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March 1, 2023

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Issue 9
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PHOTO BY GAIL SIJBERG

ROOTS TO GROW: Polly Orr and Nick Jones of the Grow Local initiative engage with the crowds attending the Seedy Saturday seed swap and sale at the Farmers' Institute. Based from The Root complex on Beddis Road, Grow Local is a collaborative program to support Indigenous food sovereignty, strengthen the local food system and share agricultural abundance. See more Seedy Saturday photos on page 12.

AFFORDABILITY

Island's living wage soars

Salt Spring tops region at \$24.36 per hour needed to meet basic expenses

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Salt Spring Island Foundation (SSIF) has released its report for 2022 analyzing living expenses, and working backwards has reached a number estimating a "living wage" for Salt Spring at an hourly amount of \$24.36.

That number is based on a hypothetical family of four — two parents, a four-year-old and a seven-year-old child — with both adults working full-time at 35 hours per week. Estimating expenses with these assumptions allows an apples-to-apples comparison with other municipalities. For example, a living wage in Metro Vancouver for this family would be \$24.08, and in Greater Victoria \$24.29.

The basic expenses in SSIF's analysis include a budget for food, clothing, rent, childcare, transportation and a small amount set aside for savings to cover illness or emergencies. The analysis also includes a modest amount for telecommunications — two cell-phone plans — and continuing education for the parents, the median cost of two online courses at Camosun College.

The report notes that "Earning the living wage does not enable a family to put away savings for retirement or a down payment for secure housing, to make a student loan or other debt payments, or to save for their children's education."

B.C.'s minimum wage currently sits at \$15.65. In 2018, the last time the living wage number was calculated for Salt Spring, minimum wage was \$12.65 and the living wage figure was \$20.95.

LIVING WAGE continued on 2



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PHOTO COURTESY WENDY WEBB

UNITED FOR OLD GROWTH: Petra Hasenfratz, left, and Cal Steel walk to the BC Legislature at Saturday's United for Old Growth rally in Victoria, two of a large contingent of Salt Spring Islanders who attended, with many riding the electric bus rented from the Gulf Islands School District. Salt Spring participants contributed beautiful hand-crafted trees made at workshops organized for that purpose, joining other costumes and artwork of species at risk and other creatures. Some rally attendees were thrilled with a surprise performance by Neil Young. The rally was organized to press for, among other things, the B.C. government to adopt all 14 recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review made public in 2020 and to halt all logging of at-risk old-growth forests and other areas suggested by First Nations.



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DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET
1 WE ME	0310	3.2	10.5	5	0524	3.2	10.5
	1902	0.9	3.0		1053	2.5	8.2
2 TH JE	0354	3.3	10.8	6	0542	3.2	10.5
	1955	0.9	3.0		1113	2.4	7.9
3 FR VE	0431	3.3	10.8	7	0557	3.2	10.5
	1019	2.7	8.9		1136	2.2	7.2
4 SA SA	1234	2.7	8.9	8	0611	3.1	10.2
	2042	0.9	3.0		1200	2.0	6.6
	0500	3.3	10.8		1727	2.8	9.2
	1035	2.6	8.5		2335	1.3	4.3
	1346	2.8	9.2				
	2122	0.8	2.6				

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FIRE RESISTANCE

Watershed fire project flows

Maxwell Lake watershed work aims to avoid 'catastrophic' wildfire and protect drinking water

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A collaboration between climate scientists and Salt Spring's largest water utility is yielding data — and a plan to improve both forest health and drinking water security for the island.

Trustees of the North Salt Spring Waterworks District (NSSWD) heard an update from Transition Salt Spring's Climate Adaptation Research Lab (CARL) scientist Ruth Waldick at their monthly meeting Thursday, Feb. 23, covering information collected upon — and current plans for — the Maxwell Lake Watershed.

NSSWD withdraws and treats water from Maxwell and St. Mary lakes, and has been partnered with CARL since early discussions with the water district's staff and trustees in 2021.

"At that time, I remember clearly," said Waldick. "Vaughn [Figueira, NSSWD's operations manager] said there were issues with sedimentation and nutrients — phosphorus in particular, we wanted to know where the sources were — and about the risk of fire."

So with data from public aerial imaging sources — and from small armies of volunteer scientists, often graduate students recruited for some on-the-ground learning — Waldick and CARL started cataloguing and mapping. The result is a living, often-updated picture — an increasingly precise understanding of the nature of the forest at every point on the watershed.

An extensive water sampling project has been critical to planning as well; a healthy forest surrounding a lake has an outsized impact on improving water quality. The hydrology phrase is "residence time" — the longer it takes for that fallen raindrop to reach the lake, the less sediment it carries with it. Drained wetlands and a criss-crossing network of planned or unintentional roads, ditches and drains has led to a lot of fast, sediment-filled water coursing down hillsides — a less optimal situation for the trees, according to Waldick.

"The faster the water moves through, the quicker the ground dries, adding another element of stress on the trees," said Waldick. "If we want to have robust, healthy trees, we need to make sure they have as much moisture as long as possible."

Looking across the map, you can see places where the trees are taller, or older, spots where large swaths of fallen timber dominate the ground cover, or sections where the underbrush is stunted by lack of light, where tall, nearly branchless trees have created a high canopy far above the forest floor.

The latter is cause for particular concern; there are many kinds of forest fires, of course, but few move as quickly as the kind that leap from one treetop to the next. So-called "crown fires" spread rapidly, largely due to their height. Well-exposed to winds, the flames and sparks jump between the tight and often interconnected branches uncontrollably.

On the map, dark red patches show these areas around the lake — Waldick showed photos of tall trees that looked like hydro poles, except for high, bushy branches blocking out the sun. There are some breaks between the high-ignition-risk areas — along high-voltage power lines, for example, or some stands of Garry Oak that naturally keep their distance from one another — but not nearly enough.

By way of comparison, within Mount Maxwell Provincial Park — where more natural growth has created distinct and separated patterns of disconnected canopies — there's less danger of one tree igniting the next. That's the model, according to Waldick — a forest that protects itself. In the watershed, it's going to need some help in the form of forest modification.

"What we want to do is create more 'patchiness' over time,"

said Waldick. "It introduces some fire resistance that is natural to the forest, and reduces the potential for catastrophic spread of fire. With our thinning we'll open gaps, which will also let more light in."

Left on their own, these high-canopy forests tend to eventually be out-competed by their neighbours; they are, arguably, dying. But waiting for the forest to heal itself means accepting that, sometimes, the natural process chooses fire — the worst outcome for nearby water users.

A large wildfire around a drinking-water lake — even if it miraculously spared the utility's equipment — would precipitate years of water too full of contaminants to effectively treat for drinking; when the vegetation holding soil in place burns, that soil flows downhill right alongside ash from the fire, contaminating the water and often contributing to harmful algae blooms.

More than half of Salt Spring gets its drinking water from lakes and streams.

Waldick said specifics vary, but the data show Salt Spring is getting more of our rain in the winter, and less of it in the summer — a shift that's predicted to be about 20 to 25 per cent over the next few decades. The more data that can be collected, the more accurate these models become — so the CARL team has set up 10 long-term monitoring sites at several points on the watershed, including some on private land.

"We have a commitment from Foxglove Farm, and sites on Greg Johnson's property to the east of the watersheds," said Waldick, "so we can understand the variety of things going on in the soils, the different forest types, why some areas look better than others."

The good news: more accurate data means CARL can target parts of the forest that really needs the work, and are more at more risk than others. Instead of changing the whole watershed, they could prioritize work, in manageable chunks.

"We want to focus on areas around trails," said Waldick, "because that is where people will be — and people start fires."

From there they analyzed fuel loads — the things that would take a careless spark and turn it into a disaster. The plan of attack begins with controlled thinning, and moves into some cutting-edge forest restoration and fuel management practices, working with graduate students — like bundling smaller downed timber and arranging it to mimic a fallen old-growth tree in how it holds moisture, accelerating decomposition and encouraging seedlings.

All that starts to restore the soils, said Waldick. "And when we open those patches, the trees get more light, they'll grow bigger, they'll get to the 'old growth' stage faster. We get more understory that is fire resistant, instead of just logs on the ground."

Despite utilizing notoriously affordable grad student labour — and some grants from sources like Environment and Climate Change Canada, and local sources like Transition Salt Spring and NSSWD itself — securing funding is ongoing work, according to Waldick. One idea to augment extant and incoming grant money has been to raise funds selling off material harvested from the thinning work — think of a solid-sawn heavy timber beam, and a homeowner knowing it exists specifically because of watershed protection and forest restoration.

