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3 Burgoyne liquid waste options outlined



9 Upcoming fall fair needs volunteers (and zucchinis, of course!)

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PHOTO BY ROB LOWRIE

AND THEY'RE OFF: Some of the 85 cyclists participating in the 10th-annual Cycle of Life Tour leave the Farmers' Institute grounds Sunday morning after camping there and enjoying island hospitality. See story on page 11.

LEGAL ACTION

Seabreeze court dispute settled

BC Housing working to rehouse remaining two residents

BY ROBB MAGLEY

DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Much of the legal conflict surrounding the former Seabreeze Inne has been resolved, according to a flurry of terse but decisive court documents released last week.

And as two Salt Spring nonprofit societies seek to refocus themselves on their charitable work, a call has gone out for rental accommodation for people remaining at the Bittancourt Road building.

According to filings with B.C.'s Supreme Court and confirmed by both parties, the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation's (LMHF) legal action against Salt Spring Island Community Services (SSICS) has been dismissed without costs payable to any party — an

agreed settlement, according to LMHF board chair Janet Cunningham, ending a dispute that has been ongoing since October 2022.

"The action against SSICS has been settled and the Seabreeze Inne is almost entirely vacant," said Cunningham, "because of people voluntarily leaving, or because of the court order requiring them to leave."

That June 23 interlocutory court judgement had ordered two of six people still living in the building to vacate; of the remaining four, according to Cunningham, two are still living at the property — but BC Housing staff are working with them to find and rent acceptable on-island accommodations.

"Anything the community can do to help provide rental accommodation to

the two remaining individuals would be welcomed," said Cunningham, who characterized their needs as two one-bedroom, studio or basement suites at market rent. "The foundation can forward any such opportunities to BC Housing and assist with the move."

SSICS (now simply ICS) executive director Rob Grant confirmed the court's consent order, expressing frustration with a legal case he said had cost the society more than \$50,000 in legal bills and "hundreds of hours wasted."

"We are glad this part of the Seabreeze saga is over," said Grant. "One nonprofit suing another is ridiculous."

LMHF continued on 2



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CLEAN-UP CREW



PHOTO COURTESY CASHI

Participants in a Ganges Harbour clean-up gather at the Coast Guard dock before combing the shoreline for trash on Sunday, Aug. 27. More than 30 adults and kids joined the effort organized by the Clean and Safe Harbour Initiative group. Spokesperson Glenn Stevens said a lot of trash was collected, including heavy items like mattresses and wet tires. The piles of trash are scheduled to be removed through use of a landing barge and garbage bin from Salt Spring Garbage on Friday, he said.

SSIFR

Two fires extinguished



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

Caution tape and exterior damage seen at the Kings Lane supportive housing complex, which fire and police authorities suspect was deliberately set.

Maliview and Kings Lane blazes within one week

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A pair of structure fires just four days apart kept Salt Spring crews busy, according to officials, who caution dry conditions are expected to persist.

Quick action in the early morning Monday, Aug. 21 kept a fire confined to the outside of temporary supportive housing units at 154 Kings Lane, according to Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue (SSIFR) Chief Jamie Holmes. Twenty firefighters were on scene from 1 a.m. to 4 a.m., he said, after receiving a report of a fire burning externally.

Some 2,500 gallons of water were used to completely extinguish that fire, according to Holmes, adding that it was fortunate crews were able to access a hydrant right across the street from the complex.

"The crews managed to contain it to the outside, just as it was starting to breach inside," said Holmes. "The fire ended up doing electrical damage, and there was damage to the propane lines, so that displaced the occupants of that unit."

Holmes said residents were allowed to go back to the complex the following day; just two units were damaged, he said, one of which was vacant, and there was room in another building to relocate residents from the other. That blaze is being treated as "suspicious," according to Salt Spring RCMP, who were actively investigating.

Just a few days later, fire personnel responded to a house fire on Maliview Drive where SSIFR Assistant Chief Mitchell Sherrin credited a "great save" to the on-shift crew, who he said were at the scene just 12 minutes after the call from dispatchers — at 7:45 p.m. Friday, Aug. 25.

Sherrin also praised the early response of nearby resident and firefighter Jovian Wiefelspuett, who he said raced to the home and took quick steps to help keep the fire from spreading.

"He closed all the doors and windows on the structure," said Sherrin, "which limited fire growth before the first fire engine arrived."

Investigators said the Maliview fire seemed to have started from a collection of "discarded rechargeable batteries and cell phones," according to a press release.

No people — residents or firefighters — were injured in either event.

Inne decommissioning underway

LMHF

continued from 1

B.C.'s Supreme Court also issued a consent order to dismiss LMHF's third-party action against the property-holding entity administered by BC Housing, the

Provincial Rental Housing Corporation, again without costs payable to any party. PRHC entered into a lease agreement with LMHF to use space at the former Seabreeze Inne shortly after the foundation purchased the property in 2022.

Meanwhile, LMHF says it has begun decommissioning the building at 101 Bittancourt Rd. in preparation for converting the former motel into 17 rental units for hospital staff. Cunningham thanked the community for their continued support.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire district's draft budget tops \$5 million

Officials cite inflation, wage contract settlements

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A draft fire district budget for next year has been put before trustees, with another large increase and a strong indication that inflation, rather than costs for a new fire hall or other capital projects, holds the reins.

Approved by the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District's Finance and Audit Committee in July, the \$5.09 million 2024 draft budget proposal represents another year of increasing costs and corresponding taxes — a 9.47 per cent hike from the previous year's \$4.65 million, according to chief administrative officer Rodney Dieleman, who presented the

draft to trustees Monday, Aug. 21. That's higher than last year's increase of 7.87 per cent, Dieleman noted, but still lower than 2021's 11 per cent bump — and none of it is for capital improvements.

"Of that increase, there is no increase for new capital equipment, new buildings or any capital increases at all," said Dieleman. "All of the increases are for operational expenses."

Dieleman pointed out cost pressures for firefighting tend to follow inflation for regular consumers, only more so.

"Fuel for fire trucks isn't cheap, and our electricity bills go up just like yours," said Dieleman. "But things like firefighting clothing doesn't go up in price at the same rate as blue jeans in the store; it goes up exponentially faster, because of a lack of suppliers and even materials."

Against a backdrop of higher

fire equipment prices, the budget reflected an expressed target of keeping administration costs to less than 10 per cent of budget, Dieleman said, which was met — "We don't really want to have a heavy administration," he said. But staffing costs beyond administration will see increases next year due to wage contract settlements, themselves a product of inflationary pressure.

"Most of it is wages back paid," said Dieleman. "If you watch the news, nurses, policemen and firefighting professionals are getting large contract settlements. We had to catch up with almost 7.5 per cent back pay and current wage increases for next year."

And while Dieleman said he believed those contract settlements will return to historical normal in coming years, for the moment it's going to steer the budget upward.

