are in a creative and inspired mood. You do have work to do and may feel a bit intimidated. Yet a plan is beginning to unfold. While your energy levels may be up and down, there should be peaks you can act upon. Creating a more beautiful home environment matches the time of year yet runs even deeper than the season. Let the creativity flow.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22) There is likely a lot shaking in your world. On one hand you are in the mood to expand and increase while on the other you may feel restricted and perhaps unconfident. Yet your ambitions have been activated and your wheels are turning. Your quest for new strategies and approaches will bring results soon.

Libra (Sep 22 – Oct 22) You have entered into an important learning curve. It may even be traced back a year or so. Yet, it has been reactivated again. Feeling confident about it all may require extra effort and patience. With a money carrot dangling in front of you however, your ambitions are running high. Supported by a pioneering spirit to prevail, you feel strong.

Scorpio (Oct 22 – Nov 21) Some big dreams have been activated by this recent New Moon. These will come more fully to light as the week progresses. Sharing your passions with others feels easier than usual. Yet there is reason to say some lingering doubts in the back of your mind must be overcome. Fortunately there is also the indication that you have the hidden strengths to prevail.

Sagittarius (Nov 21 – Dec 21) A whole new level of enthusiasm and determination is on the rise. Aspirations to realize dreams and goals that have been gestating for a long time are highlighted. You are focused to establish a whole new level of power that has perhaps eluded you these past few years. With the recent New Moon in your sign, now is the time to initiate your next set of momentums.

Capricorn (Dec 21 – Jan 19) Your imagination is stirring. A philosophical mood lingers and many thoughts are running through your mind. While you are eager to express your power, you may feel the need for new tools and strategies. Some friends are there to support you now yet their advice may not be so easy to take. Questions about what constitutes true friendship is woven into this plot.

Aquarius (Jan 19 – Feb 19) You have begun to see yourself and the world and in the world in new ways. You have perhaps been aware of these perspectives for a long time but now they are taking root. As returns for past efforts steadily flow in, you have reason to feel optimistic. Yet, you remain determined to obtain new tools and skills. Even so, you may not have the focus but you will in a couple of weeks.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20) The seeds of new beginnings in your public and/or professional life have been sown. These are now in their gestation phase. The signs of these new developments should be evident by now. You may feel an extra weight of responsibility to respond. Fortunately your passions are on the rise. Ideally you are open to the possibilities. The time is right to shop around for promising leads.

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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**DEATHS****CAMPBELL, James McGeer**

July 13, 1918 – Nov. 29, 2015

A Gulf Islands icon left us on Sunday, November 29, when James McGeer Campbell died at Greenwoods Eldercare on Salt Spring Island. Jim Campbell, who along with his wife Lorraine has been a fixture on Saturna Island for 70 years, was 97.

Jim and Lorraine came to Saturna in 1945 to farm property owned by Lorraine's father. Those familiar with the Campbell Farm understand why they never left. They raised four children in an idyllic location long reachable only by foot or horse, or by boat and tractor. They opened their home and the farm, including cottages at Saturna Beach, to pretty much anyone -- students, families, travellers -- who shared their passion for the place. The Dominion Day Lamb Barbecue began at Saturna Beach in 1950, and attracted boaters from throughout the Pacific Northwest for four decades before it moved to Winter Cove.

Jim was a deeply curious, thoughtful, quick-witted personality, with no shortage of firmly held opinions, and a brilliant storyteller's ability to deliver them. His fervent belief in the sanctity of public process also informed a very active political life. Along with Lorraine, he was committed to community service, a trait that ran deep in his family. His father, Charles McKinnon Campbell, Sr., was a mining engineer with a strong conservation ethic long before that was fashionable. His uncle, Gerald Grattan McGeer, was twice mayor of Vancouver, as well as an MLA, MP and Senator. Jim Campbell was congenitally and by disposition a Liberal, and was involved with the party for much of his life.

Jim served for 10 years on the Capital Regional District Board, seven as chairman, 12 years on the Gulf Islands School Board, and a term as head of the BC School Trustees Association. He served for two years on the Islands Trust, and was a vigorous advocate for its core mandate to preserve and protect the Gulf Islands.

After the turn of the millennium, concerned about overdevelopment in the Gulf Islands, he and Lorraine sold and donated a significant portion of their farm -- including more than two kilometres of waterfront and Saturna's glorious Taylor Point -- to the federal government to form part of the new Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

Jim was born in the mining community of Phoenix, B.C., and also lived in Grand Forks, Vancouver, Cassidy, Montreal, and Okiepe, South Africa, before returning to Vancouver in 1929. He studied agriculture at UBC, where he met Lorraine. They married on Dec. 29, 1944, and lived briefly in Halifax, where Jim served as captain of a Halifax-based Fairmile patrol ship during World War 2.

