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Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021

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PHOTO BY NANCY JOHNSON

LET THE FESTIVAL BEGIN: Attending the Festival of Trees ribbon-snipping event at the Harbour House Hotel lobby are some of the many participants. From left are Cora Platz of the Salt Spring Island Harvest Food Bank, Cherie Geavreau from Copper Kettle Community Partnership, Mollie Colson from Friends of Kenya, Jewel Eldstrom of Copper Kettle, RCMP Const. Hardip Gill on the stairs, RCMP Const. Felix Charette-Thibault, Lynda Turner from Friends of Kenya and the main organizer, and RCMP Corp. Matthew Crist. The event sees people place food bank donations under the decorated tree of their choice, or provide cash donations to the Copper Kettle, daily until Jan. 3. Last year the popular annual festival could not be held due to COVID-19.

TRANSPORTATION

Road safety attention demanded

St. Mary Lake and Cusheon area residents seek action

BY EMELIE PEACOCK
 DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Residents of two lakeside Salt Spring roads are appealing to the island's transportation commission to do something about their safety concerns, yet local politician Gary Holman said those concerns are "falling on deaf ears" at the provincial level.

Debbi Toole, a 32-year resident of Salt Spring and co-owner of Lakeside Gardens Resort, outlined "grave concerns" on a circa one-kilometre stretch of North End Road from Langs Road to a rope swing on St. Mary Lake.

"They're treacherous curves, it's utilized hugely and . . . differing groups with differing agendas . . . are utilizing that road. And people drive too fast, period," she told the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC) at a Nov. 29 meeting.

Toole recounted a late May collision between a van and a motorcycle where the motorcyclist was taken by helicopter to Vancouver, as well as accidents involving rollovers and vehicles in ditches.

"Some are reported, but the majority are not," Toole said.

ICBC data for 2016 to April 3, 2021 shows six crashes in the stretch of North End Road referenced by Toole. Seven more crashes were reported further down the road, between Acheson and before the North End and Upper Ganges Road four-way stop.

The Tooles need to redo their fence on a yearly basis and a utility pole nearby has been knocked down twice over the past 30 years. Toole recounted a vehicle coming around one particular blind curve in the road, cutting the corner dramatically.

"I was literally within inches of being completely wiped out and had to throw myself over into the ditch, which is not pleasant, because it's blackberried and all the rest of it," she recounted. "I thought, 'Something has to be done about this.'"

The issues are amplified to "mayhem" on hot summer days, Toole said, as people park on an adjacent scree slope and parents, children, teenagers and dogs cross the road to the lake.

"It's a nightmare and it's going to be a disaster if something isn't done."

Toole's warning was echoed in a December 2019 Driftwood story that described how the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) had promised to "review the 60-km/hr zone and sightlines on North End Road to see what safety improvements could be considered."

"Do they have to drive so fast? Will it take an injured pedestrian or worse," stated Susan Worrall in the story, which also noted that safety issues were flagged as far back as 2011, when the Salt Spring Parks and Recreation Commission identified the lake and the North End Road access points as a "red alert area."

A MoTI staffer confirmed to the Driftwood that the ministry is "committed to a review of North End Road," with plans to look at the current speed and consider signage or other safety improvements. The plan is to collect traffic counts and speed data in the spring of 2022.

ROAD SAFETY continued on 2

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Holman: ministry complaints fall on deaf ears



PHOTOS BY EMELIE PEACOCK

At a Nov. 29 meeting, from left, Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission members Aubrey Smith, Peter Meyer and Gary Lehman listen to North End Road resident Debbie Toole outline actions she would like to see taken to reduce road hazards near St. Mary Lake.

ROAD SAFETY

continued from 1

Toole outlined a list of measures she wants to see for that stretch of North End Road, including a no-parking area on the scree slope and enforcement of this rule. The speed limit, currently 60 km/hr, should be reduced and signage needs to go up, she said. Currently there are two signs in the stretch along St. Mary Lake, one in each direction, warning of curves ahead and advising a speed of 40 km/hr in the curves.

White lines need to be maintained better, Toole said, and speed calming measures put in around corners.

Most of the 14 guests attending the SSITC meeting were part of a delegation to discuss another lakeside road. Speaking on behalf of the group, Nomi Davis said residents of Cusheon Lake Road have appealed to an "evolving procession of officials" over the past 30 years to almost no avail.

The 30-km/hr zone which runs the length of Cusheon Lake goes largely unheeded, Davis said, and with a dense residential area parallel to a popular beach, increases in traffic volume and heavy trucks using the route creates safety concerns.

"These all contribute to both the degradation of the road, which further decreases water quality as well as our community's long-held fears of someone, or more beloved pets, being seriously injured or killed," she said.

The road travels through Salt Spring's largest watershed, and the Cusheon Lake Stewardship committee has repeatedly reminded MoTI about pollution caused by vehicle-related runoff.

"Neither MoTI nor other entities that have authority over roads act as if they care or understand the value of the watershed and the drinking water supply," Davis said.

ICBC data from 2016 to April 3, 2021 shows seven crashes in the area: four near the intersection of Cusheon Lake and Stewart roads, and three near the Cusheon Lake and Fulford-Ganges roads intersection.

Citing a Nov. 6 crash and one three years earlier in the same location, Davis called these examples of "systemic ineffectiveness" of the transportation ministry. Having heard of the Bayfield v. British Columbia ruling which found the province partially guilty of failing to take reasonable care in the design of a highway and a median in which a rollover occurred, Davis said "some in our group are now seriously contemplating legal action against MoTI for negligence, both to the watershed and the humans residing in the community."

In addition, Davis brought up the "verbal, physical and emotional abuse" that residents have been subjected to from drivers and which appears to be increasing. She noted there had not been consistent speed limit enforcement on this route.

Davis said actions are needed, starting with the loan of an ICBC speed board and weight restrictions on the road. As well, the delegation wants to see the speed calmed to 40 km/hr for the entire road, while keeping in place the 30-km/hr section that exists, as well as signage pointing out Beddis Road as an alternate route for Ganges and north island traffic. In the future, the group wants to see permanent speed reader boards installed, and traffic calming systems such as speed tables, bumps and rumble strips.

Capital Regional District (CRD) senior manager Karla Campbell told commissioners a report on speed boards will come in the new year.

Responding to the delegations, CRD director Gary Holman and SSITC chair Gayle Baker said immediate actions for both North End and Cusheon Lake roads should involve getting in touch with MoTI and doing walk-arounds with them on those stretches.

The concerns raised by both delegations are an example, Holman said, of how MoTI "doesn't effectively or meaningfully respond."

"This has got to be part of it . . . the public has to advocate to us and us to the MLA and to MoTI. But you look at the experience, and it's not particularly good. And I think, in part, because we're voices in the wilderness," Holman said. "Clearly, complaints from commissioners, elected officials, commissions . . . and that includes MLAs, for the most part appear to be falling on deaf ears."

A more effective way to get a response from the ministry needs to be considered, said Holman, perhaps involving someone with formal professional standing or qualification documenting safety concerns. The question of advocacy to MoTI will be discussed at the next transportation commission meeting in January.

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LOCAL COVID REPORT

Gulf Islands and Southern Vancouver Island

Data released by the BC Centre for Disease Control on Dec. 1 indicates that only two new COVID-19 cases were reported in the Southern Gulf Islands from Nov. 21-27.

The number is the lowest recorded since the beginning of August when there were zero cases. The largest one-week number was 24, reported in the Oct. 10-16 period.

However, Salt Spring's daily case rate per 100,000 between Nov. 26 and Dec. 2 was six, up from four the previous week, indicating the likelihood of more than two cases being on the island in the latter period. The other Gulf Islands have a daily case rate of zero.

Eighty-one per cent of Salt Spring residents aged 12 and over have had at least two COVID vaccinations. For Saturna, Mayne, Pender and Galiano islands that figure is 92 per cent.

Forty-five per cent of Salt Spring residents and 28 per cent on the other Gulf Islands who are aged 70 and older have had a booster shot as of Dec. 2.

Southern Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands COVID-19 case data:

NEW REPORTED COVID-19 CASES

	Week of 10/31 - 11/06	Week of 11/07 - 11/13	Week of 11/14 - 11/20	Week of 11/21 - 11/27
Southern Gulf Islands	13	13	5	2
Saanich Peninsula	9	18	31	28
Greater Victoria	67	49	23	50
Langford to Port Renfrew	23	16	15	22
Duncan Area	48	67	37	48
Chemainus to Nanaimo	4	15	14	26
Total	164	178	125	176

We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe, and happy holiday season.

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DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET
8	0107	0.2	0.7	12	0434	1.7	5.6
	0938	3.7	12.1		1208	3.5	11.5
	WE 1540	2.8	9.2		SU 1934	1.5	4.9
ME 1754	2.9	9.5	DI				
9	0156	0.5	1.6	13	0145	2.3	7.5
	1022	3.7	12.1		0539	2.1	6.9
	TH 1706	2.5	8.2		MO 1234	3.4	11.2
JE 1902	2.6	8.5	LU 2005	1.2	3.9		
10	0246	0.8	2.6	14	0320	2.6	8.5
	1102	3.6	11.8		0650	2.4	7.9
	FR 1812	2.2	7.2		TU 1256	3.3	10.8
VE 2056	2.3	7.5	MA 2034	1.0	3.3		
11	0338	1.2	3.9	15	0425	2.9	9.5
	1137	3.5	11.5		0802	2.7	8.9
	SA 1858	1.9	6.2		WE 1316	3.2	10.5
SA 2331	2.2	7.2	ME 2101	0.8	2.6		

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HOUSING CRISIS

Seabreeze tenants get breathing room

But more time is still needed, says head of Community Services

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Extension of the subject-removal date for the Seabreeze Inne purchase has given current tenants some breathing room, but the extra six weeks may still not be enough time for new homes to be found.

