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## HOUSING

# Commons welcomes first tenants



### Affordable rental housing for families changes islanders' lives

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The week leading up to New Year's Day was a busy one for 12 island families who moved into homes at the new Salt Spring Commons housing development.

Salt Spring Commons is designed as long-term rental housing in two- and three- bedroom townhomes, with a mix of rental formulas based on income eligibility. The first 12 rental units represent completion of Phase 1 of the project. Phase 2 occupancy of an additional 12 family units is expected for May. The development is owned and operated by Salt Spring Island Community Services (SSICS).

Born-and-raised Salt Springer Taylor Booth is one of the people who celebrated the new year with a move. He is thrilled to have a home for his baby daughter and fiancée.

"I think this is what Salt Spring has been lacking really quite severely over the past number of years," Booth said. "Over the years I have seen countless families have to move off the island because there's nothing they can find here for housing."

Salt Spring Community Services agrees that "many families with 'good paying jobs' are living in substandard housing, being forced to move frequently or even seasonally, or deciding to move off island permanently."

"The negative impacts this has on our community's schools, economy and overall social wellness are widely known and discussed," the organization states.

Booth's daughter was born in June of last year, and he found out the very next month that his landlord needed to sell the property along with the small cottage his family had been renting.

"It was a little bit stressful because we didn't have anywhere else to go. We didn't have any leads," said Booth, who owns Bean Drinkin Cafe in Ganges Alley.

Fortunately, someone told him about the Salt Spring Commons project and his partner jumped right on the application process, which took a few months to go through.

Having become a successful applicant, the family now has a brand new home in a community of other families. Booth said so far he's met seven or eight of the other tenants who have kids of all ages, from toddler to teen.

"It's really nice to have it all coming together," Booth said.

SS COMMONS continued on 3

PHOTO COURTESY SS COMMONS

Taylor Booth, a born-and-raised Salt Spring Islander and local business owner, celebrates his family's new home at Salt Spring Commons on Bishops Walk Road. The first 12 families moved into the Salt Spring Island Community Services-owned complex last week.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

# MLA Olsen looks back at unique year in office

Clear vision sought for work ahead

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The past year was unlike any other in recent memory, one in which a global pandemic collided with every aspect of life from the personal to the political.

As Saanich North and the Islands MLA Adam Olsen observed when thinking back on 2020: "It's been a notable year in so many ways."

It was certainly notable for the B.C. Greens, who ended the year in a much different position from where they started it. Olsen and Cowichan Valley's Sonia Furstenau easily held onto their seats in the snap election held on Oct. 24, but the party failed to recoup the loss of a third seat after former colleague Andrew Weaver became an independent in the previous session. The election also saw the BC NDP surge to a majority and therefore end the confidence and supply agreement that gave the Greens more access to power.

Olsen said one thing people may not realize is the Greens did more than just vote with the NDP when it came to passing key bills in the previous minority government; the Green caucus opinion was sought and incorporated as those bills were being developed and refined so they would be acceptable by the time they hit the floor.

"So the biggest difference is the Greens won't have voices influencing legislation in the early stages," Olsen said.

"We're definitely more of a traditional opposition party now, that's for sure. [But] we do have a bit of experience as an opposition party even though we had this unique dual role of being responsible for keeping government running. There's definitely tools and tactics and strategies that we've used since 2017 to raise issues."

One example of success, Olsen said,

was in the matter of old-growth logging. He said the NDP government went from being uninterested in discussing the issue to agreeing to a review and then committing to implementing all of that review's recommendations as one of their 2020 election campaign promises, all through the Greens' work in opposition.

"We're also still partners in the government and I think it's important to remember that," Olsen said, pointing out all 87 members of the B.C. Legislature were elected to represent their communities and want to do their best to fulfill that trust.

"We should never forget this is a collection of human beings, and we may have different beliefs and approaches to things, but we all got involved for the betterment of our communities," he said.

COVID-19 has dominated most news cycles and it's been a major matter for the B.C. government since March. The pandemic has both changed much of the business being done by the province and how it's been accomplished.

"It's surreal," Olsen said. "I've been doing this work [of political representation] for the past 12 years. One of the main attractants is being able to sit down with somebody in a coffee shop and talk about the issues."

Olsen estimates he's had thousands of such meetings until this year.

"That's what's inspiring for me, and COVID just shut that down. It put me on my patio like everyone else. It was very isolating. Certainly not being able to get out and around the constituency like I like to have been challenging," Olsen said.

He also feels Zoom meetings leave a lot to be desired when it comes to governance. The hybrid model at the B.C. Legislature means only 10 MLAs are in attendance at a time and the rest come in digitally. This leaves no opportunity to have the casual in-person conversations that are so useful for understanding the larger picture.



PHOTO COURTESY ADAM OLSEN

Saanich North and the Islands MLA Adam Olsen looks forward to returning to constituency visits in 2021.

"I think our democracy has taken a big hit," Olsen said. "Politics is people."

One positive outcome, though, was the weekly digital meetings that started early on in the pandemic between Olsen, Elizabeth May's office and the elected officials of the Islands Trust and the Capital Regional District associated with the riding. This has continued to develop, and a more formal body known as the Southern Gulf Islands Forum is starting to take shape.

Issues other than COVID that Olsen has been hearing about from constituents over the past year include health care access. He said the doctor shortage experienced on Salt Spring and the Gulf Islands is also an issue on the Saanich Peninsula — where there are 14,000 unattached patients — and all over B.C. Meanwhile, the provincial government's aim of transforming the health-care system to one with more "primary care networks" has not been easy to accomplish. Remuneration across different disciplines and politics within and between different profes-

sional associations are just some of the issues, Olsen said.

"It's a big complex mess and I think I'm mostly pleased the provincial government is trying to address it and the approach they've taken."

Other constant themes for the constituency relate to transportation and public education.

"Health care, transportation and education are the three biggest ministries, and all of them are struggling to keep up with the demands," Olsen said. "I think it's going to require government to be creative and innovative, which is difficult for government to do, and to realize delivering these services the way we've always delivered them is not serving society . . . The funding model for school districts such as SD64 is a prime example that the funding model has to be more reflective of reality."

Looking ahead to next year, Olsen said he hopes to see a much more comprehensive vision for the future governance of the province than indicated by the NDP's initial throne speech on Dec. 7. The B.C. Legislature is not scheduled to restart until March, a month later than usual, and he expects there will be a new throne speech then to direct the work ahead.

"I'm going to be paying very close attention to that, and anything other than the full social and economic recovery of the province will not be acceptable," Olsen said.

Olsen is looking forward to the time when he can re-establish connections and visit all his constituent communities again, hopefully sometime in 2021. Like everyone else, he hopes the COVID vaccination program is a success and opens those possibilities.

"I'm really hoping people on the Saanich Peninsula visit the Gulf Islands and I hope the people of British Columbia do a lot of travel in the area too, because I think our tourism operators really need our support," he added.

## TIDE TABLES

### at Fulford Harbour

**JANUARY 2021** PST (UTC-8h)  
When using Daylight Saving Time, one hour must be added to the predicted time in the table

DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET
<b>6</b>	0311	1.5	4.9	<b>10</b>	0433	3.2	10.5
	1042	3.5	11.5		0759	3.0	9.8
	WE 1801	1.5	4.9		SU 1246	3.4	11.2
	ME 2355	2.3	7.5		DI 2051	0.2	0.7
<b>7</b>	0404	2.0	6.6	<b>11</b>	0521	3.4	11.2
	1110	3.5	11.5		0919	3.1	10.2
	TH 1844	1.1	3.6		MO 1330	3.4	11.2
	JE				LU 2134	0.1	0.3
<b>8</b>	0206	2.6	8.5	<b>12</b>	0604	3.6	11.8
	0513	2.4	7.9		1028	3.1	10.2
	FR 1138	3.5	11.5		TU 1419	3.4	11.2
	VE 1926	0.8	2.6		MA 2218	0.1	0.3
<b>9</b>	0334	2.9	9.5	<b>13</b>	0644	3.6	11.8
	0635	2.8	9.2		1128	3.0	9.8
	SA 1210	3.5	11.5		WE 1510	3.3	10.8
	SA 2008	0.4	1.3		ME 2301	0.1	0.3

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## COVID-19

# Island cases decrease against B.C. trend

Island Health patients just two per cent of provincial total at December's end

If we continued to observe common sense and effective techniques of social distancing and masking over the holidays, we may well have

kept COVID under control. We will know more when the early weeks of January are reported out by the province.

PREPARED BY CURT FIRESTONE AND STAN DERELIAN

This week, we continue to share good news.

