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EMERGENCY SERVICES

Rough road slows down responders



PHOTO BY ALAN BIBBY

Salt Spring Island Search and Rescue (SSISAR) volunteer Kurt Gierlich checks out what is known as "Big Bertha" on Mount Maxwell Road before the SSISAR equipment vehicle attempts to go any further. Search and rescue personnel say that vehicle is likely the only one that can transport an injured person in a stretcher off the summit area of Mount Maxwell Provincial Park, as it did on April 7, due to the terrible road conditions.

Ministry says no plans to upgrade Mount Maxwell Road

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The historically rough gravel road leading to one of Salt Spring's most spectacular views is getting worse, according to island emergency officials — and with no provincial plans to improve it, agencies tasked with safety are buying more capable vehicles, redesigning emergency plans or simply working longer hours as access to Mount Maxwell Provincial Park becomes increasingly poor.

In response to questions from the Driftwood, officials with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) agreed the road currently is "steep, narrow and rough" and noted MoTI has posted signs that four-wheel-drive vehicles with higher-than-average clearance are "strongly recommended" for those wanting to use the road.

But, according to MoTI, beyond those warning signs, visitors to the park — and emergency

responders — shouldn't expect anything different.

"While the ministry maintains the road as best as possible, it quickly degrades due to the steepness and exposed bedrock," the ministry said in a statement. "Given the challenging natural terrain and its location on an ecological reserve, there are no current plans to upgrade the road."

Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue (SSIFR) Chief Jamie Holmes said the condition of Mount Maxwell Road — as well as other rough roads on the island, such as those up to Mount Bruce and down to Musgrave Landing — factored heavily into recent equipment acquisition, specifically the new brush truck.

"It's a bit of the rationale for why the new brush truck looks so 'mean' for the streets of Salt Spring," said Holmes of the high clearance 4x4. "That road over the last 10 years has gone significantly downhill."

While upgrading the off-road capabilities of the department helps get crews in faster — it's better to get there while there's less fire to fight, Holmes said — the new brush truck is hardly ideal for transporting patients. But there may not be much choice; on some steep and rough roads, ambulances just can't make it, and rescuers can find themselves transporting patients farther than expected.

On April 7, Salt Spring Island Search and Rescue (SSISAR) was called out to assist an injured person, reportedly hurt near one of the unofficial rock-climbing routes in the park. The man had a significant leg injury, according to SSISAR manager and paramedic Jason Grindler, with 14 SSISAR members involved in a difficult evacuation that included an hour-long carry-out in a basket stretcher and two separate rope assists on steeper, more technical sections of the trails.

ROAD continued on 3

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GROUND IS BROKEN



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

The sound of heavy equipment at work marked the beginning of construction at the future site of Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue's new fire hall, where excavation and site service work started Monday, April 22. Local company Charlie's Excavating was the successful bidder for the site's civil works, which include levelling, drainage, water and sewer hookups, electrical conduits and creating the parking lots, at a value of more than \$1.2 million. MKM Projects of Qualicum is the construction management company. The new \$12.5-million hall at 455 Lower Ganges Rd. is expected to be ready for firefighters and administrative staff before the end of 2026.

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ISLANDS TRUST

Housing bill impacts dissected

Trustee Harris rails against Islands Trust and CRD over exclusions

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Not all provisions of the latest provincial bill aimed at helping the housing crisis will apply to Local Trust Areas, and that exclusion has one local trustee calling for Salt Spring Island to "get out of the grip" of the Islands Trust.

The B.C. government's Bill 16 will grant new authorities to local governments, including allowing most to require new developments provide "site-specific works and services" such as affordable and special-needs housing units, as well as a parallel set of tools sharpening their ability to require site-level infrastructure — such as wider sidewalks or protected bike lanes.

Local Trust Committees (LTCs) will receive some of those authorities, but not all of the bill will apply — partly due to explicit exclusion of the Trust areas, and partly due to the bill's inapplicability. For example, a provision in Bill 16 granting authority to enact tenant protection bylaws — supporting people facing displacement in cases of redevelopment — is not available to LTCs, because the bill creates a new development permit area the Islands Trust is exempt from.

"It's kind of 50-50," said Trust planning services director Stefan Cermak. "And there's still a little bit of unclarity in some circumstances, because of the lack of regulations and what-have-you."

Cermak laid out an early summary for the Trust's Executive Committee Wednesday, April 24, in a briefing that will soon make its way to LTCs. As far as the site-level infrastructure provisions, Cermak explained, the Islands Trust is included — although "there's kind of a hiccup," he said, in that those provisions are triggered at the time of a subdivision or at the time of a building permit.

"And since the Islands Trust doesn't issue building permits, we're exempt from that," said Cermak. "However, I did confirm with them that the regional districts do have that authority — and LTCs could work in cooperation with regional districts, such that some of these service and works agreements are triggered [when building permits are issued]."

But the so-called "inclusionary zoning" provisions that might require a certain percentage of non-market units in a new development will not apply to the Islands Trust.

"I've been back and forth with provincial staff to understand that a bit better," said Cermak, saying it seemed the focus of those measures was on large, high-density projects unlikely to gain footing on islands in the Trust area.

"Moreover, this new authority — this sort of pre-zoning impact — excludes affordable housing projects that are owned by cooperatives, societies and governments," said Cermak. "So a lot of the high-density stuff that you're doing for affordable housing existing today is exempt from it anyway."

Meanwhile, Salt Spring local trustee Jamie Harris took to social media, posting a video the same day railing against the inequity of the Bowen Island Municipality — its population a fraction of Salt Spring's — being granted tools he characterized as a "fast track" to allow housing projects to start. Harris laid blame with the Islands Trust and the Capital Regional District (CRD), positing that Salt Spring should "get out of the grip" of both by becoming a municipality itself.

"Salt Spring Island does not belong in the Islands Trust anymore," said Harris in a video. "It's clear to me at this point that the Islands Trust and the CRD are incapable of dealing with the issues that Salt Spring Island faces. We're excluded from these housing initiatives that the province has pushed basically across all of B.C., but the Islands Trust and Salt Spring are excluded."

Bill 16 is characterized by the B.C. government as the second phase of provincial efforts to address the affordable housing crisis. The passage of Bill 44 in the fall of 2023 preceded an amendment to the Islands Trust Act excluding the Trust area from that bill's small-scale multi-unit housing requirements — including those for secondary suites and accessory dwelling units.

That decision was made, according to a Jan. 8 letter from Minister of Housing Ravi Kahlon, because of the Trust's "special mandate to 'preserve and protect the Trust area and its unique amenities and environment' and pre-existing limitations to critical resources like drinking water and waste disposal."

"The Ministry of Housing has focused on ensuring that the Islands Trust has the information they need to inform their decisions around development," the letter continued, "without requiring that additional densities be allowed, which could negatively affect sensitive island ecosystems."