The Lady Minto Hospital Foundation (LMHF), which has a subject-to offer to purchase the motel that began renting rooms with BC Housing support during the COVID-19 pandemic, announced Friday that the foundation's potential possession date has been moved to late February. That means current rentals can continue until Feb. 15, 2022, rather than the originally set date of Dec. 31.

LMHF said in a press release that it continues to collaborate daily with government agencies and service providers on the transition of occupants triggered by the sale of the privately owned motel near Ganges.

However, Salt Spring Island Community Services (SSICS) executive director Rob Grant said he is so far not aware of realistic solutions to secure housing for the approximately 18 displaced tenants.

"That worries me with the tight timeline," Grant said on Sunday. "Feb. 15 is still a very

short timeline, particularly with Christmas in the middle, and organizations such as ours already being short-staffed and very busy."

Grant added that the 2021 homeless count identified 148 individuals on Salt Spring.

"I would like to see if there is a way for people to stay in their Seabreeze homes for now and have a well-planned transition based on a timeline when LMHF actually needs the building vacant for their purposes," Grant continued. "I don't see any major downsides to that option, so I hope it could at least be considered. There may be other options that I am not aware of, but I think the whole community would breathe a sigh of relief if we can land on a solution quickly."

Earlier this fall, when SSICS was unsuccessful in its attempt to purchase the inne with assistance from BC Housing, and it was going to revert to tourist accommodation, LMHF decided to purchase the property for hospital staff housing.

"The option was to let the Seabreeze revert to tourist accommodation, or to try and keep it as a community housing asset," said Roberta Martell, the foundation's executive director. "Increasing the number of rental units will be important to the island and invaluable to the hospital where 31 positions are currently vacant."

She added, "I hope folks understand that the temporary housing operating out of the inne isn't closing because we're buying it, it's closing because it wasn't purchased to

continue as such by either BC Housing or Community Services. We understand that their decision has been to fund a custom-built supportive-housing facility rather than investing in purchasing the Seabreeze to use it as such. For the sake of so many vulnerable people on Salt Spring, we look forward to seeing progress on that project sooner rather than later. Thanks to the current owner for opening up his motel to temporarily house the vulnerable, and for working closely with us to provide time to help facilitate a transition."

LMHF says access to long-term rental housing is imperative for maintaining optimal hospital staffing levels, which is why the organization has made housing a major priority. The Seabreeze's 28 motel rooms will be renovated into 14 to 16 traditional rental apartments, which will be rented by Lady Minto Hospital staff.

The foundation's offer to acquire the Seabreeze Inne is its third housing initiative, along with providing a grant to support rental of a "landing pad" to house newly hired hospital staff, and the creation of an online rental database: the Housing Information Portal or HIPLIST (<https://ladymintofoundation.com/hip>).

LMHF board chair Dave Taylor noted, "Everybody needs a home, full stop. This is a time not for conflict, but for collaboration. This crisis is bringing people together and shining a light on the need for focused coordination on housing."

ISLANDS TRUST

Trustees wrangle over budget strategies

Housing action fails

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Islands Trust Council will float an approximately \$9.2-million budget for 2022, following council's quarterly meeting held last week in Victoria and via Zoom.

The public will be asked for input on the budget before it is passed at a meeting in March and so the final amount could change. But if it doesn't, property taxpayers will see what Salt Spring trustee Peter Grove described as an increase from the previous year that is "dangerously close to five per cent."

"It is just appalling to my mind that we would be seeking a five per cent increase," said Grove, who also chairs council's Financial Planning Committee, which initially proposed a budget that would require a four per cent tax hike.

Increases are attributed to rising staff compensation, election costs for November of 2022, a larger communications budget and other smaller items.

Council chair Peter Luckham pointed out that a number of reductions had been made since the budget-forming process began earlier in the year.

Trustees such as Paul Brent from Saturna Island and Michael Kaile from Bowen were particularly critical of a practice that saw past draws on excess surplus funds keep tax increases artificially low. Kaile pointed to a Trust staff report that said that practice "has been previously flagged by staff as unsustainable."

"Perversely, I actually support

putting this budget out to the general public. Let them see it and let it be damned, as it should be," said Kaile.

Gambier Island trustee Dan Rogers, who is also an Executive Committee member, said he considered the budget to be "very responsible," considering "how the activities of the Trust have become markedly more complex in the last number of years, with climate change and reconciliation, and it overlooks the fact that a lot of the increases have been a response to that and often are funded by grants as opposed to taxes."

He agreed that the Trust could not live off its surplus in perpetuity, but noted those funds were largely leftover requisitions for projects the Trust couldn't deliver on for some reason in the past.

Rogers said he would of course be open to making changes to the budget based on public input.

During a delegation to council on Dec. 1, Mairead Boland of Saturna Island pointed out that asking for public input in February for a budget that will be passed the following month did not make much sense.

Instead, she suggested, trustees should use feedback provided in a survey from February of 2021 to guide their more recent decisions. That survey indicated people did not want a tax increase.

"Why not skip the usual budget survey and use last year's results to guide you?" she asked.

In other Trust Council news, while council agreed to acknowledge the housing and workforce crisis that exists on some islands when trust-

ees met last week, they fell short of requesting the provincial government help create a housing authority or similar body.

Trustees Laura Patrick from Salt Spring and Scott Colbourne from Gabriola had put forth motions hoping to see their colleagues agree to explore a never-before-used part of the Islands Trust Act, but a number of trustees expressed concerns and instead narrowly voted to send the matter to council's regional planning committee for consideration first.

"It is important that Trust Council has declared that a housing equity and workforce shortage crisis exists on many of the islands within the Islands Trust Area," said Patrick. "However, I am disappointed that Trust Council sent the recommendations that the Province of British Columbia develop the necessary mechanisms to create, fund, govern and administer an islands housing authority-type entity that will develop housing solutions . . . to committee for further consideration."

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Islands Trust

GANGES VILLAGE AREA PLAN TASK FORCE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

We are currently seeking applications for two vacant seats on the Ganges Village Area Plan Task Force (the Task Force serves as a Special Project Advisory Planning Commission). To ensure the diverse perspectives and voices that reflect the diversity of the community, women, visible minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (LGBTQ2S+), and others who may contribute to diversity are encouraged to submit their application.

If you are passionate about planning the future of Ganges Village and believe you have the expertise, and experience to serve on the Task Force as described in the Terms of Reference, we invite you to submit an application for the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee's (SSI LTC) consideration. Please review the Project Charter and the Terms of Reference prior to your application, please visit our project webpage for the application. <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/ganges-village-area-plan/>

First review will be held in mid January. Please contact our Islands Trust office if you have any questions.
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LOCAL NEWS

MATTERS

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EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Emergency info outlined



PHOTO BY DAVID PAINE
 Isabella Point residents stranded by a flooded and then damaged road watch the water flow during major flooding on Nov. 15. Questions about where to get accurate, up-to-date information have arisen following the event.

Program coordinator urges use of official sources and local POD program

BY EMELIE PEACOCK
 DRIFTWOOD STAFF

After rainfall deluged Salt Spring Island last month, causing flooding and road closures, some confusion arose as to where to look for the most up-to-date emergency information.

Salt Spring Island's emergency coordinator Charles Nash told the Driftwood that 9-1-1 is always the go-to in case of an emergency happening in front of us. People should also be connected to their local neighbourhood POD program, as well as check official sources for information, starting with the Salt Spring Island Emergency Program, DriveBC and Salt Spring's local authority for emergencies, the Capital Regional District (CRD).

In an emergency, the 9-1-1 dispatch service will connect callers with the right agency, whether it be fire, ambulance or the CRD's emergency program. If phones are not working, people should contact a POD leader.

Salt Spring Island's neighbourhood POD program has over 50 PODs and more than 325 POD leaders who distribute information from emergency services to the residents in each group and also relay information back to the CRD.

"If there is an emergency, we will also either call our POD leaders or email our POD leaders. We do have a radio system as well, in case communications go down," Nash said.

PODs get their inspiration from orca family groupings of the same name, Nash said, who are known to be really involved with and look after one another.

Anyone new to this system can private message the Salt Spring Island Emergency Program on Facebook or email ssidepc1@crd.bc.ca with their street address, to find out which POD they belong to and how to get connected.

While resiliency training and meeting with PODs would normally be ongoing, Nash said those activities have been hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the property market surged during the pandemic, many people who moved around the island or into the community may not be aware of the program.

Nash added that the POD pro-

gram is always looking for people to volunteer. For more information, contact ssiepc@crd.bc.ca.

To get general information during weather events such as the recent rainfall, people should check the Salt Spring Island Emergency Program (SSIEP) Facebook page as well as head to the CRD's website (crd.bc.ca) and search for "emergency management." For more information about how to prepare for an emergency, visit www.crd.bc.ca/service/fire-and-emergency-programs/ssi-emergency-program.