The Gulf Islands had only one reported active COVID case in the week of Dec. 20-26, 2020. This is while in the week ending Dec. 31, Vancouver Island showed an increase of 71 reported COVID cases and British Columbia had an increase of 3,381 cases reported.

Where are the COVID cases in B.C.? Sixty-three per cent are located in the Fraser Health area with Surrey, Abbotsford and Burnaby being hot spots. Twenty-four per cent are located in the Vancouver Coastal Health area. The Island Health area has just two per cent of the total B.C. cases. Vancouver Island residents are doing a very good job of holding down the number of new cases relative to the other health areas. Let's continue good COVID behaviour!

## Southern Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands Covid-19 case data:

### REPORTED ACTIVE COVID-19 CASES

	Week of 11/29-12/5	Week of 12/6-12/12	Week of 12/13-12/19	Week of 12/20-12/26
So. Gulf Islands.....	4.....	5.....	0.....	1.....
So. Cowichan Valley.....	3.....	5.....	3.....	0.....
Saanich Peninsula.....	11.....	5.....	6.....	12.....
Victoria.....	18.....	6.....	10.....	12.....
Langford to Port Renfrew..	4.....	3.....	7.....	1.....
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>40.....</b>	<b>24.....</b>	<b>26.....</b>	<b>26.....</b>

# Family housing gap bridged

**SS COMMONS**

continued from 1

In addition to the new construction that means the units are safe and clean, Booth said he appreciates the fact that the Bishops Walk location is close to town and of course that the rent is affordable, "which is impossible to find on this island."

The two-hectare (five-acre) property is within the Ganges village area, close to local schools and adjacent to an established pedestrian trail leading to town and Mouat Park. The complex includes a common house with a community room for post-pandemic tenant meetings, events and parties, as well as shared commercial laundry facilities, supplemental to those provided in each townhouse unit. A courtyard and common grassy area gives kids a safe place to play outside.

Thanks to the generosity of the Powell Street Foundation, a principal funder, the project also boasts having a state-of-the-art solar project with grid-tied solar powering electric vehicle charging stations, landscape lighting and shared laundry. A separate system is expected to supply about 30 per cent of the domestic energy needs for the residents with each unit fitted with an array to offset power consumption.

SSICS is still accepting some rental applications for Phase 2 units as submitted through the BC Housing Registry. People should visit [bchousing.org](http://bchousing.org) and the Housing Listings page to start the application process.

The provincial government provided \$2.4 million towards the project, with additional funds and support provided by SSICS, the Capital Regional District and the Islands Trust.



PHOTOS COURTESY SS COMMONS

Two views of the new Salt Spring Commons affordable housing complex on Bishop's Walk Road.

**BC HYDRO**

## Hydro urges line sense

Gulf Islands incidents underscore need for education

BC Hydro is urging community members to take care after encountering some dangerous and potentially tragic situations in the aftermath of recent storms.

BC Hydro's community relations manager Ted Olynyk said crews responding to trouble on the southern Gulf Islands last month found members of the public were putting themselves at risk of serious injury or death by getting too close to power lines.

"A downed or damaged power line is a danger and the individuals involved in these incidents were extremely lucky to escape without injury," Olynyk stated in a public warning.

One recent incident on Salt Spring reported by BC Hydro involved a faller who had cut a tree onto a power line. When crews arrived to repair the line, the faller was making additional cuts to the tree while it was still in contact with the high voltage line.

In another incident that occurred on Saturna Island, BC Hydro crews responding to a "wire down" call arrived

on scene to find a member of the public had cleared a fallen tree that had been blocking the road and was also in contact or close to downed power lines.

With more winter weather likely on the way, the power utility is asking people living on the Gulf Islands to maintain their distance from downed lines and from any trees that may be involved until professional crews can attend.

"Trees cause about half of all power outages and contact between trees and power lines can create a danger to anyone touching the tree. Power lines can remain energized, or become energized at any moment, and the tree may be a path for the electricity to flow," Olynyk said.

"The convenience of free firewood or clearing access to a blocked road is not worth your life. If you come across a downed or damaged power line, assume it's live, stay back at least 10 metres and call 911 to report it."

BC Hydro offers safety awareness programs and education programs for the entire community, from elementary students up to professional trades. People can visit [bchydro.com/safety-training](http://bchydro.com/safety-training) for information on free electrical safety awareness training for trades workers and first responders.

## REAL ESTATE

# Salt Spring home values jump by 6.4%

Assessment complaints can be submitted until Feb. 1

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The average Salt Spring home value increased by more than six per cent over the past year, reflecting strong interest from buyers for properties located right across the Vancouver Island region.

Numbers released by BC Assessment on Jan. 4 are linked to market values as of July 1, 2020. The trend shows an uptick in sales over the previous year, when the market had relatively stabilized.

"Home values across Vancouver Island have appreciated this year due to strong demand combined with limited inventory for sale," assessor Tina Ireland explained in a news statement. "For most communities, the assessed values of single-family homes are up moderately about five to 10 per cent."

The average-valued single-family home on Salt Spring is now provisionally set at \$681,074, an increase of 6.4 per cent compared to last year's \$640,401 valuation. Waterfront homes on Salt Spring became even more desirable, with values jumping 12.6 per cent from an average \$892,497 in 2020 to \$1,004,594.

One waterfront Salt Spring property that is normally on the list of the 100 highest valued properties in the Vancouver Island area was well up in the rankings again this year: at \$7.99 million, 466 Scott Point Rd. is now the 22nd most valuable property in the island region. Also making the top 100 list is 3015 Southey Point Rd., coming in at number 82 with a valuation of \$5.59 million.

The average assessed value of single-family homes

on the other southern Gulf Islands increased by eight per cent this year, or from \$376,478 to \$406,597. Waterfront homes on Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna islands showed a more modest increase in value than on Salt Spring, going from an average assessed value of \$644,903 to \$693,388.

Homeowners can expect to receive their notice of valuation in the mail as early as this week. They can also use the online tool at [bcaassessment.ca](http://bcaassessment.ca) to see their assessment immediately and compare the valuation with other nearby properties.

"Property owners can find a lot of valuable information on our website, including answers to many assessment-related questions, but those who feel that their property assessment does not reflect market value as of July 1, 2020 or see incorrect information on their notice should contact BC Assessment as indicated on their notice as soon as possible in January," Ireland said.

If there is still concern after speaking to an appraiser, property owners can submit a notice of complaint up until Feb. 1 to schedule an independent review by a property assessment review panel. Review panels are independent of BC Assessment and are appointed annually by the provincial government. They typically meet between Feb. 1 and March 15 to hear formal complaints.

Property owners are reminded that an increase in assessed value does not automatically translate into an increase in property taxes, however. Only those homes whose value dips or jumps up beyond the average change in the community will see their tax rate change beyond the budget increases that local governments have set.



Saltspring Island  
Fire Protection

**SALT SPRING ISLAND  
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
2021 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**REGULAR MEETING DATES**

**Board meetings start at 6:30 pm and at present, are held at Hart Bradley Hall, Salt Spring Lions Club 103 Bonnet Avenue.**

**Scheduled meeting dates are:**

- JANUARY 18, 2021
- FEBRUARY 8, 2021 (second Monday)
- MARCH 15, 2021
- APRIL 19, 2021
- MAY 17, 2021
- JUNE 21, 2021
- JULY 19, 2021
- AUGUST 16, 2021
- SEPTEMBER 20, 2021
- OCTOBER 18, 2021
- NOVEMBER 15, 2021
- DECEMBER 13, 2021 (second Monday)

COVID-19 restrictions limit the number of people in attendance and require the wearing of face masks. Attendees will be asked to provide contact information and sign in at the door.

Board of Trustees  
Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District  
November 16, 2020

# OPINION



**2019 CCNA Awards**  
 Gold - Best Editorial Page | Gold - Best Feature Series (Gail Sjuberg)  
 Bronze - Best News Story (Elizabeth Nolan) | Bronze - Community Service

**2020 BCYCNA Awards**  
 Bronze - Best Historical Writing (Elizabeth Nolan)  
 Bronze - Best All Round (for circulation Category C)



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### EDITORIAL

# Keep doors open

**F**or many people, 2020 will be remembered as the year they learned to "Zoom."

Everyone using the Zoom platform has likely encountered difficulties at some point either themselves or been impacted by other people struggling when they are meeting online, resulting in a few shared laughs. However, Zoom and similar platforms have been indispensable for keeping in touch with people and maintaining essential business and government activity when getting together face to face was not possible. Meeting online will no doubt remain as a convenient and cost-saving option for all kinds of organizations, even when restrictions caused by the pandemic are lifted.

Local governments in the Gulf Islands are among agencies who have used Zoom or other platforms to ensure the public has access to their proceedings when in-person meetings have not been possible or desirable due to COVID-19.

