

Driftwood

GULF ISLANDS

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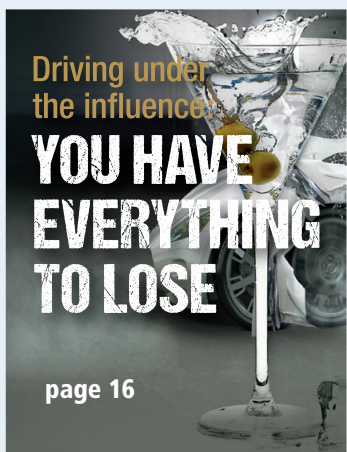


inside:



DRIFTWOOD STORY CONTEST

Holiday Story Contest
winning stories begin on
page 7



Driving under
the influence

YOU HAVE EVERYTHING TO LOSE

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INSERTS:

- Country Grocer
- Home Hardware
- Thrifty Foods
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EARTHQUAKE

Galiano Islanders at epicentre of earthquake

Residents report banging, shaking and rumbling

BY EMELIE PEACOCK
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

One loud bang and then nothing. That's how Wade Chernoff describes an early morning earthquake that woke up Gulf Islanders and was felt as far away as the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

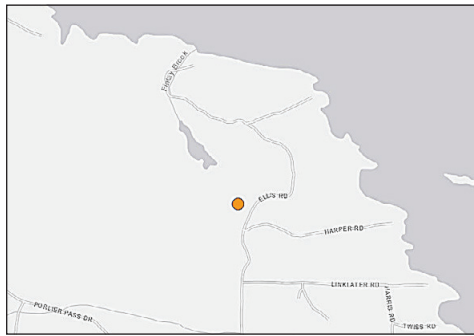
No damage or injuries have been reported from the 3.6 magnitude earthquake that took place around 4:13 a.m. Friday morning. The US Geological Survey (USGS) logged the epicentre of the earthquake 12 kilometres east northeast of Ganges at a depth of 17.3 kilometres.

"I joked when it hit that 'Wow, we must be in the epicentre or something.' It was just a big bang," Chernoff said. "It was just quite an impact . . . just like one sharp explosion almost."

A USGS map shows the epicentre near Ellis Road on Galiano Island, very near Chernoff's home. A few years ago, Chernoff found out he lives close to a fault line that runs from Georgeson Bay in Active Pass across the island to just behind his home and near the golf course. Perhaps the quake happened along this fault line, he said.

Chernoff was dead asleep at the time, and the bang woke both he and his wife Jing Wang. Their cat Weeba was also up and acting strangely.

"Normally he'd be sleeping heavily, but no, he was up and just kept staring in silence just wondering what happened."



US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

US Geological Survey website image showing the epicentre of Friday's earthquake (yellow dot) near Ellis Road on Galiano Island.

Right away Wang knew it had been an earthquake, while Chernoff thought it might have been a tree hitting their house and so went outside to check. Both had experienced earthquakes before with shaking and rattling, yet this one was only a bang not followed by any aftershocks.

Rachelle Hayden was one of the few people awake before the earthquake, owing to her early mornings as owner of the Sturdies Bay Bakery.

"I was actually making myself a coffee and I heard rumbling and it sounded like it was coming my way," she said, describing the sound as a loud one which "literally sounded like the earth was moving."

"I've never experienced an earthquake before, so I really had no idea what was going on . . . and then the house started shaking, and so that's when I clued in," Hayden said.

Her home on Gulf Drive was rattling, rather than swaying, and she could feel the earthquake shaking the ground.

"At that moment I felt like, 'Wow, this is Mother Nature.' And anything can happen and I couldn't control it," Hayden said.

The shaking lasted less than 30 seconds, during which time Hayden said she froze. She didn't have time to think of her emergency plan or of positioning herself in a safer spot in the house.

Ken Kucille, who lives near Trincomali Channel on Galiano, said he was in bed but awake just shortly after 4 a.m. when he heard a rumble.

"I perked my ears up and it was doing a little bit of shaking, and all of a sudden it was like somebody kicked my bed!"

It was a strange feeling, Kucille said, like the bed had been kicked from underneath him.

"There was a definite bang, so I got up and started looking outside to see if something hit the house."

Kucille's daughter, son-in-law and six-year-old twin grandchildren, who live closer to the epicentre, were all awakened by the earthquake. They also experienced shaking for several seconds.

Hayden has since spoken to many people at the bakery, the "epicentre for coffee" on Galiano, she said, an apt joke after the morning's excitement. Some customers told her they slept through the earthquake while others described how rattling sounds woke them up. Household pets also had a diversity of experiences, with some people's dogs barking like crazy and others' cats sleeping right through it.

Many who posted online about the earthquake confirm they experienced a loud bang, around 4:13 a.m., with some reporting hearing rumbling before the bang. Others reported their homes shook and windows rattled. By Monday a total of 1,005 people had reported to the USGS that they felt the quake, with responses from as far away as Sooke, Sechelt and Aldergrove.

Salt Spring geologist Hugh Graham noted the USGS website stated there were two separate shocks, one minute apart, with the first at a depth of 20 kilometres and the second at a 10 kilometre depth and a few kilometres to the north-west.

"This sounds like a shallow crustal fault roughly parallel to the coast and totally unrelated to any big climax subduction thrust fault," he noted by email.

Earthquakes are very common in Western Canada, with over 1,000 per year occurring in the region, according to Natural Resources Canada. The most earthquake prone area of the country is the Pacific Coast. In the offshore area west of Vancouver Island alone there have been more than 100 earthquakes of magnitude five or higher in the last 70 years.

"Part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, the concentration of earthquakes along the west coast is related to the presence of active faults, or breaks, in the earth's crust," NRC stated.

The seismic energy of earthquakes is measured on the Richter magnitude scale from zero to 10 plus. A 3.6 magnitude quake is generally felt yet rarely causes damage.

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Season's Greetings
&
Thank You
to all our Customers
and Staff this
Holiday Season

CELL TOWER

Trust urges Rogers to meet with residents

Channel Ridge cell tower process continues

BY EMELIE PEACOCK
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The debate around a proposed emergency and wireless communications tower is not over, as local politicians hope to get Rogers and concerned residents near Channel Ridge to meet.

The joint Rogers Communications and Capital Region Emergency Service Telecommunications (CREST) tower proposal has gone through a federal approval process and was also given a statement of concurrence by the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee (LTC) in July. Yet concerns from residents which arose after the letter of concurrence was issued must be addressed, said chair of the LTC Peter Luckham.

Most of the concerns from residents of Canvasback Place, some of whom live within 40 to 100 metres of the proposed 40-metre tower, "came late into the decision making, and that's unfortunate, but is also indicative that folks in the neighbourhood didn't hear about it," Luckham said.

The LTC was advised that Rogers undertook public consultation, yet local resident Julian Clark called the consultation "woefully inadequate" and trustee Laura Patrick voted against issuing the letter of concurrence. Trustee Peter Grove has also since raised concerns that the tower application may have been misleading and due process on consultation may not have been followed.

"We are concerned about the points raised by the residents . . . it seems apparent to the LTC that more communication is necessary with neighbouring property owners regarding the placement of the telecommunications facility," Luckham wrote in a letter to consulting firm Cypress Land Services, which works with Rogers.

Luckham said he is now waiting to hear back on this request to have Cypress host a public meeting to answer questions around "fulfillment of the requirement to consult" and minimizing impacts of the placement of the tower.

Luckham clarified that at the time they issued the letter of concurrence, Salt Spring's LTC did not have a policy on the siting and use of telecommunications towers. While a

model antenna strategy was developed by the Islands Trust and while neighbouring Galiano Island has their own strategy, Salt Spring had not amended nor adopted the Trust's model strategy. The default consultation procedures of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), the federal body which deals with telecommunications licensing, would apply.

In letters to the LTC, residents said they support the building of a CREST tower on the island. It is the proximity to their homes and it being close to an already existing TELUS communications tower that they oppose. Clark stated that the closest home is 43 metres from the proposed tower site, and there are at least 10 homes within 300 metres of it.

Two of the residents closest to the site, Connie Nichols-Ledger and Frank Ledger, wrote that they fear the effect of radio frequency waves on individuals with medical equipment such as pacemakers, as well as the potential devaluation of their homes should the tower be built. They suggested alternate locations on Channel Ridge which are undeveloped.

Health aspects of antenna sitings are not something within the LTC's ability to decide on, Luckham noted, with standards set by Health Canada.

Luckham said it's important not to create false expectations around what will or will not be done about the tower.

"What we need to do is determine whether or not Rogers is able to answer concerns that have been raised by members of the public to the community's satisfaction," he said.

One future possibility is negotiating the actual siting of the tower, which would happen between landowners Onni Group and Rogers.

The LTC, "if it became apparent that there was a lack of consultation to the community," could also rescind the letter of concurrence, Luckham said. He stressed that it's too early to say, and that this option has not yet been discussed by the LTC.

ISED confirmed that while it's not typically done in these kinds of situations, the LTC can rescind a letter of concurrence.

"If you believe that the LTC based its decision on inaccurate or incomplete information then you may be able to consider this action, but if not then you may have to accept the scenario and consider how things might be handled differently in the future,"



PHOTO COURTESY ISLANDS TRUST/GOOGLE MAPS

A Google Maps image shows the proposed location of a joint Rogers-CREST emergency and wireless communications tower at Channel Ridge.

ISED noted in communication with Islands Trust planners.

A letter of concurrence is seen as the final step of a "fully complete and acceptable consultation," ISED stated, "and the proponents would have the authority to start planning the construction of the facility." During planning the LTC can communicate with the proponent and ask about "possible changes to the structure, location, etc." ISED added, yet the LTC is under no obligation to do so.

Channel Ridge is CREST's second attempt at locating a tower on Salt Spring Island in recent years. The first proposed location at the Salt Spring Legion branch, meant to improve coverage in Ganges, faced strong opposition. CREST was strongly encouraged by the LTC and community members to identify other

locations, Luckham said, and "did a pretty broad sweep of the island to identify locations."