"Right now, everybody's feel-

ing the inflation," said Dieleman, "and that has a trickle down effect on all operations."

"Of that increase, there is no increase for new capital equipment, new buildings or any capital increases at all."

RODNEY DILEMAN
CAO, SSIFPD

Trustees voted to receive the 2024 draft, and to make plans to present the proposal to the public at a special town hall meeting 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 14 — which will also include information on the district's five-year strategic plan and "all information available" on the new fire hall.

"It will be at the Community Gospel church, a big open meeting space," said board chair Rollie Cook. "It's structured simply as a conversation, with everyone sitting in a circle. And we'll go for as long as it takes."

Trustees also passed a motion reiterating support for the new fire hall project and the fire hall steering committee's work in particular; that passed 6-1 in favour, with trustee David Courtney recording a vote in opposition.

Courtney later offered a motion to reverse previous board decisions and "consider a Plan A and a Plan B concept" for the new firehouse, and had brought another that would amend the board's policy manual to include language on spending money "wisely."

Neither motion received a second, although the latter was referred to the planning and policy committee for discussion.

LIQUID WASTE

LCC aims to shrink septage, sludge trucking costs

Creating 'biochar' could save fuel, disposal costs

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's Local Community Commission (LCC) is digging into one of its perhaps less-glamorous delegated services — but some innovative ideas may save ratepayers millions of dollars in coming years.

Troy Vassos, senior environmental engineer from consulting firm Integrated Sustainability, presented the LCC his team's analysis of waste treatment options at the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Burgoyne Bay facility on Salt Spring Island — acknowledging the reality that human waste is rarely a topic delved into eagerly.

"It's not everybody's favourite subject, I'm sure," chuckled Vassos, who explained for the uninitiated that the material in question — the accumulation of solids from Salt Spring's septic tanks, as well as biosolid "sludge" from the island's two wastewater treatment facilities, at Ganges and on Maliview — is collected, alongside water treatment sludge and that gathered from restaurant grease traps, at a facility at Burgoyne Bay, where it all waits to be eventually transferred by truck and ferry to Vancouver Island.

Commissioning the report was one of the last actions taken by the now-dissolved Salt Spring Island Liquid Waste Disposal Local Services Commission, whose responsibilities now lie with the LCC. Commissioners anticipated a "technical demo" report on the order of 10-12 pages, but were delighted Vassos brought a more fulsome examination to their meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 22.

"I think it's about 50 or 60 pages," said Vassos. "So you got a lot more than you originally hoped for. But we felt it was necessary to enable you to make these decisions."

Vassos has more than a passing familiarity with Salt Spring, and particularly with the Ganges wastewater treatment plant; he was the engineer responsible for upgrading equipment there when the ultra-filtration membranes had failed and needed replacement. Projects like this, he said, need to be thought about with 20-year horizons, and

designed for the future; otherwise, he said, "you're constantly paying for infrastructure."

The report explained the current operating budget for the handling, transportation and disposal of Salt Spring's septage and sludge was \$817,000 for the year. If the island's population grows at the same rate it has over the last two decades — and the volume of material goes up accordingly — Vassos' team predicted the average cost would top \$1 million per year quickly, reaching nearly \$1.4 million in 2043. That represented a total of \$22 million in operations cost over two decades, "plus inflation," said Vassos.

"But two things septage and biosolid sludge have in common is that they're mostly water — about 98.5 per cent," said Vassos. "So what we're disposing on Vancouver Island is mostly water."

To save trucking costs, the consultants looked for ways to thicken — or "dewater" — the material, and then deal with the liquids and solids created separately — possibly even avoiding off-island transportation.

For the liquid, one idea was to dispose of it in the already-oversized Ganges treatment plant; but while Vassos said it could "easily" handle the additional liquid load, the cost of trucking the liquid from Burgoyne was far higher than treating it and dispersing it into the ground at the Burgoyne site — even after factoring in the capital expenditure of building that septic-field-like system.

"The option we're suggesting would be the most environmentally sensitive, to treat it biologically — using in this case a recirculating filter-type treatment process. Very limited operations cost, it basically operates on its own quite nicely for six to eight months before it needs someone to take a look at it, and we disperse the treated liquid into the ground."

Several options for solids had to be discarded, but as much for regulatory reasons as costs. Composting on-site, for example, requires adding wood chips and sawdust, increasing the volume of solids to deal with. Moreover, the CRD currently prohibits use of that sort of compost — and on-site dehydration, similarly, produces a soil nutrient product subject to a provincial prohibition.

The best value, according to the analysis, could be to "thermally degrade" the biosol-

ids into biochar — killing off all the proteins associated with viruses, parasites and bacteria with heat.

"Because you change the chemical and physical nature of it, it wouldn't classify as a biosolid," said Vassos, who posited it might therefore not fall under current CRD prohibitions for use. "You've got an inert carbon, phosphorus and nitrogen material that can be used for agricultural applications — or we could transport it to Hartland [landfill] at much less cost, because we're not transporting all of that liquid with it."

The recommended approach — separating most liquids from solids with a press, treating the liquid with a recirculating biofilter process and dispersing it into the ground, then burning the solids with a pyrolysis system — "A bit like running a barbecue," quipped Vassos — appealed to commissioners partly for the potential for generating biochar for soil, and partly for cost savings. The 20-year aggregate operational cost would run about \$2.6 million, compared to \$22 million currently projected with the status quo, according to Vassos.

"It's the most logical, sustainable approach," said Vassos. "The disposed-of

water becomes part of the groundwater, returning to the environment. And with the pyrolysis, you're recovering nutrients that were waste products."

"I know all biochar is not the same," said commissioner Gayle Baker. "Are you comfortable that the biochar would be heavy-metal free and appropriate for soil use?"

"Biochar will reflect the habits of the homeowners in Ganges and the surrounding area of Salt Spring," said Vassos. "If people discharge paints, heavy metals, waste batteries and so forth into their septic tanks, that is going to be reflected in the quality of the biosolids being produced."

Typical domestic wastewater is fairly innocuous, Vassos said — unless you've got industry nearby.

"Metro Vancouver you'll find a higher concentration of metals in the biosolids than you will in Victoria," said Vassos. "And of course you'll have a higher level in Victoria, with its minor industries, than you would on Salt Spring."

The LCC moved to accept the recommendation and asked staff to prepare a strategy that includes verifying biochar's status under the CRD's biosolids restrictions.

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Salt Spring 1896

The SSI Fall Fair needs you!

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OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Fabulous fair

One of the most dramatic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was the temporary loss of community gatherings, and their slow return to "normal."

Last year the Salt Spring Fall Fair certainly "felt" as it usually did, with the events we all love to watch or participate in — from sheepdog trials to zucchini races — taking place, but vendor numbers and exhibition entries in general were definitely down from traditional levels.