People can also sign up for emergency alerts for their area through the Alertable system. People with a smartphone can download the Alertable app and those with smart home devices like Alexa or Google Home can download the Alertable skill. There is also an option to sign up online to receive text messages, phone calls or email alerts. For more information, visit alertable.ca/signup.

DriveBC.ca is the definitive authority on roads and is updated by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI), yet the website is not always completely up-to-date for Salt Spring as seen by the recent rainfall event. Nash said the SSIEP also provides updates on road openings and closures on their Facebook page and through the POD network when they get them.

The agencies and leaders involved in responding to the Nov. 14 and 15 flooding will be doing a debrief, Nash said, to look at lessons learned.

The weather event, which caused around two weeks of road closures and repairs, was also a topic of discussion at a Nov. 29 Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC) meeting.

Salt Spring CRD director Gary Holman said as with many emergencies, communication was the most difficult issue. Information was flying around Facebook, people were moving barriers on closed roads to get through and there was other kinds of confusion.

"The emergency program was doing their best to clarify that," and the debrief will consider communications, he said.

SSITC chair Gayle Baker said "communication wasn't what it should be," and suggested the topic be included at an upcoming commission meeting.

Commission member Aubrey Smith said the recent event showed that Emcon Services, the contractor for road repairs on Salt Spring, was "under-resourced" and lacked decent detour signs and barriers for road closures.

"We need to ask them why that happened and what the procedures were, what the action plan was, and to make sure that they are resourced in the right way at the depot here," he said.

"In all the matters that I've dealt with with Emcon, they are under-resourced. They just don't have the equipment to repair roads properly and they certainly don't have the things that were needed the other day," Smith added.

Emcon resourcing is something that would need to be worked on with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Holman said, adding that he will bring up the topic in a meeting with Saanich North and the Islands MLA Adam Olsen and a staff member from MoTI in December.



CHARLES NASH

Capital Regional District



Fernwood and Highland Water Service Commission

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Ensuring that public health and safety protocols are followed, a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting will be held. There will be limited capacity at the venue with a maximum of 10 people in-person, including members of the Commission and staff.

Pursuant to Bylaw No. 3911 (Fernwood and Highland Water Service Commission Bylaw No. 1, 2015), residents within the Highland and Fernwood Water Local Service Area are invited to attend:

Fernwood and Highland Water Service Commission Annual General Meeting

Date: Thursday January 13, 2022

Time: 10:00 am

Place: Creekside Meeting Room
 108-121 McPhillips Ave, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2T5

The electronic Zoom link will be provided on the first page of the agenda package posted to the CRD website: www.crd.bc.ca four days prior to the meeting.

Committee Membership Opportunity

Pursuant to Bylaw No. 3911, real property owners or residents in the Fernwood and Highland Water Service Area are invited to nominate themselves or another real property owner or resident who is prepared to represent the Local Service Area to stand on the committee for a two (2) year term commencing January 1, 2022.

Total membership on the committee is four plus the Electoral Area Director (three members resident electors; and one member may be a resident elector of the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area). There are two positions expiring December 31, 2021.

Nomination Instructions

When submitting your nomination, please include the committee name in the subject line, your full-name, telephone number and residential address along with the nominee's full-name, telephone number and residential address. Nominations may be submitted at the meeting for members to stand on the committee for the following term.

Bylaw No. 3911 is available for viewing on the CRD website at www.crd.bc.ca

Any questions about this matter should be directed to Shayla Burnham, Committee Clerk, Salt Spring Island Parks and Recreation: 250.538.4304 or email: sburnham@crd.bc.ca

Personal information collected is in accordance with s.26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, for the purpose of administering the Fernwood and Highland Water Service Commission nominations. Personal information submitted will be kept confidential, and used only for the purpose for which that information was collected.

FOREST ECOLOGY

Fire prevention research ignited

Maxwell Lake watershed benefits from grant funds

BY EMELIE PEACOCK

DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring will soon see groundbreaking research and interventions for fire risk and resilience in one of its most important watersheds, as a Transition Salt Spring project has secured \$100,000 in federal funding and other support.

The Maxwell Lake watershed will be the site of a collaborative project involving researchers from multiple universities, Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue, North Salt Spring Waterworks District (NSSWD), Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society (SSIWPS) and the Salt Spring Island Conservancy (SSIC). The project is being funded by a \$100,000 commitment from Environment and Climate Change Canada's EcoAction Fund, \$25,000 from a private donor on the island and work-in-kind offered by NSSWD.

Ruth Waldick, a research scientist who heads up climate action plan implementation with Transition Salt Spring, said the project will start with experts in fire ecology, forestry and biology walking the land of the just over one-square-kilometre watershed. They will collect qualitative and quantitative information from different parts of the watershed, creating a database and maps to identify ideal areas to receive treatment.

While the community has done very well protecting large swaths of second-growth forest around Maxwell Lake, Waldick explained that logging on the Gulf Islands left behind "legacy fuel loads on the ground and forests that were not healthy." These second-growth forests have many trees of the same age planted too densely together, not thriving, and a lack of healthy vegetation growing in the understory, the area of the forest between the forest floor and the canopy.

A study done over 10 years ago found there was extreme fire risk in the watershed, due to fuels on the ground. If the forests have been functioning as they should, Waldick said, ideally these fuels would have decomposed and no longer pose a fire risk. Part of the project will be a re-assessment of this risk.

Experts from SFU and UBC, as well as Washington and Oregon universities where fires and heat domes have been affecting their forests for longer and with higher intensity, will be consulted on various options for treating the forest to reduce fire risk and build resilience. This will also include connecting with fire stewards from the WSÁNEC community, for "insights and advice on how they historically and traditionally have used fire to manage fuel loads and also to enhance the health of these ecological systems," Waldick said.

Treatments could include green fire breaks or berms or recovering the understory using fencing.

"We want to identify those areas that look like they would be a place where a fire could gain ground, and then to identify potential treatments that could be done to mitigate that," Waldick said.

The project will be the first research of its kind on fire risk and mitigation strategies in the Gulf Islands' unique forest ecosystem, and groups from other Gulf Islands will also be involved.

Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems are not uniform throughout and the watershed area itself contains a lot of biodiversity, as well as multiple "ecological communities," Waldick explained. These include Garry oak meadows, forested areas with coastal Douglas-fir and other species such as hemlock, arbutus forests and areas with western red cedar.

"From our perspective, as a model for this



PHOTO BY PIERRE MINEAU

Ruth Waldick of Transition Salt Spring and North Salt Spring Waterworks District trustee Gary Gagné on a walk-about at the Maxwell Lake watershed last week. A fire risk and resilience project will soon get underway in the area thanks to an EcoAction program grant from the federal government, a major private donation and work-in-kind from the NSSWD.

project it's excellent," Waldick said, as the team is able to look at "fuel loads on the ground, canopy and subcanopy structure" as well as forest health, fire risk and biodiversity in multiple ecological communities. The project and the treatments cannot be done in a one-size-fits-all approach, as each area may respond differently to different treatments.

A large part of the work will be restoration and looking at natural techniques to help forests recover. When in a healthy state, Waldick explained, forests ward off fire risk and also ensure watershed health by, among other functions, cooling air temperatures, growing naturally fire-resistant plants, helping water infiltrate the ground and replenish groundwater supply, warding off landslides and flash floods.

"In order to be resilient . . . in the future, we need to restore some of the natural functioning in these systems so that they are not going to be vulnerable to fire that could enter the forest," she said.

Captain Mitchell Sherrin with the fire department said human activity is behind the vast majority of wildfires on the island, with the main causes backyard burns get out of control or campfires that are unattended or improperly managed. The fire department will be involved, Sherrin said, in education events and developing educational material that could come from this project.

"If a forest fire wiped through there, it would be a major, major disaster for Salt Spring, wiping out at least 40 per cent of our water supply for many, many years," said NSSWD trustee Gary Gagné.

While fire is a natural process in a forest, without trees to store rainfall, all of the ash and debris left by the fire could get washed into the lake during heavy rainfall. The debris and warming temperatures would result in eutrophication, Waldick explained, and potential cyanobacterial, or algal, blooms in the lake.

"It's a long-term problem," Gagné explained, as the underbrush takes years to build up, "and it would really, really devastate this island because we don't have enough water."

Right now, everything south of the Country Grocer complex is supplied by Maxwell Lake, he said, and the system is set up to be able to feed water out of Maxwell Lake if the supply from St. Mary Lake is disrupted but not vice versa.

Transition Salt Spring will turn to the partners who own or protect most of the land in the watershed to see which actions can be taken. By the end of 2022, Waldick said the hope is to have community members — arborists, landscapers, foresters — implement the treatments.

The project is part of Transition Salt Spring's overall goal to seek out clear, scientifically based actions people can take to reduce impacts of climate change, Waldick said. Information gleaned from the project will go out to the community in real time, she added, so that people can take action on their own properties where the vast majority of Salt Spring's forests are located.

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Capital Regional District

CRD

Cedars of Tuam Service Commission

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Ensuring that public health and safety protocols are followed, a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting will be held. There will be limited capacity at the venue with a maximum of 10 people in-person, including members of the Commission and staff.