With coverage gaps on the west side of Salt Spring from Vesuvius heading north, the tower is meant to improve emergency communications for CREST, which delivers radio communications to first responder agencies, including Salt Spring Fire Rescue and the BC Ambulance Service.

Partnering with Rogers allows cost savings and cuts down on the number of towers and poles in the visual landscape, CREST's general manager Gordon Horth explained in April. Using the existing TELUS tower was not possible, Horth explained, as it was not adequate structurally to take on the equipment needed by CREST and Rogers.

WEEKLY COVID + CLINIC REPORT

In addition to the BC Centre for Disease Control data outlined in the chart below, newer data indicates five COVID-19 cases on

Salt Spring Island and two on the other Southern Gulf Islands reported between Dec. 10 and 16.

Island Health has now set up a clinic at the south (Park Drive) side of Salt Spring Island Middle School to facilitate vaccination, including booster shots. Clinic hours are currently 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays through Thursdays for people aged 12 and up, and Fridays for ages five to 11, with the schedule subject to change. Boosters are available by appointment at 1-833-838-2323, with first and second doses available for walk-ins.

Eighty-four per cent of Salt Spring residents aged 12 and up have received one dose of vaccine. Eighty-one per cent have received two doses.

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

NEW REPORTED COVID-19 CASES

	Week of 11/14 - 11/20	Week of 11/21 - 11/27	Week of 11/28 - 12/04	Week of 12/05 - 12/11
Southern Gulf Islands	5	2	5	4
Saanich Peninsula	31	28	18	24
Greater Victoria	23	50	51	171
Langford to Port Renfrew	15	22	17	28
Duncan Area	37	48	58	43
Chemainus to Nanaimo	14	26	50	32
Total	125	176	199	302



Islands Trust

2022 Regular Meetings of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee

The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee will be meeting to consider various matters of general business such as applications received, bylaw reviews and meeting notes.

Regular Meetings are scheduled for:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday January 18	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday February 15	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday March 22	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday April 19	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday May 17	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday June 14	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday July 12	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday August 9	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday September 6	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday October 11	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday November 15	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road
Tuesday December 13	9:30 AM	Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road

The proposed meeting agenda is usually available one week prior to the meeting and may be obtained at the Islands Trust office or on our website.

Please note that correspondence received from the public may become part of a meeting agenda that is published online.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/location/salt-spring/>
CONTACT US AT 250-537-9144 OR: ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca

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

Bridging a divide

The Driftwood has received an unprecedented amount of negative feedback about last week's Viewpoint piece from Amanda Spottiswoode.

Many people expressed themselves with strength and cogency. Others merely ranted, and worse, to both Ms. Spottiswoode and ourselves. Some of the written response is in this issue of the paper.

To everyone, vaccinated or not, who was upset by reading the Viewpoint piece and felt it unnecessarily divisive, we apologize. We understand vaccine hesitancy and related concerns, and that many people have medical reasons to not be vaccinated.

Just to clarify, Ms. Spottiswoode's piece was addressed to provincial authorities, criticizing their current approach. It was not a call to arms. Also, printing of it or any other opinion in the Driftwood does not signal agreement.

THE ISSUE: Vaccine opinion reaction

WE SAY: Concerns have validity

Some people have been understandably upset to not see their views reflected in the opinion pages of the Driftwood in the past 18 months, despite submissions against vaccination and other public health measures being provided to us. Like many media outlets, we have not felt it responsible to publish pieces that discourage vaccination, mask use or other public-health measures, or those that promote conspiracy theories. We have not felt it responsible to promote actions that would disrespect health-care workers and authorities by overwhelming the health-care system, or promote myths that "only" sick and elderly people will die, and by extension be suggesting that is an acceptable state of affairs. Vaccines have clearly made it possible for some semblance of normal life to resume, at least.

However, not allowing any alternate views in the opinion pages has been disconcerting to some degree and, to provide some balance, in this issue we have included a piece from a longtime naturopathic doctor that questions the dominant vaccine narrative. Doing so does not mean we discourage vaccination or any other "mainstream" recommendations about how to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

It is possible that reading alternate views may add to understanding about why some people feel the way they do, and help bridge — even slightly — a gulf that is shockingly much wider than could ever be anticipated.



Fanning flames of division

BY HANNAH BROWN

I believe sincerely in free speech . . . without it we are a doomed society.

I need to qualify that, however, as free speech that encourages actions against other people is moving out of the realm of speech and into the realm of actions that may need to be prosecuted.

In Canadian law, Section 319(2) promoting hatred makes it an offence to willfully promote hatred against any identifiable group of people.

Amanda Spottiswoode has the right to express her fears, but to actually detail how to systematically make mandates that are so harsh and life threatening as to make people submit to something being injected into their bodies and the bodies of their children is appalling at best.

As feminists, both women and men, we have fought for years for "my body, my choice."

Amanda wants us to believe that COVID is being carried on by those of us who are unvaccinated. I would remind you and those who support Amanda and her virulent beliefs that it is the vaccinated who are bringing

VIEWPOINT

the present COVID mutation into our country. The unvaccinated are not allowed to travel.

There is so much divisiveness in our society and in our world. Surely, it is not too much to expect that any of our neighbours will not fan these flames with a writing that tells, step by step, how to actually hurt people with whom they disagree.

**We need the choice
 and we need to
 learn to live in
 peace with each
 other.**

And finally, to deny these same neighbours health care for which we in Canada have fought so long and so carefully. How shallow and narrow and cruel a thinking is that? Let me be clear. Amanda is wanting to charge us, if we happen to get sick with COVID, whether we've caught it from a vaxxed or unvaxxed per-

son. She wants us to be given a bill for our own health care for which we are and have always been paying? That's the old rich vs. poor story isn't it? Those amongst us who are "blessed" will be able to "pay the medical piper." Those not so blessed will not be able to pay and will be "out of luck," maybe even die, just like that suffered by too many people in the world who do not live in countries with health care for all. So many very sad and unjust stories of which too few of us know or care to know. Shame on Amanda!

COVID in its various mutations is here to stay. Some will handle it with vaccination and additional vaccinations and others with their own immune systems. We need the choice and we need to learn to live in peace with each other.

Is that too much to ask of our good Salt Spring Island citizens? With sadness, I write that it seems to be too much to ask of Amanda and her followers. I trust that it is not too much to ask of the other Driftwood subscribers.

The writer is a Salt Spring resident.

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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Does the idea of a white Christmas make you happy?

Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Are you concerned about the Omicron variant?



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: }

"I felt like, 'Wow, this is Mother Nature.' And anything can happen and I couldn't control it."

GALIANO RESIDENT RACHELLE HAYDEN ON THE EARTHQUAKE

SALT SPRING SAYS

WE ASKED:

What do you want for Christmas?

METTEO POERSCHKE



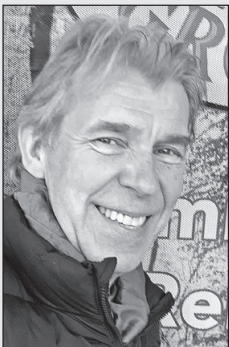
A Manchester United soccer shirt.

EMILY AMON



We just celebrated Hanukkah, but for next year I would love a pair of wool mittens.

ROBERT STEINBACH



A bottle of Gevrey-Chambertin Pinot Noir.

PAULINE BATH



I want to see my family. They're all spread out, we'll see what happens.

WILLIAM MACPHERSON



I want a place to live for all the people who found a home in the Seabreeze Inne, and who might have to leave when it's sold.

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

Beyond free speech

I am compelled to respond to last week's "Turn up the heat on un-vaxxed" piece by Amanda Spottiswoode.

I as well as many others found this "opinion piece" to be quite offensive and borders on hate speech, and suggestive of segregation tactics.

We are all trying to navigate through what now has stretched to two years of the COVID-19 situation, and there is much divide amongst the community of Salt Spring. I strongly feel that letters suggesting that people who make their personal health choice should be isolated and therefore segregated from the rest of the community, even going so far as to suggest preventing people who have not been vaccinated from boarding B.C. ferries and entering some places of business should not be published. This type of behaviour does nothing to ease the tensions and fears that most Salt Spring residents already possess. There are arguments for and

against vaccination. Regardless, news publications should do their best to ensure that this type of speech is not published. It seems to go in the direction of segregation, a very ugly practice that, as history has shown, was frowned upon and later omitted from society.

I do believe in free speech, but opinion pieces like this go beyond that and enter into states of existence that we have fought hard against. Please consider the impacts that these types of things have on our community, and consider more scrutiny before publishing.

DARREN LINNELL,
SALT SPRING

Upsetting

I was disturbed by the vitriol expressed in the Viewpoint piece by Amanda Spottiswoode last week.

Her hateful thoughts, calling on action for more extremes for "these people" to divide some of our community further into isolation for standing up for their personal body boundaries,

were too extreme to repeat.

Given the amount of airtime any of the alternative thinking/beliefs on how to approach this global situation gets, it is especially concerning that Amanda's nastiness was given space.

We are being told a one-size-fits-all approach is the answer, despite there being evidence that it doesn't, and isn't even serving the 80 per cent who have been wearing it.

Humans are diverse, capable of creative solutions that don't involve being a hammer.

If you are being pressured not to print anti-mainstream thought pieces about COVID, please stop fanning the fire with the deeply upsetting views on how to persecute one's neighbours.

SUE EARLE,
SALT SPRING

Not idiocy

The self-righteous diatribe by Amanda Spottiswoode needs a reply.

She writes, "I am reasonable, I am rational," implying the unvaccinated are not. She

calls the unvaccinated stance "idiocy," which is labelling them idiots.

The unvaccinated that I personally know are people that care about their health. They exercise, but are now banned from the gyms, eat well, often from farm stands, and before being segregated had an active social life. These are the hallmarks of a healthy lifestyle. Some I know are highly educated in the health-care field as well as other professions. Their views are not idiocy!

Now the writer would like to see them punished further and is calling on the government to do it.

