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PHOTO BY GAIL SIJBERG

BOOKWORMS AND WORKERS: Sneaking a few quick reads while sorting books and setting up for this weekend's Books & Bling fundraiser for Salt Spring Literacy are, from left, Maureen Stuart, Deb McGovern, Cheri Reid, Lynn Clark and Michael Clark. The Farmers' Institute will be packed with mostly used books and jewellery on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 3, 4 and 5, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. See the story about Salt Spring Literacy on page 11 to learn about the organization the funds will benefit.

BUREAUCRACY

Childcare group wins tax appeal

Early learning centre determined to 'meet public good'

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The non-profit behind Salt Spring's longest-running childcare organization has regained tax exemption status an appeals board said was wrongfully taken away. It's a victory that took countless volunteer hours — and the intervention of multiple elected officials — to secure.

The non-profit Gulf Islands Early Learning Society (GIELS) was spared what might have been thousands of dollars in property taxes after provincial property assessors reversed an earlier demand that they justify not only their charity status but also their community value.

That re-examination of the society — whose services have been offered on Salt

Spring for more than four decades — was prompted by legislative changes in 2021, according to GIELS board chair Jennifer Emekoba, who found herself spearheading an effort to sort out a "strange, stressful mess."

"Suddenly, all these non-profits holding property had to be re-evaluated," said Emekoba. "It seems oppositional to where it felt like the province, even the entire country, was headed in regard to lifting up the sector."

GIELS had seemingly run afoul of B.C.'s Assessment Authority, whose personnel had determined that under the Taxation (Rural Area) Act (TRAA), neither the society's day-care facility — a converted 122-year-old residence on Drake Road, operating as the

Salt Spring Early Learning Centre — nor its adjoining vacant lot used as a play yard was now exempt from taxation.

The new tax bill would've added approximately \$5,000 each year to the society's expenses, according to Emekoba.

"And sure, it's a small amount in the grand scheme of things," she said. "But it's substantial for us, when the cost of goods and pretty much everything is increasing."

It turned out more than a few phone calls were required to sort out the 40-year-old non-profit society's status. GIELS even lost their first stage of appeal, according to Emekoba, prompting them to reach out to community leaders for help.

GIELS continued on 2



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FIRST POPPY



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 92 president Bruce Angus, left, pins a poppy on Salt Spring's Capital Regional District director Gary Holman at the Legion's First Poppy Ceremony at the Centennial Park Cenotaph on Oct. 29. See next week's Driftwood for a special Remembrance Day section and details of Nov. 11 events.

HOUSING INSECURITY

Drake camp future uncertain

Police, BC Housing arrive as members of 'The Sanctuary' seek support

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Reports of sudden action at a Drake Road encampment came in just as the Driftwood went to press Monday afternoon, even as Salt Spring Island representatives had been urgently meeting with BC Housing officials in hopes of finding a path forward.

As of press time, police and BC Housing representatives had reportedly arrived at the site, and a gate was installed across the access road to the property. The action was not entirely surprising given what the province's subsidized housing provider — which holds the lease on the 5.5-acre parcel where it plans to build 28 units of supportive housing — has said about people living in some eight to 10 vehicles and tents set up on the property since late September.

Green Ground Community Design Society's Nejmah Guerroudi said she met with BC Housing staff last Tuesday, Oct. 24; just two days later, several of those staff met with MLA Adam Olsen, Salt Spring Local Community Commission (LCC) member Gayle Baker and Capital Regional District (CRD) director Gary Holman. Baker said Monday that meeting was well-intentioned but inconclusive, and that another was set for Tuesday, Oct. 31 — again, after the Driftwood goes to press.

"I left the meeting clear that BC Housing managers understand the complexity of the encampment on Drake Road, and are seeking solutions for this unique group — comprised

largely of self-managed young working women," said Baker Monday morning. "While these solutions were not apparent at the end of the meeting, another is set for tomorrow."

It is unclear what Monday afternoon's developments mean for the group living at the property. Guerroudi said earlier in the day that they would seek community partnerships to maintain the encampment, rather than BC Housing or CRD management, characterizing those living at what they've called "The Sanctuary" as members of a cohesive community that have been displaced multiple times.

"We're creating a sense of community that doesn't centralize the care."

NEJMAH GUERROUDI
Green Ground Community Design Society

"They've already been kicked out of park land by CRD," said Guerroudi. "As a group, it was decided to go to Drake Road because everybody knew that project is not even going to go forward this year, and the land is just going to sit there another winter."

Some confusion was reported as to whether BC Housing has properly posted or delivered paper notices of eviction to anyone staying at the Drake Road property; at an Oct. 19 LCC meeting, commissioners and a community member familiar with the encampment said such notice had been received by at least one person staying at the Drake Road property,

which Guerroudi said was merely an innocently repeated — but unsubstantiated — rumour.

Authorized representatives of leaseholders can give notice of trespass orally under many circumstances, according to B.C. statutes, and signs were reportedly posted on the property — although some expressed concerns about whether those signs could be seen. Neighbours Kathy Page and Richard Steel told the Driftwood they believed contractors working for BC Housing may have forgotten to fasten one side of a chain that formerly blocked passage onto the property and "made the attendant signage invisible."

"The trend is definitely upwards [in encampment population]," said Page, correcting Baker's statements made at the LCC meeting about the number of people at the site not increasing. Page said a "considerable number" of people — and a half-dozen barking dogs — had made their way onto the property since the first camper was noticed on Sept. 20.

BC Housing has said they are finalizing details of a revised construction timeline for the Drake Road supportive housing project, anticipating completion now by the end of 2024. Meanwhile, Guerroudi said the group's model of "mutual community support" was more valuable to people who were struggling than the "top-down, service-oriented social services industry."

"We're creating a sense of community that doesn't centralize the care," said Guerroudi. "The care is everyone; we're a network of individuals learning how to care for themselves, and each other, and the whole. I'm asking the community to wrap around us, do it a bit differently, and not just box people up."

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Society chair urges groups to examine property tax notices

GIELS

continued from 1

Those representatives took little convincing, she said; letters of support came from Saanich North and the Islands MLA Adam Olsen, Salt Spring's Capital Regional District director Gary Holman, and Salt Spring Local Trust Committee chair Tim Peterson, joining the testimonies of several parents of children who attended in extolling GIELS' importance to the community.

The campaign finally bore fruit on Tuesday, Oct. 24 as an appeals panel issued its ruling. It held that the society was unfairly caught up in a narrow interpretation of the act, and according to B.C. Property Assessment Appeals Board panel chair Howard Kushner, the Assessment Authority had erred — having essentially revoked GIELS' exempt status because the property did not "provide a demonstrable benefit to ALL members of the

community."

"But that is not the test," wrote Kushner. "Rather the question to be asked in this case is whether there is a general public good that is being met by filling a need in the community. It is not necessary that every member of the community directly benefit by the use of the facility."

"Take a close look [at property tax notices] and do your best to weather the storm if you appeal."

JENNIFER EMEKOBA
Gulf Islands Early Learning Society board chair

In this case, wrote Kushner, the evidence pointed to a larger, more general economic and social benefit almost unavoidably; the childcare

centre is open from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. five days a week, clearly of benefit to the parents and guardians working as "teachers, nurses, doctors, hydro and ferry workers" — and also to all those in the broader community who rely on their services.

The appeal process also had the happy effect of bringing GIELS' property valuation for the facility parcel down, "closer to reality," according to Emekoba, although the society must continue to pay taxes on the play yard parcel for now.

"I ran out of steam," laughed Emekoba. "So maybe next year."

Regardless of the "difficult ride," Emekoba encourages everyone to examine their property tax notices carefully.

"Take a close look," she said, "and do your best to weather the storm if you appeal."

For more information about the Salt Spring Early Learning Centre, or to donate, visit saltspringearlylearning.ca.

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NSSWD

Water plant 'trash' gets lab nod

Byproducts okayed for re-use; sludge plan could save transport fees

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

One person's trash may indeed be another's treasure, as Salt Spring's largest water provider received a thumbs-up from a testing lab on recycling one byproduct of water treatment — and safely discharging the other into the ground.

"We had our centrate and 'cake' — dewatered sludge — tested," said North Salt Spring Waterworks District (NSSWD) operations manager Ryan Moray, updating the district board Thursday, Oct. 26. "It came back very positive for [use as] a soil amendment."