Waldick is optimistic; grassroots support, particularly from neighbouring properties and an academic world eager for an outdoor laboratory, has been significant. NSSWD trustee Chris Dixon agreed, joining the rest of the board in gratitude.

"And it's important that people on Salt Spring understand the issues up there, what you people are doing, and how utterly critical it is," said Dixon. "We're undoing decades of poor forestry management."

"I think we've been very successful so far," said Waldick. "The volunteerism, the community contribution has been massive."

And, she added, from a climate change perspective, protecting the health of these forests may be "the single most important thing we can do on Salt Spring."

Report predicts rent costs will keep rising

LIVING WAGE
continued from 1

That represents an increase for both — the living wage has increased 15.1 per cent, and the minimum wage has increased 23.7 per cent — but

also illustrates a gap that suggests affordability remains elusive for wage workers.

"The high living wage rates highlight the need to simultaneously lift wages and lower the cost of living," according to SSIF, "particu-

larly the cost of housing."

The report concludes that, given a lack of "affordable and available" housing on-island, the cost of rent is likely to continue at a rate unaffordable to workers.

Data was gathered from

a number of government sources, as well as the foundation's own Vital Signs survey done last year.

The full report is available at the library, or can be accessed online at: ssifoundation.ca/livingwage2022.

TRANSPORTATION

Ferries get financial boost from province

\$500 million to head off large ticket price hikes

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A weekend press conference heralded half a billion dollars in new ferry funding, but offered few specifics on how that money would be used to keep fares from potentially skyrocketing.

Premier David Eby said the goal was to head off a likely increase in ticket prices, warning that recent submissions to the BC Ferries Commission had indicated a need for hikes of more than 10 per cent each year for four consecutive years — an unacceptable pressure on “families and small businesses who rely on BC Ferries,” he said.

“People would of course be paying more to ride the ferry,” said Eby, “but we would also see other prices rise as a result.”

Eby cited potential impacts to deliveries and increased costs for businesses, professional contractors and tradespeople who could in turn pass these costs on to consumers already hit hard by rising prices.

But while Eby and Min-



YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

Premier David Eby announces a \$500-million injection into BC Ferries at a Sunday news conference livestreamed on the government's YouTube channel.

ister of Transportation and Infrastructure Rob Fleming were adamant the \$500 million would be used to offset potential fare increases — possibly keeping them as low as three per cent, they said — questions about how much might be budgeted for fleet electrification or other specific cost-saving measures were skirted in favour of broad strokes. The final fares will, Fleming said, be determined by the ferry commissioner, not the province.

“So I don't have a breakdown,” said Fleming. “The capital side of BC Ferries operation is not the gov-

ernment of B.C.'s job, it's an independent company. The commissioner has a very important role to play in overseeing the credibility and the importance of the investments that are planned to be made by BC Ferries, and that's exactly what's going on right now as they negotiate a new performance term.”

The BC Ferries commissioner is expected to announce preliminary annual fare increases by the end of March, which will guide a four-year period beginning in April of next year; the final plan for increases will be published by Sept. 30.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Saturna, Reginald lands acquired

Conservancies succeed in fundraising drives

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Completion of another Gulf Islands land conservation campaign was announced last week.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC) said in a press release that it was able to protect the Fisher Bluffs property on Saturna Island, a 31.2-hectare (77.2-acre) site, “thanks to the generosity and support from the local community.”

The property is described as having “tremendous ecological value,” containing several sensitive ecosystems, including a wetland, shallow-soled grassland, herbaceous rocky bluffs and mature coniferous forests.

“The purchase of this property ensures that the land will never be developed or sold, protecting its ecosystems and biodiversity for its continuity,” states the NTBC.

In December the NTBC asked for public support to contribute the final \$50,000 of the purchase price needed.

Acquisition of the property adds to the non-profit's newest conservation complex on Saturna after 58.1 hectares (144 acres) of land called the Money Creek parcel was purchased in June of 2022.

On Salt Spring Island, a different conservation organization — the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) — last month

announced it had successfully raised the final \$500,000 needed to purchase a \$7-million 162-hectare (400-acre) parcel of south-end land near Reginald Hill.

The conservancy said local contributions helped make the fundraising drive a success and thanked everyone who contributed. Personnel also stressed the land is not currently available for the public to use.

“This land is not yet held by NCC. There is still more work to be done to transfer the lands into conservation. We look forward to providing an update in the spring when the acquisition phase of the project is completed,” said Steven Godfrey, west coast program director for the NCC. “In the meantime, we ask people to continue to respect the private properties of the family and the neighbours.”

NCC says its first priority will be to develop a conservation management plan for the property.

“The plan will identify and guide what activities will be necessary for and compatible with protecting biodiversity and natural systems on the land,” said NCC communications director Lesley Neilson. “This plan will take time to develop, and the team at NCC thanks islanders in advance for their patience as the planning process unfolds.”

The KELÁ_EKE Kingfisher Forest campaign led by the Raincoast Conservation Foundation and Pender Islands Conservancy also achieved its \$2.1-million goal to buy 18.2 hectares (45 acres) of ecologically valuable land before a Dec. 31, 2022 deadline.



**NORTH
SALT SPRING
WATERWORKS
DISTRICT**

NOTICE TO THE RATEPAYERS OF THE NORTH SALT SPRING WATERWORKS DISTRICT

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTION OF TWO TRUSTEES

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

8:00 a.m. February 8, 2023

12:00 noon March 7, 2023

Nomination of candidates for these positions must be made in writing, duly signed and seconded, by two duly qualified electors of the North Salt Spring Waterworks District with signature of agreement by the nominee, and delivered to the District Office at or before 12:00 noon, Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

NOMINATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FROM THE FLOOR

Both of the Trustee positions are for a three year term commencing at the Annual General Meeting, to be held on Thursday, April 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road and virtually through Microsoft Teams. The link will be posted on the district website for the public to join. The Trustee election will use both a mail-in ballot process for advanced voting, and an in person ballot process for voting on the day of the AGM. Voting packages for advanced voting will be mailed on March 22, 2023 and ballots must be received at the District office by April 25, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. In person voting on the day of the AGM will begin at 2:00 p.m. and end at 6:00 p.m. The results of the election will be announced at the AGM as soon as they are available.

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

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

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

NOTICE OF 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Ratepayers of the North Salt Spring Waterworks District will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 27, 2023 at the Community Gospel Chapel, 147 Vesuvius Bay Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, and virtually through Microsoft Teams (the link will be available on our website).

www.northsaltspringwaterworks.ca

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OPINION

2022 CCNA Awards
Gold - Best Special Section | Gold - Best Local Cartoon (Dennis Parker)
Silver - Best Editorial (Gail Sjuberg) | Bronze - Best Editorial Page

2022 BCYCNA Awards
Gold - Best All Round (for circulation Category C)
Bronze - Community Service Award



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EDITORIAL

Living under fire

It has become increasingly clear that the beleaguered forests around Maxwell Lake are one careless campfire from catastrophe.

Fortunately, the North Salt Spring Waterworks District and Transition Salt Spring's Climate Adaptation Research Lab (CARL) are partnering to improve fire resistance on district property, as a tool to secure freshwater quality and security for customers.

If scrupulous forest modification works, we think the Salt Spring Island Conservancy should take notes and follow suit.

The conservancy is, we feel, appropriately unenthusiastic about cutting down trees in forests under its charge through a covenant. A healthy forest habitat is rarely improved by human intervention; degradation CARL scientists have documented all came from human disruption.

THE ISSUE: Catastrophic fire risk

WE SAY: Improving forest health crucial

are incompatible with conservation goals that include habitat protection for species at risk. B.C.'s FireSmart program specifically advises against planting cedar or pine trees, for example.

CARL and lead scientist Ruth Waldick have suggested thinning the district's forest with a metaphorical scalpel, rather than an axe. Breaking up the patches of fire-prone forest canopy to let in light, promoting understory health through ground-level efforts like bundling small cut trees to mimic fallen big ones, and improving soil resilience and stability with careful stewardship — these are actions that can help the forest help itself, cutting fire risk without the wholesale cutting of trees.

That these kinds of targeted efforts also improve wildlife habitat should be more than just icing on the proverbial cake; it should also show the conservancy it is possible to live alongside protected forests without normalizing an unacceptable risk of wildfire and freshwater insecurity.

Homeowners have a community responsibility to do what they can to lessen the risk of fire spreading beyond their property to the rest of our island. No less should be asked of the stewards of conserved forests — particularly if doing so, very carefully, can protect the biodiversity we all value.

But unfortunately, sometimes an unhealthy forest left to its own devices will improve its health through wildfire — and a large one would have devastating effects on islanders.