When a minority group is singled out for punishment when they have done nothing wrong but make a health-care decision it is called persecution. Vilifying this group publicly incites hatred and we do have laws against hate speech. This should never have been published. Free speech, yes. Hatred, no.

DOROTHY IRWIN,
SALT SPRING

MORE LETTERS continued on 6

Whole community effort can reach herd immunity

DR. MANON BOLLIGER, ND

I can appreciate that those who followed the mandates and placed their trust in "the science," the appointed experts, the media and the pharmaceutical companies sincerely believe they have done the right thing.

But are we aware as a collective that there are many people who should not risk taking these shots? Are we aware that those who have naturally acquired immunity are at greater risk of side effects from vaccines? A recent study in Vancouver supports further investigation of how anti-body-reactivity may impact the clinical severity of COVID-19 or SARS-CoV-2 vaccine responses.

In the Lancet, a respected medical journal, in an article entitled "Covid-19: stigmatizing the unvaccinated is not justified," Gunter Kampf warns us that both the unvaccinated and vaccinated play a relevant role in the pandemic. This is why some countries have chosen to focus only on the most affected of our society, have spared the children who have statistically no benefit from these shots, respected natural immunity, and like Japan, are leading the way to "No Force, No discrimination."

Recent research has confirmed that the vaccines neither confer long-term immunity nor stop the spread, rendering them, defacto questionable as "vaccines." In fairness to the pharmaceutical industries, their aim was to reduce illness and death and never claimed the injections would prevent infection or reduce transmission. In fact, even the health "experts" like Dr. Anthony Fauci have admitted that the vaccinated and the unvaccinated are the same in terms of viral load. In fact, he claims that the vaccinated harbour more virus than the unvaccinated.

Let's face it, your innate immune system is your front line of defence. When infection succeeds in getting beyond the innate immune system in the upper respiratory tract, the adaptive immune system is

INDEPTH

engaged. This allows antibodies and other cellular defences to be created against many different aspects of the coronavirus (not just the spike protein). By contrast, COVID injection recipients' adaptive immune systems are triggered unnaturally to create antibodies only against the coronavirus spike proteins. This leads them to not only depend on regular boosters, but in turn reduces their own natural immune system's responses. The artificial adaptive antibodies are sub-optimal in neutralizing coronavirus, therefore there is a risk of "antibody dependant enhancement." This has been observed in prior animal studies where animals who had received the vaccine and later were exposed to the virus, died in all cases.

Since less than 0.3 per cent of COVID-19 infections are fatal, with a study from March 2021 finding deaths generally occurring in extremely elderly, obese or unhealthy people, it is important to make informed decisions on our health. Countries such as Israel are now on their fourth booster, and yet they have some of the highest COVID-19 rates. The public health authorities are saying we may need continual boosters to maintain antibody levels. However, the artificial adaptive immunity does not adapt as well as natural immunity to variants. Vaccines are not risk-free. With each booster comes a risk of adverse reactions.

There is emerging data on serious consequences and deaths from this adopted solution such as cardiomyopathies, neurological issues, acquired immunodeficiency syndromes, inflammatory bowel disease and "unexplained" increases in cancers, miscarriages and infertility. We cannot really know the long-term impact of this apparently "quick fix" solution on our health, and

as professor of risk management Norman Fenton shares we may not have the true mortality rates correct.

I believe that we risk prolonging the pandemic by counting solely on vaccine-induced immunity rather than working with our entire community to reach herd immunity. Because these vaccines are targeted and bind to only the virus spike protein, not only do they override the antibodies of the innate immune system, they also produce less broad protection. With this narrow focus these antibodies override the innate immune system from engaging future infections. This eliminates the first and most important line of defence, the innate immune system, from both fighting the infection and adapting for future variants.

A risk-benefit assessment is essential for any treatment, including vaccine therapy.

If the vaccine companies have negotiated indemnity from the consequences for their trials, ending late 2022/early 2023, who will pick up the pieces for our seriously injured? For our strained economy?

Should we allow our government to act as our doctors and make decisions for us as business owners? Decisions for us as families telling us who and whom we can invite?

While many took the vaccine to benefit society, how beneficial is it to have a divided society? Why are our freedoms being treated like privileges? Have we lost our way as Canadians?

The writer has been a naturopathic physician for 30 years. She divides her time between Salt Spring and Bowen islands.

Editor's note: A version of this piece with links to the author's sources is posted on our gulfislandsdriftwood.com website.

MORE LETTERS

continued from 5

A step back in time

I was appalled at the recent Viewpoint titled "Turn up the heat on unvaxxed" and was surprised that you would actually print that piece.

Throughout her piece Amanda Spottiswoode encourages the reader to dislike and feel disdain for someone who is making a choice that is different than hers.

She encourages hatred, division and

prejudice in her article, and you, the Driftwood do the same by giving space to such venom.

Within my lifetime, there was a huge stigma in our society against people of different genders and those who chose a different lifestyle. When some of these people became sick and started dying of AIDS, people said "Good! Served them right!" As time went on society realized that their attitude towards homosexual people was actually a persecution of these same people. Only when famous people started speaking out against the persecu-

tion of homosexuals did it begin to lessen and today, decades later, society realizes how much harm they did to members of their society with their cruelty towards these people who made different choices.

To call for people that have chosen to not be vaccinated whatever their reasons (and this includes many nurses, doctors, police, fire personnel) to suffer segregation and to be ghettoized is a step back into a time of great prejudice.

The people choosing to not be vaccinated are from different strata of our society, but the narrow-mindedness that would perse-

cute a minority living in our society is the same as it was in the time of AIDS.

Besides which, if you are vaccinated, you have nothing to fear. If you get COVID, you will not get very sick, so why allow the vindictiveness of this author's words to be printed in your paper?

I am not anti-vaxxer, but I am definitely pro democracy. We've come a long way. This kind of thinking is taking us back many decades.

Shame on the Driftwood.

CAROL MONEY,

DUNCAN AND SATURNA ISLAND

Thank You Host Families



The Gulf Island International Program would like to recognize our wonderful host families and to say a big thank you for making the holidays merrier for our international students. You make a lasting impression on these students and we are honoured to have all of you as hosts in our program and community.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season!

If you are wishing for more information on becoming a host family, please visit our website at www.studyinbc.ca or email the Homestay Manager, Chantal at cstaines@sd64.org



Fight for the right thing

I have fought for the forest for the past year and a half, cleaned up the mess left behind by the RCMP as they destroyed the belongings of the defenders.

I have endured arrest. I have witnessed the brutality of an unjust system and a government that lies and I have come to realize that this represents much more than the protection of the ancient trees, the ancestors of the forest and also that which exists above and below. The purified air, the mycelium that travels for miles connecting under the rich understory in their own sweet society. I have walked among the ferns and admired the mushrooms and lichens, picked huckleberries sprouting from nurse logs and gorged on blackberries growing at the edge of the trees. Tiny waterfalls and streams tumble into larger rivers and eventually into lakes and ocean. All interconnected.

Returning to the everyday, I am becoming very aware that the fight for the forest, the fight for our environment: the air, the water, the fish, the deer are all indicative of the enormous issues we are facing to protect our rights and freedoms. The freedom to protest peacefully, the freedom for investigative journalism, the freedom over our bodies and where we are able to travel, shop, eat and enjoy entertainment. The freedom of parents to decide what is best for their children.

I, along with thousands, have been fighting for the continued health and existence of our ancient grandmother trees where we have witnessed violence and loss of freedoms we always took for granted. There is no more depending on the decency of the police or any idea of honesty in government. Government that ignores our charter of rights and freedoms.

The protest is about to become enormous all around the earth as we fight for what is the right thing. Care for our planet and all sentient beings.

It is important for us to be kind, whether or not we agree and I am shocked at the opinion piece by Amanda Spottiswoode published by the Driftwood last week. It was unbelievably unkind and scientifically incorrect. The biggest pandemic is one of divisiveness and fear.

JO-ANNA LOGAN,

SALT SPRING

Fanning the flames

I was very upset to read a Dec. 15 item in your paper submitted by a Salt Spring Islander, Amanda Spottiswoode.

Most of my friends and fam-

ily members have chosen to get the COVID vaccinations, but I have a few friends who have not. Each of those individuals are thoughtful, kind, respectful, intelligent people who have thought long and hard about their decision and are able to clearly articulate their reasons for not wanting to participate in the vaccination rollout. It was clear that Ms Spottiswoode felt nothing but contempt and I would go so far as to say hatred towards the unvaccinated members of our community and country.

There is already so much tension, suffering and division that has resulted from the last challenging two years. For your paper to allow a voice of hatred to fan the flames of this division is, at the very least, upsetting. I trust that the decision to publish Ms. Spottiswoode's letter was only a grave error on your part. In an effort to heal any further wounds that may have occurred from the printing of Ms. Spottiswoode's hateful letter, I hope you will write an apology to the entire Salt Spring community.

SHELAGH DODD,

SALT SPRING

Hope for better

I was disappointed and surprised to see the Driftwood publishing such a clearly discriminatory and divisive piece of writing by Amanda Spottiswoode.

Not only does the writing place the blame for the pandemic on the shoulders of the unvaccinated, which is an inaccurate conclusion, but it neglects to acknowledge that the vaccines do not stop transmission.

I fled Canada on Oct. 29 of this year, as the "maple leaf curtain" dropped, preventing Canadians from leaving their own country - a clear and present violation of our constitutional rights. One would have thought that if there was an ounce of truth to the assertion that this is a pandemic of the unvaccinated, that this measure would have stopped new variants from finding their way into the country. Where we find ourselves now is indicative of the fact that vaccinated people can get and spread COVID. The unvaccinated haven't been allowed on flights so I'm not sure how anyone can justify the continued spread of misinformation that the pandemic is our fault.

Instead of continuing to blame and shame people for their right to choose what does and does not go into their body, it is in my humble opinion that it is time for us to start to look at how we can manage the virus, rebuild our fractured society, and care for the most vulnerable, including those affected by drug addiction, homelessness and mental illness. The pandemic and our response has exacerbated all of these

problems. It is time for us to get back to the idea that we are all in this together, and that we need to be kind, calm and respectful.

