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Issue 23
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TRANSPORTATION

Ganges Hill upgrades detailed



PHOTO BY ROBB MAGLEY

Island Pathways' Robin Jenkinson passes out high-visibility bike safety flags to MLA Adam Olsen, left, and Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Rob Fleming during a rally for safer cycling and improved infrastructure held Friday, June 2, at the Mouat Park meadow next to the Lions Bike Park.

Transportation Minister Rob Fleming shares project info during island visit

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

This may be the last year pedestrians and cyclists take their lives in their own hands by choosing to head up or down Salt Spring's Ganges Hill.

Sharing the narrow roadway with vehicle traffic will be a safer proposition by next fall, according to Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Rob Fleming, because the Ganges Hill project — to widen and improve shoulders along the first stretch of Fulford-Ganges Road south of town — is a go.

Design of the project will be completed by the end of June, Fleming announced, with construction activity starting this fall and full completion before winter 2024. Fleming delivered the news, appropriately enough, during a GoByBikeBC Week event held Friday, June 2 at the Mouat Park meadow by the Lions Bike Park on Seaview Avenue.

Fleming joined Saanich North and the Islands MLA Adam Olsen, who had biked to the event from the Fulford ferry along with dozens of islanders to take part in a safer cycling rally organized by Island Pathways.

The rally brought Salt Spring families — and active transportation advocates — to the

meadow by wheel and on foot. Younger riders enjoyed a Strider-bike course, and enthusiasts passed out cake and bicycle-blender-made smoothies. Island Pathways also had stickers and enough tall orange bike flags to equip everyone who wanted better visibility on the road.

There was also an opportunity to push for better infrastructure, as well as for the completion of the Salish Sea Trail Network — with Salt Spring's uneven shoulder from Fulford to Vesuvius considered the “missing link” on the popular 250-kilometre south Vancouver Island cycling route. Olsen shared a microphone with Fleming as the rally transitioned into the weekly ASK Salt Spring question-and-answer event. Fleming said he knew islanders were concerned about Ganges Hill from a safety perspective, but that the construction needed to be “climate resilient.”

“The scope of this project keeps getting bigger,” said Fleming, “because the drainage challenges are significant.”

Open ditches are generally off the table, according to Fleming and Michael Pearson, the transportation ministry's Vancouver Island district director, not just for this proj-

ect but for most going forward. Pearson said the increasing likelihood of heavy rainfalls due to climate change meant closed systems for stormwater are necessary — to avoid the kinds of infrastructure failures Salt Spring Island and much of the province saw during the atmospheric river events in late 2021.

Pearson pointed to the section of Fulford-Ganges Road near Blackburn that washed out during those storms.

“That was from a culvert that was already there, that was over capacity and failed,” said Pearson. “When we take into account climate change and 200-year storm events, what the engineering dictates is that more often than not we should use bridges rather than culverts.”

“It's going to be a significant investment,” added Fleming. “We don't have the final contract amounts, but it's going to be in the tens of millions, not just in the millions.”

The finally progressing plan calls for 1.5 kilometres of “paved and protected” bike shoulder, said Fleming — including the full 1.2 metres that has become standard for bicycles.

FLEMING VISIT continued on 2



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FIRE

Rekindled underground fire startles Beddis area

Fire officials urge caution as danger moves to “extreme”

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A report of a smoky smell brought fire trucks to a waterside property near the end of Beddis Road on Monday, May 29, with more than a dozen firefighters working for hours to contain a previously extinguished fire that had re-ignited.

Seven trucks, 14 firefighters, 1,500 gallons of water and “a lot of digging” ended the creeping grass fire, which ultimately burned a 30- to 40-square-foot area, according to Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue (SSIFR) Assistant Chief Mitchell Sherrin, who said the call from a concerned neighbour came in around 2:30 p.m.

Sherrin said investigators believed the source of the blaze was likely a campfire that, despite appearances, had not been fully extinguished and had been “sim-



PHOTO COURTESY SSIFR

Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue (SSIFR) personnel work to fully extinguish a fire on a Beddis area property that had originated as a campfire about a week earlier. SSIFR advises that fires can move underground, particularly in rocky areas. The island's fire risk level shifted to extreme on Monday.

mering” — burning beneath the ground surface — for about a week.

“Somebody had attempted to extinguish it,” said Sherrin. “But one thing that’s really important

for people to understand is that fire can go underground, especially if you’re burning in an area that’s kind of rocky.”

Small gaps between dirt and rocks beneath the surface can hold

pockets of air, roots and dust — just enough fuel and oxygen for the fire to keep alight.

“And that’s what it looked like it had done,” said Sherrin. “It had slowly burned quite deep underground, in amongst the roots of some trees. And then, you know, with a little bit more warmth and a little bit more wind, it broke out and started to spread into a grass fire.”

Firefighters worked until 6 p.m. digging up a large area around the grass fire to ensure all the burning roots beneath were fully extinguished. Sherrin said while these root fires were startling, they were not entirely uncommon; he recalled a fire on Salt Spring that had sprung from a supposedly extinguished winter burn pile. That fire had “overwintered” underground, he said, and rekindled several months later with the arrival of warmer spring weather.

At the time of the fire, the fire danger level was at “high.” On June 5 at 1 p.m., SSIFR moved that level to “extreme.” Restrictions in place since May 18 have banned most burning across the region.

Campfires are still allowed for now — with a free permit, which can be obtained online via saltspringfire.com — but extra vigilance is key at this time, according to Sherrin.

“The grass fire was obviously serious and concerning for us, particularly now that we’re into the high fire risk,” said Sherrin. “Fire can start and spread pretty easily right now, so people need to be mindful.”

Sherrin said the first thing anyone planning a campfire should do is select the right site for it — being especially careful to burn on a non-combustible surface, and away from anywhere there might be roots.

“If you can see a canopy of trees above you, that means there’s going to be roots underneath,” said Sherrin. “Make sure you’re not burning on tree roots or on thick dust — that soft, springy ground — because fire can definitely go underground, especially if it gets hot enough.”

“And,” he added, “make sure it’s fully extinguished before you leave.”

HOUSING

CRD hopes to expand housing funding

‘Counter petition’ planned to seek elector approval for borrowing

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

For once, according to elected officials, the best way to help might be to do nothing.

A new Capital Regional District (CRD) initiative allowing the district more borrowing power in the name of affordable housing will require elector approval — but in the form of an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) or “counter petition,” where the measure succeeds by having fewer signatures. CRD director Gary Holman said he supports the plan, partly because Salt Spring has had good success in accessing funding under this kind of program in the past.

The proposal is similar to the CRD’s earlier Regional Housing First program, Holman said — which involved borrowing matched by BC Housing and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and brought funding to the 54-unit Croftonbrook Islanders Working Against Violence (IWAV) project.

“In addition to Croftonbrook, projects including Murakami Gardens, Salt Spring Commons, the Cedars and BC Housing’s Drake Road supported housing facility are examples of [such] success,” he said.

In the new proposal, the CRD intends to increase its borrow-

ing authority through the Land Assembly, Housing and Land Banking service to \$85 million to support potential partnership opportunities to increase the supply of affordable, inclusive and adequate housing in the region. The current requisition capacity — as set by the service’s bylaw — is already fully committed to affordable housing projects under development.

“We need to be nimble, we need to be determined and we need to signal a willingness to invest in solutions,” said CRD board chair Colin Plant, “so we can quickly take advantage of new housing opportunities and provincial or federal government programs that will allow us to secure more units for those in need in this region.”

CRD staff said they are exploring a range of partnerships related to “acquiring and preserving existing affordable housing, acquiring lands on or near transit corridors, acquiring and/or advancing affordable housing projects, and looking into longer-term partnership opportunities with other orders of government.”

Staff will be conducting the AAP in the coming weeks. If the counter petition “fails,” investment could begin as early as 2024. Holman said specifics on the taxpayers’ burden would be finalized as part of the AAP, but preliminary estimates he’d been shown by CRD staff indicated an average-value property on Salt Spring would incur less than \$2.50 per month in borrowing cost.