We acknowledge this and promote fire risk mitigation efforts on private land, but management recommendations aimed at homeowners



Business challenges faced

BY ADAM OLSEN

SAANICH NORTH & THE ISLANDS MLA

I keep a pulse on the local business community through regular meetings with business leaders. At the end of British Columbia Chamber of Commerce Week in February, I invited the chambers in Saanich North and the Islands to a video call to hear how I can better advocate for them with the provincial government.

Our riding is diverse, as are the needs of the businesses. In addition to supporting the tourism economy with safer transportation routes and visitor friendly infrastructure, there was overwhelming agreement that workforce housing was the top priority across the peninsula and Southern Gulf Islands.

We have a range of housing needs — for frontline workers, skilled trades, healthcare, the technology sector. The Sidney commercial centre, and the Keating and West Sidney/North Saanich business parks generate more than a billion dollars of activity annually, making them critical contributors to the local and regional economy.

The enterprises in these commercial and industrial zones produce necessary tax revenue for our municipal governments, jobs for our community members and vibrant neighbourhoods for people of all ages.

Currently, thousands of workers commute more than 40 kms to get to work each day. On the Southern Gulf Islands, businesses are struggling because their workers have been priced out of the real estate market, and many rental units have been turned into short-term vacation rentals.

Add all the factors challenging local business competitiveness together and it poses a significant risk that I and my colleagues in elected office must understand and

respond to.

Earlier in the week, my BC Green Caucus colleague Sonia Furstenau and I met with the BC Chamber of Commerce

board chair Greg Thomas, and president and CEO Fiona Famulak. They visited the legislature to meet with MLAs to advocate for businesses.

Over the last few years, the resilience of businesses across the province has been tested with the global pandemic. The ensuing inflation and rising costs on business has added to their challenges. Many businesses have closed their doors, and many more are threatened.

The BC Chamber pointed to increasing wages, the employer health tax, PST, mandatory benefits such as paid sick leave, and delays of project permitting.

I left these meetings with a fresh reminder of the balance we must strike to ensure that both the workers get paid fairly and have the benefits they need to keep them safe and supported at work, with the reality of the entrepreneurs and investors in our communities who create the jobs, hopefully close to home.

Lastly, a reminder of my upcoming Public Circle Community Meetings in March. Please join me to discuss topics relating to the provincial government. Community meetings are open to the public and completely non-partisan. The Salt Spring Island meeting is on Friday, March 17 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Fulford Hall.

Salt Spring's CRD director Gary Holman will join me to highlight, update and answer questions on the work we do together to represent and support Gulf Islands communities.

See saanichnorthandtheislands.com/ events for other island meeting dates this month.

VIEWPOINT

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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Will you/did you attend the Salt Spring Film Festival?

☐ Yes ☐ No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Have you ever tried saving your own seeds?

32 73
NO YES

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.

ISLAND VOICES

Letters to the editor are welcome, but writers are requested to keep their submissions to 350 words or less. For details about deadlines, and word limits for the Viewpoint and other longer opinion pieces, contact the editor at the email address below, or phone 250-537-9933. All submissions may be edited for brevity, legality and taste. Writers are asked to provide a telephone number where they may be reached during the day, and to sign letters with their full name. Letters published do not necessarily reflect the views of Driftwood Publishing Ltd., its staff or advertisers. Send letters to: news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

SALT SPRING SAYS

THE CIRCLE EDUCATION ASKED:

In light of the Salt Spring Film Fest and International Women's Day, what movie about an inspiring woman or with a strong female lead is your favourite?

ALICIA HERBERT



I was awe-struck by Buffy Sainte-Marie: Carry It On. This film tells a strong story of an Indigenous woman connecting with her family, and it also is a brave story for all women about standing up for our beliefs throughout our lifetimes.

DAN ADAIR



Erin Brockovich. I love that it is based on a true story and that Erin, despite being a single mother and not highly educated, is a powerful heroine who sticks up for what she believes in and works hard for everyone she cares about.

MARYANN BIRD



Women Talking with Sarah Polley as director. It features a group of women, from old to young, facing a difficult decision after years of trauma. Their wisdom and resilience, along with their compassion for each other, was so touching and impressive.

ERIC DEMPSTER



A Town Like Alice. A quite dated movie and mini-series based on the book written by Nevil Shute. The story is about the heroism of an "ordinary" young English woman who is taken prisoner in Malaysia by the Japanese during WWII.

ADELE MARK



The Mirror has Two Faces. Barbra Streisand is my idol. In an age of women feeling they need to change everything about themselves to fit into an unrealistic beauty standard, this film drives home the message that beauty is subjective and that it's better to always be yourself.

LETTERS to the editor

Cabinet minister visits island

As Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, I have the honour of meeting British Columbians and learning about what matters most to them.

There is nothing I love more than visiting communities to hear first-hand about your concerns and opportunities you see. This week I'll be visiting Salt Spring Island, territory of the Coast Salish peoples. This beautiful island boasts world-class art galleries,

wineries and craft breweries, but it isn't immune to issues troubling other B.C. communities.

Across our province, people are having conversations about public safety. I'm visiting Salt Spring to learn more about how my government can make this island's communities stronger and safer.

In addition to addressing public safety, we are committed to supporting the hospitality and legal cannabis industries through practical measures as we rebound from the pandemic. For example, we have extended temporary patio licences allowing British Columbians to

enjoy our world-class food and beverages while enjoying the scenic patio views and we continue to look for ways to support growth of the legal cannabis market while providing safe and accessible options for British Columbians.

With the recent introduction of a licence for farm-gate sales and the public engagement on cannabis-consumption spaces, understanding public opinion on cannabis-related hospitality and agri-tourism activities is a practical next step. The feedback in this report will play an important role in the development of provincial policies.

We're committed to supporting growth of a strong, diverse hospitality and legal cannabis industry alongside Indigenous partners, stakeholders and British Columbians.

We are taking action to build safe, healthy communities for everyone. To hear more and to share your perspectives, please join me at the ASK Salt Spring meeting at the Ganges Fire Hall (105 Lower Ganges Rd.) on Friday, March 3 at 11 a.m.

MIKE FARNWORTH,
B.C. MINISTER OF PUBLIC SAFETY
AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

MORE LETTERS continued on 6

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"We want to focus on areas around trails because that is where people will be — and people start fires."

RUTH WALDICK, TRANSITION SALT SPRING 'CARL SCIENTIST

Pursuit of immortality gets easier every day

I read recently that science is on the verge of curing old age. In fact, the first person to live for 1,000 years is already among us, according to Dr. Aubrey de Grey, a biomedical gerontologist.

I'm prepared to bet it's not me. There are already days when I certainly feel 1,000 years old, but I'd be content if Dr. de Grey could see me through to my 150th birthday without the inevitable indignities of getting old.

The thing is, what does "curing" old age actually entail? There's no point in being 1,000 years old if they can't control nose hairs and eyebrows, nor do I much relish the prospect of a 150-year-old bladder or prostate, much less a 1,000-year-old one, so I'm assuming conquering old age will mean sorting out all the bits that invariably need replacing after 50 or so years.

I've thoroughly researched Dr. de Grey — and didn't understand a single word he said. The only thing I can tell you is that he has a very long beard and looks more like Methuselah than a man of science, so it could be that he's on to something. Either that, or he's totally bonkers.

(Incidentally, Methuselah, according to the Bible, was 969 years old when he died. That is now thought to be a mis-translation, and he was in fact 969 lunar months old, a measly 78 years. If you can't trust the Bible to get things right, what can you trust?)

In two weeks, I'll be 73 and it's true that were I a 73-year-old Biblical chap I'd be venerated but most likely dead. The Bible may promise three score and ten, but if you made it to just two score and ten in those days, you'd have still cheated death by half a score.

But I'm fully invested in the 21st century and as a nod to my pursuit of great age, I bought myself a blood pressure monitor with my Christmas Amazon gift cards.



Paul McElroy
+ ANOTHER THING

I'm not sure if taking your blood pressure every 30 minutes passes as a hobby, but for my birthday I have asked for a microscope and a small pathology lab. I already have an impressive collection of COVID test kits because they are free, not that I need them since I am vaccinated to the eyeballs and already looking forward to the next dose, which will also be free. I know there are still a few hapless souls out there who cling to the belief that the vaccine rots your brain, makes your heart explode and eventually turns you into a Brussels sprout, but that's their problem, and since I'm probably on the shortlist to live to be 1,000 years old, I'm going to need all the help genetics has to offer, to which end I decided it was time I knew what blood group I belong to.