AWARDS

Hewitts' volunteerism recognized

Watershed protection efforts earn provincial Community Award

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Two Salt Spring Island residents are among only 20 Community Award recipients named by the BC Achievement Foundation this year.

Doreen and Wayne Hewitt were recognized for their active roles in championing water protection on Salt Spring Island for more than 30 years.

"Recognizing the watershed's vulnerability, they forged partnerships with key stakeholders, including the Island Stream and Salmon Enhancement Society, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of the Environment, and Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection," states information in the announcement. "In 1993, they founded the Cusheon Lake Stewardship Group. Their joint efforts have extended to establishing the Beddis and Cusheon Area Residents' Association, fostering a broader community engagement from the original Beddis Area Residents' Association."

Wayne Hewitt's leadership roles in the Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society and Doreen Hewitt's tenure as a special commissioner on



COURTESY BC ACHIEVEMENT FOUNDATION
Doreen & Wayne Hewitt
Salt Spring Island

BC Achievement Foundation image that acknowledges Doreen and Wayne Hewitt's 2024 B.C.-wide Community Award.

the Beddis Water Service Commission exemplify their commitment, said the foundation. Doreen held leadership roles in 15 community groups, while Wayne led the development of the Watershed Management Plan for Cusheon Lake, completed in 2007.

"The Hewitts have vigilantly monitored governmental initiatives, zoning applications and potential threats to the island's watershed. Their role as educators and advocates has helped to safeguard Salt Spring Island's drinking water sources

amidst increasing development pressures and climate change challenges," foundation material continued.

"Community Award recipients are recognized for their outstanding contributions in making life better through innovation, dedication and volunteerism," said Premier David Eby. "From young leaders to experienced organizers, from entrepreneurs to educators, this year's honourees show us the benefits of working together to build a happier, healthier and stronger British Columbia. Their good works are an inspiration to us all."

The 2024 Community Award recipients will be recognized in a formal presentation ceremony held in Victoria on May 8 in the presence of the Honourable Janet Austin, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. The Community Award ceremony will be live-streamed on BC Achievement's website beginning at 2 p.m. on May 8. The presentation ceremony will also be aired on TELUS' Optik TV Channel 707 — Community Connections — after the event.

Each awardee will receive a medallion designed by Robert Davidson, OC, OBC. They will also be celebrated through an online #shinethebrightbc campaign to commemorate their inspirational achievements positively impacting British Columbians.

ENVIRONMENT

Broom drop-off event revived

Set for Saturday, May 25 at Community Gospel Chapel grounds

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's Native Plant Stewardship Group has just announced that Invasive Plant Drop-off Day has been reinstated for 2024, after earlier advising the public that its members were no longer able to manage the event.

With support from the Salt Spring Garden Club and Transition Salt Spring, the group has committed to one more date — Saturday, May 25 at the Community Gospel Chapel hall on Vesuvius Bay Road — with a possible second date of Sunday June 9. Support from both the public and local government agencies is needed for the June 9 date to proceed, the group said.

For the May 25 event, chippers, trucks and workers will be employed to handle and transport the product to local farms.

"Where we have previously asked for donations, we will now charge a modest fee based on volume, ranging from \$5 to \$150, from hatch back to dump truck," the group said in a press release. "As before, we will accept broom, gorse, ivy, holly — the woody invasives that are so imperilling our forests and homes."

The usual CUT BROOM IN BLOOM signs have been posted around the island, reminding people about the best time to tackle broom. With the plant at its most vulnerable in the pre-seed stage, its invasiveness is curtailed. The Native Plant Stewardship Group advises that broom should be cut at or just below the base of the plant.

Broombusters.org is a useful site for more inspiration and instruction. People can check out bcinvasives.ca as well.

For the safety of personnel and equipment, roots mixed with soil and potentially rocks, are not accepted.

Help is still needed to make the invasive plant drop-off day sustainable for the long term. For more information, suggestions or support, people can contact Deborah@transitionsaltspring.com.

NEWSBRIEFS

Harbour Air buys electric engines

Company officials at Harbour Air said the airline has signed a letter of intent to purchase 50 new electric engines for its floatplane fleet from manufacturer magniX.

The deal, announced Monday, April 22, supports the company's goals toward electrification, according to CEO Bert van der Stege, as well as a standing plan to have its first electric aircraft commercially certified by 2026.

"The agreement with magniX underscores our commitment to revolutionize commercial aviation with electric propulsion," said van der Stege, "and to pave the way for cleaner, quieter and more efficient air travel."

Including a trip to Ganges last May as part of the Electrify Salt Spring festival events, Harbour Air said it has completed 78 successful test flights with its "ePlane" prototype, which first took to the air in 2019.

Harbour Air said it hopes to convert additional aircraft within its fleet and offer third-party conversions to promote widespread adoption of electric aviation.

Code of conduct

The Islands Trust is planning to discuss a proposed code of conduct under its

new Committee of the Whole structure, hoping to review early language as a non-decision-making group.

CAO Russ Hotsenpiller told the Trust's Executive Committee they had been "blessed" thus far with a level of professional congeniality many organizations would envy — and that staff agreed with trustees that it was a good opportunity to review how to respond if things change.

"We have to applaud the people of yesterday who in 1997 were developing the standards of conduct and putting those in place," said Hotsenpiller. "It's great to have a sort of a launching pad, but I think we can generally agree the tenor of conversation in the modern world might be a little bit different."

Draft language for the proposed code of conduct was referred to the broader Trust Council, who will likely review plans in June.

RCMSAR25 garage sale

The Gulf Islands Marine Rescue Society has set a day for donations of any marine-related items for its annual Marine Garage Sale, to raise funds to support Salt Spring's on-the-water search and rescue team.

Drop-off is Friday, May 10, from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Search and Rescue hall at 261 Fulford-Ganges Road, with the

garage sale the next day: Saturday, May 11 from 9 a.m. to noon. Anyone wishing to donate but unable to come to the drop-off event should email heatmarystone@gmail.com to arrange collection.

BC Hydro offers free portable AC units

As temperatures rise, BC Hydro is ramping up outreach to income-qualified households — and those who received recommendation letters from regional health authorities — reminding them there could be an air conditioner in their future, free of charge.

This program is available year-round, according to the electric utility, but customers who apply and have their evaluations completed now will likely receive their unit sooner than during warmer months. The offer is open to both renters and owners, and includes both the unit and a one-time installation; homeowners can also choose to self-install their units, BC Hydro said, which may help in receiving a unit quicker.

Income qualification sets eligibility ranges depending on the size of the household; for example, a pre-tax income for a four-person household of under \$73,800 would qualify for the program. Visit bchydro.com/freeAC to apply.

Search and Rescue pressing province for road upgrades

ROAD

continued from 1

But while transport from the parking lot near the scenic outlook would usually be via BC Ambulance, during this rescue the ambulance was unable to navigate the last stretch of rough road, requiring the victim be carried in SSISAR's equipment vehicle down to a staging area near Maxwell Lake before paramedics could bring him to the hospital for further care.

