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inside:



7 Bernadette an inspiration for all women and girls



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Wednesday,
Mar. 3, 2021

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Issue 9
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PHOTO COURTESY FERNWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

COLOUR OF KINDNESS: Students in Andrew McPhee's Grade 4-5 class at Fernwood Elementary School mark Pink Shirt Day on Feb. 24 by wearing T-shirts they decorated with messages of kindness to future Fernwood school students. Many of the school's classes have been focusing on the theme of empathy and reaching out to others. Pink Shirt Day originated in Nova Scotia in 2007 as a statement against bullying and is now celebrated around the world.

CRIME

Disappearing dogs spark fears

Theft from locked kennel shocks owner

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Fears that valuable dogs on Salt Spring are being targeted by thieves came to an upsetting conclusion for kennel owner Jaime Halan-Harris last week, when her two dogs joined the list of potential victims.

Halan-Harris discovered on Wednesday morning her two shepherd-cross dogs had been taken from a triple-locked outdoor run, just 20 minutes after she put them outside. The dogs had mysteriously returned to their run later in the day, but not before Halan-Harris had involved RCMP and BC Ferries in a frantic attempt to keep the thief from taking the dogs off-island.

"It was a horrible six hours to live through, thinking I would never see my dogs again," Halan-Harris told the Driftwood. "I was mortified. I was bawling like a baby. It just shocked me."

Halan-Harris runs the Salty Dog daycare and kennel service on her large acreage. She can have up to 10 dogs in separate outdoor runs, and also has a large indoor play area.

On the morning of the theft, she had just put her two dogs outside and was welcoming dogs coming in for the day in the house while her son was out doing pick-up service for other clients. She happened to glance outside about 15 or 20 minutes after she put her dogs out and noticed they were gone.

Halan-Harris had already been worried about reports of dogs disappearing without a trace on the island, which started last October with the search for a husky named Attie who went missing from Old Scott Road.

That's one reason she had three locks on the run, but when she went outside she could see those locks had been tampered with.

"I called my son right away and we went straight to the RCMP," she said.

Halan-Harris is not sure how someone was able to get the dogs away since they don't usually go to other people. Her male Belgian shepherd is a rescue dog and is especially wary of people. Her female husky-shepherd cross is pregnant — which may be one reason they were targeted. Another reason could be the female's unusual reddish coat.

"She's a very rare colour. You don't usually get an auburn red, so I'm thinking that's why," Halan-Harris said.

As for the prospect the dogs may have escaped on their own, Halan-Harris said that is impossible. All her outdoor runs are secured with concrete around the base, and her property serves as the shelter for lost dogs located by CRD bylaw enforcement.

"We have escape-proof runs. We've never lost a dog," Halan-Harris said.

One of the most troubling aspects of the incident is how targeted it appears to have been. Halan-Harris said she is only ever alone at the house for around 20 minutes in the morning and again in the afternoon.

"It's kind of scary because of the timing. It feels like we must have been watched," she said. "Salt Spring was never like this before. We didn't move here to be terrified about our dogs being taken. We moved here because you could leave your door unlocked."

DOGS continued on 2

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FIRE DISTRICT

Fire board clamps down on water concerns

Submersible pump and consultant to aid program

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN

DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Salt Spring Fire Protection District is making steps to address water supply issues that could limit the fire department's ability to meet needs in the Ganges core and at the farthest reaches of the island.

Two resolutions passed at the Feb. 22 board of trustees meeting will potentially put short and longer-term solutions in motion for accessing sufficient water during major fire events. The board voted to request quotes on a portable submersible pump that can draft seawater. They will furthermore request proposals toward hiring a consultant who can work with the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) to develop a business case for the best way to meet fire flow water requirements.

Fire Underwriters Survey assessments, typically done every five years, inform the home insurance premiums that underwriters set for fire losses. Some residents have recently reported difficulty in obtaining fire insurance for homes located more than eight kilometres from a fire hall. According to local insurers

Westland Insurance Group and SeaFirst Insurance this is the outcome of a high-risk global market and not due to the local fire department's response, but some trustees indicated hearing otherwise.

Discussion at last Monday's meeting centred on whether to concentrate on district administrator Andrew Peat's recommendation to hire professional help, which could ultimately lead to use of a submersible pump, or whether to go straight to ordering a pump for immediate impact.

Overall consensus was that both motions could be supported, but many trustees felt acquiring the pump was paramount.

"It's our responsibility to do everything we can to ensure our district ratepayers are protected, as well as to ensure that we do everything in our power to bring insurance rates down," said trustee Howard Holzapfel. "I think we have to move on this and we have to move on this quickly, because there will be people that will not be able to afford insurance increases."

Holzapfel also suggested using treated waste water produced by the Capital Regional District, which is currently released into Ganges Harbour.

After Salt Spring's water supply issues were

outlined in the 2010 FUS report, the fire department worked to receive superior tanker shuttle accreditation, giving it the ability to transport water to properties located far from a usable hydrant. Island residents reported seeing a reduction in their insurance rates almost right away, and accreditation meant improved grades in the 2015 FUS report.

However, at least a dozen of the 31 recommendations in that report for improving future fire protection grades further relate to water supply. Many of them are outside the fire district's purview, since they are based on infrastructure owned by the North Salt Spring Waterworks District and Fulford Water Service. At issue are water mains, pumps and hydrants, rates of flow, pressure and reliability of the source.

Peat observed the board had set aside \$150,000 to address water supply issues, and said he believed they needed to find out exactly what FUS requires in order to spend it wisely.

"We have to identify what the problem is," Peat said, adding flow requirements for downtown Ganges amount to a sustained supply of 3,000 to 4,000 gallons per minute for a period of three hours.

"We're talking hundreds of thousands of

gallons of water that we have to have available to fight a major fire. And we're not going to get that from a storage tank of effluent; we're not going to get that from the fire hydrants. We've got to have an alternate source to bridge the gap."

Facilities committee chair Andreas Gedeon gave his opinion that what the district really needs is a new FUS report, which normally would have been done last year.

"If we're really saying and assuming here that the current word of mouth, anecdotal reports of denied insurance is a result out of that FUS report, then just hiring somebody to address water flow by no means addresses the majority of the issues in that report," Gedeon said. "And if we take that report as a base, then we need a 2021 report."

As Gedeon pointed out, water supply is just one area where the grade could be improved. FUS recommendations include things like acquiring a ladder truck, initiating a sprinkler bylaw and doing live fire training, among other things.

Fire board trustees attempted to schedule a meeting with FUS reps last year but were unsuccessful due to COVID-19. It is expected a new assessment will be done sometime this year.

FOOD PRODUCTION

Salt Spring Abattoir gets \$222,525 grant toward expansion

B.C. awards COVID relief grants

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN

DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Support for local food production is set to expand in the coming year due to COVID-19 grant funding benefitting the Salt Spring Abattoir Society.

The society has received \$222,525 to increase the abattoir's processing capacity to support farmers and meet demand for local meat. Grants totalling \$20 million for 38 rural projects were approved under StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan, which aims to protect people's health and livelihoods while supporting businesses and communities.

Anne Macey, spokesperson for the Salt Spring Abattoir Society, said the organization applied for the grant during a really busy period last fall hoping to double the size of one of their modular buildings. This will allow them to increase their cooler space and the area for cutting and wrapping meat, while also providing more room for workers to physically distance.

"We thought, 'Okay, let's apply,' — never dreaming that we would get it," Macey said.

The RER funding is part of \$100 million of restart money administered through the provincially funded Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program.

"StrongerBC is about building an economic recovery that includes everyone, and it is vital our rural communities remain vibrant," said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, in a press release announcing the grant awards. "The RER program is one part of our commitment to spark job growth and help build stronger communities throughout B.C."