Moray reached out for clarification to MB Labs, whose personnel have been doing water quality testing for NSSWD for more than two decades.

"I asked them their thoughts on re-use," Moray said. "I just wanted to make sure that I was on the right track, and they sent out a quite positive letter of support."

The dewatered component could be used as a product for land application, said Moray, and the centrate — the water from which most solids have been removed — was cleared to be discharged back into the ground for "natural infiltration."

Moray said NSSWD was working with a consultant to consider locating a site for infiltration ponds, where the combined liquid byproduct from the water treatment plant could be discharged — and where the remaining sludge could be harvested for "secondary beneficial re-use," he said, "such as for soil amendment."

"Long-term operations costs could be reduced significantly because currently we're hauling [the waste product] from St. Mary to a storage tank at Burgoyne, and then there's another fee to haul it off-island to have it treated."

RYAN MORAY
NSSWD operations manager

The plan was very preliminary, Moray told the board — more of a roadmap so far — but could produce real savings over time.

"Long-term operations costs could be reduced significantly," said Moray, "because currently we're hauling [the waste product] from St. Mary to a storage tank at Burgoyne, and then there's another fee to haul it off-

island to have it treated."

The method could likely also be used at the upcoming Maxwell Lake dissolved air flotation plant for its waste product as well, Moray said, although plans there recently hit a snag: the archaeological consultant previously contracted "had not returned calls for over eight months," according to a NSSWD operations report, forcing the district to re-start that provincially mandated work in advance of construction.

"It had seemed like work would be proceeding forward," said Moray, "but progressively, communication fell apart. So we had to start from scratch [with a new contractor]. We've since completed the preliminary field reconnaissance with Stantec."

Costs for that work are similar to those for the unfinished preliminary assessment, according to Moray, and although the new contractor seems to be moving quicker than anticipated, there was still moderate concern about the plant being completed in time to meet Island Health's deadline of the end of 2025.

"What I can say is that Island Health has already been generous enough to extend the date from July," said Moray. "I feel that as long as we're working toward the goal, on track, and doing our due diligence to see that the plant is constructed in accordance with the regulatory requirements, we'll be in good standing there."

FOR THE RECORD

Credit for a photograph of Don Conley and Cicela Månsson in the Oct. 18 issue of the Driftwood was incorrectly attributed. The photo was taken by Howard Fry.

Ask the Expert



Q: What is a High Interest Savings Account and why is it useful?

Expert: Libby Van Rossum,
Senior Financial Advisor—Ganges

Have you ever looked at your savings account and wished it could do more for you? It can! It's called a high interest savings account (HISA). Here are a few of the benefits.

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CONSERVATION

Fragmented Gulf Islands park targeted for funding

Conservation group partnering to create buffers around 10 parks

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A national effort to create land buffers around Canada's most treasured places has identified the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve as one of just 10 parks to be thus protected — and among only two in British Columbia — as the country's largest conservation organization starts work with the federal government to link disconnected habitats.

As drawn, the border of the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve hems in about 3,600 hectares in total, scattered in discontinuous parcels on dozens of islands and islets. But those map lines can't fully protect the reserve's biodiversity on their own, according to Catherine Grenier, president and CEO of the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC).

"Nature knows no bounds," said Grenier. "Neither should we. That's why partnerships like this are so critical."

Grenier said the initiative, which leverages a financial collaboration between NCC and Parks Canada, is called the Landscape Resiliency Program — a \$30-million effort to support resilient landscapes by conserving as much as 30,000 hectares near national parks, connecting habi-

tats and creating new protected buffers around them.

The program was unveiled through an announcement Grenier made Tuesday, Oct. 24, alongside Steven Guilbeault, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister Responsible for Parks Canada. Guilbeault called the Landscape Resiliency Program "real action" to build resilience across protected and conserved areas, saying the "30 by 30" target — the goal set last year by the federal government to conserve 30 per cent of Canada's land and water by 2030 — has become a model embraced by the international community.

"Now we are doubling down on implementation," said Guilbeault. "Working together with communities and conservation partners is key to ensuring that the lands, waters and ice that play such important roles in the lives of Canadians are protected for current and future generations."

Parks Canada is investing \$15 million that NCC will leverage to raise matching funds, working with First Nations, local communities, property owners and other partners to conserve land — through outright purchases or donations, or via landowner agreements.

"This important initiative builds on our longstanding relationship with Parks Canada," said Grenier, "to address the impacts of the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss in Canada."

For more information on the program visit natureconservancy.ca.

HAVE YOUR SAY



Proposed Bylaws 287 and 288

Rezoning and re-designating a portion of the subject property from Rural Residential (RR) to Agriculture (AG)

Subject Property Address: 490 Gardner Road, Galiano Island

Parcel Identifier Number: 004-695-844

Application: GL-RZ-2022.2 (Hayes)

COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
GALIANO ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE

What are Proposed Bylaws No. 287 and No. 288?

The proposed bylaws would amend the Galiano Island Land Use Bylaw No. 127, 1999 and the Galiano Island Official Community Plan No. 108, 1995 by rezoning and re-designating a portion of the subject property from Rural Residential (RR) to Agriculture (AG).

How do I get more information?

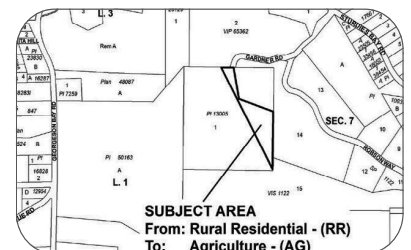
Copies of the proposed bylaws, the Public Hearing Binder and other information on the application is available on the Galiano Island Current Application webpage and, at the Islands Trust office at 200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8 from the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays, after October 27, 2023.

A Community Information Meeting (CIM) will be held prior to the Public Hearing and will provide the opportunity for members of the public to ask questions about the proposed bylaws.

Submissions

Prior to the Public Hearing: Written submissions will be accepted until 4:30 p.m., November 10, 2023, by Email: vicphsub@islandstrust.bc.ca or Mail or Drop Off: Islands Trust, 200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8

At the Public Hearing: Only written submissions presented at the Public Hearing will be accepted until the close of the Public Hearing. Written comments made in response to this notice will be available for public review.



Community Information Meeting and Public Hearing
Tuesday, November 14,
2023 at 1:00 p.m.



Galiano Island South Community Hall
141 Sturdiess Bay Road
Galiano Island, BC



Who should attend?
Anyone affected by the proposed bylaws.



Enquiries?
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OPINION

Driftwood

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EDITORIAL

Helping hands

It's hard to not notice the steady stream of appeals for volunteers running on Salt Spring Island these days.

The Salt Spring Emergency Program needs residents to make its neighbourhood POD program function properly in order to keep everyone safe in a natural disaster. Salt Spring Island Search and Rescue Society is in recruit mode these days. The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 92 has been asking for people to take care of their meat draw fundraisers and other important functions.

As mentioned in our story on page 11 of this paper, Salt Spring Literacy could use more volunteers for its One-to-One Reading program that helps elementary school children develop a love of reading and skills. Even what could be considered the best volunteer gig going for anyone who's a book lover — Salt Spring Literacy's Books & Bling sale on this weekend — has had trouble filling all its slots this year.

THE ISSUE: Volunteering on Salt Spring

WE SAY: More people needed for role

The Salt Spring Public Library, established as the Mary Hawkins Memorial Library in 1958 and operated for decades as an all-volunteer venture, has seen its volunteer roster steadily drop to about half the 150 individuals it had at one time. That shift has implications for local property taxpayers as the library receives significant funds and its association presses for more money as staff positions are needed to fill the volunteer gap.

The above are just a handful of examples that caught our attention lately.

We know that volunteering can be a slippery slope on Salt Spring, with a seemingly minor commitment ballooning into an all-encompassing venture. However, that's probably not an uncommon hazard in any community that relies on volunteers to keep its social and cultural lives enriched.

At one time Salt Spring had an organization — Volunteer Salt Spring — dedicated to matching individuals with non-profit groups needing volunteers through an online site. It provided a first-step, one-stop shop for people wanting to get involved with community life in some way, with specific descriptions about what the roles required and information about recruiting organizations.

It's something that would again benefit the island, if only some an existing agency — or some volunteers — could be found to do it.