SSISAR members provided transport to the summit parking lot for two BCEHS paramedics so they could accompany the patient during his descent, Grindler said, but the extra steps meant delays in both response and evacuation time — as well as increased pain and discomfort to person being rescued, despite ongoing pain management and effective padding for comfort.

"The washboard and washed-out surfaces in some areas forced SAR vehicles to slow to a walking pace," he said, "with one section in particular requiring the rescue vehicle needing to be spotted in 4-wheel drive in low range to navigate very deep uneven ruts and holes in the road."

Grindler said SSISAR hoped MoTI would consider solutions to improve at least some of the more damaged sections, and that the organization's board of directors would be sending letters to the ministry and to BC Parks to that effect. SSIFR Chief Holmes agreed it would be helpful, but worried the cost of upgrades might make the province decide it could be cheaper to close the road to vehicles altogether.

"My suspicion would be that they might just turn it into a walking park, versus being able to drive up to the lookout," said Holmes. "I'm hesitant to complain too much because I could see them shutting down vehicle access completely."

A safety advisory posted on BC Parks' official website has a longstanding warning of "rough driving conditions" on the road, recommending experienced drivers and "only 4x4 vehicles with high clearance" travel upon it. BC Parks has also advised rock climbing — as well as slack-lining and hang gliding — is prohibited within Mount Maxwell Park, per another safety advisory online since at least 2021.

ELECTIONS

Oliver, Lucarelli to serve on Salt Spring fire board

Incumbent finishes on top

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The first of two local elections this week has ended, with incumbent Rob Oliver and newcomer Dennis Lucarelli receiving the most votes for a three-year term on the board of trustees for the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District (SSIFPD).

Voting results were announced during the district's annual general meeting Monday, April 29. Of a total 1,815 ballots completed, Oliver received 1,423; Lucarelli 1,356, and Jenny McClean 529, according to returning

officer Anthony Kennedy, who added that 45 ballots were spoiled.

A high number of ballots were cast, a participation noted even as mail-in ballots were coming in; those ballots needed to be received by April 25, while in-person voting took place April 24 and 27.

The next election results for the island — for two trustee positions on the North Salt Spring Waterworks District board — will be available after that body's annual general meeting Thursday, May 2, which begins at 6 p.m. at Community Gospel Chapel and through a Microsoft Teams link. Eligible voters may still cast ballots for that election in-person at the Community Gospel Chapel between 2 and 6 p.m. on that day.


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	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET
1	1:04	11.1	3.38		5	3:14	10.9	3.32
	17:14	2.5	0.76			9:54	4	1.22
2	1:46	11.1	3.38		6	16:23	8.8	2.68
	8:19	7.9	2.41			21:21	6.3	1.92
3	10:30	8	2.44		7	3:36	10.9	3.32
	18:19	3.3	1.01			10:30	2.6	0.79
4	2:21	11	3.35		8	17:38	9.6	2.93
	8:47	6.8	2.07			22:15	7.4	2.26
5	12:59	7.8	2.38			3:58	10.9	3.32
	19:23	4.2	1.28			11:08	1.4	0.43
6	2:49	11	3.35			18:43	10.3	3.14
	9:19	5.4	1.65			23:09	8.4	2.56
7	14:53	8.2	2.5			4:19	10.8	3.29
	20:24	5.2	1.58			11:47	0.6	0.18
8						19:43	10.9	3.32

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OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Backing broom

Volunteerism will once again save the day on Salt Spring Island.

At the last minute, and with what seems another tremendous effort, the Native Plant Stewardship Group (NPSG) has stepped up to again sponsor at least one invasive plant drop-off day, accepting broom, gorse, ivy and holly. Once more, as they have since 2010, the signs will go up to remind us all to "cut broom in bloom" and do our part to reduce the presence of the plant-choking, fire-hazard-raising yellow-flowering Scotch broom.

Two other volunteer groups — Transition Salt Spring and the Salt Spring Garden Club — have made the efforts possible.

The NPSG figured out more than 20 years ago that while islanders could easily be convinced of the value in taking care of broom on their properties — with a little education on this and other

noxious species — what we really needed was a little guidance, a little leadership, and a deadline. And as the effort grew from its original Salt Spring Island Conservancy roots to its current team-up with Transition Salt Spring and local firefighters, there were more than 10 tons brought in for on-site chipping last year, on (or in) nearly 200 vehicles, coming from every corner of the island.

Islanders can be counted upon to do the right thing for an ecological cause. But how long can we expect NPSG and their partners to continue filling the leadership void on broom removal?

Even a casual accounting of broom on Salt Spring would characterize last year's tonnage as just a fraction of what needs to be removed to contain its spread. The huge problem that's blossomed across the island has been addressed so far with a mix of ambition, hope and hard work that's deserving of every ounce of praise we can offer. But as we lead into what federal officials repeatedly warn will be among the most challenging fire seasons in history, we cannot help but wonder whether these words will be met with action from provincial or local governments.

This year, the broom drop-off has necessarily shifted its funding model from pay-what-you-can to a pay-per-load requirement. We would suggest that a government investment in fire prevention — staff, facilities and funding for broom collection and disposal — might be more cost-efficient than responding to a broom-fed blaze.

This year, the broom drop-off has necessarily shifted its funding model from pay-what-you-can to a pay-per-load requirement. We would suggest that a government investment in fire prevention — staff, facilities and funding for broom collection and disposal — might be more cost-efficient than responding to a broom-fed blaze.

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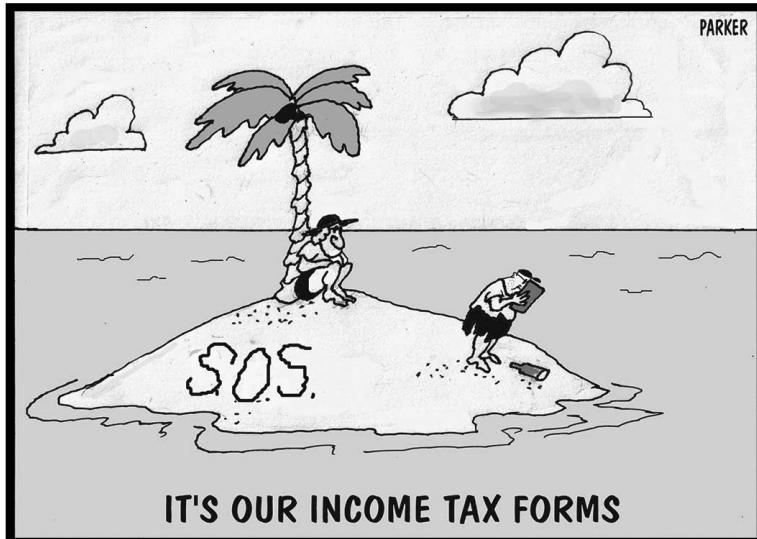
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Gold - Community Service Award



Trust dream fading fast

BY FRANTS ATTORP

Advisory Planning Commission Bylaw 467 has been broken, and the consequences for Salt Spring and the entire Islands Trust area are enormous.