This year the fair will be back to full steam on Sept. 9 and 10, with a record number of vendors signed up to attend. Hopefully islanders will also be inspired to display the bounty of their gardens, kitchens, workshops and studios by entering one or more of the multitudinous exhibit categories. If you need guidance, the Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute (SSIFI) website at ssifi.org has a link to the fall fair catalogue and entry form, or get hard copies from Foxglove Farm and Garden Supply, the Driftwood or the Ganges Visitor Centre. Deadline to submit the form is Saturday, Sept. 2.

The catalogue gives a glimpse of how many volunteers are involved in putting on the fair, with each section having at least one coordinator, but that's not the whole story. In a 2021 Aqua magazine article, then SSIFI president Marguerite Lee estimated some 400 people volunteer at the event.

This year for the first time the fall fair committee has found itself short of the number of people needed to take care of two key jobs: handling fair visitors at the admission gates and monitoring exhibits in the main hall and annex building. New SSIFI president Bradley Damsgaard explains in a story in this week's paper how many of the reliable past volunteers are simply unable to continue in their roles due to age, a phenomenon being experienced by many non-profit groups on Salt Spring and elsewhere.

With free weekend passes offered to those who do two-hour gate shifts or four-hour stints as monitors, and lots of social fun to boot, it's a great, short-term volunteer gig. Sign up online at ssifi.org.

If you are new to Salt Spring Island, you won't want to miss the fair. If you haven't been for a number of years, make it the year you return to check it out. The rest of you will surely be there. It really is an unbeatable celebration of rural life and our community.

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No evidence ADUs will help

BY RICK LAING

Michael Wall hit the nail on the head with his Aug. 9 Driftwood Viewpoint "New era in political honesty."

I'm thinking, could Bylaw 530 actually be just a cynical end run around the 2017 governance referendum that rejected incorporation and by using "The Shock Doctrine" (exposed by Naomi Klein), individuals in power choose periods of social, environmental and economic upheaval to break up the 50-year-old Islands Trust mandate from within?

Intrigued, I searched the Trust website for proposed Bylaw 530 and eventually found it under "Projects" (George Orwell would have liked that). Reading on, it is difficult not to see the bias, assumptions and cherry picking of statistics to support this bylaw. "All small and medium sized communities (between 1,000 and 22,000 population) have accessory dwelling units (ADUs), according to BC Housing," it states. How on Earth can Islands Trust employees or elected trustees seriously compare a 27-by-13 kilometre island containing numerous mountains, lakes, wetlands, shorelines, forests, villages, ferries and never-ending roads with dinky municipalities that you can drive end to end in five minutes? And, important detail, we are not a municipality.

Going to the BC Housing site, 98 per cent of these towns allow secondary suites, 76 per cent allow carriage houses and only 21 per cent allow tiny homes. They also detail eight risks/challenges, including "ADUs can stress municipal infrastructure (parking, water,

VIEWPOINT

sewage, roads) if usage levels approach maximum capacity" and "short-term rentals in tourism-based communities has created a demand to use ADUs for commercial purposes."

Continuing on with the Bylaw 530 information, "A 2022 survey among residents by Islands Trust Planning found that 80 per cent of respondents indicated support for more secondary suites and additional housing options." That is less than four per cent of Salt Spring's population and based on input from unknown people with unknown motivations. The 2022 Housing Action Program Task Force that provided statistics may have been well meaning but can't help being biased and single minded.

Progressing along the proposed bylaw we are naively and without any real world evidence assured that regulations protecting water supply, sewage systems, building permits, short-term rentals are all under their control while completely ignoring the fact that everywhere in Canada, including the Arctic, has affordability issues and that can't be solved by ripping up the official community plan. It was designed for a very complicated place and has taken thousands of dedicated people many thousands of hours to develop over 50 years.

Islands Trust, toss this ill-planned bylaw, do your jobs and hammer down on the 250 illegal short-term vacation rentals like other communities are doing and then spend more time observing the effects on the areas that have already allowed ADUs.

The 2022 Housing Action Program Task Force that provided statistics may have been well meaning but can't help being biased and single minded.

THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Have you been personally affected by ferry sailing cancellations?

Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Are you signed up with your neighbourhood POD?

51 54
YES NO

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ISLAND VOICES

LETTERS to the editor

Do the math

There are 163 homeless people on Salt Spring, according to the latest homeless count. To open up the potential number of additional dwellings permitted by proposed Bylaw 530 would exponentially open the door to several thousand more additional dwelling unit possibilities in future.

This is gross, misdirected and irresponsible overkill in attempting to address the problem, at the risk of destroying the natural capacity for sustainable island water supply and additional infrastructure requirements, should that much water in fact be available.

The only on-island supply of fresh water is what falls from the sky. Period. Full stop. Groundwater, surface water and surface catchment are the only means of accessing storage of what does not run off as water for natural ground cover to survive, during a worsening projected climate change trend for the future for all of our planet.

The only effective model for increasing the supply of affordable housing is from the provision of additional affordable government housing. This is a local, provincial and national reality. It affects the supply of services available to keep communities serving public needs. Recurring local labour shortages are a manifestation that affects both public and private sector services.

It is also a fluid, dynamic picture, where the number of people needing such sup-

port will always seek an equilibrium with surrounding communities and provinces, meaning homelessness and affordability are mobile and continually seeking opportunity where it can be found.

Where water cannot be found (as noted in the top paragraph) people cannot live, meaning the natural supply of water to a locality is the limit of human occupancy. I do not see any of this basic fact reflected in the thinking of Bylaw 530. Support for this bylaw is hugely misdirected and a waste of time and purpose.

RON HAWKINS,

SALT SPRING

Wildfire plan

Reading John Vaillant's *Fire Weather*, as fire raged through the Shuswap and Kelowna, was hair raising.

His book chronicles the Fort McMurray fire of 2016, but besides the devastating play by play, it delves into causes and preparation. One point made over and over is that everything is fuel — grass, trees, houses, vehicles — everything except water and dirt. The name of the game is to prevent ignition. Salt Spring Island is prime for conflagration, ironically because there hasn't been an "event" for many years.

What makes everybody nervous is the amount of bracken (mainly Scotch broom,

blackberry patches and dead branches) just waiting for a spark. The island seldom gets lightning, but wind and high summer temperatures are common.

There needs to be a large, community-wide thrust to lessen these threats. It is a daunting task, but doable with discipline, stamina, organization and the certainty that ignoring the obvious courts disaster. Start with a grid. Assign each section with mitigation responsibilities. Proactively patrol. Tie compliance to insurance (no clear, no coverage). Purchase a firefighting vessel.

I lived on Salt Spring, happily, for 25 years, 1990-2015. Five days after I bought the property, my then neighbour let a beach bonfire get out of control. It raced up the embankment and took out five mature fir trees on my side. The fire department got there lickity split and put it out. Had the flames gotten away . . .

