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JANUARY 2024



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Driftwood

GULF ISLANDS

Wednesday,
Jan. 31, 2024

64th year
Issue 5
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PHOTO BY CHRIS MARSHALL

ART & LEARNING: From left, Coast Salish weaver Myrna Crossley-Elliott, library trustee Christine Hunt (Kwakiutl/Tingit), J'SINTEN (Dr. John Elliott), SENCOTEN Language Keeper, Indigenous art curator Rose Spahan, Coast Salish artist Satuts Stuhwum (Angela Marston), and Coast Salish artist TEMOSEN (Chazz Elliott) at the opening of ITOTELNEW HAUTUW / Tatul' utew't-hw, the new Salt Spring Library Indigenous learning area, with art by the late Coast Salish master artist TEMOSEN FET (Charles Elliott Sr.) in the background. See story and more photos on page 12.

ISLANDS TRUST

Local office's future uncertain

With lease ending, trustees mull staff move from Salt Spring to Oak Bay

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

As the end of their lease draws nearer, Islands Trust staff are still searching for a new home for the busy Salt Spring Island office.

But given few choices within the island's limited commercial space market, and facing high costs for upgrading what there is to fit their needs, some trustees are asking whether it's time for the land use authority to purchase, rather than rent — or perhaps, one trustee suggested, even leave Salt Spring altogether.

This past summer, BC Hydro — which owns the building currently being used by Trust staff on Lower Ganges Road — gave notice it would not renew the lease, planning to end its agreement with the Islands Trust on July 24.

Since then, staff have considered various options to meet its needs for space to collaborate, store documents, operate servers and greet the public as members of the community navigate the often-complex processes that surround the Islands Trust's mission.

But pickings are slim, and the clock is ticking.

"On July 1, we need to be somewhere," said CAO Russ Hotsenpiller, who told the trust's Financial Planning Committee (FPC) that despite staff efforts and engaging the services of a realtor, finding a medium-sized office space that ticked all their boxes had been challenging.

In fact, as of the committee's meeting Wednesday, Jan. 24, staff had identified just three potential sites — none of which were actually office spaces, and all required renovations.

Those renovations are estimated to cost more than \$250,000, according to Hotsenpiller, depending on the site. One lacks sufficient ventilation and a connected HVAC system, for example, and another currently has no plumbing whatsoever. That dollar figure had several trustees wondering whether the Trust should invest in its own property, rather than spending money improving someone else's.

"So we've been at this local government thing on Salt Spring for 50 years," said Denman Island trustee David Graham, "and I

presume we're going to be there for another 50. Why wouldn't we consider the political advantage of having a purpose-built local government building that offers the services that the Salt Spring Island has been offering the community — a place to gather, where trustees can meet with constituents, et cetera?"

Noting what he called a large contingent of residents who feel the Trust itself may not be the "right government" for Salt Spring, Graham said he also felt moving as often as they seemed to might not send the right message.

"It does not look like we're a serious local government, to be quite honest," said Graham, "when we keep moving every time the owner says 'no, this isn't working for me.'"

Hotsenpiller pointed out that while there are very few places available to lease, there are even fewer commercial properties offered for purchase — and none, according to their research, with structures that would meet their office needs.

SALT SPRING OFFICE continued on 2

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ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

BC Ferries targets biker safety at terminal

Officials hopeful signs and lines will help on Salt Spring

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

New “wayfinding signage” for cyclists should be in place around ferry terminals on Salt Spring Island before this summer, although there is some skepticism that a change in behaviour will necessarily result.

In response to community concerns, BC Ferries’ CEO Nicholas Jimenez had announced the company would be installing new signs to help passengers on bicycles navigate through terminals. BC Ferries’ marketing and customer experience manager Rebecca Jamieson said while she and her colleagues had been out to the terminals to review options, they agreed there wasn’t enough set up for cycling there — and that things needed to change.

“We made a number of recommendations for signage,” said Jamieson, who gave an update at Salt Spring’s Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) meeting Wednesday, Jan. 24. “So that as you’re approaching the terminal, you know whether to go to a ticket booth, or what lane you should go down.”

Those signs are being developed, according to Jamieson, with installation expected in late February or early March. Additional recommendations surrounding line painting

specifically at Fulford were likely to happen this spring as well, according to regional manager for terminal operations Camrin Hillis, who said extending and better defining the fog lines might be the best they could do, at least with the road as it currently stands.

“Not necessarily a designated cycling route,” said Hillis, “but [at least] providing some area for cyclists to exit the terminal safely.”

Salt Spring’s Capital Regional District director Gary Holman, who sits on the FAC, asked whether BC Ferries had made any decision on an earlier committee recommendation to hold cyclists back on arriving ferries at Vesuvius and Fulford, disembarking them after vehicle traffic.

The proposal was brought to captains and crews, according to Capt. James Bradley, marine superintendent for BC Ferries’ south region, but despite agreeing there would be increased safety — particularly given the lack of a good place for vehicle traffic to pass cyclists near those terminals — they predicted problems with implementing it.

“Theoretically on paper, I agree with you, it makes sense,” said Bradley, “so that the traffic doesn’t have to overtake the bikes. I wish it was as simple as that.”

Bradley described the problem being the eagerness of foot passengers in general, who tend to crowd front decks as soon as vessels approach the dock; ferries lack enough staff

to pick out each cyclist and explain a change in process and move people and bikes to the back of the ferry while underway — much less police bicyclists who simply don’t want to wait.

“Once the ship is fully loaded, from basically one end to another, we’re looking at potential damage to other vehicles, and bikes,” said Bradley. “When it was proposed to the teams, they just said it was at the moment unrealistic that we’d be able to achieve that completely from the shipboard side.”

Bradley did say that as a matter of procedure, captains and crews do their best to inform cyclists about the dangers of heading out ahead of vehicle traffic, noting many of them are local bikers themselves. FAC chair Harold Swierenga mused that perhaps the issue was cultural as much as operational.

“I’ve noticed at Fulford, the bikers that come — especially if it’s a major group — they’re the first on, and then the first off,” said Swierenga. “It’s a difficult one to police. There’s a big sign right where the bus passengers board that has been there for years and been ignored for years.”

Jamieson said BC Ferries was currently working on a “bike experience” project. Although focused on major terminals, it will eventually phase into looking at things like racks on vessels, working with B.C. cycling associations to find better solutions overall.

“We should be encouraging cyclists — and



FILE PHOTO BY ROB LOWRIE

Cycle of Life Tour cyclists visiting Salt Spring Island in August of 2023, who travelled through Fulford Harbour as part of the event.

pedestrians,” said Holman. “It’s about moving people. MoTI definitely needs to be part of the conversation. We still want to organize an interagency meeting to talk about Fulford Hill and things we can do to improve pedestrian and cycling safety.”

BC FERRIES

10-sailing summer schedule slated for Fulford

Quinsam planned to supplement 2027 two-ferry service, meeting hears

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The 10-sailing schedule between Fulford and Swartz Bay is back on for this summer, according to BC Ferries officials, adding that plans to explore using the Quinsam for future supplementary service to fill the gap on the Vesuvius-Crofton route once full-time two-ferry service arrives in 2027 are still in motion.

Several representatives of the ferry company joined Salt Spring’s Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) Wednesday, Jan. 24 for a virtual meeting — that body’s first since last year.

“Once the two Island Class ferries come to Route 6, I think our problems regarding capacity will be solved for some

time,” said FAC chair Harold Swierenga. “Having the Quinsam on Route 4 during the summers should do the job for years to come as well, as long as the Quinsam’s around.”

Fulford peak season schedules will run, according to BC Ferries, from June 26 to Sept. 30 in 2024, when traffic to and from the island is expected to be at its highest. But, said Swierenga, on Salt Spring the “peak season” idea was starting to fade.

“I think ultimately we’re going to find that the peak season is going to be all year ‘round,” said Swierenga. “It’s going to be a process in which we evaluate on a continuing basis whether the Quinsam is going to have to be around longer every summer.”

Capt. James Bradley, marine superintendent for BC Ferries’ south region, said that from a shipboard perspective, the extra sailings from Fulford last summer had gone very well.

“It was a little bit more extra work for the crews,” said Bradley, “but once they got into the swing of it, I would say it was more of a success than what some people were expecting.”

Bradley said that projected congestion issues in Swartz Bay were handled well, and despite the additional pressure on crews, the 10-sailing schedule — which amounted to a 25 per cent increase in capacity on weekdays — worked out from a fleet operations point of view. Salt Spring Garbage driver Mike Stacey said he agreed, both as a customer of BC Ferries and an FAC member.

“In the summer it worked really well for us,” said Stacey. “Sending the trucks over two trips a day, we saved a lot of time, and we hardly ever missed a boat.”