### THE ISSUE: Public access to government

### WE SAY: Local bodies need to be flexible

attend due to COVID-19 regulations and the size of meeting spaces.

In the case of CRD commissions, who meet at the small Salt Spring Public Library community room, there may be space for just one member of the public to view the proceedings. In those cases it only makes sense to use a Zoom or similar option to allow broader participation, if needed.

Islanders may not be clamouring to attend local government meetings, but if a controversial issue were to arise, the story would be much different. It behooves all government bodies to be as flexible as possible in ensuring the public has access to its proceedings, whether that requires renting a bigger space for meetings or ensuring it can use Zoom or another online platform.

As useful as online meetings have been, our local MLA Adam Olsen is correct when he says in this week's Driftwood story that "democracy has taken a big hit" due to legislators and citizens being unable to meet in person to discuss important issues.

Some day this year public meetings as we knew them in the past will return. Until then, local governments must continue to ensure their constituents can remain informed and participate, if they wish to do so.



# Time to support The Fritz

BY CHRIS RIDEOUT

When I was a kid growing up in the east end of Toronto, movies were a part of my life more than school, sports or family.

In those days, it seemed like there were movie theatres everywhere, from the plain suburban ones near my house to the splendid opera-style grand palaces downtown. I used to wonder at them as I rode the streetcars to the YMCA on Saturday mornings — an excursion planned by my parents to get me out of the house.

It also seemed that the neon-encrusted movie halls were beckoning me with the huge signs outside promising air-conditioning: "It's COOL inside!" This would have been a treat in the Toronto summers. These grand theatres looked like real theatres inside, with proscenium arches, opera-style boxes and golden glittering fixtures.

I had a small allowance from my Dad and I was able to save some quarters from my part-time job as a pin-boy at the local bowling alley. I wonder how many of your readers remember pin-boys? I gladly spent my 25 cents on an afternoon in the Birchmount theatre on

## VIEWPOINT

Kingston Road. I drove by there during a recent visit to Toronto; it's all condos now.

For young boys, and a little later, boys and girls, the Saturday movies were a feast. Cowboy movies, cliff-hanging serials, romantic movies with too much kissing and movies with lots of shooting. And popcorn everywhere. When we had had enough on-screen kissing we threw our flattened popcorn boxes at the screen to the frantic shouts of the manager to stop.

Many changes were there: first time I laughed out loud, first time I was really scared and the first time I dared to put my arm around the girl I had asked to the movies. Since the bowling-alley had gone electronic, I paid both our ways with my paper-route money. My arm locked up painfully and sometimes it still hurts . . . in more ways than one.

It turned out that my professional career involved the critical investigation into literature and the forms of narrative, so it was only a small jump from books to

movies. After all, they are really the same thing; both dealing with stories. Some books and some movies don't have stories but often that is the story.

So it was with sadness that I feared that moving to Salt Spring would surely mean no more digital first-run movies. I thought perhaps there might be a 16mm projector or an old 35mm, but since there were no more new big-budget 35mm films being shot, I just resigned myself to leaving digital behind forever.

Then I heard, or read, about The Fritz. It seemed that a digital projector had been purchased in 2013 and first-run movies were shown. Too good to be true, I thought, but no, it was true. Joy unlimited!

The whole point of this nostalgic ramble is to say thank you to The Fritz owner Dave Paul and applaud his courage and patience in keeping The Fritz going in these perilous times.

I urge everyone to help him out in any way: buy some popcorn, drinks or just send him a couple of bucks. Everyone needs a new movie now and then.

I hope The Fritz never goes on the fritz.

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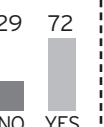
### THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Are you feeling optimistic about 2021?

Yes  No

### LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Are you ready for the next storm and power outage?



Cast your ballot online at [www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com](http://www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com) before Monday 2 p.m. or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 2 p.m.

# OPINION { QUOTE OF THE WEEK: }

**"I think our democracy has taken a big hit. Politics is people."**

SAANICH NORTH & THE ISLANDS MLA ADAM OLSEN

## SALT SPRING SAYS

**WE ASKED:** *What is something you are really looking forward to in 2021?*

**ALVARO SANCHEZ**



I'd like a normal Saturday market for my financial and mental health.

**PATRICK LAROUCHE**



For COVID to go away and everything go back to normal.

**ANNA HALTRECHT**



The end of the pandemic! Full houses at ArtSpring, art openings and travelling to Jerusalem.

**BUDDY PYPER**



I'm looking forward to going to the skate park and going on trips.

**ROBERT JENKINSON**



Taking a big RV trip and visiting friends, getting my shot, and weather to match my daughter's sunny disposition.

## LETTERS to the editor

Letters to the editor are welcome, but writers are requested to keep their submissions to 350 words or less. Letters may be edited for brevity, legality and taste. Writers are also asked to furnish a telephone number where they may be reached during the day, and to sign their letters with their full name. Thank you letters will not normally be considered for publication. Send your letters to news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

### CRD needs online plan

The following letter was sent to Salt Spring's Capital Regional District director Gary Holman and filed with the Driftwood for publication.

Dear Gary Holman, I am writing to you to address the issue of public meetings for the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC) and to receive an update on what is being done to remedy this.

As you know, there has been no attempt to set up a Zoom link for the SSITC meetings even though the restrictions on in-person, public meetings have been in place since March 2020.

The Salt Spring Local Trust Committee was able to immediately set up public meetings with an electronic link in a smooth manner. However, the CRD here has apparently had a difficult time trying to set up a Zoom link.

Under the Dec. 2, 2020 provincial Guidance for Open Meetings and Electronic Meetings (under current public health orders and Ministerial Order 192), the following is stipulated: "Local governments must review or develop a resolution with respect to open or electronic meetings, and state how they will continue to meet the principles of openness, transparency and accountability in the current circumstances."

I would like to be sent a copy of the Salt Spring Island CRD's resolution with respect to the open, electronic meetings, and the plan you have developed to continue to meet the principles listed above.

**JENNIFER MCCLEAN,**  
SALT SPRING

### Hold the forest thought

My husband and I have enjoyed 20 years of living on Salt Spring and value the

diversity of people and opinions.

Many wonderful minds with idealistic intentions live here and sometimes this leads to controversies. This past year is no exception and the opinions rage on both sides of forest retention and logging-for-a-living positions. The mere mention of Coastal Douglas-fir protection by the Islands Trust as part of the provincial government's over-all plan to preserve endangered CDF ecosystems has sides vying for attention.

So, let's look at what we can agree on: affordable housing and the need for it.

What is the main limitation on new housing? Would it be water connections on the limited water supply on the islands for additional housing? Probably that would be either number one or two, depending on where the cost of construction comes in. The option is either to build needed housing using only rainwater catchment as the

source of water, which is prohibitively expensive, or rely on the already fully-subscribed water systems. Water retention depends largely on intact watersheds with large coniferous and broadleaf trees and their understory of shrubs, grasses, ferns and lichens. Many of those watersheds are on private land. Protections of the forests on them are meagre. Douglas-fir trees are found in many of these forests. Does protection of all forests now seem reasonable?

If we want Salt Spring to be liveable for all in the future as climate change progresses, water will no doubt be the deciding factor for increased affordable housing. Any protections of forest ecosystems which can be offered by private land owners, the Islands Trust or the provincial government should be welcomed.

**MARIAN HARGROVE,**  
DEAN ROAD

**MORE LETTERS** continued on 7

## Travelling the 'nice' track for a new writing year

I've occasionally been accused of ranting, that I am not enough about pleasantries and too much about posturing, more tirade than tiptoeing through the tulips.

I'll even admit that I may have been inordinately unkind to our southern neighbours recently and for that I'd like to apologize to at least 51.3 per cent of them. The other 46.9 per cent can kiss my . . . no, that's enough, no more Mr. Nasty!

It's all very unsettling for a man of letters to discover that his very sporadic literary maundering has unsettled some gentler souls on the island who don't much like strident opinion, so for 2021 I shall endeavour to set aside my customary pettishness and do nice.

So. Nice weather, isn't it? Cold but quite nice nonetheless, especially if, like me, you actually enjoy the rain and welcome it as an excuse not to work in the garden. But whatever your personal preference, nice weather is so much nicer than nasty weather if you want my opinion. But you probably don't want my opinion, so I won't argue with you. My nice is quite possibly not your nice and so I think I'll change the subject.

Isn't Salt Spring super? A small if slightly soggy patch of paradise, an absolute gemstone just brimming with lively, lovely people all falling over themselves to be livelier and lovelier than the next person.

And we're all so kind hearted and tolerant that we not only indulge hitchhikers but invite them into our cars without masks and carry them from one end of the island to the other.