Crying fowl over contest

BY JILL BARTLE

With all that's wrong in the world, one thing I thought we could all count on was honesty and fair play here on our island home. I've given some thought to whether, in the interest of keeping the peace, I should just keep quiet. But honour is at stake and I can no longer remain silent.

September's Fall Fair, as always, featured many competitions that showcased the talent and hard work of the various artists, cooks, farmers and zucchini racers that call this place home. I'm always interested to see who has gone above and beyond with their Scotch eggs, knitted dusters and Lego masterpieces and, as always, there was splendid work to admire.

I spent some time amongst the displays, then wandered my way over past the pie line-up (still too long) and found myself in front of a pen in which a group of people stood around while another fellow shouted roars for the benefit of competitors and spectators. "What's this?" I thought. "It's an animal pen, but there are no pigs or calves to be seen." I was curious and hung around to see what was going on.

The competitors took turns standing and looking thoughtful for a moment whilst (I gather) girding their loins. Then they would emit strangling, shrieking noises, at the same time walking in a manner one could only call silly. It gradually dawned on me... they were being roosters! Fabulous! What fun.

The big moment came when one particular competitor, none other than island crowing superstar Dulcy Wilson, took her turn. She stood. She focused. Then, loins girded, she began.

The woman vanished and was replaced by a staring, head-bobbing, strutting appa-

VIEWPOINT

rition. This creature took a deep breath and the most breathtaking, astonishing cry rent the air. We all gazed around, wondering where the rooster was!

Okay, maybe not, but it was amazing and no doubt woke anyone up who hadn't yet. This was the very epitome of roosteriness and the response of the audience (ostensibly part of the judging process) confirmed that this competitor left everyone else scratching in the dust. She was a shoe-in (despite the fact that roosters don't wear shoes).

But no... supposedly the judge was not so easily convinced. (Poppycock, I thought.) He declared it was a tie, and had a crow-off between two competitors — Dulcy and another hopeful. But the resulting offerings left no doubt, either from the performances or the thunderous applause for Dulcy. Then it happened: the judge said, indicating Dulcie, "Well, you see, she's won it before..." and gave the honours to the other competitor.

Well! My feathers were ruffled, I assure you. What a cock-up. No winning because you'd won before? What kind of decision is that? Is that what they said to Canada's hockey teams at the Olympics? I have to tell you that, for me, the integrity of Salt Spring Fall Fair judging in its entirety has been thrown into question. Who's to say which blackberry jam was actually the best? Was the judge influenced by past triumphs? Can we really believe in anything anymore?

Say what you will... integrity matters. From the youngest toddler entering their crayon drawing to the most elderly crafts-person, we've done our best in front of our neighbours and enjoy our fairly won ribbons.

And when it comes to the Fall Fair Rooster Crowing Contest, no one comes close to Dulcy.

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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Do you currently
spend time in a
volunteer role?

☐ Yes ☐ No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Should Bylaw 530
be abandoned this
time?

38 95
NO YES

Cast your ballot online at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com
before Monday 2 p.m. or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 2 p.m.

ISLAND VOICES

LETTERS to the editor

Soap column amuses

I am always amused by Shilo Zylbergold's column in the Driftwood, and the most recent one in the Oct. 25 edition made me laugh perhaps more wryly than usual. He comments on the unexpected trove of Irish Spring soap bars in the B&B in Comox, which, for a long-time islander like Mr. Zylbergold should not be surprising.

Because: one of the first things I learned, probably 40 years ago, about living with mice on Gabriola Island (the same little cuties that dwell on Salt Spring) is that if you want to deter them from nesting in your cupboards, attic, crawlspace and most particularly your vehicle's engine compartment, you place one or more bars of Irish Spring soap nearby. The unmistakable perfume of this soap is so pervasive (no doubt borne on the airwaves all the way to the next island by killer phthalates), that rodents tend to avoid any proximity to areas where Irish Spring soap has been strategically placed.

I didn't think they made Irish Spring soap anymore either (can anything so strongly perfumed even be legal?) so perhaps the big stash discovered by Mr. Z. is a forward-thinking property owner's

way of preparing for a relatively rodent-free future, at least until the B&B is long a place of the past. After all, it doesn't matter when you purchased the soap, the scent will last forever.

And, that unopened package of Irish Spring soap in the oyster shell dish — it's not actually for human use — it's a baseline test to see whether any rodents are actually brazen or olfactorily challenged enough to rip open the package and gnaw on the soap, as they do with other unscented or naturally scented bars of soap. Gnaw-marks on the package? Tell any already-booked guests that you are doing renovations (i.e. hosting a pest-control outfit for a day or so) and suggest re-booking for a later date.

SUSAN YATES,
GABRIOLA ISLAND

Make right decision

The following was sent to trustee Laura Patrick and filed with the Driftwood for publication.

I am hoping you will vote to approve Bylaw 530.

We very much need Bylaw 530 on Salt Spring, especially for the many island families such as my own who are falling between the ever-widening cracks.

People can no longer afford to buy anything within their means and even renting becomes increasingly difficult!

My own situation is absolutely ridiculous, with an impossible restrictive zoning.

It was noted that you are frustrated with increasingly difficult naysayers and would have to agree as I notice that letters to the Driftwood are usually packed with the same perennial ostriches. Doom and gloom!

As you find yourself vacillating and torn to make the right decisions for us; perhaps you should consider giving in your position as one of our trustees and letting the candidate closest to you in the last election take over and attempt to control this coup.

ROWENA DIXON,
LOWER GANGES ROAD

Editor's note: B.C.'s election laws do not provide for the resigning seat of an elected official to be filled by another candidate in a previous election.

Bylaw 530 failed for other reasons

In the Oct. 18 Driftwood, trustee Laura Patrick was quoted as characterizing

island letter writers opposing the proposed Bylaw 530 as promoting a narrative that the "sky is going to fall" with the resulting increase in Salt Spring's population. She said the power wielded by them would result in the failure of the bylaw being passed by the Islands Trust Executive Committee and she wanted to "take the power from them and give the power to people who need these houses."

Would it be fair to suggest some of these people aspiring to live on Salt Spring do not have the same perspective as island residents with the level of knowledge and commitment of some of the writers who have lived here for many years?

The failure of Bylaw 530 was not due to the opposition of concerned letter writers who responded to Laura Patrick's request to send in ideas "to make my bylaw better." What stopped Bylaw 530 was obvious from the start: the bylaw would not make affordable housing and could not be passed because it breaks the Islands Trust Act and Salt Spring's official community plan (OCP). Now Patrick and fellow trustee Jamie Harris are moving to change the OCP itself. Their first step has been to apply for \$96,000 of taxpayers' money to hire outside "consultants" to manage the outcome.

MARIAN PORTER,
SALT SPRING

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"The first step for newcomers is getting a house on Salt Spring. The second step is literacy, because it's language and it's, like, everything. No language, no job. No job, no food; no food, no life — no life!"

IGOR DARMOKHID ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH SALT SPRING LITERACY

Drone compounds questionable relationship with the silicon chip

My watch took a funny turn recently. It had become convinced that I was lying prostrate on the kitchen floor and was in the process of calling an ambulance and the police on my behalf.

In fact, I had simply smushed a clove of garlic with the side of my knife harder than I'd intended and my watch, bless its little silicon heart, thought I'd taken a tumble. Had the police turned up I might have been arrested for wasting their time or assaulting a vegetable.

As it was, I quickly reassured the watch and went back to murdering garlic cloves, but it began to dawn on me how much of my life I'd given over to apps and electronic gizmos. I am becoming a slave to the silicon chip.

My diary, for instance. Every morning I'm reminded by my watch, phone and tablet that my day is invariably an empty casket and that the likely highlight of my week will be "Replenish Pill Box." Or worse, "Colonoscopy," which the watch announces with altogether too much relish.

I've actually handed the management of my medications to a jovial app which, at certain times

makes a pill-rattling noise and reminds me: "Let's Keep You On Track! Take your 10 a.m. medication." And since I seem to take enough pills to keep a small African nation in good health, it will go on reminding me until I let it know I've done what it told me, and we can both relax. Except that I can't relax because once the pill app is satisfied, the water app kicks in to tell me that unless I drink some water I will likely die, a warning usually accompanied by some smug homily about the virtues of keeping hydrated.

For some reason, it has set me an insurmountable target of drinking enough water every day to drown a whale, and frankly, I've become a serious disappointment to it. As I have to the bathroom scales and toothbrush.