The so-called 10-sailing plan — nine on Sundays — began last year and featured a first sailing most days departing Fulford at 6 a.m. for Swartz Bay, and a last chance for Salt Spring passengers to return home departing Swartz Bay at 10 p.m.

Ferry officials said there would be renewed efforts to align the amended schedule with Salt Spring’s BC Transit bus service.

Full schedules will be available at bcferries.com and bctransit.com/salt-spring-island.

SAVE THE DATE

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Trust staff asked to explore purchase option

SALT SPRING OFFICE

continued from 1

“So if there was a purchasing regime in place, it would be a bare land construction kind of scenario,” said Hotsenpiller. “And we have had discussion with both the CRD and the North Salt Spring Waterworks District about future collaborations, both of which were positive. But neither is imminent.”

Hotsenpiller said that pursuing that sort of partnership — a notion of all local governments under one roof often mused upon by Salt Spring CRD director Gary Holman — would be a protracted, strategic direction for the Trust, with a two- to five-year timeframe.

With a deadline approaching — and a shared understanding that there was no possibility of completing a new build before July — several trustees wondered whether a temporary move off the island to Sidney would make sense.

Mayne Island trustee David Maude pointed out the same questions were being asked with consideration to moving the Gabriola office across to Nanaimo.

And Salt Spring trustee Jamie Harris said he thought perhaps a move to Oak Bay could be permanent.

“It seems at first glance that it would be more than workable for all the Southern Gulf Islands to move there, including Salt Spring,” said Harris, noting the ability for planning, clerical work and even meetings to be done electronically.

Hotsenpiller said in terms of foot traffic, it was the busiest office for the Islands Trust. And Lasqueti Island trustee Tim Peterson, who chairs Salt Spring’s Local Trust Committee, said he hears frustration from islanders whenever that office isn’t open.

“There is definitely a strong contingent on Salt Spring that wants an office there,” said Peterson. “And I really do like the idea that instead of shelling out big money for leases that we consider purchasing. However, time is of the essence here.”

Committee members seemed to agree, choosing to recommend leaving funding in place for improving a leased space — for the moment — and making it clear they were holding out hope another alternative would present itself.

“I’m up for crossing my fingers,” quipped Hotsenpiller.

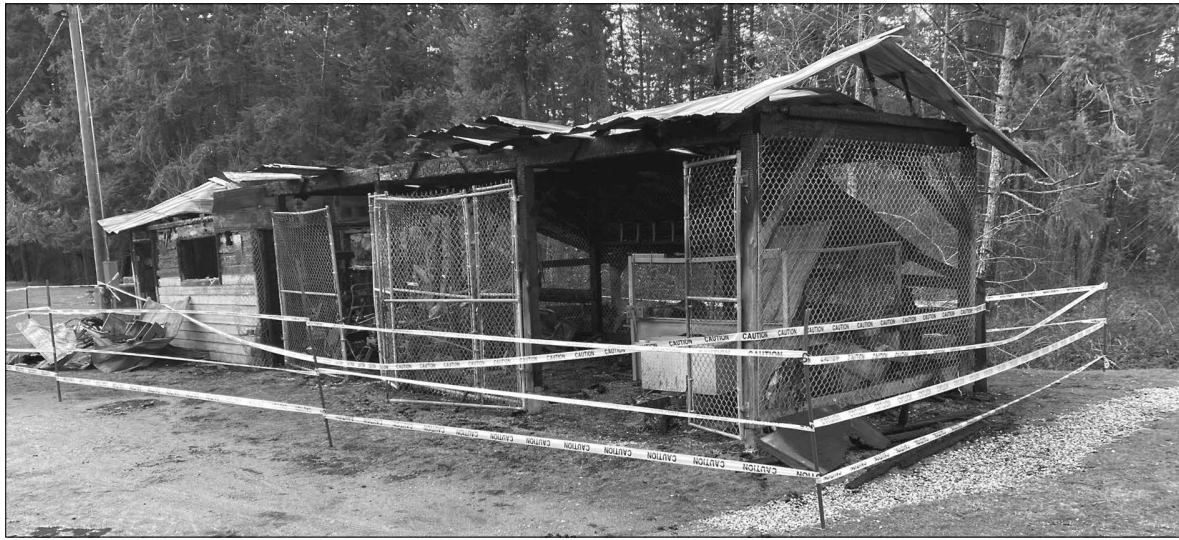


PHOTO BY RUSS CROUSE

UP IN SMOKE: A maintenance shed at Portlock Park destroyed by fire in the early hours of Monday, Jan. 22. Salt Spring Fire Chief Jamie Holmes said the structure was fully involved by the time crews arrived after a 1:46 a.m. call came in from staff at the Emcon highways yard across from the park. Over a three-hour period, 15 firefighters and 3,000 gallons of water from a nearby hydrant were used to extinguish the blaze, ensuring it didn't extend to the Lions picnic shelter or a truck and excavator parked on site. Holmes said there is nothing to indicate the fire was deliberately set, especially with no tracks seen in the snow on the ground around the building. A combination of the structure being an older building and the likelihood of rodents damaging wiring may have been the fire's cause, said Holmes.

ISLANDS TRUST

Draft policy plan delayed

Trustees eye public engagement on policy statement amendment

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A first draft of the Islands Trust's amendments to its official policy statement will likely stay out of the public eye into the spring, even as plans for its rollout — and talking points for trustees — solidify.

Trust Area Services director Clare Frater gave a project update as part of a funding request to the Trust's Financial Planning Committee on Wednesday, Jan. 24.

The Policy Statement will soon mark 30 years since its last meaningful update in 1994 — coming up short, according to officials, in adequately addressing issues of reconciliation, climate change and housing. Efforts to begin an update process began in 2019, but were delayed in 2021 when residents crowded public meetings — and filled newspaper opinion pages — with negative reaction to both wording and process during a first reading of the proposed changes.

Trustees reacted by sending staff back to the drawing board, to incorporate that feedback into a new document now produced, according to a Trust Area Services report, and shared with nine First Nations representatives for their feedback and reflections.

While there have been delays with First Nation engagement, according to Frater, planning a communications strategy should proceed regardless.

"Without properly funding communication sup-

port, you risk a challenging process," said Frater. "I think we've seen that in prior experiences and found that we were not sufficiently equipped around the communication side of things."

The coordinated approach to public engagement will include providing enough communication materials for trustees to give them confidence in answering questions from their local communities.

"Such that when it goes public on the agenda, you're all equipped with speaking notes and 'frequently asked questions,'" said Frater. "And you will have all the commentary from First Nations."

Frater said her recent discussion with Trust Programs Committee chair Kristina Evans had made the broad outlines for a plan that would produce an agenda for that meeting well in advance of the usual 10-day pre-meeting timeline — hopefully as soon as mid-March, which would give both trustees and the public more time with the information.

"The nations are aware that council is very eager to see this document and receive their comments," said Frater, noting they had only received the new document in September. "I just can't at this point commit to a firm timeline. I am hopeful it goes public in the middle of March."

"I have been following the project since the very beginning of the revision," said Gabriola Island trustee Susan Yates, "as a citizen, as a reporter and now as a trustee. I would like to see it finished, before this term is over, and done well — it is the backbone bylaw for the entire Islands Trust, guiding all of our official community plans."

BC FERRIES

Crews prepped for EV fires

Ferry officials defend shipboard electric vehicle firefighting plans

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

BC Ferries officials say their shipboard plans to fight fires involving electric vehicles (EVs) are robust and already in place.

Company personnel also emphasized EVs are no more likely to catch fire than gas-powered vehicles — and there are no plans to disallow them from ferries.

"Our current policy allows vehicles that are insured and road-safe to travel," said BC Ferries community relations manager Tamara Olsen.

The topic was broached at Salt Spring Island's Jan. 24 meeting of the Ferry Advisory Committee; committee member and Capital Regional District director Gary Holman noted there had been some "Facebook chatter" regarding the potential risk of EVs aboard vessels within B.C.'s ferry system.

Vehicle firefighting policy for BC Ferries was established using marine industry best practices, according to Olsen, and is constantly evolving based on the latest information. Capt. James Bradley, marine superintendent for BC Ferries' south region, agreed, and defended ferry crews' firefighting capabilities.

"In actual fact, Transport Canada this morning came out with another safety advisory on exactly this topic," said Bradley.

"We're following everything that they're currently suggesting to put into place."

Ship Safety Bulletin 04/2024 highlights information about the carriage of EVs on Canadian ferries, noting that while electric vehicles require special procedures — as the fires can burn hotter, last longer and are more likely to re-ignite once extinguished — they are not more prone to fires than vehicles with an internal combustion engine.