Oh no! I was very nearly cross and unkind again, which wouldn't do at all. Hitchhikers most likely lead such wholesome lives that COVID-19 wouldn't dream of infecting them.

See how quickly I fall into spite, how quickly my hackles stir? It's a curse, this Weltschmerz and a failing I've been trying hard to overcome to the extent that



**Paul McElroy**  
+ ANOTHER  
**THING**

I've been giving thought to forming something like Alcoholics Anonymous or the Freemasons, a gathering of like-minded older men and women who would meet to moan about stuff, somewhere to get things off their chests so they can enjoy the rest of the day in peace and harmony. ("Good morning. My name is Paul and I'm cantankerous.") Probably in a coffee shop or café and only after we've all been vaccinated, of course, because moaning through a mask is too much hard work. Although it would at least give us something to moan about . . .

We'd need an agenda. It wouldn't do to just turn up and start complaining because there are already plenty of opportunities to do that elsewhere on the island.

So, an agenda. Just off the top of my head, you understand, but the standard of driving on Salt Spring might be a good place to start because I've been told it's not up to much, but since I don't find myself stepping over the dead and dying beside the road yet, it's probably apocryphal. So we'll give that a miss.

State of the roads? Nah, been there, done that and, in any case, we've recently had some lovely yellow lines laid down and even lovelier footpaths, so that's another non-starter.

Centennial Park? Far too contentious if your preferred solution is barbed wire, electrified fences and cattle prods.

Cheap housing? Boardwalk proposal? Wouldn't it be simply super if we were

incorporated and had a sensible form of governance? All far too controversial and goodness knows there's no shortage of contention these days and, in any case, I would personally be hard pushed to work up a good head of outrage over any them.

So it'll have to be something cheery, at least for the first column of 2021. My cats, for instance. This week I will do warm and fuzzy and tell you about my two cats who are not especially pleased with me. Which puts them at the head of a growing list of people who are also less than thrilled with me these days.

A lovely young family recently moved into the house next door: a mum, a dad and two delightful children who are a breath of fresh air in a neighbourhood that has more wrinkles than a plateful of prunes. The problem, as far as the cats are concerned, is that my new neighbours also have two dogs, both the size of small ponies.

And the cats are blaming me for allowing them to move in to their territory. The dogs themselves are unimpeachable, quiet, courteous and very handsome, but the cats, being cats, are looking for someone to punish. They've taken to watching me through the windows, having given up on the outdoors since it has been sullied by dog aromas. Not so much watching, more a fixed stare of icy malice, the kind of blood-freezing, unblinking glower that only cats can muster; a pair of malignant grimalkins poised to pounce.

There's not much they can do about the dogs, which would reduce them to gristle, so they are quite obviously conspiring to take me out instead. And since my only use to them is as a can opener operative, they are weighing up the prospect of getting by without me. Which, now that I think about it, is a far-from-nice thought.

Happy New Year.

paulmcelroy@shaw.ca

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dwsalty@driftwoodgimedia.com



PHOTO BY MYLENE DAMMEL-SHERRIN  
**HUNGRY FAMILY:** Mom Millicent enjoys some hay while her lambs named Molly and Morris wait for their own meal time. The lambs were born on New Year's Eve and are the first of the season for Swallow Farm on St. Mary Lake.

# Channelling resources essential

BY JAN SLAKOV

2020: a year people are eager to leave behind, as visions of overcoming the pandemic dance in our heads.

This year also came with the fires, extinctions and refugee crises of our worsening climate crisis.

Like most people, I prefer not to dwell on such thoughts.

But a few lines by a young man I knew as a child sober me up: "We have overshot our capacity to reduce CO2 naturally . . . The next decade will be hard, but not as hard as the 2030s."

He wrote a book, *Dancing After the Music Stops*, inviting "people to dance on the upper deck of the Titanic as it sinks." There's a place for such a reaction, but let's save what can yet be saved. It's not just the climate, but the creeping fascism; yes, it's awful, but the resistance is so beautiful!

I recently re-connected with Bob Thomson, who won the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression Integrity Award of 2013, after he leaked statements by the Canadian ambassador to Chile regarding the Pinochet coup, 40 years earlier. His actions were a kind of "catalyst" that helped many others welcome Chilean refugees in the wake of the coup. In accepting the award he

saluted whistle-blowers of our time, people like Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange or Edward Snowden, who risk their lives and reputations to bring us hidden facts, alternative voices, different interpretations. He thanked the people who helped him, who confirmed with hugs or praise, that he had done the right thing.

Immediately I remembered reading about a transformative hug: Lynne Quarmby describes how, when she was arrested in 2012 for blocking a coal train, "some in the crowd were jeering . . . and instead of standing tall . . . I hung my head. [Then] a woman broke from the crowd . . . She was crying and the policeman who was escorting me allowed her to approach; she gave me a hug and whispered, 'Thank you, thank you.'"

This vignette gives us insight into how we can all make a difference, as citizens, as police, in whatever capacity we find ourselves. The destructive construction of the TMX pipeline has been put on hold for a time after a worker was killed and another seriously injured. A grove of cottonwoods is still standing, although a YouTube video called the "Highest Treehouse in the World?" and shared

by science enthusiast Kurtis Baute has been removed.


They aren't giving up, though, and neither should we. The idea that such talented, dedicated people face persecution and arrest, not just by the RCMP, but by private CN and BNSF railway police, is hard to take. A good number of activists and civic leaders, including authors Heather Menzies, Helen Forsey, Elizabeth May and Salt Spring's Bill and May Henderson of Chilliwack fame, have signed an open letter inviting police to speak out in favour of upholding international law, of refusing to be part of ongoing ecocide.


Imagine what would be possible if we all channelled our resources and gifts towards averting a Titanic catastrophe. Bob Thomson did that, becoming the founder of a fair trade organization called TransFair, now a "slowcialist or heretic in the church of growth."

Here's to a future we can embrace, full of transformative hugs and learning together how to be good ancestors.

*The writer is a Salt Spring resident and frequent contributor to the Driftwood's opinion pages.*

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# Forestry and forests can unify

SUBMITTED BY ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH NETWORK

In 2020, we were hit by an enormous amount of change.

People in our community are worried about COVID-19, their jobs, their housing and the state of the environment. We're witnessing increasingly dangerous fire seasons, deeper droughts, wilder storms, declining salmon populations and increasing numbers of species at risk — the hallmarks of a century of land-use change and accelerating climate change. We write as part of a newly formed Ecological Research Network, comprising resident scientists who are studying aspects of forestry, water, ecology, climate change and fire risk on Salt Spring Island.

As we read Jamie Harris's impassioned opinion piece in the Driftwood on Nov. 25, 2020, followed by letters by Sheila Dobie and Jean Wilkinson (Dec. 17, 2020), we empathize and want to contribute to this conversation about the value of coastal Douglas-fir forests. As Jamie's letter makes clear, we could all benefit from discourse and collaboration among islanders on the subject of our forests. The health of our forests affects the safety of our communities from fire, the health of local ecosystems and watersheds, and the viability of local forestry livelihoods. All of these things are important elements of our island's economy and culture.

How we manage our forests bears directly on the safety of our communi-

## INDEPTH

ties. In the last decade, more forests have been cleared as a result of road building and development than forestry. Today our forests are vastly different from what they looked like 150 years ago. Old-growth forests have been replaced with fragmented stands of second and third-growth forests. Forest understory shrubs and deciduous trees that act as fire retardants are being lost as a result of over-browsing by deer. This has left soils dry, increasing risk of drought-related tree dieback. These factors, taken together with more than 100 years of fire suppression under increasingly hot and dry weather, have all the ingredients for creating significant forest fires.

Our forested ecosystems also support water uptake and storage in our creeks, lakes and groundwater systems. The presence of forests within watersheds reduces erosion, holds soil moisture, moderates temperature and supports biological diversity, which makes these forests even stronger. Types of forestry that actively retain large, mature trees, the understory, soil moisture and wildlife trees are key to reducing fire risk and drought. By harvesting less wood than the forest generates, managed forests can still capture more carbon than they release; which is important to mitigating climate change.

Recognizing the various values of our forests, the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee has expanded the charter for their Coastal Douglas-fir and Associated Ecosystems Project to enable community members who would be affected by changes to forest management to contribute to this planning process. We are now presented with a golden opportunity to come together as a community to discuss issues of safety, the health of our ecosystems, and the security of forestry, farming and other rural livelihoods on Salt Spring. The potential result: better policies and rules to improve our forests while providing timber, firewood, recreation, wildlife habitat and carbon storage.

One thing is for sure when it comes to forests and forestry on Salt Spring: we all value good jobs, healthy ecosystems, sustainable water supply and a future that's safer from forest fires. We are not interested in banning logging on this island. The Coastal Douglas-fir Project is another example of an opportunity for all of us to work together to ensure the different values we share are considered.