The scales know I need to lose weight and while it hasn't yet got to the point of "Lose weight or get off me, you great tub of lard," it endlessly reminds me that my diet of butter tarts, pork chops and mashed potato isn't working by flashing red to show the inevitable weight gain. The occasional day that it flashes green is a day to celebrate, usually with a cheesecake.



Paul McElroy
+ ANOTHER
THING

My toothbrush is just as judgmental and shows a sad face if I spend less than the requisite two minutes cleaning my teeth. Strictly speaking, I'm supposed to link it to an app on my phone, but after a couple of days it became too mortifying when I realized I was spending five minutes of my morning trying to please a toothbrush.

My Apple Watch is at the hub of much of the self-inflicted bullying and shaming, a relentless stream of helpful nagging to ensure that I'm living up to its standards. Look, I know its heart is in the right place, and that it was only put on this earth to take care of me, but it's like living with Florence Nightingale strapped to your back.

For instance, if I've been sitting around not doing much, which frankly is a not unusual state

of affairs for a man of my frail years, it will tell me to stand up! I'm actually quite partial to sitting around and not doing very much, but as far as my watch is concerned, to be elderly and immobile is a short slide to an early death. So I stand up — and then sit down again. If my posture throughout the day is less than upright or I'm favouring one leg over the other, it will make a note of it and address it in my weekly dressing down.

But it's chiefly obsessed with getting me to take exercise, which is a challenge that would tax an army sergeant let alone a dinky little watch with delusions of grandeur. I take exercise. Three days a week I take exercise, down at the Rainbow Road pool, a-leaping and a-bobbing with as much enthusiasm as water and gravity will allow me to leap and bob, but the watch is usually cynically unimpressed and is more likely to whine about the noise than praise me for the calories I've sloughed off in the pool. Noise at that level, it warns me, could make me deaf, which, given the amount of ABBA we bob up and down to, would be no bad thing.

And now, to compound my absolute surrender to the silicon chip, I recently won a drone. A drone! It's about the size of a sparrow and, if I'm perfectly honest, serves absolutely no useful purpose whatsoever, but I love it. It is the ultimate man toy, stuffed full of silicon chips and smart circuits and I'm already secretly scouring the internet for something bigger, faster, higher flying and, if possible, armed because, in my own small way, I believe I have the solution to a great many of Salt Spring's problems: armed drones.

Or at least, I would have a solution were the drone not now lodged for all eternity in a tree in my backyard and some 50 feet above the ground. Technology, eh? Don't you just love it?

But thanks to arborist and tree climber extraordinaire Kevan Brown, the drone is back to earth. Unfortunately, it broke an arm or wing or whatever in the process and now is as much use as a chocolate wok and an excellent excuse to buy something bigger and better. Watch this aerospace . . .

paulmcelroy@shaw.ca

CRIME

RCMP describe busy summer of responses

Impaired driving a concern

SUBMITTED BY SALT SPRING ISLAND RCMP

Between July 1 and Sept. 30, Salt Spring Island RCMP responded to 791 calls for service, for a running total of 2,133 calls so far this year. In addition to the (average) 8.6 calls per day, police also conducted 360 foot patrols (average four per day) and 145 licensed premises checks (bar walks) in this 92-day period.

In light of current trends on Salt Spring, police also issued 261 traffic warnings, issued 154 violation tickets, conducted 39 check-stops and took 20 impaired drivers off our roads. High numbers of impaired drivers continues to be a concerning trend on Salt Spring Island, especially when considering the safety of other drivers and pedestrians alike. Some impaired drivers are getting caught a second time for impaired driving; police are recommending Criminal Code charges in those investigations. The difference between a provincial immediate roadside prohibition (IRP) impaired investigation and a Criminal Code impaired investigation, among other things, is that a Criminal Code impaired conviction results in a one-year driving prohibition and a criminal record, thus affecting one's ability to travel out of the country and reducing employment and volunteering opportunities. Immediate roadside prohibitions are a Motor Vehicle Act provincial legislation, they do not come with a criminal record but do impact your driving record. Other types of files during this period included eight firearms complaints, one sex-

related offence and 66 mental health-related calls. Also during this period, 80 boats were checked or documented in Ganges Harbour for the purposes of enforcement and safe boating practices. Some of the calls for the third quarter are detailed below:

July 2023:

- A driver who had received a 90-day impaired IRP in March 2023 was caught again drinking and driving. A Criminal Code investigation was commenced and is now before the courts.
- A driver was seen accelerating quickly and who nearly drove into the ditch on Lower Ganges Road. Police found the driver was impaired and a 90-day driving prohibition and a 30-day vehicle impoundment (or IRP) resulted.
- A male was found to be drinking in Centennial Park and after repeated warnings and his failure to abide by police warnings, the male was removed from the park.
- A driver fled from police after an attempted traffic stop; a provincial warrant has been requested for the driver's arrest.
- SSI RCMP responded to a report of a fraud that took place where the victim provided their bank account information and password over the phone to a person alleging to be a lawyer who was providing legal counsel to their son; \$9,000.00 was taken from their account. The thief has not yet been identified.
- SSI RCMP were notified of a pedestrian with minor injuries who was struck by a passing vehicle in downtown Ganges. Police have not yet identified the vehicle nor the driver. If you witnessed this incident or

have information that can assist police, please contact the Salt Spring Island RCMP at 250-537-6757.

August 2023:

- A shoplifter was caught by police and charged with theft after stealing from a local business.
- Police were advised of an adult walking in a residential area who was partially naked from the waist down; the person was identified, found by police and directed to keep their clothes on.
- Police were called in the early morning for a youth who had consumed illicit drugs and was now missing; the youth was eventually located by police.
- A domestic assault was responded to by police; all parties were separated, charges considered, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development was contacted due to police concerns for the baby.
- SSI RCMP responded to an arson where a residence was attempted to be set alight; the investigation is continuing.
- RCMP were contacted after receiving a report of someone speaking disparagingly about another person's aura; Police provided encouragement for the situation to be addressed by the parties involved. No charges were laid.
- Mischief to a local business was reported to police; the seven youths were located by police on a boat, one of whom was arrested for obstruction. An item taken by the youths was returned by them and they all apologized to the property representative; no charges were laid.
- An illegal encampment in downtown Ganges was directed to be removed by police; with compliance, no one was arrested or charged.
- SSI RCMP received a report of a person struck by a weapon on a boat in Ganges Harbour; after investigation, it was learnt that multiple criminal acts took place by two persons. Warrants are being requested for both parties.
- SSI RCMP responded to a domestic dispute where one person was kicked in the leg by their partner; the partner was arrested for assault and charges recommended to Crown.
- Police were requested to attend a residence for a person who, after stabbing themselves in the leg and threatening to kill others, said they wanted to "die by cop." Police attended and apprehended the individual without further injury, transporting them to hospital for a psychological assessment.

September 2023:

- Police arrested a person with an outstanding warrant for possession of property obtained by crime; after arrest, the person was released with a court date on Vancouver Island.
- Police were called to a downtown business for an



PHOTO COURTESY SSI RCMP

Alcohol found in vehicle of car impounded during issuance of an immediate roadside prohibition.

intoxicated person who had refused to leave the property and subsequently fought another patron. The intoxicated person was arrested for being intoxicated in a public place and placed in jail overnight.

• SSI RCMP conducted an interview for an historical homicide.

• Police were advised of a person who drew a knife and held it to someone's throat during the course of an argument and subsequent fight. The person with the knife is believed to have fled Salt Spring, but a warrant for multiple charges is being sought by RCMP.

• Multiple mischiefs and thefts were reported to police over the course of a weekend; the non-resident subject was identified and arrested with multiple charges recommended to Crown. The subject was transported off Salt Spring Island.

• A shoplifter was caught by police and charges of theft were recommended to Crown.

• SSI RCMP received a report of a vehicle failing to stop for a school bus that was stopped and letting off children. The vehicle and its owner were identified and police attended their residence. Failing to stop for a school bus is a \$368 ticket and three demerit points.

• Police received a report of a youth assaulting another youth with a weapon. The alleged assailant was arrested by police and charges will be recommended to Crown.

• Police responded to a report of a missing person armed with a knife wanting to kill themselves. A search resulted with police eventually locating the person and taking them to hospital for assessment.

• A traffic stop was conducted on a driver who was driving at a slow rate of speed in downtown Ganges. The driver was found to have been drinking, failed two breath tests and was served a 90-day IRP for impaired driving.