SCOTT HYLANDS,
VICTORIA

Ganges road rage

I've always known that shopping in Ganges at the peak of the tourist season is a challenge, but nothing prepared me for the road rage I encountered on Friday afternoon.

I had just finished my grocery shopping and was heading back past Centennial Park

to the south end. Unfortunately, a seemingly endless stream of ferry traffic was passing through town just as I was trying to leave.

As I sat patiently at the stop sign waiting for a break in the traffic, an impatient fellow in the vehicle behind me started yelling at me in a very aggressive manner. He told me to "get going" and, to make his point, actually drove into the rear of my car. I don't know how he expected me to "get going" given the steady stream of cars coming from the south. There was no way to proceed without causing an accident.

As this incident unfolded, a brave motorist came to my defence. He stopped and told the angry driver behind me to "leave her alone" and to "back off" as he was right on my bumper. His words may well have prevented the situation from escalating even more.

This act of kindness was soon followed by another. A woman in the ferry traffic noticed the build-up of vehicles behind me. She stopped her car and signalled for me to cross in front of her, and this allowed me to make a safe left turn towards the south.

Needless to say, the whole episode left me badly shaken for the rest of the day. But my faith in humanity was restored as I thought of the two kind souls who helped me deal with a very trying ordeal. May there be more peace and kindness in the world!

J. HIGHSTED,
SALT SPRING

"This isn't just about the well-being of racialized students and staff. It's about ensuring that casual racism isn't normalized for any students in this district and giving students the tools to build a world where deep equity is a possibility."

HUGHSON WELCH, BIPOC COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE MEMBER

We're all hanging from interdependent ancestral family trees

It seems like wherever we go these days and whomever we chat with, everybody wants to talk about their family tree. It's as if all the last few remnants of the "me" generation have suddenly morphed into the "where did we come from" generation. We so want to believe that we are part of something much bigger and older. What many are seeking is some kind of a link to what came before. With such an uncertain future staring us in the face, it's no wonder we are looking back behind us in search of a connection with the past.

We all like to think that we have sprouted from family trees standing proud and tall with branches extending wide and strong. What we refuse to admit is the possibility that there might be more than a touch of root rot at the very foundation of our family lineage. We've been told over and over again that great-great-great grandfather Jedidiah was a pillar of society and deacon of his church, but what has conveniently been glossed over were his penchant for drink, gambling and having a warm butt nestled in his lap.

On the other hand, the rootstock of the old dynasty may be tried and true, but somewhere along

the cycles of growth, one of our ancestors may have branched off in a southerly direction, thus exposing the familial name to the scandalous equivalent of powdery mildew or perennial canker. Great-aunt Sophia claimed to be a dowager contessa who had been stripped of her title and regal Hungarian estates after the Battle of Hapsburg, but she never really came any closer to aristocracy than that bag of Earl Grey tea she plunked in her teapot at three o'clock every afternoon. That long-awaited telegram which was supposed to verify that she had been reunited with her fortune never did arrive, and in the end, her branch on the family tree just seemed to wither away with the years.

Exploring the many twists and turns that comprise the saga of your family no longer has to mean fetching a bunch of scrapbooks down from the attic and dusting off the pages. Discovering the family history can be as close as a click of your computer. The field of sites offering you a leg up in finding possible living relatives is both crowded and competitive. The leader among these genealogical heritage internet corporations is Ancestry, but there exist many more clawing to



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**NOBODY
ASKED ME
BUT**

catch up. Among these you will find MyHeritage, Findmypast, Genes Reunited and OneGreatFamily. The names may sound like a singles club for broken-hearted genes, but it's all about big business. They even supply you with DNA kits that will link your personal biology with those of others who not only don't know that you are related, but would probably rather not be made aware of your existence at all.

It is said that the most confusing day of the year on Salt Spring is Father's Day, on account of the fact that nobody really knows for sure who is related to whom and how that relationship came about in the first place. As a case in point, Willie Nelson sings a song about him marrying a widow who has a grownup daughter who then marries his father. This makes his dad his son-in-law and his daughter becomes his mother. The familial

bonds become weirder and weirder until the song reaches the chorus (also the title of the song): I Am My Own Grandpa. Salt Spring is living proof that woven relationships such as these are not so far-fetched.

There exists an entirely different landscape of genealogy that has yet to be tapped into by the ancestry industry. As far as we know, nobody has begun researching past life and reincarnation family trees. Using these cosmic models, there is no reason why you can't trace your family history back through distant geographies, time eras and dimensions. You may find your personal tree has pulled up its roots and skedaddled over to a whole different woodlot, thus increasing the number of genealogical possibilities exponentially.

Reincarnation ancestry, however, may open up a Pandora's box of surprises. Your search may uncover evidence that you share genetic material with King Tutankhamun of ancient Egypt and have a sizable claim to the vast fortune of gold and precious jewels buried in his tomb, but there is also solid documentation that you may instead be a branch off the family tree of a 12th-century fruit fly.

Perhaps it would be wiser to abandon the concept of a family

tree and instead adopt the model that we are all connected through a family forest. Each tree in the forest is actually part of this vast organism held together by a network of fungal threads called mycelia. In this way, each tree in the forest is actually only a branch of the organism and can communicate with the rest of the forest entity through the mycelia network. Thusly, because they are all inter-connected, no single tree can stand on its own, nor can it draw attention to its successful growth, without acknowledging that it was a group effort.

The same can be said about this recent obsession with ancestry and family lineage. We are all in this together. Whether we survive or collapse as a species is dependent on how we cooperate instead of compete for the best and the most of everything. Maybe it's time to bonsai the old family tree before it all becomes a tangle of intertwined branches and suckers.

Nobody asked me, but tracing a family tree on Salt Spring may be about as productive as filling your gumboots with water before you wear them out in the rain. No matter how carefully you tippy-toe your way around, you're bound to get soaked in the end.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 64

Anti-racism group termination upsets members

Racialized students, families lose important link

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

When Gulf Islands students head back to school on Sept. 5, they will do so with new anti-racism policies and procedures and a paid anti-racism coordinator in place.

Those changes arise from work done by the district and its Anti-Racism Advocacy Working Group (ARAWG), established in 2020 in response to a public demand for systematic racism to be examined in all institutions and society as a whole.

But ARAWG members from the island's Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) Community Collective feel the job is far from complete, and say they were shocked

when they received an email from board chair Tisha Boulter in May advising that the group would be immediately disbanded, despite committee terms of reference created in 2022 stating the group would continue until May of 2024 and its mandate and existence would be reviewed at that time.

"The unilateral decision to 'conclude' the group was made without notice, consultation or even a conversation with members of the committee. This seems utterly out of step with the respectful relations the board claimed to be seeding with community stakeholders around this important issue, and undermined a lot of the trust that was built," the BIPOC group members wrote in their initial response to the board.

In recounting what occurred during a Driftwood interview this summer, working group BIPOC member Hughson Welch summarized how the decision hit.