Pursuant to Bylaw No. 3055 (Cedars of Tuam Water Service Commission Bylaw No. 1, 2003) residents within the Cedars of Tuam Local Water Service Area are invited to attend:

Cedars of Tuam Local Water Service Commission Annual General Meeting

Date: Friday, January 14, 2022

Time: 10:00 am

Place: Creekside Meeting Room

108-121 McPhillips Ave, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2T5

The electronic Zoom link will be provided on the first page of the agenda package posted to the CRD website: www.crd.bc.ca four days prior to the meeting.

Committee Membership Opportunity

Pursuant to Bylaw No. 3055, real property owners or residents in the Cedars of Tuam Local Water Service Area are invited to nominate themselves or another real property owner or resident who is prepared to represent the Local Service Area to stand on the committee for a two (2) year term commencing January 1, 2022.

Total membership on the committee is two plus the Electoral Area Director (one member must be an owner of real property; and one member may be a resident). There are two positions expiring December 31, 2021.

Nomination Instructions

When submitting your nomination, please include the committee name in the subject line, your full-name, telephone number and residential address along with the nominee's full-name, telephone number and residential address. Nominations may be submitted at the meeting for members to stand on the committee for the following term.

Bylaw No. 3055 is available for viewing on the CRD website at www.crd.bc.ca

Any questions about this matter should be directed to Shayla Burnham, Committee Clerk, Salt Spring Island Parks and Recreation: 250.538.4304 or email: sburnham@crd.bc.ca

Personal information collected is in accordance with s.26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, for the purpose of administering the Cedars of Tuam Water Services Commission nominations. Personal information submitted will be kept confidential, and used only for the purpose for which that information was collected.

OPINION

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

2021 BCYCA Awards
 Gold - Best All Round (for circulation Category C)



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EDITORIAL

Find your POD

Not having information when you need it most can be frightening.

Racing around the internet refreshing multiple websites and asking your neighbours on Facebook for updates can be disconcerting and time consuming. Doing all of this while water is rushing over roads in a deluge like we saw on Nov. 15 is not ideal.

Luckily, for people living here there is already a tried and tested network of Salt Spring Islanders organized as the killer whales are into neighbourhood PODs. These groups put official information out to their neighbours as soon as they get it, and relay back up the chain what's happening on the ground. PODs are also part of a radio system, in case telephone and internet communications go down.

THE ISSUE: Getting emergency information

WE SAY: Get connected before disaster strikes

If finding your POD inspired by cute orca families lulls you into a false sense of security, you can also remember the program as P.O.D. "Prepare or Die," as some community members have dubbed it. Not much grey area there.

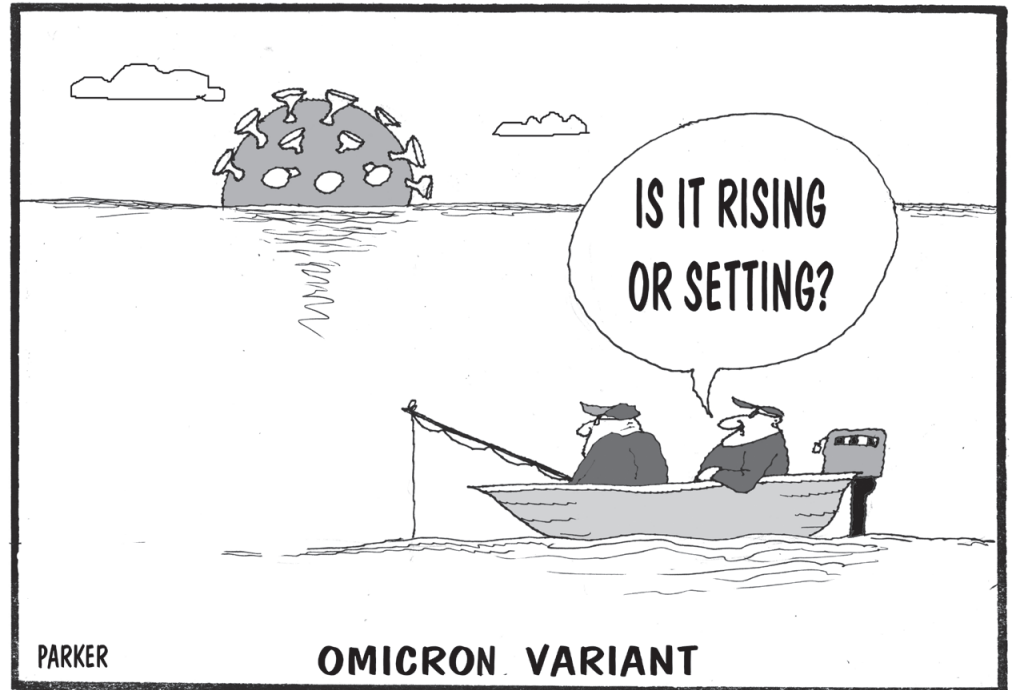
You can connect to your neighbourhood POD by private messaging the Salt Spring Island Emergency Program (SSIEP) on Facebook or emailing Ssidepc1@crd.bc.ca with your street address.

Social media is a great source for unverified observations. As an Isabella Point Road resident told us during the flooding, a local Facebook group (SSI Road & Ferry Report) provided information and solace as she observed the dramatic effect of heavy rainfall in her neighbourhood.

Yet with multiple observations and opinions circling on social media, it is best practice to head to an official source first, which for Salt Spring is the SSIEP Facebook page and crd.bc.ca.

Another emergency information tool is Alertable, which you can add to your smartphones as an app or to your smart home devices as a skill. People can also sign up online for text, call or email alerts at alertable.ca.

As with all emergencies, information was an issue during the November rains. So we'll also be eager to hear what comes out of a debrief officials will be having on the response.



PARKER

OMICRON VARIANT

Dangerous rezoning planned

BY MAXINE LEICHTER

Ever wonder why we have zoning bylaws? It's an important question. The rural character of your neighbourhood, the privacy you enjoy, and perhaps even the quality and quantity of your water depend on the number of dwellings that are allowed per lot.

I recommend you take a careful look at what is allowed next door to you. There could be many changes as a result of decisions taken at the Nov. 9 meeting of the Local Trust Committee.

In 2017, then trustees suspended enforcement of illegal dwellings on Salt Spring unless there are more than one per lot. In 2020, that policy was expanded by current trustees to cover all illegal dwellings, but only as an emergency pandemic measure. Now, trustees have extended that temporary measure "until there are safe, secure, appropriate housing options that are affordable for all demographics and household types in perpetuity."

Exceptions will be made if there is a health, safety or environmental threat, but even then, no action

VIEWPOINT

will be taken unless someone complains. And as everyone knows, most people are reluctant to complain about their neighbours because they don't want conflict.

It has long been a Salt Spring tradition to rent out questionable, non-code-compliant structures. Several years ago, a local realtor wrote a blog that included this: "The vast majority of suites on Salt Spring are illegal suites. I personally have been in hundreds of them and some are nice and some are not. Some are dank dark fire traps I would not let my dog sleep in."

One would think that a non-code-compliant dwelling would automatically be considered a safety threat. That is the reason we have a building code. Such buildings can be a potential fire threat to residents and the neighbourhood.

The non-enforcement policy can only be changed at a local Trust committee meeting, which currently seems very unlikely. But change is still possible if, for example, new trustees

are elected. Unfortunately, that is not the case with zoning changes.

Trustees are now proposing bylaw changes that would allow "accessory dwellings" such as cottages and in-house suites in ALL zones on Salt Spring. This is particularly dangerous because zoning stays with the land and is difficult to undo. Once people have a right to develop, they don't want it taken away. And we don't yet know how many "accessory dwellings" will be allowed in each zone.

Just imagine what could end up next door to you when this zoning change is coupled with the non-enforcement policy. Write to our local trustees and let them know that such a change of zoning is unacceptable, especially on an island with limited resources and services, and where rural character is supposed to be protected.

Yes, we need affordable housing, but it must be safe and it must comply with our official community plan. This can be provided by zoning for more purpose-built subsidized housing, like the 100 plus we already have and many more being planned.

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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Do you know what emergency program POD you belong to? Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Should BC Ferries be doing more to address Route 6 congestion?
 NO YES
 23 246

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: }

"It's a nightmare and it's going to be a disaster if something isn't done."

DEBBI TOOLE, ON NORTH END ROAD SAFETY ISSUES

SALT SPRING SAYS

WE ASKED:

Are you happy with the ferry service right now?

DALTON WOOLCOCK



Recently I was almost left behind because the ferry left early, but other than that the service is fairly good.

ANDREA HOWELL



We're homebodies and don't take the ferry much. We live on the road to the Vesuvius ferry and my only ferry-related complaint is that the road is getting busier again with ferry traffic.

JIM GARRETT



We need a bigger capacity on the Vesuvius ferry. Not only in summer but year-round.

GILLIAN MCCONNELL



The Queen of Cumberland takes longer to load, so it's consistently half an hour late. I understand that ferries need maintenance, so maybe they can adjust the time table to make planning easier?

JOHN HOBBS



The ferry in Vesuvius is always backed up nowadays. We need a bigger ferry, or two smaller ones.

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

Punished

Kudos to the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation (LMHF) for stepping up to accomplish two important goals for the Salt Spring community by bidding on the Seabreeze Inne.

The foundation waited to make an offer until the year-long attempt by Salt Spring Community Services to partner with BC Housing to purchase the property had failed.

