



## DRIFTWOOD STORY CONTEST

Holiday Story Contest  
winning stories  
on pages 6,7,8,11.



**12** Santa's Workshop report  
for 2023

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## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

# Firefighters douse burning car at ArtSpring

BY ROBB MAGLEY  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Officials said a car fire burning just a few streets away from the Ganges Fire Hall was brought under control quickly, as firefighters responded within minutes to the ArtSpring parking lot.

The call came in shortly after noon Tuesday, Dec. 12, according to Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue (SSIFR) Deputy Chief

Dale Lundy, who said the fire was fully resolved — and firefighters were back in service — in less than an hour.

"Six firefighters and two trucks came to the scene," said Lundy. "Thankfully not a raging fire, it was kept inside the cab."

Using a little more than 200 gallons of water, the fire was contained to the passenger compartment of the single vehicle, Lundy said, although

the car and its contents were likely a total loss.

Police were also on-scene during and after the fire, according to Salt Spring RCMP Detachment Commander Sgt. Clive Seabrook, who said the fire was "not suspicious."

"As the vehicle is parked on private property, we have left it with the land owner to work with ICBC for removal," said Seabrook.



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

Vehicle after fire extinguished by Salt Spring firefighters.

## HOUSING SECURITY

## CRD investigates parking options for winter campers

Rainbow, Mouat park lots considered

BY ROBB MAGLEY  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Capital Regional District (CRD) board has asked staff to outline legal ramifications of temporarily "decriminalizing" long-term RV parking in some lots at parks on Salt Spring Island, as officials here seek an over-wintering spot for those displaced from a cleared-out encampment.

"We have a serious homelessness issue on Salt Spring," said Salt Spring CRD director Gary Holman, who addressed fellow board members Wednesday, Dec. 13. "We're

trying to find a place where folks literally living in their vehicles can have a relatively safe place to park, that has some degree of management and oversight, and some kind of protection."

Holman brought a motion to the CRD's Electoral Areas Committee, which ultimately advanced a request for a staff report on "de-prioritizing enforcement of parking regulations" at the Rainbow Recreation Centre lot, on the CRD's Kanaka Road property and at the parking lot in front of Mouat Park. Last week, Salt Spring's Local Community Commission agreed to start work with the Chuan Society in hopes of negotiating a managed space through the end of April — helping people evicted last month

from BC Housing's undeveloped Drake Road property.

"Right now, people are parking willy-nilly throughout the village," said Holman, who also serves on Salt Spring's LCC. "Some of those folks, at some times, are being harassed by certain individuals — more than harassed, sometimes it can amount to vandalism or even physical threats and worse."

Salt Spring CRD senior manager Karla Campbell said there was already a legal review underway, adding that on-island staff have received some feedback from local police.

"RCMP has informed us that they would want to see that there's a plan in place, so that they're not always the ones to be responding,"

Campbell told the board. "They don't have the resources to be dealing with the issues that come up with certain behaviours that happen in these encampments."

CAO Ted Robbins warned they could face difficulties in deciding not to enforce some bylaws.

"We would find ourselves potentially in a situation that could be challenging when it comes to service authority," said Robbins, "particularly if we receive complaints from members of the community. We are obligated to respond."

Holman said the discussion surrounded a smaller number than perhaps fellow CRD directors imagined — "We're talking about eight vans," he said — but he did expect to hear from park neighbours.

"This is not an attempt to eliminate 'no parking' regulations," said Holman, "but to put it as a low priority so when folks are calling staff, staff can point to elected officials."

"We have to be thinking of the broader impacts with allowing folks to live in their vehicles in community parks," said Robbins, "when it comes to thinking of how we're managing wastes — including human wastes, which we know has been a problem."

CRD board chair Colin Plant emphasized that the move was, so far, just a request for more information to guide decision-making.

"Any concerns that we haven't offered the public an opportunity to weigh in will be addressed when this report comes back," said Plant.

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## LAND USE

# Trustees chart course for Salty Dog operation

## LTC to suspend enforcement

BY ROBB MAGLEY  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

On its face, there was little change in status for a Salt Spring kennel operation, despite more than an hour of public comment before the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee (LTC) meeting Thursday, Dec. 14.

There was star power — musician and philanthropist Raffi Cavoukian spoke in defence of Salty Dog Retreat, calling it an “essential service” and praising the dedication of its staff. Cavoukian is listed on application documents as a partial owner of the kennel property.

There were impassioned, even tearful speeches — one supporter begged trustees not to act similarly to the government she lived under in the former Soviet Union, another

accused LTC staff of impugning the kennel's reputation by mere mention of bylaw enforcement actions against it, and cited the Magna Carta.

And there were letters — dozens in favour of allowing Salty Dog to continue non-permitted operations at its new Blackburn Road site, alongside a handful expressing concerns over impacts to the watershed there. Most of the property is mapped as “Watershed & Islet Residential” in the island's official community plan (OCP), and “Rural Watershed 1” in the land use bylaw, leading the LTC last month to deny a temporary use permit (TUP) application for the business, in operation at the site since it was purchased in March.

In a room packed with supporters, trustees clearly weren't eager to say “no” to the project a second time, although they concurred with staff that Salt Spring's OCP would not permit a temporary permit at

that parcel, and if another application was submitted — as Salty Dog owner/operator Jaime Halan-Harris was proposing — it would just be denied again.

And while they didn't exactly say “yes” either, trustees threaded the needle: expressing clear support for the kennel itself while acknowledging continuing the prohibited use at the property is indeed unlawful — at least, without significant changes.

Trustees advised Halan-Harris to submit a new application, this time to amend the OCP itself — to essentially ask to carve the property out of the mapped watershed. That could take place concurrently with a permanent rezoning application, or a temporary permit could be applied for afterwards, if the OCP amendment was successful.

That amendment process could be lengthy — likely a year or more — and is expensive; staff noted the current fee structure put an OCP

amendment application at nearly \$8,000. The outcome is also uncertain, as the process includes staff review, a public hearing, LTC consideration and referral to First Nations, advisory agencies, the Islands Trust Executive Committee and the B.C. municipal affairs ministry.

But in the meantime, Salty Dog's proponents can tally a “win” on at least one front — trustees said explicitly they would use their authority to halt enforcement actions against Salty Dog while an application to amend the OCP was in progress. In a standing resolution on “unlawful uses” passed back in 2020, the LTC voted to allow itself to direct the temporary cessation of bylaw enforcement actions for applicants, even while a prohibited use is continuing, if they believed there was a “community need” to do so.

That authority does not extend to enforcement actions stemming from complaints received by the

Capital Regional District (CRD), trustees noted, although Islands Trust bylaw compliance and enforcement manager officer Warren Dingman said he would reach out to colleagues there.

“I can certainly make contact with the CRD,” said Dingman. “Let them know what land use enforcement issues are taking place, try and find out what their concerns are right now, and what they're proceeding with for enforcement.”

Halan-Harris seemed eager to accept LTC staff's offer to meet and hammer out details as soon as possible, in hopes of starting the application process quickly — before any further Islands Trust bylaw enforcement actions take place. Once the application is made, according to LTC chair Tim Peterson, trustees can pass a “resolution without meeting” (i.e. through email) to halt enforcement.

“We're open until Christmas,” said planner Chris Hutton.

## HOUSING

## Divided committee advances ADU plan

### No public hearing scheduled

BY ROBB MAGLEY  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Development of a path toward “legal” accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on Salt Spring is moving ahead, possibly as fast as provisions of the Local Government Act allow — and Salt Spring Island's Local Trust Committee (LTC) is using every procedural tool in the book to swiftly launch a plan meant to increase housing stock.

The course set, perhaps counterintuitively, included passing a resolution to “proceed no further” with the just-downsized Bylaw 530, which envisioned a small-scale map-based approach for ADU zoning, showing few properties where they would be allowed, but contemplating a streamlined “spot zoning” pilot project for islanders to request their property be added to that map.

But while Bylaw “530-Lite,” as trustee Laura Patrick had nicknamed it, was officially abandoned at the LTC's Dec. 14 meeting, the functionally identical Bylaw 537 appeared in its place — this time introduced specifically noting the LTC would not hold a public hearing, a move allowed since the bylaw was consistent with the island's official community plan.

And, with public notification to indicate a first reading was incoming at a yet-to-be-scheduled special meeting — and with a stated intent to complete second and third readings at the same event — the new bylaw could be finalized in near-record time, after which the “spot zoning” applications could conceivably begin.

But trustee Jamie Harris, long an ardent supporter of ADU provisions, said he was concerned the “spot zoning” would have too many procedural hoops to jump through to be considered truly streamlined.

“I don't trust this process,” said Harris. “I'm

definitely afraid that the second part of this, the pilot project, will not anywhere near encompass what it needs to.”

Harris specifically called out the potential for what he thought would be unreasonable “proof-of-water” requirements; neither those requirements nor any others have yet been specified, although Harris had earlier expressed skepticism on different agenda items surrounding a project charter.