In this past quarter, Salt Spring RCMP participated at the September Fall Fair and the July 1st Canada Day celebration, and in the months to come, look forward to more opportunities to continue being part of this community.

Much loved 'Antiques Roadshow' is back at Steffich

It happens just once a year; a special opportunity for Salt Spring Islanders to come into Grace Point Square's Steffich Fine Art Gallery with their treasures that they've always wondered about, often turning them into CASH. Just in time for the holidays!

Over three days, Fri., Sat., Sun. -

November 3, 4, 5 from 10 - 5pm, the Buying Event features a team of experts who offer free appraisals and will be purchasing new or broken gold and silver jewelry, coins, bank notes, sterling silver flatware, vintage watches, antique BOOKS and toys, older stamp collections, musical instruments and FINE ART.

The team of professionals include Britannia Antiques & Coins estate buyer and Salt Spring local, John Newman. He is joined by Steffich's own Fine Art Specialist, Kaeli Yarwood, as well as 35 yr. Books and Maps expert William Matthews, former Salt Spring resident who now owns the oldest bookstore on Vancouver Island, 'The Haunted Bookshop'. He will be offering unique insights into old and rare BOOKS brought in.

Andrew Blanshard, co-owner and now General Manager of Weeda Stamps in Victoria is also a 35 yr. veteran of stamps and postal history. He returns again, to bring his wealth of knowledge to the event. Another recent addition to the team, a 20 yr. vintage toy collector specializing in Diecast toys and Hotwheels, will also be on hand.

"The Salt Spring Style Roadshow has become a favorite," says a regular visitor each year. A portion of the proceeds is donated to the Lady Minto Women's Auxiliary. "It's a meaningful way to say thank you to them, for everything they do for our hospital and community."

For those who can't make it into the gallery, organizers are happy to do house calls, as time permits.

Call John at 250-886-4048 or 250-537-9197 to make an appointment.

See you there!!



Paid Content

John Newman, owner of Britannia Coins & Estates, holds the first and last Canadian bills that featured the face of Queen Elizabeth.

The Driftwood will be closed for Remembrance Day Friday, November 10

We will reopen on Monday, November 13 at 9 am



Driftwood
COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER
241 Fulford-Ganges Road,
Salt Spring Island
250-537-9933
gulfislandsdriftwood.com





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CONCERT PREVIEW

Remembrance concerts presented by BOTR



PHOTOS BY JOHN COCHRAN

Seen in recent Bach on the Rock (BOTR) rehearsals for the Remembrance 2023 concert are, in photo at left, Andrea Varju, Adrian Wright, Bo Curtis and Marc Sira; and, at right, cellist Paula Kiffner and BOTR artistic director Jean Sébastien Lévesque.

Dona Nobis Pacem and more

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Remembrance Day will be marked on Salt Spring not only with the traditional ceremonies in downtown Ganges and the open house at the Legion, but with a special concert at ArtSpring that evening and the following afternoon.

Bach on the Rock (BOTR) Chamber Choir and Orchestra is presenting Remembrance 2023, anchored by Ralph Vaughan Williams' acclaimed 40-minute cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Give Us Peace), among other pieces. Concert producer and BOTR founder Carol Brown said she has been so impressed by the sound of the 29-piece orchestra assembled for the occasion, as well as the choir, whose members have embraced the spirit of the masterwork. Soloists are acclaimed Canadian soprano Suzie LeBlanc and baritone Hans Grunwald from Vancouver.

Vaughan Williams served in the medical corps during World War I and the composition reflects his experiences, along with words of writers such as Walt Whitman that he chose to accompany the music.

"We are incredibly fortunate to bring this work forward and to be in the company of Bach on the Rock's artistic director Jean

Sébastien Lévesque, and Suzie LeBlanc and Hans Grunwald, as we bring this production to life on Salt Spring," said Brown.

She is also thrilled that four Gulf Islands Secondary School students are singing with the choir. Connecting the generations with the hope of spreading awareness about the horrors of war is one of Brown's wishes for the event. That idea germinated in a conversation over tea between Brown and her neighbour Susan Benson, a well-known artist and theatre stage designer who has created impactful artworks on themes of war and envisions a larger exhibition at some point. Reaching younger people who have not experienced the reality of war themselves is one of Benson's aims, a concept that Brown has carried into the Remembrance 2023 concert.

Brown said people often see the state of world conflict as being on a continuum, with war at one end and peace at the other, in an "us versus them" polarity.

"We need to step out of that continuum, out of that polarity, into another space where we can choose to see that peace has always been the case. And it is never us versus them. It is always and only us."

Among other pieces in the Remembrance 2023 program are the beautiful *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* motet by J.S. Bach and the Makana Youth Choir singing *Ani Ma' Amin*.

"I think people are in for an incredible opportunity," said

Brown about the concert, noting that hearing a recording of such wonderful music is nothing like a live performance for audience members.

"What you bring and what we bring comes together in unique ways in that setting."

Brown is grateful for funds and/or sponsorship provided by the Salt Spring Island Foundation, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 92, the Salt Spring Arts Council, Canadian Veterans' Association, ArtSpring and Country Grocer.

The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 11 and at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 12. But people are invited to come half an hour early to enjoy a pre-show singalong of songs from the World War I and II eras in ArtSpring's lobby led by Salt Spring Singers director Don Conley on piano and members of the Singers, Viva Chorus and the Lost Chords choir.

Good Company Entertainment Group
 presents
Agatha Christie's
THE
MOUSETRAP
 Directed by Suzanne Rouger
Mahon Hall
 November 2,3,4,9,10,11 2023
 7:30 PM
 Tickets available at ArtSpring & at the door

ARTSPRING

Collegium musicians perform Nov. 5

Masterclass students from Victoria

BY KIRSTEN BOLTON
FOR ARTSPRING

For students, parents, teachers, and classical music lovers in the community, a unique afternoon performance from the Young Artists Collegium Program at the Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM) offers a rare glimpse of gifted youth on the rise and the important role of performing and mentorship in their journey.

On Sunday Nov. 5, the very best students from the Collegium program come to ArtSpring for a special chamber music concert featuring breakout ensembles of 12- to 18-year-old talent on piano, violin, viola, cello, voice, flute, oboe, clarinet and guitar.

The concert will then be followed by a fascinating on-stage feedback session from a great master artist to further hone and refine their technique. This year, ArtSpring is proud to announce the guest mentor will be violinist Yuel Yawney, who is a distinguished member of the internationally acclaimed Vancouver-based Borealis String Quartet and the Aurora Piano Trio, and is artistic director of the Cascade Peaks ChamberFest. Yawney has toured extensively since 2000 across North America, Europe and Asia.

Founded in 2006, the VCM Collegium program is

rated among the best in Canada. Students have won top prizes in local, provincial and national music festivals, with graduates earning placements at UVic, McGill University, Robert McDuffie School, New England Conservatory, Curtis Institute and the Julliard School of Music.

Artistic director Simon MacDonald, who has been leading the program for the last five years, said, "I am lucky to be working with these kids, and every year the students, some as young as 11 years old, continue to impress me with their dedication and willingness to learn difficult pieces of chamber music and perform major solo works for important competitions and appearances."

While competition is not the focus of the program, he notes, being invited to play on a national stage and receive high-level feedback is a testament to the value of the program in helping young talent advance to the next level.

Students and parents arrive for a full day of dress rehearsals, exploring Ganges, a student lunch at ArtSpring, the concert itself and the post-performance feedback session from Yawney and members of the audience who wish to comment or ask questions.

Special ticket prices are \$20 for adults and \$5 for youth. Angel tickets are available in person or by phone for \$15.

SSNAP The Salt Spring National Art Prize

We wish to acknowledge over 125 volunteers for their part in making the Salt Spring National Art Prize and the Parallel Art Show such a resounding success.

Thank you for your willingness to support the visual arts in Canada. Your volunteer efforts bring meaning, connection, and vibrancy to our community. Your time is greatly appreciated, respected and inspiring, helping us to shine on a national stage.

Your support in encouraging an appreciation of the arts invoked dialogue and advanced art's ability to make a difference in our world.

Thank you!



LIVE THEATRE

Good Company brings The Mousetrap to Mahon

Agatha Christie classic

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* is known as the longest-running play in the world, and Salt Spring theatre fans will learn why it has endured when an island version opens on Thursday, Nov. 2 at Mahon Hall.