We look forward to working with island foresters, farmers, related businesses and the Islands Trust to help realize these important potential outcomes.

*The Ecological Research Network, affiliated with Transition Salt Spring, includes Ruth Waldick, Tara Martin, Briony Penn and Susan Hannon.*



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## MORE LETTERS

continued from 5

### Movie fans rally

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If you are able to make a contribution toward covering some of the expenses, please send an e-transfer to: thefritz@hotmail.ca or send a cheque to: SSI Movie Theatre, c/o 190 Quarry Drive, Salt Spring Island, B.C., V8K 1J2.

And please spread the word to all island movie lovers. Many thanks.

Hopefully see you at The Fritz . . . soon!

Please note that the above request has been instigated by myself and supported by many friends. Fritz owner Dave Paul has not asked us to do this.

**RACHEL JACOBSON,**  
SALT SPRING

## Rants + ROSES

### Roses

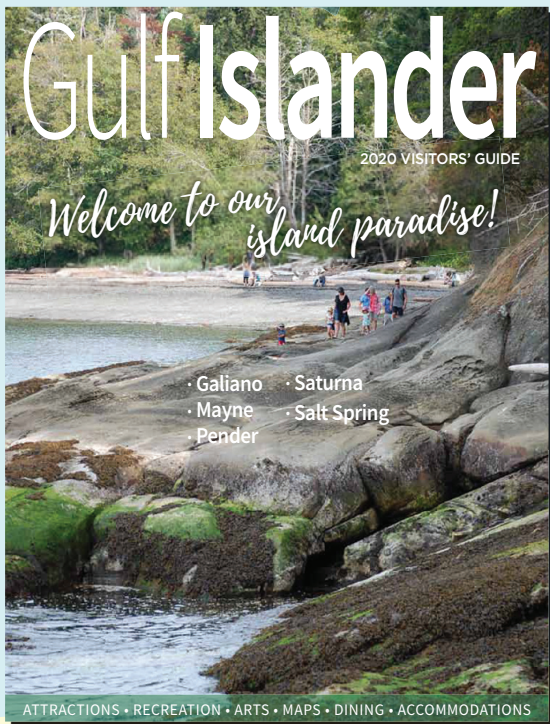
A huge bouquet of robotic roses to the Salt Spring Island Foundation for granting the GISS Robotics Team a VEX Robotics Competition Field and a VEX Robotics Competition Kit. This funding has made it possible for our team to continue designing, building and programming robots despite setbacks from COVID-19. Thank you!

A lovely holiday bouquet to the young lady who so kindly placed a bouquet in my basket at Country Grocer on Wednesday, Dec. 23. I don't know her name,

but enjoyed talking to her in the lineup and was so pleased to be "gifted" a birthday bouquet. A class act, that! Carol H.

To Laura the knitter and those who knit at Heritage Place, a happy holiday season and a thank you from Copper Kettle.

A large bouquet of red roses to "Salt Spring Santa" and all who contributed to the beautiful bag of goodies delivered to our house. We thank you for your kindness and wish all a Happy New Year, joy and happiness. Grant and Isabell



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**MUSIC**

## Songs and chants shared on Tuesday

Marilyn Walker leads Star of the Sea online session

BY GAIL SJUBERG  
 DRIFTWOOD EDITOR

On Tuesday, Jan. 12, Star of the Sea Centre for Spiritual Living and Practice will present Songs of the Heart and Spirit via the Zoom platform.

Salt Spring Islander Marilyn Walker will lead the free session, which consists of an eclectic set of songs and chants, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Star of the Sea press materials explains: "Music is one of the best stress relievers there is; it opens the heart and brings joy to the darkness



PHOTO COURTESY STAR OF THE SEA  
 Marilyn Walker, who will lead a Jan. 12 Zoom session called Songs of the Heart and Spirit.

within and without. Drumming gives a steady beat to synchro-

nize our heartbeats and calm our thought-filled minds."

Tuesday evening's music will be a combination of covers and originals, songs and chants, and with a new COVID song.

"We start with the riotous and energizing, then deepen gradually into the calming and contemplative. We finish with a shamanic calling in each of the four directions — you may join in with your drum and call in any spirit-helps you'd like to."

Participants can join the session with a drum, rattle or rhythm sticks, or they can clap along with their hands.

"And since we won't be able to hear or see you, feel free to jump or waltz around. If you

can drum, vocalize and move at the same time, you get the deepest experience ever."

Walker will be joined in socially distanced fashion by Edgar Hann on his Newfoundland button accordion and Adam Huber on guitar.

People must pre-register to get the Zoom link through staroftheseassi@gmail.com.

Walker is a visual artist and a musician, and a retired professor of anthropology and ethnobotany from Mount Allison University.

Her most recent publication is Shamanism: An A-Z Reference Guide, Beliefs and Practices from Around the World, published by Rockridge Press of California.

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**FINE ARTS**

## Submission period opens for 2021 SSNAP show

Canadian artists invited to send entries until May 31

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
 DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Salt Spring Arts Council is looking forward to another exciting autumn ahead with the Salt Spring National Art Prize set to bring innovative visual art from across the nation to Mahon Hall.

The call for submissions to the 2021-22 biennial event opened on Jan. 1 and will close on May 31. An exhibition of the finalists' work will take place in September and October at Mahon Hall, showcasing approximately 50 finalists chosen by a national jury.

As the arts council explains in its press material, SSNAP was established in 2015 "to recognize, showcase and publicize the accomplishments of Canadian visual artists and to advance public appreciation of visual arts. Through this initiative, we encourage Canadian artists whose work demonstrates originality, quality, integrity and creativity to submit significant pieces with a real visual impact and depth of meaning."

The organizers have pledged to continue the program for its fourth scheduled offering even though it's unclear how the COVID-19 pandemic might be affecting events in the fall.

"As a biennial national art prize with \$41,000 in awards, we are committed to continuing our legacy and look toward mounting a live exhibition in September 2021, respecting public health protocols



DRIFTWOOD FILE PHOTO

Part of the crowd at Mahon Hall for the last Salt Spring National Art Prize gala awards evening, which was held in October of 2019.

in place at that time," the SSNAP committee states.

Top prize is the Joan McConnell Award and Residency for Outstanding Work, comprising \$15,000 and a residency valued at \$5,000. Other cash prizes will be given to jurors' choice and people's choice award winners, and \$2,000 is awarded to the best finalist from Salt Spring Island.

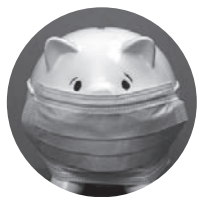
Entries are open to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada who were 18 years of age or

older as of Jan. 1, 2020. Both two-dimensional and three-dimensional works are open to consideration.

All entries must be submitted by the artists themselves. Their identity will be anonymous to the jury during finalist selection process. Submission guidelines can be found at [saltspringartprize.ca/submit/](http://saltspringartprize.ca/submit/).

To receive updates on the process and the awards show timeline, people can click the Keep Me Informed button on the SSNAP website at [www.saltspringartprize.ca](http://www.saltspringartprize.ca).





# ISLAND LIFE

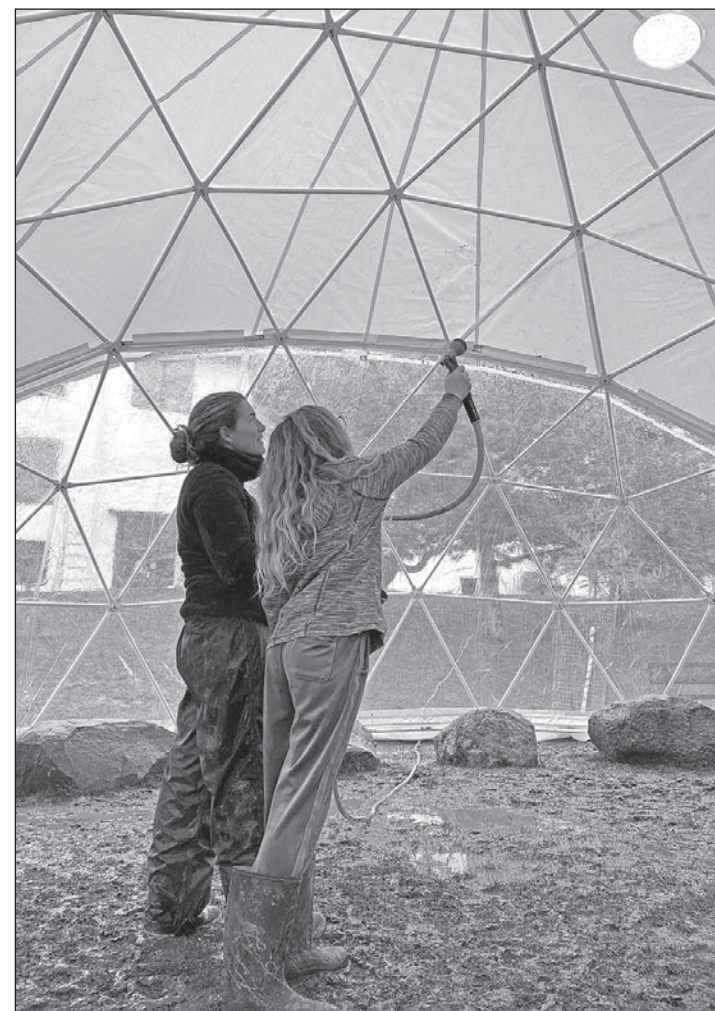
**D.W. Salty is looking for material for his column, Streets of Salt Spring Island**

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**EDUCATION**

## Geodesic dome provides outdoor school shelter



At left, Salt Spring Elementary School parents and Phoenix Domes personnel set up a new outdoor learning space for students, while at right, Bryn Pyper power-washes the interior of the new geodesic dome with her mother Robin Jenkinson.