“So I hope voters will support this affordable housing initiative,” said Holman, “by not signing the petition.”

New bike shoulder will be safe and visible

FLEMING VISIT
continued from 1

“It will be properly lined, it will be safe, and it will be visible,” said Fleming. “I know you’ve been waiting a long time for this investment.”

Fleming also said the line markings along the entire roadway from Fulford to Ganges would be re-painted; Olsen said that would be happening this summer.

“It’s going to be compliant with Bill 23,” said Fleming, referring to the bill he tabled in April that, among other measures, implements a one-metre minimum safe-passing distance and a three-metre minimum following distance that drivers of motor vehicles must observe when sharing roadways with pedestrians, cyclists, e-bikes and other similar devices.

“We heard from your committee members and your local officials who want some signage to go with it as well,” said

Fleming, “so we’ll do that.”

Most questions from participants surrounded safety issues and tended toward the very specific. There were comments requesting a lower speed limit through Ganges and asking for an easier public reporting system for traffic offenders; one cyclist begged for a less abrupt transition from the new road surfaces to the inevitable gravel covering the bulk of the Fulford-Ganges Road shoulder. Potholes were mentioned, and both officials and several members of the public chimed in to promote — and celebrate — the effectiveness of Emcon’s road hazard reporting line.

“Emcon’s hazard reporting line has been fabulous every time I’ve called them,” agreed ASK Salt Spring organizer Gayle Baker. “They even call me back when something’s getting done.”

Emcon’s reporting number is 866-353-3136.

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DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET
7	0144	3.0	9.8	11	0629	1.9	6.2
	0441	3.1	10.2		1044	2.2	7.2
WE	1259	0.0	0.0	SU	1630	1.3	4.3
ME	2139	3.5	11.5	DI	2359	3.3	10.8
8	0310	2.8	9.2		0711	1.4	4.6
	0534	2.9	9.5	12	1303	2.2	7.2
TH	1352	0.2	0.7	MO	1731	1.8	5.9
JE	2220	3.5	11.5	LU			
9	0432	2.6	8.5	13	0026	3.3	10.8
	0642	2.6	8.5		0748	1.1	3.6
FR	1441	0.5	1.6	TU	1454	2.5	8.2
VE	2257	3.4	11.2	MA	1839	2.2	7.2
10	0539	2.3	7.5		0050	3.2	10.5
	0823	2.3	7.5	14	0822	0.7	2.3
SA	1534	0.9	3.0	WE	1612	2.8	9.2
SA	2330	3.4	11.2	ME	1950	2.5	8.2

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WATERWORKS

Water quality reports mandated

Island Health puts spotlight on chlorination byproducts in Maxwell Lake drinking water

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A refocused effort targeting disinfection byproducts has Island Health officials and staff at Salt Spring's largest water district working to gather information and take action to ensure safer drinking water.

Trihalomethanes (THMs), such as chloroform and bromodichloromethane, are among the common byproducts of disinfection. They occur when organic matter already in lake water reacts with the chlorine added to disinfect it. THMs have also been linked to colorectal cancers, according to Health Canada; since most drinking water treatment plants in the country use some form of chlorine to disinfect drinking water, that agency has set guidelines for THMs: a maximum acceptable concentration of 100 micrograms per litre.

While federal regulators note the health risks of THMs are far less than those from consuming water that has not been disinfected, they direct utilities — including the North Salt Springs Waterworks District (NSSWD) — to make every effort to keep THMs

and other byproducts at the lowest levels possible, so long as they do so without compromising the effectiveness of disinfection.

"This has been happening since the dawn of time, since we started to chlorinate the system," said NSSWD operations manager Ryan Moray at the district's May 25 board meeting. "It's something that is being tracked more and more now by Island Health, [so] we're working with them to meet all the limits that we're required to."

The recent action seems to stem from reinvigorated efforts by Island Health to encourage the district to monitor THMs more closely — indeed, the requirement to complete the new Maxwell Lake Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) treatment plant by 2025 stems from an effort to remove much of the organic matter that reacts to create THMs before it encounters the chlorine. Water from St. Mary Lake is currently treated through a DAF system prior to chlorination.

The urgency also comes after a routine inspection of the Lake Maxwell water system earlier this year. That inspection in February found written records of operations and maintenance — including manual measurements of chlorine residuals at the chlorination plant and throughout Ganges — and reported that treated water samples were tested for bacteria, cyanobacterial blooms and disinfection byproducts

regularly with "satisfactory" results. However, Island Health indicated it wanted more fulsome reporting specific to THMs.

The last Annual Drinking Water Report was completed in 2018. According to Island Health, legislation requires that to be done annually, and told NSSWD the next one was due by June 30. Part of the collaborative plan going forward, Moray said, included enhanced flushing on the Maxwell system, as well as increased data gathering — and sharing with the public.

NSSWD has been asked to trend the THM levels for the prior years, then provide reporting in collaboration with Island Health every year until the new water treatment plant is completed in 2025, said Moray, adding that the district and Island Health would collaborate on a memorandum that would be distributed to customers.

In the last annual water quality report in 2018, the Maxwell Lake system was noted to present at a THM concentration of 135.13 ug/L, averaged across samples from multiple locations collected quarterly. That report also noted 81.3 per cent of THM samples at Maxwell were above the guideline 100 of ug/L.

For more information on the Maxwell Lake DAF project and water quality monitoring, visit northsaltspring-waterworks.ca.

ISLANDS TRUST

Bylaw 530 open house on tap Saturday

Accessory dwelling unit proposal takes educational route, says trustee

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Islanders can get up to speed about proposed Bylaw 530 at an open house event at Meaden Hall this Saturday.

From noon to 3 p.m., Salt Spring Islands Trust staff will be on hand with educational materials and to answer questions people may have about the proposition to define areas where accessory dwelling units (ADUs) can be used for housing purposes on the island. An initial open house took place June 6 at the library.

"We're trying to change the narrative for Bylaw 530 to be more educational," said trustee Laura Patrick. "We worked hard with staff to create information that was more useful. We're trying to show that [ADUs] exist; it's a new word, but it's not a new thing. It's not housing that doesn't already exist on Salt Spring, we're just expanding where it's allowed to be used."

A web page has also been set up specifically for Bylaw 530. It is at islandstrust.bc.ca/bylawno530/. A public hearing on proposed Bylaw 530 has not yet been set.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Trust budget picture clarified

Expenses top \$8.8 million for last fiscal year

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A draft document summarizing year-end operations at the Islands Trust gave trustees a preview of what a final financial results statement will look like later this month.

Accountants — and policy wonks — know the "fiscal" year wrapped up at the end of March; financial committees typically start reporting how things went in the early summer, and the Islands Trust Financial Planning Committee (FPC) met this week to review the highlights before advancing them to the Islands Trust Council at that meeting, scheduled at the end of June.

The financial statements are still considered drafts, according to administrative services director Julia Mobbs — the year-end financial statement audit will take place in July, for example, and there are some new required accounting standards that will likely increase expenses and liabilities and reduce accumulated surplus balances when implemented — but the final numbers shown to the FPC at its May 31 meeting should be pretty close.

Islands Trust's consolidated expenses, including capital purchases, totalled \$8.8 million for the year, nearly half a million dollars — or 5.3 per cent — under budget, according to the draft document.

Revenues were almost exactly on budget — technically \$2,600 lower, practically a rounding error for a body that brings in \$8.7 million in taxes, fees and transfers

from provincial and federal governing bodies. The lion's share of those revenues came from property taxes, which total just over \$7.3 million, according to draft documents.

Notably, revenues from land-use application fees were just under \$200,000, or roughly 25 per cent lower than budgeted, due to fewer permit applicants than expected — a slowdown in application volumes that began to trend downward last year, before budget-setting time.

Unlike predictable tax revenues, fees are difficult to budget for, said Mobbs.

"It's hard to predict application volumes," she said.

An interesting change year over year, Mobbs said, related to cash and investments.