The Good Company Entertainment Group is presenting the play, which is directed by Suzanne Rouger and co-produced by Rouger and Karen Arney. The duo most recently brought the entertaining musical *Dogs in the Moonlight* to an ArtSpring audience.

Rouger says *The Mousetrap* is a classic British mystery, where a group of people are stuck in a snowstorm at Monkswell Manor and it becomes apparent that one of them has committed a murder.

She notes the play is both comedic and serious.

"It has serious subject matter, but sometimes it has funny moments because the characters are very eccentric."

acters are very eccentric."

People will be treated to both familiar island actors and some new faces on the stage. Megan Colgan plays Mollie Rolston, Rigo Kefferputz is Giles Rolston, Carlo Locatelli is Christopher Wren and Mrs. Boyle is played by Wendy Beatty. Derrick Milton is in the role of Major Metcalf, Metta Rose will be Miss Casewell (with Chantal Pentland taking the role for one show), St. Clair McColl is Mr. Paravicini and Clifford Daniel plays Detective Sergeant Trotter.

The Mousetrap opened at The Ambassadors Theatre in London in 1952, and moved to St. Martin's Theatre in 1974, where it continues to run, having taken a break only during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Good Company production is using the original soundtrack and sound effects from the 1950s.

"So it has a vintage kind of feel, which just really sets the mood," said Rouger.

And there will be no doubt that this is a British play, with Ann Stewart tasked with dialogue coaching duties.



PHOTO BY SUZANNE ROUGER

Rehearsing a scene from *The Mousetrap* are, from left, Rigo Kefferputz, Megan Colgan, Metta Rose, Carlo Locatelli, Derrick Milton, St. Clair McColl and Wendy Beatty.

The Mousetrap runs Nov. 2 to 4 and 9 to 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Treats and refreshments will be for sale at intermission, with proceeds benefitting the

Cats of Salt Spring Rescue Society.

Tickets (\$25) are on sale through ArtSpring (online or in person) or at the door at Mahon Hall.

FILM & FUNDRAISER

Award-winning migrant experience film on island

Fundraiser for ABBA shelter

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Documentary filmmaker Judy Jackson's award-winning film *Where Can We Live In Peace?* has a special screening at the Fritz Cinema on Saturday, Nov. 4 at 3 p.m.

The film documents the work of ABBA house, a migrant shelter founded by Pastor Ignacio Ramirez in Celaya, Mexico. Those who have been forced to leave their Central American homes are offered kindness and hope — a brief respite from the hardships and dangers they face in their desperate search for a place where they can bring up their children in safety.

Many migrants dream of "el otro lado," new lives in the United States. Border crossings today (about 9,000 a day) are at an all-time high, as are deportations. The migrant crisis has become heavily politicized and migrants are increasingly demonized. The

U.S. border is a 2024 election issue and President Joe Biden has authorized an addition to the border wall, something he said he would never do. Thousands of migrants huddle in makeshift camps on the Mexican side, where gangs rape women, kidnap and extort men.

Jackson's poignant and compassionate film draws us into the world of the ABBA shelter and the lives of migrants who find comfort and support there, a place where each is treated with kindness and dignity — as a human being. Throughout the film, we hear the migrants' voices as they recount their difficult stories, explaining why they had to leave homes in Central America. The reasons are mostly related to corruption, gang violence, climate change and abject poverty.

They frequently travel by jumping on and off freight trains, infamously known as "La Bestia." Sadly, and inevitably, there are often accidents, which shatter dreams of working in America and sending money back to support their families. ABBA is the only shelter in Mexico that

looks after migrants who have lost limbs. It works with the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide therapy, counselling and prostheses. The amputees have even formed a band.

Now Pastor Ignacio has a new vision. A donation of a huge piece of abandoned land means he can move forward with plans to build a cultural and human rights centre, a sanctuary where amputees can heal and plan new futures. Here, they will receive not only medical, psychological and physical help, but there will also be workshops to provide education, art and music therapy along with digital learning which could lead to jobs for those who are disabled. This new sanctuary is an example to the world of what is possible. *Where Can We Live In Peace?* screenings are raising money for this new centre.

Jackson, a former Salt Spring resident now living in Victoria, says the impulse for her latest film was driven by the personal loss and despair she experienced when her fiancé Neil tragically died of

brain cancer. Overcome with grief, she read voraciously to try to find answers and support from others who had lost loved ones. Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* was the book that resonated most loudly. Frankl, an Auschwitz survivor who lost parents and his fiancé in the camp, observed that those who helped others, even a little, seemed to fare better than those who did not.

"So, with film funding for foreign stories increasingly impossible in Canada, I picked up a simple camcorder, headed to Mexico and, without a budget, learnt to film and edit on my own, and made *Where Can We Live In Peace?* And yes, it has helped me heal," Jackson said.

Where Can We Live In Peace? has won multiple awards in Europe and North America.

Jackson has made more than 100 documentaries about human rights and social justice issues that have been widely broadcast in Canada, the U.S. and England. A complete list of her documentaries can be found at judyfilms.com.

Remembrance 2023

Saturday Nov. 11, 7:30 | Sunday Nov. 12, 2:30

Bach ON THE ROCK presents
Ralph Vaughan Williams
"Dona Nobis Pacem"
Artistic Director:
Jean-Sébastien Lévesque
Featuring:
Suzie LeBlanc - Soprano
Hans Grunwald - Baritone
Makana Youth Choir
with Caroni Young

Tickets & Info:
www.artspring.ca | www.bachontherock.com

ArtSpring, 100 Jackson Avenue, Salt Spring Island

Victoria Conservatory of Music
Young Artists Collegium Program
ArtSpring Presents
25th Anniversary
Collegium
Sun Nov 5
2:30pm
\$20 | \$5
artspring.ca
tickets.artspring.ca
250.537.2102

ART SHOW

Printmakers share latest works

Salt Spring Gallery exhibit

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

People have one more week to see the Salt Spring Island Printmakers' annual show, *Impressions 8*, at the Salt Spring Gallery on McPhillips Avenue.

This year 15 members are showing original hand-pulled prints as well as three-dimensional work containing print elements. The show can be seen daily, except for on Sunday and Monday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., until Nov. 8.

A full spectrum of printmaking techniques is on display, including prints produced from wood block and linoleum blocks, silkscreens, zinc plate etchings, collagraphs and monotypes. Subjects drawn from nature, pets and social issues make it a show for all interests. Exhibitions of mini-prints, at four inches by



PHOTO COURTESY PAMELA PLUMB

Dendrochronological Blues by Pamela Plumb is part of the *Impressions 8* show.

four inches in size, are becoming a worldwide phenomena, and the Salt Spring group has eight on display.

The printmakers regularly host workshops in their studio at the Salt Spring Island Multi Space and welcome new members.

DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Swan Song launches Best of the Fests series

Premieres and classics to screen at ArtSpring

BY STEVE MARTINDALE

FOR SALT SPRING FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

Travel from the top of Alaska to the tip of Tierra del Fuego, pull back the dance curtain to reveal tumultuous behind-the-scenes drama, and join legendary 1970s musicians both on stage and backstage in three award-winning documentaries at ArtSpring this month and next.

The Salt Spring Film Festival's annual Best of the Fests film series begins on Wednesday, Nov. 15 with Chelsea McMullan's award-winning documentary *Swan Song*, which immerses viewers in Karen Kain's epic struggle — in the midst of the pandemic and on the eve of her retirement as artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada — to

mount a glorious production of *Swan Lake*, which had originally launched her career as a world-famous ballerina over half a century ago.

The tradition-bound world of ballet is being challenged from within by outspoken young women of colour, who are among the most talented emerging ballerinas. Anyone with an interest in the creative process — and the joyful and occasionally exasperating challenges of inter-generational collaboration — won't want to miss seeing septuagenarian Kain and her enormously talented ensemble of young dancers, choreographers, set builders and costume designers grapple with time constraints, unexpected delays and potentially explosive identity politics.

Presented by co-director Sean O'Neill, who will be in attendance from Toronto, *Swan Song* made

its world premiere at the recent Toronto International Film Festival and was subsequently named Best Canadian Documentary at the Calgary International Film Festival.