What you published in your paper was none of these things. I hoped for better from my community. I hope for better from my community.

KEVIN VOWLES,

SALT SPRING

Joy of voice

I am writing today because I am heartsore with Island Health's decision to not allow singing inside their facilities.

Over the last 20 plus years, my fellow choristers and I have watched people's faces light up with delight and even participate in our various performances at Braehaven, Greenwood and the Extended Care Unit at Lady Minto Hospital. Sometimes the people who respond are those who do not connect well with the daily run of the world, but who feel the call of the music. It is a bright spot in their day and, from their positive reactions, seems to bring back happy memories and is certainly heartwarming to witness. I think the staff have fun, too, which is certainly needed!

I understand and completely support caution to protect the frail and ill, but to take away singing at Christmas is too much. If masking, distancing and vaccination are not enough to be safe, would it be possible to also use the rapid tests before entering to sing? There must be a way to be safe and to share the joy of the live human voice.

The Twelve days of Christmas will soon be upon us, could we not find a way?

PATRICIA FLANNAGAN,

SALT SPRING

Taking up the challenge

A couple of weeks ago, a bookclub on Salt Spring issued a challenge to other clubs on Salt Spring Island to support the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) program at our wonderful library.

Interlibrary Loan lets us borrow many copies of the same book which saves us having to purchase all of the books we read each year. Our group, called The Bonfire Bookies, will rise to the challenge and donate \$25 per person per year for the cause.

COVID certainly put a kink in our meeting plans, but our hardy group of women decided to brave the elements and meet around a bonfire through the winter last year. (Hence our new name.)

So, we lay down the gauntlet to the other clubs to join us and pony up the support!

MARY RICHARDSON,

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STORY CONTEST

Story winners announced

Young Salt Spring, Mayne and Galiano writers participate

The Driftwood once again received an enthusiastic response to its holiday season story contest.

Winners in the various age categories are as follows, and the first and second-place winning stories are printed on the following four pages of this issue. Those writers can pick up vouchers for gift certificates to Salt Spring Books from the Driftwood office. Up until Jan. 31, 2022, vouchers can be exchanged for gift certificates at the store in Ganges.

Ages 5-7: First place, Rain Johnston, The Elves' Problem; second place, Tayo Rossman, Infinite Snowman; honourable mentions, Ida Barczak and Degan Morrell.

Age 8: First place, Destiny Spencer, a Catville Christmas; second place, Violet Penner, Christmas Eve; honourable mention, Edie Keefer, The Christmas Mice's Curse.

Age 9: First place, Rosa Ilinykh, Pine the Little Tree Elf; second place, Shyanna Spencer, A Christmas as Santa; honourable mentions, Jude Bromley, Christmas Night; Robin Metze, The Day We Caught Santa.

Age 10: First place, Aliza Lindzon-Graham, The Rhubarb Family; second place, Heidi Magnus Fisher, Elf-19; honourable mention, Oisin Ayton, The Elf Disaster.

Ages 11-13: First place, Ana Roy, The Christmas Wish; second place, Finn Bryant, Santa.

GISS international program and senior students: First place, Uma Chacon Moreo, A Memory to Unite; second place, Kaishi Nakaa, Christmas is For Everyone.

Thank you to our community judges: Victoria Olchowecki (coordinator), Barbara Aust, Sheila McEachern, Lyndsay Mundy and Janet Smith.

This year's cover art contest winner from GISS art program submissions is Mathilde Hiersemenzel. She also earns a Salt Spring Books gift certificate.



PHOTO BY DAMIAN RICHARDS

CHRISTMAS CHEER: With program coordinator Sarah Etherington (top left), members of the Learning Through Experiential Authentic Processes (LEAP) program take a moment out from singing carols at Mouat's Home Hardware (and other places around Ganges) to pose for a photo. Singing in the community was just one of their random acts of kindness this season.

The Elves' Problem

BY RAIN JOHNSTON
FIRST PLACE
AGE 5-7 CATEGORY



One Christmas some elves were in their house. The Mum was in the kitchen and her name was Ginny. The Dad's name was Harry. The kids' names were Albus, Willy, Analisa and James. They just called Analisa, Ana. Remember, they are elves.

One day the kids were playing in the yard and Dad was at work and it was almost Christmas Eve and Ginny was making a stew for Christmas Eve. She made the stew right before Dad got home. When Dad arrived he was always hungry.

Dad arrived home right as the stew came off the stove. Then the kids came in and right away they saw Dad.

They went to give him a hug and he said, "I have bad news."

Ginny and the kids said, "What is it?"

"All the presents were stolen!"

The kids and Ginny said, "What??"

"Santa asked me the find them," said Dad. "Who wants to come with me?"

Albus said yes and Ana said yes and Willy said yes and Ginny said yes and James said yes.

"So let's get packing."

Three days later they were on their journey to find a bag of presents. Analisa's bag had some food and a lot of toys.

Five days later they had met a robot in the snow. Why would a robot be in the snow? They asked the robot to pick them up and robot said yes.

"Just ask me what you want," the robot said.

"We want to find a bag full of presents."

"I think I saw a bag land over there."

"Can you please bring us over there?"

"Sure," said the robot.

One of the kids asked the robot, "Was it red and white?"

"Yes it was," said the robot.

Albus whispered to James and he said, "We found it."

James said, "We found it!" to the rest of them.

"Yay!" said Willy and Ana.

The robot's name was Rozzum Unit 7134.

Roz lowered them down and waited and 15 minutes later they came back with a red and white bag. "We found it!" said Analisa.

"Roz, can you please bring us back to the North Pole?"

"Yes," said Roz.

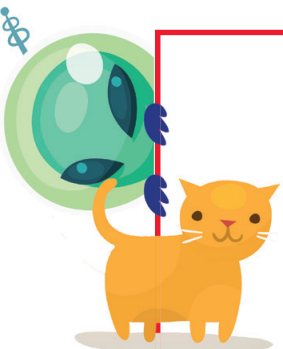
Three hours later they saw Santa!

"You found it!" said Santa.

Santa was so excited.

A Catville Christmas

BY DESTINY SPENCER
FIRST PLACE
AGE 8 CATEGORY



Once upon a time in Catville it was Christmas and every Christmas all the cats in Catville start to stand and talk. Most of all they love to party. Every Christmas there is a hot chocolate stand and they love it.

But they didn't know something was coming. Sooner or later they heard a noise. It sounded like "clink, clink, clink." It was coming closer and closer and closer.

Then they saw what the noise was. It was an alien ship coming closer. But only one alien was in it, and it was disguised as Santa! He was stealing all the presents and Christmas decorations!

Someone had to stop him. No one came and then he captured Santa Claus. Christmas was ruined. Then he captured the sleigh and the reindeer with it. And then a brave cat stood up and said, "Stop stealing things, alien!" and the alien did.

The cats wondered why he stopped. One cat went up to the alien and it was a robot. The cat turned him off and set him on happy mode. Christmas was back! All the cats got so many presents because they saved Santa and they saved Christmas. They had a big party.



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A Memory to Unite

BY UMA CHACON MOREO
FIRST PLACE
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM / GISS STUDENTS CATEGORY

December 8, 1997 was Christmas tree shopping day. People looked for the perfect sized Christmas tree to take home and decorate with ornaments and coloured lights.

These fir trees have been growing in the flourishing forest for almost two decades. Every year is the same. Forests in all regions of the world are filled with the sound of swinging axes and birds flying away from their nests that cling to the top of those trees. After the armed crowd finishes the slaughter, the forest seems like the ruins of Rome.

But that particular day, the story changed. Amongst all the moving green polka dots seen from above the forest, a small, thin red dot appeared in a clearing. It was not a red fox with a tail as cunning as a mouse, it was not a northern cardinal who had come out of his winter hiding place to find out what all the fuss was about.

It was a boy who wore a red sweatshirt; it was ruby red with a deer on the front to give him the Christmas spirit that made him feel so good. He ran through the forest, alone and happy, touching the snow on the ground. He seemed to be no older than 12. He pulled out of his pocket a small, round, brown fir seed. He dug a hole and planted a kernel of life that would soon be the beginning of a story to remember. The boy came every December 8, every year, to take care of the most beautiful fir tree that anyone had ever seen. Every year he brought the same lights and coloured ornaments to decorate it, inspired by real Christmas spirit.

On December 8, 2015, that changed. The child did not appear, no one appeared. There were neither lights, nor decorations, nor Christmas spirit. The forest felt cold and lonely. Destruction came; many cars, cranes, and people running around with axes. It was

like the Hunger Games.

And there he stood in front of the most beautiful fir tree in the forest. Our little man with the same ruby red sweater he had been wearing 18 years ago. But what was he doing there? Why was he carrying an axe in his hand? Why did he look up and down at the tree as if in an instant, that which he had cherished for so long could disappear with a single hack?

With one swift swing, he cut it without a doubt, but with a lot of guilt. The tree fell like a feather, but when it touched the ground, it sounded like a buffalo stampede.

Why did he do it? Why didn't he even think about it? Why didn't he let his fir tree live in the forest, keeping the Christmas spirit alive? But he did it and there was no turning back.

The same memory that had united them, disappeared with an almighty blow in one dreadful moment.



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CHRISTMAS

A Christmas as Santa

BY SHYANNA SPENCER
SECOND PLACE
AGE 9 CATEGORY

Once upon a time on Christmas Eve a girl named Sara was going to bed to wake to presents and a full stocking. She turned off the lights and said good night to her mom and soon fell into a deep sleep.

She heard a voice saying, "Santa, wake up there is Christmas cheer to spread."

Sara woke up and she was not in her room. It looked different. Sara looked in a mirror and was startled. She was Santa!

She heard the voice, it was back. It said, "Wake up, Santa!" Sara got up out of bed and went through the door. There standing in front of her was Mrs. Claus.

She told him that she needed to deliver presents to all the good boys and girls. Sara got in the sleigh and in two seconds or less she was in the sky.