“I would propose that we try to expedite the OCP [revision] process,” said Harris. “Let's fix the OCP and put the original Bylaw 530 through.”

Harris had earlier lamented that the OCP revision was going to take too long, and had pressed for finding a way to shorten the process timeline. Planners said the regulatory requirements for amending an OCP demanded specific steps, none of which could be skipped in ways that might meaningfully shorten the time needed.

The Bylaw 537 meeting will be held by Jan. 23.



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Christmas Eve Afternoon Service, 3:00pm  
Service of the Word/Compline, 10:00pm

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# OPINION

2022 CCNA Awards  
Gold - Best Editorial Page | Gold - Outstanding Community Service | Silver - Best Front Page  
Silver - Best Local Editorial (Gail Sjuberg) | Silver - Best Local Cartoon (Dennis Parker)

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



## Driftwood

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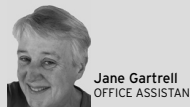
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### EDITORIAL

## Feedback loop

One could be forgiven for thinking that islanders are simply ungovernable.

The news continues to tell stories of local governments struggling to act in ways that reflect the values of their communities. And if Salt Spring is unified in any way, it might be in a belief that our governments have no idea what those values are.

How else to explain the surprise officials repeatedly express, facing events that seem as predictable as sunrise? When an advocacy position is confidently taken at one meeting, it will bring a crowd in opposition at the next; when our officials are begged in one moment to enforce a bylaw, they are guaranteed to be chided later for doing so. When they feel they've heard that the best course of action is no action against an infraction, they will hear the precise opposite — and with equal passion — just weeks later.

If they don't react based upon what they hear, they're out of touch. If they do, they're submitting to the loudest complainants.

From bylaw enforcement to land-use decisions to housing security and even in designing a public park, there are always multiple opinions on the best way forward. Unfortunately, many officials seem simply to react to each voice they hear, and in succession.

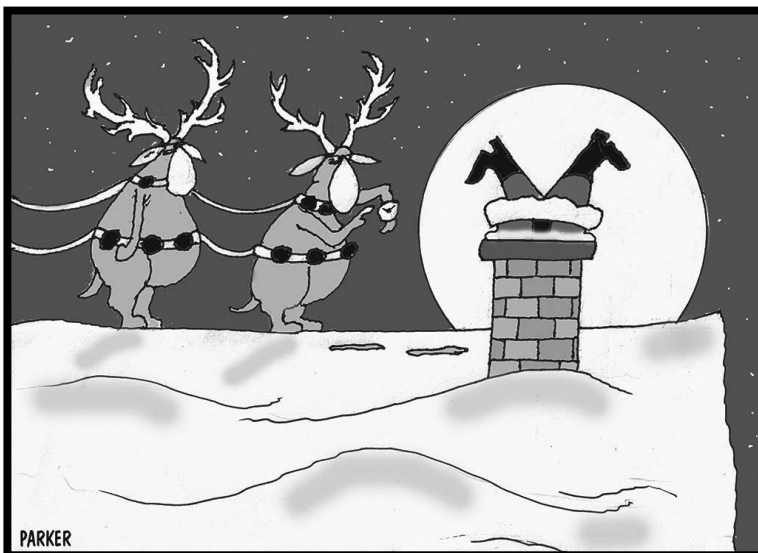
While they must consider public opinion, if our elected officials hope to learn what their community values by quantifying feedback — a notion reflected in every "due to the large amount of comment" justification we hear for decisions — they are doomed to continue the cycle, and deservedly so. Taking the call for more feedback to its logical conclusion, 12,000 letters on each topic would reduce every matter to another election. It sidesteps the duties of office.

Moreover, islanders have consistently shown an unwillingness to "settle" for a majority-rule, zero-sum approach, truly believing they can find solutions that work for all of us.

If an opportunity to build from common ground and transcend reactive governance exists, perhaps it lies in nurturing public buy-in for our longer-range projects, like the official community plan now ready to be revisited. A community's guiding documents can reflect a more stable shared understanding of its values, of decisions made on what we find important. Building more durable common consent could reduce the reliance on selective application — giving the public some idea of what to expect — and help our officials stop chasing ephemeral public approval.

**THE ISSUE:**  
Reactive governance

**WE SAY:**  
Guiding docs could help



PARKER

## Reflecting on CRD progress

BY COLIN PLANT  
CRD BOARD CHAIR

As each year comes to a close, I make a habit of looking back and reflecting on what took place. As Chair of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board, I would like to share some of the progress we made during the first year of our four-year term.

This year we started working towards a new collaborative approach to transportation governance. We have engaged with local governments, electoral areas, the province, and relevant partner agencies to identify any changes needed to optimize regional transportation governance. Using the feedback received we are designing a transportation service that will enable the region to meet its transportation mode share and reduce carbon pollution.

Housing affordability continues to challenge many individuals and families in our region. In 2023, by collaborating with local, provincial and federal partners we added over 200 new affordable homes to our region. The CRD Board also intends to increase its borrowing authority through the Land Assembly, Housing and Land Banking service to \$85 million to support potential partnership opportunities to increase the supply of affordable, inclusive, and adequate housing.

The new Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission has broadened local elected oversight on Salt Spring Island for island-wide services, ensuring that its unique needs are recognized and addressed. The commission will play a vital role in shaping service delivery on the island, and we are excited to see the positive impact it will have on the community moving forward.

### VIEWPOINT

This year our Solid Waste Management Plan was approved by the province, and we are beginning to implement policy changes that have the potential to divert up to 40,500 tonnes of waste away from Hartland Landfill each year.

We partnered with the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, the South Island Prosperity Partnership, the City of Victoria, the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce and Animikii to launch the South Island Indigenous Business Directory to support Indigenous economic reconciliation by building new relationships and connections. This directory provides new opportunities for relationships and partnerships between community members and the many Indigenous-owned businesses across the region.

While we celebrate these accomplishments, we recognize that there is more work to be done. The challenges our region faces are complex and multifaceted. However, with a strong vision, clear priorities and the support of our community, we are well-positioned to make a lasting impact.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build on our successes and address the pressing issues that our region faces. We remain committed to our goals of sustainability, inclusivity, and the betterment of the lives of all CRD residents.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to the CRD Board, our dedicated staff and our community for their unwavering support and commitment to our shared vision. Together, we have achieved great things, and I am confident that the years to come will bring even more successes and positive changes to our beautiful region.

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### THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Are you spending less on Christmas this year than last?

☐ Yes ☐ No

### LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Is the NDP on the right track with its housing strategy?

32 61  
YES NO

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# ISLAND VOICES

## LETTERS to the editor

### Respect new conservation area

Thanks to Robb Magley for his excellent article on the Reginald Hill Conservation Area in last week's paper.

I appreciated his emphasis on the purpose of the reserve. The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) purchased the area to protect at-risk species and ecosystems. They have graciously allowed visitors to walk on the trail to the summits, with the proviso that they stay on the trail, and leave their pets and bikes behind. Thus, it is disturbing that mountain bikers are still riding up there. I have also seen the bike tracks entering the reserve, the ruts in the wet earth, the moss ripped off the rocks, the "No bikes" signs torn off and the grooming of tracks and jumps far from the hiking trail.

Many of us on Salt Spring donated a considerable amount of our time and money to help NCC purchase and protect this ecologically precious area. It is heartbreaking to see others flout the rules. I would hate to see the reserve turn into another Channel Ridge where bikers have carved multiple new trails through the forest,

seeps and meadows. There are many species that live, forage and/or breed on the ground that are disturbed by the bikes and the trails: I estimate at least five species of reptiles, four species of amphibians, four small mammal species, 15 bird species plus all the native plants that are already heavily impacted by deer browsing and invasive species. The bike tracks also divert the flow of water down the slopes, increasing erosion in the watershed.

Our island community recently purchased land on Mount Maxwell as a community park where mountain bikers are welcome. It would be great if the mountain bikers went up there and left the nature reserves and conservation areas for nature.

SUSAN HANNON,  
SALT SPRING

### Kept in the dark

Kudos to the Driftwood for shining light on the secret Trust Council meeting of Sept. 26 where, according to an official document, trustees from all the islands reached a "consensus determination" that basically allows local trustees to pick

and choose their own priorities despite the islands' protected status.

When interpretation of the preserve and protect mandate was last discussed by Trust Council in 2021, there was no such secrecy. The debate was public with everything recorded on videotape. A comprehensive legal opinion was even made public.

But all that transparency resulted in a lot of controversy. Salt Spring trustee Laura Patrick, for example, who led efforts to block prioritization of environmental protection, found herself defending her politics in the media.

Since that time, there has been an independent Governance Review Report which was anything but flattering for the Trust. It identified a Trust with "no clear sense of direction and purpose," "disregard of policies on a regular basis," "conflict of interest," a lack of data regarding sustainability and a provincial government missing in action. A key recommendation was to give First Nations and the Province representation on Trust Council.

The report summed up the debate this way: "Is the Islands Trust a planning organization, or an institution charged with preserving and protecting a unique area

with a broader mandate where planning is just one tool?"