"It's more water," said Bradley. "The biggest challenge we have is that fire burning hotter, and the greater chance of re-ignition due to the battery. But other than that — just lots of water."

NOTICE GL-TUP-2023.3 GALIANO ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE



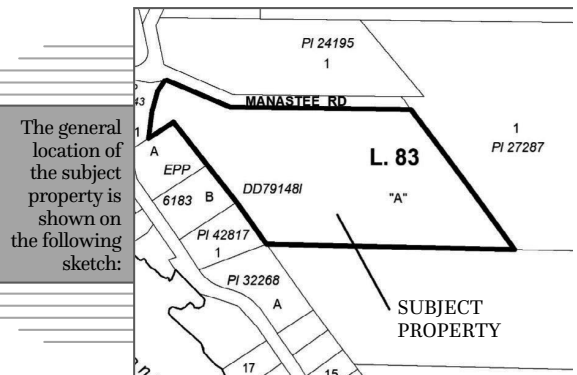
Islands Trust

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 494 of the Local Government Act that the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee will be considering a resolution allowing for the issuance of a Temporary Use Permit. The proposed permit would apply to PARCEL A, (DD 79148-1), OF LOT 83, GALIANO

ISLAND, COWICHAN DISTRICT, EXCEPT PART IN PLANS 13304, 24195, 27287 AND VIP69843 (PID: 004-966-295). This property is located at 120 Manastee Road.

The purpose of this temporary use permit would be to permit four recreational vehicles for employee accommodation.

The establishment of these uses would be subject to the conditions specified in the attached proposed permit. The permit would be issued for three (3) years and the owner may apply to the LTC to have it renewed once for an additional three (3) years.



A copy of the proposed permit may be inspected at the Islands Trust Office, 200 - 1627 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8R 1H8 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday inclusive, excluding statutory holidays, commencing January 26, 2024 and continuing up to and including February 6, 2024.

For the convenience of the public only, and not to satisfy Section 499 (2) (c) of the Local Government Act, additional copies of the Proposed Permit may be inspected at various Notice Boards on Galiano Island.

Enquiries or comments should be directed to Kim Stockdill, Island Planner at (250) 405-5157, for Toll Free Access, request a transfer via Enquiry BC: In Vancouver 660-2421 and elsewhere in BC 1-800-663-7867; or by fax (250) 405-5155; or by email to: south-info@islandstrust.bc.ca before 4:30 p.m., February 6, 2024.

The Galiano Island Local Trust Committee may consider a resolution allowing for the issuance of the permit during the regular business meeting starting at 1:00 p.m., February 13, 2024.

All applications are available for review by the public with prior appointment. Written comments made in response to this notice will also be available for public review.

OPINION

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

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



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EDITORIAL

Home for the Trust

There's an unfortunate irony to the Islands Trust facing its own kind of housing insecurity on Salt Spring Island.

BC Hydro advised the Trust in July 2023 that it wouldn't be renewing the lease on the space north of Ganges where the Trust has had an office for the past 20 years.

The local government body's inability to find a new home exemplifies the lack of appropriate spaces for any number of activities on the island, a state of things some critics might blame on the Islands Trust — justifiably or not — because it is in charge of providing zoning for those activities.

THE ISSUE:
Salt Spring Trust office space

WE SAY:
Could islanders help solve the problem?

Those include purchasing property that could be made into an ideal or usable space, or closing the Salt Spring office and transferring needed staff to Trust head office in Oak Bay. The former will be a costly long-term project, one that will look like a marathon with sprinter's hurdles sprinkled in all along the way. The latter seems like a recipe for potentially unhappy staff — will they commute? Work remotely? — and an even unhappier public, who might need to hop a ferry to have every complicated question about their development permit application answered satisfactorily.

Meanwhile, trustees are setting aside a quarter of a million dollars to improve buildings never intended to house a full office and staff, if that becomes the only option deemed palatable.

It's a situation that clearly needs more brainstorming and outreach, and at the very least a request for some accommodation on timing from BC Hydro.

And if any of our readers knows of a potential landing spot for the Salt Spring Islands Trust office, they could contact a local Trust committee member, staff at the present Trust office at 250-537-9144, or the Victoria office at 205-405-5151.

There are likely many reasons a relatively simple ask like a downtown office space seems so difficult, but for certain the options being discussed at the Trust Council committee level don't seem too appealing — or indeed feasible for solving a rather pressing problem.

PARKER



Friends group still alarmed

BY JENNIFER MARGISON
FOR FRIENDS OF THE GULF ISLANDS SOCIETY

The Islands Trust was created by the provincial government in 1974 to protect the Gulf Islands from overdevelopment. It was given authority over land use with the legislated mandate to "preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment."

The Friends of the Gulf Islands Society is alarmed that elected trustees acting together as Trust Council have interpreted "unique amenities" to include "housing, livelihoods, infrastructure and tourism." This new interpretation of the Islands Trust mandate gives development equal consideration or even priority over environmental protection, considering the Trust more like a local government than a conservation-oriented "trust."

The elements named can in no way be considered unique. We are shocked this erroneous interpretation was decided on during a closed meeting last September, with no way for the public to hold their elected trustees accountable on how they voted. This de facto redefinition was described in Trust documents as a "consensus" but that seems highly unlikely given the voting record of some trustees. However, Salt Spring Trustee Laura Patrick, whose actions imply support for this interpretation, refuses to say how she voted.

Legal opinions can be discussed in closed meetings, but the political debate to arrive at an interpreta-

VIEWPOINT

Democracy is in danger when important decisions are arrived at behind closed doors and elected representatives cannot be held accountable.

tion of the mandate should have taken place in an open meeting. We have sent letters to the Trust asking for an explanation, but have not received answers. Our next step will be to take a complaint of inappropriate procedures to the provincial Ombudsperson.

This definition matters because it will likely guide development of the new Trust Policy Statement, the critical document that sets requirements for all Islands Trust bylaws. Even now, the new interpretation may influence decisions of local Trust committees on various islands and of the Executive Committee.

Democracy is in danger when important decisions are arrived at behind closed doors and elected representatives cannot be held accountable.

If you want to express your concern, write to Trust Council at execadmin@islandstrust.bc.ca.

The Friends of the Gulf Islands is a society dedicated to protecting the natural environment, surrounding waters and rural character of the Gulf Islands. Our goal is to ensure that the Islands Trust fulfills its legislated mandate: to protect the environment and truly unique amenities of these beloved islands.

To learn more about Islands Trust issues, our society and to join our group and receive regular updates about Islands Trust activities, see our website at friendsofthegulfislands.ca.

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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Should cyclists be forced to wait for ferry traffic to clear?

☐ Yes ☐ No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Are you tired of over-the-top negative political discourse?

20 124
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

Disagreements appropriate

Before Jason Mogus, co-founder of Salt Spring Solutions, lectures other people on their language ("We All Need Each Other" — last week's Viewpoint), he may wish to tone down his own and not disparage the views of others.

It seems Mr. Mogus has no tolerance for opinions that differ from his own. He wants everyone to have "faith" in those who agree with him.

Those of us who opposed rezoning thousands of properties for more residences have good reasons for doing so. Rather than focusing on short-term data, we believe that, in time, most lots will be fully developed.

And, rather than assume these new residences will be affordable long-term rentals, we believe they are more likely to be used for vacation rentals and other purposes. We believe for housing to be affordable and go to the target population, it must be subsidized and/or strictly regulated and monitored. Several such

projects are in the works, but they take time.

These are honest disagreements, totally appropriate for debate in the public sphere.

This year there will be a discussion about amending our official community plan, including whether to do away with the current population cap that stopped rezoning most of Salt Spring's single-family properties to allow an additional unit.

In a democratic and free society, no one should be discouraged from participating in the discussion for fear their language will be called extreme or alarmist.

MAXINE LEICHTER,
SALT SPRING

AAP process flawed

Well, if you didn't vote against the CRD's Alternate Approval Process to borrow \$85 million on your dime because you weren't aware, due to the timing being during the Christmas season or

the convoluted process; or you didn't have access to an application, or computer printer and scanner, or couldn't figure out how to then enclose your vote into a pdf, a question in the Driftwood may have saved our bacon from greedy clutches.

Unlike the CRD unwieldy process, a very simple question in the Jan. 10 Driftwood asked a very simple question.

"Do you support higher taxes to build public housing?" And the answer was very clear. Fifty people voted "yes" and 112 people voted NO! Seems pretty clear to me. NO means NO!

There are also questions around the legality/integrity of their questionable convoluted Alternate Approval Process processes, which seem to be uniquely designed to get the least responses possible.

TOM PICKETT,
LEE ROAD

Lacking logic

For its general call to consume less, Joe Stacey's guest column in last week's

issue held appeal for me.