"We have a board, a group of Europeans, just informing melanated folks that the discussion that is being had is now over — end of story, that's it," he recalled.

Gulf Islands community members and school district personnel created ARAWG following the murder of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white police officer in Minneapolis in May of 2020, and an incident at Gulf Islands Secondary School (GISS) in September of that year where some students wore T-shirts hand-painted with racist and homophobic slogans. The committee consisted of all "district stakeholders," including CUPE, GITA, administrators and DPAC, two trustees, reps from other relevant community groups and BIPOC members Welch, Sharyn Carroll and Molly Murphy. Also at the table was Deblekha Guin, a BIPOC individual and Galiano resident, who represented Access to Media Education. Guin, Welch, Carroll and Murphy say the working group had made progress on a number of fronts, but several issues were not yet resolved or completed.

They note that an uncomfortable exchange occurred the last time the working group met, and attempts to address it were not successful, making them feel as if that could have been a factor in the group's sudden termination. Yet systemic racism cannot be eradicated if difficult conversations between individuals do not take place, they say.

Trust was further eroded by Boulter's response to their initial letter and especially when BIPOC Community Collective members and allies attended a June 14 school board meeting on Galiano Island as a delegation. They expected to have a discussion with trustees about their decision to cancel the working group, but Boulter cited meeting rules related to delegations, which do not allow for back-and-forth conversations.

But the silence just fuelled the group's frustration.

"If it had been a conversation, it would have been better," said GISS student Finn Bryant, who attended the meeting. "The way it was so one-sided made me sad. I wish they would just acknowledge and be willing to hear what people were saying . . . the presentation was strong and had a lot of emotion and force that made me cry."

Guin said it's unfortunate that the board "doubled down at a moment where they could have really practised humility and taken things to a deeper level. They've kind of revealed how they want to operate and it's very demoralizing, and I don't know what the implications are for the racialized students and staff and other marginalized people down the line."

"I think the crux of the matter really is that they use the system, which has been

created for Europeans, by people of European descent, to give and take power as they see fit," observed Murphy. "So whenever it gets too difficult for them, they get to stay home."

Guin and Carroll said the board seemed to miss one of the most important things about the working group's existence.

"Families of racialized kids felt a tiny bit of reassurance knowing that we were at the table with senior leadership," said Guin.

Carroll notes that they had become informal resource people or supports for students, families and community members, were invited into some classrooms and led workshops, and did so without any compensation or specific recognition.

"How do we say 'no' to helping racialized people who are asking for help from us instead of going directly to the board or administration?" she asked.

Boulter said she has agonized over how the termination of the working group could have been done differently, and understands how Carroll, Guin, Murphy and Welch could be upset.

"There was a building of trust, there was an investment in a relationship over three years, and then the rug is swept out from under you. I think there's a sense of disrespect and a sense of lack of safety in that . . . I can imagine — I'm trying to put myself in their shoes — that feels like a violation."

Boulter said that was not the board's intention, but she still feels the decision itself was the right one. She said that an annual review of the working group was part of its terms of reference, and when that was done in April trustees felt the group had not only accomplished its purpose but set in motion a number of additional things.

The provincial education ministry has also brought in a K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan for all school districts, she notes.

Boulter added that she found the delegation at the Galiano board meeting extremely disturbing in the way some individuals expressed anger when trustees refused to respond to questions being posed to them.

She said she doesn't know how the rift can be repaired but she would like an attempt to be made.

BIPOC Community Collective members say the most important thing now is to ensure the emotional and physical safety of racialized students in the Gulf Islands.

As Welch stated, "We're all swimming in the sea of white supremacy. We all have learning and unlearning to do. This isn't just about the well-being of racialized students and staff. It's about ensuring that casual racism isn't normalized for any students in this district and giving students the tools to build a world where deep equity is a possibility."

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AT THE Saanich Fair!**

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M.P.
May**

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WEST COAST IMMERSION: Artist Nathalie St-Amant speaks to visitors about the exhibit of work by herself and Michael Henri Wright, as well as their unique artistic relationship where she painted in his Clayoquot Sound cabin at various times in her life, at Salt Spring Gallery on Saturday. The show called An Odd Agreement, which includes personal items belonging to Wright, seen in the photo at right, continues until Wednesday, Sept. 6.

PHOTOS BY GAIL SJUBERG

CHOIRS

Women of Note mark 30 years



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

Five of 18 past or present Women of Note choir members singing at a 30th anniversary celebration are, from left, Julie Kimmel, Sandy McNie, Patricia Flannagan, Elizabeth Courtney and Vera Algoet.

Potluck, songs and more

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Women of Note choir celebrated 30 years of making music and friendship with an alumni party at Lions Hall on Aug. 15.

Eighteen of the almost 100 women who've been part of the choir since 1993

came to the potluck, including three who now live in Horsefly and Quesnel, B.C., and Petawawa, Ont. Two others "zoomed" in for the occasion.

Janice McLean has been a Women of Note member for the entire 30 years, and organized the celebration with current director Linda Quinn, (who has only missed one season in the last three decades).

The choir now consists of seven singers, Quinn said, but was originally a larger ensemble, initiated by Patricia MacFarlane and Dawn Penny Brooks, with Brooks as director. It was first called Cantabile Women's Chorus before the Women of Note name was adopted in the spring of 1994.

The choir did initial performances at various events, with its first full concert called To Music . . . To Life! held at the United Church on June 9-10, 1995.

At the Aug. 15 celebration, messages sent from women who could not attend were shared by Quinn, and names of those who had passed away were read out and they were honoured with a song. The group also sang some of their favourite pieces from across the decades.

Judy Ellis, who attended from Quesnel where she now lives, told Quinn how much she enjoyed the gathering.

"It really was a special time being with you all and other choir members that I knew, meeting members who had been part of the choir before my time and meeting members who have joined the choir since I left."

LIVE MUSIC

Sue and Monik team up for gigs

At the Legion and All Saints

SUBMITTED BY MUSIC MAKERS

On Wednesday, Sept. 6, Sue Newman and Monik Nordine will be back for Tea à Tempo, bringing their tasty tunes, heartfelt and wacky, to old and new friends.

With collective backgrounds in music, theatre, dance, parenting, causes and being island girls from way back, this dynamic duo knows how to deliver a show you'll remember.

With a mix of original and familiar songs, anecdotes and antics, Newman and Nordine share their lives through their creative lens of experiences. Music by donation at All Saints by-the-Sea begins at 2:10 p.m., followed by optional tea and treats at a cost of \$4.

An award-winning saxophonist, Nordine sits in regularly at the Salt Spring Jazz and Blues Society's Sunday jams at the Legion. People can catch Nordine and Newman there on Sunday, Sept. 3 for their



audience appreciation gig with the Frank Allen Four from 3 to 6 p.m.

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BALLET KELOWNA PHOTO BY EMILY COOPER.