By moving quickly, the foundation forestalled the property being gobbled up by commercial interests that certainly would have turned the inne into more tourist accommodations. Instead, if all goes well, the foundation will be taking huge strides towards filling critical hospital staffing vacancies by providing the critical housing piece that currently is missing.

Yet in this "no good deed goes unpunished" world, the fingers

of blame for the displacement of the current low-income and at-risk denizens of the Seabreeze appear to be pointed squarely at LMHF. This makes no sense in the real world.

Surely it is Salt Spring Community Services' actual job to find housing for these folks and they have had quite a bit of time to formulate Game Plan B should their desired Seabreeze purchase not materialize. It feels a bit like gaslighting to me to now cast shade on the swift, decisive and community-supporting actions of the LMHF.

Unfortunately, it is the Salt Spring way is it not, that tenants, often long-term ones, get evicted by homeowners exercising their right to sell their properties. This frequent tenant disruption is rarely pretty but should surprise absolutely no one.

In this case, it is frustrating that neither BC Housing nor Salt Spring Community Services

have formulated a concrete plan for what's next for the current Seabreeze dwellers being displaced through no fault of their own. This freight train has been bearing down on Community Services for quite some time, so it seems only fair for them to shoulder the weight of the crash and clean up the mess.

The fact is that the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation is on track to score a significant win for health-care services and medical housing on our island, especially important in the age of COVID. If the purchase is finalized after due diligence is done, I cannot be the only senior rooting loudly for LMHF to succeed.

ANNE PALMER,
SALT SPRING

People too

The Dec. 1 Driftwood contained a Viewpoint and a letter

that were negative about the possibility of a project named The Vortex being built on the site of the old Fulford Inn.

Of course both writers neglected to mention that there has been an establishment on that exact spot since before 1900 and, prior to its final demolition in 2015, the Fulford Inn had been a popular gathering place for locals and others who came to enjoy the food, the welcoming atmosphere and the live music. Certainly the estuary needs protection, that's a given, but 120 years of businesses operating on that property must also be considered.

Salt Spring is not only about the environment, it's also about the people who live and contribute here. Surely a compromise is possible and much needed.

MARK PERRY,
SALT SPRING

MORE LETTERS continued on 8

Two-vessel service a suggested fix for Route 6

BY D.G. COURTNEY

For those of us that use Route 6 between Vesuvius Bay to Crofton on a regular basis, and the residents of Chaplin Street in Crofton, the answer is unequivocal: there is insufficient capacity.

A recent letter from BC Ferries (BCF) Customer Relations on behalf of CEO Mark Collins stated that BCF did not expect ridership to recover for the next two to three years because of the effects of the pandemic on business. The letter also stated that they anticipate that the MV Quinsam (vehicle capacity 63), which will be redeployed from the Nanaimo to Gabriola Island route in the spring of 2022 to Route 6, will serve capacity demand adequately until 2035 when the ship's useful service life is complete at approximately 55 years of age.

The above two comments by BCF management are patently unreasonable given the current state of ridership on Route 6.

Actual BCF data repudiates their own comments. From July through October of this year ridership is up close to 19 per cent from the same period in 2019. There was a definite uptick in ridership in June when residents began to travel once again and visiting tourists returned. The current building boom has kept all our suppliers and trades busy going back and forth. The Bowen Queen with a capacity of 63 vehicles experienced overloads on a regular basis. One to two-sailing waits with vehicles lined up on Chaplin Street to the turn-off onto Crofton Road were not uncommon. On the Vesuvius Bay side were one to two-sailing waits with traffic backed up to Sunset Drive. Generally in the summer months, Mondays and Thursdays are colossal vehicle gridlock nightmares. Just ask one of our BCF terminal marshalls who take the constant verbal abuse over the under-capacity situation. They are doing their best with the tools provided.

I think everyone who is familiar with and uses Route 6 on a regular basis appreciated last week's "Community fed up with Quinsam" Driftwood piece. Hats off to ferry advisory committee chair Harold Swierenga and chamber of com-

merce president Darryl Martin for disclosing some of the Route 6 issues. The current situation is intolerable on Route 6.

I have a proposed solution for Route 6. Take the MV Quinsam and MV Quinsita and run them on the hour from each terminal. With a turn-around time of approximately 30 min at each terminal, this service should rival the on-time performance of the British and German rail services.

In so doing you provide immediate relief to ferry traffic gridlock at both ferry terminals. However, the silver lining might be that Fulford ferry traffic will be mitigated by north end residents choosing to use the Vesuvius Bay terminal rather than Fulford to access southern Vancouver Island. Having to be at the Fulford terminal one hour and 15 minutes prior to be assured of travel, after driving 30 minutes from the north end, would make it an easy call for most. The return of showing up 30 minutes prior to the scheduled time at Vesuvius Bay terminal without a sailing wait would be a distinct possibility with two ships running. The Town of Crofton will potentially have Chaplin Street returned as a thoroughfare instead of being used as a parking lot for BCF. It's a win-win situation for all three terminals by mitigating traffic congestion and relief to all residents who live near a ferry terminal. With the new Cowichan hospital opening in 2026 and a 10-minute drive from the Crofton terminal, ridership will only continue to grow for this and the other amenities the Big Island has to offer. It's interesting to note that ridership on the Fulford ferry is down by .06 per cent from July through October of 2021 compared to the same time frame in 2019. The migration to travel from the Vesuvius Bay terminal seems to have begun already. If anyone would like to repudiate my data, just ask one of our dump truck operators on your next crossing on how much productive time they lose to ferry waits on a daily basis. Darryl Martin alluded to this in his comments last week.

INDEPTH

For those who come from a contrarian point view and say that this would be extremely costly for BCF, here are a couple of little known facts:

- Route 6 Vesuvius Bay – Crofton is the most cost-effective route in the inter-island system, subsidized at only \$205 per capita per year. (All smaller routes within the ferry system are subsidized.)

- Route 19 Nanaimo – Gabriola is subsidized at \$1,220 per capita per year. But here's the thing: Route 19 is receiving two new Island Class eco-ferries, which will incur terminal upgrades for the spring of 2022, providing a two-ferry service for Gabriola residents. Each ferry cost approximately \$50 million.

Equally interesting, the distance on both Routes 6 and 19 is three miles and Gabriola residents pay approximately \$9.50 less per crossing. Hmm, it's either good negotiating skills or karma on behalf of the elected officials in both Nanaimo and on Gabriola Island. Hats off to them.

Now if you're still feeling a little contrarian about an upgraded two-vessel service on Route 6, using two fully depreciated 40-year-old vessels, consider this:

- Route 5 – Southern Gulf Islands Route is subsidized at \$4,910 per capita per year. Route 5 is slated to receive the latest Salish Class vessel — the Salish Heron — in the spring of 2023. The Salish Heron, capacity 138 vehicles, cost \$95 million. Another hmmm? However, BCF CEO Mark Collins advises the Southern Gulf Islands residents that sailing waits will be a thing of the past. Hats off to our friends and families over there as well, well done!

I believe the way forward is to campaign BC Ferries for a two-vessel service on Route 6.

Email BCF CEO Mark Collins – mark.collins@bcferries.com and cc to CRD director Gary Holman – ssidirector@crd.bc.ca with a subject line of "The Fix For Route 6."

The main body of the text should politely request a two-ferry service on Route 6 for the spring of 2022 to end traffic gridlock at Vesuvius Bay, Crofton and Fulford Harbour terminals. Thank you! (Please keep your comments civil).

Rants + ROSES

Roses

A huge bunch of roses to the caring people who helped me after my fall on Nov. 25. So much compassion was shown in helping me with my injuries and calling the ambulance right away. It was there immediately with two wonderful attendants. My care in the hospital was also the best. Things could have been so much worse. Salt Spring has again shown us why we live here. *Mary Fraser*

A rose to all property owners who keep their culverts clear. In case you didn't know, it is your responsibility to keep culverts unclogged.

I send 2,021 poppies to Legion president Tom Woods and his team for planning and delivering a memorable Remembrance Day ceremony on a rainy COVID Nov. 11. *Ken Lee*

I would like to thank Emcon for the well-timed road maintenance of cleaning out of many of the ditches that parallel our main roads before the heavy rain fell. It made a difference. *Jean Gelwicks*

A big bouquet of red roses to our ambulance crew who swept the street in front of the ambulance station to remove the rubble left by the big storm flooding the ditches.

A fragrance of flowers for the Country Grocer, its van and especially its driver for her patience, organization and good will in taking van loads of Meadowbrook passengers to ArtSpring and other events around the island. We otherwise would not likely be out at night! *Jean Elder*

A huge bouquet of roses to the Salt Spring Island Foundation. Their generous funding allowed us to install 13 laptops and a laptop safe into a Social Studies classroom at GISS with the goal of supporting student learning. *Rachel FitzZaland*

Roses to the kind and lovely person, or persons, who put gravel on the path between Sunnyside and South Ridge. Thank you for keeping us safe! *Marlyn Horsdal*

MORE LETTERS

continued from 7

Consequences to choice

In response to Daniel Leonard's "Gay man compares two forms of discrimination" piece in last week's Driftwood, as far as I know, the state of homosexuality is not a choice. Those who are homosexual don't choose to be homosexual; they have no choice. Antivaxxers, on the other hand, choose not to vaccinate. Hence, this is an entirely false comparison.