Yet Stacey's antagonism for EV drivers specifically appeared quite misguided. Since about 95 per cent of new vehicle purchases in Canada are for the gas-powered ones (with all their documented problems), maybe he should redirect his criticism to address that huge demographic.

Further, while Stacey pats his own back for driving a "gas-sipping" 34-year-old truck, he neglects to consider that fuel efficiency in conventional vehicles has improved over 35 per cent over the past two decades alone, just as average vehicle emissions have lowered substantially.

Stacey claims to "support clean air," but boasts about a vehicle that discredits his position. And he mocks a minority of "sheep" for not being the same as him, but presents no credible alternative. He writes with enthusiasm, it's true, but without a bumper crop of logic.

BRETT JOSEF GRUBISIC,
SALT SPRING

MORE LETTERS continued on 6

{ QUOTE OF THE WEEK: }

"It does not look like we're a serious local government, to be quite honest, when we keep moving every time the owner says, 'no, this isn't working for me.'"

DAVID GRAHAM, DENMAN ISLAND TRUSTEE, ON THE NEED FOR NEW SALT SPRING ISLANDS TRUST OFFICE

Word of the year honours can prove to be fleeting — thankfully

Now that we've crossed the frontier line and ventured fearlessly into the year 2024, it's time to take a step back to announce the official "Word of the Year" for 2023. You probably didn't even realize that such an award even existed, did you? Well, not only is it real but there's actually a competition among respected literary bodies that choose the winner.

In one corner stands dictionary publisher, Merriam-Webster, which selects its candidate by its popularity, based on the number of times people look up the word. The competition comes from Oxford University Press, which employs a public vote. Oxford first publishes a list of eight words from which the public chooses the top four finalists. The winner is then picked from these final four by a panel of expert etymologists.

The Word of the Year as chosen by Oxford is "rizz." It originates from the sound of the middle syllable of "charisma" (as in kariz-ma), and describes someone or something that has real style or charm. In street slang, it can mean the ability to attract a sexual partner. Saying that someone has real rizz, however, can be misconstrued to mean that their hair resembles an Italian rice and Parmesan dish.

The winner, as selected by

Merriam-Webster, is "authentic," which means real or actual and not fake or an imitation. On a more cosmic level, it can convey a sense of being true to one's personality or spirit.

Although Oxford and Merriam-Webster lead the literate field in popularizing words and expressions, they are by no means the only players in the game. For instance, The American Dialect Society, perhaps in a mocking mood, offered its support for the word "enshitification" to describe the deterioration of online platforms.

Coming at the subject from the opposite side is Lake Superior State University, which publishes an annual Banished list for words and expressions that are so imprecise, overused, trite and meaningless that they deserve to be kicked out of the English language. "Gaslighting," which means dangerous psychological manipulation and was chosen by Merriam-Webster as word of the year as recently as 2022, is first in line for banishment. Similarly, "quiet quitting," which describes an employee who performs the bare minimum on the job, is an expression that is ready for early retirement.

Among some other words that are lining up for banishment, you will find the acronym G.O.A.T. which stands for Greatest of All



Shilo
Zylbergold
NOBODY
ASKED ME
BUT

Time. G.O.A.T. has been so overused that it can basically be called on to describe everything from athletes and politicians to chicken wings and guacamole. "Irregardless" is another candidate for expulsion, especially since nobody actually knows whether or not it means the same thing as "regardless." For the same reason, say adios to both "inflammable" and "flammable" as both terms are confused with each other and it's a mystery as to which one means you are likely to burn your fingers off.

Language has always been amorphous and fluid, so it should come as no surprise that new words come bursting onto the scene while others line up to catch the last stagecoach out of town. In my youth, words such as "groovy," "cool" and "out-tasight" were mainstays of conversation, although cool is still cool to use. You would be hard-pressed, however, to say you "grok" somebody and have anybody "dig" what you mean. Even

Oxford's winning word, "rizz," is already being dismissed as being passe. Other terms on their way out are "absolutely," "amazing," "totally," and "moving forward," and there will be no tears shed by me when they are gone for good.

Moving in to take the place of these oldies are delightful specimens such as "tush push," a football play where the quarterback gets his butt pushed by players behind him in order to advance the ball far enough to gain a first down. Another newbie is "Barbenheimer," a term that combines the titles of two movies, Barbie and Oppenheimer, which were both released on the same day and found fantastic commercial success even though they dealt with subjects that were polar opposites.

Other words popping up on the horizon include "Swifties," defined as passionate fans of pop singer, Taylor Swift, and "situationship," which is used to describe an informal romantic or sexual relationship (presumably with someone who oozes tons of "rizz").

I have my own informal list of words and expressions that I wouldn't mind never having to hear or read again. Who is going to miss "it is what it is?" Will anybody feel deep sorrow when "at this point in time" is replaced by the much simpler "now?" How

about "at the end of the day" disappearing behind the sunset and being replaced by "finally?"

Include in this list all the terms that derive from technical and business jargon. How long do you suppose you can get into a meeting or conference before someone suggests a "deep dive" before making a "pivot" so you can "circle back" to "move the needle" and get "boots on the ground" in order to "think outside the box?"

Probably my least favourite candidates for Word of the Year are the ubiquitous LOL and the supertext "ha ha" (followed closely by the equally irritating "ha ha ha"). How can any of these compete with the inaugural winner in 1990? The word was "bushlips" and it was inspired by George H.W. Bush, who was quoted as saying "read my lips, no new taxes" just before he went ahead and raised taxes.

Nobody asked me, but maybe it's time we simplified the English language. It was not that long ago when most male teens needed only two adjectives to get by. If something was good, then it was "awesome." If it was bad, it was "annoying." There was no need to think outside the box back then. Besides, regardless of whether you were inside or outside of it, the box was annoying.

SMILE LINES



PHOTO COURTESY RYDER BERGERUD

Some of the more than 100 people who attended the Jan. 27 Beaver Point Hall Community Dance and Potluck enjoy contra dancing to the music and calling of Na Mara.

Rants + ROSES



Send your submissions to
news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

Roses

A huge heartfelt thank you to the people who helped me Saturday, Jan. 20 at 6:40 a.m. at Long Harbour ferry terminal, as I had a bad fall inside the building. Many of you came running at the speed of lightning to help me sit up, then stand up, while you were asking the correct questions to be sure I was okay. Words of thank you seem not enough, but thank you from the bottom of my heart. *Jenny Svendsen*

Roses from Copper Kettle Community Partnership to all the amazing people who make our work with "those that have less" possible! With lots of love and

many thank yous! P.S. 383 gift cards were distributed in 2023! *Jewel and Cherie*

Thank you to the Snow Angel who cleared my driveway! It was a complete surprise and greatly appreciated. *Anke*

So much appreciation to everyone who made the community dance this past Saturday at Beaver Point Hall happen. In an almost reflexive way everyone helped out, setting out tables, bringing dishes to share, mopping up spills, and popping into the kitchen to scrub dirty plates sparkling again. Can't wait to share more laughs and dances with you in the future. *Ryder Bergerud*

MORE LETTERS

continued from 5

Words matter

How interesting that Jason Mogus, co-founder of the housing group Salt Spring Solutions, is now using accusations of "extreme language" to address criticism of an ambitious agenda to rezone most of Salt Spring Island, without significant results in terms of affordable housing (in last week's Viewpoint piece).

Could it be that the only thing extreme is what is going to hap-

pen to this beautiful island over the coming decades?

Politics can change everyone's lives, and language is one of the favourite tools used to put everyone to sleep as the world is transformed. Words can be particularly destructive when they are used to render legal documents ineffective — by changing "must" to "should consider," for example. So, yes, we must be ever mindful of words and how they are used.

J. HIGHESTED,
SALT SPRING

Protect future generations

We need British Columbia's leadership to reform the tobacco industry.

Last week was National Non-Smoking Week, and British Columbia has an historic opportunity to reduce healthcare costs and reform the tobacco industry.

Over many decades, Big Tobacco has engaged in deception and targeted marketing that has addicted youth and resulted in

immense suffering, disease and premature death for so many people. The devastating impacts of tobacco use in British Columbia is extensive and undeniable — more than 400,000 (nine per cent) still smoke tobacco, with 5,800 tobacco-related deaths and \$688 million in healthcare costs every year.

All 10 provinces have filed lawsuits against the tobacco industry collectively seeking more than \$500 billion in damages, and right now British Columbia's government is negotiating a settlement with Big Tobacco.

To prevent disease and save lives, it's vital that the settlement implement strict new controls on the tobacco industry, and establish substantial long-term funding for tobacco control through an independent fund. We must protect future generations. As such, the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) urges Premier David Eby to use this monumental opportunity to hold Big Tobacco accountable and prevent future harm to citizens.