"In 2022, most of our funds were held as cash and cash equivalents," said Mobbs, "whereas in 2023, more of our funds are invested in longer-term investment vehicles."

About \$1.8 million less cash was held in 2023, due to more investing in longer-term products. In 2022, cash accounts in many banks offered historically high interest rates, and the Islands Trust took advantage of good returns with very low risk.

On the liabilities side, and at least on paper, the Trust looks to be in better shape partly due to the timing of salary payments — which through a peculiarity of accounting led to one less pay period worth of wages included in the 2023 value versus the 2022 value. More significant were the "savings" from underspending on planning staff salaries, due to several staff vacancies, as well as program spending savings — from programs not able to be progressed due to lack of staff.



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OPINION

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Silver - Best Editorial (Gail Sjoberg) | Bronze - Best Editorial Page

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



Driftwood

Published every Wednesday by
Driftwood Publishing Ltd.

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EDITORIAL

Sparking action

If there's such a thing as a warning shot across the bow for wildfire season, the recent grass fire down Beddis Road must certainly qualify.

Although neighbours smelled smoke in time to alert firefighters — itself no small miracle, given how well we could smell the multiple blazes already in progress on Vancouver Island — any fire that literally hid underground for days should give islanders something to think about. And when coupled with the fact that there hasn't been a drop of moisture since, it comes as little surprise that Salt Spring's fire danger level shifted to "extreme" on Monday.

We're not alone. On all the Gulf Islands, Vancouver Island, the mainland and indeed across the country, Natural Resources Canada is projecting a higher-than-normal level of fire activity this summer — a broad stroke of "well-above-average-red" all the way from from British Columbia into western Québec. During July, according to the models, severe wildfire potential will likely expand into the Yukon.

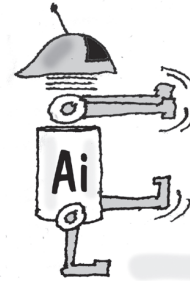
Salt Spring Assistant Fire Chief Mitchell Sherrin said a lot of islanders think fire officials just "spin a dial and decide how bad it is," not realizing how complex — and how often imitated — Canada's fire weather projecting actually is. Predictions come from various agencies — including the Canadian Seasonal to Inter-annual Prediction System (CanSIPS), itself a powerhouse of data and 3-D modelling — feeding in atmospheric and oceanic variables from temperature and wind to sea ice and soil moisture to create a forecast.

Sherrin said Canada's system has been copied by other countries because of how accurately it predicts the likelihood of fire ignition, and the speed that fire might spread. We could also, with some care, be examples to the world of how to successfully navigate a dangerous fire season.

Apart from avoiding carelessness, information is key. A webinar on Salt Spring Island's Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan is still available on the CRDVictoria YouTube channel; the plan itself and a wealth of other fire safety information is available at crl.bc.ca/ssi-emergency. And of course Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue has FireSmart and current fire conditions information on its website, saltspringfire.com.

And until we get the rain, let's mind every spark and ember.

PARKER



HOW DO WE TURN THIS THING OFF?

Stop CGL project damage

The following is an open letter to B.C. Environment Minister George Heyman, Energy Minister Josie Osborne and the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office.

VIEWPOINT

BY RODNEY POLDEN

I am writing to you today concerning the entirely preventable damage being caused by the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline project, to the wetlands and salmon-bearing creeks in the watershed of the Morice River (Wedzin Kwa).

As I'm sure you're aware, hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en people whose territory this is have never given their "free, informed and prior consent" for this project, as required under Canada's international obligations. Meanwhile the water and other natural resources on which they depend are churned and smothered with silt by a corporation whose sole interest is clear to any observer, regardless of the collateral damage they cause.

How much longer do we have to watch the illegal actions that continue again and again along the CGL pipeline, while your ministry and your government seem to just look away?

Would you have considered such actions permissible, and the government's inaction excusable, before you yourselves became the people causing or permitting such a state of affairs?

There is absolutely no justification for the damage to salmon-bearing creeks and the associated wetlands that this corporation's evidently incompetent practices are causing.

So why is the government taking no action? Why is it apparently now the responsibility of members of the public to remind the government of their legal

duties to be protecting these irreplaceable resources? I demand that CGL be issued a stop work order along the entire route of the pipeline, and that it then be fully enforced.

The continuing breaches and disregard by this corporation would seem to clearly indicate that much more forthright measures are now required. It has to be asked of the government: if you will not take action despite the damage already done in repeated incidents, what further destruction and damage to all these salmon creeks would it require before you start doing the job that is solely yours to do? Will you wait until the resource and all those dependent upon it, both human and natural, are irrevocably impacted? And after that, what would be the point? Time is being wasted here, instead of the steps that you could be taking to protect what is at risk. Is your government up to the task, or not?

The previous half dozen occasions when stop work orders were imposed on CGL seem to have been simply forgotten, because the damage to waters and habitats from erosion, spills and so on seem to just roll on unabated. Construction needs to be completely halted until CGL can properly protect from any further damage to these vital water resources and wetlands.

From past experience, this kind of disregard for both Indigenous rights and for the natural resource might be anticipated from a conservative government. We had a right to expect better than this from an NDP administration though, I think.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

The writer is a Salt Spring resident.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES PER YEAR:
Digital Edition with Print Edition: \$85.00 | Elsewhere in Canada \$115.00
Foreign: \$248.00 | Digital Edition: \$45.00 anywhere | Prices include GST

Driftwood

Funded by the
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Canada Publication Mail No. 0040050837 | International Standards Serial Number 1198-7782
Member of News Media Canada + National NewsMedia Council, and BC & Yukon Community NewsMedia Association

THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Have you taken any
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yet?

☐ Yes ☐ No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

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election outcome?

51 83
NO YES

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ISLAND VOICES

LETTERS to the editor

Looks can be deceiving

The second-to-last paragraph of Mike Stacey's "Listen to the old-timers" opinion piece in the May 17 Driftwood — "Egad, my toilet is faulty, my kingdom for a plumber" — reminds me of searching through plumbing parts at Windsor Plywood hoping to find an adapter of some sort to solve one of those plumbing problems unique to Salt Spring Island.

I wasn't having much luck, but then I noticed there was an older man waiting behind me dressed in overalls of a type favoured by TV personality/builder Mike Holmes and he was carrying bits and pieces similar to those I was trying to fit together. He had a wise look about him. I guessed he was a plumber and held up the two pieces of pipe I wanted to join and asked him if he knew if they even made an adapter that would solve my problem.

He looked at me sadly and said, "Unfortunately, 40 years of law has not equipped me with the information necessary to answer that question."

JOHN DENNISTON,
VESUVIUS

30-day speed limit challenge

Expectations are running high for our newly elected and committed Local Community Commission (LCC) commissioners. Here's an opportunity for them to solve a serious public safety concern that's been going on now for three years and even longer for some.

B.C. Transportation Minister Rob Fleming was empathetic and clearly concerned about our speed limits at the ASK Salt Spring session he attended on Friday. That event was really a celebration for those who ride within our community and request improvements to

our road infrastructure from a public safety standpoint.

Let's stop with the studies. It's all been done by Drive BC in 2015.

If you are standing stationary on your bicycle in Ganges village and are hit by an oncoming vehicle, here's your odds of surviving.

"Pedestrian crash survivability rises from 20 per cent at 50 km/h to 90 per cent at 30 km/h," according to a 2016 study titled Exploration of Vehicle Impact Speed – Injury Severity Relationships for Application in Safer Road Design.

My challenge to LCC commissioners is to have the 30-kilometre Ganges speed limit in place by July 5, 2023. Let's incorporate that speed limit into the new signage welcoming everyone to the village of Ganges when the time comes.

Thank you on behalf of our toddlers, seniors, cyclists, tourists and everyone else in between.

DAVID COURTNEY,
SALT SPRING

People invited to join Thrift Shop team

The Lady Minto Thrift Shop has just completed the "wish lists" for the Lady Minto Hospital, Greenwoods and Brae-haven, a yearly commitment for the care and comfort of the patients and residents, all funded through monies obtained from donations received from the generosity of Salt Springers.