In a recent letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I described how a Salt Spring trustee formed a hand-picked advisory planning group; how that group, which included the trustee herself, met "informally" for many months in 2020; how it wrote a report and submitted it to a local government of which the trustee was part; and how that government implemented the group's recommendations, effectively replacing a "comprehensive" official community plan (OCP) review Trust planners had proposed.

The goal, as made evident in the media, has been to break free of growth limits in our OCP. A key part of the plan was to create an official Housing Action Plan Task Force operating outside the context of a comprehensive OCP review. That task force was legally established in accordance with Bylaw 467, but soon proceeded to violate its own terms of reference by making recommendations contrary to the policy intent" of our OCP.

Bylaw 467 has many requirements: criteria for selecting members, appointment of members, election of a chairperson, a detailed referral, meetings that are open to the public, minute taking and a stipulation that a trustee cannot be part of the group.

So why did the lobby group not follow the same rules? To be clear, unappointed community members have no responsibilities under Islands Trust law. But trustee Laura Patrick and the other members of the former LTC were bound by Bylaw 467, which is an extension of the Local Government Act, and, unfortunately, they decided to ignore it.

That the initial, unappointed lobby group was in fact an advisory planning body was

VIEWPOINT

made clear in the LTC resolution that created it. The group's role was to "advise" the LTC and "provide advice and recommendations on policy and regulations." This means Bylaw 467, which extends to "special projects" involving "land use and community planning," should have applied.

That two of the trustees, Laura Patrick and Peter Luckham, were members of the Trust's Executive Committee which is responsible for ensuring all policies and procedures are respected, makes it even more egregious. So why are events of 2020 relevant today? Because, when the planned OCP review was derailed by the housing "initiative," environmental protection became secondary. Suddenly, the agenda shifted to trustee Patrick's impossible dream of providing "safe, secure, appropriate housing options that are affordable for all demographics and household types in perpetuity." It explains why, even after 16 years without a full review of our OCP, we are now being offered a "focused" review built around housing rather than a "comprehensive" review as originally proposed by Trust planners.

Since all Trust documents are interconnected, Patrick has championed efforts to amend the mandate. A new interpretation, reached in-camera by Trust Council last September, deprived the mandate of its environmental focus by making everything from tourism to infrastructure a priority. It will now guide development of the new Trust Policy Statement which governs all Trust islands.

A Salt Spring OCP project document states: "The Islands Trust Policy Statement is currently undergoing a major amendment, the results of which will inform the scale of change that a renewed OCP can invite." It seems that change is going to be significant and dependent on the political leanings of trustees. The other Gulf Islands dream is fading fast.

THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Do you have Scotch broom in your neighbourhood?

Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Is the SSILTC decision to not proactively enforce against STVRs a good idea??

37 82

YES NO

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ISLAND VOICES

LETTERS to the editor

Dragonfly and CRD issue clarified

I'm writing to clarify some issues regarding the Dragonfly housing project, following the April 17 letter to the editor from Fernando and Tami dos Santos.

The North Salt Spring Waterworks District (NSSWD) moratorium on new connections means that Dragonfly must rely on groundwater, which is owned and regulated by the province. In addition, since Dragonfly is a strata ownership model, provincial legislation requires the strata corporation or an existing water purveyor to establish a professionally managed water utility. NSSWD declined to establish such a utility and I requested CRD staff to examine the feasibility of CRD playing this role.

CRD staff prepared a report for the CRD Board, which approved the establishment of a CRD water utility subject to conditions that would be required for any proponent in these circumstances, such as:

- providing a housing agreement ensuring affordability of the strata units;
- providing a satisfactory design of the water treatment plant.

At this time, neither of these conditions has been met. CRD was also working to secure approvals for either establishing a CRD utility within, or alternatively removing the property from, the NSSWD service area.

The Dragonfly proponents deserve our

thanks for their efforts and hopefully another group will take up their offer to transfer the property to continue this much-needed affordable housing project. As demonstrated by the Croftonbrook project, an affordable rental approach would not only simplify the water supply issue but would also be eligible for government grant funding.

GARY HOLMAN,
SSI CRD DIRECTOR

Remembering Rita

Rita Dods left this earth a while back for a well-earned rest and it occurred to me that half a century ago everyone on the island knew her, but now very few did. That is a shame because so many people who have kept the community alive tend to disappear quietly and unnoticed.

When my dad went into the ground the priest referred to him as a "hands-on Christian." Rita would qualify for the same description. She was not a "me" person. It was always about others.

I first met her when she ran The Reef, or The Chip Shop, as it was commonly known. As a rule, daughter Loretta was at one of the tables working on her colouring book under her mother's watchful eye. In John Grain's Mod and Lavender book he describes the atmosphere around town in the 1960s. Young people had several places to go for food, foolishness and social interaction, something sadly lacking today. (John's dad was my

English teacher and encouraged me. Thanks, Mr. Grain.)

At Rita's we were welcomed, relaxed and gently steered in the right direction. She was our second mom and always told our parents how wonderful we all were, the only time I can recall her telling a bald-faced lie. Mrs. Dods was NOT a push-over, however. If someone got out of line he would hear about it loud and clear. No crap would be tolerated. I remember when Tex was shooting off his mouth and driving everyone in the place nuts, Mrs. Dods came thundering out of the kitchen and yelled across the room, "Peter! That's enough! Be quiet!" Peace was restored. This balance is what made her "real." Hard working to support her family but still with time to do for others, she was a valued asset in the community, never seeking attention or praise for what she did.

One night when I was working for the highways department plowing snow, in out of the crappy weather came Rita with a plate of sandwiches for us. This was not anything out of the ordinary, just something she did.

I feel it would be an error on my part to just let her go without letting the newer residents know about the loss of someone who made a difference when the island was not what it has become. I won't say goodbye, Rita. We'll see you in a while. We know where to find you.

MIKE STACEY,
SALT SPRING

Solution starts with us

In a time when plastics are threatening every aspect of our existence, it is encouraging to see two local businesses — The Salt Jar and the Laundromat — working hard to reverse that trend.

Thank you, Driftwood, for bringing it to our attention with your April 24 articles. We now have options to adding yet another container to that never-ending pile of plastics destined for recycling, or for the ocean, landfills, whale bodies, human embryos, etc.

So next time you're out and about, load up a bag with some containers and come on down to the back of The Root Hub on Beddis Road to check out the Salt Jar. Who knows, you might just go home with some feta cheese in glass, flour, balsamic vinegar, maple syrup, shampoo, body lotion, laundry strips, etc. Take it from me, body lotion in a jar or reused plastic container means you get to use every bit; my Nana would be pleased. Should you forget your containers, stop in anyway, you'll be glad you did.