But not everyone wanted this review. When funding for the private consultant was put to a vote by Trust Council on Dec. 3, 2020, it passed by a narrow margin of 14-12, and the Trust's failings were exposed — but with the aim of bringing positive change.

After release of the report and one election later, responsibility for implementing the report's recommendations has fallen to an eight-member Governance Committee, which includes Salt Spring trustee and self-declared Trust foe Jamie Harris as vice-chair, along with Salt Spring trustee Laura Patrick and three others who also voted not to expose the Trust to scrutiny. The recommended changes may be a long time coming.

It seems the Governance Committee has yet to implement this crucial part of the Governance Report: "Islands Trust decision-makers are accountable to each other and the public as well as to the government. Transparency, built on the free flow of information, is an essential attribute."

FRANTS ATTORP,  
SALT SPRING

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"We're trying to find a place where folks literally living in their vehicles can have a relatively safe place to park, that has some degree of management and oversight, and some kind of protection."

GARY HOLMAN, SALT SPRING ELECTORAL AREA DIRECTOR

## "Uncomfortable" Christmas With Scrooge message proves timely

BY GAIL SJUBERG  
DRIFTWOOD EDITOR

I hope everyone had a chance to see Christmas With Scrooge at Fulford Hall this past week, and if you didn't there might still be tickets at Salt Spring Books for the last show tonight (Dec. 20).

Christmas With Scrooge is a beloved Salt Spring cultural institution and I got to see it again last Thursday night. I love the mix of things that stay the same and the new additions as the musical evolves. Sue Newman — daughter of Ray and Virginia Newman, who birthed the musical play 52 years ago — and the show's director and producer, still opens the post-prologue action as the elegant dancing Christmas Fairy whose wand turns on the Christmas tree star's light. The most recent Scrooge (Patrick Cassidy) and Cratchit (Kevin Wilkie) are perennially delightful, yet fresh faces are always in the mix of a Scrooge show.

I thought this year's cluster of Cratchit children and Spotty Dogs were remarkable, and the show featured exceptionally strong singing from the cast. I was especially moved by the rendition of Not So Long Ago in the scene where Belle Merriweather (Amber Tuttle) sets loose her once betrothed young Scrooge (Dustin

Bragg Van Wyck) due to his toxic obsession with gaining wealth.

I wasn't sold on the move to Fulford Hall when the show first went there in 2019. It seemed harder to follow the action and to hear some people when they weren't facing our way. Some of the traditional theatre "magic" was gone with less sophisticated lighting and being able to take in the whole scene at a distance on the ArtSpring stage.

But this year I didn't seem to miss a word and, in addition to being impressed by the lovingly appointed Fulford Hall for the occasion, I appreciated several aspects of the in-the-round format. Those included seeing audience members across from me smiling, laughing and singing; being able to admire the stunning costumes up close; sensing everything that goes into the movement of actors, dancers and singers because you can almost reach out and touch them.

An unexpected effect of the format was feeling discomfort at the depictions of poverty. When the desperation of the beggars, pickpockets, drunks and other poor people are right in your face, it definitely has more impact.

That feeling was rekindled the next day after I had a conversation with a long-time islander

whose freely divulged opinions I always enjoy hearing. She shared her concerns about Ganges and said people who were down on their luck and crazy, basically, should find another community to hang out where there were more services for them. She speculated that islanders' generosity was encouraging more of the same high-need people to come here. She wondered if our food security programs were not reaching the longer-term families and seniors who "really" needed them because more demanding newcomer street people were being served first. Valid concerns and questions, no doubt.

I know some people have had unsettling experiences in Ganges and/or Centennial Park in recent years, but our village centre is no different than any other community of our size. I'm not sure why we expect to be spared the unpleasant outcomes of our country's failure to maintain adequate housing stock for people of all income levels in the past 20 years and to provide enough access to mental health services. We know that insecure housing and mental health problems are inextricably linked.

Some illuminating facts about public housing funding were shared by the Capital Regional

District (CRD) senior manager of regional housing Don Elliott in a presentation at the Nov. 23 Local Community Commission meeting. From 1983 to 1986, the Capital Region Housing Corporation created an average of 115 units of affordable housing per year with financial help from provincial and federal governments. As that funding steadily declined and then dried up, so did public housing creation in the CRD. Except for one project the CRD funded on its own, and one anomaly, zero units were created for 15 years — from 2003 to 2018 — representing the philosophy of private-enterprise-all-the-way governments.

"That's the problem that we are now facing," he said. "That's what we're trying to solve, is all of that lack of investment from senior levels of government."

Elliott said the CRD's housing corporation has returned to the 1980s level of housing creation thanks to investments made in recent years, while noting the financial challenges to maintain that level or, ideally, exceed it are significant. Public acceptance of property tax increases — or a switch in priorities — to help fund housing projects is needed.

A number of individuals and organizations are obviously trying hard to create housing on

Salt Spring. Similarly, the Ambassador Program, the Mental Wellness Initiative and Mental Health First Aid courses, and our current crop of socially aware RCMP officers, have had some success while working to minimize issues in Ganges.

I don't want to downplay people's reasons to feel fearful or uncomfortable in our public spaces. We would all rather walk around Ganges seeing only securely housed, unstressed and happy folks, right? But that's not the reality here or almost anywhere these days.

But back to Christmas With Scrooge. I found the preface of the program interesting as it reminded us of the continuing validity of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol story: "We have endeavoured in this Ghostly little Play to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put our Audience out of Humour with Them-selves, with Each Other, with the season or with Us. May it Haunt Your Home pleasantly, and no one wish to forget its message."

With that the Newman family is perhaps suggesting that we need to be "haunted" and even made to feel uncomfortable by witnessing poverty up close, whether depicted by actors in Fulford Hall or real people in Ganges.





## HOLIDAY STORIES

# Contest proves youth literacy alive and well

Stories come from all ages and learning centres

BY GAIL SJUBERG  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

If readers have heard rumours about the decline and fall of literacy among today's youth, they were proven false by this year's Driftwood holiday story writing contest.

It seems that teachers of more island classes and homeschooling groups than ever guided their students through the process in 2023, and individual writers also submitted stories on their own initiative. Most of the younger

participants wrote out their stories by hand and provided illustrations as well.

Thank you to our judges Victoria Olchowicki, Joan Gage, Donna McWhirter and Sheila McEachern, who took on four of the seven age categories, up from last year's five due to the sheer volume of stories submitted. First- and second-place winning stories are printed in this issue of the paper, with the exception of the Grade 11 winners, whose stories will appear in next week's issue.

Winners are: Age 6-7 category: First place, Elora King; second place, Levi Venter; honourable mention, Meira Diamond.

Age 8 category: First place, Charlotte Chuter; second place, Ellie Clemson; honourable

mention, Naiya Hamilton, Lula Lidster.

Age 9 category: First place, Buddy Pyper; second place, Millie Smid; honourable mention, Angus Bestwick, Duke Fossen and Duke Boraski, Nathan Silva, Zavy Van Ommen.

Age 10 category: First place, Violet Penner; second place, Marrella Hoffman; honourable mention, Penelope Crabtree, Edie Keefer, Matisse Richard, Leona Waters.

Age 11 category: First place, Inara Demich; second place, Noelle Burgess; honourable mention, Shyanna Spencer, Lizzy Phillips.

Age 12-13 category: First place, Ana Roy; second place, Bryn Pyper; honourable mention, Owen Dyck, Cameron Kalf, Scout Kel-low, Mira Mills.

Grade 11 at GISS: First place, Ben Atkinson; second place, Yuto Nakabayashi; honourable mention, Sven-Guido Schultze.

Several GISS art students submitted cover art entries, as did Fernwood Elementary School students. This year's winner is Oscar Scaia.

Scaia, as well as first- and second-place story winners, can pick up vouchers for gift certificates to Salt Spring Books at the Driftwood office at 241 Fulford-Ganges Rd. The vouchers must be taken to the bookstore by Jan. 31, 2024 to be exchanged for gift certificates. Thank you to Salt Spring Books for once again participating as a much-valued contest sponsor.

## Just in Time for Christmas

BY MILLIE SMID  
SECOND PLACE  
AGE 9 CATEGORY

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Rose Parker. All she wanted for Christmas was some friends. Sadly all she had were stinking bullies. One of them was named Eddie.

One freezing morning, Rose took her husky Lolo out for a walk. On her way to the park she ran into Eddie.

"Better be good or Santa won't give you presents," he said sarcastically. "I bet you still believe in Santa, ha ha ha!"

Rose took Lolo down the street to the park. On her way home she couldn't help but think about what Eddie said.

When she got home, she ate dinner and by the time she got in bed she had decided to run away. She packed what she needed and hid it under her bed. After her parents tucked her in, she grabbed her stuff and jumped out the window.

She snuck through the yard and out into the street, then a car came zooming around the corner. Rose was so scared, she ran until she was out of breath. She slowed down and looked around. She didn't expect what she saw: Santa's sleigh!