Then the sled stopped and a button glowed. She pushed it and time stopped and she dropped out of the sled and she was in someone else's home. She put some presents down and did the same with everyone else.

Then there was one home left. She did the same thing she did with all the other homes except this time she started to look out the window. The snow was gently falling. She put the presents down. By the window she saw snow gently falling on the ground. She went back in the sleigh and as she zoomed past the window she saw herself waking up and seeing Santa.

Then suddenly she woke up from a long sleep and in the window she saw Santa whooshing past her window.

The Rhubarb Family

BY ALIZA LINDZON-GRAHAM
FIRST PLACE | AGE 10 CATEGORY

Let me tell you about the Rhubarb family. They are a family of six living in a medium-sized apartment in Alberta.

Lucinda and her kids, Polly and Hannah, are Jewish. Roger and his kids, Carmen and Max, are Christian. They are a recently conjoined family, and they are struggling over which holiday to celebrate, Chanukah or Christmas. But that's not all they're struggling with.

"Ughhh, is it already morning?" asks Hannah with a groan, as the kids wake up one snowy morning. She looks over at Polly's bedhead and laughs.

"It looks like a hedgehog," says Max, chuckling.

"Not funny," says Polly.

"Kids! Breakfast!" comes the call from two rooms over. The four of them rush to the breakfast table.

As they eat, Polly sees snow through the window. She jumps up and runs down the hall.

"Calm down!" says Carmen, the oldest child. "You're acting really immature, you pipsqueak!"

"Don't call me pipsqueak!" says Polly. She is older than Max but shorter than him, and Max never lets her forget it.

Hannah walks in, dressed as formal as usual. She is 12 but her mom still dresses her, since she has been blind

from birth. Although she can't see, her hearing is terrific.

"I can hear mom and dad in the other room," she says. "They're arguing about what to do about the winter holidays."

The kids are silent for a moment. Then Polly speaks up.

"I've got it!" she enthusiastically yelps. Then she whispers something into Carmen's ears. Carmen smiles and nods at the plan.

"But first, I want to take a walk in the snow," says Polly, as the kids head outside.

All four kids are walking in the snow. Carmen is helping Hannah build a snow-

man, as Polly watches birds fly around together. Max is trying to break the ice on a pond by throwing rocks at it. When they get home, there are warm mugs of hot chocolate ready.

The next day, the four kids are having a meeting in Carmen's bedroom, where they can get the most privacy. Polly begins to explain her plan.

"Which of you can cook?" she asks, and Carmen raises her hand. Polly ticks a box on her clipboard, and continues questioning her siblings. A few minutes later, Polly adjourns the meeting and the kids all grin at one another.

The next morning, the kids put their plan into action. Carmen cooks the food and hides it in her secret mini fridge. Max prepares the decoration. Hannah, with her awesome hearing, waits to hear if their parents wake up. And Polly manages all of the kids.

When Lucinda and Roger slowly creep downstairs to hide the presents, all four kids jump out and say "Tada!"

The parents look in wonder at a Christmas tree with a chanukiah on top, hanging dreidels and ornaments. They turn and see a feast laid out. They run and hug their kids. In the end, the holidays are better with a little bit of everything.

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:
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Holiday Stories



The Christmas Wish

By ANA ROY
FIRST PLACE | AGE 11-13 CATEGORY

All I wanted was a caring family with a cozy house, so I wouldn't be lonely. The wind bit through my fur, my ears flopped in the cold Christmas air.

I stared through a brightly lit window illuminating everything around it. Inside a bustling family ate their dinner: turkey, mashed potatoes, green beans and many more delectable options. The smells drifting out of the windows and all the nooks and crannies were even better. The smell of fresh pine and eggnog was intoxicating.

The small, cheery home was a splendid living arrangement, unlike mine of the cold desolate tundra. It was no place to live, under a tree trying to preserve body

heat, waiting and waiting for the perfect family that would never come.

The wind howled like a wolf howling at the moon, the cold bit at my skin. I felt it creeping up my spinal cord like a viper, then I collapsed in the crisp new snow. Above my cold shivering form came the soft jingle of bells, the sound drifted through the calm night air, then as soon as it faded the nearest house's door slammed open as wide as it could go. Someone crouched beside me and picked my limp body up. That's when my vision dimmed and then it was gone.

I was resting on or in something. It was warm, soft even. I had never felt so ener-

getic in my life. I cracked my eyes open and to my surprise I was inside the big blue house. There were five people. They all had dark brown skin and bright, glittering kind eyes. The first one was tall and lean. They had short brown hair and green eyes. He was the tallest of them all. Two of the other people were small, with bluey green eyes and little pigtails. A middle-aged woman with long wavy brown hair was lordling over me like the rest of them. The last one at first glance looked like she was a kid but had striking white hair and a hunchback.

Then I knew with a start I had got my one and only Christmas wish.

Pine the Little Tree Elf

BY ROSA ILINYKH
FIRST PLACE | AGE 9 CATEGORY

Zzzzzz. Pine, a little tree elf with a small top hat and a blue sweater, was snoring away in his little hole in a tree. Pine was an unusual tree elf. He despised Christmas . . . a lot. So while all the elves were having Christmas fun he was snoozing in a deep sleep.

While this was happening a woodcutter was finding the perfect Christmas tree to cut down. Aha, he found one! So he swung his axe. And happened to cut down the very tree that Pine was sleeping in!

Pine was in such a deep sleep that he didn't know that his home was being dragged on the ground . . . with HIM in it!

It seemed to Pine that he was asleep forever. But when he finally woke up, all his sleepiness drifted away from him and disappeared because now he was fully awake, wide-eyed and staring around his surroundings. He was correct that he was in a human's house . . . all he could say was that it was huge and was suffocated in Christmas decorations. And honestly by the look of it, it must have taken years to decorate. It was covered in lights, holly, ornaments . . . really, any decoration you

could think of.

While Pine was looking at this magnificent sight, the Larksons (the people who owned the house) came back from Christmas shopping and slumped down on the sofa tiredly. Pine had never seen a person before and climbed dangerously close to the tip of the branch and observed these weird alien-like creatures. Pine didn't know that HE was being observed by the humans. . . more like watched. The youngest child of the family spotted him first, and started to shout, "Mommy! Daddy! Come look at this," she cried desperately.

Immediately four people came running into the room and started to stare at him in amazement. They had never seen an elf. They didn't even know that they were real! Because of this, they thought he was a garden gnome. This was an incredible insult to Pine, but he didn't say anything in fear of these massive creatures.

Pine crawled to the trunk of the tree and climbed into the hole. The oldest child tried to catch him but her parents stopped her because they knew that he was scared.

This was a relief to Pine because he WAS scared. All the shouting and staring gave him the creeps . . . especially the human itself was . . . terrifying. And at this he fell fast asleep.

He woke up next morning with the smell of gingerbread cookies. He might not have liked Christmas but he LOVED gingerbread cookies! How did they know that he loved them, he wondered while he happily gobbled up the delicious pastry. After this he noticed that there was a present too! But why? At that moment he noticed the calendar and that all the boxes were all crossed out until the 25th. Now he understood. It was Christmas!

He quickly opened his present. It was a beautiful Christmas sweater. Immediately he realized he didn't have a present for the Larksons. He dug inside the hole in the tree and brought out a beautiful ornament. Once the Larksons came down he gave it to them. They were so happy. And from that day, Pine loved humans and humans loved him . . . and he loved Christmas.

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Christmas is for Everyone

BY KAISHI NAKAYA
SECOND PLACE
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM / GISS STUDENTS CATEGORY

Today is Christmas Eve. Santa usually delivers presents with some reindeer and a sleigh, leaving the Christmas presents under the Christmas tree, but this is only the normal way Santa delivers presents.

Then what else? Well, sometimes he delivers presents in the forests and sometimes in the sea; places that you wouldn't normally be able to enter. It's hard to deliver presents to those places. Now, I'm gonna tell you how Santa delivers presents to those places.

The first place is Elf Woods. Elf woods exist in many areas but they're hard to find and even if you find the woods, there is a rite of passage to enter so it is almost impossible to enter. But fortunately, some elves help Santa get in. Santa asks them for hints and also

gets taught manners from the elves. For example, they teach Santa that the ritual for entering Elf Woods is: pick up the leaves (or fallen leaves) of the same kind of tree as the elf tree, walk toward the tree, and say "Please let me in" in your heart while holding it. Suddenly, a fairy door appears and Santa can enter. When you enter it, you will be surprised because there are some giant trees, mushrooms, grasses and so on. Anyway, finally he has entered the woods so now



he just needs to deliver the presents.

The second place is Atla Aqua. This is a big kingdom under the sea and it is also difficult to deliver those presents because this kingdom is located four miles under the Atlantic Ocean. Of course, Santa is not a fish so he needs to wear diving gear, but this is not enough to go there.

Santa must get help from the biggest creature in the oceans: the Blue whale. To get help from the Blue whale, Santa has to bring a lot of krill to him. If you

try to force it to help, he will put you in his mouth and squirt you into space. Anyway, after Santa got the whale's help, the whale could carry the presents in his mouth instead of reindeer. After travelling with whales for one hour, Santa finally arrives at Atla Aqua. The kingdom is covered by a big bubble so he can breathe normally and go on delivering his presents.

Santa gave all the presents to the children and then came back to his house. He was exhausted so he sat on his chair in front of the fireplace. Then one elf brings a cup of milk with some cookies and asks him, "Santa, why do you work so hard to deliver to all these places?"

Santa smiles and replies, "Christmas is for everyone."

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Holiday Stories

The Infinite Snowman

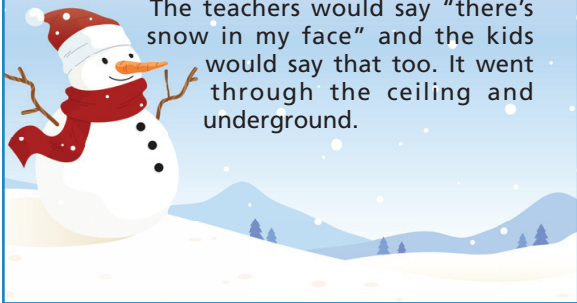
BY TAYO ROSSMAN
SECOND PLACE
AGE 5-7 CATEGORY

Once there was a snowman. It was an infinite snowman.