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With the Frank Allen Four

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Sunday September 3rd – 3-6pm

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ISLAND LIFE

SOCIAL HEALTH

Community wellness probed

Survey launched to contribute to 'caring and belonging' efforts

SUBMITTED BY THE MENTAL WELLNESS INITIATIVE

The third story in our Mental Wellness Initiative (MWI) series tackles the question "What does it mean to have community wellness? How would we know? What would be the signs?"

So often in our society we respond to problems. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, it does however mean we tend to react to problem situations rather than looking deeper to what the problem situations are a symptom of, and attending to what is needed to address the roots of these issues or challenges.

Perhaps you have heard us speak to MWI, which is investing in strengthening community responsiveness (being "response-able") to community health and wellness needs. These include the willingness to come together, to include those impacted by health decisions (lived or living experience) and to invest in healthy relationship building, all while making decisions in the best interests of the community.

The MWI is in service to the health and wellness potential of the community and not simply to remedying singular unhealthy elements. And we return to the questions at the top: What does it mean to have community wellness? How would we know? What would be the signs? One quick answer to this is that it is varied.

It seems safe to say that people receiving the proper support in a timely way would be part of community wellness. The World Health Organization speaks to the social determinants of health being key to wellness. These include things like timely and affordable access to health services, including mental health. Also included are housing, basic amenities and the environment. There are many others, such as access to recreation, input into decision-making (social inclusion) and more. We all want to feel part of community.

Island partners

The Salt Spring Vital Signs, an initiative of the Salt Spring Island Foundation (SSIF), also looks at wellness indicators and highlights community challenges. The housing crisis, concerns about the erosion of community and general concern about the future of Salt Spring Island. Housing (again), income inequality and

the changing climate are of particular concern. The SSIF vision is of a healthy and caring community.

The MWI has arrived at a similar vision — co-creating a community of caring and belonging. While some would argue that it's more of a mission statement, we believe that the act of co-creating is a vision in that it is through our ongoing co-creating, and doing this in a relationally healthy way, that a community of caring and belonging continues to exist. We have put lots of time investing in and documenting the pieces that greatly contribute to this ongoing co-creating — "elements of building a culture of care," seeing our process as one of the projects. We share these out to other groups and organizations as templates to build off of in support of strengthening the larger community.

We strongly believe that a sign of wellness is a community that is working well together, including partnering between and across service agencies and community groups, that is demonstrating healthy relationship building (and decision-makers that know how to do this), that is including diverse voices, that is engaged in learning in order to see a fuller picture, and making decisions accordingly.

In the last MWI story we shared with you the voices of some of those involved in the MWI, their expressions of caring or belonging, for others or in experiencing it themselves. These are signs of our success in the wellness potential of our work together as we also invest in the wellness potential in the larger community.

Community wellness refers to the overall health, well-being and prosperity of a community as a whole. It encompasses physical, mental, emotional, social and economic aspects of the community and its members. Achieving community wellness involves creating an environment that supports and promotes the health and happiness of all individuals who live in that community.

Survey

We'd like to hear from you. What does it mean to have community wellness? How would you know we have it? What would be the signs?

We invite you to contribute through our voluntary survey. All responses will be seen by the MWI coordinators and synthesized by them for others within the MWI. We will do our best to maintain anonymity. See the survey link in the online version of this article at gulfislandsdriftwood.com.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Scottish Country Dance Club hosts introductory evenings

Free Monday sessions on Sept. 11 and 18 at All Saints church

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Salt Spring Scottish Country Dance Club is starting another season with two "everyone welcome" dance nights.

Set for Monday, Sept. 11 and 18, the complimentary sessions run from 6 to 8 p.m. at All Saints by-the-Sea.

"We encourage you, your friends and family to join us for an enjoyable and relaxing evening of easy dances

taught whether you have no experience or lots," states a public invitation. "Scottish country dancing is great fun and what better way to enjoy some friendship, great music and physical activity. You do not need a partner, a kilt, Scottish ancestry or any previous dance experience. Scottish country dance will widen your social circle, as well as improve your health, fitness and overall well-being." The group says that for people who have "two left feet, we will show you how to use the right."

More information is available from the group's website at: sites.google.com/view/ssiscdc/home.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!
The Fall Fair needs volunteers for 2 hour shifts
Receive a free weekend pass
Signup at SSIFI.org

STRIKING GOLD



PHOTO COURTESY SS STINGRAYS

Salt Spring Island's Druehn Pinney, centre, tops the podium with a provincial gold medal win in the 100-metre backstroke at the B.C. Summer Swimming Association meet held Aug. 18-20 in Nanaimo. Twenty youth swimmers from the Salt Spring Stingrays team qualified to attend the provincial meet this year — a remarkable number for a small island, according to club president Shelly Johnson, who applauded the "courage and determination" it takes for athletes to compete at that level. "We are so proud of their accomplishments," said Johnson.

For our next article we will reach out to organizations or others in the community to hear their stories about the MWI.

To get involved with the Mental Wellness Initiative — to volunteer or donate, or for more information in general — contact David Norget at davidnorget@gmail.com or William McPherson at willieonsaltspring@gmail.com.

Fall Fair Focus



Shuttle buses are back.
Keep an eye out on the website www.ssifi.org for full details on schedules and stops.

VENDORS, VENDORS, and more VENDORS:

There will definitely be something for everyone! Take a pic at your favourite booth and share with us on Instagram @SSIFALLFAIR #SSIFALLFAIR2023

Deadline for general entries is Saturday, Sept 2 with drop off dates listed in the Fall Fair catalogue.

Thank you for your support of the Fall Fair and we look forward to seeing you there!



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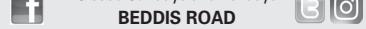
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COMMUNITY

Volunteers needed for Salt Spring Fall Fair

Free weekend passes for those who step up

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's biggest annual event is just around the corner, but fall fair organizers need a few more boots on the ground at the Farmers' Institute to make it come off without a hitch.

Volunteers are still needed at the admission gates and to act as monitors in the exhibition hall and annex for the Sept. 9 and 10 event organized by the Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute (SSIFI).

SSIFI president Bradley Damsgaard said it's been tough to get enough people to sign up for the required shifts.

"People are aging out and not



DRIFTWOOD FILE PHOTO

A creatively decorated zucchini racer at last year's fall fair. This year the library's FabLab is offering kids a chance to use its facilities for making racer components after school from Sept. 5-7. Book an appointment at saltspring.bc.libraries.coop/fablab/ or get more info from fablab@saltspringlibrary.com.

able to do as much volunteering as in the past," he said.

Gate volunteers take entrance fees, provide the information pamphlets and help with the

proof-of-payment wristbands.

Monitors generally keep an eye on things in the hall and annex and answer any questions fair-goers may have.

The SSIFI has sweetened the volunteering pot by providing full weekend passes to anyone who takes on a two-hour gate or four-hour monitoring shift.