But Santa wasn't in it or anywhere nearby! Suddenly, she couldn't help but cry. Then she remembered she was in the middle of a road, and started walking. She walked all the way to Main Street, then heard a sound coming from an alley.

He was a little short man. She knew it was Santa! She timidly walked towards him, creeping closer and closer. He looked up in surprise.

"Why are you here, dear child?" Santa said softly, while standing up.

"I'm lost and scared and really alone," said Rose, curling into a ball and starting to cry. Santa patted her on the back and said, "Don't cry little girl, I'll help you find your way."

Rose got back up, wiping her eyes. "Really?" Rose said with relief.

"I'm always happy to help someone in need," Santa said reassuringly. He whistled loudly and suddenly the air smelled like gingerbread. In seconds Rose could see

reindeer and Santa's sleigh in the distance.

"Wow!" Rose said. "How did you do that?"

"I'm Santa, of course," he said. They got into the sleigh and in a minute they were back at Rose's house. They could see through the window that everyone was sad, crying and worried.

"Why don't you go inside?" Santa said.

"But what if I don't get any presents? I haven't been all good this year," she said, tearing up. Santa said, "You know, I can just check my list."

"Oh yeah," replied Rose. She was on the nice list! "Wow! I'm a nice kid!" she said in relief. "Thank you for everything, Santa but I gotta go home for Christmas Eve!"

Santa understood. He dropped her off and flew away.

"HOHOHO! Merry Christmas everybody!"

Rose went inside and everyone went screaming towards her and smothering her with love. "Where have you been I've been SOOOOOO worried about you!" said her mom.

"I thought I was a bad kid but turns out, I'm on the nice list!" Rose said enthusiastically.

"Someone's been drinking too much egg nog," mom said sarcastically. "Let's get you to bed, tomorrow is Christmas and I know you're excited."

As Rose tucked into bed she fell asleep really easily and had visions of sugarplums dancing in her dreams.



### TIDE TABLES

at Fulford Harbour

DECEMBER 2024 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
20	311	2.9	9.5	24	612	3.5	11.5
	535	2.9	9.5		1118	3	9.8
	1102	3.3	10.8		1404	3.1	10.2
	1923	0.6	2		2214	0.4	1.3
21	411	3.2	10.5	25	645	3.5	11.5
	740	3.1	10.2		1153	2.9	9.5
	1135	3.3	10.8		1453	3.1	10.2
	2008	0.5	1.6		2250	0.4	1.3
22	456	3.4	11.2	26	713	3.5	11.5
	933	3.1	10.2		1228	2.8	9.2
	1218	3.2	10.5		1540	3	9.8
	2052	0.4	1.3		2325	0.5	1.6
23	536	3.5	11.5	27	736	3.5	11.5
	1037	3.1	10.2		1306	2.7	8.9
	1311	3.1	10.2		1626	2.9	9.5
	2134	0.4	1.3		2356	0.7	2.3

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## Rune's Christmas Gift

BY INARA DEMICH  
FIRST PLACE  
AGE 11 CATEGORY

Hi! I am a dog and my name is Rune. I am going to tell you of the day I made my home in the stars.

Far out in the volcanic beds of Iceland, where great mounds of crystalline burgs crash into the wild sea, it is the time of year when the humans decorate their homes with evergreen boughs and holly. I especially enjoy when they prepare an abundance of yummy food for me to jump up and taste! But I always get in trouble.

I am a very lucky dog. I have a family that loves me, especially dear Aneta, my best friend!

It all started on a frigid day when a chilling breeze swooshed passed my face. I was out with Dad to find Mikshi, Aneta's cat. Oh, how I hated Mikshi. Meanwhile, trying to find Mikshi, I got lost in a roaring blizzard. My family searched for me, but

the blizzard was a relentless and unforgiving barrier between us. However, Aneta was determined to find me, yet she was born blind and could only see a bleak darkness. Not that it would be any help to have sight, for all I could see was white dust blowing in all four directions.

I could hear her calling me. I followed her voice until I heard the ice crack beneath my paws. I ran away from the shifting ice, when I found a hole where Aneta had been standing! I jumped into the numbing glacial water. Luckily, the water was sleek on my fur coat and made it easy to swim through. There was Aneta, falling to the bottom of darkness. I dove as far as I could until I reached her, and gathered all the strength of the united packs before me, and at that moment I felt my ancestors with me to pull her back to the surface. My eyes were swollen from the icy water, but I could see enough to put Aneta on my back.

By the time we were halfway home,

Aneta had awakened to Aurora Borealis above our heads. Aneta said softly to me, "You saved me, Rune! You are such a brave boy! Are we almost home, Rune?"

"Awooo!" I howled to my dear Aneta. We were home once again!

Aneta got off my back and ran inside to greet her worried family.

"Mama! Papa!" she called. Aneta was home, though it was time for me to go. My pack was waiting for me in the sky. And so, with a little Christmas magic, the Northern Lights reunited me with my ancestors.

A few years later, it was Christmas Eve again and Aurora Borealis was in the sky. Aneta and her family were together under the stars.

Aneta's dad said, "Look! It's a shooting star! Make a wish, Aneta!"

She said, "I wish that I could see the world." That night, I granted her wish. One magic Christmas, Aneta could now see!





# The Story of the Elves

BY BRYN PYPER  
SECOND PLACE  
AGE 12-13 CATEGORY

This is the tale of Christmas long ago, when the beard of Santa was not white as snow. Without his jiggy belly, Santa was faster then. Even so, the population of children was growing and so were the poor Saint's responsibilities. Every day, he would stay up late, eating only candy canes and making toys. In desperation, he bought caffeinated candy canes to keep him awake all night! It all went downhill from there.

That Christmas, he couldn't deliver to all of the children in time. Only the extra-good ones got gifts. Since

he'd spent so much on caffeine, he couldn't afford coal for the misbehaving children. They got empty boxes.

Most of the children became depressed over the dark winter, and the next year didn't write Christmas letters at all! Santa became so high on caffeine that the toys he made had extra arms and legs! Eventually, he gave up and took a vacation to the South Pole to ask the penguins for help.

He packed his sack, saddled Dancer, and rode off across the world. As they landed, Santa tumbled into a snowbank, losing all of his caffeinated candy canes. He promptly fell to sleep. He hadn't slept in years!

"Ahhhhh!" he awoke suddenly in

a snow cave being watched by creatures with small pointed ears. The tiny beings quickly scattered and jumped onto the backs of penguins waiting outside, sliding away across the snowy landscape. Santa got up and followed their tracks.

After an hour, Santa came upon a shimmering palace of ice. Standing guard at each column were small humanoid and penguins! Saint Nicholas took a deep breath and calmly walked inside. Above him were sparkling ice chandeliers, ahead were ice sculptures of penguins and "Elves"? The largest statue was labeled: "Aegnor, Ruler of the Elves." Magic pulsed around him.

He climbed a great staircase seek-

ing the Elven Ruler. Bowing when he reached the top, Santa beheld an enormous room with tall windows and tapestries lining the walls and a great throne of silver and lazuli matching the icy decor. Aegnor bowed low to Santa and asked him to state his business.

"I seek help to make and deliver toys to all the children each year."

"The Elf Council will confer to find a fair solution," he told Santa. He blew a loud hunting horn and within minutes, a dozen elves slid in on the backs of penguins.

Santa was pleased to find a bench to sit on while he waited. The meeting took all of thirty minutes. When called, Santa bowed to each Council Member then to the King. Each

nodded their head in acknowledgment.

"Fifty elves will help you make toys each year... In return, you'll all holiday here after Christmas, and each summer, take them to Salt Spring Island to visit their cousins Erskine and his Fairy Friends," he pronounced. "And, Santa, no more caffeine!"

"Thank you!" Santa replied. They left the next day.



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# The Christmas Sleigh Ride

BY MARRELLA HOFFMAN  
SECOND PLACE  
AGE 10 CATEGORY

Hideous neighs came echoing from the barn as I rose from bed. What could it be? A bloodthirsty cougar that swam from Vancouver? My horses Rudolph and Prancer fighting over their delicious hay? I run downstairs, ignoring my Mom trying to make me eat breakfast and say Merry Christmas.

"I do not have time!" I yell, not even thinking about what I'm saying. I crash into the Christmas tree as fast as a cheetah, raring to get outside to see my beloved horses.

I run into the barn aisle, relieved not to see any predators. I breathe a sigh of relief, until I see that my horses Rudolph and Prancer are gone!

I have only had them for a few months, I didn't think I would have to say goodbye to them that quickly. I frantically run across the road to my friend Robin's house. She runs up to me, I grab one of her horses and hop on, and she quickly follows my path by getting her favourite horse, Polar, and gallops close behind me. We are on a mission and determined to find the horses!

As we are trotting through the snow-covered forest I hear a random "ho ho ho!" and horses making joyful noises. I look up, mystified. I can't quite believe my eyes. I tell Robin to stop her horse and look up! We look up in unison, our mouths dropping at once. It can't be! Santa Claus? We are completely shaken. We watch as the sleigh disappears behind the ice-covered mountains. We finally realize what we just saw, and gallop as fast as a racehorse in the Kentucky Derby, trying as hard as we can to meet Santa as he lands.