All choices have consequences. Accept yours. With regard to the writer's comment "What society do we have if we coerce people into having medical procedures they do not want?" Oh please! Having your tonsils cut out or kidney removed is a medical procedure. A vaccination is not a medical procedure. And even if you defined it to be such, there's a long history of such mandatory "medical procedures" that have benefitted human society in incalculable ways: Billions of people can thank vaccinations against polio, diphtheria, smallpox, cholera, etc. for being alive and well today.

MIKE CHIN,
SALT SPRING

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ARTSPRING

Howard Jang takes helm of island arts centre

Salt Spring Island resident brings extensive and varied background to ArtSpring leadership position

SUBMITTED BY ARTSPRING

The board of the Island Arts Centre Society is very happy to announce the appointment of Salt Spring Island resident Howard Jang as ArtSpring's next executive and artistic director (EAD).

Jang is a senior arts and cultural leader with over 30 years' experience running large arts organizations in Canada. He will assume this position in early January 2022, taking over from cur-

rent executive and artistic director Cicela Månsson.

Society president Walter Stewart notes that the search for a new EAD attracted applications from across North America and Europe.

"We were bound that we were looking for the best candidate regardless of that candidate's location. It was a real joy to discover that the best candidate was right in our midst, having moved to Salt Spring a little more than a year ago. Howard brings an extensive and varied background in arts and arts facility management with a real commitment to the place of the arts in the community. He has an extraordinary network in the arts right across Canada and beyond, which will benefit ArtSpring and its service to Salt Spring Island.

One person we talked to said, 'Anywhere in the arts in Canada, the name Howard Jang is gold.'

Jang started his career in New York City before moving back to Vancouver in 1989, first as orchestra manager of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and then executive director of Ballet BC. Further executive directorships followed at the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and Arts Club Theatre Vancouver. More recently Jang has been director of Simon Fraser University Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, and vice president arts and leadership at the Banff Centre.

"I am thrilled to be joining ArtSpring as their next executive and artistic director, and to build upon the tremendous foundational

and organizational work of Cicela Månsson," said Jang. "When my wife Alexandra and I moved to Salt Spring last summer, we were attracted to the breadth of the artistic and creative community and intuitively felt that ArtSpring would be a home for us. I am looking forward to be working with such a committed team and board of directors, and excited to be given this opportunity to contribute to such a vibrant organization inspired by place."

The board and staff look forward to working with Jang in the post-pandemic renewal of ArtSpring's service to the community, and in driving that service to new levels of support for artistic expression on Salt Spring Island.



PHOTO COURTESY ARTSPRING

Howard Jang, the new artistic and executive director of ArtSpring.

CONCERT PREVIEW

Salt Spring Singers 'rise again' on stage

Lifting people's spirits part of choir's motivation

BY GAIL SJUBERG

DRIFTWOOD STAFF

ArtSpring promises to be a place of overflowing joy this weekend when the Salt Spring Singers choir presents its first concert in two years.

Called We Rise Again, the program will be a mix of seasonal tunes, some inspirational pieces and two that honour those who have lost their lives due to COVID-19.

The concert runs Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. All ticket purchases are in advance through ArtSpring.

As choir director Don Conley's program message explains, "After two years of deprivation, we gather again to celebrate our joy of music and its healing effect. Singing is truly a balm for our times that has the capacity to heal and reinforce the interior beauty that lies in the core of every individual. Choral singing brings unity of soul and heart and reminds us of our deeper true nature."

The Dec. 11-12 performances will appropriately open with the We Rise Again title song by Leon Dubinsky, followed by We Are the World, written by Michael Jackson and Lio-



DON CONLEY

nel Ritchie for the 1985 Live Aid multi-artist concert that raised funds for Ethiopian famine relief. Beautiful pieces called The Ground by Ola Gjeilo and In Remembrance by Jeffery L. Ames will acknowledge the human losses of the pandemic, and the audience will join in for an in-the-round song called Love is Love.

Seasonal music includes the first movement of John Rutter's Gloria, four Spanish carols, an old French carol, Sir Christemas, Jingle Bells, Christmas Angel, the comedic Twelve Days of Christmas Confusion and the Hallelujah, Amen from Handel's Judas Maccabaeus.

In addition to enjoying singing together again, Conley said choir members look forward to being of service to the community.

"I think the choir and myself believe this is something we can do to lift people up at this time, so this is a motivator," he said. "A lot of people have been isolated and haven't been out much, so this is an opportunity to come out and experience something that's live safely."

Conley said precautions will ensure the event is a safe one. Both choir and audience members will wear masks and be

distanced. Audience capacity is still at 50 per cent at ArtSpring this month, and all patrons must show proof of double vaccination.

"All choir members are double vaccinated and some have had boosters," said Conley.

Due to COVID the choir is both smaller than it was and has also been rehearsing a bit differently: in two smaller groups and distanced.

"We had to retrain in how to hear the rest of the choir when we are distanced."

Conley said his singers have risen to the challenge and achieved a beautiful sound.

"They are doing a fantastic job," he said.

Deb Smith is the choir's assistant conductor and James Yee is the accompanist.

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Spirit of Salt Spring



From left, Salt Spring Rotary Club members John Walker and Richard Hannah present Salt Spring Island Community Services executive director Rob Grant with a cheque for \$12,600, representing proceeds from Rotary's Fabric Frenzy fundraising sale held Oct. 22-24. Funds will be used for local youth mental health programs.

The Spirit of Salt Spring is a regular feature in the Driftwood for local businesses and organizations to publicize charitable donations. First-come, first-served basis as space permits.
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Obituaries



Barbara 'Bo' Phelan (nee Southern)
July 22, 1928-Dec. 1, 2021

Barbara 'Bo' Phelan (nee Southern) born on July 22, 1928 in Peterborough Ontario, has died in her 93rd year in Victoria, B.C.

Bo started life as a country girl and, although she travelled far and wide internationally and lived in various cities including Montreal and Toronto, Bo's most enduring love was for life in the countryside, ideally in a cottage beside the water, surrounded by dogs and beauty.

Bo found this dream location on Salt Spring Island BC where she spent the last 30 years of retirement with her husband of 68 years, Daniel 'Dan' Phelan as well as with her grown children, Tracey, Jamie, Darragh and Maureen. Much like Bo herself, some of these were also smitten with the beauty of this coastal region and have put down roots here as well.

Bo enjoyed active early years as a graduate of the University of Toronto and she particularly relished her time at CBC in the early '50's before her life as a wife and mother began in earnest in 1954 when she married Dan while he finished his studies at Cornell University in Scranton NY. Busy, busy years followed, full of the joys and sorrows of family life, beginning with the loss of a first daughter, Mary Julia, who did not survive.

Shortly thereafter the four other children were born and Bo and Dan were swept up in all that family life entails: home making and career pursuits, and, later in life, lovely winters skiing in Ontario and playing tennis, and swimming on Sanibel Island, Fla. These passions continued for Bo well into her 70's and 80's as did her love of making family meals and taking long walks in nature.

Over the last 24 years on the island, Bo especially cherished visits with her only grandchild, Conor Phelan Barry, son of Jamie and Mark Barry. And most recently, Bo received a visit from her only nephew on her side of the family, the only son of her only sister Joan Kieffer (nee Southern), the Rev. Charles 'Chuck' Kieffer of Phoenix, Arizona.

Bo was also part of the large extended West Coast Phelan clan and had life-long friendships with Dan's brother, Peter Patrick Phelan of Vancouver and his sister, Darralyn Bonnor of Victoria as well as their children, Bo's many nieces and nephews, on the Phelan side of the family.

Bo's family would especially like to acknowledge Dr. Ron Reznick, Bo's faithful physician of thirty years and Jean, who listened so patiently whenever Bo called the office. More recently, both Sandi Muller of Heritage Place and Darlene Carpenter Valcourt of Salt Spring Island, have also shared their friendship with Bo and have given her loving care. Finally a special thank you to the staff at Parkwood Court, Victoria, BC, where Bo spent the final months of her life in comfort and peace.

A celebration of Bo's life is planned for sometime in May 2022, in Toronto, Ontario where Bo's ashes will be laid to rest with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. JJ Southern, at Mount Hope Cemetery, Toronto Ontario. Please contact Hayward Funeral Services on Salt Spring for more details by emailing Contact@haywardsfuneral.com or Bo's only son, Darragh by emailing Darragh.p@sympatico.ca

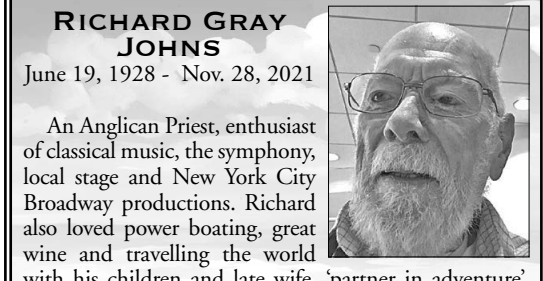
Obituaries

Obituaries

Obituaries

Obituaries

Obituaries



RICHARD GRAY JOHNS
June 19, 1928 - Nov. 28, 2021

An Anglican Priest, enthusiast of classical music, the symphony, local stage and New York City Broadway productions. Richard also loved power boating, great wine and travelling the world with his children and late wife, 'partner in adventure', Yvonne.