The abattoir is currently closed for its annual winter break but will re-open in mid-March. The facility enters its busy

period in June and stays that way through to the end of the calendar year. This poses some tricky scheduling for the expansion project, which must be started this year under the terms of the grant.

"The challenge is to do it at the same time as keeping operations going," Macey said. "We certainly won't be shutting down."

Macey said the abattoir was especially busy last fall, as more people have been looking for local food sources during the pandemic, and more people are also growing food locally. Orders for chicken processing in particular were way up.

"We are seeing a lot more demand, and hopefully we'll be able to respond to it even with COVID," Macey said. "We have a committed group of people, so we're hopeful."

Staffing has been another challenge, since it's difficult to attract people with butchering skills because of the lack of housing.

"We are looking for a number of people this year. If there is anyone who has the skills or wants to learn them, we'd be happy to hear from them," Macey said.

TIDE TABLES at Fulford Harbour

MARCH 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
3	0105	1.6	5.2	7	0157	3.2	10.5
	0737	3.4	11.2		0623	2.9	9.5
	WE 1423	1.1	3.6		SU 0946	3.0	9.8
4	ME 2106	2.7	8.9	DI 1816	0.7	2.3	
	0151	2.1	6.9	8	0257	3.3	10.8
	0803	3.3	10.8		0821	2.8	9.2
TH 1517	0.9	3.0	MO 1054		2.9	9.5	
5	JE 2247	2.8	9.2	LU 1918	0.7	2.3	
	0249	2.5	8.2	9	0343	3.3	10.8
	0831	3.2	10.5		0918	2.7	8.9
FR 1613	0.8	2.6	TU 1221		2.8	9.2	
6	VE 0411	2.8	9.2	MA 2014	0.7	2.3	
	0903	3.1	10.2	10	0423	3.3	10.8
	SA 1713	0.7	2.3		0955	2.5	8.2
			WE 1341		2.8	9.2	
			ME 2104	0.7	2.3		

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Kennel ups security plans

DOGS

continued from 1

Security will be even tighter at the kennel now with better locks and the installation of video cameras and a security system. Halan-Harris said she believes that islanders must also stand together to make it clear they won't tolerate dog thefts.

While the return of the dogs remains a mystery, Halan-Harris feels it was due to the quick response of RCMP and BC Ferries staff who were watching out for the dogs at all three terminals. The pressure may have convinced the perpetrator to think again.

"They were wonderful; I was so impressed," she said. "If not for them I wouldn't have got my dogs back."

Her friend Sabine Roodenburg was also instrumental in

getting the word out that the dogs could be returned, no questions asked. Roodenburg told the Driftwood she's helped several people get their pets back in the past just through networking.

Salt Spring RCMP detachment commander Sgt. Clive Seabrook said officers take reporting of dog thefts seriously, and were very happy the dogs belonging Halan-Harris had been safely returned.

"We do take steps to work with BC Ferries to respond to these cases quickly," Seabrook said. "We're also comparing files to see if there are any commonalities between these events. In the meantime we're recommending people keep an eye on their pets. We're very sympathetic and we'd hate to see anyone's pet taken for any reason."

TRANSPORTATION

Path deadline moved

Province agrees to extend grant timing

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring residents will hopefully not lose \$490,000 in grant funding toward a complicated section of pathway on Lower Ganges Road thanks to a deadline extension negotiated between the Capital Regional District and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI).

Construction work on the pathway from Baker Road to Booth Canal Road is now well underway. Salt Spring CRD engineer Allen Xu reported last Monday the ministry had extended the pathway's completion deadline from the end of March to the end of June. As he told the Salt Spring Transportation Commission, that should leave plenty of time to complete the work.

"I think there's very little risk of the project not being completed by June 30th," Xu said, adding most of it will be done by sometime in early May.

Some delays were incurred at the start of the project due to dangerous trees that were identified as needing to be removed for workers' safety, plus winter weather. The only parts that will need some extra time after the bulk is finished are installing fencing and concrete block retaining walls in a few stretches.

Xu said the commission may need to increase the total project budget, currently set at \$700,000. Efforts to protect some "precious trees" through hand-excavating and hydro-vac soil removal around the roots of one arbutus tree have added to costs. Xu said the contractors have also encountered some utility lines that are very close to the southern terminus, so design modifications will be needed.

Money has been saved by reducing the pathway structure depth in some places to avoid removing more trees, which also reduced excavation costs and gravel fill. However, Xu said the \$40,000 project contingency is being used up quickly.

The transportation commission will not find it hard to make up the shortfall, as CRD electoral area director Gary Holman pointed out, since the North Ganges Transportation Plan has come in under budget. Final invoices have not been reconciled, but Xu said he expects there to be close to \$300,000 left over.

Holman thanked CRD staff for their oversight and for coming under budget so significantly.

"It's quite stunning, actually," he commented.

The transportation commission passed several motions at the Feb. 22 meeting to help guide future pathway work. Two motions that direct staff to create policies on tree cutting and rural pathway standards aim to avoid the controversy that arose out of the current work on Lower Ganges Road.

CRD senior manager Karla Campbell pointed out staff are already working on the first item. Commissioner Gary Lehman reported he and his fellow Island Pathways member Philip Grange are developing a checklist of features that can be considered to meet a "rural" pathway definition. They will share the checklist with CRD staff to help inform the draft policy.

The commission additionally passed a resolution regarding its pathway proposal on Ganges Hill, which is to take place in conjunction with a MoTI repaving project on Fulford-Ganges Road.

MoTI area manager Don Legault told the commission last month there probably would not be room for the pedestrian pathway planned for the uphill side of the road because the road and paved shoulder will take up most of the available space. In some cases the ministry will need to acquire property and move utility poles to achieve a consistent road right-of-way of 25 metres.

The commission has asked staff to negotiate with MoTI to include paving of the ditch and underground drainage in its project design to make pathway work more efficient and cost-effective.

Xu said he believed that might be possible.

"If they agree, I think that would be the best possible option for us," he said.

Xu himself will not be around for the eventual pathway construction. It was announced at the meeting he will be leaving his position near the end of March for a move to the Lower Mainland. The CRD's engineering technologist for Salt Spring will manage projects until the senior engineering position is filled.

The commission also gave a fond thanks and farewell to Tracey Shaver, a long-time administrator with the local CRD office who recently took a new position at Greenwood ElderCare.



**NORTH
SALT SPRING
WATERWORKS
DISTRICT**

**NOTICE TO THE RATEPAYERS
OF THE NORTH SALT SPRING
WATERWORKS DISTRICT**

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
FOR THE
ELECTION OF TWO TRUSTEES**

Notice is hereby given to the Ratepayers of the North Salt Spring Waterworks District, that nominations for TWO trustees will be received in the District office between:

**8:00 am February 24, 2021
12:00 noon March 9, 2021**

Nomination of candidates for these positions must be made in writing, duly signed and seconded, by two duly qualified electors of the North Salt Spring Waterworks District with signature of agreement by the nominee, and delivered to the District Office at or before 12:00 noon, Tuesday, March 9, 2021.

**NOMINATIONS WILL NOT
BE ACCEPTED FROM THE FLOOR**

Both of the Trustee positions are for a three year term commencing at the Annual General Meeting, to be held on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road and virtually. Due to COVID-19, a maximum of 50 people are permitted to attend in person; however the meeting will also be held virtually through Microsoft Teams, and the link will be posted on the district website for the public to join. The Trustee election will use an exclusively mail-in ballot process. Voting packages will be mailed on March 22, 2021 and ballots must be received at the District office by April 16, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

To be eligible a nominee must be a Canadian Citizen, 18 years of age or older, an owner, or spouse of an owner of land in the North Salt Spring Waterworks District, and entitled to be registered as a voter under the Elections Act.

Visit the "Who We Are" and "Becoming a Trustee" pages on our website for more information about the role of a Trustee.

Nomination forms are available at the District Office and online in the Documents/Forms section of the District website.