We turn out of the forest, speeding into the dewy meadow, we cannot believe we caught up to him! He slowly lands right next to Robin's horse as we canter towards him.

That's when we realize! I softly chuckle as I understand it all now.

"So that's where you lot were this whole time!" I say to them, still not fully believing my day.

Robin is so exasperated she slides smoothly right off Polar's back. It's Rudolph and Prancer, leading the pack of horses pulling the gorgeous, brand-new-looking sleigh.

I'm so insanely happy about finding my horses that I don't even realize that I'm talking to SANTA CLAUS? I finally gain the courage to speak to him but all that comes out of my mouth is a quiet mutter. Embarrassed by her friend, Robin says, "Oh my gosh! I can't believe it's you. Why are Prancer and Rudolph leading your beautiful sleigh?" Jealous of her social skills, I am able to mutter, "I woke up to such a fright!" with a smile.

Santa laughs and says, "Sorry that I startled you. These two have been pulling my sleigh for years. Come and help me deliver some presents!"

And so, Robin and I have been Santa's little helpers for every Christmas to come.

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# Joy and More Joy

BY LEVI VENTER  
SECOND PLACE  
AGE 6-7 CATEGORY

## Chapter 1

On a nice Christmas Eve, Santa was gonna give presents to everyone on Earth.

But then he noticed there were no chimneys. Without chimneys, nobody would get gifts.

So Santa went back to the North Pole. He was unhappy that he couldn't spread joy. So he asked Mrs. Claus, "What should I do?"

The next Christmas, the snow started melting. Santa didn't know what to do. He hoped, he wished that there was still one piece of joy left in him. Then the apocalypse

happened; then everything went wrong.

## Chapter 2

There was no joy left in anyone. The world became boring. There was nothing to do. And there was something new. There was still a little joy left in one season. There was Halloween. That was the last bit of joy.

## Chapter 3

There was more joy. And more, and more, and more. And then, it hit me. There was joy all around the world. I was wondering how that happened.

## Chapter 4

Is there more holidays? Meh! Maybe not! The end is only the beginning.





# Ferry Christmas

BY VIOLET PENNER  
FIRST PLACE  
AGE 10 CATEGORY

One night, on Christmas Eve, I was sitting up in bed, when I heard a sound from downstairs.

I bolted out of bed, threw on my slippers, put on a tee-shirt and jeans, and ran on to the stairwell.

I was quieter from then on, since I knew my parents were sleeping. I tiptoed down the stairs and was puzzled to find that there was no one there.

Then I heard a sound in the yard.

I crept out the back door and gasped. There was a man in a red coat, surrounded by presents in a red sleigh pulled by reindeer. He looked over.

I ducked behind a hydrangea bush, which was wilted seeing as it was the middle of winter. He looked away.

I jumped into the back of the sleigh and nestled into the bags of presents. The reindeer took off, and I almost yelled

like I would on a roller-coaster, but then didn't because Santa didn't know I was there.

We soared above the rooftops covered in a light dusting of snow, for around five minutes, but then the sleigh started to act up. The sleigh's engine (do sleighs have engines?) started to sputter.

Santa yelled to the reindeer, "Emergency landing in Drummond Park!"

The sleigh dropped sharply and we touched down hard, ripping up grass as we went.

"Drat!" Santa said.

"What happened?" asked a reindeer.

"We were too heavy, for some reason," said Santa.

I decided to reveal myself before Santa accused a reindeer of putting dumbbells in the back of the sleigh or something.

"Umm, hi."

"What were you doing in my sleigh?" asked Santa.

"Uh, funny story, I jumped into your sleigh when you weren't looking, sorry."

"Well, that definitely explains a few things," said Santa. "But we need to find a vehicle to enchant so I can keep delivering presents."

I looked across the bay.

Santa followed my gaze.

"You have got to be kidding me," said Santa.

"Nope, I'm not," I replied.

"Fine," said Santa, "but we have to return it."

\*\*\*\*\*

The reindeer we weren't riding were carrying bags of presents.

We attached the reindeer to the front of the Skeena Queen, and loaded the presents on with the long ones in the middle lanes and the short ones in the side lanes.

Santa gave me a ride home and dropped me off in the backyard. Santa bade me goodbye, and flew towards the moon, shouting, "Ferry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

# Butterfly and M.



Christmas tree and butterfly drawing by Elora King.

BY ELORA KING  
FIRST PLACE  
AGE 6-7 CATEGORY

On the night before Christmas, butterfly and M. were decorating the tree. Butterfly was decorating the top and M. was decorating the bottom.

And then the tree snapped and fell on M. Butterfly was worried because you can't say Merry Christmas without an "M"!

So then butterfly flew out into the forest to get all the forest animals to come and help get the tree off of M.



# A Winter's Gift

BY ANA ROY  
FIRST PLACE  
AGE 12-13 CATEGORY

I ran, snow crunching underfoot. My breath came out in short bursts. The moon was high in the sky, full and round as a glass of milk. The breeze brought the faint whisper of Christmas carols. Light flakes of snow fell like whirlwinds around me. Despite the cold biting at my fingertips, cold sweat trickled down the nape of my neck. The howl of wolves was clear as a bell in the silence of the forest. The trees towered over me like giants, their branches weeping to the ground, heavy with capes of snow.

My heart was hammering in my chest. Again, a wolf cried. In my right hand, I held a lantern, my knuckles white on the handle. Finally, I burst from under the canopy.

I stumbled, and the lantern slipped from my clenched fingers. I was out of the trees but kept stumbling through the thick white as the howls started gaining on me. The fuzz on my knee-length parka was matted with clumps of snow.

I headed to the end of the clearing and back into the dark forest; the only light now was the moon, shining on the crisp blanket of snow. Once again, I heard the low bay of a wolf not too far away. The ground started to slope down, and I ran faster. I breathed a slow sigh of relief, but too soon, I tripped on something hidden under the night's snowfall. I crashed into a lake with thin ice on top.

The cold hit me first. Disoriented, I flailed around, trying to find the surface. The burn in my lungs grew worse, and my fingertips ran across the smooth glass-like surface of ice. My long hair floated

around me like snakes. I hit my fist against the ice to no avail.

Well, this is it, huh? I pulled a small dog carved from birch from my coat pocket and held it to my chest. "Matt," I thought, "I'm sorry I broke my promise. I didn't get to make it home for Christmas."

The air bubbled out of my throat, and my eyes slowly closed. I heard sounds, but I couldn't entirely be sure if I was hearing things. I felt someone haul my body from the icy chills of the water. I gasped for breath at the sight of the round face of my older brother, Matt. His face quickly changed from worry to relief in an instant. He pulled me into his arms and put me down in the plush furs of our family sleigh.

The dogs pulled hard on the reins, and I drifted off to the light jingling of sleigh bells as I was whisked away.

# A Robber on Christmas Eve

BY NOELLE BURGESS  
SECOND PLACE  
AGE 11 CATEGORY

Once upon a time there lived a little girl named Peighton. She lived in a tiny town and they liked to celebrate Christmas in a BIG way.

It was the night before Christmas and Peighton was SO excited to open presents the next morning but didn't have her hopes up too high because the past two Christmases there had been a robber going around stealing all the presents Santa delivered. Oddly enough, the town's number-one suspect was Santa Claus, but Peighton knew in her heart that it couldn't be Santa Claus.

So this Christmas she was determined to figure out who the robber was and set a trap by tying string by the front door for this robber to trip on. But that didn't exactly work out how she wanted, so to use her time better she put out milk, cookies and carrots for Santa and

his reindeer, then decided to sleep on the sofa in the living room.

Peighton heard a loud noise and woke up startled in the middle of the night. When she looked around she saw that Santa had come and gone by now as there were presents underneath the tree.

"Wow!" Peighton whispered. All of a sudden the back door creaked and slowly opened. Peighton quickly fluffed her pillow and threw her blanket on top of her and closed her eyes to pretend she was sleeping. Peighton squinted her eyes to see what was going on, and what she saw was bad!

She saw Santa dressed in a robber suit taking all the presents, but Peighton was confused because Santa had already come. Peighton started to get clues that this guy was not the real Santa. One of the clues was that this robber had a tan. How do you get a tan when you live in the North Pole? She also noticed that his sack was navy blue.

Peighton knew she had to take action. She didn't want to miss the opportunity to catch him. She quietly rolled off the couch and grabbed her roll of string and crawled over to the robber and tied the string around his boots while he was distracted stealing the presents.

Once the robber put the final present in his navy-blue sack, he took a step and tripped. He fell right on his face and, when he looked up, he saw Peighton staring right back at him with her arms folded. He knew in that moment he had been caught and felt so embarrassed. When Peighton asked him why he would ruin Christmas he explained to her that he was always jealous of Santa.