I can't begin to tell you how disappointed I was to discover that I am a bog-standard O positive, which is so common you can probably buy it in two-litre bottles from Pharmasave.

I'd hoped for something more exotic, but when your middle name is Average it's the kind of disappointment you learn to live with, and in any case, the opportunities to brag about your blood group are few and far between. "Hello, my name's Kevin and I'm AB negative . . ."

It cuts both ways though. There is a handful of unlucky people with Rhesus Null "golden" blood, which makes them very special but also entirely likely to die

if they need a blood transfusion or organ transplant, while we everyday O-positive folk can most likely source spare body parts at Canadian Tire.

Meanwhile, my pursuit of immortality has become a lot simpler with the arrival of BC Health's online app. Did you know that you can access the results of every blood test, urine sample and other more delicate investigations less suited to inclusion in a family newspaper? And once accessed you can spend long, happy hours Googling the results to see just how close you came to having something unspeakable or, conversely, how revoltingly healthy you are. Red blood cells, for instance. There are roughly 30 trillion in the human body, but if you're, say, a bit anemic, it can be half that number, which begs the question . . . who counts them?

That's not the only question begged by the inestimable folks in a pathology lab. Do they squabble over an especially interesting sputum sample or a urine specimen that shows promise? Do they take work home with them when a particularly challenging flask of blood presents itself?

Other aspects of the medical profession have long puzzled me. I can understand why a bright young doctor fresh out of medical school would aspire to be a heart or brain surgeon, but which of them wakes up with an overwhelming desire to become a proctologist? Or a urologist? It seems the kind of skill set more appropriate to a vet until you consider just how invaluable their expertise is, so I am infinitely grateful that some clever young men and women make it their business to get to the bottom of my problems.

And who knows, a thousand years from now we may not need bottoms at all.

paulmcelroy@shaw.ca



PHOTO BY ANNA SZUL

DELIGHT: Performing artist Isabelle Kirouac engages with the audience at Mahon Hall for Salt Spring Arts' free Family Day event called Habitats on Feb. 20. The packed house enjoyed Kirouac's show presented with Nayana Fielkov, a post-show Q&A, photo booth, and other activities and snacks.

CRD tax hike now at 5.6%

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Board votes on its final 2023 budget on March 15. The proposed final 2023 CRD/CRHD (Capital Region Hospital District) requisition is \$7.64 million, a 5.6 per cent increase over 2022, excluding taxes and fees paid by area-specific CRD water and waste treatment facilities on Salt Spring Island.

The provisional requisition increase for the CRD and CRHD, summarized in my Driftwood article of Sept. 14, 2022, was 3.5 per cent, similar to the average yearly increase during the past four-year term. The main contributing factors were, and still are:

- full-year costs to PARC of leasing/operating the Salt Spring Island Multi Space (middle school)
- COVID-related impacts on swimming pool and other PARC fees, as well as transit ridership and fares
- continued library staffing increase as volunteer numbers decline
- higher costs of liquid waste trucking/disposal.

Historically high inflation (currently about six per cent) significantly increased cost pressures. Negotiated CRD staff wage and salary increases were more than double assumed in the provisional budget. The one-time and ongoing cost of the voter-approved Local Community Commission (LCC) elections (to be held May 27) alone accounts for a 1.5 per cent tax increase). BC Transit maintenance fees for our newer buses coming this April will be higher, which added to the cost and requisition pressures for the final budget. Salt Spring will also contribute modestly to a new (voter-approved) geese management service and increased funding for the Aboriginal Homelessness Coalition.

Offsetting these cost increases somewhat has been the reduced cost of the fire dispatch service, now provided by Saanich. The requisition for Salt Spring's community economic development service was reduced by deferring hiring of a full-time coordinator, while still allowing funding for special projects and community organizations engaged in food security and beautification of Ganges. The requisition for the grant in aid service, which incurred surpluses in 2021 and 2022, was reduced somewhat. Devolution of Saturday Market management to a local non-profit group and related requisition increases, anticipated in the provisional budget, was delayed due to uncertainties regarding post-Covid vendor participation.

Special provincial government funding has mitigated COVID-related transit and PARC revenue impacts, but is now almost fully allocated. While transit and PARC revenues are recovering, COVID impacts still linger.

The "average" Salt Spring residence was assessed at \$1.1 million in 2023, almost a 13 per cent increase over 2022. Assessed values on Salt Spring increased at roughly the same rate as for CRD as a whole, meaning that unlike in 2022, our share of the costs of region-wide services remains the same, with no related requisition impact.

The 2023 CRD requisition per "average" residential property of \$97 per month (versus \$92 per



Gary Holman
CRD DIRECTOR'S
REPORT

month in 2022), in addition to fees for some services, funds a range of regional, sub-regional and local services and amenities, such as: affordable housing, health facilities, regional and local parks, climate action, building inspection, recreation facilities, our library, the arts, grants in aid, liquid waste, residential recycling, public trans-

it, pedestrian/cycling infrastructure, emergency planning and tele-communications, fire dispatch, community economic development, livestock injury compensation and Fernwood dock.

As in most municipalities, commercial and industrial tax rates are higher (typically much higher than in unincorporated electoral areas) than for residential properties.

It should also be noted that Salt Spring has benefited greatly in the past term from over \$30 million in grants and funding commitments directly from the CRD, or flowing through CRD from senior governments, including:

- \$3.74 million from Capital Region Hospital District for the new Lady Minto emergency department
- \$300,000 in PARC funding, in addition to staff-negotiated donations from the landowner and Salt Spring Island Foundation to acquire the Mount Maxwell community park
- CRD Regional Housing funding for the Croftonbrook project
- continued CRD funding to support free residential recycling
- over \$2 million in senior government infrastructure funding for a new CRD Maliveau sewage treatment plant and Salt Spring's first large scale composting facility
- BC Housing's commitment to fully fund the capital and operating costs of 28 units of supported housing on CRD's Drake Road property
- \$3.6 million in federal gas tax funding for local infrastructure projects, including affordable housing and our new fire hall
- Ministry of Transportation funding for the repaving of Ganges hill with widened shoulder bike lanes, plus \$490,000 for the Booth Canal-Central pathway
- almost \$2 million from the province to PARC for shared recreation/daycare space at the Rainbow Road swimming pool, Centennial Park upgrades and the Bishops Walk pathway
- \$72,000 in new provincial funding to help replace swimming pool heat pumps and also support continuation of Transition Salt Spring's many climate action initiatives.

Note that in the future, the Local Community Commission (which includes the CRD director) will be making budget decisions for 11 local CRD services (including those now overseen by four island-wide commissions), and advising the director on three additional local services.

I will be presenting the final CRD budget proposal in the March 10 ASK Salt Spring session at SIMS from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. As always, please contact me at directorss@crd.bc.ca with any questions or comments.

a decade to train for competitive and recreational running. It is also used for local school track meets and provided a good training site for a team from GISS last year, allowing some talented young runners to set their sights on provincial championships.

A proposed walking path around the park's perimeter, while a nice addition, does not support the needs of Salt Spring's many runners. Portlock's track is also known as a safe place for elderly walkers to enjoy a flat, traffic-free cardio workout.

I am concerned that the CRD's plan to remove the track altogether is unjustified and would be a considerable loss to the community. I hope an upgraded site master plan will include the running track and provide a multi-sports and recreation facility that will accommodate all Salt Spring and visiting athletes well into the future.

SUSAN GORDON,
COACH, SALT SPRING SNEAKERS RUNNING CLUB

MORE LETTERS continued on 12

Capital Regional District



Notice of Meeting

Capital Regional District Board 2023 Financial Plan Bylaw Approval

A meeting of the Capital Regional District Board, including budget discussion for 2023, will be held:

Date: Wednesday, March 15, 2023
Time: 1:00 pm
Place: CRD Headquarters, 6th Floor Boardroom
625 Fisgard Street, Victoria, BC



OUTREACH DIRECTOR WANTED

To oversee the
Salt Spring Active
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this summer.

Part time position - details at
www.islandpathways.ca/outreach/

Let's Talk Supportive Housing on Salt Spring Island



BC Housing Community Information Sessions

Join us to learn more about temporary and permanent supportive housing projects on Salt Spring Island.

Online Community Information Session

Wednesday, March 8, 2023
4 - 6 pm

RSVP: [SSI-Community.eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)



Community Open House

Thursday, March 16, 2023
4 - 6 pm drop-in
Salt Spring Island Lions Club
103 Bonnet Avenue



MORE LETTERS

continued from 5

Don't remove track

I completed the survey regarding Portlock Park and the CRD/PARC's plan for reconfiguring the site (GetInvolved.crd.bc.ca/Portlock-Park).