**NOTICE OF
2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Ratepayers of the North Salt Spring Waterworks District will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at the Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, and virtually through Microsoft Teams.

www.northsaltspringwaterworks.ca
761 Upper Ganges Rd., Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 1S1
(250) 537-9902

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

	REPORTED ACTIVE COVID-19 CASES			
	Week of 1/24-1/30/21	Week of 1/31-2/6/21	Week of 2/7-2/13/21	Week of 2/14-2/20/21
Southern Gulf Islands...	0	0	1	0
Saanich Peninsula	7	14	9	4
Victoria	33	26	21	19
Langford to Port Renfrew	13	9	6	8
Duncan Area.....	53	22	12	45
Chemainus to Nanaimo.....	55	104	70	50
Total.....	161	175	119	126

OPINION



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

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



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EDITORIAL

Unsafe harbours

Three years ago, the Canadian government introduced the Interim Anchorages Protocol in response to many complaints about international freighters parking in waters between the Southern Gulf Islands and Gabriola Island.

It was part of the much touted \$1.5-billion Oceans Protection Plan, and while island residents were skeptical that the protocol would really make a difference, it at least appeared to be a step in the right direction. In fact, except for data on vessel use of anchorages and complaints about them being collected, nothing has changed in the past three years.

Some 33 spots are designated as approved spots for huge ships to drop anchor while they wait to be accommodated at the Port of Vancouver. Sometimes those ships wait for weeks for a spot, with noisy generators running around the clock, lights blaring away and crews engaging in ship maintenance. The biggest concern, though, is that a collision will result in a fuel spill in our waters.

THE ISSUE:
 Freighter anchorages

WE SAY:
 Citizen action needed

Information contained in a recent Transportation Safety Board report points to valid reasons to worry. The TSB investigated a March 2020 incident that saw two ships' anchors get tangled in Plumper Sound. In addition to identifying "gaps in the effectiveness of safety management" in that case, the report revealed that 102 incidents of ships dragging anchor had been recorded on our coastline between 2015 and 2020.

The Islands Trust and its chair Peter Luckham have devoted considerable time and energy to keeping this issue in the spotlight, along with citizens' groups, First Nations, other local governments, the province and some area MPs. Last week Luckham told the Driftwood, "The incident where those two ships' anchors got tangled was a serious wake-up call, and we haven't woken up."

This is a situation that could be ameliorated if there was a sincere desire to do so on the part of the federal government, the shipping industry and the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority. It's time for all parties involved to "wake up."

It truly feels like a David and Goliath scenario, but First Nations, residents and local governments are not going to give up fighting this intolerable situation. A House of Commons petition at petitions.ourcommons.ca — under e-2985 — is the first place for islanders to make some waves and have their voices heard.



Pathway project disturbs

BY LUISA MAFFI AND DAVID RAPPORT

VIEWPOINT

As islanders with environmental values, we are fully in favour of paths and trails as means to foster active transportation and discourage the car culture, with clear health benefits for both people and the planet. As residents of the Baker Road to Booth Canal Road area, however, we are appalled by the current pathway construction along that stretch of Lower Ganges Road, which we find woefully misconceived and highly damaging of both the natural and the cultural heritage of the area.

Other islanders have already expressed dismay for the unannounced and unexamined loss of nearly two dozen trees along the pathway — trees that the project had deemed problematic for construction. As we see it, however, the trees were not the problem. Rather, the problem resided squarely within us humans. That's what happens when we set out to pursue our goals — laudable in principle as they may be — in ways that are insensitive to and damaging of the natural world, instead of working with nature in a thoughtful and respectful manner. Most, if not all, of those trees might have been

spared if project planning had been grounded in ecological principles rather than being driven by engineering concerns.

Now it turns out that a similarly aggressive approach has also been applied to some of Salt Spring's cultural heritage, which likewise happened to be an "obstacle" to construction work. On both corners of Baker Road, where it meets Lower Ganges Road, lies one of Salt Spring's historic cemeteries, a tranquil spiritual site that exudes the island's rural character. That spirituality and that character have now been desecrated and defaced. The narrow, sloping shoulder has been dug out completely, right up to the cemetery's fence, and a jarringly unsightly retaining wall of concrete blocks has been erected to prevent collapse of the now exposed edge of the graveyard.

How could something so egregiously out of line with rural character come to pass? In conversations with both CRD director Gary Holman, and Allen Xu, the CRD engineer overseeing this project, we learned that funding for this particular section of the pathway was

obtained from the transportation ministry hastily and with a tight deadline for work completion. Hence a rushed and heavy-handed approach that aimed far more at meeting the deadline than at being mindful of the area's natural and cultural features. And hence, too, the omission of a well-publicized community consultation process.

The damage is done, and we were told it is impossible to stop the project now and rethink it from a less intrusive perspective. But the worst of the damage can and must be remediated, ensuring that the concrete blocks along the cemetery's edge and further down the road are completely covered over with backfill and that significant revegetation is done. We had assurances that the CRD will do its best to conduct such restoration, but this intent must be confirmed publicly and an action plan and timeline be put forth just as soon as possible.

Above all, some serious soul searching must take place within and among the CRD, the transportation commission, the volunteer organizations working on pathways, and the community at large, so that such an egregious debacle never happens again.

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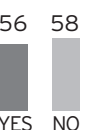
THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Should freighter parking be limited in Gulf Islands waters?

Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Are you motivated to make changes needed to fight climate change?



Cast your ballot online at 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:

“We didn’t move here to be terrified about our dogs being taken. We moved here because you could leave your door unlocked.”

JAMIE HALAN-HARRIS, SALTY DOG DAYCARE AND BOARDING

SALT SPRING SAYS

WE ASKED: *Is there anything you would like to find during this week-end’s seed exchange?*

CATHARINE MARZALIK



Flower seeds — poppies and calendula — and some perennial arugula.

JOCELYN LUKOW



I bought all my seeds in the fall, so maybe I would have fun picking out a few flower varieties I’ve never grown before.

BRANT RANGLES



Wild flowers, lettuce and kale, and maybe poppies.

NATALIA WOZNIAK



I think it’s important to have winter keepers, so potatoes, carrots and beets.

SANDY ST. PIERRE



I want to find a tea bush. I’ve heard it’s possible to grow and dry your own tea here.

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

Sign petition

Up until a few years ago there were few freighters parked in the Gulf Islands. Suddenly they’re everywhere.

If you read Elizabeth Nolan’s “Anchorages unsolved” article in last week’s Driftwood, you may have been struck, as I was, by how over and over we humans prove so unable to walk softly on this planet. We want our goodies. And there just isn’t the political will in our broad federal and provincial government institutions to challenge that. It seems only when our (perceived) needs directly cause someone to actually die, that an elected person can dare to close the cookie jar.

However, let’s not say die! Let’s not let it go that far.

There is a petition to the House of Commons to “prohibit freighter anchorages throughout the proposed Southern Strait of Georgia National Marine Conservation Area.” (From Saanich Inlet to the southern tip of Gabriola Island.)

But I went to the website last week to sign on and there were less than 750 signatures! We are 10,000 strong on Salt Spring! We love this planet and we know this is an extraordinary place. Surely that, and an awareness that over 100 freighters dragged anchor in the last five years along B.C.’s coast and that freighters offload many types of pollution on our shores 24/7 (light, sound, chemical, invasive species), surely all of that should result in at least 7,500 signatures. If from all the Gulf Islands we could generate 10,000 signatures, legislators might feel they could get re-elected by supporting this initiative. And that could be enough to make the change.

Do we really care about saving this beautiful place, our home on native land? Please go to the federal government petitions page (petitions.ourcommons.ca), enter e-2985 to select the correct petition, and put your name in there. It takes five minutes.

BILL HENDERSON,
SALT SPRING

What does ‘no’ mean?