Peighton was a nice girl and had compassion for him. Peighton told him to bring all the presents back to the right address. Then she would forgive him. The robber agreed to bring all the presents, and the tiny town was so happy because that was their first Christmas in a long time.

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## ARTS COMMUNITY

# ArtSpring AGM dissects season of transition

## Legacy fund growing

BY KIRSTEN BOLTON  
FOR ARTSPRING

Torrential rains did not deter a quorum of members from attending ArtSpring's 2023 annual general meeting on Dec. 4, which reviewed the 2022-2023 season in terms of highlights, challenges and financial performance and welcomed in two new board members.

Board president Sandra Heath opened the meeting describing the 2022-2023 season as one of transition, including ongoing adaptation and adjustment in a post-COVID environment. A return to regular audience sizes was very much still in building mode, as it has been for other arts organizations around the world, but she noted that the season was the first full one for executive and artistic director Howard Jang.

"It was an ambitious back-to-full season with over 26 events, two thirds of which were programmed by Howard with some carry-over commitments from our previous

director," said Heath. "Through Howard's programming and initiatives, we have begun to attract some different audience members and build stronger relationships with community, local youth and several key sponsors, including season sponsor Island Savings Wealth Management."

Of particular mention was the completion of ArtSpring's strategic plan, which was created after an intense process of consultation and commitment. The document lays out the organization's priorities in organizational performance, programming, community engagement, governance and the integration of Indigenous knowledge and beliefs through a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility framework. With a series of goals and action points for the next three to five years, the strategic plan is now set to guide ArtSpring's course as it pivots into its next 25 years.

The three-way partnership in presenting Archipelago: Contemporary Art of the Salish Sea was highlighted as a first. The cross-border collaboration with Salt Spring Arts and the San Juan Islands Museum of Art brought

a captivating showcase of six artists from the San Juan region to ArtSpring in April and May — a first-ever international exhibition for ArtSpring. ArtSpring also hosted the Parallel Art Show for SSNAP.

Healthy community bookings from GISS and guilds, strong donor support, and the highest earning Treasure Fair on record were reasons to be positive. However, like many other organizations have experienced, volunteer numbers were down from pre-COVID days, putting a strain on capacity when volunteer time is essential to operations.

Outgoing board treasurer Stephanie Conradi was pleased to announce that ArtSpring was very fortunate to receive several generous legacy bequests during the 2022-2023 season, which had an impact on the positive year-end results and will help with capital improvements to ArtSpring's aging building. They also provided a significant investment into a managed endowment fund that will bring future stability to ArtSpring's operations and sustainable growth.

A new Legacy Committee has now been formed with the intent of encouraging dona-

tions and bequests specifically for the endowment.

Looking forward to the 25th anniversary in 2024, Jang invited the audience to see this year as a time to celebrate the past but also as a turning point into the future, as an opportunity to be part of what he called "cathedral thinking."

"Cathedral thinking is joining those stone masons, architects and patrons who collectively came together to build something bigger than they were and invested their time, money and skills into something they did not live to see the completion of," said Jang. "We are asking people to be part of an effort that will benefit their grandchildren or great grandchildren in generations to come."

Outgoing board members included treasurer Conradi, directors Dawna Lewis and Chris Sanderson. New incoming members include former treasurer of Salt Spring Singers Ronald Dyck and realtor and owner of Sweetwater Farm Fiona Walls.

Members of the community who wish to pick up a copy of the annual report and financial reports may do so at ArtSpring.

# what's on this week

Wed. Dec. 20	Fri. Dec. 22	Sun. Dec. 24	Mon. Dec. 25	Tues. Dec. 26	Wed. Dec. 27
<b>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b> <b>Carols for Christmastide.</b> Community carol sing with All Saints choir at All Saints by-the-Sea. 2 p.m. Followed by seasonal treats. <b>Christmas With Scrooge.</b> Fulford Hall. 7 p.m. Last show! Advance tickets at SS Books if available. A few people might be able to be squeezed in at the door. <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Festival of Trees.</b> View beautifully decorated trees daily at the Harbour House Hotel. Bring a food donation to place beneath your favourite, or give a cash donation to Copper Kettle. <b>Christmas Feast for Teens.</b> Free games, music and dinner at The Core. 4 to 7 p.m. <b>Knit Purl Community.</b> Knitters meet at the Salt Spring Library program room on the third Wednesday of every month. 5 to 7 p.m. <b>Swing Dancing.</b> Every Wednesday at the Legion. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. <b>Music Bingo.</b> Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.	<b>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b> <b>Karaoke.</b> At the Legion. 7:30 p.m. <b>Viva Chorale! Food Bank Fundraiser.</b> Christmas carols plus a reading from The Tailor of Gloucester by Beatrix Potter with C.C. Humphreys. ArtSpring. 7 p.m. Bring an item or money for the food bank. <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>The Root Mini Holiday Market.</b> Fun family event and last-minute shopping opportunities at The Root Food Hub on Beddis Road. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. <b>Festival of Trees.</b> See Wednesday listing. <b>Sat. Dec. 23</b> <b>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b> <b>Jim Raddysh &amp; Monik Nordine Quartet.</b> Jazz at the Legion. 7 p.m. <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Blue Christmas Service.</b> All Saints by-the-Sea. 5 p.m. <b>Festival of Trees.</b> See Wednesday listing.	<b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Christmas Eve Service.</b> Salt Spring Island United Church. 7 p.m. <b>Christmas Eve Mass.</b> St. Paul's Church in Fulford. 11 p.m., carols at 10:30 p.m. <b>Salt Spring Christmas.</b> Community Gospel Chapel. 3 p.m. <b>Festival of Trees.</b> See Wednesday listing.	<b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Christmas Ball at Fulford Hall.</b> Everybody welcome to enjoy brunch from 11 a.m. and dinner from about 6 p.m. Potluck (optional). Gifts for the kids and music at the day and evening jam. Alcohol-free event. <b>Christmas Day Service.</b> Our Lady of Grace Church. 10 a.m. <b>Festival of Trees.</b> See Wednesday listing.	<b>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b> <b>Boxing Day Bash.</b> With the Coalition. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. <b>Folk Jam With Open Mic.</b> Legion. 6 to 9 p.m. <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Festival of Trees.</b> See Wednesday listing.	<b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Music Bingo.</b> See last Wednesday's listing. <b>Swing Dancing.</b> See last Wednesday's listing.
<b>Thur. Dec. 21</b> <b>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b> <b>Open Mic.</b> At the Legion. 7:30 p.m. <b>Craig's Karaoke.</b> At Moby's Pub. 8 p.m. to midnight. <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Festival of Trees.</b> See Wednesday listing.	<b>Fri. Dec. 22</b> <b>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b> <b>Fridays With DJ Boomtown.</b> Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. til 12:30 a.m.	<b>Sun. Dec. 24</b> <b>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b> <b>Jazz Jam.</b> Singers, players and fans welcome at the Legion. 3 to 6 p.m. <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Christmas Eve Services.</b> All Saints. 10:30 a.m., 3 p.m. and 10 p.m. <b>Christmas Eve Interfaith Service.</b> St. Mary's church in Fulford. 5 p.m. <b>Christmas Eve Mass.</b> Our Lady of Grace Church. 7 p.m., carols at 6:30 p.m.	<b>Mon. Dec. 25</b> <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Christmas Eve Service.</b> Salt Spring Island United Church. 7 p.m. <b>Christmas Eve Mass.</b> St. Paul's Church in Fulford. 11 p.m., carols at 10:30 p.m. <b>Salt Spring Christmas.</b> Community Gospel Chapel. 3 p.m. <b>Festival of Trees.</b> See Wednesday listing.	<b>Tues. Dec. 26</b> <b>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b> <b>Boxing Day Bash.</b> With the Coalition. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. <b>Folk Jam With Open Mic.</b> Legion. 6 to 9 p.m. <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Festival of Trees.</b> See Wednesday listing.	<b>Wed. Dec. 27</b> <b>ACTIVITIES</b> <b>Music Bingo.</b> See last Wednesday's listing. <b>Swing Dancing.</b> See last Wednesday's listing.

**CINEMA**

- **Wish** runs Friday-Saturday, Dec. 22-23, Tuesday, Dec. 26 and Friday, Dec. 29 through Tuesday, Jan. 2 at 7 p.m. See thefritz.ca for more movie info.

**EXHIBITIONS**

- Gallery 8 presents the **15th Annual Christmas Exhibition of Small Works** daily through Dec. 31.
- **Artcraft Winter**, a show and sale of work by numerous Gulf Islands artists, runs daily at Mahon Hall through Dec. 23, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Dec. 24 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Thursday, Dec. 21 is the last day to see the Salt Spring Gallery artists' **Small Works** show.

- **Deck the Walls: Nature Prints at the Library.** New works by the SSI Printmakers are on display until Dec. 30.
- **Katie Watt: A Retrospective** is the ArtSpring lobby-area show until Dec. 22.
- **Dulcy Wilson** is showing her flower-themed paintings at Harvest Moon through December.