Since the pandemic the donations have been amazing, particularly in jewellery, treasures, books and boutique clothing. Thank you!

The Thrift Shop is always ready to welcome new volunteers. It is an organization of camaraderie, fun and potential friendships.

Come and join, it is very fulfilling.

JEAN WILLIAMS,
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QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"Fire can start and spread pretty easily right now, so people need to be mindful."

MITCHELL SHERRIN, ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF, SALT SPRING ISLAND FIRE RESCUE

LCC process prompts suspicion that absolutely nothing will get done

Yay, we've got a Local Community Commission (LCC)! We're a paragon of democracy and it's only a matter of time before all the island's problems are resolved. Hoorah for the LCC! Hoorah for our glorious commissioners, four very decent, dedicated islanders who, for a paltry \$10,000 a year, will sort things out. Hoorah!

In the 50 and more years that I've been allowed to vote, I don't believe any election has been as taxing and completely pointless as this recent one for the LCC, an institution I am entirely certain will bring not a single iota of better management to a system of government that is already completely daft and has been broken since its inception.

For a start, there were 15 candidates. 15! In an ordinary election in an ordinary constituency, you can expect to have maybe six hopefuls, four of them most likely affiliated to a particular political party you either love, loathe or are entirely indifferent to, and perhaps a couple of independents who are invariably single-minded and entirely off the wall.

There are party manifestos full of bombast, bluster and empty promises, even from the incumbents who want you to vote for them again despite

the obvious hash they'd made of things in their four years at the helm. No matter how dire the circumstances, they all offer a bright light at the end of a tunnel.

Not so the LCC. There is no bright light, just a nagging suspicion that absolutely nothing will get done.

Look at the issues. In the recent two-hour village hall colloquium, none of the smaller matters the LCC is actually mandated to manage – Fernwood dock, racquet courts, for example – were addressed because they are, by and large, trivial or irrelevant and not in the least concerning to most of the people in Fulford Hall that evening. Nor, it seems, to the 70 per cent of eligible voters who couldn't be bothered to vote at all.

The real concerns – housing, the state of the island's roads, cycle paths, and the endlessly frustrating and elusive boardwalk – were discussed ad nauseam despite a glaring caveat . . . the LCC is entirely toothless and has little authority to deal with any of them, except maybe the boardwalk.

Oh, there was an absolute consensus that "something needs to be done," but short of filling in the potholes themselves, the only recourse the newly elected commissioners have is to appeal to the good



Paul McElroy
+ ANOTHER
THING

graces of the Capital Regional District or the provincial transportation ministry, institutions not necessarily noted for their good graces.

**I've lived around a bit,
so take my word for it,
while it is undoubtedly
attractive, the only truly
unique thing about this
island is its breadbasket
bureaucracy.**

Most of the candidates' agendas were at best aspirational: "Everyone deserves safe housing. Everyone deserves clean housing. Everyone deserves access to their own housing." Very laudable, but what precisely are they going to do about it? The LCC has neither the budget nor the legislative clout to pitch a tent in Centennial Park let alone fast-

track some realistic land-use regulations.

There was a lot of talk about Salt Spring's "uniqueness." I've lived around a bit, so take my word for it, while it is undoubtedly attractive, the only truly unique thing about this island is its breadbasket bureaucracy. It is becoming a construct, a rambling rural theme park with far too many problems for a toothless entity like the LCC.

As the remorselessly realistic Brian Webster put it: "We have to update the building codes that don't match the reality of today, and I think that the LCC should be raising that issue, but respecting the fact that it's not ultimately an LCC decision." And it will go on raising the issue until it's blue in the face, but it will simply remain an issue.

Similarly, there is an awful lot of "reaching out" in the LCC's future. Reaching out to the CRD, the Islands Trust, the provincial government and the numerous independent improvement districts like North Salt Spring Waterworks.

"If I were elected," says Gayle Baker, who was, "The first thing I'm going to do is get local commissioners to commit every month to going to the [improvement district] meetings, building relationships and trying to see what the possibilities would be. And

that might be a beginning." A beginning to what? Longer meetings? As things stand, the new commissioners will need only to turn out for just nine LCC meetings a year to get their \$10,000 stipends, which is hardly a king's ransom, but likely money for old rope, even if they do fill in their spare time by dropping in on others, checking out the "possibilities." Unlike a legitimate town or city councillor, they are not going to have constituents pounding on their doors, demanding "something be done about it!"

In the end, I gave one of my four votes to someone who is at the exact opposite end of the tolerance rainbow to me because she seemed smart, compassionate and energized, and she had a plan and priorities which weren't necessarily my own but which she deserved a shot at. Not that she got it.

But I'll leave the final word to LCC candidate Don Marcotte, who perfectly summed up why a vote for him particularly was probably a waste of pencil lead . . . "I'm even getting ready to get the hell out of here. Who can afford to live in this place?"

How did that particular manifesto work for you, Don?

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PHOTO BY ROBB MAGLEY

MAKING NOISE: A big crowd joins to celebrate a big cheque – a \$10,000 donation from Salt Spring Island's 100 Men Who Care group to support Island Pathways' work advocating for safe active transportation on the island – at the June 2 bike rally at the Lions Bike Park.

Independent BCCOS oversight important



Adam Olsen
MLA'S
COLUMN

it's appropriate for the PSA to act as police complaints commissioner for special constables? When I tried to ask the PSA about this situation, I was inexplicably rerouted back to the BCCOS chief and Ministry of Environment staff.

Antiquated legislation unleashes the authority of the environment minister to direct a provincial policing agency, the BCCOS, in serious environmental investigations like large-scale corporate mining and forestry non-compliances.

For the B.C. NDP to admit the BCCOS is a fully functional and unrestricted environmental policing agency limits the powers of the PSA and BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU), and restricts the B.C. NDP's ability to access information or influence investigations in environmental crime.

The provincial government would be subject to internal policing reviews of environmental decisions both under provincial offence provisions, and perhaps the Criminal Code of Canada. Beginning to understand why this B.C. NDP might be dragging its heels on oversight of the BCCOS?

Constabulary independence should be enforced as a cardinal principle of our democracy and rule of law, just as Minister Farnworth reminds me. But it's not how his regime is operating.

Conservation officers who put their lives on the line every day must know they have a safe place to do their police work on environmental matters. Currently, they do not.

The Police Act is Minister Farnworth's responsibility. He is allowing a heavily armed service, with all the powers of police but no independent oversight, to be under the direct control of his colleague, Minister of Environment George Heyman.

Minister Farnworth has been loitering on the special committee recommendation to require independent oversight of the BCCOS for over a year. Serious crimes need investigation and his inaction is threatening the safety of the public and the people we ask to do this dangerous work.

A lack of independent oversight of the BCCOS is unacceptable and the B.C. NDP government needs to fix this immediately.

British Columbians would be shocked to learn that the B.C. Conservation Officer Service (BCCOS), a small, heavily armed service with no independent oversight, can be directly controlled by the B.C. NDP government through the minister of environment.

The Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act report submitted to the legislature last year recommended that Minister of Public Safety Mike Farnworth fix this glaring lack of independent oversight and he has ignored that recommendation.

The BCCOS website describes conservation officers as "highly trained, dedicated individuals responsible for enforcing 33 federal and provincial statutes, they hold Special Provincial Constable Status under the Police Act and have unrestricted appointment to enforce Acts and Statutes, and protect the public and preserve the peace."

Conservation officers dress like police, drive police-like cars, use police-like tactics, carry police-like assault rifles and have all the powers of police under section 9 of the Police Act, but are not subject to police-like independent oversight and have no constabulary independence. They are directly responsible to the environment minister. It's his own police force.

When I asked Minister Farnworth about this issue in budget estimates he directed incidents with weapons to the Independent Investigations Office, and issues around toxicity of culture, such as homophobia, transphobia and racism to the Public Service Agency (PSA).