Two weeks ago, the Driftwood asked its readers, “Should affordable housing be an Islands Trust priority?” Eighty per cent of the respondents said “no.” What are the readers saying?

1. Are they saying that this is not an Islands Trust area of responsibility?

2. Are they indicating that a different government or local organization is better equipped to address affordable housing issues?

3. Are they saying that the Islands Trust should not address the affordable housing issue in isolation from the other governments that also have some responsibility for housing on Salt Spring Island, such as: the Capital Regional District, province, federal government and local improvement districts?

4. Are they saying that affordable housing is not a Salt Spring need or priority?

Affordable housing is a Salt Spring necessity if residents desire low and moderate income workers to live here, to service our community needs and to enable a diverse community. Surveys have shown that our local businesses, our farms, our health services and our schools have a difficult time filling vacant positions because we do not have housing for employment applicants.

I hope that the response to the Driftwood question will motivate a survey to be conducted to understand what the 80 per cent responding readers who voted “no” are telling us.

Our whole community must move in a thoughtful forward direction to create needed affordable housing for those who wish to work and live on Salt Spring. Without the workers, we will become an island without the services necessary for a vibrant, healthy lifestyle.

CURT FIRESTONE,
SALT SPRING

Only an absolute nutter would pay to declutter

There was a woman on the radio a few days ago who was described by the interviewer as “a professional organizer.” A professional organizer? Someone who is presumably paid to come round to your house and sort out your socks and underpants. Or rearrange your cutlery drawer so that soup spoons don’t end up with the dessert spoons, which as anyone who has ever owned a knife and fork will tell you is just not proper. My in-laws, who were proper beyond reason, even had a separate drawer for their fish cutlery.

As is my way with things that need sneering at, I began listening to the professional organizer with an upward curl to my left lip. Why would anyone pay to have someone come round and “organize” them? Why would I pay someone besides my wife to point out that I’d got a food stain on my sweater and looked as if I’d spent the night on a bench in Centennial Park. Or to complain that I “have six pairs of shoes in the hallway and who did you think was going to put them away where they belong so somebody doesn’t trip on them which, at our age, we are more liable to do and you should give a bit more thought to where you simply drop stuff now that we’re in our 70s . . .” It’s a mere matter of time before my winter coat is reorganized with woollen mittens attached to the sleeves by a length of elastic.

I’m already being systematized to within an inch of my life, so why would I spend my hard-earned pensions on someone else to remind me that I’m a scruffy nuisance? But then I had a thought. The garage, the shed, my woodshed, the fridge, all of them cluttered almost beyond redemption.

The shed, for instance. We’ve recently had it reroofed so that it has gone from being a damp, dank, dreary repository of rusting nuts and bolts and inexplicable tool-things to a dry, dreary repository of



Paul McElroy
+ ANOTHER THING

rusting nuts, bolts and inexplicable tool-things.

The upside is that I’ve been able to park my Christmas present there, which regular readers will recall was to have been a Harley Davidson motorcycle but had morphed into a Shop Vac by Christmas Day. So I’ve had a bit of a clear out, a desultory bagging up of the worst bits of unsanitary rubbish and a quick vacuum (which was, incidentally, a poor substitute for cruising the highways astride 100 Harley horsepower with the wind in my face and not a care in the world), but it is still not a place that invites a chirpy hobbyist to build his model airplanes, whittle his clothes pegs or whatever it is people do in the sheds at the bottom of their gardens. It is in serious need of “decluttering,” which is the professional organizer’s area of expertise, although calling the detritus in my shed “clutter” is like calling the Capitol rioters “boisterous.”

So if this lady with her degrees in clutterology and her tidy mind could see her way to giving my shed a quick organizing I’d be grateful provided it’s not too expensive. Neatness is all very well, but shabby most likely comes cheaper.

The garage, I’m afraid, is also a lost cause. Back in the U.K., in a time before I was a Canadian, most homes had single garages the size of a shoebox with just enough room to park a single Morris

Minor provided the passengers got out before you drove in because there was only enough space to open a door on one side of the car. In those days, four doors were an American affectation and suburban architects, even in the ‘90s, apparently couldn’t get their heads around the fact that there might be cars bigger than an Austin A30. A second car was also a rarity and anyone pretentious enough to own his and her cars was most likely a drug dealer or foreign. Consequently, a British garage (pronounced “garidge” by the way) was entirely useless for anything but parking a car overnight to get rusty. It is also the reason, I suspect, why the Brits invented the garden shed to store their push-mowers (motor mowers were self-indulgent and vulgar and mostly unnecessary on a typical British lawn which was the size of a toffee wrapper) and to pot their geraniums.

So to find myself the proud owner of a garage big enough to park half a dozen Morris Minors and still have room to get out of the car is a New World luxury. Not that I’ve ever actually driven the car into the garage since there just isn’t enough room because of everything else that has been parked there. And I’m still not entirely convinced that leaving a damp car in a dry garage isn’t an invitation to rust and the inevitable disintegration of the car before its allotted time.

In any case, I like the garage the way it is more or less; it’s cluttered, but in a good way. And the woodshed is merely full of wood that will eventually be burned, and I’ve solved the cluttered fridge problem by throwing the old fridge out and buying a new one, which may seem like an extravagant way to handle a bit of tidying but I’m sure it was cheaper than a couple of sessions with the Clutter Lady.

paulmcelroy@shaw.ca

Seed sanctuary boosts resilience

BY SHEILA DOBIE

Our food begins with seeds.

Our food security is humbly and tenderly held by seed. It warrants reverence as a vulnerable link to our survival.

On Salt Spring Island — where abundance seems to burst around us — we have the gift of long-term resilience and opportunity with our own community seed supply. It's small but mighty, as any seed collection is; the potential in each kernel! And it requires stewards to help it grow. Imagine our local food system grown by our own seed. This is true food sovereignty.

The Salt Spring Island Seed Bank is located at The Root on Beddis Road. It is a unique

partnership with the Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust and the Salt Spring Sanctuary Society. It is the current evolution of past seed library projects that many community members were part of. A seed room was built in 2017-18 (largely by Michael Hogan — another of his many legacies to this community) and has been storing a small collection of seeds, stewarded by a handful of seed savers.

Last spring we experienced a huge surge of energy and awakening for local food growing, and found its strengths and limits. This was an intimate thing for many of us; taking stock on what more we could do with our land, getting access to

ground, sharing knowledge, finding mentors, enough water close by, and then, finding seed. Supplies ran out — fast!

Some farmers and gardeners are committed to seed saving and this year we once again look at our home supply with a sense of relief and validation. All that hard work and learning over the years has paid off. And this little known seed supply, the Salt Spring Island Seed Bank, is here on our island, stewarded by our own growers, and nourished with a vision and commitment that will serve us for the long term.

To access seeds from this supply, people simply become members of the seed sanctuary society (for

\$20), start off with any five varieties of their choice, and then take on whatever stewardship they can provide in building up that seed supply. Some of our members have ended up having successes in other seeds they have been saving and we have added them to the collection.

People who want to learn more can visit seedsanctuary.com for contact information and how to become a member.

Better yet, check out the seed bank at The Root when it is a stop on the seed wwap tour set for this March 6-7 weekend.

The writer is a Salt Spring Sanctuary Society board member.

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Housing should be a Trust responsibility

BY JASON MOCUS

A year into the pandemic, I've been reflecting on the value of community. What does it really mean? How does community serve my life? How does it make Salt Spring more livable, safe, and resilient, particularly in the face of big challenges?

When I think about how we're all surviving this tough year, my mind goes to the critical services the community provides my vulnerable family. Everyone at my kid's school. The incredible logistics of our grocery stores. The health-care system and amazing network of alternative healers. Those making me a coffee or serving take-out food. Friends and parents from different backgrounds and walks of life reaching out. There's more I could mention, but that's my list.