**Viva Chorale!**  
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## Obituary

## Obituary

## Obituary

## Obituary

## Obituary

## In Memoriam

## In Memoriam

## Judy Nurse (nee Watson)

Salt Spring Island BC  
(previously Saskatoon, Prince Albert  
& Regina SK) passed peacefully, at  
home and on her own terms  
December 14th, 2023.

Judy's final days and weeks were filled with gratitude and she lived a happy and fulfilling life to the end surrounded by those she cherished most. Judy is survived by husband Murray, brother Gerry Watson, children Laura Morris (Roger), Michael Nurse, and Heather Connolly (Darragh) as well as grandchildren Caiden & Jeremy Morris and Sam & Julia Connolly. A Celebration of Judy's Life will be planned for the new year.

Judy was creative and generous with a scientific mind, filling her life with adventure, both far from, and close to, home. Judy's warmth radiated. She was happy, grateful and generous with her time and her love. When she wasn't deep in conversation with family and friends or working on a project, Judy spent her time reading, baking, painting, organising, meditating, walking, hosting parties and travelling.

Judy's love of a project led to many great creative enterprises, a lot of which were focused towards her children and grandchildren. Judy wrote each of her grandchildren an illustrated story (or two) which were always a little bit goofy and lots of fun. She made puppet video's (<https://youtu.be/gN4FtYL3J28>), puzzles, cook books, comfort blankets, boo-boo cream and sing-along music videos. Judy's many projects and adventures were shared with her husband Murray, with whom she shared 52 loving years.

Judy grew up in Regina, Saskatchewan and attended Sheldon High school where she was valedictorian in her graduating year. She studied Nursing at the University of Saskatchewan before starting her career as a Public Health Nurse. Judy furthered her academic career with a Master's of Science in Epidemiology, also from UoF. Although Judy always said her most important job in life was being a mother, she committed her professional life to a nurturing and fulfilling career in Cancer research and education.

She enjoyed spending her summers at the cabin at Pebble Bay, Iroquois lake, SK where she revelled in the community spirit of breaking bread together and raising young families together. Judy retired at the age of 55 to Salt Spring Island, BC where she quickly joined the community by volunteering and getting involved. Over her 18 years on Salt Spring, Judy was on the board of the Painters Guild, Art Spring, and SSI Library.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of the following charities:  
Salt Spring Public Library  
([www.saltspring.bc.libraries.coop](http://www.saltspring.bc.libraries.coop)),  
Salt Spring Foundation  
([www.ssfoundation.ca](http://www.ssfoundation.ca))  
or Stqeeye  
([www.stqeeye.ca](http://www.stqeeye.ca)),  
an indigenous run, not for profit  
organisation based in BC.



## Patricia (Pat) Jem Macpherson

1936 - 2023

November 7, 2023 Patricia (Pat) Macpherson, age 87, peacefully with her husband and her island family at her side. Survived by her soulmate John Macpherson, adoring pup Angus, her loving sisters-in-law Carol Macpherson (Michael Johnson) and Laurie Hayes (Glenn), much extended family, half brothers Richard Ellison (Maggy) and David Ellison, estranged daughter and son Jane Mackenzie and Garnet Bartlett, and grandson Mackenzie (Mac) Flett.

Pat had two quite full lives, beginning in Perth, Scotland. The class system grated, and she emigrated to Canada at 20 with husband Godfrey Bartlett. They worked across Canada and eventually settled in Surrey, operating their own business. They divorced after 28 years.

Pat then met John in Vancouver in 1986. The two had an instant "meeting of the minds" and became inseparable friends, dreaming, philosophizing and cycling. They also adventured - first to the US, then to Thailand, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, visiting friends, hiking the Himalayas and living as pilgrims in Buddhist monasteries. They married in 1988 and bought their first home.

They cycled the Camino in 1991, purchased land on Salt Spring in 1994 and built their dream home in 1999. They then opened Cloud 9 Oceanview B&B and treated some 2,000 couples to a taste of Salt Spring. Pat especially loved entertaining family and friends, the two also finding time to travel to Australia, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Britain and more.

Pat rediscovered cycling at age 74, which inspired younger friends. Soon she was organizing tours to Chemainus, Victoria, Merridale Cidery and more. She spent her 79th birthday cycling Thetis Island and cruised and cycled the islands of Croatia at 83.

Pat struck some as a "deep, introspective person with a vast curiosity, intuition, and insight into the world around her". Many others recall her humor, laughter, wisdom, generosity, directness, kindness to all creatures, loyalty and her wide welcoming smile for newcomers. Pat's gold standard was one of mutual inclusion. John was hugely proud of her and his family loved her dearly.

Pat also loved science, mechanics, arts and crafts, literature and supercars. (A Ferrari rental for her 65th was well received.) A lifelong reader, Pat had a frightening knowledge of the life sciences and more besides, sharing deeply with her Book Club and many friends. She volunteered at the Library and for the annual Book sale as well, and especially loved "volunteering" for her Wine Club duties - researching, sipping, laughing and sharing no-nonsense opinions about the quality on offer.

Pat disavowed spiritual beliefs but resonated with the wisdom of Zen, which merged science and her own sense of self, birth, life and death. As a dewdrop slips into the shining sea or as a cloud forms and changes but does not "die"... Pat was a natural.

Pat and John remained devoted, and Pat lived to the last fully present and engaged. She went in gratitude and peace, with nothing on her bucket list and no regrets. Heartfelt thanks to Pat's closest friends invited as beloved witnesses (Wendy Vine, Victoria Skinner, Karen Laidlaw) and to Dr. Holly Slakov and Nurse friend Izy Cohen for their compassionate professionalism. Pat is fiercely missed but not gone: her heart beats on through all of us who loved her.

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## In Memoriam

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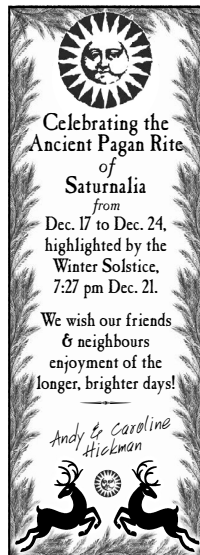
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## Announcements



## Announcements

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## Announcements

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Our office will be closed for the  
holidays from Monday, December  
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We apologize for any inconvenience and look  
forward to serving you in the New Year.



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## The Lost Reindeers

BY CHARLOTTE CHUTTER  
FIRST PLACE  
AGE 8 CATEGORY

Santa's reindeers went for a walk. They accidentally wandered into the deep, dark, shadowy forest.

They got lost, and they forgot there were werewolves in the forest. Unfortunately, they ran into a pack of vicious werewolves. They all ran away, but Rudolph was too slow, so the werewolves got him. He was really badly hurt!

The other reindeer tried to take him back to Santa, but they weren't strong enough. They frantically tried to find their way to Santa's workshop. Suddenly, the reindeer quickly turned around,

and they saw Santa's elves! The elves had searched for days to try to find Santa's reindeer.

The tired reindeer saw that Santa's elves were scared, so all the reindeer asked for help to find their way back to Santa's workshop. The elves said yes! With the help of the elves dragging Rudolph, bumping into a bunch of trees and rocks and other reindeer, they finally made it back to the workshop safely, besides the sticks in Rudolph's hair.

When they got to the door, a fairy came in to heal Rudolph. The fairy said "abracadabra" and Rudolph was healed.

"Hey, I'm healed!" said Rudolph. They lived happily ever after.

## The Night I Saw Santa

BY ELLIE CLEMONSON  
SECOND PLACE  
AGE 8 CATEGORY

It was Christmas Eve. I made a deal with Santa: if I left three cookies I got to see him. He said they were delicious. He gave me a present.

Then I went to bed. In the morning I woke to a really joyful sight. I noticed he turns on the Christmas tree lights every Christmas. They were beautiful.

Then I opened the presents with my family. I got a box of crayons. I was disappointed. Then I saw a giant box with my name on it. Inside was two bunnies. I named mine "Bungie" and my brother named his "Marshy."



Artwork by Grade 5 Fernwood Elementary School student Cameron Beamish.

## Black Currant Forestmas

BY BUDDY PYPER  
FIRST PLACE  
AGE 9 CATEGORY

One stormy winter night, snow was swirling and trees were falling like stones. A very small crow waddled frantically about until she reached a hill. She could see something glowing in a nearby grove. Through the trees she saw the faint outline of a small cabin with brightly lit windows.

This little crow of ours has a lot of curiosity, so of course she had to go up to the door and "Knock. Knock. Knock." She heard a low rumbling noise inside, then eight large Rob-

ins tied together with leather leads gracefully fluttered out pulling a sleigh carrying SANTA COON! You know, "Santa Coon is coming to town," from that famous Forestmas carol. It was him!

Dear Reader, I bribed the crow to tell me her real name. It's Currant, really it's Black Currant.

Sincerely, Santa Coon

Once Currant and Santa Coon had spoken about her family, who had been swept away in the storm, he asked what Currant wanted for Forestmas, and then made an unbelievable offer.