People can sign up to volunteer on the ssifi.org website.

The 2023 fair is shaping up to be the biggest fair in years, said Damsgaard, with a record number of vendors set to attend and no pandemic restrictions to consider.

Organizers hope to see lots of entries in the horticulture, flowers, baking, preserves, hobby arts and other classes to fill the exhibition hall. This year's theme is Blue Jeans and Healthy Greens, which is specified in some of the categories.

The deadline to submit entry forms is Saturday, Sept. 2. People can download the form on the Fall Fair page of ssifi.org, print it

and take it to Foxglove Farm and Garden Supply, the Ganges Visitor Centre or Island Savings with the required fee. The form is also part of the Fall Fair Catalogue available at Foxglove, the Ganges Visitor Centre and the Driftwood office. The catalogue is accessible online at ssifi.org and contains a schedule of events, as will next week's issue of the Driftwood.

Credit card payments will be available for the first time at the gates this year.

Shuttle buses will run to and from the Ganges Visitor Centre, and the Safe Grad committee is handling parking and traffic safety.

People are reminded to bring their own water bottle, which can be filled on the site, as plastic bottles of water are not available for sale.

what's on this week

Wed. Aug. 30 Thur. Aug. 31 Fri. Sept. 1 Sat. Sept. 2 Sun. Sept. 3 Mon. Sept. 4 Tue. Sept. 5 Wed. Sept. 6

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Tea à Tempo: Adam Dyjach, tenor, and James Yi, piano, perform at All Saints church. 2:10 p.m., followed by optional tea and treats.

John Herbert. With a musical guest on the lower deck at Moby's Pub. 5 to 8 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Book Launch: Robert Weeden. Local writer reads from *Small Forays Into Big Spaces: Eavesdropping at Meetings of Nature and Culture*. Library program room. 7 p.m.

Bittancourt Museum. Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Music Bingo. Moby's Pub. 8 to 10:30 p.m.

Thur. Aug. 31 Fri. Sept. 1 Sat. Sept. 2 Sun. Sept. 3 Mon. Sept. 4 Tue. Sept. 5 Wed. Sept. 6

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Shakespeare: Battle Royale. ExitStageLeft Productions, in partnership with Graffiti Theatre, presents a hilarious evening of outdoor Shakespeare-themed theatre. 7 p.m. Advance tix only (with location near Ganges specified) through exitstageleftproductions.com.

Morien Jones. Moby's Pub lower deck. 5 to 8 p.m.

Open Mic. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.

Sophia Danai. Mateada Social Club. 8 to 10:30 p.m.

Craig's Karaoke. At Moby's Pub. 8 p.m. to midnight.

Sarah Osborne. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

North Salt Spring Waterworks Trustees Meeting. Via Microsoft Teams. 9 a.m. See nortspringwaterworks.ca for link and agenda.

Neighbourhood Story Time. Stories for young ones read by community members or library staff in the library's children's area every Thursday from 11 to 11:30 a.m.

Bittancourt Museum. See Wednesday listing.

ACTIVITIES

International Overdose Awareness Day. Public speakers, facilitated circle, music, yoga and more. Centennial Park from 2 to 5 p.m.

Salt Spring Local Community Commission Town Hall. Bring your questions and concerns to the LCC. Lions Hall. 5 to 7 p.m.

Fri.

Sept. 1

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Shakespeare: Battle Royale. See Thursday listing.

Ange Hehr. Moby's Pub lower deck. 5 to 8 p.m.

Fridays With DJ Boomtown. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. til 12:30 a.m.

Everyday People. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.

Reuben and the Dark. Mateada Social Club. 8 to 10:30 p.m.

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

ACTIVITIES

ASK Salt Spring. Island Pathways members are this week's scheduled guests in the SIMS courtyard. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Family Movie Matinee. Every Friday in the library program room at 1 p.m.

Youth Board Games. For ages 6 to 13. Children's area at the library. 1 to 3 p.m.

Bittancourt Museum. See Wednesday listing.

Sat.

Sept. 2

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Shakespeare: Battle Royale. See Thursday listing.

Jessica Benini. Lower deck. Moby's Pub. 5 to 8 p.m.

Duck Creek Trio. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.

Live music TBA. Legion. 7:30 p.m.

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

ACTIVITIES

Saturday Market in the Park. Centennial Park market. 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sun.

Sept. 3

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Audience Appreciation Day. With the Frank Allen Four at the Legion. 3 to 6 p.m.

Vixx. Moby's Pub lower deck. 5 to 8 p.m.

Synergy. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Bittancourt Museum. See Wednesday listing.

Mon.

Sept. 4

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Lopezapalooza. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.

Tue.

Sept. 5

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Ashton Bachman & Guest. Lower deck at Moby's Pub. 5 to 8 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Tuesday Farmers' Market. Hosted by the Salt Spring Community Market Society in Centennial Park. 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Trivia Tuesday. At Moby's Pub. 8 to 10 p.m.

Wed.

Sept. 6

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Tea à Tempo: Sue Newman and Monik Nordine. All Saints church. 2:10 p.m., followed by optional tea and treats.

John Herbert. With a musical guest on the lower deck at Moby's Pub. 5 to 8 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Bittancourt Museum. See last Wednesday's listing.

Music Bingo. See last Wednesday's listing. Wednesday's listing.

CINEMA

• **Barbie** runs Wednesday, Aug. 23 to Thursday, Aug. 31 at 7 p.m. plus a 3 p.m. matinee. Then **Oppenheimer** is the movie from Friday, Sept. 1 to Tuesday, Sept. 5 at 7 p.m. See thefritz.ca for more movie info or phone 250-538-7718.

EXHIBITIONS

• **Photosynthesis**, the annual fine art photography exhibition, is on at ArtSpring from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily through Sept. 4.

• **A Closer Look: Nature and Materials** is the Artcraft Showcase exhibition on the stage at Mahon Hall featuring work by Sibéal Foyle, Peter Pierobon, Paul Oeuvray and Jan Smith. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. until Sept. 17.

• **Salty Pear Gallery** presents Ute Hagen's exhibition titled **Abstracts** - an expressionist's vision of emotions in motion until Sept. 30.

• **An Odd Agreement**: Nathalie St-Amant and Michael Henri Wright artwork runs at Salt Spring Gallery through Sept. 6. The gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.

• **2020 Vision — abstract art by Jeff Lederman and poetry by Margaret Sullivan** — runs at the ArtSpring gallery from Sept. 6 to 18, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

• Through September, Seth Berkowitz shows photographs in a series titled **A Torn and Splintered Ridge** in the ArtSpring lobby at ArtSpring.

• **55th annual Artcraft** gallery and shop of work by 100 Gulf Islands artisans is on at Mahon Hall daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. until Sept. 17.