The friends lived in the snowman. When the eyes called the name of the snowman's friends, the snowman's friends would dig through the snow to the eyes. Then the snowman's friends would call to the feet and the same thing would happen at the same time.

The snowman was on top of the Centre School. The snowman poured over the walls of the Centre School and then the whole world. It trespassed over properties. It even went inside houses and the school hallways were full of snow.

The teachers would say "there's snow in my face" and the kids would say that too. It went through the ceiling and underground.



Elf-19

BY HEIDI MAGNUS FISHER
SECOND PLACE
AGE 10 CATEGORY

"Ahhh choo!" Peppermint sneezed.

OK, hang on, let's go back a step. It was November 19th and all the elves were hard at work binding bouncy balls, testing wind-up toys and tasting the finest elven chocolates.

Suddenly Mistletoe (a famous elf scientist) burst into the workshop.

"It's here!" screamed Mistletoe.

Thirteen thousand heads shot up.

"Calm down, Mistletoe," said Ms.

Claus, reaching out her hand.

"Don't touch me!" he shrieked.

"Or you could get it!"

"Get what?" Ms. Claus asked.

"Elf-19."

Dun dun dun duuuun! (Dramatic music.)

There's only one word to describe what happened next: chaos!

One hour later . . . Peppermint and her family, five-year-old Marshmallow, seven-year-old Gumdrop, 10-year-old Jelly Bean and her husband Candycane were huddled in

their spherical sunset pink and baby blue cottage.

"Mommy?" said Marshmallow.

"Yes, sugar plum?" said Peppermint, trying desperately to sound calm but failing miserably.

"What is it, honey?"

"Why do we have to quarantine?"

She said "quarantine" like it was a stale gummy bear. And for once in her life Peppermint couldn't answer.

It had been five weeks since quarantine had started and one fed-up elf was Marshmallow. So she hatched a master plan to beat Elf-19 once and for all. The only problem was she didn't have a master plan, so she went to Jelly Bean for help.

Jelly Bean thought she should make an antidote, so that's what little Marshmallow did.

It took four weeks and 13 days (and her entire chemistry set she got last year for Christmas) but Marshmallow finally finished. It was some-



thing Einstein would marvel at: It was CAKE! Chocolate magic cake to be specific.

Jelly Bean rushed over to help deliver the Chocolate Magic Cake all over Elfhelm. Jelly Bean and Marshmallow had saved Christmas! And yes, I know it is really cheesy to stop with a happy ending, but I'm out of paper, so I guess this is . . . THE END.

Christmas Eve

BY VIOLET PENNER
SECOND PLACE | AGE 8 CATEGORY

Lying in bed I could not sleep. I wished and wished for the morning to come. As dawn drew close I heard a sound on the roof, followed by the distinct sound of a jolly HO HO HO. I leaped out of bed and crept downstairs and out of the corner of my eye I spied good old Santa in the family room.

I was happy to see him but something was wrong.

He seemed to be pinned to one spot! I could not tell what was happening.

Suddenly, I remembered my brother

had left his stocking in his room. His empty stocking hook was caught on Santa's hood. I had to do something!

I jumped out of my hiding place and unhooked him. Santa was very pleased.

He gave a very loud HO HO Ho and sent me to bed. In bed I felt I was the luckiest girl in the world. In my sleep I dreamed that I was at the North Pole at a party.

In the morning I woke up and ran downstairs and in the light I saw a scrap of red velvet on the hook.



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SANTA

BY FINN BRYANT
SECOND PLACE | AGE 11-13 CATEGORY

I couldn't sleep, my head mulling one question over and over: Is Santa real?

The question had stemmed from a conversation when at school last week we had been discussing Santa, and Ala had said that her father was Santa, and many kids had agreed. I was unsure of what to think.

But that was then, this is now . . .

I thought I might finally get to sleep when I heard a thump on the roof, and muttered curses. I ran out of my bedroom, and headed to the fireplace. I attempted to push myself into the stove, but of course realized that wouldn't be possible as a method to reach the roof. Meanwhile, I could hear grunts from up above.

I remembered the ladder that my mother had left leaning against the roof, after sweeping off the snow the day before. I ran out the back door, and scrambled up the ladder. There had been a new layer of snow, deeper than before, over the night. But there was

also a sled with a rotary propeller which was slowly spinning counterclockwise. The groans seemed to be from a pair of shoes sticking out of the snow.

I pulled hard, and with more groans, and finally a pop Santa came out of the snow. But there was something vaguely familiar about him. I blurted out, "Who are you?"

He replied, surprised, "Uh...Santa."

And that's when it clicked, he was Ala's dad. So I retorted, "But you're Ala's dad."

He explained, after pulling me onto the sled, that every neighbourhood (or island) has its own Santa, a member of the Santas Union. Each one gets, as he puts it, "a badge, cookies and milk, a nifty uniform,

and a super great sled." He also explained that they all get paid by taxpayers money, and from individual parents.

Apparently, the parents who want his services send him a list of presents, he picks the best choices, and buys them. Then, he gives the parents a receipt, and delivers the presents on time. But, he added, I need to deliver your presents, and then move on to the next house on my list.

I returned to bed, and a few minutes later heard a whirring sound, accompanied by a flurry of snow outside my window. I fell to sleep soon after, dreaming of helicopter sleds and upside down Santas.

In the morning, I awoke to the smell of fresh muffins, and wondered whether it was all a dream. But, when I opened my presents, a note was pinned on one that read, "THANKS FOR THE HELP AND THE CHAT LAST NIGHT" . . . Santa.

I smiled, and bit into my muffin.



Deer Friends,

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Thank you for making our year so bright!



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PHOTO COURTESY HASSI
SANTA'S BACK IN FULFORD: Painted plywood Christmas displays that used to be displayed in Fulford village have been lent by their owner Bruce Patterson to the Harbour Authority of Salt Spring Island for display at the Fulford government dock by the ferry terminal. Jim Heath of the harbour authority said his group added lights to the display so the local community and ferry passengers could enjoy Patterson's display once again.

Navigating the housing response

BY LAURA PATRICK
 SALT SPRING LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE MEMBER

Wow! Have you noticed all of the fear mongering about housing on Salt Spring that has been flying around lately? I feel I must weigh in and help readers navigate their way through all of this jibber jabber.

Right off the top, I want to explore what is meant by "rural character." On Salt Spring, our official community plan and land use bylaws are intended to reflect the characteristics that the community values. When I consider rural character, I think of Salt Spring's farm lands, forest lands and clustered developments around its villages, but I also think of people and community. I know we can and must embrace our rural character to strengthen, not diminish, the Salt Spring Island community. Without strengthening our community and social connections, we cannot even begin to address challenges such as the increasing effects of climate change.

We have many challenges that require sophisticated and imaginative approaches developed by people working together. Our island culture, our rural character, is rooted in volunteerism and service to others. I'm grateful for all of the islanders who bring their deep sense of community to each and every challenge. When we experience severe weather, illnesses or accidents, it is our emergency responders, health workers, local business owners, service providers, farmers, contractors, forestry workers, neighbours, friends and family who step up to help.

It is a fact that we have a housing equity and workforce shortage crisis on Salt Spring. Every time we contemplate actions

to address this crisis, the voices of fear soon emerge. Simply put, the majority of the housing on Salt Spring only serves one class of people. The over-heated real estate market combined with the pandemic-related work-from-home movement has created incredible demand. People are flocking to smaller communities across B.C., gobbling up real estate. House renovation and construction here is occurring at a frenzied pace. Just the other day, I had to wait for three ferry sailings due to 10 concrete trucks coming to the island to pour the foundation of a single house. The fear-mongering voices are silent on this type of development, which clears forest, builds big and houses few.

Our hospital and its lab, nursing homes, grocery stores, restaurants and businesses of all shapes and sizes are desperately short of staff and are operating at reduced capacities. The fear-mongering voices want you to think that the workforce shortage is due to growth, when actually it is due in large part to housing unavailability. That's right, while we can rejoice in the few new affordable housing units that have been painstakingly brought into play, we have not estimated how many housing units have been stripped from the rental market due to conversion to owner-occupied or short-term vacation rental use.

The local Trust committee (LTC) modified its standing resolution on illegal dwellings back in June 2021. We made these changes in advance of the anticipated busy tourist season in response to calls from local business owners who had to resort to housing their staff in recreational vehicles. Since then, the availability

of rental housing has only deteriorated further, putting even more strain on island businesses. The Housing Action Program Task Force (made up of citizen volunteers) requested that this standing resolution regarding unlawful dwellings remain until sustainable housing solutions are implemented. They also requested some clarifying language on the actions that will trigger enforcement. As the Islands Trust staff were concerned that sustainable housing solutions were difficult to define, I had suggested this definition: until there are safe, secure, appropriate housing options that are affordable for all demographics and household types in perpetuity. To the fear-mongering voice, this definition equates to unlimited growth, but to me it means let's strive to have a spectrum of housing that serves a healthy and diverse community.

Let me quickly address the other thing that the fear-mongering voice is droning on about. The LTC requested staff to report back on potential bylaw amendments to permit accessory dwelling units in all zones. In no way did the trustees imply or direct staff to create bylaw amendments that fly in the face of the Islands Trust's mandate, AND any future bylaw amendments are subject to a public process.

The housing equity and workforce crisis impacts all of us on Salt Spring. We require systemic change to create a healthy spectrum of housing on Salt Spring. Heading into this winter holiday season, I ask those of you who have empty homes, suites or cottages to consider making them available to long-term renters. AND enjoy the holiday season!