He is survived by Jean Lorraine Campbell (nee Thomson), daughters Nan Logan and Jacques (Jackie) Campbell, son Tom Campbell, grandchildren Faedra, Ian, Andrew, James and Mary Grace, and three great grandchildren, Christopher, McKenna, and Ana Margaret. He was predeceased by his son James McGeer Campbell, Jr., and his older siblings Charles and Mary (Mim).

A memorial event will take place on Saturday, December 19, between noon and 4 pm at the Saturna Recreation Centre. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Saturnina Foundation (P.O. Box 112, Saturna Island, V0N 2Y0) or the charity of your choice.

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS****DEATHS****CHRISTINA WEBB STEVENS (Nee Fowler)**

March 25, 1928 – December 2, 2015

Chris passed away quietly on the evening of Wednesday, December 2nd, with her family at her side. Left to remember her are her devoted husband, Ken; children, Keith, Sharon, and Brian Stevens; daughter-in-law, Leanne Stevens; grandchildren, Dana, Kim, Sean, and Brodie.

In 1948, Chris met and married Ken and they lived, and raised their children, on Salt Spring Island. They moved to Parksville in 1990 and spent many years travelling in their RV. Chris had a happy full life and will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

In keeping with her wishes, there will be no service. Those wishing to honour her memory may do so by making a donation in her name to Oceanside Hospice Society, 210 Crescent Road West, Qualicum Beach, BC V9K 1J9.

To send a condolence to the family please visit

www.yatesfuneral.ca

YATES FUNERAL SERVICE & CREMATORIUM
(1.877.264.3848) in care of arrangements.

Evelyn John

1935 - 2015

"Life is a Strange Affair"

Evelyn John (née McCallum) born on wee Cliftonville Parade, Belfast Northern Ireland, in 1935 passed away on December 9, 2015 in her home, surrounded by family and all their love.

The story that led to this moment began with a leap of faith. At 21, Evelyn decided to leave the old country for a land she had barely heard of with a sailor she had only just met and married.

That eventually led her to Salt Spring Island, where she was recently honoured as a "Pioneer", having made it her home for over 50 years.

She leaves behind: brother Hugh (Marie), daughters Lorraine (Ben), Sharon (Murray), and Barbara (Randal), as well as step daughter Pam (Lise), and grandchildren: Lauren, Michael, Ellen, Ashley, Matthew, Caitlyn, and Callum. She will be welcomed into the Great Beyond by her youngest daughter Valerie, first husband Doug John and husband Chester Lengyel.

Our family matriarch will be fondly remembered for her love of singing, dancing and playing the odds, for her daily tidily and daytime dramas, for her afternoon chin wags, dedicated volunteering, and her world renowned killer coleslaw.

She could cook for an army, dance like a dervish, and scabble with the best of them. She was a fierce spirit and kindred soul.

*We will always love you, Evelyn.
Lang may your lum reek.*

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS****DEATHS****FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS****CARDS OF THANKS****FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS****CARDS OF THANKS****FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS****CELEBRATIONS**

Fulford Community Hall
Christmas Craft Fair
Thank you's.

To the talented craftspeople for supporting our hall fundraising. Your contributions are vital for the hall's upkeep.

To ALL of our junior volunteers extraordinaire, Karmen, Annie, Julia, Liam C., Liam Mc., Jesse, Cameron, Emily, Sofiya and Rachel, thank you for your help as the fair would not run as smoothly without your contributions.

To Moe, our creative Friday night chef, our weekend 'chefs', and countless bakers of fine desserts. Many thanks to Janice, our photoshop whiz.

Special thanks to:

1. Country Grocer
2. Thrifty's Foods
3. Windsor Plywood
4. Mouat's Trading
5. Upper Ganges Liquor Store

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

DEATHS**Irene Sarina Roper**

Nov. 10, 1920 -
Nov. 27, 2015

Irene passed away peacefully at her home on Salt Spring Island. She was predeceased by her parents Henri and Lillian Dubeau, her first husband William Muir in 1943, and her second husband Don Roper in 1999. Don and Irene are survived by their nephew and niece, Allan and Kathy Reimer, their grandnephew James Reimer, his wife Adena and their daughter Lilah Joan as well as their life-long friends in Maple Ridge, Jay and Judy Kinrade and their family. Irene moved to Salt Spring in 2001 to be close to her family. She was a past Worthy Matron of the Eastern Star both in Maple Ridge and later on Salt Spring Island. She loved music and animals and was a kind, generous and trusting person. We find comfort in knowing that she is now with her loved ones and not lonely anymore.

The family would like to thank all those who cared for our beloved auntie and kept her safe and happy in the last years of her life. There will be a service of remembrance at a later date.