Two weeks later, on Nov. 29 at ArtSpring, join seemingly fearless globe-trotter Matty Hannon as he embarks upon a daunting 50,000-kilometre solo journey down the entire West Coast of the Americas in search of the best surfing beaches, traveling initially by motorcycle, in the award-winning Australian documentary *The Road to Patagonia*.

Hannon's epic adventure doesn't go quite as planned, as along the way he experiences breakdowns and detours, and unexpectedly falls in love right here in B.C. when he meets organic farmer Heather Hillier, who spontaneously follows Hannon south to his Patagonian destination, ultimately travelling

through South America on horseback with their surfboards precariously strapped to their saddles.

Somewhat remarkably, the Salt Spring Film Festival is presenting the international premiere of this award-winning film, which was named both Best Film and Best Documentary at the Byron Bay International Film Festival and which won the Audience Choice Award at the Melbourne Documentary Film Festival, and which no one in the world outside of Australia has yet had the opportunity to see.

While the Best of the Fests series usually brings you the latest releases from the international film festival circuit, don't miss a very rare opportunity to see a beloved blast from the past on the big screen when *The Last Waltz* — which is widely considered the greatest concert film of all time — is presented on Dec. 6 at ArtSpring with

newly remastered 5.1 audio and HD video quality.

Calling it quits with a lavish farewell show at San Francisco's Winterland Ballroom in late 1976, The Band's final performance was captured for posterity by director Martin Scorsese.

The film boasts guest performances by an astonishing roster of musical talent, including Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Emmylou Harris, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, the Staples Singers and Muddy Waters. Re-released across Canada to celebrate the life of Canadian musician Robbie Robertson, who died in August at the age of 80, this special screening will be co-presented by the Gulf Islands Community Radio Society.

Tickets (\$13) for each film are available via ArtSpring, online or through the box office.

what's on this week

Wed. Nov. 1	Fri. Nov. 3	Sat. Nov. 4	Wed. Nov. 8
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT	ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES
Tea à Tempo: Chamigos. All Saints church. 2:10 p.m. followed by optional tea and treats.	Books & Bling. Giant sale of books and jewellery at Salt Spring Farmers' Institute. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A Salt Spring Literacy fundraiser.	Abattoir Bash. 11th annual fundraiser for the Salt Spring Abattoir Society. Farm to table dinner plus silent auction. Fulford Hall. Doors at 4:30 p.m.; dinner at 6.	Salt Spring Climate 101. Teen Climate Action Webinar via Zoom presented by Transition Salt Spring and the library. 5 p.m.
GISS Music Showcase Night. Mateada. 8 to 10:30 p.m.	Antiques Road Show Buying Event – Salt Spring Style. Free expert appraisals and more at Steffich Fine Art. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Sun. Nov. 5	BC Libraries Present: John Vaillant. Via Zoom from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Get link from Salt Spring library's website.
ACTIVITIES	Neighbourhood Story Time. Stories for young ones read by community members or library staff in the library's children's area every Friday from 11 to 11:30 a.m.	LIVE ENTERTAINMENT	LCC Office Hours. See last Wednesday's listing.
Local Community Commission Office Hours. Meet with commissioners every Wednesday at the CRD office on McPhillips Ave. Ben Corno, 8:30-10:30 a.m.; Brian Webster, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Gayle Baker, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.; Earl Rook, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.	ASK Salt Spring. The Salt Spring Public Library's FabLab is the topic in the new ASK spot in the Transition Salt Spring/Restorative Justice room at SIMS. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Victoria Conservancy of Music: Young Artists Collegium Program. Concert at ArtSpring. 2:30 p.m.	Bridge. See last Wednesday's listing.
Bridge. Every Wednesday at the Salt Spring library program room. Bring a partner and enjoy yourself. 12:45 p.m.	Youth Games & Chess Club. For ages 9 to 13. Children's area at the library. 1 to 4 p.m.	Blues Jam. Legion. 3 to 6 p.m.	Music Bingo. See last Wednesday's listing.
Music Bingo. Moby's Pub. 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.	Sat. Nov. 4	ACTIVITIES	CINEMA
Thur. Nov. 2	LIVE ENTERTAINMENT	Books & Bling. See Friday's listing.	• Taylor Swift The Eras Tour runs Thursday, Nov. 2 to Sunday, Nov. 5 at 6:45 p.m. each night plus a 2:45 p.m. matinee on Sunday. Check thefritz.ca for possible updates and more movie info.
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT	The Mousetrap. See Thursday listing.	Antiques Road Show Buying Event – Salt Spring Style. See Friday's listing.	EXHIBITIONS
Poetry Open Mic. With featured poet Rhona McAdam. Salt Spring Public Library program room 7 p.m.	DJ Skywater. Mateada. 8 p.m. to midnight.	Mon. Nov. 6	• Impressions 8, the Annual Exhibition of New Works by the Salt Spring Island Printmakers, runs at the Salt Spring Gallery from Oct. 20 to Nov. 8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays.
The Mousetrap. Good Company Entertainment Group presents Agatha Christie's classic play. Mahon Hall. Doors at 7 p.m. and show at 7:30 p.m.	Everyday People. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.	Veterans' Luncheon. For any individual who has served in the military or RCMP. Meaden Hall in the Legion. 1 p.m. Sign up in advance through the Legion.	• Brian Purcell shows his photography show called <i>One's View of Humanity</i> in the ArtSpring lobby through November.
Open Mic. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.	Bert's Blues Banned. Legion. 7:30 p.m.	Climate Action: A Youth Guide Webinar With Lilah Williamson. Via Zoom through the library from 5 to 6:30 p.m.	• Jason Newport shows paintings in the library program room for the month of November.
Craig's Karaoke. At Moby's Pub. 7:30 to 11 p.m.	ACTIVITIES	Tue. Nov. 7	
ACTIVITIES	Books & Bling. See Friday's listing.	LIVE ENTERTAINMENT	
Books & Bling Preview Night. For Salt Spring Literacy Society members. (Join at the door.) Farmers' Institute. 7 to 9 p.m.	Antiques Road Show Buying Event – Salt Spring Style. See Friday's listing.	Open Mic. Legion. 6 to 9 p.m.	
Fri. Nov. 3	Book Launch: Robert Hilles presents <i>The Pink Puppet: A Book of Tales.</i> Library program room. 2 p.m.	ACTIVITIES	
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT	Film Screening: Where Can We Live in Peace? Award-winning film by Judy Jackson, a former resident of Salt Spring. The Fritz Cinema. Fundraiser for ABBA group that aids migrants. 3 p.m.	Trivia Tuesday. Moby's Pub. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.	
The Mousetrap. See Thursday listing.		Wed. Nov. 8	
Leland River & Rave Coach. Mateada. 8 p.m. to midnight.		ACTIVITIES	
Karaoke. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.		Book Launch: Bob and Judy Weeden present <i>Vessels and Verses</i> at Steffich Fine Art. 7 p.m.	

Books & Bling

Salt Spring Literacy's fundraising book and jewellery sale. Farmers' Institute. Fri., Sat., Sun., Nov. 3, 4, 5 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Pets

Ineke van Hasselt

July 10, 1946 | October 18, 2023

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Gerda Casimir & Valk Beekman
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Nieces and nephews

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ISLAND LIFE

SOCIAL GROWTH

Literacy centre serves community



PHOTO AT LEFT COURTESY SSL; PHOTO AT RIGHT BY GAIL SJUBERG

Igor Darmokhid works on English language proficiency with volunteer tutor Susan Walker in the photo at left, while Salt Spring Literacy (SSL) children's program coordinator Keiko Taylor, left, and SSL executive director/coordinator Stella Weinert welcome people to their new space at SIMS. The Books & Bling sale, which runs Nov. 3 to 5 at the Farmers' Institute, is a fundraiser for the Salt Spring Literacy Society.

Programs for all ages

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Books & Bling sale that runs at the Farmers' Institute this Friday through Sunday, Nov. 3 to 5 is one of Salt Spring's best-loved annual fundraisers and social events, organized by the Salt Spring Literacy Society.

As people pay for their newfound book and jewellery treasures, they often ask what the funds are directed towards.

Salt Spring Literacy (SSL) has existed on Salt Spring since 2007, and offers various programs for learners of all ages. Former School District 64 teacher Stella Weinert has been the SSL coordinator for several years now. She and others are thrilled to have acquired two classrooms at the Salt Spring Island Multi-Space for their new home base.