I regularly use the track at Portlock for running and walking workouts, and I'm familiar with the usage by all ages, each day and at all times.

While the survey allows enough space to voice one's opinion, I was highly disappointed that the multiple-choice question about which activities the respondent participates in while attending Portlock Park did not mention running! My heart sank as it seems the entities in control of the site are unaware that the Salt Spring Sneakers running club, and many other unaffiliated runners on the island, have been using the 400-metre oval track for more than



ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT

VISUAL ARTS

Residency artists enliven community



PHOTO COURTESY SSA AIR

Joyce Majiski, the Salt Spring Arts Artist in Residence from 2020, studying the sea in Haines, Alaska last summer.

Joyce Majiski returns to island for film fest; animation the focus of next AiR guest

BY MARGARET DAY
SALT SPRING ARTS AIR PROGRAM

As the pandemic began three years ago, Yukon artist and environmental activist Joyce Majiski was almost halfway through her Salt Spring Arts Artists in Residence (AiR) residency.

Majiski's residency was both one of the most popular with our community and one of the longest projects of all those we have supported. It involved the life-size carved replication of every bone in the skeleton of a humpback whale stored here on Salt Spring. Majiski used as her material the awful pink and blue styrofoam waste that tosses up on our west coast shores.

Despite the difficulties and restrictions imposed by COVID we were able to arrange for the work in its

unassembled state to be seen by the community. Crated and sent to Whitehorse it formed the centrepiece of a very large installation exhibited at the Yukon Arts Centre, which opened in December 2020. At this weekend's film festival Majiski returns to Salt Spring for the March 5 showing of *Song of the Whale*, the documentary short made while she was on the island.

Film has often been a component of an AiR residency. In 2019, documentarian Dianne Whelan took a winter break from trekking across Canada and came here for a chance to edit some of the footage made on this epic six-year journey. Sarah Genge was here last year to work on the documentary she is making about the town of Wells, B.C. Fraser McCallum's research during his stay in 2016 resulted in *To Remain Unconnected*, which probes the regional context of Salt Spring and how back-to-the-land lifestyles have been impelled to adapt to increasing tourism and real estate speculation.

Now in its seventh year, 22 individual artists and three large

groups have participated in the AiR program. Photographers, painters, dancers, writers, print makers, designers, ceramicists, sculptors, textile artists and artists whose discipline is social activism have come to Salt Spring to further their own art endeavours and share their expertise and enthusiasm with both Salt Spring artists and the community at large. The artists, chosen by a jury of their peers living on the island, reflect both the real diversity found in the Canadian arts community as well as the interests and concerns of the island. Connections made between artists and like-minded islanders have always formed an important component of the residency, the aim being to enrich the artists' lives and our own.

Artists have come from across Canada and beyond: closest to home was Tai Whelon from the Burgoyne Valley, furthest east was Audrey Feltham, a printmaker from Cornerbrook, N.L. and from the far north Margaret Nazon, a bead artist of the Gwich'in First Nation of the N.W.T. An artist's work often reflects their place of origin and through Chukwudubem Ukaigwe, Fatima Garzan and Alvin Tolentino we have had insight into the viewpoint of artists from Nigeria, Iran and the Philippines. Much closer to home Judy Anderson from Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan, and the 2017 SSNAP winner, taught us much about Indigenous thought and process. Like many of the artists, Anderson formed strong bonds with the island and has returned several times.

As we head into March we are looking forward to hosting Jesi Jordan our first artist/ animator. Jordan, who works in traditional animation, will be with us for six weeks, beginning mid-March through to the end of April. If you are interested or already involved with animation we would love to hear from you. You

can contact us at air@ssartscouncil.com.

To learn more about past artists go to saltspringarts.com/artist-in-residence/archive/.



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Pärt, Gorecki, Gjeilo and Giannini

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2:00 pm Sun. March 12

All Saints by the Sea, Ganges

Tickets: online at bachontherock.com or at the door (cash or card)

Adults \$25, students \$5

VISITING PERFORMERS

Gogo and McKenna hit Salt Spring

Musicians from coal-mining communities tour together

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The east and west coasts will meet at the Salt Spring Legion next Thursday, March 9 when John Gogo from Vancouver Island and Cape Breton Island troubadour Mike McKenna Jr. perform.

Both songwriters and recording artists are products of coal-mining families.

"Storytellers at heart, they are steeped in the 'songs of the workers' tradition, though neither performer confines himself to the genre," explains press material about the tour.

The Salt Spring show, which begins at 7:30 p.m., is part of a multi-day tour this month.

Having co-written and co-starred in the touring theatrical production called *Good Timber - Songs & Stories of the Western Logger*, Gogo now has his own one-man John Gogo Coal & Wood Show to re-launch in 2024. He performed an original version at Mahon Hall in November of 2019.

He is currently recording his sixth album — *Western Balladeer* — with contributions from Duke & Goldie, David Essig, Ed Peekeekoot, Paul Gogo, Alan Moberg, Tobin Stokes, Rick Scott, Daniel Lapp and Valdy.

McKenna was born in Glace Bay, N.S. and raised along the Mira River. His songs encompass narrative, poetry, protest and true stories about life and death in Nova Scotia's coastal working-class communities. His most recent album — *At the Edge of the World* — won the Rising Star Recording of the Year award at the 2021 East Coast Music Awards, among many other awards and nominations.

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FESTIVALS

Indigenous films and filmmakers highlighted

Local and national films and subjects at weekend film fest

BY STEVE MARTINDALE
SS FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

Indigenous films and filmmakers will be in the spotlight at this weekend's Salt Spring Film Festival at Gulf Islands Secondary School.

Cowichan cultural worker and archaeology consultant Harold Joe from Duncan will be joined by his prolific co-director and co-producer Leslie Bland from Victoria to present two films at the Festival: A Cedar Is Life features Indigenous Elders from Cowichan to Haida Gwaii exploring the centrality of the cedar tree to West Coast First Nations; while Tzouhalem brings to life the legendary Cowichan chief who became the most powerful 19th-century Indigenous leader in the Pacific Northwest.

Salt Spring filmmaker Ryan Haché will be joined by co-director Ritchie Hemphill from Victoria, who was raised on the Tsulquate reserve, to present their delightful film Tiny. Using stop-motion claymation, Tiny recounts the charm-



VOICES ACROSS THE WATER FILM STILL

Alaskan Tlingit master carver Wayne Price mentors Inland Tlingit apprentice Violet Gatensby from Carcross, Yukon, in Fritz Mueller and Teresa Earle's documentary Voices Across the Water.

ing and occasionally harrowing stories of the unusual float-home childhood of Ritchie's mother, Colleen Hemphill (AKA Cluya'gilakw), founder of the Indigenous newspaper Awa'kwis, who is now the chief negotiator for the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw Nations and who will join us from Port Hardy.

Tiny is part of the aquatic shorts program Salish Sea Stories, which also features Freshwater Salt Spring, directed by local photographer and filmmaker Alex Harris. Produced by John Millson

of the Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society, Freshwater Salt Spring features an interview with Xwaaq'w'um land and water defender Sulatiye' Maiya Modeste, project coordinator for the Stqeeye' Learning Society, who was also an advisor to the film. This program concludes with Uncharted Waters, directed by Molly Dennis, which profiles environmentally conscious young people from the Squamish Nation (AKA S wx wú'mesh Úxwumixw) and their non-Indigenous peers

collaborating on a community-led mapping project to protect Howe Sound (AKA Atl'ka7tsem).

In Eric Janvier's NFB short film Heartbeat of a Nation, a young Chipewyan Prairie Dene First Nation father patiently teaches his young son how to make a caribou-skin drum. Inter-generational sharing of traditional Indigenous knowledge is also depicted in Fritz Mueller's Voices Across the Water, about the art and craft of canoe building, which will be presented by producer, writer and co-editor Teresa Earle from Whitehorse. Traditionally done only by men, such as Alaskan Tlingit master carver Wayne Price, canoe building is now also being taught to young women, including inland Tlingit artist and apprentice Violet Gatensby from Carcross, Yukon, who is featured in this gorgeous NFB co-production which graces the cover of the festival's program guide.

Declared extinct in the 1950s but still very much alive, the Sinixt Nation's 65-year struggle for recognition is documented in Ali Kazimi's Beyond Extinction: Sinixt Resurgence. Meanwhile, marginalized people from various communities seek recognition in B.C. museums and official archives in

the NFB production Unarchived, which includes interviews with Kwagwiltz artist Lou-ann Neel and Tahltan Central Government archivist Sandra Marion, and which will be presented by Vancouver filmmakers Hayley Gray and Elad Tzadok.