Salt Spring is surviving the pandemic pretty well, but because of our other major crisis — housing — I'm concerned the foundation of our strong community is being too quickly eroded, and that people are focused on the wrong reasons why.

Even before the pandemic, many of our community's social indicators were in decline. Hundreds of health-care workers, educators, those front-line grocery store heroes, workers who staff our restaurants, grow food, care for our elderly and sick, or make beauty with their arts and crafts were being forced off the island due to the high cost or just complete lack of safe available housing.

Sadly the trends that were already pushing many to the breaking point have only been accelerated by the pan-

INDEPTH

demic. The Globe and Mail last week reported house prices have jumped an astonishing 30 per cent in desirable rural regions outside big Canadian cities. Look no further than the new clearcuts in your neighbourhood to see how the same holds true here.

Did you know the average house price on Salt Spring two years ago was \$835,000? To afford that kind of mortgage, a family needs to make \$135,000 a year. But with our median household income being only \$57,000 . . . do the math. It's a pretty big gap, and it's only getting bigger.

Look out a few more years or decades to where this road takes us, without a bend in the curve. Who do we expect to be able to take care of an aging population in the near future when our critical health and social services literally cannot fill jobs today?

Now imagine if I told you that, just as our local government was finally dragging itself to the starting line on this issue after decades of inaction, a faction within it is proposing to instead simply walk away.

This is not fake news. There is a group of trustees — not from Salt Spring — making the case that the Trust's responsibilities should not include housing, and in fact go further to suggest its mandate be focused only on the environment. This would be a change from what I and others feel is the original founding dual purpose of the Trust to

also protect our unique island culture and community.

This issue is being discussed and debated at a March 3 online town hall on the Trust Policy Statement updating and then at a Trust Council meeting on March 9-10.

I believe this is profoundly misguided. I realize the climate emergency is traumatizing a lot of people, as it well should. I work full time on helping grow the global climate movement, and it's tough out there, and will get tougher. But looking at climate solutions solely through an ecological lens is the exact opposite of where everyone else is going on this.

Building walls, or moats, is not an acceptable or compassionate response.

Climate solutions must include people, particularly those most at risk and impacted by our current broken economic systems. That's climate justice. With smart planning and incentives from the Trust and others, this can be done with less impact on our environment than the current mansion-driven rural sprawl our system is encouraging today.

If you agree our Islands Trust shouldn't abdicate its role in protecting our community, please contact your local trustee, attend the online town hall on March 3, or go to www.SaltSpringSolutions.com and send a letter to all trustees from there.

The writer works to pressure global banks and investors to stop funding the climate crisis, and is a co-founder of Salt Spring Solutions.

Capital Regional District

CRD

Notice of Meeting

Capital Regional District Board
2021 Financial Plan Bylaw Approval

A meeting of the Capital Regional District Board, including budget discussion for 2021, will be held:

Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Time: 1:10 pm

Place: CRD Headquarters, 6th Floor Boardroom
625 Fisgard Street, Victoria, BC

Rants + ROSES

Rants

A bouquet of poison ivy to the COVID conspiracist who refused to wear a mask in Country Grocer because the majority of the world's doctors and scientists are "lying about the pandemic." A bouquet of \$100 bills if he can explain why they are lying.
Paul McElroy

Roses

A bounty of roses to all the willing beachgoers who sawed and lifted and rolled and raked the accumulation of logs and debris from

Vesuvius Beach on a recent Sunday. Thanks to your efforts, the beach is walkable again.
Carol Williams

To the gentleman who found my phone on Cranberry Road and dropped it off at the Driftwood office, thank you so much and I wish you all the best.
Amanda

Roses to the kind person who found this 95-year-old woman in a green jacket and bleeding on a path at the west end of Country Grocer on a recent Friday and called an ambulance. I am doing well. Thank you, thank you.
K. Darling

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Island woman's life offers inspiring lessons

Bernadette Mertens-McAllister reflects on experiences

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

With International Women's Day coming up this Monday, March 8, members of the Salt Spring Painters Guild were moved to champion their former president Bernadette Mertens-McAllister as a woman worthy of being featured.

"I believe she is a great role model for women who are aging, and for girls and young women of all ages. She is very compassionate, sensitive and supportive of others. These characteristics have been refined through her commitment to learning and growing," explained guild member Melodie Herbert.

"She is a remarkable person with such a varied, accomplished life," agreed Philippa Tattersall. "Her creativity never ceases to amaze me. And she is so giving of her skills and encouragement to others."

Mertens-McAllister, age 73, has indeed led a fascinating life filled with adventure travel, environmental advocacy and artistic expression, while her willingness to keep learning is matched by her generosity in sharing her skills and knowledge with others. For her, it all boils down to one principle.

"I measure success not by what I have done but how I did it — with joy, positive attitude and love," Mertens-McAllister said. "I believe we have a choice within the circumstances. We are on a path where we learn and evolve. Each step along the way, happy ones and hard ones, are lessons learned."

Mertens-McAllister was born in Switzerland to Belgian parents, the fourth in a family of four daughters. They moved around Europe often since her father was employed by Belgian Airlines, which meant she didn't have many friends at school. Join-



Salt Spring artist and environmentalist Bernadette Mertens-McAllister at Fort Franklin, NWT in 1972, left, and in present day.

ing the Girl Guides from age 11 to 18 brought her a wealth of riches.

"That actually shaped my life because we were constantly going for nature walks and camping and doing good deeds," Mertens-McAllister said. "I had really good friends there."

After finishing school Mertens-McAllister started her advanced education in biology at the University of Liège in Belgium.

"I wanted to travel and study fauna in their habitat but they reassured me that being a woman, my job would be teaching in a school or researcher in a lab. So I quit," she said.

Instead, she completed her studies in fine art photography, and once she finished that, she went out into the world as a photographer. In 1970 she travelled 17,000 kilometres in one month on a trip from Paris to Kabul, Afghanistan in a small Citroën with three friends. The destination was a car rally where she was responsible for the photography.

Later that year she emigrated to Canada. She worked in a darkroom in a Vancouver photo lab and then travelled extensively around the Arctic as a freelance photographer, hitchhiking her way into cars and airplanes from Tuktoyaktuk to the Nahanni River. There she met up by chance with Canadian explorer Jean Poire and

they viewed some remote caves together in the First Canyon.

After some trips in between to Europe and Mexico (where she summited the 5,426-metre Popocatepetl volcano on her own) Mertens-McAllister moved to Sidney, where she worked as a photographer and managed Studio West. During this time she met her former partner. They built a 17-foot wooden sailboat together and travelled for five months in 1976, going from Sidney to Seattle with no motor, no tent and no phone. Their daughter Ingrid was born in 1977.

During the late '70s, Mertens-McAllister worked for naval architect Bill Garden as a photographer. By now a single mother, she decided a teaching career would be acceptable after all. She received her teaching degree from Simon Fraser University, and then taught French Immersion for eight years in Vernon, B.C.

Mertens-McAllister moved back to Vancouver Island in 1993 and then met her husband, the well-known environmentalist Peter McAllister. She worked for his Raincoast Conservation Society as a photographer during three years of extensive explorations of the Great Bear Rainforest. The pair travelled in Europe, the U.S. and Canada to campaign for its protection, making slide shows

and evening presentations. During that time she also started to paint intensively and took some art workshops.

The years 1996 to 2012 were spent cattle ranching at Upper Hat Creek (between Lillooet and Cache Creek) where Mertens-McAllister helped with everything from rounding up the herd on horseback to branding, irrigation and haying. She also participated in group and solo art exhibits. The McAllisters gave up ranching life when they moved to Salt Spring in 2012, but some things are familiar to that time.

"We had to fight to save the forest and the farm because they were going to clear-cut," Mertens-McAllister said about the ranch.