But section 6 of the Police Act states the Public Service Act does not apply to special provincial constables while exercising a constabulary duty.

Does Minister Farnworth really believe

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PERFORMING ARTS

Youth theatre festival launched



METTA ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY

Young performers in a rehearsal for Spring Awakening, an exitStageLeft Productions show from 2018. A new festival will let teen actors and playwrights soar on Salt Spring this summer.

Collaboration spawns exciting opportunities

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Christie Roome was a 17 year old who loved writing and theatre when she had a life-changing experience as a participant in an Alberta Theatre Projects playwrighting festival in Calgary.

"It was the most amazing thing I had ever done in my life," she said in a conversation with the Driftwood last week.

Roome imagines the script she wrote at the time was "horrible." She remembers thinking, "Oh, that didn't work the way I thought it would." But that's great, too. . . The adults around me took me seriously. They called me a playwright, and I was 17 years old. For me, the whole experience was just so incredibly empowering."

Roome is a local author, creator and activist who recently

charmed audiences in the role of nerdy scientist Candy Reeves in *Dogs in the Moonlight* at ArtSpring. She has teamed up with Christina Penhale of exitStageLeft Productions, in partnership with Graffiti Theatre and ArtSpring, to bring an opportunity like the one she had to youth aged 13 to 18 this summer. The Salt Spring Youth New Creatives (SSYNC) Festival runs Aug. 14-19 at ArtSpring, supported by a generous Salt Spring Island Foundation (SSIF) grant.

The SSYNC festival will showcase original plays and provide a mentorship opportunity for young writers and actors to create and receive feedback from professional playwrights, dramaturges, actors and directors in a workshop environment. Students will develop writing skills, build confidence, learn the elements of writing plays and character development, and explore topics, themes and issues that are important to them. At the end of the week-long experience, a showcase will occur at ArtSpring, where

youth actors will bring the playwrights' words to life in a public performance. Roome and Penhale stress that full plays will not be produced.

The festival is open to students who live on Salt Spring and beyond.

Penhale and Roome are thrilled with the mentors who have come on board for the week and the plan that has emerged.

Celebrated playwright and author Natalie Meisner will mentor the writers with support from Roome, while accomplished actor, director, teacher, clown and storyteller Jeffrey Renn will mentor the actors alongside Penhale. Karen Lee White, a prolific Indigenous author and playwright from Vancouver Island, will lead a workshop in Indigenous theatre.

Feedback from the mentors on the syllabus created by Roome and Penhale has been great so far.

"We're working with all of them to expand the syllabus and ensure that what we've included is also what they're really passionate about teaching as well," said Penhale.

"I feel so incredibly grateful and honoured to be working with all of the people that I'm working with to bring this to fruition," said Roome. "I actually, truthfully, honestly almost don't believe it's happening. I feel it's a bit of a dream."

The festival's timing is significant, the organizers note, with young people severely impacted by the isolation that resulted from the COVID pandemic and social restrictions, and the loss of access to performing arts programs and collaborative creative work.

Youth interested in festival participation can access the registration link on the artspring.ca website. Eight playwrights and 16 actors can be accommodated. Organizers hope to fill those spots by June 30.

Participants don't need to provide writing samples in order to participate. The application form is more of a "getting to know you" exercise, said Roome.

"There's not really an application process, like with other programs, where you have to apply and get vetted," added Penhale. "For this first year we wanted to make it accessible and not scary while we try to build a foundation for this to go forward."

The festival aims to demystify the playwrighting process.

"Anybody can do this if they have an idea that they want to explore . . . It's really more about the creative exploration of ideas in the form of theatre," said Penhale.

"We want it to be fun and accessible, and a really open, welcoming place where the youth can come and try something new that they may not have tried, or something that they thought 'Oh, that may be interesting,' but they haven't had a space to do that in yet."

Also on the topic of accessibility, Roome said they are grateful the SSIF grant has made the festival possible and kept the registration fee at a low \$200. (A handful of bursaries are also available.)

Some funds are still needed to support the Indigenous component of the event. Anyone interested in contributing to that initiative can contact Roome or Penhale at ssyncfestival@gmail.com.

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TEA À TEMPO

Annie and Chris duo makes All Saints debut

June 14 recital features guitar, vocals and accordion

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Tea à Tempo on Wednesday, June 14 is delighted to welcome the newly formed duo of local musicians known as Annie and Chris.

Annie Palovcik has returned

to the musical stage after a 15-year hiatus. She last performed at All Saints by-the-Sea with Arvid Chalmers in the Music and Munch series. Her then band, Annie and the Roadhouse Gang, performed at fall fairs, Fulford Days, the Vesuvius Inn, Moby's, the Harbour House and the Tree House Cafe. She was also known to islanders as the owner of the first music store, Annie's Music Box.

Chris Martell is from Nova Scotia via Vancouver and has

called the West Coast his home nearly half his life. A multi-instrumentalist, Martell is equally adept on either guitar or drums. He has been a member of many bands and has travelled throughout North America performing with some of them. A broad spectrum of genres interests this mercurial soul who has been making music, scribbling poetry, lyrics and singing for as long as he can remember.

Both musicians have a love

of country folk music, singing together not just on originals but on the songs of such artists as Willie Nelson, Roseanne Cash, Bob Dylan, Alan Moberg. Palovcik plays a lovely little piano accordion and Martell an acoustic guitar.

Music by donation begins in All Saints at 2:10 p.m., followed by tea and treats at a cost of \$4. Donations provide the honoraria for performers and contribute to the running of the series.



PHOTO COURTESY MUSIC MAKERS

Chris Martell and Annie Palovcik.