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DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET
22	0008	0.4	1.3	26	0240	1.2	3.9
	0850	3.5	11.5		1043	3.5	11.5
WE				SU	1803	2.0	6.6
	ME			DI	2147	2.2	7.2
23		0044	0.5	1.6	27	0326	1.6
	0920	3.5	11.5	1108		3.5	11.5
TH				MO	1833	1.6	5.2
	JE			LU			
24		0120	0.7	2.3	28	0019	2.2
	0949	3.5	11.5	0421		2.0	6.6
FR				TU	1132	3.4	11.2
	VE			MA	1905	1.2	3.9
25		0159	0.9	3.0	29	0225	2.5
	1016	3.5	11.5	0530		2.4	7.9
SA	1735	2.3	7.5	WE	1156	3.4	11.2
SA	1925	2.3	7.5	ME	1941	0.8	2.6

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Sunday, Dec. 19th at 10:00am

Blue Christmas:
Thursday, Dec. 16. 4:45 pm

Christmas Eve – Festival of Lessons and Carols:
Friday, Dec. 24th at 4:00pm

Christmas Eve – Candlelight and Incense – The first Eucharist of Christmas:
Friday, Dec. 24th at 10:30pm

Christmas Day – Christmas Eucharist: **Saturday, Dec. 25th at 11:00am**

The first Sunday After Christmas: **Morning Prayer, Sunday, Dec. 26th at 10:00am**



*"O Holy Child of Bethlehem,
 descend to us, we pray."*



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YOUTH PROJECTS

Reading crazed class nets \$2,000 for food bank

Centre School kids complete read-a-thon

BY EMELIE PEACOCK
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

For fifth and sixth graders at Salt Spring Centre School, reading is a way to relieve stress, be creative in your own head and also raise thousands of dollars for a local cause.

The seven-member class got together ahead of the holidays and decided to read as much as possible and gather pledges along the way from friends and family. The read-a-thon brought in over \$2,000 and the class decided the Salt Spring Island Harvest Food Bank was the place these hard-earned dollars should go.

Olivia Novak brought the idea to her class, having done her first read-a-thon on her own when she was 10. Living in Vancouver at the time, she remembered feeling sad, guilty and unable to do anything to help people experiencing homelessness in her city. She decided to act



PHOTO BY EMELIE PEACOCK

When they're not reading up a storm, Salt Spring Centre School Grade 5-6 class members get silly. They are, from top left, Roisin Gill, teacher Daniel Squizzato, Harley Greenwood and Olivia Novak. Bottom row, from left, are Wresten Cutshall, Julia Bowland, Aliza Lindzon-Graham and Kobe Nash.

by reading 11 books and gathering \$1,000 in pledges, with a matching donor who brought her donation to Vancouver's Covenant House to \$3,000.

Olivia's little sister Emilie, 8, also got on board this year and read Judy Blume's Fudge books, as well

as The Nevergirls. The sisters raised \$1,803.

"We're like a reading family," said Olivia. "We usually read with our mom, stay up super late and read by the fire . . . My dad's reading too."

Everyone in the class went about

choosing the books they liked and gathering funds their own way.

"I'm not the fastest reader, I just like to enjoy the book," said Aliza Lindzon-Graham, who read The Hidden Kingdom, book three in the Wings of Fire series, every night before bed. Each chapter brought in \$2 for the read-a-thon.

Julia Bowland gathered \$2 per book, reading 10 books in four short days. Bowland prefers to read graphic novel format as "it gives you more context because there's more pictures, and it gives you the whole story but with less words."

"It's like you're living in the book, it's like you're seeing it happen almost. It's really, really calming and it kind of feels like a TV show but better," said Olivia Novak of her joy of reading. Among other books, she read the Hunger Games series, as well as Divergent and The One and Only Ivan.

The fundraising effort was a collaborative one, said teacher Daniel Squizzato, as was choosing where the funds should go.

"It's local and many different

types of people, including kids, benefit," he said of the reason the class chose the food bank.

"It's such a small population, we're going to make a pretty big impact," Lindzon-Graham said.

"It feels really good, and I'm happy I did it," said Emilie Novak. "I want them to feel like we do, to have a home . . . because no one should feel like they're not wanted or something."

For people wondering what books to stick their noses into over the holiday, Lindzon-Graham's reading list may inspire. She'll be reading The Marrow Thieves, The Hobbit and the fourth Wings of Fire book.

Olivia said she hopes to turn the read-a-thon into a yearly tradition. And for people who might be feeling a little helpless with what is happening in the world or in their community, she recommends to "just try."

"It doesn't always have to work but you can at least try, then you'll know. If you never try then you'll never know what you can do," she said.

RECREATION

Trail and nature club invites newcomers to January activities

AGM on Jan. 27

SUBMITTED BY SSI TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB

Salt Spring residents are invited to get moving in the new year by joining the outings of the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club on Tuesday mornings.

Newcomers are always welcome and can take part in three events before deciding whether to join. (Double vaccinations are recommended.) People can sign up at saltspringtnc.ca.

Tuesday, Jan. 4

- Hike: Bob Keates will lead a hike in Channel Ridge starting at the Epron Road access point. Meet at ArtSpring at 9:45 a.m. to carpool or at 10 a.m. at the top of Epron Road.

- Walk: Meet at ArtSpring at 10 a.m. to carpool for a walk on Mount Belcher with Charles Kahn as leader. This interesting walk involves some climbing and will take about three hours. Bring a lunch.

Tuesday, Jan. 11

- Hike: Carron Carson will lead a hike to the summit of Baynes Peak, starting at the trailhead at Armand Way. Meet at ArtSpring at 9:45 a.m. or at 10 a.m. at the end of Armand Way.

- Walk: Sue Lehmann will lead a walk in the Mount Tuam Ecological Reserve to the waterfall. Some sections are steep and there will likely be wet areas. Leave from ArtSpring at 10 a.m. or meet the leader at 10:15 a.m. at the end of Maxham Road (left fork at end of Isabella Point Road) to start the uphill climb.

- Ramble: Bryan will lead. Meet at Centennial Park at 10 a.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 18

- Hike: Charles Kahn will lead a hike in Mill Farm area up to Mount Bruce. Meet at 9:45 a.m. at ArtSpring or 10 a.m. at Drummond Park.

- Walk: Meet at ArtSpring at 10 a.m. to pick a leader and decide on a walk.

- Ramble: Meet at Centennial Park at 10 a.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 25

- Hike: Join Ashley Hilliard on a moderate hike in Ruckle Park. We'll take the shoreline trail to Yeo

Point and return by one of the inland trails. Meet to carpool from ArtSpring at 9:45 a.m. or at 10:05 a.m. at the heritage buildings parking lot in Ruckle Park. Some slippery sections to be expected.

- Walk: Meet at ArtSpring at 10 a.m. to pick a leader and decide on a walk.
- Ramble: Ann H. will lead. Meet at Centennial Park at 10 a.m.

AGM

On Thursday, Jan. 27, the club's annual general meeting takes place at the Lions Club's Hart Bradley Hall at 103 Bonnet Ave. (at the corner of Drake Road). Lunch, which begins at 11:30 a.m., is provided by the club. After lunch, we will review club reports, elect a new board and discuss club business. RSVP for the lunch to secretary.stnc@gmail.com.

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JAN MACPHERSON

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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.

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Christmas Corner

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Christmas Corner

Salt Spring Community Christmas Dinner

AT COMMUNITY SERVICES
December 25th • 3pm-6pm

This year SSI United Church is partnering with SS Community Services for a 2021 "take-out" style Christmas meal. 100 dinners will be served with cheer & hot drinks!

All are welcome!

For your Christmas dinner, come to Community Services on Ganges Hill
268 Fulford-Ganges Road (Yellow Sub Entrance)
Additional parking is available next door at Kingdom Hall.

On behalf of our SSI volunteers, seasonal blessing to all!

Auto Dealers

Coming Events

Salt Spring Community Christmas Dinner

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December 25th • 3pm-6pm

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The festive season is accompanied by two very significant events this year. This first is serious Saturn in Aquarius forming its final square to original and unorthodox Uranus in Taurus. The conjunction of these two gas giants occurred in 1988 and this marks the beginning of its final quarter which extends to 2032.... Since Uranus and Saturn share rulership of Aquarius, this already dynamic aspect is that much more powerful. The thing is that square aspects reveal energies at cross purposes. The outer synchronicity is a flailing economy on a global scale. Whatever the exact causes, there it is. Some assert that it will ultimately lead to worldwide economic reform manifesting as the end of Fiat currency (money as we know it) and the takeover of digital currency, as with Cryptocurrency, perhaps. The other major event is Jupiter entering Pisces on December 28 but more on that next week. What stands out is the fact that Jupiter and Saturn are the social planets symbolic of norms, customs and traditions and Uranus is the trans-social revolutionary.

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)
Your ability to be fully present in the moment to enjoy the festive season will vie with the pressures of larger fiscal realities. Like an earthquake that is being felt across the entire planet, it is hard to idly ignore it. Looking to the future with optimism will require deep acceptance and determination to adapt.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)
You yearn to see and understand the bigger picture and the deeper meaning of the story. Change is the perennial keyword and tends to be antithetical to your nature. Solidity and endurance are keywords for you. Fortunately, Uranus in your sign indicates your willingness to enter new territory. The main question is: what constitutes fertile ground?

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 21)
Deep changes continue to rumble. Positively, these have manifested as a steady process of empowerment over the years. Jupiter in Aquarius has contributed to this expansion and as it enters Pisces, you will be challenged to endure a cycle of expansive contraction. For now, trust the metamorphic process occurring both within and without.

Cancer (Jun 22 – Jul 22)
Some cycles of change are much deeper and powerful than others and by now you are quite familiar with and aware of this fact. Yet, perhaps these have been positive for you, subject to deeper karmas and integral progress over the years. Either way, the process continues but the first major reprieve in a while is dawning now.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 23)
A cycle of expansion and commitment that began in late 2020 continues yet will now take a definite turn towards deeper waters. These are destined to include spiritual themes of death and rebirth, transcendence and faith. This is actually an invitation to embrace the mystical side of your nature; to acknowledge your soul source.