Yvonne met Richard 65 years ago when she was a parishioner at his first Church as 'Priest in Charge' in California. Together they spent years with their 4 children as Richard fulfilled a calling to parishes in Nicaragua and Guatemala; the most wonderful years for them both as they grew to love the Latin American culture and especially its people.

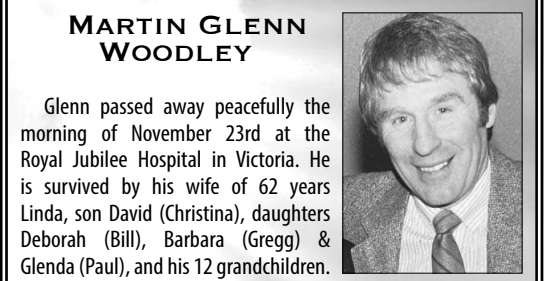
The family then moved to Manhattan where Richard spent 8 years at the head office of the Episcopal Church, until he and Yvonne moved to Toronto to what would end up being 30 years at Church House as Director of Personnel for the Anglican Church of Canada.

Richard and Yvonne loved their weekends at Lake Simcoe navigating the Ontario Locks, and their greatest joy ... becoming Canadian Citizens.

After retirement, the familiarity of the West Coast, Salt Spring Island and All Saints by-the-Sea in Ganges was where they knew they wanted to call HOME. Boating ... a home with ocean views, wonderful friendships, seafood, visits from friends, grown children, grand children, and great grand children became the main stay until Yvonne passed away and Richard moved to Vancouver to be closer to family.

Sadly, Richard has left us after a year in long term care in West Vancouver, but those who knew him well will remember his extraordinary ability as a 'story teller', sharing funny and heartfelt stories of people and travels from his 'life well lived'.

A memorial service for Richard's Celebration of Life will be held at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver, April 2, 2022 10:30am-1:00pm.



MARTIN GLENN WOODLEY

Glenn passed away peacefully the morning of November 23rd at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. He is survived by his wife of 62 years Linda, son David (Christina), daughters Deborah (Bill), Barbara (Gregg) & Glenda (Paul), and his 12 grandchildren.

Glenn lived an outstandingly full life, making the most of everyday. Born in Port Alberni, BC and later moving to Chemainus, where he excelled in sports as an all-star athlete, winning provincial titles in basketball and baseball. Later in life he coached basketball and Little League Baseball. When he wasn't on the court or the diamond he was in the boxing ring, winning a Golden Gloves title at 14.

And then there was golf at his beloved Salt Spring Island Golf Club. Glenn became a club member in 1966; he was a player, tournament volunteer, Junior Golf supporter, coach, ambassador, Grounds Committee and House Committee member, Men's Captain, Club President, and a proud Popo as he'd take time to get all of the grandkids out on the course at every opportunity. He loved to travel for golf and teeing it up at Scotland's St. Andrews Old Course was a life long highlight. He loved History and made sure his travels always included visits to meccas of the past.

It was all fun but not all games. Glenn worked just as hard at academics as he did in sport. He graduated from UVic's Education Faculty and immediately took a position as Principal at Saturna Island Elementary school. Along with starting his career came starting his family of four children before moving to Salt Spring Island in 1964, a move that truly sparked his nearly 40 year teaching career starting with a teaching position at Salt Spring Elementary. While teaching, Glenn earned his Masters of Education in Administration from UVic and enjoyed principalships at all 3 Salt Spring Elementary Schools. It was not uncommon for many a past student to stop Glenn in town to thank him for his direction and caring during their early school years.

He worked passionately to strengthen Salt Spring's community. He sat on the Board of the SSI Foundation, was Chairman of SSI Parks and Recreation for 15 years where, under his leadership and the dedication of fellow islanders like Hal Leighton and Roy Lee, the Commission developed the Fulford playing field for soccer, baseball and softball, the Little League diamond in Ganges, Portlock Park for soccer, tennis, softball and track and field and the commission took over Mahon Hall for the arts.

With never a minute wasted, teaching, coaching, & countless committee & community meetings he still made time to create a farm with his wife in the Cranberry Valley. Land clearing and swamp draining brought hay fields and acreage for beef cattle and a barn for pigs, not to mention his very own rustic driving range. But his vegetable garden was something to behold. Glenn was passionate about his garden and his toiling paid dividends. His corn and hay were award winners at the Fall Fair and he loved to boast over a late summer dinner that "everything on your plate is right off of this farm".

Spanning 82 years, Glenn was an athlete, an academic, a farmer, and a community builder respected by many. He was a kind-hearted man with a gift of honesty, integrity and fairness.

During the last 6 years Glenn quietly dealt with Parkinson's, but never missed his Yoga with Celeste, PD Movement with Anna and training sessions with Leslie. He faced his challenges bravely only to find himself being eased out of the game but Glenn was never the guy you'd want to see benched.

Memorial service will be held at the Community Gospel Church, 147 Vesuvius Bay Rd. On Wednesday, December 15 at 2:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Glenn's name to the SSI Foundation.

Masks and proof of double vaccination are required.

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In Memoriam



Margaret Northeast
(nee Edwards)

June 3, 1939 - Dec. 14, 2017

Lovingly remembered by her family

In Memoriam

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FUNDRAISER

Crash victim needs support

GoFundMe page helps Rudy Hexter

BY EMELIE PEACOCK
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Community members are rallying around a Salt Spring Island man in critical condition after a crash involving his electric motorbike and a vehicle.

Rudy Hexter was flown by helicopter to hospital in Victoria after the Nov. 29 head-on collision, a GoFundMe online fundraiser stated. A local writer, carpenter and teacher of breathwork, meditation and qigong, Hexter is in critical condition and is preparing for further surgeries amid fears that he may lose his right leg.

The near fatal accident resulted in Hexter sustaining a fracture in his left shoulder and severe damage to his right leg, the fundraising page stated. His shoulder has been repaired through surgery, with three months of rehabilita-



PHOTO COURTESY GOFUNDME
Crash victim Rudy Hexter in hospital in Victoria.

tion time ahead. Doctors are looking at options for the damage to his leg, which includes broken and missing bones and a broken knee joint. This could entail at least five to six reconstructive surgeries or amputation.

A Dec. 6 update on the fundraising page stated that Hexter's haemoglobin is slowly stabilizing

after he lost blood at the accident scene.

"Our beloved Rudy faces a long road of recovery," the fundraiser stated, including surgery and rehabilitation for the next year or more or possibly learning to "live and adapt to life without his right leg." The fundraiser, which has so far raised \$44,616 of a \$50,000 goal, will help with costs of medical treatments, temporary accommodations, renovations to make Hexter's home accessible, paying for caregiver support and help with income. The expenses will likely be far higher than the fundraising goal, organizers wrote.

"Rudy is an incredible shining light in our community - all who know him, love him," the fundraiser stated. "His huge warm generous heart and beautiful warrior spirit inspire and uplift everyone around him. Now is the time to show him we are by his side in this time of great adversity and healing."

CHRISTMAS

Santa needs toy donations

Collection boxes in island stores

This year's Santa's Workshop program has seen high demand, and donations are now needed to ensure enough gifts can be provided to island children at Christmas time.

Workshop head elf Wendy Eggertson said new and lightly used, clean toys for children up to age 12 can be donated at collection boxes at West of the Moon, Mouat's Home Hardware, Pharmasave and Country Grocer. Boxes will be on site until Dec. 16.

Cash donations are also appreciated so that new gifts and gift certificates can be purchased. People should contact Eggertson at weggertson@shaw.ca or 250-537-2658 regarding cash donations.

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what's on this week



Wed. Dec. 8	Fri. Dec. 10	Sat. Dec. 11	Sun. Dec. 12	Tue. Dec. 14	Wed. Dec. 15
<p>ACTIVITIES EV Group Holiday Gathering. For EV owners and seriously interested folks. Mateada Cocktail Restaurant in the Creek House complex. 5 to 8 p.m.</p> <p>Thur. Dec. 9 LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Open Mic and Jam. At the Legion. 7 p.m. (Preceded by the Seafood Draw at 5 p.m.)</p> <p>Fri. Dec. 10 LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Buck Dodgers String Band. Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m. Doug and the Buds. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m. (Preceded by the Meat Draw at 5 p.m.)</p>	<p>ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Film Festival. Fulford Hall at 4 p.m. for the first film. See saltspringfilmfestival.com for all the details. Hackergal Day: Women in Technology Panel. Meet and ask live questions to an inspiring online panel of women who are breaking down stereotypes in technology. Geared for ages 12 to 20. Library Program Room. 10 to 10:45 a.m. Contact atrepanier@saltspringlibrary.com to register or to receive a link to attend from home. Amnesty International "Write for Rights" Event. Write letters to support and free unjustly imprisoned people around the globe. At the library. 3 to 5 p.m.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Salt Spring Singers: We Rise Again. Seasonal concert at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m. (Advance tickets only.) Mike and Margo. At Moby's Pub. 7:30 to 11 p.m. Pride Karaoke. Sing solo, a duet, a group, or just cheer everyone on! At the Legion. Doors at 7 p.m. for a 7:30 p.m. start.</p> <p>ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Film Festival. See Friday listing.</p> <p>ONLINE Majik Kids - Magical Stories for Magical Kids! World-wide Listening Party & Book Launch. Salt Spring-based children's book publishing company releases first six stories via www.majikkids.com. 9 to 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Salt Spring Singers: We Rise Again. See Saturday listing, except the concert time is 2 p.m.</p> <p>ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Film Festival. See Friday listing. ART can HELP Event. In-person part of a sale of artwork by Julia Lucich and a fundraiser for Food Banks Canada and Canadian Red Cross, with two-thirds of the price of the piece going to charity. Lions Hall. 2 to 8 p.m. View artwork online at www.julialucichart.com/art-can-help/ Mon. Dec. 13 ACTIVITIES ART can HELP Event. See Sunday listing. Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District Trustees Meeting. At the Ganges fire hall. 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Local Trust Committee. Regular business meeting at Lions Hall. 9:30 a.m. Town hall at 12 noon.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Islands Trust</p> <p>VIA ZOOM Poetry Evening: From Darkness to Light — Nurturing the Urge to Create. A collective of aspiring poets on Salt Spring will lead an evening of shared poetry with an invitation to participants to also share poems dear to their hearts or sprung from their pens. 7 to 8:30 p.m. Register at staroftheseassi@gmail.com for the Zoom link.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT GISS Music Presents: Arcadia. Featuring students from the guitar class, composition class, GISPA music and the GISS jazz combo. ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>VIA ZOOM Check Mates Teen Chess Club. A Salt Spring Public Library event via Zoom where ages 12-18 play world-class chess instructors. 6 to 7 p.m. Contact atrepanier@saltspringlibrary.com for the Zoom link.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>