"We're really happy with the new space," said Weinert. "It's given us two private tutoring areas, room for storage, room for program prep, the 1000X5 program and storage for the book sale, and for doing workshops and training."

Last year SSL had 44 adult learners accessing the free tutoring services — mostly English language learners and people needing sustained help using computers or other devices — and 75 people dropping in for a specific purpose such as completing a government form or getting one-time technology help.

Keiko Taylor, also a retired teacher and administrator, coordinates the programs benefitting children. The 1000X5 program collects books for children aged 0 to five, which are distributed on a regular basis to families who might not otherwise have access to a lot of books. The title refers to the belief that a child should have seen 1,000 books by the age of five in order to develop solid literacy skills.

The One-to-One Reading Program sees adults listen to elementary school children read and provide gentle coaching. Orientation, training and support is provided, and the time commitment is only about 90 minutes per week.

Penny Poole, a retired teacher from

Ontario, is an enthusiastic One-to-One volunteer. Not only did she have a teaching background but relevant family experience as well. While one of Poole's sons learned to read easily at a young age, the other was diagnosed with dyslexia and struggled.

When it seemed one of her three One-to-One schoolchildren was not making progress last school year after several sessions, she turned to her son, who is now 42, for advice. He encouraged her to stick with it and just have fun with the student when they are together.

"And that is what the teacher said as well," recounts Poole. "Develop the relationship, don't worry about the reading . . . and then it was a totally different game."

After time spent getting to know each other, one day while they were sharing giggles the student started to pick out some words from a Dr. Seuss-type book they were reading. And then they discovered Mo Willems' books, and that sent the student well on their way to being a reader by the end of the school year.

"I absolutely loved it," said Poole. "For me, it was a real sense of being a part of something that's growing, and it's progressive and it's helpful, instead of all the other things that I could do . . . But this is also personal. It's partly because of my heart for my child, my own son and the process that he went through, and partly it's just because I'm at an age where you really want to know that what you're doing is good work."

Poole appreciates all the support, strategies and games provided to volunteers by Taylor, and the other people within SSL and the school district she encounters.

"The kind of books that you're reading with the child are fun and delightful," she added. "It's such a positive and optimistic experience. I can hardly wait to go and see the kids, so that's really nice."

One-to-One currently operates in Fulford, Fernwood and Salt Spring elementary schools, and the program could use a few more volunteers, even on a casual basis. People should contact Taylor at info@saltspringliteracy.org or 250-537-9717 if they are interested.

Helping people for whom English is not their first language is another major program offered by Salt Spring Literacy.

Igor Darmokhid is well known on Salt Spring for his artwork and efforts to raise funds to help victims of Russia's war on his home country of Ukraine. He works at Thrifty Foods and Lady Minto Hospital, and knew absolutely minimal English when coming to Salt Spring five years ago with his wife Oksana and daughter Ivanna, who graduated from Gulf Islands Secondary School last year.

Darmokhid has been learning English through Salt Spring Literacy's free tutoring services since he arrived, and is currently one of 12 people from Ukraine doing that. The Ukrainians also get together as a group outside of literacy centre activities.

Darmokhid describes the importance of learning English for newcomers.

"The first step for newcomers is getting a house on Salt Spring. The second step is literacy, because it's language and it's, like, everything. No language, no job. No job, no food; no food, no life — no life!"

He said the emphasis of his initial lessons with tutor Roger Mah Poy was things he needed to know in order to work at Thrifty Foods: how to tell customers where products can be found in the store, for example, and what to say when he didn't know the answer. A similar process occurred when he started to work at Lady Minto Hospital.

He is now working towards his English Language Skills Assessment certification.

Darmokhid has also seeded another Salt Spring Literacy program in Ukraine.

"It's kind of like our 1000X5 program," said Weinert. "He's sent books to a preschool in Ukraine and raised all the money to do that."

Darmokhid said he and islander Victoria Olchowecki and others have fundraised some \$60,000 locally for projects that mainly benefit children and medical supplies and staff in Ukraine.

The literacy centre is open Mondays through Thursdays from noon to 4 p.m. For more information, contact Weinert at sweinert@saltspringliteracy.org or 250-537-9717, or drop by the information table at Books & Bling this weekend.



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1	0028	0.4	1.3	5	0337	1.1	3.6
	0858	3.5	11.5		1227	3.4	11.2
WE	1358	2.9	9.5	SU			
ME	1712	3.0	9.8	DI			
2	0111	0.5	1.6	6	0434	1.3	4.3
	0957	3.5	11.5		1300	3.3	10.8
TH	1554	2.9	9.5	MO	2026	2.1	6.9
JE	1722	2.9	9.5	LU	2306	2.2	7.2
3	0156	0.6	2.0	7	0536	1.5	4.9
	1053	3.4	11.2		1327	3.2	10.5
FR				TU	2032	1.9	6.2
VE				MA			
4	0245	0.8	2.6	8	0119	2.3	7.5
	1144	3.4	11.2		0638	1.7	5.6
SA				WE	1348	3.2	10.5
SA				ME	2047	1.7	5.6

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ARRIVING ON FUMES



PHOTO BY RICK NEUFELD

Gulf Islands School District 64 welcomed its third all-electric school bus on Wednesday, Oct. 25, the latest arrival and part of the district fleet's transition to electrification that began with the first exhaust-free bus back in January.

NSSWD

Water tolls finalized

Debt service and meter change charges increase

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

With the end of 2023 in sight, Salt Spring Island's largest water provider has set its budget for 2024 — and adopted its bylaw for tolls and charges, finalizing an increase in per-litre rates for next year and a higher surcharge for upcoming water treatment plant at Maxwell Lake.

These come against a backdrop of zero increase for most customers in their parcel tax base rate, according to the bylaw adopted at the October meeting of North Salt Spring Waterworks District (NSSWD) trustees. Financial officer Tammy Lannan presented the board with only minor revisions from a September draft document, with customers seeing the second of four years' worth of capital construction surcharges for the plant — 2023's \$90 charge for single detached residences will become \$200 in 2024, rising to \$300 in 2025 and \$400 in 2026, to service the expected debt payments.

"To be clear, of everything that is proposed [in the budget], that is probably the clearest — and largest — change," said NSSWD board chair Brian Pyper, as trustees voted to approve the plan Thursday, Oct. 26.

That increase of \$110 per residential parcel will be larger for commercial and multi-unit parcels, with a few properties looking at increases topping \$1,000. But the majority — 84 per cent, or more than

1,700 customers — will see the smaller number on their tax bill. The plant is expected to improve water quality from Maxwell through a dissolved air floatation (DAF) process — much like that in place at St. Mary Lake — that removes organic matter before chlorination, reducing trihalomethanes and other byproducts of disinfection.

Water toll rate increases were finalized this week as well, a 10 per cent increase that Lannan estimated would hit most customers — 70 per cent, in this case — with annual bill increases of less than \$36, although heavier residential water users in particular could see much more.

Lannan has previously said she expected that 10 per cent increase in rates to yield just eight or nine per cent of a revenue increase, as many customers may adjust their water use to compensate for higher per-litre costs.

Other changes in 2024 will include an increased meter change-out charge — from \$200 to \$500, to better reflect the cost to the district of performing the service.

"We have not looked at this for years, unfortunately," said Lannan. "The cost of meters has gone up, to just about \$400 each, and the cost of the labour is still \$100."

In other district news, the board heard a water level report on the island's water-source lakes. Restrictions on water use were lifted Tuesday, Oct. 17, as both St. Mary and Maxwell lake levels began to trend upward "significantly," according to NSSWD operations manager Ryan Moray.

"To date in October, we've had 175.8 millimetres of rainfall," said Moray, saying that brought levels "right up there" near the top of capacity.

IT'S OFFICIAL!



PHOTO BY SUSAN LUNDY

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District chief administrative officer Rodney Dieleman, left, and Salt Spring Fire Chief Jamie Holmes unveil the Building for Tomorrow sign at the site of the new Ganges fire hall next to Brinkworthy Estates on Lower Ganges Road at a ceremony on Monday afternoon. Speaking at the event in addition to Dieleman and Holmes were Saanich and the Islands MP Elizabeth May, fire trustee John Wakefield, CRD director Gary Holman and Makayla Joe-George of the Stqeeye' Learning Society, who did the land blessing. Monik Nordine led the crowd in singing O Canada, with people heading to the Legion for snacks, tea and coffee afterwards.

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