ANDREA SEALE,
CEO, CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

MONEY MATTERS

HIRE A PRO
AND MAKE YOUR
MONEY GROW!

TAX SOFTWARE CAN'T DO IT ALL!

Tax season is fast approaching! If you're thinking about using a computer program to file your taxes, you may want to reconsider. Here are four shortcomings of tax software.

1 It can't understand complex situations

Although tax software is capable of handling most common tax scenarios, it may not be programmed for more complex

situations, such as multiple income sources, investments, business income or international tax matters. A professional tax preparer will ensure you don't miss out on possible deductions or credits.

2 It can't tell you if you missed something

Tax software relies on accurate data entry, meaning incorrectly entered information could go unnoticed and result in inaccurate returns. Additionally, although software can suggest deductions and credits, it may not be able to identify all the specific tax breaks that a human tax professional could uncover.

3 It may not be up to date on the latest tax laws

Tax laws and regulations change from year to year, and tax software might not always be up to date. These inaccuracies can result in financial discrepancies and potential legal complications. A professional tax preparer ensures your taxes are filed correctly and you get the most out of your return.

4 It can't provide personalized advice

Although tax software can automate the filing process, it can't provide customized advice based on your unique situation. A tax professional offers personalized guidance tailored to your financial situation. This can help you make informed decisions and optimize your tax strategy for the future.

Don't sweat this tax season. Entrust your taxes to a local professional!



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LITERARY EVENTS

Author returns with first YA fantasy novel

Giselle Vriesen shares writing and publishing experience

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Giselle Vriesen was a volunteer at the Salt Spring Public Library when she was a Gulf Islands Secondary School student, graduating in 2018.

On Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 4:30 p.m., the 23-year-old woman will return to the library for the book launch of her first young adult fantasy novel — *Why We Play With Fire* — published by 100 Block Futures, a division of Row House Publishing and Simon & Schuster.

"It's super fun to be able to have the launch there," she told the Driftwood in a recent interview.

Vriesen started seriously writing fiction when she was 16 years old, and has kept to that course ever since.

"I have a tendency to just really commit to things. So when I was 16, I decided I wanted to be an author. I kind of just full tilted into it. It's been a dream," she said.

Why We Play With Fire is the second book she wrote which she thought had the potential to be published, and her instincts were obviously correct.

Vriesen serendipitously ended up having a one-on-one conversation with Row House president Rebekah Boroucki, where her questions about the editing and publishing process were answered, and led to her book being edited by two different lead editors.

"The editor ended up really liking it and acquiring it, and that's how I got a publishing deal."

Vriesen said the journey from submitted manuscript to final version was a very cooperative one. She and the editor would focus on one aspect of the novel — the minor characters, for example — going back and forth with ideas and suggestions until they were satisfied with the results.

She was also given ample input about the illustrator, as well as cover image and design. That process began with her looking at a board full of other book covers she was inspired by and had a similar energy to her story. The illustrator, ShinYeon Moon, provided

several samples and she chose from a narrowed-down final grouping, and also provided her opinion about use of colours.

"It was definitely very input heavy and it was amazing to be able to have that much control."

Why We Play With Fire is about a 16-year-old girl named Thea and the odyssey-like challenge she is given. As publicity information explains, "Thea finds herself transported to a house for the children of gods, where she must retrieve lost keys while navigating secrets, rival schools, and her own doubts, all before the shadow creatures catch up to her."

"Embark on a spellbinding odyssey of self-discovery, where Thea's extraordinary journey unfolds within a realm of enchantment and peril. Desperate to escape encroaching darkness, Thea is propelled through a mystical well by her mother and grandmother, left only with a cryptic mission to 'retrieve the keys.'"

Vriesen said the setting includes places with recognizable names — including Salt Spring Island and Crofton — but the characters also go to other magical worlds.

"The story is really about the rites of passage it takes to become an adult," said Vriesen, "and I was really excited to be able to include that as the main element."

Thea is 16 years old in the novel, but Vriesen said younger readers will also benefit from getting to know a character who will experience life challenges long before they have to.

"It will almost prep them for all the different ways that they can handle the grief and loss and tough decisions and stuff like that, but in a safe environment while they are at home and reading."

People can learn more about the book on the simonandschuster.com website.

Vriesen studied creative writing at UVic for a year, and took Neil Gaiman's masterclass and Tomi Adeyemi's *The Writer's Roadmap* course online.

While she understands the value of acquiring general skills through a traditional university writing degree, Vriesen said because she already knew what she wanted to learn it made more sense to study the specific genres and styles she was interested in.



PHOTO: COURTESY GISELLE VRIESEN

Giselle Vriesen, author of *Why We Play With Fire*, which will be launched at the Salt Spring Public Library on Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 4:30 p.m.

With online course options, "You can study exactly what you need to take you in the direction you want to go, one step at a time . . . I got to refine what I was learning to be specialized towards what I wanted to make of it."

Vriesen has a long list of favourite authors, but among the top entries would be Sylvia Moreno-Garcia, Tomi Adeyemi and Holly Black.

In addition to Tuesday's launch at the Salt Spring Public Library, where copies of *Why We Play With Fire* will be available to purchase, Vriesen is so far scheduled for in-person



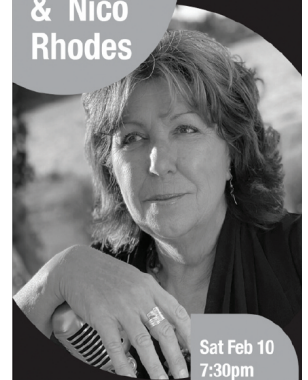
Book cover of *Why We Play With Fire*, illustrated by New York-based ShinYeon Moon.

events in Nanaimo, Vancouver and Duncan, and other online activities, such as interviews with book Instagrammers and influencers.

People can find Vriesen on Instagram @gisellevriesen.

Joëlle Rabu & Nico Rhodes

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ARTSPRING PRESENTS

Mother-son duo set to create cabaret magic

Joëlle Rabu and
Nico Rhodes on
stage Feb. 10

BY KIRSTEN BOLTON
FOR ARTSPRING

As one critic aptly summarized Joëlle Rabu, she is "Edith Piaf, Bette Midler and Carole Burnett all rolled into one extraordinary performer. Her passion-filled voice is spine-tingling and her stage presence electric."

With that in mind, Salt Spring is in for an unforgettable evening of music, memories and theatricality spiced with laughter on Saturday, Feb. 10 as Rabu brings to the stage an honest and candid journey that reflects her decades of performing, living, travelling and loving.

Known for her ability to delve into several musical styles, Rabu's interpretation of classic European cabaret-style tunes and jazz melodies; her rich vocal timbre and engaging stage presence; her heart wrenching torch songs and comedic moments have left audiences

spellbound for more than three decades.

Whether breathing new life into songs like Irving Berlin's *What'll I Do?* or John Prine's *Hello In There*, strutting through classics from *Cabaret* or evoking the nostalgia of Piaf's *La Vie en Rose* or Neil Young's *Harvest Moon*, Rabu gives herself completely to the music and her audience, occasionally responding to requests or encouraging people to sing along.

Singing primarily in English and French, Rabu also indulges her love of Spanish with powerful songs such as *Cucurrucucú Paloma* and *Melodia Descadenada (Unchained Melody)*.

What makes her current stage show even more unique and entertaining is the connection she has with her talented accompanist pianist, Nico Rhodes, her son, who is making his own headlines in the western Canadian jazz and musical theatre scenes.

Rhodes was raised on tour with his singer mom and lighting designer father and a trio of musicians who reportedly nurtured his musical upbringing "by osmosis." By the time Rhodes was 16, he had already won several classical piano and jazz saxophone competitions. At 17,

he was introduced to musical theatre by playing sax, flute, bass and piano in a Cole Porter show. Rabu played one of the leads.

In addition to contributing his piano skills to frame the power of his mother's vocals, the humorous banter between them on stage is delightfully entertaining and can only stem from their inter-generational points of view in experiencing heartache, laughter, vulnerability and life on the road.

A two-time Jessie Award winner and Juno nominee, Rabu has won international critical acclaim for her theatrical portrayal of the Parisian chanteuse Edith Piaf, whose recordings were heard throughout Rabu's French upbringing. She has toured five continents, recorded eight albums, performed for royalty and was a recipient of the B.C. Governor General Queen's 70th Jubilee Award in Arts and Culture.

Thank you to Kate Merry for sponsoring this performance.

Tickets are now on sale at tickets.artspring.ca or at the box office Tuesdays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Theatre Angel tickets for only \$15 available as of this Friday in person or by phone.