THE FRITZ CINEMA
 Belfast shows Friday, Dec. 10 through Tuesday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. nightly, plus a 3 p.m. matinee on Sunday. COVID-19 protocols in place.

EXHIBITIONS

- **Artcraft Winter**, a showcase of work by more than 100 Gulf Islands artists, runs at **Mahon Hall** until Dec. 22, plus artwork by **Artists From the Fringe** and a youth arts group in the annex room.
- **Gallery 8** presents its annual **Christmas Show of Small Works** upstairs in the gallery in Grace Point Square through Dec. 31.

EXHIBITIONS

- Ceramic artist **Denys James** holds an open studio on Saturdays, Dec. 11 and 18 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. **182 Welbury Drive.** Phone 250-538-7001 to arrange a visit on other days and times.
- **ART can HELP** sale of work by **Julia Lucich** to benefit Food Banks Canada and the Canadian Red Cross. Online at julialucichart.com/art-can-help/ through December, plus an event at the Lions Hall on Dec. 12 and 13. (See listing above.)
- **Heather Webb** has artwork at **Dragonfly Art Supplies** this month.

EXHIBITIONS

- **Avril Kirby** shows photographic works from her **Conversations With Thomas** series in the **library program room** through December.
- **Salt Spring Painters' Guild** member **Marian Hargrove** exhibits watercolour works in the **Country Grocer café** through December.
- **Salt Spring Island Printmakers** present **Foot Stomping Prints** in the **ArtSpring lobby** until Dec. 16, on Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. only.

**GISS Music Presents: Arcadia
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Wednesday & Thursday, Dec. 15-16, 7:30 p.m.
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CLIMATE ACTION

How do we cope with the challenges we face?

Transition Salt Spring activities recapped

BY DARLENE GAGE

TRANSITION SALT SPRING

There is something changing in the air. Can you feel it?

Rain, heat, smoke.

Fear, division, loss.

It can be overwhelming to experience so much change and upheaval in such a short period of time.

As humans, we are hard-wired to seek out security, and that seems to be in short supply these days.

We all need some hope that things will

get better, that we will manage, that we can adapt to the changes and even thrive (despite or because of them).

Want to know how to reconnect to hope?

Get busy with people you like.

Volunteer your time.

Give money to causes you believe in.

Share your anxieties with people you trust.

Connect with your neighbours.

Lower your consumption on the daily.

Walk or bike when you can. In a forest. By the sea.

Use your voice to push our leaders to wake up and smell yee olde coffee.

Learn from those who've come before, and those whose voices you've not heard before.

It's like exercise, this muscle called 'hope'. It



needs to be used time and again to get stronger.

As the Talmud counsels us, "Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it."

Over here on the climate action end of the work, Transition Salt Spring has been super busy this past year pushing to make sure that some of the most important of the 250 recommendations from our Climate Action Plan are implemented.

While we are the only group on Salt Spring Island fully dedicated to addressing the climate crisis, this work can only be done by working with others. We believe that it's only in collective action that we can actually hope to see results in the time we have left to address the climate crisis.

And it's not always easy -- this working together. We disagree, we get hurt and we hurt each other. We get tired. We lose hope. Then, we try again. We apologize, we rest, we care for each other. And we get busy again. And our hearts are filled.

"How busy?" you ask.

Well, through our Climate Action Coach Program we've helped over 700 residents (in two short months!) access rebates and information about home renovations to save energy and money and reduce emissions. Everything from heat pumps and insulation, to rainwater collection and windows. And in the new year, with incentives to upgrade that old wood stove!

Transition Salt Spring is delivering regular webinars to help us all understand what the coming climate change impacts will be and what it will all mean for us right here at home. This past year alone has seen 10 webinars attended by close to 1,000 people. We make sure there are ongoing social and print media and community outreach tables and materials to accelerate our learning.

Transition is working to restore ecosystems like our new Lake Maxwell watershed project that will help us protect this precious source of water from deepening drought and the increasing risk of forest fires. We will share what we learn with every community in the region that supports Coastal Douglas-fir forests.

Transition Salt Spring facilitates the Climate Action Network that brings local agencies and experts together to set climate priorities, learn and collaborate on new projects. The Lake Maxwell project is the first to spring from this collaboration.

We also support six working groups like the Electric Vehicle Group, the Rainbow Road Community Gardens, and the Native Plant Stewardship Group. You can start your own group any time. And we are here to help.

Transition is working hard to put climate change at the top of the agenda with actions like the Climate Strike Rally and through our advocacy, pushing local and provincial officials to act with much-needed urgency.

But we can't do this alone. Come join us, won't you? Volunteer, donate, learn. We invite you to get busy with us.

Transition Salt Spring has embarked on our annual giving campaign. Our December target is to raise \$25,000 to keep up this important work. There's no better time since a generous island donor is matching every dollar you give until Jan. 2, 2022.

And new this year is our 'Give the Gift of Local Climate Action' program where you can donate on behalf of a friend or family member. Choose that option and we will send them a card to let them know how much you care about them and their future.

As the year comes to a close, and we find time for some reflection, I urge each of you to choose hope. Choose action. Choose community.

On behalf of all of us at Transition Salt Spring, you have our deep gratitude.

One Cool Island is a regular series produced by Transition Salt Spring. Darlene Gage is the TSS programs manager and a local leader in the field of restorative justice. To support our work and learn more: transitionsaltspring.com.

Holiday Story Writing Contest

Write a story of 500 words or less whose topic relates to the Holiday season.

- All Gulf Islands students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 are eligible.
- Stories will be judged on quality of writing, clarity of presentation and originality of theme.
- Winning entries will be published in the Driftwood in December.
- The name, age, address and telephone number of the writer must be written on the back of each entry.
- Send entries to the Driftwood, 241 Fulford-Ganges Rd., Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2V3, email to news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com.
- For more information, 250-537-9933.

Teachers: Classes with the highest participation level are eligible to win a donation of \$100 made on behalf of the class to the charity of their choice!

The deadline for our annual writing contest is Friday, December 10th. Win a Salt Spring Books gift certificate for a story of up to 500 words about the Holiday Season.

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A Time For Thanks

JAN MACPHERSON

During this holiday season we are reminded of how blessed we are to live on this island, in this province and in this country.

To my clients, friends and colleagues in real estate, I continue to enjoy and appreciate working with you especially during these times of immense change.

In 2022 it is my hope that our sense of world community deepens and that we can work together to find creative solutions to address the many challenges ahead.

Peace, Good Will, Prosperity, And Above All Good Health To All!

Jan Macpherson, M.E.S., R.I.(BC) - GOLD AWARD 2020 (VREB)
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2020 RE/MAX PLATINUM AWARD

Marketing

Trust matters: Canadians turn to news outlets for information they need to know

NANCY JOHNSON
PUBLISHER

The results of a new survey by the Toronto-based public relations firm Kaiser & Partners, Inc. has found that Canadians resoundingly view established news outlets as the best source for reliable news and information when compared to social media platforms.

Overall, the survey shows that 39 per cent of Canadians indicated that they consider some sources of information to be less credible today, compared to pre-pandemic. By far, the outlets taking the biggest hit are crowdsourced news platforms and social media.

Content from social media in general is reported as the least credible (73 per cent of Canadians), followed by information conveyed by others in platforms such as Reddit and Quora (45 per cent). When broken down by age, more than three quarters of Canadians aged 55 and older find social media less trustworthy as a result of the pandemic than those between the ages of 35 and 54 (74 per cent) and those between 18 and 34 (66 per cent).

SOURCE: News Media Canada

dgIMEDIA
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Season's Greetings

Advertising Deadline Change

Please note that the **Gulf Islands Driftwood office** will be closed at noon on Fri Dec 24 and all day Mon Dec 27, and will reopen 9am - 4pm on Tuesday, Dec 28.

ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR THE GULF ISLANDS DRIFTWOOD
Wednesday Dec 29 edition will be as follows:
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, NOON

Driftwood
GULF ISLANDS

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