See thesaltjar.ca for more details and opening hours.

Yes, we can wait for someone else to solve the problem, but we already know that's not going to happen. The solution starts with us.

MICHELLE GRANT,
SALT SPRING

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"It's a bit of the rationale for why the new brush truck looks so 'mean' for the streets of Salt Spring. That road over the last 10 years has gone significantly downhill."

SALT SPRING FIRE CHIEF JAMIE HOLMES ON THE CONDITION OF MOUNT MAXWELL ROAD

Finally getting used to island smiles, but not the hugs and kisses

If I'm honest, and I am, scrupulously, I have a rather hard time doing nice. At least, not in the relentlessly pleasant way that so many Salt Springers do nice. Hugs and kisses up and down the grocery aisles, hugs and kisses in the middle of the road, hugs and kisses halfway across a pedestrian crossing. This is a small, cosy community, so I've never understood why so many people greet each other as if they've just crossed the Gobi Desert to get here.

And the smiling! People here smile at me all the time, and I can't be certain if they know me and I should smile back or whether I simply look comical. I suspect the latter because, after 15 years in retirement, I've mostly given up looking in any way entirely well-balanced or even slightly respectable. I was thoroughly respectable for about 50 years and have a closet somewhere crammed with suits, ties and moth balls to prove it, so while I'm not yet ready for dungarees, a man bun and nose rings, I am, much to Mrs. Mac's anguish, far less concerned with my appearance than I ever was.

I think it's the smiles that I once found so peculiar, so different.

Nowadays, mellowed by my many years marooned here, I almost welcome them and occasionally even smile back, but in my other life, played out in a variety of big cities, if someone smiled at you in the street or on the metro you simply walked faster or moved down the train. A random, unexpected, uninvited smile was clearly a sign of insanity because only mad people smile at strangers before they bludgeon them to death. And as for hugging in the aisles of, say, Tesco or Carrefour, you would very quickly be run over by an aggressively driven shopping cart. Stop for a chat in the middle of Leytonstone High Road and you'd be under a bus within 20 seconds.

Europeans are certainly less inclined to smile at strangers than Canadians. Or to respond to a welcoming smile. Several years ago, Walmart opened a few stores in Germany and instructed its staff to greet shoppers with a smile and the German equivalent of the entirely American "Have a nice day." "Ich wünsche dir einen schönen Tag," which doesn't exactly trip off the tongue, but it does carry the same vacuous message. "Wie geht es dir heute?" comes closer, but most



Paul McElroy
+ ANOTHER
THING

Germans prefer to keep their day — good, bad or indifferent — to themselves, vielen Dank.

The instruction to staff lasted about six months until Walmart bosses resigned themselves to the fact that German shoppers, like most Europeans, instinctually didn't trust anyone who simmers for a living. They didn't know how to respond and simply wanted to be left to their shopping without being encouraged to "Have a nice day," which they knew was going to be just like every other day. And frankly, if there was one nation least inclined to public displays of affection it is Germany. Fine people certainly these days, but not much given to frivolity or idle chitchat unless it's accompanied by leather shorts and copious amounts of lager.

In some respects, the inescap-

able Canadian phatic is even more threatening to a European, especially a British European (if we're allowed to call them European anymore) because it invites a response. "How's it going, eh?" is quite obviously a question and consequently demands an answer, even though the clerk isn't expecting one and has no intention of engaging in conversation.

What makes it especially difficult is that the question levelled at you across the checkout counter invariably comes from a teenage part-timer who in reality has as much interest in your well-being as they have in the politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. And why would they? They've got 60 years before their prostates become a conversation topic and they are most likely considerably more interested in the young lady stacking sardines than they are in the anticipated pleasures of sitting down to a nice cup of tea and a biscuit.

"How's your day going, eh?"

"Well, since you're asking, not bad for an old fellah, knees a bit off a problem, but in truth I'm more worried about the state of the world. Not so much for myself, you understand, because I don't

have much more to give beyond getting through the next five years, but for your generation and the next. \$89.43? Of course. Debit. Thank you."

Furthermore, I don't think I've had a conversation with a teenage girl for 60 years and even then it was stupefyingly difficult as the equally teenaged inmate of an all-boys school. Fifteen-year-old girls were going on 22 while 15-year-old boys were all pimples and unintended falsetto. I was still in short pants, for God's sake, while the girls, I discovered much, much later, were wearing brassieres!

Don't think for a moment that I am in any way disparaging our teen clerks; my own sons did their stint behind a counter and I'm sure it was formative (although I don't remember getting any family discounts, which would have been useful with three boys who all ate enough to feed a small African nation), but anyone who has owned teenagers will know that conversation with an elderly adult isn't big on their social calendars.

Have a good one, eh?

paulmcelroy@shaw.ca



ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT



KALEIDOSCOPE KIDS



PHOTO COURTESY SS CIRCUS & GYMNASTICS

Tsunami Circus members Hannah Rowthorne, Sana Wallace and Emme Hannah practise a routine on the chandelier in preparation for the Rainbow Kaleidoscope show at the Salt Spring Island Multi Space gymnasium on Thursday, May 9 at 6 p.m., Friday, May 10 at 4 p.m., and Saturday, May 11 at 2 and 6 p.m. Advance tickets are available through West of the Moon (cash only). A diverse group of 50 children and youth aged seven to 19 make up the Tsunami team, led by a dedicated team of volunteer coaches. Circus members have been working to create the show since last fall.

WE'VE STRUCK GOLD!

Your Gulf Islands Driftwood just snagged the **Gold Award** for General Excellence and the Community Service award at this year's Ma Murray Awards—where we celebrate the crème de la crème of community journalism across BC and the Yukon. We are grateful to our readers and advertisers for their six decades of support.

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Driftwood GULF ISLANDS

MUSICAL THEATRE

Venus Conundrum show ready to entertain

Music of late '50s and early '60s anchors crazy original comedy

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Feuding Greek and Roman gods and mortals of a midwestern U.S. diner in the early 1960s meet head on in the Good Company Entertainment Group's latest original musical stage production.

The Venus Conundrum, written and directed by Suzanne Rouger, promises both hilarious comedy and fantastic music, with hits from the late 1950s and early '60s performed by the show's live band.

"The premise is that there's a conflict between two of the goddesses and one of the goddesses — Venus — sends the other goddess to the early '60s to be miserable because it's 'uninspired, artistically,'" explained Rouger. "It all takes place with this kind of mythological warfare in this diner in the early '60s, and Cupid is involved and arrows go awry."

She said the action is just plain "silly" and anyone who has watched parts of the rehearsals ends up in stitches.

"It's almost like [the TV show] Happy Days as a musical," she mused . . . with the warring and mischievous gods thrown in for good measure.