These days, the couple is trying to save Salt Spring's forests, and have another contentious clear-cut to deal with just over the property line on lands once owned by Mike Larmour. Mertens-McAllister has also given her time to volunteering with the Painters Guild, serving as president for some years. She's additionally volunteered for two months in Guatemala, helping in a small hospital for starving children.

Mertens-McAllister has kept her independent spirit and continued to do many trips to remote locations with her husband and

on her own, kayaking, hiking and birding. She spent three months in Argentina and Chile in 2018, mainly car camping solo. (She did meet up with her daughter during that trip to celebrate her 70th and Ingrid's 40th birthday.)

"It was absolutely amazing. My whole life I wanted to go to the end of the world, whether the Arctic or the Detroit de Magellan. Just to see a large vista, I really like that," she said.

While she's had many adventures, Mertens-McAllister has faced challenges as well. In 2008 she went through chemotherapy, surgeries and radiation for breast cancer.

"It opened my eyes and heart," she said of the experience, "because I realized I could not say no."

It also led to her becoming involved in meditation and Buddhism.

"That really helps me and gives me a lot of wisdom in my life," she said.

Mertens-McAllister acknowledges she started out life with family advantages, such as a loving mother and responsible father. And with four girls in the family there was no sense there were things they couldn't do.

"I don't really know how my young years as a woman were different than the ones for a woman now. My parents gave me a lot of freedom and my youth has been similar to the one students have now," Mertens-McAllister said.

"I know that for International Women's Day, I'd like to inspire all women, young and old, and I would like to tell them: Make and follow your dreams and they will happen. Always make choices according to your deep intention and aspiration. Learn the skills and go for what you are passionate about. Have trust and don't be afraid of the unknown.

"I believe I always had a star that looked after me ... And when I look back, my dreams as a teenager, they all became true. I always believed that what I was dreaming would be possible."



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LOCAL MUSICIANS

COVID music chronicles launched

Salt Spring Arts Council effort highlights island's musicians

SUBMITTED BY SS ARTS COUNCIL

A year of living with COVID has taught us so much about what is truly important, what we can live without, and what we desperately look forward to getting back to.

The pandemic has shown us fragile fault-lines in those things we previously took for granted. Musicians and live music have taken a substantial blow as a result of the last year. Working musicians who rely on gigs, session work or teaching have had to restructure their livelihoods. Yet so many continue to find ways to create, collaborate and share their music with fans — and for those of us who love music, their songs are the balm we need now, more than ever.

We invited eight Salt Spring Island musical acts to Mahon Hall and asked them each to perform a song we could share



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jose Sanchez (AKA El Jose) is one of the Salt Spring musicians and groups featured in an arts council video project that kicked off March 1.

on their behalf. We also asked them what kind of support they need now — until live music returns — from their fans and

their community.

It's going to be a while before the live music economy can rebuild. In the meantime, we can support our incredible local talent.

Throughout March we are featuring videos by IRTH (Mar. 1), El Jose (Mar. 4), Renée Layla (Mar. 9), Fawkes & Hownd (Mar. 11), Suzy Gay (Mar. 15), The Buck Dodgers Stringband (Mar. 18), Trisha Spire (Mar. 22) and Luke Wallace (Mar. 25), all captured by local production team Syd Woodward (videography) and Harley Dunn (sound).

Watch the Arts Council's social channels and website for all eight videos and make sure to share them: ssartscouncil.com/covid-chronicles/. If you are looking for other ways to support local musicians: find them online and buy their music, follow their social channels, hit the like, heart, follow and pre-save campaigns — it's a way to boost their music in the playing field of algorithms and make your support count.

For more information on all these artists, check out the musician directory on the arts council website.

Grant Applications Invited



salt spring island foundation

The Salt Spring Island Foundation will be accepting funding applications beginning March 1, 2021. A total of \$101,000 will be disbursed this spring to registered charitable organizations. All charitable project types and sectors are invited to apply.

As part of its regular funding cycle, up to \$25,000 of the total amount will fund projects designed to build the capacity of the applicant organization. There is a checkbox on the application to indicate "capacity-building" projects.

Please note the following funding limits apply:

- Capital projects cap at \$10,000 per application
- Direct service projects cap at \$7,500 per application
- Capacity-building projects cap at \$7,500 per application

The application deadline is March 31, 2021. For complete information on applying for a grant, visit ssfoundation.ca or call the office at 250-537-8305.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Groups present video project

Performing arts supported

SUBMITTED BY THE CIRCLE

The Circle Salt Spring Education Society and Islanders Working Against Violence have partnered with Graffiti Theatre Company to create a performance to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD) in the community.

Local musicians, activists, poets, performing artists and youth were invited to interpret this year's IWD theme of Choose to Challenge. A video compilation of their reflections, presentations and performances was created as a way to explore this theme and to celebrate the incredible women in our community.

Rebecca Nygard, executive director of Graffiti Theatre Company, said, "During this pandemic, social disparities, inequalities and injustices have been magnified. Women have been disproportionately affected — significant loss of income, job loss, isolation,

abuse — and often tasked with working, homeschooling and bearing the emotional load of our global crisis.

"The performing arts have also been significantly impacted by the pandemic. We must continue to make sure that artists are supported so they can continue to perform, create, and bring us together, although not physically."

"Since 1977, March 8 has been a day to acknowledge the women who have socially, economically, politically and culturally paved the way so that future generations of women could realize their full potential," said Janine Fernandes-Hayden, executive director of The Circle. "This year's theme seems like a tall order, but it can start in simple ways, like the ways we think, talk and act in our everyday lives. We are grateful to Graffiti Theatre for their initiative and creativity in shepherding a truly unique experience."

The video will be available on March 8 at saltspringexchange.com/IWD2021.

POETRY

Hayes heads up Poetry Open Mic

Thursday night event

The next featured poet in the monthly Poetry Open Mic at the library is Salt Spring's own Diana Hayes.

The Zoom event runs on Thursday, March 4 beginning at 7 p.m., hosted by the Salt Spring Island Public Library. People wanting to read a poem can sign up at 6:45 p.m.

Hayes was born in Toronto. She studied at UBC and UVic, earning a BA and MFA in Creative Writing. She has written five

books, most recently *Labyrinth of Green*, published by Plumleaf Press in 2019. *Deeper Into the Forest*, a spoken word/music CD was produced at Allowed Sound Studio with musician and sound engineer Andy Meyers.

Her narrative photography has been featured in galleries around coastal B.C. and commissioned for book covers. In 2020 she began a publishing venture with the creation of Raven Chapbooks.

To register and get the link, send an email to programs@saltspringlibrary.com.

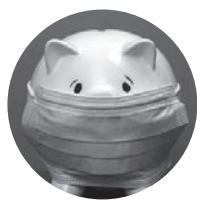
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View their performances online, starting March 8th, at saltspringexchange.com/IWD2021

Presented by The Circle, IWAV, and Graffiti Theatre Co.



ISLAND LIFE



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

FOLLOWING PROTOCOLS: Some of the Michael Dennis sculptures in the Hastings House field are seen outfitted with masks, a comment on the current pandemic times.

AGING

Survey reveals COVID impacts

'Younger old people' face the most negative effects among seniors

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A new study that examines how COVID-19 is impacting the older population and their advance care plans shows the younger segment of the 55+ group has been the hardest hit when it comes to mental health, financial burden and family stress.

COVID-19 Experiences and Advance Care Planning Among Older Canadians is a study funded by Simon Fraser University's Gerontology Research Centre and the Canadian Frailty Network. The survey ran from Aug. 10 to Oct. 10, 2020. Canadians aged 55 and older were asked about COVID-19 impacts to health, social and financial security and planning for the future. Researchers also wished to learn if there would be different results as a function of age groupings, gender or sexual orientation.

Salt Spring resident Robert Beringer is a member of the five-person research team responsible for the project.

"I really enjoyed conducting the survey and putting it together," Beringer said. "The group I was working with would have been happy with 1,000 responses and we got over 4,300, so we're really happy about that. I guess people just wanted to speak about their experiences."