### Parents group works with local company to set up dome at Salt Spring Elementary School

**SUBMITTED BY SSE PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Over 43 local donors, combined with other funding and a generous discount from a supplier, have gifted the students of Salt Spring Elementary with a new outdoor shelter this Christmas holiday.

During this first weekend of 2021, a hardy group of SSE parents worked with Salt Spring-based Phoenix Domes to erect the new nine-metre-diameter geodesic dome tent in the front schoolyard.

"The benefits of learning outside are well documented. Taking the learning outside is even more important now with COVID-19. It is going to be wonderful to have another covered outdoor space for the kids — especially in the rainy season," said SSE principal Shelly Johnson.

The current outdoor classroom at SSE consists of a roof on posts, and is well used. But, in stormy weather, the wind blows the rain through and the children get wet and cold. This dome will now provide a well-ventilated, sheltered learning space. It has three built-in vents, plus an open door and a side wall that unzips, allowing for lots of airflow, with better protection from the wind and rain. Because it's modular and relatively simple to take down, it can be stored over summer holidays.

Inside the dome, a circle of 16 large boulders provides seating for students within, and the ground is covered with cedar wood chips. Thanks to the Salt Spring Island Foundation, classes will learn about and paint the colours of the cardinal directions of the medicine wheel on four of the boulders. Other boulders will portray art created by Quentin Harris and the core values of belonging, community, culture and success, which are featured in SD64's new Indigenous Enhancement Agreement, as a way to bring it to life in a physical learning experience.

"It's very exciting to see our dome being used by these young students," said Freyja Skye, owner and founder of Phoenix Domes.

Her company provides affordable and beautiful dome shelters that are easy and quick to erect, yet incredibly strong and durable.

"This is our first dome classroom, and we're already discussing a transparent cover, so in the future, students can create a greenhouse biosphere," she said.

Geodesic domes were invented by architect and visionary Buckminster Fuller. Because they are

formed entirely of triangles, weight and stress are evenly distributed to make especially strong and cost-effective structures. Some may recall the iconic biosphere built by Fuller for Expo 67 in Montreal. For that structure he was awarded a gold medal from the American Institute of Architects in 1970.

More info on Phoenix Domes can be found at [www.phoenixdomes.ca](http://www.phoenixdomes.ca) or contact Skye at 1-888-983-7513.

## MEET with ELIZABETH MAY

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or email [Elizabeth.May.C1@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Elizabeth.May.C1@parl.gc.ca)

## LOCAL BUSINESS

## Brown joins local chamber as ED

Leadership position filled for island's business organization

The Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce has announced that Jesse Brown has joined the organization as its new executive director.

"The board is excited about the skills and experience Jesse is bringing to the chamber," said Darryl Martin, president of the Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce. "We are confident in his ability to connect with the chamber membership, Salt Spring community, and work with our diverse community interests. Building on the foundation established by his predecessor Jessica Harkema, he will help us address current issues like Ganges improvement, housing for working families, and the COVID recovery, as well as future challenges and opportunities that will arise."

With prior experience as an executive



PHOTO COURTESY SS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Jesse Brown, who is the new executive director of the Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce.

director, working with many volunteer boards, Brown brings to the chamber demonstrated skill in association management, program development, membership engagement and fundraising.

"I am looking forward to working closely with the chamber board, local businesses, and community partners to address the pressing issues that Salt

Spring faces. Now, more than ever, the island needs a unified effort to support the local economy and ensure we remain a vibrant and forward thinking community," Brown said.

Brown is a strong advocate for local business and a green economy. He brings campaign and political expertise to the chamber as a former Green candidate in the 2019 federal election. He has first-hand understanding of the impact that small business has on livelihoods and communities, having worked at his family's retail operation on the mainland. He has deep roots on Salt Spring and is thrilled for the opportunity to return to the island full time.

Chamber board members said they are pleased to welcome Brown to help them promote and improve the island's economic, civic and social welfare while protecting and enhancing sustainability.

The Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce has a membership of nearly 300 businesses.

## LITERARY EVENTS

## Poetry night and Humphreys reading on Zoom in upcoming week

Brent Talbot is special guest for Poetry Open Mic on Thursday

BY GAIL SJUBERG

DRIFTWOOD EDITOR

The Salt Spring Public Library is kicking off 2021 with two literary events.

First up is the virtual Poetry Open Mic evening on Thursday, Jan. 7, with featured poet Brent ("a little space") Talbot.

Talbot published his book of poetry called Rainbow Soul Food Heart Opening Poetry last year. That book was dedicated to his mother, who Talbot says "is my best friend, my inspiration and my greatest teacher. We have weathered many storms and I am grateful for her unconditional love." Talbot says his next volume, called Rainbow Brain Food Mind Expanding Poetry, "is birthed and ready to print."

People who want to read one poem in the open mic part of the event should join the Zoom meeting at 6:45 p.m. Listeners can join at 7 p.m., with the featured poet following the open mic portion.

The Zoom meeting link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89754490946> with a Meeting ID of 897 5449 0946, or hook up through the Salt Spring library website: [saltspring.bc.libraries.coop](http://saltspring.bc.libraries.coop).

Open mic nights are held on the first Thursday of each month.

Then on Wednesday, Jan. 13 at 7 p.m., the library hosts an author reading with Chris Humphreys. Humphreys is an actor, author, playwright and audiobook narrator whose newest book is called The Hunt of the Shapeshifters. It completes The Tapestry Trilogy, which started with The Hunt of the Unicorn.

"The Unicorn Tapestries in New York are a medieval masterpiece — and a mystery," explains Humphreys' website. "No one knows who wove them, who for, or when . . . Elayne knows . . . kinda. At least, she's been told by her father that their ancestor wove them. Not only that, he left a doorway in the tapestries that opens onto Goloth, the Land of the Fabulous Beasts.

"But bonding with a unicorn and trying to overthrow a tyrant is only the beginning of Elayne's adventures in Goloth. Over the course of three books she is called back to the Land of the Fabulous Beast again and again. Each time she faces terrible danger, learns about love, and has to fight to save both Goloth and her own world."

Humphreys will talk about the creation of a trilogy when he only planned on writing one book, and what keeps drawing him back to Goloth.

A CM Magazine article said of The Hunt of the Unicorn that it is "one of the best fantasy books to be written in the last few years . . . by weaving historical elements into the modern world, the author has created a parallel world of wondrous beasts such as the types that would be found in medieval bestiary."

Humphreys is the artistic director of Salt Spring's Theatre Alive. He has written 20 novels, including The French Executioner, Chasing the Wind, The Jack Absolute Trilogy, Vlad, A Place Called Armageddon and Shakespeare's Rebel. Plague, which was released in 2014, won the Arthur Ellis Award for Best Crime Novel that year. Humphreys has an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC.

People can join the meeting at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82749155081> with a Meeting ID of 827 4915 5081 or use the library website link found at [saltspring.bc.libraries.coop](http://saltspring.bc.libraries.coop).



CHRIS HUMPHREYS

## what's on this week



Thurs. Jan. 7

## ACTIVITIES

**Al-Anon (Support for Friends and Families of Alcoholics and Addicts).** A friendly, supportive group that meets in person every Thursday, 12 to 1 p.m. at Salt Spring Seniors' Centre. Social distancing and COVID-safe practices in place. Participants' privacy also guarded.

## VIA ZOOM

**Poetry Open Mic.** With special guest poet Brent (a little space) Talbot. Join the Zoom meeting at 6:45 p.m. to sign up for the open mic portion (one poem per reader); and at 7 p.m. to listen. A Salt Spring Public Library event. See [saltspring.bc.libraries.coop](http://saltspring.bc.libraries.coop) for the Zoom link.