Donations in memory of Irene can be made to the SPCA or PETA, organizations that she supported for many years.

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Driftwood

Earlier this year, Patrick Keddy and Tina Dawn Hawkins exchanged marriage vows under a Salt Spring full moon. Family and friends from east to west joined in the celebrations. Mary Lou and Brad Bompas look forward to the happy couple's return to Salt Spring in 2016.

Celebrating the Ancient Pagan Rite of Saturnalia
from Dec. 17 to Dec. 24, highlighted by the Winter Solstice. 8:49 pm Dec. 21.

We wish our friends & neighbours enjoyment of the longer, brighter days!

Andy & Caroline Hickman

IN MEMORIAM GIFTS

Salt Spring Hospice

Hospice volunteers offer the gift of hands, heart, and presence to dying and grieving Islanders.

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saltspringhospice.org

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COMING EVENTS



INFORMATION

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

INFORMATION



CANADA BENEFIT Group - Do you or someone you know suffer from a disability? Get up to \$40,000 from the Canadian Government. Toll-free 1-888-511-2250 or www.canada-benefit.ca/free-assessment



CLASSIFIED AD DEADLINE: MONDAY 4PM



HELP WANTED

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

TENDERS

THE BC LIQUOR DISTRIBUTION BRANCH
The BC Liquor Distribution Branch is seeking janitorial companies with commercial cleaning experience to bid on one or more of the 27 stores on Vancouver Island.
If you qualify go to: <http://www.bcbd.gov.bc.ca> and search under Liquor Distribution Branch for Janitorial Services on Vancouver Island Bid number: - ITQ2015-12-14 A
Closing date & Time: December 14, 2015 before 2pm PST.

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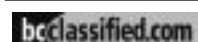
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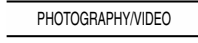
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SEE WEEKLY HOROSCOPE ON PAGE 17

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to our patients

Please be advised that the office of **DR. ROBERT CRICHTON** **WILL BE CLOSED** for the Holidays **Friday Dec. 18 - Monday Dec. 28**

The office will reopen **Tuesday Dec. 29, 2015 at 9:00 am**

We are very sorry for any inconvenience this may cause

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY PLEASE ATTEND LADY MINTO HOSPITAL

TENDERS

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District
Request for Proposals
Contract for Service
Information Technology & Website Support

The Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District is soliciting expressions of interest from qualified applicants to provide information technology and website support services.

Information regarding the scope of the work, proposal requirements and general terms and conditions is available on the District's website:

www.saltspringfire.com

The deadline for submission of proposals is December 31, 2015.

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Please forward resumes to:
Amber Ogilvie
aogilvie@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

Dgim

sports&recreation



PHOTO BY BILLIE WOODS

HOME RUN FUNDS: Members of the Salt Spring girls' softball team celebrate receipt of a \$1,000 donation from the Saunders Family Foundation with Bob Saunders (fourth from right in front), his son David Saunders (handing over the cheque) and Jim Ten Hove (far left in front) during a visit to Salt Spring on Dec. 2. The non-profit foundation of the Saunders family (of Saunders Subaru fame) supports youth sports and education causes on Vancouver Island and Salt Spring. The group also disbursed \$1,000 to the Salt Spring branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, \$1,000 to the Salt Spring Middle School's lunch program, and \$500 each to the Gulf Islands Secondary School and Salt Spring Elementary School music programs. This year's Saunders Family Foundation funds came from an annual charity golf fundraiser held in May.



PHOTO COURTESY SSTR

SUPER SEAT: Jack Pettit gets set to enjoy a new saddle placed on the Salt Spring Therapeutic Riding Association's beloved horse Laddie. The association was able to purchase three new saddles for its program thanks to a grant from the Salt Spring Island Foundation.

BASKETBALL

Alumni tourney announced

Annual GISS competition set for Dec. 26

Excitement continues is building in the lead-up to the Boxing Day basketball clash between Gulf Islands Secondary School alumni and students.

The action gets underway Saturday, Dec. 26 at 5 p.m. at the GISS gym with a showdown between two alumni men's squads. The 6 p.m. match features alumnae women against this year's senior girls squad. The evening concludes with the winner of the men's alumni playoff taking on the senior boys team at 7 p.m.

James Cameron, a player who helps coordinate the yearly competition, said the event features many return participants and spectators. The holiday tradition gives islanders a chance to work off some holiday calories, reconnect with old friends and celebrate in a fun, friendly environment.

Competition in the event costs \$5 per player to cover the gym rental. Admission is by donation, with all proceeds going to the GISS sports fund, which helps teams cover travel costs.

The event is the last major sporting event at GISS before the annual Nairn Howe Memorial Tournament, which takes place on Jan. 14 and 15, 2016.

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