what's on this week

Wed. June 7	Fri. June 9	Sun. June 11	Mon. June 12	Tue. June 13	Wed. June 14
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Tea à Tempo: Kathy Stack Trio. All Saints church. 2:10 p.m., followed by optional tea and treats. GISPA's A Wrinkle in Time. GISS performing arts program production at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m. John Herbert. With a musical guest on the lower deck at Moby's Pub. 5 to 8 p.m. K-Tones. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.	LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Fridays With DJ Boomtown. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. til 12:30 a.m. Fawkes & Hownd. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m. Karaoke. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.	LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Vixx. Moby's Pub lower deck. 5 to 8 p.m. Dan Smith. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Bittancourt Museum. See Wednesday listing.	LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Tom Hooper. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.	CINEMA Book Club: The Next Chapter runs Friday, June 9 to Tuesday, June 13 nightly at 7 p.m., plus a Sunday 3 p.m. matinee. Rated PG. 1 hour, 47 minutes. See thefritz.ca for more movie info or phone 250-538-7718.
ACTIVITIES Star of the Sea Speaker Event. Petra Hasenfratz of the Green Raven Clinic will share her recent experiences with the Spiritual Elders of the medicine tribes in the jungles of Ecuador and Colombia. Star of the Sea/St. Mary's Church. 7 to 8:30 p.m. Registration and info at starofthesea.ca. Spongy Moth Trapping Program Information Session. Learn about the provincial government plan to eradicate an invasive species from Salt Spring Island. Fulford Hall. 5 to 7 p.m. Bittancourt Museum. Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Music Bingo. Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.	ACTIVITIES ASK Salt Spring. CRD director Gary Holman is this week's guest in the SIMS lobby. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday Game Night. Board game night for ages 13-19 at the Salt Spring library program room. 7 p.m. Bittancourt Museum. See Wednesday listing.	ACTIVITIES Fulford Water Service Commission AGM. Annual general meeting of the CRD commission for the Fulford area at the SIMS boardroom. 10 a.m. Also accessible via Zoom. Link is in the agenda package on the crd.bc.ca website.	EXHIBITIONS Leslie Corry and Rosalie Matchett's Ingrained Patterns and Pathways opens as the Showcase Exhibition at Artcraft at Mahon Hall on Friday, June 9, with a reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Artcraft gallery and shop opens for its 55th season at Mahon Hall on Friday, June 9 and continues daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through the summer months. Art Jam at the Laundr-O-Mat is a show of work by Art Jam group members running through June 30, with a reception with the artists on Saturday, June 10 from 3 to 5 p.m. 14th Annual Eclectic Visions exhibition by Salt Spring Photography Club members runs at Gallery 8 daily until June 15. The Suitcase Project, a multimedia exhibit by Kayla Isomura, shows in the library program room through June. Mixed-media abstract artist Laila Jensen's Groovy Grooves show is on at Salt Spring Gallery on Wednesdays to Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., until June 14. Colton Prevost shows wildlife photography in the ArtSpring lobby through June.	ACTIVITIES Cedars of Tuam Water Service Commission AGM. Annual general meeting of the CRD commission for the Cedars of Tuam area at the SIMS boardroom. 12:30 p.m. Also accessible via Zoom. Link is in the agenda package on the crd.bc.ca website. Tuesday Farmers' Market. Hosted by the Salt Spring Community Market Society in Centennial Park. New hours of 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. Trivia Tuesday. At Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.	LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Tea à Tempo: Annie and Chris. All Saints church. 2:10 p.m., followed by optional tea and treats. GISS Music Presents Four-Star Daydream. Term-end music show at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m. John Herbert. With a musical guest on the lower deck at Moby's Pub. 5 to 8 p.m. Terry Warbey. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.
Thur. June 8 LIVE ENTERTAINMENT GISPA's A Wrinkle in Time. See Wednesday listing. Dave Carl. Moby's Pub lower deck. 5 to 8 p.m. Sam Tudor. Mateada Lounge. 8 to 10:30 p.m. Open Mic. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m. Craig's Karaoke. At Moby's Pub. 8 p.m. to midnight. Valdy. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.	Sat. June 10 LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Bach on the Rock Chamber Orchestra & Choir: Back to the Future. Three works by J.S. Bach plus a commissioned piece by Britney Do. Fulford Hall. 7 p.m. Buck Dodgers Band. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m. Love Cats. At the Legion. 6 p.m. Downtown Mischief. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. Hilltop Pranksters. Mateada Lounge. 8 to 10:30 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Saturday Market in the Park. Centennial Park market. 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Proposed Bylaw No. 530 Open House. Learn about the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee's proposed bylaw to allow accessory dwelling units on an expanded number of properties. Meaden Hall. 12 to 3 p.m. Salt Spring Island Trail & Nature Club Presents: Chris Arnett. Island historian shares information about names of locations and places on Salt Spring Island in a special talk. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Trail & Nature Club Presents: Chris Arnett. Island historian shares information about names of locations and places on Salt Spring Island in a special talk. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Trail & Nature Club Presents: Chris Arnett. Island historian shares information about names of locations and places on Salt Spring Island in a special talk. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Trail & Nature Club Presents: Chris Arnett. Island historian shares information about names of locations and places on Salt Spring Island in a special talk. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.
Fri. June 9 LIVE ENTERTAINMENT GISPA's A Wrinkle in Time. See Wednesday listing.	Sun. June 11 LIVE ENTERTAINMENT JS & Friends Concert. Bach on the Rock artistic director and pianist Jean-Sébastien Lévesque, violinist Victor Fournelle-Blain and horn player Margaret Fisher perform the Brahms Trio for Violin, Horn and Piano in E-flat major and Saint Saens' Violin Sonata No. 1 in D minor. All Saints by-the-Sea. 3 p.m. A fundraiser for the Bach on the Rock Music Society. Jazz Jam. Singers, players and fans welcome at the Legion. 3 to 6 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Trail & Nature Club Presents: Chris Arnett. Island historian shares information about names of locations and places on Salt Spring Island in a special talk. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Trail & Nature Club Presents: Chris Arnett. Island historian shares information about names of locations and places on Salt Spring Island in a special talk. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Trail & Nature Club Presents: Chris Arnett. Island historian shares information about names of locations and places on Salt Spring Island in a special talk. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.	ACTIVITIES Salt Spring Island Trail & Nature Club Presents: Chris Arnett. Island historian shares information about names of locations and places on Salt Spring Island in a special talk. Salt Spring library program room. 2 p.m.

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CONCERT PREVIEW

Bach on the Rock ready for a busy weekend



PHOTO BY JOI FREED-GARROD

Bach on the Rock choir members rehearse "in the round" with artistic director Jean-Sébastien Lévesque at the piano for their June 10 evening concert at Fulford Hall. The following afternoon, Lévesque, horn player Margaret Fisher and violinist Victor Fournelle-Blain will perform at All Saints.

Bach to the Future on June 10; fundraising recital on June 11

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Fans of music from baroque, classical, romantic and contemporary eras have two concert events to enjoy on Salt Spring this weekend.

On Saturday, June 10, Bach on the Rock (BOTR) chamber orchestra and choir will return to its namesake roots with a largely Bach repertoire for its final concert of the season. BOTR artistic director Jean-Sébastien Lévesque has put

together a program of three contrasting J.S. Bach pieces for a concert called Bach to the Future, as well as a commissioned piece, set for Fulford Hall on Saturday, June 10 at 7 p.m.

Then on Sunday, June 11 at 3 p.m. at All Saints by-the-Sea, Lévesque and two colleagues — violinist Victor Fournelle-Blain from Montreal and Salt Spring horn player Margaret Fisher — will team up to present a recital of two works: Camille Saint Saëns' Violin Sonata No. 1 in D minor and Johannes Brahms' Trio for Violin, Horn and Piano in E-flat major. This event is a fundraiser for the BOTR Music Society.

Saturday's concert includes Christ lag in Todes Banden, one of the earliest cantatas written by Bach for Easter

and using the text of a hymn by Martin Luther. Bach's Orchestral Suite No. 1 in C major will feature BOTR musicians in a multi-movement work with uplifting French-style dances. The third Bach piece in the concert is the Violin Concerto in A minor, with soloist Fournelle-Blain. Lévesque said the concerto will be familiar to many.

When programming his first season as artistic director of BOTR, Lévesque wanted to support a young composer in creating a piece especially for his chamber choir and orchestra. He said Britney Do — a graduate of the Vancouver Academy of Music composition program who has trained in the Vancouver Symphony Orchestral Institute and plays violin with VSO School of Music ensembles — came highly recommended. Do's piece called Prey to AI will premiere at the June 10 concert.

As artificial intelligence is a huge topic in society these days, "It's a work that fits in with this moment," said Lévesque.

Fournelle-Blain and Lévesque have played together on a number of occasions. At the Sunday afternoon fundraiser at All Saints they will perform Saint Saëns' Violin Sonata No. 1 in D minor, a work known for its technical difficulty. San Francisco Symphony program writer Scott Foglesong described it as "a dazzling showcase for both instruments."

Fournelle-Blain has played with numerous orchestras and ensembles, including the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, where he held the position of principal viola. He is currently part of the McGill University faculty.

Fisher will join them for the beau-

tiful Brahms trio. She was an active performer in several orchestras and chamber groups in Alberta before moving to Salt Spring Island, and now plays in concerts with the Vancouver Island Symphony, the Victoria Symphony, the Civic Orchestra of Victoria, the Sooke Orchestra and Bach on the Rock.

Along with leading ensembles in Québec and being the pianist for Les Voix de le Montagne before moving to Vancouver in 2020, Lévesque has played piano with well-known musicians and singers, developing a broad repertoire along the way. He was mentored by Jean Saulnier in achieving his master's of music degree from the Université de Montréal, and participated in master classes with pianists and teachers such as Jean-Philippe Collard, Jacques Rouvier, Louis Lortie, John Perry and Marc Durand. Lévesque has been director of Bach on the Rock's chamber orchestra and choir since the fall of 2022, developing a unique musical community and leading the group in presenting impactful concerts.

Tickets for both concerts (\$25 for adults, \$5 for youth) are available on the bachontherock.com website or at the door.

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SUBSTANCE USE

Front-line youth services available

Counsellor focuses on prevention, education and harm reduction

BY MARCIA JANSEN
DRIFTWOOD CONTRIBUTOR

B.C. has entered its eighth year since the provincial government declared a drug toxicity public health emergency. Since 2016, more than 11,000 people have died from poisoned drugs in the province.