Virgo (Aug 24 – Sep 22)
One way or another, you have been and continue to undergo an important learning cycle. It has and continues to require you to face some fears and/or uncomfortable realities, but there are some victories indicated too. Now, the shift is towards creative expansion, which includes gaining the attention of a wider audience.

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 23)
Despite a continuing process of deep, complex and sobering changes close to home and with family, you have also likely experienced a steady increase of creative confidence. Some of this has and continues to result as financial themes require your full attention. Some other big tests are fast approaching and will require faith and emotional self-control.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
Many thoughts, ideas, plans, schemes and dreams are tumbling in your mind. Your confidence levels may have vacillated in 2021, but shifts are occurring producing new opportunities. Practical ambitions and creative aspirations will guide you to lay fuller claim to your gifts, talents and resources. Focus to recognize your own assumptions and projections.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)
Asserting a strong lead to establish a whole new foundation continues. Your confidence levels are destined to rise in 2022, so focus to take full advantage. The more committed you are to learn new skills or simply to explore new horizons, the better. Changes in your lifestyle are ideal and likely and include new financial commitments.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)
A surge of energy and determination has already been activated and will grow steadily over the coming weeks. Your focus will get both stronger and sharper. It remains that you have to do your part and do not expect handouts or free passes. However, opportunities may come from who you know at least as much as from what.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 19)
Capricorn time is one of inner retreat for you. Even if you are out-and-about, a reflective, contemplative, meditative urge pulls. Of course, other factors may counter. This year, a strong rebellious streak is present adding a philosophical and analytical emphasis. Progressively, your meditations will deepen and you may emerge more illumined and aware.

Pisces (Feb 20 – Mar 20)
Mars in Sagittarius is sounding trumpets summoning personal power. Practical and professional interests lend a sobering element to the festive season this year. Positively, you could actually accomplish a lot. Jupiter re-entering your sign on the eve of the new year will activate an expansive and adventurous spirit that will grow steadily through to spring.

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RCMSAR

Station leader's kindness prompts donation



PHOTO BY WENDY SQUIRRELL

RCMSAR Station 25 leader Ken Squirrell at his wife Wendy's Saturday market booth, where he talked to a Vancouver man about a search and rescue experience.

Visitor expresses appreciation for marine rescue services

BY ELLEN VESTERDAL
RCMSAR 25

Ken Squirrell, the leader of Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue (RCMSAR) station 25, recently had an encounter that our group wants to share.

Squirrell was working at his booth at the Salt Spring Saturday Market, when Claudio Grubner from Vancouver approached him. He noticed Squirrell because he was wearing his RCMSAR jacket and hat. They got to talking, and Claudio purchased a plant holder. This is all a very normal experience for Squirrell, as people come by to talk with him and purchase ceramic items that his wife, Wendy, makes. What was not so usual is that Grubner offered to donate to the RCMSAR, Salt Spring Unit. Here is why.

Grubner had a story to tell, and Ken was happy to listen. That's what makes him such a good station leader and vendor: he is a good listener. The story is about his boat, his son and danger averted.

Grubner keeps his boat at Sewell's Marina, in Horseshoe Bay. His 21-year-old son wanted to do his yearly outing with his friends. Using his dad's boat, he was going to go to Bowen Island for dinner with his friends and then return. This is all very normal, except . . . the boys didn't return.

Naturally, Grubner was very worried. He called the restaurant and found out that they had left by 7 p.m. but were still not back, or so he thought. He kept calling his son's cell phone, but there was no answer. He called the Marine Search and Rescue, and SAR alerted the BC Ferries so they could keep a look out. No luck. Finally, by almost 10 p.m., he drove over to the marina and found that his boat was there, safe and sound – and there was no sign of the young men. As it turns out, the cell phone had died, and his son had gone out, totally unaware that his dad was worried and looking for him. When they finally made contact, he tore a strip off him and made new rules. Nonetheless, he was very grateful for the help of the RCMSAR.

Because Squirrell was so kind to listen to his story, Grubner came back later with his wife to make a substantial donation. Squirrell's kindness and

willingness to listen inspired him to do it right then and there. He really appreciated that Squirrell put everything aside to listen. The service he received from the RCMSAR was extraordinary and he appreciated it, but for Grubner and his wife, Rebecca, it was that Squirrell listened.

If you have a story to tell, we would love to hear it. And, of course, we are happy to receive any amount of donation. You will receive a tax receipt and our undying gratefulness. And you will have helped to make boating safer in our area.

Donations can be sent to the Gulf Islands Marine Search and Rescue Society at PO Box 782, Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 1A0, or contact RCMSAR member Tim Slaney at tslaney@telus.net.

what's on this week



<p>Wed. Dec. 22</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Music Bingo. Wednesdays at Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Festival of Trees. Bring food bank donations and admire decorated Christmas trees in the Harbour House Hotel lobby.</p> <p>ONLINE</p> <p>Daniel Lapp's 18th Annual Home for Christmas Concert. An online, cross-country, multi-media celebration premiering via the Victoria Conservatory of Music's YouTube channel. 7 p.m. See https://vcm.bc.ca/event/daniel-lapps-home-for-christmas/</p>	<p>Thur. Dec. 23</p> <p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>Open Mic and Jam. At the Legion. 7 p.m.</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Festival of Trees. See Wednesday listing.</p> <p>Fri. Dec. 24</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Christmas Eve Service. At Salt Spring United Church. 7 p.m.</p> <p>Festival of Lessons and Carols. All Saints By-the-Sea. 4 p.m.</p> <p>Candlelight and Incense. The First Eucharist of Christmas service at All Saints at 10:30 p.m.</p> <p>Festival of Trees. See Wednesday listing.</p>	<p>Sat. Dec. 25</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Salt Spring Community Christmas Dinner. SS United Church and SS Community Services partner for a take-out style dinner for 100 people, with cheer and hot drinks, at Community Services, Yellow Sub entrance. 3 to 6 p.m.</p> <p>Christmas Eucharist. Service at All Saints. 11 a.m.</p> <p>Festival of Trees. See Wednesday listing.</p> <p>Sun. Dec. 26</p> <p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>Buck Dodgers. Live music at Moby's Pub. 8:30 p.m. to 12 a.m.</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Festival of Trees. See Wednesday listing.</p>	<p>Mon. Dec. 27</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Festival of Trees. See Wednesday listing.</p> <p>Tues. Dec. 28</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Trivia Tuesday. At Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Festival of Trees. See Wednesday listing.</p> <p>Wed. Dec. 29</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Festival of Trees. See last Wednesday's listing.</p> <p>Music Bingo. See last Wednesday's listing.</p>
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The Fritz is closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Then **Julia** shows on Sunday, Dec 26 at 3 and 7 p.m., and Monday-Tuesday, Dec. 27 and 28 at 7 p.m.
See www.thefritz.ca for more movie info. COVID-19 protocols, including vaccine card and mask requirements, and limited seating, in place.

EXHIBITIONS

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

EXHIBITIONS

- **Heather Webb** has artwork hanging at **Dragonfly Art Supplies** this month.
- **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** cafe through December.

EXHIBITIONS

- **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.



Driving under the influence: YOU HAVE EVERYTHING TO LOSE



DRUNK DRIVING: TRUE OR FALSE?

1. DRINKING COFFEE ACCELERATES THE METABOLIZING AND ELIMINATION OF ALCOHOL FROM THE BODY.

FALSE. Time is the only factor in sobering up. Getting some fresh air, having a nap, or taking a cold shower aren't any more effective than drinking coffee in eliminating alcohol.

2. ONLY 3 PERCENT OF ALCOHOL IS ELIMINATED THROUGH SWEAT.

TRUE. This means that busting some moves on the dance floor won't help you sober up more quickly.

3. NO MATTER HOW MANY DRINKS ARE CONSUMED DURING AN EVENING, ALL YOU NEED TO DO TO BE SAFE IS TO STOP DRINKING AN HOUR BEFORE DRIVING.

FALSE. To respect allowable legal blood alcohol levels, it takes a lot longer than 60 minutes before being able to drive, especially if someone has been drinking for hours.

4. IT TAKES TWO HOURS TO ELIMINATE ALL ALCOHOL FROM THE BLOOD WHEN A BLOOD ALCOHOL RATE OF 0.07 HAS BEEN REACHED.

FALSE. It takes about five hours to eliminate all that alcohol from the blood.

5. ALCOHOL AFFECTS PERIPHERAL VISION, HEARING, THE CAPACITY TO EVALUATE DISTANCES, AND REFLEXES.

TRUE. All these factors mean that a person who has consumed alcohol has lower levels of concentration, poor coordination, and will likely be unable to react properly when faced with an obstacle.

5 THINGS YOU COULD LOSE AS A RESULT OF IMPAIRED DRIVING

Getting behind the wheel after consuming drugs or alcohol can have dire consequences. Here are five things you may lose as a result of this choice.

1. YOUR LICENCE

One potential penalty for driving under the influence is that your licence may get revoked. In some regions, first-time offenders are prohibited from driving for a period ranging from several months to a year.

2. YOUR MONEY

In addition to getting fined for the infraction, you'll need to pay for a lawyer. You can also expect to spend more on car insurance for many years to come. Additional expenses may be involved too. Depending on the circumstances, you may have to settle up with a victim or pay into a compensation fund. You may also need to pay for a breath alcohol ignition interlock device.

3. YOUR CLEAN CRIMINAL RECORD

If you're found guilty of driving under the influence, you'll end up with a criminal record, which could complicate many facets of your life, from landing a job to travelling.

4. YOUR JOB

If your job requires you to operate a vehicle (for example, if you're a trucker, delivery person or taxi driver) you may be forced to leave it. This may also be the case if your employer demands that you have a clean criminal record.

5. YOUR LIFE

Impaired driving heightens your risk of being in an accident, and if you add poor road conditions to the equation, it could make matters worse. If you get into a car crash, you could be seriously injured or killed, or you could injure or kill your passengers or other road users.

If you plan to consume drugs or alcohol, make sure you have a safe way to get home. Call a taxi, hire an Uber or catch a ride with a friend.

**Keep Our Island Safe!
Don't Drink & Drive!**

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