Sue Biely and Josli Rockafella from Vancouver's Story Money Impact, which seeks to increase the impact of Canadian documentaries, will be on hand to highlight Tamo Campos and Jasper Snow-Rosen's Klabona Keepers, about the Tahltan Nation's struggle to protect the Klabona Sacred Headwaters from the mining industry in northern B.C.; as well as Cam MacArthur's Before They Fall, about the Fairy Creek blockade to protect unceded Pacheedaht Territory from the logging industry on Vancouver Island, where a number of Salt Spring residents were arrested.

The Salt Spring Film Festival takes place this Friday through Sunday at Gulf Islands Secondary School. Passes are available at the ArtSpring box office (250-537-2102) or online at artspring.ca. Subsidized passes are available by request.

For the full screening schedule, pick up a program guide or visit www.saltspringfilmfestival.com.

what's on this week

Wed. Mar. 1

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Tea a Tempo. Backstage plays Irish, Newfoundland, folk and gospel music. All Saints by-the-Sea. 2:10 p.m. Followed by optional tea and treats.

ACTIVITIES

Teen Lounge. Activities for youth aged 13-18 every Wednesday afternoon at the library's Teen Zone. 4 to 5 p.m.

Music Bingo. Wednesdays at Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.

Buddhist Meditation. Offered by Salt Spring Insight Meditation at Ganges Yoga Studio. Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Info: ssimc@gmail.com.

Thur. Mar. 2

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

GISS Improv. High school improv team members perform at the Legion. 7:30 p.m.

Poetry Open Mic. With featured poet Susan Alexander. Salt Spring library program room. 7 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Mother Goose. Rhymes, songs and storytelling activities for babies and children to 4 years of age and their parents/caregivers. Library program room. 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Fri. Mar. 3

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

'90s Party With DJ Boomtown. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Karaoke. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

ASK Salt Spring. This week's guest is B.C.'s Solicitor General and Minister of Public Safety Mike Farnworth, and MLA Adam Olsen. In the Ganges Fire Hall training room. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Fri. Mar. 3

ACTIVITIES

Neighbourhood Story Time.

Community members read stories for kids and parents/caregivers in the library's children's area. 11 to 11:30 a.m.

Youth Games. Every Friday for ages nine to 13 in the library program room. 2 to 4 p.m.

Gospel Choir Workshop. With Marcus Mosely, Bill Sample and Darlene Cooper. Community Gospel Chapel. 7 to 9 p.m. and continuing Saturday. Details/registration: vivachoralesaltsspring.com

Airing of Island Diaries Salt Spring Island Episode. Knowledge Network shows Salt Spring segment of Island Diaries from 2016 at 7 and 11 p.m.

Salt Spring Film Festival. Gala film opening evening with screening of Still Working 9 to 5. GISS. 7 p.m. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and dinner available to purchase.

Sat. Mar. 4

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

The Fabulous Flakes. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.

Ange Hehr. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Gospel Choir Concert. Part of workshop weekend led by Marcus Mosely, Bill Sample and Darlene Cooper. Community Gospel Chapel. 2:30 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Salt Spring Film Festival. First full day of film screenings and Social Justice Bazaar at GISS. Doors open at 9 a.m. First films shown at 10 a.m.

Gospel Choir Workshop. Continues from Friday night. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Book Launch: Dave & Rosemary Needs: The Power of Dreams. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.

Sat. Mar. 4

ACTIVITIES

CHIR.fm Record & CD Sale Fundraiser. Saturdays at the portable classroom at SIMS. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sun. Mar. 5

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Jazz Jam. Singers, players and fans welcome at the Legion. 3 to 6 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Salt Spring Film Festival. Second full day of film screenings and Social Justice Bazaar at GISS. Doors open at 9 a.m. First films shown at 10 a.m.

Spanish Conversation Group. Chat with other Spanish speakers or learners in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Library program room. 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Tue. Mar. 7

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Songwriters Circle Acoustic Open Mic. At the Legion. 6 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

What's in a Name? Discussion led by Clark Saunders. St. Mary's Church, Fulford. 2 to 3:30 p.m. More info/register through staroftheseasi.ca.

Grandmothers to Grandmothers 15th Annual Scrabble Fundraiser for Stephen Lewis Foundation.

First of two days of games held at the Salt Spring Inn. 3 to 5 p.m.

Trivia Tuesday. At Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.

Wed. Mar. 8

ACTIVITIES

Teen Lounge. See last Wednesday's listing.

Music Bingo. See last Wednesday's listing.

Buddhist Meditation. See last Wednesday's listing.

Wed. Mar. 8

VIA ZOOM

Let's Talk Supportive Housing on Salt Spring Island. Online Community Information Session hosted by BC Housing. 4 to 6 p.m. RSVP to ssi-Community.eventbrite.ca

CINEMA

• **The Whale**, with best actor nominee Brendan Fraser, runs Friday, March 3 to Tuesday, March 7 nightly at 7 p.m., plus a Sunday matinee at 3 p.m. Rated PG, 117 minutes. See thefritz.ca for more movie info or phone 250-538-7718.

EXHIBITIONS

• Salt Spring Painters Guild members show work in the lobby of ArtSpring this month.

• Salt Spring Gallery presents Sculpture by Janus from the Mind Myths Series from March 3 to 22, with an opening reception on Friday, March 3 from 5 to 7 p.m.

• Photographer Howard Fry shows portraits of family, friends and acquaintances in the library community program room through March.

GISS Improv

High school team performs at the Legion

Thurs., March 2, 7:30 p.m.

Fundraiser for Improv Games

THRIFTY FOODS

Ganges, Mout's Centre 7:30am to 9pm
Customer Service 250-537-1522



ISLAND LIFE

SALT SPRING ISLAND Recycling Depot Update

THE RECYCLING DEPOT
349 Rainbow Rd.

NEW HOURS AS OF TODAY

Monday - Thursday

10am to 5pm

Fridays 8am to 4pm

**Closed Saturday and Sunday
as well as Stat Holidays
and long weekends**

- Recycling Depot
Management

HELPING HANDS

Aid sought for former fire chief

Les Wagg suffers severe stroke

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

One of Salt Spring's former fire officials could use some help from the community he served for more than 30 years.

The family of Les Wagg, who served as Salt Spring Island's fire chief until 1999, have started a GoFundMe page to raise funds on his behalf at: www.gofundme.com/f/help-get-retired-fire-chief-les-wagg-home.

Wagg's grandson Marquez Holtby said the former chief had suffered a stroke last year that left the left-hand-side of his body paralyzed. Holtby said the family started the GoFundMe to raise money for costs associated with his medical care, including a medical flight back home from Ontario where he had been spending some retirement time.

According to family members, Wagg spent one month in the hospital there until he was stable enough for an air ambulance flight back to B.C. — a \$58,000 flight, they said. After another two months in the hospital in Victoria, Wagg has entered rehab there and hopes to return to his Sooke home in the next several weeks — where the family plans to install several accessibility improvements for him, such as ramps and an accessible bathtub.

Friends and former colleagues continue to ask the community to step up if they can. Another former chief, Arjuna George, said Wagg was his first chief back when he joined the department,



DRIFTWOOD FILE PHOTO

At his retirement party in 1999, former long-time Salt Spring fire department chief Les Wagg, centre, is flanked by two of his predecessors, Goodie Goodman, left, and Fred Donaghy. Wagg's family has initiated a GoFundMe campaign to assist with medical expenses related to a stroke he suffered while in Ontario.

and called him "the definition of a true community fire chief," dedicating countless hours to serving his community.

"I only worked with him for a few years before he retired," said George, "but I learned so much from him in that short time. Now it is time to support him in his recovery; if you can donate financially, fantastic, if not, sharing his family's GoFundme page would be greatly appreciated."



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CHARITY

Pie Ladies roll out funds report

Women and children main beneficiaries

SUBMITTED BY SALT SPRING ISLAND WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Following Women's Institute Month in February, and in honour of the birthday of our founder, Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, the Salt Spring Island Women's Institute (also known as the "Pie Ladies") is pleased to announce our annual 2022/2023 donations.

We are a group of only 17 members, but with the enthusiastic help of 16 community women, we were able to make and sell over 600 pies at the 2022 Fall Fair and Apple Festival. The wonderful support we get from the community when we sell our pies, plus donations from Salt Spring Island gardeners, farmers and grocery stores, help keep our costs down so that we can give more money away.

This year we are donating more than \$12,000 to local, provincial, national and international groups. We have made over 10,000 pies since 2001 and have given away over \$100,000 in the past 10 years, an outstanding amount for a group that has never had more than 20 members who make all the pies that we sell.