Salt Spring Island and residents of the other Gulf Islands are directly affected by the crisis with fatal and non-fatal overdoses happening. Shae Houston, youth and family substance use counsellor for Island Community Services (ICS) on Salt Spring Island, offers help to youth and their families and focuses on education to prevent harm.

Houston has worked in the realm of human services most of her life. She was a youth counsellor in the Surrey School District for 14 years, travelling back and forth from Salt Spring Island before she retired.

"It was like a month following my retirement from SD36 when I decided that I wasn't ready to stop. I still had work to do," she said with a smile.

She liked being surrounded by young people and became an educational assistant. Not feeling it was the right fit for her, she started working for ICS as a case worker for the Housing First program. The decision this year to shift her focus to substance use youth and family coun-



PHOTO BY MARCIA JANSEN

Shae Houston, the youth and family substance use counsellor for Island Community Services, outside her Core Inn workplace in Ganges.

selling was sparked by her personal experiences.

"I've witnessed mental health challenges of loved ones and lost four family members to drugs. This job is close to my heart," she said.

Coming from a big city to Salt Spring Island, she noticed that substance use is just as common here as in Surrey. The potential she sees for youth to develop problematic substance use remains the same across communities.

"There are so many factors that can lead to

problematic substance use. Reducing stigma around substance use and increasing dialogue about substances amongst families is the best strategy to keep youth safe."

Houston focuses on prevention, education and harm reduction.

"When a young person decides to use a substance, I want them to understand how to reduce the risks. The mantra often begins with: go slow, know your source, get your drugs tested and consider there is an increased risk when you mix substances. Unbiased knowledge around substance use is an ongoing educational process."

She wants islanders to know that she does not do her work independently. She consults with her local youth team, school and Island Health personnel, and has quarterly meetings with substance-use professionals off-island.

"I have seen firsthand how devastating substance use can be. It can create pain among loved ones and destroy individual lives. I do this job to keep people safe."

There are plans to start support groups on the island for parents with children who use substances and for youth affected by substance use.

"I hope to reach more people who need help in this community. I think the stigma surrounding substance use is holding them back so far. But I will not give up easily in my attempts to make positive differences in this community around how we collectively approach substance use conversations and support those who are struggling."

If you are interested in joining support groups or want to get more information, please contact Shae Houston at shouston@ssics.ca.

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CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Healthier forest goals attainable

Erik Piikkila shares knowledge and island-specific experience

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Islanders interested in learning more about the connection between healthy forests, climate change and water resources had access to a regional expert at two Transition Salt Spring (TSS) events last week.

Erik Piikkila, a forestry technician and forest ecologist, was the guest at a TSS webinar on Thursday, June 1 and also led 24 people on a June 4 field trip through Duck Creek Park.

In answering questions from webinar moderators Inga Michaelson and Patti Baral of TSS, Piikkila painted a picture of a healthy forest, addressed Salt Spring's specific situation and made suggestions about what individual landowners can do to reduce fire risk, increase forest health and help reduce climate change impacts in the process. He has been a consultant with TSS on its Maxwell Lake watershed restoration project. Piikkila said Salt Spring was generally in a good position because it has ample forest cover and

most of the tree harvesting took place many decades ago.

"It is a second-growth forest, a younger forest, but it's maturing as time goes on. So that's time that is banked that's helping us with this development. That's going to help us out as we get back to more shady, cool, moist conditions, which are characteristics of old-growth forests, which will then slow down forest fires if we were to get any forest fires."

Piikkila described a healthy forest as one that has many different plants, animals and layers.

"You've got big trees, you've got medium trees and small trees, you've got shrubs, you've got herbs covering the forest floor, you've got moss and lichen hanging in the tops of the trees and you've got animals like a spider that could be living on a moss mat at the top of the tree... So we have these forests that are interconnected — there used to be lots of them — and they buffer change. They can change the direction of wind, they also shade and cool the planet, they soak in tons of carbon dioxide, and then they give off oxygen. They also slow down water on the landscape, filter water and then direct the water so it doesn't run just on the surface but gets into the soil and eventually will trickle down and refill aquifers."

He pointed out that forest ecosystems



ZOOM SCREENSHOT

Forests expert Erik Piikkila during a Transition Salt Spring Zoom webinar.

provide these services "absolutely for free," while communities spend millions of dollars on water filtration plants.

Piikkila showed visual examples of healthy and unhealthy forests, with suggestions for improving situations. Thinning of trees is important in some cases, along with piling branches and smaller debris to encourage rot and not have contiguous areas of fire fuel on the ground.

People can get more information by watching the webinar on the TSS YouTube channel. Check the transitionsspring.com website for the link when it's posted. Other past educational event videos are also available to watch.

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Obituaries

Obituaries

Obituaries

Coming Events

Coming Events

HARRY NIELSEN

Harry Nielsen passed away on April 11, 2023 surrounded by his family on Salt Spring Island. He was 7 weeks shy of 97. Harry was born in Odense, Denmark to Mads Nielsen and Laura (Poulsen) Nielsen, the youngest of two brothers and three sisters. He became an apprentice, then journeyman and finally master carpenter. He survived World War II in occupied Denmark, then travelled to Sweden and Norway to find work.

While in Bergen, Norway, he asked a lovely young Norwegian woman directions to the Carpenters' Union office. He and the woman, Anna-Margrethe, began to date and she eventually moved with him to Denmark where they married in 1948. They had a daughter Marianne followed by a son, Tore. In 1957 the family immigrated to Canada, settling in Brooks, AB, where Harry had several relatives and an immediate job offer, and where youngest daughter Vivian was born. Harry worked long hours saving money to buy land and build their home on Seventh St. W. When it was completed, the family moved into their very own Harry-built home.

Harry was well known and respected in Brooks and throughout the County of Newell for his excellent craftsmanship, witty humour, and humility. 'Hi Harry!' was heard wherever he went, and he was constantly complimented for the beautiful kitchens, custom cabinets, and quality furniture that he'd built. In his early years in Brooks he focused full-time on house building, and worked part-time as Building Inspector for the Town of Brooks Low-Cost Housing division. He spent some years building and finishing houses with Oscar Jacobsen and then started his own business, Nielsen's Cabinets. Word of mouth about the excellent quality of his work spread and he was busy even without advertising. Once established, he felt comfortable taking time for other pursuits like Sunday family picnics at Lake Newell, summer trips to BC, or Sunday afternoons at one of the various farms in the County, visiting fellow Danish families. He also began creating beautiful intarsia pieces and other wooden works of art on the lathe in his workshop. After long work days, Harry did not hesitate to help his friends, neighbours and acquaintances with furniture repairs and custom projects—often for free. In his retirement, he gave his time and skills freely to build shelving units, display cases, and custom cabinets for local organizations, like the Brooks Public Library and the IGA. He showed kindness, respect and generosity to everyone.

After his beloved Grethe died in 2006, Viv and grandson Noel became Harry's constant companions. In 2015, the three of them moved to Salt Spring Island, BC, where Harry once again enjoyed living close to the ocean. He never completely hung up his hammer, spending his days building prize-winning wooden artworks in his workshop, helping Viv with house renovations and repairs, and contributing wood projects to their beautiful garden. Bursting with pride, he could also be found cheering on Noel at his concert performances. Harry kept himself mentally sharp: he did daily sudoku and avidly read newspapers, biographies and novels. He enjoyed TV sports, especially hockey, curling, and tennis. His sense of curiosity remained strong, as did his love of learning, and he maintained an enviable focus on health and wellness. Harry reveled in nature, primarily walks by the ocean and in lush coastal forests. As an avid birder, he enjoyed his hummingbirds and other assorted feathered friends at the feeders. He and Viv spent many mornings by their pond watching tadpoles grow into frogs, surrounded by flowers he had a hand in tending. Harry loved his animal companions, most notably their sweet dog Lego, and their cats Eli, Ollie and Eva.