Fri. Jan. 8

## ACTIVITIES

**Parent & Tot Circle.** New five-Friday Salt Spring Parks and Recreation Commission-sponsored program led by Flo Roberson begins today. Explore song, yoga, movement, story and connection with your little one. Caregiver participation required. Heron's Nest classroom on Rainbow Road pool site. 9:30 to 10 a.m.



**Kids Yoga & Crafts.** New five-class program series for kids aged 5 to 8 and led by Flo Roberson begins today at the Heron's Nest classroom on Rainbow Road pool site. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Fri. Jan. 8

## VIA ZOOM

**ASK Salt Spring.** Salt Spring CRD director Gary Holman is this week's guest who will update islanders on CRD news and take participant questions. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Email [ask@asksaltspring.com](mailto:ask@asksaltspring.com) to get the Zoom link.

Sat. Jan. 9

## ACTIVITIES

**Standard First Aid With CPR.** First day of a two-day course at Portlock Park portable. A SSI Parks and Recreation Commission-sponsored course taught by Chantelle Pohl and Chelsea Harris. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Register online at [ssiparc.ca](http://ssiparc.ca) (24/7) or 250-537-1402 (Mon-Fri from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.)

Sun. Jan. 10

## ACTIVITIES

**Standard First Aid With CPR.** Second day of course. See Saturday's listing.

Mon. Jan. 11

## ACTIVITIES

**Heron Nest Preschool.** New licensed childcare program offered by Salt Spring Parks and Recreation Commission in building next to Rainbow Road Aquatic Centre opens today. More info/register: [ssiparc@crd.bc.ca](mailto:ssiparc@crd.bc.ca) or 250-537-1402.

Tues. Jan. 12

## VIA ZOOM

**Songs of the Heart and Spirit.** A session of eclectic set of songs and chants led by Marilyn Walker runs from 7 to 8:30 p.m. A Star of the Sea Centre for Spiritual Living and Practice event. For more info, to register and get the Zoom link, contact [staroftheseassi@gmail.com](mailto:staroftheseassi@gmail.com).

Wed. Jan. 13

## VIA ZOOM

**Chris Humphreys Author Reading.** Salt Spring writer and author of 19 books reads from his latest work via a Salt Spring Public Library event. 7 p.m. Get the Zoom link from the library website at: [saltspring.bc.libraries.coop](http://saltspring.bc.libraries.coop)

**Gulf Islands Board of Education Trustees Meeting.**

Public welcome to observe school board meeting via Zoom. 1 p.m. See the [sd64.bc.ca](http://sd64.bc.ca) website under "board meetings" for the link.

Thurs. Jan. 14

## VIA ZOOM

**MP Elizabeth May Virtual Community Meeting.** 7 to 8:30 p.m. See the [elizabethmaymp.ca](http://elizabethmaymp.ca) website for the Zoom link.

## THE FRITZ CINEMA

• Closed until further notice due to COVID-19 regulations.

For updates, visit *The Fritz* website at [www.thefritz.ca](http://www.thefritz.ca)

## EXHIBITIONS

• **Jacky Cooper** has work hanging at **Salt Spring Coffee Co.** this month.

• **Talia Peckel** has her artwork at **Switchboard Cafe** through January.

• **Kathy Dryden** shows collage and acrylic paintings at **Country Roasters Cafe** this month.

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**Obituaries**      **Obituaries**      **In Memoriam**      **Coming Events**      **Coming Events**

### Sheila Olive Christensen

Feb. 9, 1927 – Dec. 18, 2020



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our matriarch, Sheila, from natural causes in Abbotsford, B.C.

Sheila is predeceased by her devoted husband of 70 years, Nils, and her son, Erik. She will be lovingly remembered by her daughters, Marit and Randi, her four grandchildren and her five great-grandchildren.

Born in Arlesley, England, Sheila lived in England and Egypt with her parents, and Norway and Holland with her husband, before the couple settled in Canada to raise their family.

Sheila had an insatiable curiosity and the soul of an adventurer. One of her finest qualities was the wonderful ability to find delight in every day and to have such gratitude in her life. She was a strong, steadfast and inspiring woman and we loved her deeply.

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*Yoga with Cate*

### LAURENCE LOUIS BONGIE

December 15, 1929 – December 26, 2020



Laurence ("Larry") passed away on Boxing Day in Lady Minto Hospital on Salt Spring Island. Son of Louis and Madalena Bongie, he was born in Turtleford, Saskatchewan, and no matter how far he went in life, geographically and intellectually, he never lost touch with his northern Saskatchewan roots and the memory of that one-room schoolhouse near Fairholme which he attended with his beloved sister Alda.

After moving with his family to Vancouver in 1944, a love for literature and philosophy took him first to the University of British Columbia and then to Paris, where in 1952, at the ripe old age of 22, he received a doctorate from the Sorbonne. Upon his return to Vancouver in 1953, he took up a teaching position at UBC, eventually becoming Head of the French Department in 1966, a position he held until his retirement in 1992. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1998, he continued to add to a series of groundbreaking studies of eighteenth-century France that culminated in 2004 with his sixth book, "From Rogue to Everyman: A Foundling's Journey to the Bastille," which beautifully exemplifies his passionate engagement with archival research and buoyantly dissident approach to social history. During all this time, his loving wife Bettye oversaw his transition from motorcycle-driving bohemian in the 1950s to Subaru-driving contrarian in the 2010s. Starting in 1973, Larry and Bettye spent most of their free time at "the farm" on Salt Spring, where they moved for good in 2010. After Bettye's death in 2013, Larry persevered, working on French translations of his last two books, taking many a thoughtful stroll down Philosopher's Walk, and excelling, late in life, at the fine art of being a grandfather. Diagnosed with terminal cancer in February 2019, he died as he would have wished, strong in mind (if weak in body), dispensing anecdotes and jokes in that inimitable fashion which enlivened so many leisurely lunches and dinners at the UBC Faculty Club during its golden years.

A loyal son, a fiercely protective father, and a doting nonno, Larry is survived by his sister Alda, his son Chris (Ishita), his grandson Ishaan, nieces and nephews Rick (Carmen), Terry, Laurel (Drew), and Margot (Leo), along with many other cherished relatives and friends.

Goodbye, Larry, we will miss you more than you'd care to know. In lieu of flowers, please send donations in his name to the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation as a token of our collective thanks for the care provided Larry in his final days.

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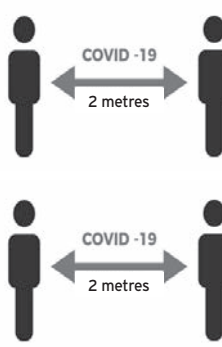
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## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

Michael O'Connor - Life Coach Astrologer

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TIP OF THE WEEK: READ MORE IN MY NEWSLETTER. SIGN-UP IS FREE ON MY WEBSITE.

2021 began under the waning light of a Full Moon in Leo. The Moon was opposed to Saturn and both were square to Uranus forming a charged T-square. This aspect pattern reveals a revolutionary impulse that will invariably produce a full range of reactions where credulity regarding personal perceptions is bound to clash and this is an anchor theme for the year. Do you see reality as it is or as you are, by your nature and social conditioning? Neuroscience asserts it is the latter. So, who, how, and why are you, you?

Mercury conjunct Pluto in Capricorn on January 4th synchronized as the stern attitudes of auth authorities was followed by Mars entered Taurus on January 6th the day of the count of votes from the Electoral College in the United States. Mercury enters Aquarius on the 8th and forms a hard square to Mars activating debate and division then conjuncts Saturn and Jupiter in Aquarius on the 10th and 11th respectively, squaring Uranus on the 12th. Are you ready for a planet-wide revolution? Ready or not...

**Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)**  
This week will synchronize with an awakening of new perceptions. Whether by instinct, intuition, outer sources of information, or circumstances specific to your life, new perceptions will be activated. Practical considerations linked to finances are featured. You are determined to see where things are going and to take action accordingly. The future beckons and you are paying attention.

**Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)**  
As eager as you are to reflect upon the bigger picture, more immediate responses are required. Changes in your public and professional life and/or in the world generally are shifting quickly now and require your full attention. A 'go big' attitude is guiding your actions. This is no time to be casual or even philosophical. Circumstances are requiring your full and sober attention.

**Gemini (May 21 – Jun 21)**  
A steady process of transformation and empowerment continues. It includes stripping away now irrelevant dreams, fantasies, and wishful thinking, on one hand, and the awakening of new ideals, realizations, and interpretations, on the other. These new perceptions may also be described as future visions, new philosophies, and a keen determination to learn new things.