The cast is a mix of Good Company stalwarts, such as Megan Colgan (playing Venus), Dion Hackett (Vulcan and Val parts) and Sarah Dawn Morris as mortal Frankie Bennett, plus performers from some past shows and some newcomers. Since singing ability is a crucial part of a successful musical, Rouger has recruited some new voices by attending karaoke nights at the Legion and Moby's Pub.

"We have some female voices that are amazing," said Karen Arney, the show's music director, executive producer and co-producer with Rouger.

One of those individuals, Eve Middleton-Meyer (who plays the goddess Kalliope), is even commuting from Vancouver to participate.

For The Venus Conundrum, Salt Spring stage manager extraordinaire MacKenzie Williamson has passed her usual responsibilities to Johane Sinclair and is one of the cast members (Dr. Naomi Hall) instead.

Joining Arney in the band this time are Jim Shultz on guitar (and also playing Jupiter), Daveo Daviday on drums (also in Cupid/Cooper roles) and Ben Arney (Linus) on bass.

With a smaller band the music is more chorally focused, she said.

Cool dance routines are also part of the show. Rouger's choreography even includes a couple of tap-dance numbers.

"I'm pretty impressed with them, just because it's not an easy thing to do — and they're doing it," she said about the tap-dancers.

"I don't think that I've seen a choreo session with more smiles than in this thing," she added. "And they're really enjoying the swing dancing too."

Shows run at ArtSpring on Thursdays through Saturdays, May 9 to 11, and May 16 to 18, at 7:30 p.m. Opening night has a special ticket-price offer. Tickets are available through ArtSpring online and at the box office.

The Venus Conundrum will be the last show presented by Good Company Entertainment Group, as principals Rouger and Arney are ready to move on to other creative projects.

Their most recent show was last year's thematic rock concert Dogs in the Moonlight, with Time Piece and Peter on the Brink two of their other favourites of the past 10 years.



Viva Chorale!



CONCERT PREVIEW

Viva Chorale presents Earth Voices

Singer-composer Leela Gilday joins chorale for May concert

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's Viva Chorale invites islanders on a musical journey through a connection with the land and our changing climate — and welcomes a Juno Award-winning composer to join them on the ArtSpring stage for opening night.

Earth Voices is Viva Chorale's spring program, and features an original work composed for the choir by Yellowknife singer/songwriter Leela Gilday, titled Gentle the Heart, according to musical director Caroni Young.

"Every three years, Viva Chorale commissions a composer to write a new piece for the choir," said Young. "We knew that we were going to have Leela's piece, but we didn't know what it was going to be about until we got it. It's so beautiful and heartfelt — all about our connections to the lands."

Gilday is a Dene nation member, Young said, and some of the language — and many of the traditional themes — are incorporated into the piece.

"She's actually going to fly in for the premiere," said Young, "and because she's a fabulous performer, we've invited her to play a couple songs as well."

Young travels each weekend herself, taking time from her teaching position at Capilano College to direct the choir on Salt Spring. Earth Voices, she said, is a concert divided into four parts, featuring

Canadian composers such as Tim Corlis, Stephen Chatman and Sheryl Sewepagaham — each part built around one line of a poem that is the final piece.

"Some pieces are designed to make us think about our role in climate change, or how we take care of the earth," said Young. "And our place as a part of the cycle of life — we are the earth, and it is us."

Piano accompanist Shirley Bunyan returns to support the singers, joined by Derrick Milton on flugelhorn, Jamie Hall on marimba and — stepping from among the singers to play guitar and ukulele — Kai Tocher.

Viva Chorale performs Earth Voices at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 4, with a matinee at 2 p.m. on Sunday, May 5.

Tickets are sold through the artspring.ca website or the ArtSpring box office.

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what's on this week



ISLAND LIFE

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Ruckle Heritage Farm Day on tap for Sunday

Traditional rural life celebrated

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF
FROM RUCKLE HERITAGE FARM CONTRIBUTION

One of Salt Spring's favourite annual events returns this Sunday, May 5, with Ruckle Heritage Farm Day celebrating farming and rural life on the island.

Running from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the event displays heritage farming and crafts side-by-side with nature in the beautiful Ruckle Farm setting.

The day is geared toward educational heritage farm related themes from the days of old, and free family fun. The event invites participation on every level, be it volunteering, attending or taking part in the day's many

hands-on-activities facilitated by volunteers.

Educational booths demonstrate old-time crafts like spinning and weaving, basket making, knitting and quilting, and the blacksmithing group and farrier will demonstrate their skills alongside the old log forge building. People can try their hand at butter churning next to the old milk house, where information on milking and cheesemaking can be found near the antique equipment on display.

Log-sawing as it used to be done invites participation, while nail hammering, face painting and the fish pond for kids are endlessly popular.

Inside the barn are archive displays, as well as old farming equipment, along with a new display by the Salt Spring Archives of neighbouring Indigenous pioneer Sophie King's drift-

wood folk art. The 1872 homestead, the Henry Ruckle house, will be open to view.

Picnic seating is available for patrons of the food vendors on site. Use of cash is preferred. Music will be provided by Marianne Grittani and Rose Birney, with special guest Valdy.

Other events include sheep herding with Ruckle Heritage Farm's Mike Lane and his border collies, and Pieter Demooey demonstrating the evolution of sheep shearing, from hand to electric shears.

The farm's turkeys, bottle-fed orphan lambs and goats will be seen as visitors walk around the grounds enjoying the farm scene and the island's friendly faces.

At 152 years of age, Ruckle Heritage Farm is the oldest working farm in the Gulf Islands.



DRIFTWOOD FILE PHOTO BY BILLIE WOODS

Nail-pounding action at last year's Ruckle Heritage Farm Day. This year's event is on Sunday, May 5 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

ISLAND COMMERCE

'Business of Making' workshop launches fresh collaboration

Chamber of Commerce reaches out to boost underrepresented arts businesses

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring Island's Chamber of Commerce is launching something of a renewal campaign, according to executive director Matthew Quetton, hoping to shift its focus toward helping steward the island's economy and culture into the next decade.

If that sounds ambitious, it's because the chamber feels it's important; in the face of a changing Salt Spring Island, Quetton said the island's business association wants to find ways to better represent and support all Salt Spring businesses — and that means a lot of reaching out, particularly to those without a long history of chamber participation.

"We realized there's an opportunity for us to better represent the whole 'business' constituency," said Quetton. "There's a large group of home-based businesses on the island — arts and crafts, or tradespeople, or remote digital workers. We're keen to connect and see how the chamber can be more valuable to folks like that than in the past."

To that end, and in the first of what Quetton hopes will be a series of such events, the chamber has partnered with Salt Spring Arts (SSA) for a "Business of Making" panel — a professional development day for the

arts community, for those who may not have a precise notion of where to take their craft next.