The WI emphasizes donations to groups that help children and women, especially in agriculture and health care.

Donations for Children and Youth on Salt Spring

Santa's Workshop: \$300 to buy Christmas gifts for children in families who would not have enough money to buy them gifts.

SSI Girl Guides: \$200 to help with their programs and to thank them for washing the reusable plates at the Fall Fair.

SSI Therapeutic Riding: \$200 to support a program which helps many special needs children and adults, both physically and emotionally.

GISS Bursary: \$2,000 for a GISS graduating student who will be studying agriculture, environment or education. We have doubled the value of this bursary for 2023 because of the rising costs of education.

SSI 4H: \$500 to pay for the membership fee for four children who might not otherwise be able to join.

Donations for Families in Need on Salt Spring

Copper Kettle: \$500 for a group who helps so many on a shoe-string budget.

SSI Food Bank: \$500 for an important community service.

SSI Transition House: \$250 for start-up kits for families fleeing violence.

Island Comfort Quilts: \$200 to help make quilts from the SSI community for people undergoing medical treatments.

Greenwoods ElderCare: \$500 for items such as balls for drumming, new cushions for the outdoor chairs, animal picture books and fuzzy blankets.

Lady Minto Extended Care Kitchen: \$200 for kitchen items such as knives, aprons, cutting boards, a hot water urn and Bluetooth speaker for use by the residents.

Donations to SSI Institutions

Salt Spring Farmers' Institute: \$1,000 for the rental of the booth at the Fall Fair.

Salt Spring Island Museum: \$250 to help the museum with ongoing costs so that our island history is kept for the future.

Fulford Community Hall: \$1,000 for the upkeep of an important community asset, which was originally built and paid for by the Salt Spring Island Women's Institute.

Donations for BC Women's and Children's Health and Wellbeing

BC Children's Hospital: \$500 for an institution of which the WI was a founder.

Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island: \$1,500 for an institution which offers specialized health supports for children. Another institution of which the WI was a founder.

BC Women's Institute: \$500 for outreach and communication with other Women's Institutes in B.C.

Forensic Nursing Bursary: \$500 for an initiative from the BCWI for nurses who wish to continue their education to obtain a forensic nursing examiner certificate. Forensic nurses help victims of violence and ensure evidence is properly collected if the justice system will be involved.

Donations to National and International Groups

Red Cross Hurricane Fiona Appeal: \$1,000 to their general fund to help those in the Maritimes impacted by Hurricane Fiona.

Associated Country Women of the World International Fund: \$500 for international projects emphasizing agriculture and women's health. See acww.org.uk/home for more details.

The SSI Women's Institute has been on Salt Spring Island since 1920. We are always looking for new members. Contact us at ssiwomensinstitute@gmail.com. Read more about the Women's Institute at www.bcwi.ca.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

NSG applications accepted

Creativity celebrated in
group activities

SUBMITTED BY SSI FOUNDATION

The Salt Spring Island Foundation has launched its 2023 Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program, with applications being accepted

beginning today (March 1).

Designed to support community-led projects that promote connection, creativity and well-being on Salt Spring, the NSG program helps residents bring their ideas to life and make a positive impact on the place we call home. By providing small grants of up to \$500, NSG aims to empower individuals and groups to initiate projects that foster a strong sense of community, enhance our shared spaces and promote cultural diversity.

Key Dates and Conditions

Applications are accepted between March 1 and April 15, 2023. Projects must be completed by Oct. 31, 2023.

- You must live on Salt Spring Island to apply
- Your project must be free to attend, accessible and welcoming
- Registered organizations and businesses are not eligible – these grants are specifically for community members and informal groups
- You may recruit donors and sponsors, but you cannot fundraise for other causes
- You may use up to \$350 of the grant for an honorarium for yourself or another leader

For inspiration and ideas, people can read about some of the amazing projects that have already taken place on Salt Spring and watch a slide show of outcomes on the ssifoundation.ca website.

Community building projects include:

- Sessions on fitness, art, games, flower arranging, story time, language, cooking classes
- Cultural learning exchanges of all kinds
- Care packages to vulnerable seniors or youth
- Professionals offering their skills in a workshop
- Garden tours, neighbourhood beautification projects, beach cleanups.

Visit the NSG page on the foundation's website for more information, or contact program coordinator Ceridwen Ross Collins at nsg@ssifoundation.ca.

HAVE YOUR SAY



Proposed Bylaw No. 232

Rezoning to amend the Sidney Island Comprehensive Development (CD2) Zone
PUBLIC HEARING

NORTH PENDER ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE

What is Proposed Bylaw No. 232?

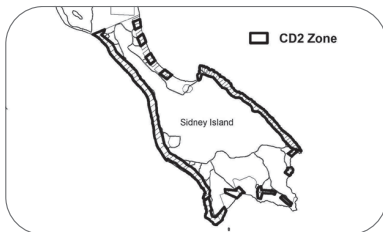
Proposed Bylaw 232 would amend the North Pender Associated Islands Land Use Bylaw No. 148, 2003 by amending the Sidney Island Comprehensive Development (CD2) zone, which applies only to the bare land strata lots on Sidney Island. The amendment would permit the temporary use of recreational vehicles (RVs) as a dwelling on lots where a dwelling has not been constructed for a period of up to four years. The bylaw would also amend the zoning to permit a larger storage building of up to 40m² prior to constructing a dwelling and would permit kitchens in the sleeping cabins on the common property.

How do I get more information?

Copies of the proposed bylaw, the Public Hearing Binder and other information on the application is available on the [North Pender Island Current Application webpage](http://NorthPenderIslandCurrentApplicationwebpage) and, at the Islands Trust office at 200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8 from the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays, after March 2, 2023.

Submissions

Prior to the Public Hearing: Written submissions will be accepted until 4:30 p.m., March 16, 2023, by Email: vicphsub@islandstrust.bc.ca, or Mail or Drop Off: Islands Trust, 200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8
At the Public Hearing: Only written submissions presented at the Public Hearing will be accepted until the close of the Public Hearing. Written comments made in response to this notice will be available for public review.



Public Hearing
Friday, March 17,
2023 at 10:30 a.m.
(in person)

St. Peter's Anglican
Church Hall
4703 Canal Road
North Pender Island, BC

Who should attend?
Anyone affected by
the proposed bylaws.

Enquiries?
Robert Kojima
Regional Planning Manager
rkjima@islandstrust.bc.ca
250-405-5159



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Obituaries

Obituaries

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

Coming Events

Coming Events

Pets



Catherine Louise Mowbray
1925-2023

The Mowbray brothers are sad to record the death of, but joyfully proud to describe the adventurous life of, their beloved mother Catherine Louise Mowbray (née Johnston), on January 31, 2023, at the age of 97. Kay, as she was known to dear friends around the world, was born on 12 August 1925, in Toronto, Ontario, and grew up in the town of Lucknow, where by her teen years she fell in love with a handsome boy named John Mowbray, whom she later married. Country girl makes good: Kay graduated from the nursing program at the University of Toronto, while John became a doctor.

In the 1940s, 50s and early 60s, the couple lived in Ontario and rural Saskatchewan, then Saskatoon, producing three boys before embarking on their greatest adventure: life overseas. They moved to Kabul, Afghanistan in 1964, where John worked for CARE-Medico, a medical education nonprofit. Just getting to Kabul in 1964 involved transit through Toronto, New York, London, Frankfurt, Vienna, Istanbul, and Beirut. "We cannot seem to organize enough to avoid chaotic departures," Kay wrote on the first page of her amusing and insightful diary, though she noted about air travel that "meals are excellent but too frequent." Shortly after arriving in Kabul there was an earthquake. This at a time when Afghan women were able to throw off their veils and attend university, a fact recorded a few pages later.

Later, Kay and John lived in Indonesia, and again Afghanistan, and then Tunisia, before moving to BC (first Cranbrook, then Salt Spring, where they lived for more than 25 years). Kay worked as a nurse and English teacher and was a frequent volunteer and fundraiser, both abroad and in Canada, with interests in human rights, hospice care, and peace. Travel, often with kid or kids in tow, was a particular passion: throughout Southeast Asia, to Communist China (in 1965!), to India and Pakistan, to Nepal and Russia and Europe and Lebanon and North Africa. In 1965 Kay and John drove a feeble Volkswagen station wagon from Kabul to Liverpool, took the car onto the Empress of Canada ocean liner, which was bound for Montreal, and drove from Montreal to Saskatoon. No air conditioning, no iPads, and three kids in the backseat the whole way.