PHOTO BY ANGIE OH

The acclaimed singer Joëlle Rabu, who will perform with her son Nico Rhodes on piano at ArtSpring on Feb. 10 at 7:30 p.m.

what's on this week

Wed. Jan. 31

ACTIVITIES

Bridge. In the library program room. 12:45 to 4:15 p.m.

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

Thur. Feb. 1

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Poetry Open Mic. With featured poet Nedjo Rogers. Salt Spring Public Library. 7 p.m.

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

ACTIVITIES

Mother Goose. For babies, young children (0-4 years) and their parents/caregivers. Salt Spring Public Library. 10 to 11 a.m.

SSI Local Community Commission Special Meeting. At the SIMS Boardroom. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. To attend virtually, refer to the Microsoft Teams meeting link in the agenda on the crd.bc.ca website.

Fri. Feb. 2

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Pico's Puppet Palace. Sally Miller and Jesse Hamilton present a puppet performance called Pico and the Golden Lagoon in the children's area of the Salt Spring library at 1 p.m. Followed by a puppet-making working from 2:15 to 3:15 p.m. No registration required.

Ora Cogan & Drama Queen. Live at Mahon Hall. 8 p.m. (Doors at 7 p.m.)

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

Fri. Feb. 2

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

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

ACTIVITIES

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

ASK Salt Spring. Saanich North and the Islands MLA Adam Olsen is the guest in the Transition Salt Spring/Restorative Justice room at SIMS. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Youth Games & Chess Club. For ages 9 to 13. Library children's area. 1 to 4 p.m.

Sat. Feb. 3

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

ArtSpring Presents: Victoria Symphony. Program of Mozart, Shostakovich and Schoenberg under music director and conductor Christian Kluxen. ArtSpring. 2:30 p.m.

Rough & Tumble. Legion. 7:30 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Repair Cafe. Bring items to Salt Spring Public Library Program Room. 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. A Transition Salt Spring event.

L'Autre Connexion - The Other Connection (aka The WOLF Movie). Film shown at The Fritz Cinema at 2 p.m. Hosted by Wisdom of the Earth Wilderness School. Followed by a panel Q & A.

Sun. Feb. 4

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Jazz Jam. At the Legion. 3 to 6 p.m.

Tues. Feb. 6

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Country Music Open Mic. With house band, or solo performances. At the Legion. 6 p.m.

Book Launch: Giselle Vriesen. Launch of YA fantasy novel called *Why We Play With Fire*. Salt Spring Public Library program room. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

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

Wed. Feb. 7

ACTIVITIES

Native Plant Propagation Workshop. A Salt Spring Island Conservancy event led by ecologist Chris Drake. Two sessions at the Blackburn Lake Nature Reserve. 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 to 3 p.m. Email debra@saltspringconservancy.ca to register.

Best of the Fests: 20,000 Species of Bees. A SS Film Festival Society film presentation of award-winning Spanish film at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m. Co-presented by DAISSI and Haiti Beekeepers Society.

Bridge. See last Wednesday's listing.

Music Bingo. See last Wednesday's listing.

CINEMA

• **Ferrari** runs Friday, Feb. 2 to Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. each night plus a 3 p.m. matinee on Sunday. See thefritz.ca for more movie info.

ART EXHIBITIONS

• Painter **Elaine Potter's Nature Marks** exhibition runs in the Salt Spring Public Library program room through February when the room is not in use on Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

• **Impromptu**, a multi-media exhibition of new and revisited favourites, is being shown in the ArtSpring lobby and Jankura Lounge throughout the month of February during the facility's open hours and before performances. The show features works by Wendy Andrews, Lorraine Douglas, Johanna Hoskins, Deborah Miller, Pam Plumb, Suzanne Prendergast and Susan Underwood.

• **Natascha Wille** exhibits *Faces of Forgotten Horses* at the Salt Spring Coffee Cafe.

Poetry Open Mic
with featured poet Nedjo Rogers
Thursday, Feb. 1, 7 p.m.
SS Library Program Room

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ISLAND LIFE

EARLY EDUCATION

'Little Rainbows' kids ready to play and learn

Centre for infant and toddler care expects full staff by March

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

"We are open!"

Those three words from Little Rainbows Early Learning Centre manager Janice Shields seem at once like a relief to say, the culmination of lifetimes of work — but also the beginning of a still-lengthy journey, as a long-overlooked education sector works to keep up with demand.

The 1,500-square-foot infant and toddler-care facility in the new addition at the Rainbow Recreation Centre, just across the lobby from the pool entrance, has been more or less physically complete since early 2022 — a Capital Regional District (CRD) grant-funded project years in the making, itself born from a steady four decades of work by the Gulf Islands Early Learning Society (GIELS) to provide child care for working families.

Shields has been part of those relentless efforts since coming to Salt Spring Island in 1994, specifically to work for the long-running Tree Frog Daycare — Salt Spring's only space for infant and toddler care when it closed in 2021, another victim of the combined staffing and affordable housing shortages. When the last contractors at Rainbow Road packed up, organizers for Little Rainbows felt those same pressures, according to Shields; despite having a new facility, they were without instructors to operate it.

"For a while we were calling them 'unicorns,' you know?" said Shields, recounting the struggle to find early childhood educators (ECEs) to work at Little Rainbows. "A rare breed. But that's the whole issue with the sector."

Shields said while funding for ECEs has increased — a provincial average wage of perhaps \$23 per hour, she estimated, now bolstered with an addition from govern-



PHOTO BY ROBB MAGLEY

Little Rainbows Early Learning Centre manager Janice Shields sets out the cash register at the new centre to indicate that donations to help purchase learning materials will be appreciated.

ment sources of another \$6 when working for a nonprofit — it still lags, particularly considering the levels of education and work tempo the positions demand.

And while it feels like the sector has never been so supported, Shields said, people can still make more money doing other things — and without having to go to college.

"I mean we've never had a federal and provincial commitment like this to a national system before," said Shields. "So that is exciting. But we're not there yet."

With improved compensation and a concerted hiring campaign, Little Rainbows ultimately brought infants and toddlers into care this year, as those

"unicorns" slowly appeared — a sort of "build it and they will come" philosophy, Shields said, with incremental growth. At full enrolment, the capacity will be 12 children; right now, they serve eight.

"We're two-thirds of our way," said Shields, adding that with ECEs and ECE assistants currently coming onboard they believe they can serve the full dozen by March. "But we still have 25 families waiting to get in — and we capped the waitlist in the summer, so there's probably really 50."

It's a demand not likely to shrink; on average, Shields said, about 70 to 75 children are born on Salt Spring Island each year. Not all will need care outside the home, she said, but the demand is growing — likely parallel

to growth in the island's cost of living, as the number of families who can financially manage a stay-at-home-parent dwindles.

Of course, children in the infant and toddler program will come and go as family situations change — and the children grow up. Shields said the vision has always been that the Little Rainbows would feed into GIELS programs for older kids as they aged out.

In the meantime, Shields said, the Rainbow Road location has been as good as anyone could have hoped — central for families to drop off and pick up as they go to and from work, and close to Mouat Park and the Farmers' Institute for quick outings. And despite everyone having to learn on the fly, building a program in many ways from the ground-up, the space has been nearly perfect.

"Just little 'growing pains'-type things," chuckled Shields. "Like, you turn the lights off and put the kids to sleep for a nap, but if someone moves, the lights come back on because they were on a sensor!"

The CRD grant provided for the building and essential furniture; other donations, including recent funding from the local 100 Men Who Care group, helped in the final push to get the doors open. Ongoing needs will include early learning resources — developmentally appropriate toys and games to fill the new shelves, said Shields, and a play-ground sized for Little Rainbows.

"I'm excited we're seeing these young, enthusiastic educators here," said Shields. And, she added, government and private donations have also brought the community a wonderful space and the right equipment.

"Shelves, cribs and carpets," said Shields, smiling broadly as she looked across the room. "Now we need things to put on those shelves, and to play with on those carpets."

Anyone interested in making financial donations to support Little Rainbows should reach out to Shields at littlerainbows@giels.org, or they can donate directly through GIELS' website: saltspringearlylearning.ca/donate/p/little-rainbows-donation.

"I'm excited we're seeing these young, enthusiastic educators here."

JANICE SHIELDS
Manager, Little Rainbows
Early Learning Centre

RECREATION

Parks and trails survey sent out

Letter prompts online option

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is asking for input on how residents use and enjoy CRD regional parks and trails, with letters and instructional mailers having gone out to select households.

The 2024 CRD Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey will collect information about residents' use of regional parks and trails, their level of satisfaction, as well as their opinions about future priorities for conservation, recreation and funding. The results will help guide the CRD in future planning and service delivery for regional parks and regional trails.