Shakespeare: Battle Royale

Last 3 nights!
Aug. 31, Sept. 1, 2
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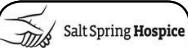
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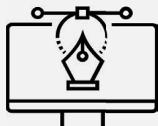
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FUNDRAISING

Cycle of Life Tour enjoys island hospitality

10th anniversary event raises funds for hospice care

BY ROB LOWRIE
SPECIAL TO THE DRIFTWOOD

The Cycle of Life Tour (COLT) pulled into Salt Spring on Saturday, Aug. 26 with 85 cyclists. The annual group ride's sole purpose is to raise funds to support local hospice care on Vancouver Island. That amounts to eight hospices, including Salt Spring Hospice.

Cyclists ride 200 kilometres in two days from Victoria to Crofton, come over to Salt Spring for an evening of celebration, fine buffet dining and camping at the Farmers' Institute and then go back to Victoria the next day.

This is a banner year, as firstly, the group celebrated the tour's 10th anniversary, and secondly, the riders raised

more money than in any other year, \$323,000 and still counting. The total raised over the ride's 10 years amounts to a whopping \$1.9 million.

Fundamental to COLT's success is the ongoing participation of 50 volunteers from hospices all over Vancouver Island, including 15 from Salt Spring Hospice.

Sponsors have also come onboard in a big way. Think Communications, Country Grocer and Canadian Tire really get behind the ride, along with several other key sponsors.

Heidi Fink, Country Grocer's signature chef and host of CHEK TV's Cookin' on the Coast orchestrated the hospice volunteers in creating a buffet feast for the riders.

Funds raised by the COLT event give a huge boost to the hospices' much-needed community fundraising to offer compassionate end-of-life care and address the needs of the bereaved. Each year, Vancouver Island hospices support 12,000 patients and family members.

To support the COLT, visit CycleofLifeTour.ca.



PHOTO BY ROB LOWRIE

Country Grocer's signature chef Heidi Fink at the Cycle of Life Tour buffet table she orchestrated for 85 cyclists at the Farmers' Institute grounds on Saturday evening.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Centennial Park set for educational, healing events

Overdose Awareness Day on Thursday

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Plans to mark International Overdose Awareness Day on Salt

Spring this Thursday, Aug. 31 have been solidified after an original announcement last week.

A gathering will be held in Centennial Park between 2 and 5 p.m. with a variety of activities taking place.

"There will be three public

talks, a sharing circle where we can introduce ourselves and say why we have come, a DJ playing music at a reasonable volume and a shared moment of silence for the people we have lost," explains information from the organizers.

People who have lost someone to overdose or drug poisoning are invited to bring a photograph of their loved one.

From 1 to 2 p.m. a Yoga For The People session will take place. Led by trauma-informed teachers, the embodied practice is considered

an important tool in the healing toolbox, say organizers.

"We recognize this can be a challenging and potentially triggering area. We will have some of our Ganges Goodwill Ambassadors available to debrief and hold space should the need arise."

TRANSPORTATION

Busy year, quarter for ferry use

Delays hit Salt Spring even as company touts ridership records

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Gulf Islanders zooming in to watch BC Ferries' annual general meeting (AGM) in Victoria might've found themselves distracted by cancellation notices ding- ing in the background, as the company announced record numbers and its president mused on staffing challenges.

The top-line number Thursday, Aug. 24 was 9.4 million — a new high for number of vehicles carried province-wide in a fiscal year, set in the one that ended March 31. That was followed by an announcement of a near-record 21.6 million passengers welcomed aboard, in a year BC Ferries president Nicolas Jimenez noted saw a 98.5 per cent on-time rate.

"For context, that's more people than pass through YVR," said Jimenez. "This is a big system, one of the largest in the world, and I think people forget that sometimes."

BC Ferries has seen its share of mechanical problems that have impacted service — and dominated headlines. Just the day before, the Coastal Inspiration joined the beleaguered Coastal Renaissance briefly in also being pulled from service, although it returned to operation in time for the AGM. The Coastal Renaissance, however, will likely languish under repairs until October, according to the company.

But for many islanders, it has been the sailing cancellations due to lack of crew that have been the most challenging this summer — and the day of the AGM was no exception. On Salt Spring, that morning started inauspiciously at Vesuvius Bay, with a cancellation alert for the morning's

sailings to Crofton issued just five minutes before the 6 a.m. boat was scheduled to leave; at 8:14 a.m. BC Ferries announced all sailings until 11:25 a.m. — four sailings and their return trips — were cancelled due to lack of crew.

By mid-morning, hopeful Vesuvius-Crofton travellers had snarled Fulford, and the Skeena Queen's 10:20 sailing was nearly a half-hour behind schedule with that traffic joining those already heading to Swartz Bay. Back in Vesuvius, Quinsam's first sailing of the day to Crofton was ultimately late as well, as pent-up traffic on that crossing made an impact.

"We've talked about the labour shortage, and it continues," said Jimenez. "We've talked about the worldwide shortage of trained mariners — an issue for all of those who are operating in this industry."

Jimenez pointed to the efforts made in recruiting staff, but indicated there was still more to do.

"I'm very proud of the work that the team has done to prepare us for 2023, crewing investments in training and certifications," said Jimenez. "But we have to revisit this model for crewing and staffing, [to] one that fits the business as we find it today."

BC Ferries concurrently released numbers for the three months ending June 30, showing yet another record high for traffic: 5.8 million passengers and 2.5 million vehicles, an increase of seven per cent and three per cent, respectively, compared to the same period in the prior year.

In other ferries news, the corporation announced Monday that it would be extending the peak season schedule between Fulford and Swartz Bay through Sept. 30.

The so-called 10-sailing plan — nine on Sundays — began June 28, and features a first sailing departing Fulford Harbour at 6 a.m. for Swartz Bay and a 10 p.m. departure from Swartz Bay to end the day.

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TIDE TABLES
at Fulford Harbour

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023 PST (UTC-8h)
When using Daylight Saving Time, one hour must be added to the predicted time in the table

DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET
30	0211	3.1	10.2	3	0106	1.4	4.6
	0950	0.3	1.0		0715	2.8	9.2
WE	1740	3.3	10.8	SU	1240	1.6	5.2
ME	2237	2.5	8.2	DI	1912	3.3	10.8
31	0324	3.1	10.2	4	0157	1.1	3.6
	1034	0.5	1.6		0841	2.7	8.9
TH	1803	3.3	10.8	MO	1326	2.0	6.6
JE	2325	2.1	6.9	LU	1936	3.3	10.8
1	0439	3.0	9.8		0248	0.9	3.0
	1116	0.8	2.6		1019	2.8	9.2
FR	1826	3.3	10.8	TU	1422	2.4	7.9
VE				MA	1959	3.1	10.2
2	0015	1.8	5.9		0341	0.8	2.6
	0555	2.9	9.5		1203	2.9	9.5
SA	1157	1.2	3.9	WE	1542	2.7	8.9
SA	1849	3.3	10.8	ME	2024	3.0	9.8

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