Quetton will moderate a discussion on how to navigate the shift from making art to successfully selling that work in a retail environment, with the help of SSA board chair Julie Kemble of Giulietta Designs, curator and former Artcraft manager Richard Steel and Julie MacKinnon, owner of a ceramics business and the Hey Julie School of Clay.

"If they haven't already, every business on Salt Spring is going to change hands in the next 10 years."

MATTHEW QUETTON
Executive director, Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce

Attendees are invited to bring along specific artworks or handmade goods for a post-panel review of pricing and presentation; the event is free for SSA members, \$15 for everyone else. It's a non-traditional take on chambers of commerce; but Quetton, who began with the chamber this year, said the new focus was born partly from discussions about change on Salt Spring — talks that began, appropriately enough, among new chamber board members who recently moved here and purchased businesses from retiring owners themselves.

Every generation of islander sees change, he said — but against the backdrop of shifts surrounding the pandemic or climate change, what's coming just within the next few years might seem startling. The chamber, according to Quetton, believes Salt Spring Island needs to start developing a sort of succession plan — acknowledging there's a significant economic transition ahead, agreeing on the culture and community they want to see afterwards, and working backwards.

"If they haven't already, every business on Salt Spring is going to change hands in the next 10 years," said Quetton. "Many of the conversations I have on a weekly basis are with people arriving, saying, 'Hey, can you help me find a business to buy on Salt Spring, because I'm interested in moving my family here' — or at the other end, people getting older and asking, 'Who might come to buy my business, and what might that look like?'"

The chamber is working to prepare its membership renewal campaign in early May, Quetton said — adding technology for the renewal platform, bringing in resources and looking to roll out a searchable directory of businesses on Salt Spring. In the meantime, the Business of Making panel takes place at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 8 at Mahon Hall. To register, visit saltspringarts.com/product/artist-pro-d/.



MATTHEW QUETTON

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Happy Victoria Day!

The Driftwood
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Mon, May 20th.

Advertising deadline for the
May 22 edition will be Weds, May 15th.

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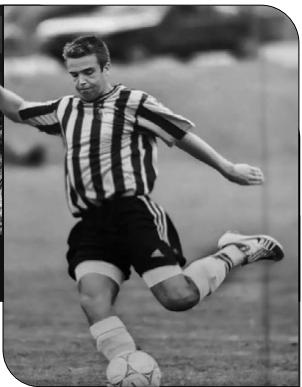
Cardin Michael Sheldon Davis
Jan. 16th 1990 – Apr. 14th 2024

It is with profound sadness and complete heartbreak we announce the unexpected passing of our sweet, handsome, amazing son Cardin. Incredible son to Kathy Kendall and Mike Davis, little brother to Tyler (Gill) and Kecia (Sheehan) and little bro to many others. Cardin was a loving and playful uncle to Anniina, Savannah and Malika, always bringing a smile to the girls' faces. Among so many other amazing titles, he was a beloved grandson, nephew, cousin, devoted teammate and friend. He was also a passionate animal lover and dog whisperer and is already missed by our boys (his dog brothers), Doug and Frankie.

Born in Victoria and raised on Salt Spring, Cardin graduated in 2008 from GISS. Athletic from a young age he excelled in all sports, especially soccer. He made his mark on the GISS high school team helping them reach the Provincial championships, played two years up on Metro teams, the BC provincial soccer teams and U15 Canadian National team. He received scholarship offers to many universities but settled on Trinity Western where they made it to the national championships every year that he played. He travelled extensively with soccer to many locations around the world, but no matter where soccer would take him, Salt Spring was where he most loved to play.

Once he returned to Salt Spring he started work as a landscaper which fit in perfectly with his love of the outdoors. He eventually started his own landscaping company and gained the most joy from the connection he made with some very special clients.

Although cut short, Cardin lived a full life surrounded by family, friends, fun, soccer, love and laughter. Family, friends and close connections meant everything to him. He had the most incredibly kind heart, was so modest, chivalrous, compassionate and always put others before himself, never expecting anything in return. The impact of his good nature and charming smile was evident and heartwarming. Cardin had an incredible sense of humour, a quick and sarcastic wit and loved to make people laugh. He was always the life of the party. He lived up to his name,



and was such a Card. You could hear his infectious laugh before you entered the room. Music was a part of his soul. He loved to dress well, loved shopping and his fashion sense was always on point. Cardy, dance parties with you were always the best. We will continue to dance in your honour and carry you in our hearts always and forever until we dance together again.

“Cardy’s Big Party” Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, May 11th at 1:00 pm at the Gulf Island Secondary School Gym. To honour Cardin’s love for ‘the look’, please dress to the nines and be as colourful as Cardin would be. There will be a soccer scrimmage afterwards on the high school field for anyone who wants to participate – we know Cardin would have loved a game with friends and will probably be commenting on our skills from above (no cleats required). There will be an informal bonfire and get together at his parent’s house, Kathy and Mike’s 232 Fulford Ganges Rd afterwards. Drop in, stay awhile or a little, have a laugh, a toast, a cheers and feel the love from, and for this amazing human. He is so loved and will be so missed.

If you would like to share a memory or story and speak at the service please let us know by emailing Kathy and Mike at daviskendall@shaw.ca. We would love that. We look forward to sharing memories and celebrating our beautiful boy Saturday May 11th.

For anyone who cannot attend we will be streaming the service so please reach out for the link.

We are so thankful for this beautiful community. We greatly appreciate the incredible outpouring of love for Cardin and support for our family.

If you wish to make a donation to a cause that is near and dear to Cardin’s heart please do so to either Raincoast Dog Rescue @ raincoastdogrescue.com or the Salt Spring Island Youth Soccer organization email: ssiuregistrar@gmail.com

In Memoriam

In Memoriam



Salt Spring Island
**NATURAL
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Music

Music For Young Minds

Mission: “To nurture children’s need for musical education while fostering their well-being.” A youth led, non-profit, founded by GISS student Jasmine Pamintuan. Seeking adult music enthusiasts with experience as board members willing to contribute their time to a meaningful cause.

Contact:
jasmine.pamintuan28@gmail.com



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Announcements

Announcements

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Announcements

Announcements

The Annual General Meeting OF THE salt spring arts council

Tuesday, May 7, 2024, 5:30pm
Mahon Hall - 114 Rainbow Road

For details, members and Notice of Special Resolution:
www.saltspringarts.com

Everyone Welcome. Members in good standing are eligible to vote, with memberships available online.

RSVP here: www.saltspringarts.com/agm/2024-agm-rsvp

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In Memoriam

In Memoriam



John A. Ellacott, Long time resident & business owner of S.S.I. Garbage went to be with Jesus on Oct.10, 2023 in Penticton at the age of 75.

He leaves behind his wife, Carla, children, Cynthia and John Paul, step children, Mark and Donnie, grandchildren, Jon, MacKensie, Bree, and Brittany, great grandchildren, Wyatt and Aria. Sister, Susan and brother, Mike.