"I strongly encourage residents who get an invite for the CRD Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey to participate," said CRD board chair Colin Plant. "Feedback from residents is invaluable and provides essential

data to help improve use of and access to our regional parks and trails system."

The last CRD Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey took place in 2017 and was done with a combination of mailed and online surveys. The 2024 survey is offered online, with the option to request a phone survey or physical questionnaire by mail.

Households randomly selected to take the survey will be mailed an invite with a participation code that can be entered online to initiate the survey. The survey will take around 15 to 25 minutes to complete, depending on the household size. Household participation is voluntary, and all information shared is strictly confidential.

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., a Victoria-based research firm, is delivering the survey on behalf of the CRD. Survey results will be available later in 2024. More information can be found online at crdresidentsurvey.ca.



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at Fulford Harbour

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| DAY | TIME | METRES | FEET | DAY | TIME | METRES | FEET |
|-----|------|--------|------|-----|------|--------|------|
| 31 | 123 | 1.5 | 4.9 | 4 | 944 | 3.2 | 10.5 |
| | 843 | 3.3 | 10.8 | | 1836 | 0.8 | 2.6 |
| | 1542 | 1.8 | 5.9 | | 424 | 3.1 | 10.2 |
| | 2057 | 2.3 | 7.5 | | 620 | 3.1 | 10.2 |
| 1 | 148 | 1.9 | 6.2 | 5 | 1006 | 3.2 | 10.5 |
| | 858 | 3.3 | 10.8 | | 1925 | 0.6 | 2 |
| | 1622 | 1.5 | 4.9 | | 446 | 3.3 | 10.8 |
| | 2259 | 2.3 | 7.5 | | 851 | 3.2 | 10.5 |
| 2 | 209 | 2.2 | 7.2 | 6 | 1100 | 3.2 | 10.5 |
| | 914 | 3.2 | 10.5 | | 2014 | 0.4 | 1.3 |
| | 1704 | 1.3 | 4.3 | | 515 | 3.4 | 11.2 |
| | 929 | 3.2 | 10.5 | | 944 | 3.2 | 10.5 |
| 3 | 1748 | 1.1 | 3.6 | 7 | 1223 | 3.2 | 10.5 |
| | | | | | 2102 | 0.2 | 0.7 |

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Obituaries

In Memorium

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WEEK OF
JANUARY 28 TO FEBRUARY 3, 2024

THE LUCKIEST SIGNS THIS WEEK:
SAGITTARIUS AND CAPRICORN



ARIES

This week will be marked by big responsibilities, both at work and at home. You'll strive to keep your space spotless, which will bring you great satisfaction. It will also help you be more efficient in your daily life.



TAURUS

You'll have a boost in self-confidence, which will pave the way for significant progress in your professional and personal life. You'll have the opportunity to stand out and be recognized in your community.



GEMINI

Whether you're single or in a relationship, you'll experience love at first sight and feel an unprecedented level of affection. You'll learn of a birth in the family, which will be a source of great joy.



CANCER

You'll expand your network of friends and professional contacts. Your great communication skills, at work or elsewhere, will enable you to establish fruitful agreements and resolve disagreements that were undermining the smooth running of activities.



LEO

Before making a major purchase, carefully assess your budget and determine if this expense is necessary. If you're patient, you'll be more satisfied and score a better price.



VIRGO

Get ready for an eventful week! A few unforeseen circumstances could arise. At work, you'll be delighted to get a promotion. This will help you feel more secure in your future or allow you to embark on a new life path.



LIBRA

Sometimes you must take a step back to see things from a new perspective and achieve a remarkable feat. The artist in you will be dazzlingly creative! You could also get involved in a charitable cause aimed at bettering society.



SCORPIO

Your friends will invite you to take part in a fun activity or trip. You'll have a brilliant idea, which will offer a partial solution to your financial problems, if you have any. Trust the experts in this field.



SAGITTARIUS

You'll organize an event that will attract many people. Both at work and at home, you'll successfully handle an urgent situation. You could have the opportunity to celebrate a success.



CAPRICORN

New knowledge will deeply inspire you and contribute to your transformation. You'll explore a new spiritual dimension or start a new ritual that brings great joy to your life.



AQUARIUS

Your emotions will be palpable this week. This could lead you to have deeper conversations with those closest to you. You'll experience a form of enlightenment that opens you up to new possibilities and gives you a unique experience.



PISCES

You must take time to think before making a crucial decision. If you want to reach your professional goals, you must make changes to move in the direction you want and experience satisfaction.



Brian Thomas Brett
1950 - 2024

Longstanding Salt Spring Island resident Brian Brett passed away peacefully in Purdy's Pavilion located in the UBC facility. Suffering from a serious stroke last year and eventually succumbing to sepsis on January 17/2024 at the age of 73. Brian was well known for his contributions to the writers community of Canada, publishing many books of poems and novels, he was also active in journalism throughout the country for most established newspapers since the early 1970s. He was highly regarded as a teacher and mentor influencing many aspiring authors throughout Canada.



Among Brian's 13 published works, "Trauma Farm: A Rebel History of Rural Life" gained him The Writers Trust Nonfiction Prize in 2009, becoming his best known accomplishment. His literary works and extensive involvement in the writers community such as President of the Writers Union of Canada, and in 2016 the winner of the Writers' Trust Matt Cohen Award solidified his position as a remarkable and respected member of the Canadian literary scene with 7 major awards to his career.

Brian Brett's passions and achievements were many, which would require a serious biography to fully encompass. He left a legacy in the writers community but also was active in environmental action, being a major contributor in the conservation effort for Clayoquot Sound and multiple other efforts to protect lands on Salt Spring Island and throughout British Columbia. His love for the natural world remains with his poetry, novels, and throughout the Canadian Culture.

A healthy family remains in Brian's departure, two loving brothers Leonard and Bill Brett, a long standing partner Sharon Doobenben. Children and grandchildren, Chris and Nancy Doobenben, siblings Kylie and Jenna Doobenben. Roben and Sovanny Doobenben siblings, Ajra and Aubrey Doobenben, many years of cherished memories! We are hoping for an April ceremony.



In Memorium

In Memorium



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Coming Events

Coming Events



Salt Spring Island
Farmers' Institute

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday February 27 at 7 pm

Membership Fees, \$20 Single \$25 Family can be purchased at the SSIFI office or at Foxglove Farm and Garden

For more information or AGM details, visit
www.ssifi.org or email us at contact@ssifi.org

Coming Events

Coming Events

*Wagon Wheel
Housing Society*



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wagon Wheel Housing Society

February 10, 2 pm

at the Laundr-O-Mat

162 Fulford-Ganges Rd Salt Spring Island

For more information call 250-538-7059

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FILM SCREENING

Spanish film creates buzz on festival circuit

20,000 Species of Bees at ArtSpring Feb. 7

BY STEVE MARTINDALE
FOR SALT SPRING FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

Despite previewing over 300 films this year, the Salt Spring Film Festival's screening committee has selected just one drama to include in this season's "Best of the Fests" series at ArtSpring: the award-winning Spanish film *20,000 Species of Bees*.

We were in search of the kind of beautifully heartfelt film that has proven popular with audiences here on Salt Spring, such as last year's visually sumptuous and beloved Moroccan weeper *The Blue Caftan*, or the romantic depiction of dangerously repressed desire in *And Then We Danced* from the former Soviet country of Georgia, which we screened in 2020 to great acclaim.

Unfortunately many of the narrative films we previewed at other festivals over the past year were disappointingly mediocre, and the best of the bunch were often well executed

but coldly precise, failing to elicit any meaningful emotional response.

And then we had the opportunity to see *20,000 Species of Bees*, which sounded as though it might be a nature documentary about apian diversity, but which turned out to be one of the most engaging and memorable films of the year.

A sculptor grappling with her artistic identity gradually becomes aware that her youngest child is struggling with gender identity, and over the course of an otherwise idyllic summer vacation in the Basque countryside, her initial obliviousness slowly shifts to maternal concern, followed by briefly intense moments of alarm, as she and her family try to make sense of why their previously cheerful eight-year-old is becoming increasingly reactive, sullen and withdrawn.

With novelistic attention to detail and decidedly non-Hollywood restraint, a layered series of small, intimately observed moments over the course of this understated film eventually culminates in a crescendo of emotion that catches viewers off-guard with its depth and intensity.



Promotional image for Estibaliz Urresola Solaguren's feature film, *20,000 Species of Bees*, about a young girl's struggle with gender identity. The film and actor Sofia Otero have already won several awards.