Harry is predeceased by his wife Grethe, his brothers Johannes and Anton, his sisters Karen, Maria (Misse) and Lisbeth, and his best friend Abe Giesbrecht. He is survived by children Marianne (Larry Gould) of Flagstaff, Arizona, Tore (Dominique Petit) of Montreal, and Viv (Ken Milligan) of Salt Spring Island; by granddaughter Sabrina of Montreal and grandson Noel of Salt Spring Island; and by nieces, nephews and cousins in Denmark, Norway, the USA, and Canada. To us, and to many others, Harry was a great man. He will be missed. Deeply. There will be a family gathering in June on Salt Spring Island to honour and celebrate this wonderful man.

Farvel og tak Dad/Morfar/Farfar.

Harry's family would like to express appreciation to the Lady Minto Hospital staff. Thank you especially to Zac, Amy, Jackie, Brent, and Dr. Gummeson. Dr. Gummeson, you were highly regarded by our dad and he enjoyed your regular clinic visits. For anyone wishing to donate to a cause that Harry supported, please consider the Brooks Animal Protection Society (BAPS) (<https://www.bapsociety.com/>), or the Cats of Salt Spring Rescue Society (<https://catsofsaltspring.com/>).



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, June 15, 7:00 pm

SSI Conservancy members, please note that the AGM will be online with access via computer (Zoom) or telephone. Please RSVP to debra@saltspringconservancy.ca no later than June 14 with your choice of access (Zoom or telephone).

Access instructions and reports will be posted at <https://saltspringconservancy.ca> by June 13. For members without internet, call 250-538-0318 by June 8 and we'll mail the info to you.

Coming Events

THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CENTRAL COMMUNITY HALL SOCIETY

Wednesday
June 21, 2023 at
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at 901 North End Road.
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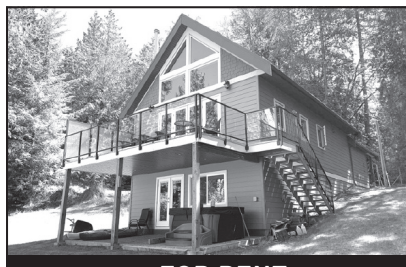
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HOROSCOPE

WEEK OF JUNE 4 TO 10, 2023

THE LUCKIEST SIGNS THIS WEEK: AQUARIUS, PISCES AND ARIES



ARIES

You'll oversee a meeting at work. It'll allow you to show off your skills and get that long-coveted promotion. The full moon will give you something to celebrate.



TAURUS

Summer holidays are coming up fast, at least for your children. This will take a lot of the stress and responsibility off your shoulders and allow you to enjoy the present moment.



GEMINI

You'll spend more time than expected on a project close to your heart. You may need to talk openly about your relationship if there's uneasiness between you and your significant other.



CANCER

You'll make agreements with new clients that will satisfy you. You have a keen eye for detail. This full moon could affect your energy levels; don't overdo it.



LEO

You'll put in extra hours at work, allowing you to bank holiday time. Reward yourself with a bit of luxury.



VIRGO

You'll make important decisions about your professional future and health. You'll try a new routine that aligns with your aspirations and produces results.



LIBRA

The full moon will encourage deep conversations with friends and family. At work, effective communication will help you overcome a difficult situation. You must adopt a healthier diet to improve your well-being.



SCORPIO

You'll suppress your feelings this week. However, talking about how you feel can be liberating. It'll allow you to purge negative emotions and regain a sense of well-being.



SAGITTARIUS

You may discover a mistake on an old bill that helps you solve a budget problem. You may have to negotiate with a client at work, or they could change their mind.



CAPRICORN

You're full of ideas and initiatives. However, you won't be able to satisfy everyone. The full moon will cause some confusion at work and elsewhere.



AQUARIUS

You may need a second cup of coffee to help you concentrate on all the tasks you have to get done. Confusion will run rampant this week, making it difficult to be understood.



PISCES

The full moon will stress you out! That's why you need to let go, grab a friend and visit a massage therapist or spa to relax.

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

In Memoriam



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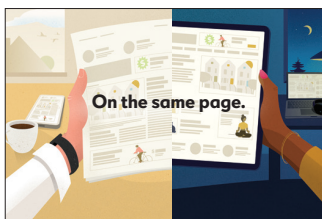
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EDUCATION

Kids shine at market fair



PHOTOS BY GAIL SJUBERG

Just a few of the Salt Spring Elementary School students participating in the June 1 Junior Market Fair were, from left, Gian Fabre, Benny Chang and Gerard Emekoba at the Bonne Sieste - Bonne Nuit booth set up by Emekoba and Fabre (Chang was visiting from his neighbouring table selling wooden tea-light candle holders); and Matilda Buck making a crocheted coaster to add to her La Cabane de Crochet offerings.

Salt Spring Elementary School students explore and execute business ideas

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring Elementary (SSE) School's gymnasium was a hotbed of entrepreneurial energy last Thursday as grades 5 and 6 students held their first Junior Market Fair.

I had planned to drop by to take a few photos for the paper, but I also ended up with an armload of charming, well-made and useful goods after visiting scarcely a dozen tables. Crocheted coasters, a hand-sewn heart pillow, polar bear

decoration, Joyful Jellies shower soap, a fir bark tea-light holder, photo cards, a pet rock and a hair scrunchy quickly scooped the cash out of my wallet.

Students had made eye-catching business logos and signs and put serious thought into their displays. Maya of Joyful Jellies had a bowl of water and washcloth available for trying out her product. Jaxon's Pet Rocks table offered an option for people to decorate their own rocks if one of the pre-made varieties didn't appeal.

The fair idea was instigated by SSE Grade 5 teacher Tanya Grant. In May of 2021, Grant was visiting a girlfriend in Courtenay, whose daughter was preparing for her class's "business fair" at the time.

"I learned about her daughter's process and followed up to hear about her experience after the fair was complete," said Grant. "I knew I wanted to try something like this."

Grant and fellow teacher Valeska San Martin, who teaches Grade 6 French Immersion students at SSE, started planning for last week's event during the 2021-22 school year.

The two teachers worked with their classes on the project for approximately six weeks this spring, "taking them through a business planning process from the idea stage, to materials required, cost of materials, production costs, cost of individual goods sold, price determination, business name, logo, slogan, marketing, store planning, salesmanship, and financial recording and reporting," explained Grant. "All aspects of business planning and development were completed at school, except all the products were manufactured at home."

Grant said every student made a profit, ranging from \$45 to more than \$200, after paying their expenses. Some sold all of the products they had made and brought to the fair.

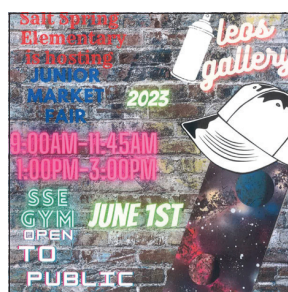
San Martin was also pleased with the process and how the fair turned out.

"This was a wonderful opportunity to encourage young entrepreneurs to learn about developing, pricing, marketing and selling a product of their own design," she said.

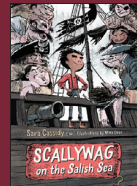
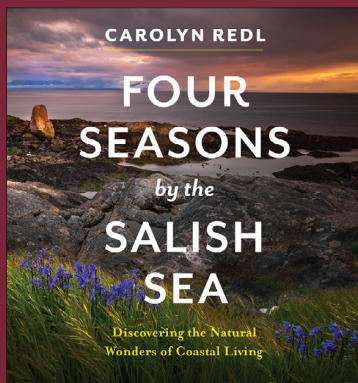
"One aspect that was different for me, as a French Immersion teacher, was ensuring that both official languages were equally represented by my Grade 6 students. As a result, their signage, labels and sales pitches were available in both French and English."

She said the students will now evaluate their experience to determine what went well and what they might do differently next time.

Hopefully the fair will take place again next year, and I will remember to bring more cash and a shopping bag or two. Or maybe a young entrepreneur will have made some bags for customers to buy and fill.



Two event posters and a logo made by three of the students.



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