Kay was beloved by family and friends for her entertaining, her Christmas decorating, her baking, her early and passionate feminist convictions, her skills at bridge, her snazzy hats, and her infinite capacity for kindness. Until no longer able, she was a devoted writer of old-timey paper letters. The yearly display of holiday cards and letters from around the world spoke to the connections she maintained. Visitors came from as far as Singapore for the celebration of the couple's 50th anniversary at the Beaver Point Hall. Kay's home was filled with art and objects from around the world, reflecting a love of Ming ceramics, batik fabrics, Afghan rugs, Balinese and Indian metalwork, Pakistani furniture, and Inuit art. She is survived by her three sons, John, Paul, and Scott, and three grandchildren, Michael, Emily and Rosa. Special thanks to Sandy and staff at Heritage Place in Ganges and to the staff at Mount St. Mary's Hospital in Victoria for an abundance of kind and respectful care during the final years of Kay's life.



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Salt Spring Island Public Library Association Annual General Meeting

Thursday March 16, 2023 3:30 pm
Salt Spring Island Public Library
129 McPhillips Avenue, Ganges, BC

A resolution to amend the bylaws of the Association will be presented for approval.

The full text of the proposed resolution will be posted on the Library's website: <http://saltspring.bc.libraries.coop/> between the publication of this advertisement and the Annual General Meeting.

All valid Library cardholders are welcome to attend and are eligible to vote at the meeting.

Information

Information

Call for Community Music Award Applications

The Salt Spring Singers invite community members to apply for a \$500 award toward music studies. All ages are eligible. Preference will be given to candidates who intend to study voice and/or are members of a community or school choir.

The deadline for applications is Friday, April 21, 2023.

For more information and an application package, please visit saltspringsingers.ca/scholarships.html or contact Lesley Reynolds at (250) 537-4861 or lesleyr1@telus.net

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Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19) You are probably inclined to lay low and perhaps even retreat while the Sun is in Pisces. Yet, Mars in Gemini indicates high energy levels and Jupiter in your sign also indicates a pioneering impulse. A weave of adventurousness combined with a philosophical and contemplative mood prevails. **Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)** Returns for prior efforts will begin to come in now as Saturn enters Pisces. Hopefully, you have been diligent and wholesome in your focus. Some major changes in your public and professional life are brewing and these could activate a powerful charge of determined assertions.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 21) If you have been seeking more recognition and perhaps fame, this is the time. It has already been underway for a couple of weeks. This theme and the stream of events that accompany it will come to a whole new level over the coming days and weeks. The results could be mixed, however, so stay grounded.

Cancer (Jun 22 – Jul 22) Looking back on things, you find yourself in a philosophical mood. As though you were writing in your diary, reflecting on how the world and you have changed is indicated. This taking-account process is linked to sifting for the gems and nuggets and reorganizing your focus to make the most of them.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 23) You have entered more than a mini cycle of change and transformation. It began 2-3 weeks ago and will continue for many months, even years. In some respects, you will be pushed to face your fears. Set your sights on the focus and discipline required to lay claim to latent reserves of power.

Virgo (Aug 24 – Sep 22) Who do you love and how and why? These and other such questions are now in focus. Appreciating the significant others in your life is featured. A resolve to deepen commitments to showing up more fully is among the deeper, long-term themes. The key to success will be to change your own attitude.

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22) Changes in your lifestyle linked to health have been a persistent theme literally for years. Positively, you have responded well and have met the challenge, which has probably included supplementing your diet. Either way, the time to enter into a whole new learning curve has begun.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21) A creative cycle continues. As is true for many, what is beginning now is actually the launch of a whole new long-term cycle. For you, themes of patience, deliberate focus and commitment are indicated. Success will depend upon your awareness and determination to undergo a steady process of personal change.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21) A meditative, introverted and dreamy cycle continues. Interestingly, a pioneering and playful impulse is also indicated. Significant others are playing key roles to activate your engagement, with mixed results. The solution may be to rest more and aim for qualitative over quantitative outer engagement.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19) Your imagination has been working overtime these past weeks and this trend will continue. Positively, you are gaining new insights and capturing new ideas and visions of possibility. Be careful not to stray too far into the future in your mind where imagination can cause more trouble than good.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 19) Getting clear on your priorities is a central theme. While you may be in you are 'not of the world', at least not currently, or you don't want to be. Getting traction and feeling grounded may prove difficult due to a general sense of uncertainty. Exercise sincere gratitude to re-enter the sweet spot zone.

Pisces (Feb 20 – Mar 20) A rising determination to take pioneering leads finds you aiming to more fully enter the flow. This paradoxical state is true to your nature. Flow implies faith in a larger plan and trusting that who and where you are now is the point of power. Use this power to direct your mind to new and promising possibilities.

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- ALFRED LORD TENNYSON



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SEEDY SATURDAY

Smiles



PHOTO BY GAIL SIJBERG

Anne Macey greets people at the Island Natural Growers booth at the Farmers' Institute on Saturday, with a variety of information about ING, which is the main Seedy Saturday weekend organizer, and activities like a "guess the seed" game. Returning to the Farmers' Institute for the first time since 2020, the weekend saw high attendance for the seed swap and sale, several workshops and a farmers' panel.



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PHOTO BY GAIL SIJBERG

Ben Corno and Kaleigh Barton of Heavenly Roots Farm, central to organizing Seedy Saturday, take care of the Salt Spring Seeds table for Dan Jason and Celeste Mallett Jason at Saturday's seed swap and sale event.



PHOTO BY GAIL SIJBERG

Kim Korol, left, and Kristine Webber of Mayne Island Clay Works sell their clay garden ollas, which are buried in a garden and slowly release water to plants. They were one of several vendors visiting from off Salt Spring.

For More Salt Spring
arts & entertainment
happenings
SEE OUR WHAT'S ON CALENDAR
ON PAGE 8.

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MORE LETTERS

continued from 6

Track well used

I am at or by Portlock Park several times per day. I notice that, while 75 per cent of the time the sports fields are vacant (with some seasons slightly busier than others), I rarely see the track empty, regardless of season.

I use the track heavily and am almost never the only person there. Unfortunately, the use of the track facility is significantly underestimated, perhaps because the users are not part of an association.

On the recent Portlock Park Site Master Plan survey, it was surprising to see that on the question, "Which activities you undertake at Portlock?", running was not listed. Yes, many people do run at Portlock Park, including individuals, members of the Salt Spring Sneakers, Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue for fitness training, as well as the high school cross-country and track and field teams. Elementary schools even use the facility for track and field days.

However, apart from runners, there are many other people that value the flat, safe and centralized surface with nearby parking, seating and washrooms. People with vision/mobility issues, parents with strollers, people with canes and people convalescing from joint replacement as well as heart/stroke issues, all find the track an essential

facility. Lighting would make the track even more attractive, especially in winter.

The option of a perimeter walking path does not qualify as a replacement for the track itself. A running track that is regulation size can be used for the sport for which it was designed, as well as for walking. A perimeter path is only useful for walking. Slow walkers and fast runners can share the track without interfering with each other. A pathway is too narrow.

Please fill out the Portlock Park Site Master Plan survey, and when you do, in the best interest of a large and varied population within our community, please advocate for a regulation-size running track.

RICHARD HAYDEN,
SALT SPRING

Consult runners

It was startling to read in the request for feedback on the plans to rehabilitate Portlock Park no mention of running and scant mention of walking as recognized activities.

While baseball and soccer crowd the park on a few weekend mornings, mostly in spring and fall, there is rarely a day or even an hour when passers-by would not notice individuals or small groups on the track. A close second in Portlock use is the pickleball courts, whose use dwarfs use of the conventional tennis courts.

Salt Spring hosts the Salt Spring Sneakers running group with over 120 members and within that larger group a team of road runners who are the highest-ranked small competition team of the 90 teams competing in the Vancouver Island winter race series. Competitive running is a year-round event. Measured, timed track training is an essential part of training, and runners who race (and some who do not) gather once a week to do measured speed work that cannot be done on Salt Spring roads because of the lack of shoulders and safety concerns. A number of Salt Springers also do their own fitness running exclusively on the track, largely for its safety.

That the current track is poorly constructed and more frequently unusable after rain and snow, resulting in injuries, has prompted discussion among runners to approach the CRD recreation program with an offer to raise money to purchase a rubberized surface to reduce injury and reduce the number of days when the current track is unusable, and improve the track for youth track and field development.

It was astonishing to see no mention of these uses of the park in the planning document. The running community would be pleased to be consulted about Portlock's future use and to contribute to its rehabilitation and improvement.

DR. ERIC ELLIS,
CAPTAIN, SALT SPRING SNEAKERS