"Do you want to test my Robin sleigh with me? The lead bird is

called Kindoff and he has a very shiny nose. I think it could be more shiny than the human-folk one," said Santa Coon.

"Yes please," said Currant. So off they went to the north. After a while, Santa Coon pulled on the leads but the Robins wouldn't budge. Then they saw why. There were two big Bald Eagles flying straight for them. So, Santa Coon frantically turned his whole sleigh around and they bolted as fast as they could back to his cabin. Kindoff narrowly escaped getting eaten!

Then, he gave Currant a tour around his workshop, where small

House Sparrows worked making tasty trinkets.

Eventually, it was Forestmas. At that point, Currant was working for Santa Coon making seed ball trinkets with the Sparrows.

Then, Santa hollered to Currant, "It's time to deliver all the presents!" So off they went through the forest to the north. Then they turned west and delivered presents over there. After that, they had to go south and east, but time was running short. The moon had already gone three-quarters across the sky and they had six more directions to go! (SE, SW, NE and NW, too).

So, they asked the Great Horned

Owl to deliver treats to the animals in the four diagonal directions. To the east they rushed towards the first beam of sunlight, dropping gifts, but they still had to go south.

Santa and Currant sped onwards. They arrived as the forest was filling with light. You would have loved to have seen the look on Currant's face when she saw her mom and dad perched on a branch waiting for their Forestmas gifts. She proudly presented each of them with a fancy seedball, wrapped in golden leaves, tied with a dried grass bow.

Cawing, they played happily ever after together in the woods.

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# ISLAND LIFE

## CHRISTMAS

# Helpers complete job



PHOTO COURTESY SANTA'S WORKSHOP  
Seen in Santa's Workshop at the Salt Spring Island Baptist Church are volunteers, from left, Jenny Meyer, Deb Cade and Wendy Eggertson (head elf). Gifts for more than 100 island children were collected and distributed at the workshop this year.

## Santa's Workshop report

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Sixty-four Salt Spring families with 105 children will be waking up to a happy Christmas thanks to the hard work of 17 volunteers and the donations from many islanders.

According to Wendy Eggertson, head elf of Santa's Workshop, groups deserving of special mention include the Salt Spring Toy Run, Salt Spring Propane, Country Grocer, the "car group," Salt Spring Island Firefight-

ers Association and two condominium communities, and individuals Stephanie Bond, Barbara de Freitas and Sharon Valder.

Eggertson also expressed gratitude to everyone who donated to collection boxes at Country Grocer, West of the Moon and Mouat's Home Hardware.

"Also a big thank you to the Baptist Church, who has provided us with a warm and spacious space in which to do our work," she said.

For people who want to contribute toys next year, donation boxes will be placed from Nov. 15 to Dec. 15.

*Best Wishes  
this holiday season*

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PAID CONTENT



## Robert and Shauna Makaroff Nature Reserve: One Family's Conservation Legacy

Submitted by Salt Spring Island Conservancy

**S**ALT SPRING ISLAND CONSERVANCY (SSIC) is excited to announce the donation and protection of 35.75 acres of land as an addition to the Robert and Shauna Makaroff Nature Reserve. This gift contributes to the largest network of contiguous undeveloped land on Salt Spring Island (including ecological reserves, park and Crown land, as well as private land protected by conservation covenants,) stretching from Musgrave to Hwmet'utsum (Mount Maxwell). This is significant for conservation as studies demonstrate that intact, extensive and connected ecosystems benefit wildlife and are more resilient to changing climate regimes. The extension of the Robert and Shauna Makaroff Nature Reserve is part of the conservation legacy of a remarkable family with a profound history in support of both environmental and social causes.

Robert and Shauna Makaroff were born in the 1920s and grew up in Saskatoon and Red Deer, respectively, in small, supportive communities. Both spent time with their families in the wilderness, fostering a deep appreciation for the natural world. They met in medical school in Edmonton shortly after the Second World War and soon began practicing medicine in Saskatchewan. This was where their four daughters were born, spent their early years, and witnessed their parents working tirelessly to provide healthcare and build community. While practicing in a small farming village, Robert and Shauna became particularly concerned about the circumstances of elderly community members, many of whom were living remotely, alone, and in poverty. Along with other community leaders,

they planned and raised funds to build a multi-unit home providing subsidized rent and modern facilities. While Shauna took over their medical practice, Robert devoted his time to manage the project and work along with other volunteers to complete the build, greatly improving circumstances for many seniors.

In 1958, they moved their young family to Edmonton and in 1961 to Vancouver. In Edmonton, Robert worked in the Charles Camell Indian Hospital and was horrified by the treatment of the Indigenous patients. Shauna completed a degree in psychiatry. In Vancouver, she was actively involved with Nasaika Lodge, established to provide safety and support for Indigenous women living in poverty. Shauna co-founded the New View Society, which still provides community integration support for people living with mental illness. She served 22 years on the board of the Pacific Post Partum Society. The Makaroff children recall housing draft dodgers during the Vietnam War and hearing their parents speak publicly for environmental protection. According to the children, they were non-conformists through and through. In the 1970s, they came to Salt Spring Island, searching for land to steward and a place where they could experiment with living lighter and more intentionally.

In an early letter sent to SSIC, Robert described the first moment he saw the land that is now adjacent to the Robert and Shauna Makaroff Nature Reserve. He describes being transfixed by the magic of the place, having arrived by pedalling and pushing his bike all the way up Musgrave Road. Robert noted that later, as they

explored the land they had purchased, they "realized the urgency of saving what one could of the threatened remaining delicate and unique island ecosystems." Robert and Shauna deeply felt the importance of protecting "major contiguous land parcels with their streams and watersheds and interdependent and variable environments."

The Makaroff sisters recall their parents' efforts to care for the area's watershed, protesting clear cutting and loss of old growth forest, and lobbying for protection of the Musgrave "green belt." Their efforts included the purchase of land, adjacent to their own, to protect it from logging; the irregularly shaped border of this purchase was negotiated by walking the land - tree to tree - to ensure enduring protection of as much old growth as possible. As the sisters became adults and began their own families, they spent varying amounts of time on the land, with and without their parents. Years of walking the trails that wound up and down the mountainside fostered their own appreciation for the natural world, along with their desires to conserve it.

The Makaroff family always viewed their role on the land as one of stewardship rather than ownership. They spent extended periods of time on Salt Spring experimenting with self-sufficiency, alternative approaches to construction, energy generation and water/waste systems in efforts to reduce their impact on the land. Always, their overarching vision was to see that their land would be protected and managed for conservation in perpetuity - both for future generations to enjoy and to ensure that large, contiguous natural areas in the south end of the island remained intact.

In 2007, Robert and Shauna were considering sharing the responsibility of stewarding a portion of their land and their relationship with SSIC began. SSIC was established as a registered charity in 1995 to conserve, protect and enhance natural values on Salt Spring Island and its surrounding waters. By 2007, SSIC had helped to establish the Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve, acquired three nature reserves totalling 223.85 acres, was running species at risk stewardship programs, and operating the Stewards in Training Program for young school children.

The Makaroff family's values aligned well with SSIC. Robert loved his long conversations with Conservancy biologists about his land and

the species present. The Makaroffs worked closely with the Conservancy over several years to determine how best to ensure enduring protection of their lands. In 2011, Robert Makaroff passed away, followed by Shauna in 2012. Honouring their parents' intentions, the Makaroff daughters completed the first land donation to SSIC through the Federal Ecological Gifts Program, creating the 91-acre Robert and Shauna Makaroff Nature Reserve in December 2012. The nature reserve has now been expanded with the generous donation of 35.75 adjoining, waterfront acres, creating a magnificent 126.75-acre reserve in December 2022.

The Robert and Shauna Makaroff Nature Reserve is primarily second-growth forest with a southwest aspect. Garry Oak and Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystems, grassy meadows and rocky outcrops, as well as streams and riparian areas, provide diverse habitat for wildlife and are home to several species at risk. A long marine shoreline allows the only legal access into the reserve's rugged walking trails.

With this generous donation, SSIC now protects 771 acres through its nine nature reserves. SSIC continues to work with interested owners to preserve sensitive ecosystems on private land through donation, acquisition, covenants (SSIC holds 17 on 798 acres in total), stewardship agreements (SSIC holds 104 on 1484 acres in total) and land management strategies. SSIC also has a strong public outreach program, providing education on local plant and animal species and ecological restoration through presentations, guided nature walks, workshops, articles, newsletters, a website and social media. SSIC's Stewards in Training school program continues to provide hands-on nature education for up to 700 K-7 Salt Spring Island students annually.

To learn more about the Robert and Shauna Makaroff Nature Reserve, visit the Salt Spring Island Conservancy website: [saltspringconservancy.ca](http://saltspringconservancy.ca). To learn more about the Ecological Gifts program, see <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/ecological-gifts-program.html>. Salt Spring Island Conservancy can be contacted via email ([info@saltspringconservancy.ca](mailto:info@saltspringconservancy.ca)) or phone (250-538-0318.)