Beringer noted the research team released the survey results with very little analysis at first because they wanted to share the basic data as quickly as possible. More in-depth research will be based on the findings, though, including journal articles and presentations. In the meantime, infographics make the initial report easy to digest for general readers, as well as other researchers.

"We wanted to make it accessible to a range of readers, and I think it really is accessible for a lot of people to take a look at it," Beringer said.

The survey examined the experiences of older people in general, with particular interest in three key minority groups: LGBT, Chinese and South Asian seniors. The response group largely reflects the ethnic breakdown of the older Canadian population percentage-wise. Transgender respondent results were not included in this report because the sample size of 22 was too small, but Beringer said the researchers will report on their experiences, along with the data collected from non-binary respondents, in other venues.

Only 61 (just over one per cent) of the respondents had been diagnosed with COVID-19. Of these, 37 people reported the severity of their infection was mild, with symptoms effectively managed at home; 14 reported the severity was moderate with serious symptoms requiring brief hospitalization; and five reported their symptoms were severe and required lengthy hospitalization and ventilation. Contrary to the researchers' expectation, the proportion in each age group diagnosed with COVID-19 decreased slightly with increasing age.

People in the youngest category of older people seem to

be having the most trouble during the pandemic, perhaps because a greater percentage of that group has yet to retire. The 55-64 age category reported more negative impacts to income, more discord at home, and perhaps as a result, more negative emotion such as depression, anxiety and stress.

"While the emphasis on combatting social isolation and loneliness among all seniors that has been exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic mitigation efforts is vital, the attention of policy makers, service providers and the general public needs also to be drawn to the unique stresses experienced by younger older adults," the researchers state.

"Younger old adults" were also less likely than older folks to wear masks or practise social distancing. However, 87 per cent of all respondents said they did social distancing most of the time, and 75 per cent said they wore masks most of the time.

Some of the other key findings are that people who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual were "more likely to report feeling depressed, anxious and sad, were more likely to report changes in health (both positive and negative) and more likely to experience changes in medical and mental healthcare access."

However, those people may also be coping better with pandemic realities. Compared to heterosexual respondents, LGB survey respondents were more likely to have taken public health measures seriously, and they were more likely to have completed advance care planning documents. Those who had experienced a pandemic before — such as with HIV/AIDS, SARS or H1N1 — additionally felt better prepared and more need to act.

As a result of this finding, the authors recommend LGB people with such experience be "encouraged and supported to reach out to their community and beyond with stories of survival and resilience — i.e., serve as exemplars, role models and mentors; and communicate strategies upon which current advocacy measures, policies and programs can be modelled."

Women across the age spectrum were more likely to comply with public health guidelines than men. Women were also more likely to experience disrupted routines and stress, and to find less support and reduced exercise. One of the report's recommendations is to use mass media to promote safe physical activities for women to support public health objectives and women's mental health.

With the researchers' key focus on advance-care planning, the most startling finding to them was how little prepared many older Canadians are in this regard. They say the communication gap around advance-care planning must be closed between older people and their physicians, and more needs to be done to promote the need for preparing documents such as advance directives.

"COVID-19 has emphasized the unpredictability of life; it is a careful balance between raising awareness of the steps needed to survive the pandemic, while also encouraging people to plan realistically for infirmity and end-of-life care post-COVID," the report concludes.

The report can be found on SFU's LGBT End-of-Life Conversations website at <http://www.sfu.ca/lgbteol.html>.

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In no case can the District accept responsibility for any claims arising out of the use of discoloured water.

what's on this week



Wed. Mar. 3	Fri. Mar. 5	Sun. Mar. 7	Tue. Mar. 9
VIA ZOOM Islands 2050: Virtual Open House. Share your views about updating of the Islands Trust Policy Statement. 7 to 9 p.m. Register at: islandstrust.bc.ca/islands2050 .	VIA ZOOM Poetry and Recipe Reading. Join Elizabeth Buchanan for a free Zoom event inspired by Plot #23 in the Shaw Family Community Gardens. 5 p.m. Request Zoom link from nanarescue@gmail.com .	VIA ZOOM Paper Covers Rock Workshop. Margriet Ruurs on How to Find a Publisher for Your Children's Book. 12 to 1 p.m. papercoversrock.ca	VIA ZOOM Islands Trust Council Quarterly Meeting. All day. See www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/council-meetings/ for agenda and how to connect.
Thur. Mar. 4	Sat. Mar. 6	Mon. Mar. 8	Wed. Mar. 10
ONLINE/ZOOM Transition Salt Spring EV Group Ask an Expert Q&A. David Elderton of Hilleater Bikes takes questions about electric bikes. 7 p.m. Get link from dfortin12@gmail.com .	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Farm Stand Community Seed Swap. Island Natural Growers takes the annual Seedy Saturday event on the road. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. See the Salt Spring Seedy Saturday page on Facebook for a map of participating farms and stands.	ONLINE Birding by Ear on Salt Spring: Part 1: Winter Birds, Residents, and Early Migrants. A Zoom webinar by Salt Spring professional nature sound recordist John Neville. 7 p.m. Register by emailing ddenningssi@gmail.com .	VIA ZOOM Islands Trust Council Quarterly Meeting. See Tuesday listing.
Poetry Open Mic. Featured poet is Diana Hayes. Join at 6:45 p.m. to sign up; one poem per reader; open mic begins at 7 p.m. with featured poet at 7:30 p.m. Email programs@saltspringlibrary.com for the link.	VIA ZOOM Paper Covers Rock Writing Workshops. See papercoversrock.ca for details about four workshops offered.	International Women's Day Local Video Compilation. Local musicians, activists, poets, performing artists and youth interpret this year's IWD theme of Choose to Challenge. Video released today at saltspringexchange.com/IWD2021 .	THE FRITZ CINEMA Closed until further notice due to COVID-19 regulations. See www.thefritz.ca for updates and info about Friday-Saturday concession nights.
Fri. Mar. 5	Sun. Mar. 7	EXHIBITIONS	
VIA ZOOM ASK Salt Spring. This week's guest is MLA Adam Olsen. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Email asksaltspring.com to get the link.	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Farm Stand Community Seed Swap. See Saturday listing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women of the She Said Collective present an exhibit called <i>Inspired By Words</i> at Salt Spring Gallery from March 5 to 24. • The Salt Spring Conservancy is holding a fundraising silent online art auction through Sunday, March 7. Go to www.saltspringconservancy.ca to participate. 	

SERVICE GROUPS

Pie Ladies serve grants

Charity continues despite events being cancelled

The Salt Spring Island Women's Institute (SSIWI) distributed a number of grants to local groups last month, despite not being able to boost their coffers through their usual fundraising activities last year.

The group of 12 — also known as the "Pie Ladies" — had a number of special activities planned for the 100th anniversary of their organization in 2020, but an April celebration and pie-selling events at Heritage Day, the Salt Spring Fall Fair and the Salt Spring Apple Festival did not happen due to the pandemic.

"Nevertheless, the members of the Women's Institute are a thrifty group and we have saved money from our previous years' sales," the group explained in a press release.

Almost \$4,000 was given to nine organizations: Salt Spring Farmers' Heritage Foundation (for Bittancourt Museum), Royal Canadian Legion Branch 92, Santa's Workshop, Salt Spring Island 4H, Salt Spring Therapeutic Riding Association, Copper Kettle, the Wagon Wheel Society's Salt Spring Laundromat, Salt Spring Food Bank and the Centre for Children's Health of Vancouver Island. A \$1,000 bursary was also given to a graduating Gulf Islands Secondary School student.

The SSIWI is dedicated to helping family and community and is always looking for new members. To join the local institute, contact president Margaret Reid at miggs9848@gmail.com or 250-537-9848.