Basque filmmaker and screenwriter Estibaliz Urresola Solaguren's surprisingly assured debut feature has won multiple audience awards at festivals around the world. Leading an ensemble of astonishingly believable performers, newcomer Sofia Otero — who is in almost every scene of the

film — became the youngest-ever winner of the prestigious Berlinale Silver Bear for Best Actor at the Berlin International Film Festival.

The late, great Maya Angelou famously said that "people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." The same can be said of cinema, which has the power to affect viewers on a profoundly emotional level that few other art forms can achieve, leaving us wiser and more empathetic for having briefly immersed ourselves in the lives of others.

As is true of the best and most evocative dramas, you may find that years from now, long after the somewhat cryptic title and the specifics of the deceptively simple plot have faded from memory, you will still remember how this lovely, heart-wrenching and thoroughly humanistic film made you feel.

Co-presented by DAISSI and Haiti Beekeepers Society, tickets to *20,000 Species of Bees* are \$13 each and are available via the ArtSpring box office. For more information, visit saltspringfilmfestival.com.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Local loans available for electric vehicle purchases

Fuel and maintenance savings cover payment costs

Are you aware that as a Salt Spring Island resident you can borrow up to \$7,000 with a very friendly, low-interest 3.5 per cent loan towards the purchase of a new or used fully electric vehicle (not a hybrid)? Yes, and you may be eligible.

I am very excited to announce that the first loan has been granted. In this case, the loan has been



Jim
Standen
EV
OLUTION

funded by a partnership of the TSS - Electric Vehicle Group and our local Transition Salt Spring Enterprise Cooperative (TSSEC). Future loans will be available from TSSEC's Climate Action pool.

TSSEC is a cooperative with

about 100 members who loan funds to individuals, community projects and businesses for climate action initiatives. In the past 12 years just under a quarter of a million dollars has been loaned to 37 projects and people! TSSEC acts as a "broker" between lenders and borrowers, and it offers low interest rates and a simple application process for its Climate Action Loan program. Larger loans are available as well for community initiatives and businesses.

The Salt Spring Electric Vehicles Group of 10 volunteers has, for over 10 years, held events, pro-

vided education programs and encouraged additional charging infrastructure. Starting with five electric vehicles and two chargers at ArtSpring, which were installed by the Earth Festival Society, we now estimate a population of 450 fully electric vehicles and close to 20 free public chargers. Our efforts have reduced the use of oil products and therefore emissions, which is the core goal of Transition Salt Spring. The EV Group is pleased to do its part. More information is available at www.ssiev.ca.

Taking out a loan for an electric vehicle makes perfect sense. Think

about loan payments being possible by diverting the funds that would have been devoted to purchasing fuel, oil and filter changes, and other maintenance items.

Of course, this loan is in addition to the existing incentives, which include, for a new EV, \$5,000 from the federal government and \$4,000 (income tested) from the provincial government. Think EVs are expensive? Think again.

If you are interested in applying for an EV loan, please contact TSSEC through the website at transitionsaltspring.com/solutions/enterprise-co-op/.

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TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

Salt Spring library opens new Indigenous area



PHOTOS COURTESY SSI PUBLIC LIBRARY

Enjoying the new ITOTELNEW HÁUTW / Tatul' utew't-hw Indigenous area at Salt Spring's library are, from left, library Indigenous coordinator Caroline Dick, library director Karen Hudson and patron Cassidy Moore.



PHOTO BY CHRIS MARSHALL

J'SINTEN (Dr. John Elliott), SENĆOŦEN Language Keeper, opens up ITOTELNEW HÁUTW / Tatul' utew't-hw, the new Salt Spring Library Indigenous Area, with Penelakut/Kwakwaka'wakw artist Maynard Johnny Jr.'s "Capturing Light" in the background and some of the Indigenous book collection at right.

Art, books, programming
have dedicated space after
opening ceremony

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's public library now has an area dedicated specifically for Indigenous learning, filled with beautiful artworks, furniture and books created by Indigenous artists and authors.

The ITOTELNEW HÁUTW / Tatul' utew't-hw Indigenous Area was opened with a ceremony on Sunday afternoon, acknowledging everyone who contributed in some way to the project.

"It's for Indigenous people, especially the 150 Indigenous youth in our school system, to come here and know that they have a place to be," explained library director Karen Hudson at the event. "Not only will they see this decolonized collection that we've created, but their families can feel they can safely come and see this art and be inspired in whatever they want to do in their lives."

She said creating the area is part of the library's ongoing response to the calls for action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report of 2015. Other initiatives include the Indigenous mural created by young artists on the outside of the library, hosting an Indigenous reading group for the past four years and more recently a friendship circle, and establishing an Indigenous coordinator position.

Caroline Dick has been in that role since September of 2023. Under her guidance, the new area will be home to language learning and other programs, including Indigenous story times for kids.

Dick said she went to school on Salt Spring and at the time it was disturbing to hear the false but then prevailing narrative about Indigenous people not living in the Gulf Islands except for some occasional clam harvesting visits.

"Coming back and being able to be a part of this has been such a healing experience for me, and to be a part of what is really a healing experience for so many different communities and different people has been such a singular honour," she said.

"We're just so grateful and cognizant of the fact that the grace that is extended to us by the Indigenous peoples and the communities around here, and the people that are from here — these are your homelands that were taken — that you are willing to come back and be here with us in these healing moments is amazing and wonderful."

Rose Spahan of the Tsartlip Nation, who curated the artwork collection, introduced attending artists and credited elders for helping her with protocol language and helping things work together in a good way.

Pieces now part of the library's permanent collection were created by James Jimmy (WSÁNEĆ), Maynard Johnny Jr. (Penelakut / Kwakwaka'wakw), Myrna Crossley (WSÁNEĆ), TEMOSEN / Chazz Elliott (WSÁNEĆ), the late TEMOSENFET / Charles Elliott (WSÁNEĆ) and Statu Stsuwum / Angela Marston (Stzuminus).

WSÁNEĆ elder J'SINTEN (Dr. John Elliott) explained at Sunday's ceremony that "ITOTELNEW HÁUTW" means "place of learning" in the SENĆOŦEN language. "Tatul' utew't-hw" is the Hul'qumi'num term for "house of learning." J'SINTEN also shared a WSÁNEĆ creation story about the first deer being created from a boy in Hwu'ne'nuts (Fulford Harbour), and a song that urges taking care of our natural places.

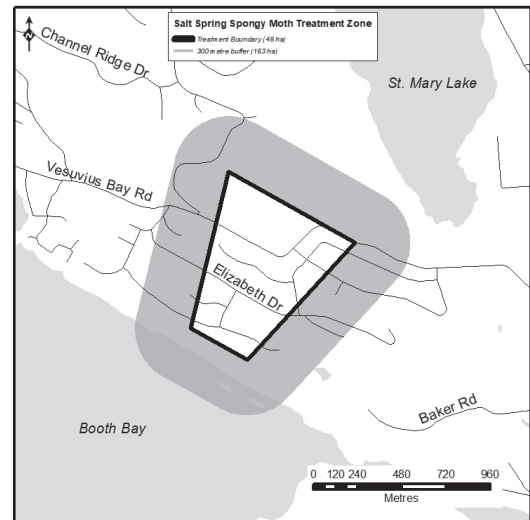
Sunday's events also included delicious bannock and other foods served by Adrienne Peter of Hungry Bubbas, preceded by songs and a talk from her father and Quw'utsun knowledge keeper Bubba Qwulshemut.

Funds for the ITOTELNEW HÁUTW / Tatul' utew't-hw Indigenous Area were provided by the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Salt Spring Island Foundation, the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation and Salt Spring Island Public Library donors.

Application for Pesticide Use

PESTICIDE USE PERMIT
APPLICATION # 738-0038-24-24

Applicant: British Columbia Ministry of Forests, 200 – 10470 152nd Street, Surrey, B.C., V3R 0Y3, Phone: 1 866 917-5999



The Ministry of Forests has applied to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy for a permit to use Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *Kurstaki*), commercial formulation Foray 48B, to eradicate an establishing spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*; formerly referred to as gypsy moth) population in a 48-hectare parcel in the Vesuvius area of Salt Spring Island (see map). Three aerial applications are planned in each area between April 1 and June 30, 2024. Btk has been approved for the control of spongy moth larvae in Canada since 1961.

Copies of the permit application and map of the treatment area may be viewed at gov.bc.ca/spongymoth/news. Check the website regularly for information on upcoming virtual information sessions.

A person wishing to contribute information about the treatment sites for the evaluation of this permit application must send copies of the information to both the applicant at the address above, or by email at flnrgypsymothinfo@gov.bc.ca, and the administrator under the *Integrated Pest Management Act* at Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Suite 200 – 10470 152 Street, Surrey, B.C., V3R 0Y3, or by email at ENVCA@gov.bc.ca, within 30 days of the publication of this notice.