**Cancer (Jun 22 – Jul 22)**  
You have entered a powerful cycle of change. In the short term, it is linked to your relationship, both professional and personal. Positively, it is activating a determination to be more empowered via a process of transformation of some kind. This can manifest as simply as letting go of old perceptions, self-concepts, and approaches and replacing them with fresh new ones...

**Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 23)**  
A whole new scope and quality of expansion are steadily emerging in your life. In the bigger picture, it implies a steady process of building upon new foundations. Improvement and refinement are implied. Discipline and a willingness to pay your dues via steady efforts and focus are featured in the long term plot. New associations are indicated. One way or another, you will experience an increase.

**Virgo (Aug 24 – Sep 22)**  
A creative mood is carrying you into the New Year. It includes a learning curve that will and probably has already begun to activate new skills and achieve new levels of awareness. A sturdy determination to forge ahead brings some emphasis to your home environment. Cleaning, clearing, and getting organized with projects you want to tackle this year are all featured.

**Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)**  
Taking stock of what is important in your life and with an eye for the future is keeping you busy as the year begins. Whether you are investing in extra reserves and supplies or the tools and materials required to get things done, a growing list with multiple categories is likely. Guided by ambitious determination, you want to take action now to feel as secure as you can, going forward.

**Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)**  
You have arrived at an important juncture in your life. It includes a process of building confidence and summoning the courage to face any fears necessary to lay claim to latent gifts and talents. The time has come to retrieve these even if it takes months or even years to fully gain access of and integrate these into your daily life. The effort will be worth it because it amounts to retrieving buried treasure.

**Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)**  
In the short term, you are busy establishing a base that is organized, reliable, and efficient. Whether this refers to your home, your workplace, or to your overall health, it feels important and will compel you to follow through. Doing so will contribute to a steady process of creating a whole new state of balance in your life that is already underway. Clean-up to clear your mind.

**Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)**  
Your sights are set on the future. There is work to do and you know it. You likely do not have all the knowledge and leverage that you would like and so you are determined to source those people and networks that will give you access. A creative strategy is required and you feel both excited and determined to make one. Focus on the bigger tasks and leave the details for later.

**Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 19)**  
A process of completing any unfinished business from last year combined with an ambitious determination to expand and increase in 2021 is guiding your focus. This includes taking initiatives to get organized with projects close to home. Fortunately, both your ability to focus and to project your visions to a wider scope regarding the future will increase this week.

**Pisces (Feb 20 – Mar 20)**  
Planning for the future is a central theme now and you are wise to follow through to get things started early in the year. It remains that existing projects and activities already started last year and earlier and bringing these to completion will likely go better and prove more satisfying than trying to enter into new ventures. Fortunately, your intuitions are flowing strongly so act on them.



# SPORTS + RECREATION

**D.W. Salty is looking for material for his column, Streets of Salt Spring Island**

If you have information on any of our streets, please contact us at: 250-537-9933 or [dwsalty@driftwoodgimedia.com](mailto:dwsalty@driftwoodgimedia.com)



## SOCCER

# Many hands bolster first half of soccer season

Kids return to fields in February



**Malcolm Legg**  
**SOCCER**  
ROUND-UP

For Salt Spring United the Christmas and New Year's break was a time to deflate the balls, lock up the goals and put the referee whistles away, and to give thanks to the many people who have helped our soccer program this fall, especially during a difficult time with COVID-19 for everyone.

SS United Soccer Club was able to put out a program, under BC Soccer's Return

to Play Phase 2 Plan, that saw 260 youth players have weekend games and weekly practices over a 12-week span. As well, our Salt Spring United Academy fielded over 30 participants on Fridays. We were also able to operate our concession to provide goodies and refreshments over this period.

This was all possible due to the support and hard work of many, including:

- Club and field staff, led by technical director Josip Bratanovic, who designed the successful on-field program, and his merry assistants Maddy Cooper Smith, Jimmy Steel and Hamish Walde, who did all the work on Friday nights and Saturdays to get the field set up and to help with coaching.
- The sign-in crew: Heather Kalf, Larry Woods, Dan Margolese, Trish Staicesku, Maggie Montague and myself, who made sure protocols of distancing and contact tracing were adhered to.
- All of our coaches and managers who

did their part to follow the format and protocols we put in place for them, and who especially gave the youth lots of challenges and fun.

- The executive, led by myself, that put together a solid COVID-19 protocol plan and made the whole program workable and affordable.
- Concession staff Maggie and Nicky Montague and Michele MacKenzie, who week after week had food and beverages available for all, especially staff.
- Our sponsors and supporters: Windsor Plywood (especially for donating all the snow fencing we needed); Tim Hortons (house and tots program uniforms and balls); Country Grocer (Save-a-Tape

program); the Rotary Club with their Plank in the Park fundraiser; the Salt Spring Parks and Recreation Commission, which provided support from their field and office staff to get us playing at Portlock Park; School District 64 for having school fields available and marked for our teams to practice on.

• The soccer youth and our club salute you all and wish you a healthy and Happy New Year.  
For 2021, SS United is planning to hopefully start on Feb. 6 with a Winter Program, an expanded SS United Academy Program, the Windsor Plywood Spring League in April and the SS United Showcase of Stars Tourney in late April.



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**The GULF ISLANDS CONTRACTORS DIRECTORY will be published in January, watch for the magazine in your Gulf Islands Driftwood.**

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## RUNNING

# Stay safe and comfortable in winter weather

Running coach provides gear tips for winter-time running



**Susan Gordon**  
THE PERENNIAL  
**RUNNER**

It is a rare day that we have weather extreme enough to prevent outdoor exercise, but there are some tricks to keeping yourself warm enough without overheating and dry enough without getting bogged down by non-breathable fabrics.

Strategic accessorizing is a cost-effective and flexible approach to ensuring you look forward to going outdoors even in inclement conditions.

In these short and dark days, it is critical to emphasize your visibility on the roads should you choose to take to the pavement in lieu of the safety of track and trails. Reflectors and bright neon gear ensures drivers can see you from a distance that allows for considerate braking and passing. This is true in daylight hours as well. On a rainy day your grey, blue and black clothing blends in with pavement and shadows, making it difficult for drivers to react quickly enough.

If you don't want to purchase a high-visibility running vest or jacket, at least buy an arm band and/or leg band that will flash your presence to oncoming traffic. I'm sure I sound like a broken record on this subject, but there have been too many accidents involving cyclists, runners and pedestrians on Salt Spring and the consequences for victims tend to be long-term.

Next up are hats and gloves. In fact, at races — when we used to have such things in the pre-COVID era — you'd often see the fastest elite runners in singlets and shorts in even the coldest weather, but they would add a pair

of gloves and maybe a tight-fitting toque or ear-warmer band. One of my all-time favourites is the Buff-brand tube, which can be worn in a myriad of ways on your head and neck. If you get too warm, it is easy to remove and wrap around your wrist for the remainder of your run.

**I haven't found a need for waterproof running shoes, but yes, your feet will get wet sometimes.**

Gloves need not be expensive or fancy, but they can make a huge difference to your overall warmth on a cool day. You can get wind and water-resistant models, but don't get anything too heavy, such as ski gloves, as you will find them too hot for running. If you don't like gloves, try wrist warmers such as those worn by tennis players or figure skaters. A bit of warmth on your wrists can help keep the rest of your body comfortable.

A good old-fashioned baseball cap is great for keeping the rain out of your eyes. You can buy lightweight, ventilated styles for days that are cool but still above freezing.

For our temperate climate, a wind- and water-resistant running vest is extremely useful. Full waterproofing can lead to your interior garments becoming uncomfortable with sweat, so plan to layer just enough for warmth and dryness, but ensure that the fabrics are designed for cardio workouts. Technical fabrics breathe and wick sweat. If sustainability is of concern to you, search on websites such as Good On You for the most ethical companies and cleanest production.

I haven't found a need for waterproof running shoes, but yes, your feet will get wet sometimes. There are some great models designed for winter, including icy conditions, but they are quite expensive. It is a good idea to have two pairs of runners so you can allow one pair to dry for a couple of days if they get a serious soaking. And a few pairs of quality socks designed specifically for running are highly recommended. Purchase a brand that has a component of natural wool and some support for your arches. Your feet will be as happy as possible on days that might keep most people indoors.

So there you have it. You are now equipped to be weather-proof enough to continue your outdoor exercise program all the way through fall and winter, no matter what the world plans to throw at us in the coming months. Just keep going!

*Susan Gordon has been a Salt Spring resident since 2012 and a successful competitive runner since 2008, with many age-group wins and series championships to her name. She is a National Coaching Certificates Program-trained endurance coach, member of BC Athletics and coach for the Salt Spring Sneakers.*