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EDUCATION

Youth seek shift to more inclusive environment

Living Books program opens conversations

SUBMITTED BY CONNECTING GENERATIONS PROGRAM, GISS

School District 64 has a new way to help combat racism.

The Living Books initiative is a resource intended to provide opportunities for high school students to speak with community members about their first-hand experience of racism.

Salt Springers may recall an incident at the Gulf Islands Secondary School on the first day of school in September involving a group of returning Grade 12 students. Some members of the graduating class arrived at school after their six-month COVID-induced absence wearing T-shirts displaying racist, homophobic and sexualized words and symbols. The students in question were held accountable for their actions and the district also engaged the services of consultant Lisa Gunderson, a respected speaker on racism and equity, who has provided workshops for students, staff and parents.

Glossing over such behaviour is unacceptable and since then there have been other incidents of racial abuse in the community at large.

Deblekha Guin, a member of the District Parent Advisory Council and the GISS PAC executive commented in September, "In the short term

there needs to be action. This conversation needs to happen. I personally hope there is also a restorative long game and we make sure young people are stakeholders in helping make the shift to a safe and inclusive environment."

The "restorative long game" is unfolding. The Salt Spring BIPOC Community Collective, which had already been working closely with the district since July 2020, bringing the issues of racism to the forefront of community attention, was instrumental in the formation in September of the district's ad hoc Anti-racism Advocacy Working Group to address institutional racism.

As Shelley Lawson, school trustee for Galiano Island, wrote: "This is important work at every level of our school district. Now is the time to learn better ways of being, with our communities, for our students. I learn better governance and policy practices at every meeting of our anti-racism committee. There is representation from the BIPOC Community Collective and The Circle at the table, grounding us in lived community experience."

Since October a committee of students and teachers has met once a week during lunch hours to work on a school community anti-racism campaign. They have celebrated Martin Luther King Day wearing black T-shirts and last month brought an awareness to their school community of Black History Month.

"It's easy to assume because everyone is hearing [about racism], someone will do something ... someone else will take care of it," writes Zoë Clarke, a Grade 11 student at GISS and a member of the group. So instead of following the easier path of indifference, a few students at GISS have come together to support students of colour as well as Salt Spring's Black, Indigenous and People of Colour community.

"We hope to educate ourselves and others about issues caused by and related to racism. As well as raising our voices as we speak up about racial injustice, we want to turn up the volume on the conversation around equality," explains a statement from the GISS Anti-Racism Working Group.

"We want to see how to dismantle the systemic barriers that are both stopping so many people from standing up and are silencing the voices of those trying to speak out. On Salt Spring Island we feel as though we are a close-knit community and word travels fast, which we hope will make it easier to spread the anti-racist principles we feel are vital. We have so far enjoyed being educated by BIPOC members of our community as well as reading the book *White Fragility* by Robin Di Angelo.

"As students on a small island, we are relatively sheltered from the outside world, and the media is our only window. We understand that it

is easy to see a real-world issue and turn your back on it, leaving it for the adults of the world to deal with, for we don't feel it is our responsibility yet. We hope that through this Anti-Racism Working Group we can help our fellow students realize that it isn't enough to just wave our hands at it and wait for it to go away. We need to embrace the uncomfortable truth that this is becoming our responsibility, and it won't go away unless we work at it."

"We hope to educate ourselves and others about issues caused by and related to racism."

GISS ANTI-RACISM WORKING GROUP

The Living Books project is the inspiration of a Salt Spring resident who contacted the high school to suggest that hearing stories from community members who have encountered racial discrimination would allow youth to better understand and have empathy for those who have been marginalized because of their heritage. We hope that anyone, whether an Indigenous person, an African Canadian, a Muslim, someone of Asian descent,

or anyone who has had any kind of exposure to racism, will be willing to share their experiences and answer questions. To begin with the conversations will be via Zoom with small groups of students in Social Studies classes.

Mary Gordon, founder of the school-based Roots of Empathy program, points out that it is from the adult world that children learn the dangerous misconception that "some are more worthy than others, because of some perceived difference."

From here stems, an "intergenerational legacy" of indifference and apathy towards racism and a host of other "isms."

Gordon says that our youth "may be students in the classroom but they are the parents, policy makers and electorate of the future."

Living Books will bring the learning directly to students in a "community-centred way," said Lawson. "Student agency and informed voice are critical in 2021 and this will be a meaningful resource for learners."

We look forward to supporting our youth together to help make Salt Spring a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone.

For more information and to apply for participation in the "Living Books" initiative, people should contact Sarah Hook-Nilsson, coordinator of the SD64 Connecting Generations program, at shooknilsson@sd64.org.

HOME & GARDEN

Community seed swap hits farm stands

Seedy Saturday tradition moves to distanced format for 2021

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN

DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Island Natural Growers (ING) is ensuring Salt Spring has access to seeds this spring even though pandemic restrictions have put the usual events on hold.

This weekend the organization will present the very first Salt Spring Island Farm Stand Community Seed Swap, taking place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 6 and Sunday, March 7 at a variety of locations across the island.

"In response to the current limits on gatherings and events, we've decided to switch up the annual Seedy Saturday event that is usually hosted at the Farmers' Institute," the organizers explain in a press release. "This year, we've planned an event spanning the whole island, and taking place at individual farm stands. This will allow Salt Springers to buy, sell and trade seeds in a safe environment, patronize their local farm stands, and have a fun day out and about while dreaming of their gardens for 2021."

Visitors to participating farm stands can bring packaged homegrown seeds to trade or give away, buy seeds from the farm who is selling them (prices as marked) or take packages of donated seeds with a donation to Island Natural Growers.

"Your donations continue to support our work in promoting sustainable agriculture on Salt Spring Island," the group explains.

Anyone who would like to learn more about interacting with the island seed bank should make sure to visit the Seed Sanctuary at The Root at 189 Beddis Rd. on Saturday. A volunteer who can answer questions about this important local resource will be on site until 3 p.m.

"The staff at The Root are also seeking community donations of tools for the new permaculture garden that will be built on-site. If anyone has unused garden tools to give away, the team at The Root will gratefully accept them," ING states.

Guidelines for farm stand visits given by Island Natural Growers are to "honour the honour system" by paying the full price indicated by seed growers. When trading or taking donated seed, it's best to take amounts that will actually be used, and to leave some for the next participant, they say.

Additional requests are that people observe physical distancing and keep two metres apart at farm stands, wear a mask around others, use the hand sanitizer provided before shopping, or bring their own, and drive and park responsibly and safely.

Participants should also remember to "enjoy yourself, and be mindful of others."

Everyone is encouraged to share their experience and post photos to Facebook and Instagram with the hashtag #saltspringseedswap.

A map with all of the locations can be found on the Salt Spring Seedy Saturday Facebook page. A list of spots confirmed as of last week are listed below.

Participating Farm Stands

- North End Farm - 2521 North End Rd
- 1982 North End Rd.
- Average Acre Life - 105 Fernwood Rd.
- The Piper's Buns - 740 Walkers Hook Rd
- Whims Road Rainbow Farm Stand - 173 Whims Rd.
- Top O' the Hill Farm Stand - 191 Fort St.
- Park Drive Neighbourhood Farm Stand - 187 Park Dr.
- The Seed Sanctuary at The Root - 189 Beddis Rd. (Saturday only - until 3 p.m.)
- Heavenly Roots Farm - 430 Dukes Rd.
- Chateau Minvielle Farm Stand - corner of Fulford-Ganges and Kitchen roads
- The Lee Road Farm Stand - 140 Lee Rd.
- Salt Spring Flowers by Tali - 401 Beaver Point Rd.
- Stowel Lake Farm - 109 Reynolds Rd.
- Salty Botanicals and Gifts - 146 Meyer Rd.
- The Quarry Farm - 190 Jasper Rd.
- 2823 Fulford-Ganges Rd.

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