John was known for his kindness and generosity!

There will be a Celebration of his life
at the Legion on May 4th at 3pm.

Thank You

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A big bunch of technicolour roses to the team at Westland Insurance - Juliana Paul, Andrina Hayes, Kai Cao, Belyene Eugenio and Sarah Harker - for volunteering for tech tutoring at Meadowbrook for us. And, an extra thanks to Juliana Paul for a successful Cyber Security presentation. Your community service is much appreciated! ☺

*From your friends at
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RADIO-CONTROLLED SAILING

Sailing club hosts one-metre yacht racers

Canada's reps at world championships among visitors

BY MARTIN HERBERT
FOR SALT SPRING'S IOM GROUP

The Salt Spring Island Sailing Club hosted an invitational regatta for wooden international one-metre yachts over the weekend and the event drew entrants from Ontario, Vancouver, Seattle and various points across Vancouver Island.

Seventeen boats competed, including the two Canadian representatives to the next world championship competition in Australia. The emphasis was on having fun while sailing in a fleet of beautiful boats.

Since 2016, many local and West Coast sailors have been turning to hand-made wooden boats, both for their beauty and for their strength. Top racers have started designing their own boats within the class rules, searching for a little extra speed, and the result has been a general improvement of hull and rigging designs. An event like last weekend's race brings together a group where thoughts and

ideas can be exchanged and the level of racing elevated.

The Salt Spring Island Sailing Club is full of talented people who love the art of sailing and from this pool of knowledge the regatta organizers were able to avail themselves of race officers of exceptional quality. Greg Slakov, Holly Slakov and Nicholas Sladen-Dew ran a very efficient regatta under trying weather and wind conditions and did the sailing club proud. They also kept the fun aspect of the event in a prominent position and they received much praise from the sailors involved. Rosemary Harbrecht and April Faget kept the racers fuelled, delivering lunches to the docks and with a delicious evening meal on the Saturday night.

The seven-strong local contingent all managed to get individual races in the top half of the fleet with Paul Faget and Martin Herbert winning individual races and placing sixth and second overall. Sunday saw very exciting sailing with strong winds rolling over the hills, dropping down on the water in unexpected and unpredictable ways. This kept the sailors on their toes.

Jill Oakes, newcomer to the sport, suffered a broken main sail boom, but unwilling to drop out, splinted it and



PHOTO BY AMY MELIUS

Radio-controlled wooden international one-metre yachts vie for honours in the waters off the Salt Spring Island Sailing Club over the April 27-28 weekend.

continued racing. This display of determination was much to the delight of the seasoned veterans of the sport.

Jason Rhodes from Vancouver won the regatta and will be racing for Canada at

the next world championship. We wish him well.

The fleet disbanded with promises of having more fun events like this in the future.

BIRDING

Avian enthusiast shares 'Big Year' challenge with islanders

Nature Salt Spring event at Lions Hall on Friday

BY KATHLEEN MASER
FOR NATURE SALT SPRING

Spring heralds the birding season for many islanders. Migrants passing through attract a lot of attention

amongst local birders.

This year we have something special arriving on the island: a remarkable young birder, a migrant himself, from Victoria. At 26 years of age, Liam Ragan has set himself a challenge called the "Big Year," in which he hopes to sight and document more bird species on Vancouver Island in one year than ever before, a kind of Guinness World Records thing. (The cur-

rent record is 275 species set by Ann Nightingale in 2015.)

Sponsored by Nature Salt Spring, Ragan will provide an entertaining evening at Lions Hall beginning at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 3.

Ragan holds an influential position within BC Nature as the provincial coordinator for Important Bird Areas and is the First Nations liaison for the new Key Biodiversity Areas in

B.C. He travels the length and breadth of the province co-ordinating and leading surveys of birds but also surveys of many other animal species at risk. With the recent and startling revelation of the greater than 50 per cent decline in the number of birds since the 1970s, he will describe and discuss how folks in local communities are coming together to protect areas significant to

birds and other species, ultimately with the goal to preserve biodiversity.

Ragan's presentation will be important for anyone who appreciates the bird diversity sharing this island with us. Now, can we find a bird on our island that Ragan has not already counted? Let's get on it!

For further details visit naturesaltspring.org.

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Player development and fun some highlights of the youth season



Malcolm Legg
SOCCER
ROUND-UP

The Salt Spring United soccer season has come to a close with their wrap-up event called Showcase of Stars. A season that started back around Sept. 1, 2023 finally reached its last Saturday under sunny skies with lots of games, a soccer golf event and free hot dogs and drinks.

The season featured a tots program (U4/5) with about 35 participants, a house program (U6-U9) that had over 130 players divided by age groups, a house league of four teams at boys U9/10, six teams playing small-sided games, four full-field youth teams, a women's Div. 2 side and affiliation with the three men's teams on Salt Spring.

The real highlight of all these

groups was not their successes but more related to the development of our younger players, good competitive teams at older ages and, most of all, lots of fun.

These successes were only made possible by a very hard group of volunteers who deserve thanks from everyone. Firstly the coaches, led by technical director Josip Bratanovic, who week after week came out to work with the players or guide them through games. The hours they dedicate to their players are truly something to give thanks for.

Then there are the referees who come out weekend after weekend, through rain, wind

and cold, to referee or run lines on the games being played. Without them there would be no games, so thank you all.

Then there is the executive: Greg Staicesku (uniforms), Ciaran Aytom (indoor scheduler), Willy Schulze (CRC), Jennifer Lannan (treasurer), Jeff Knutson (constitution/bylaws), Jesus Cabello (director), Dylan Laister (director), Maggie Montague (registrar) and myself (president/scheduler). Without these people there would be no program to enjoy.

Finally, thanks to our support staff: Michele MacKenzie (concession), Finlay Shaw (field worker), PARC (fields/bookings), School District 64 (fields/gym bookings) and Tim Hortons (uniforms).

Several programs are still running, including the Spring Academy until the end of May, and the Spring League until June 12.

Registration is open for the 2024/25 season online at saltspringunited.com.

YOUTH TENNIS

Positive culture thrives on courts, at school

Youth players achieve at all levels with Salt Spring program; tennis team established at GISS

BY MARGARET FISHER
FOR SALT SPRING TENNIS ASSOCIATION

It's been a year of growth and success for junior tennis on Salt Spring Island with our students achieving impressive results under the tutelage of coach Mukul Karthikeyan.

Salt Spring hosted the B.C. 2-stars Boys U16 and U18 event at the indoor courts on April 21 and 22.

Scott Goddard, Nate Kray-Gibson and Gabriel Gordon all competed hard against competition from Vancouver and Victoria, but went down in the first round of tough competition. Scott and Nate recovered well, winning the consolation events in their respective age groups.

These events are key in providing our local players a chance to compete on home turf, saving travel expenses and time. The Salt Spring Tennis Association (SSTA) hopes to increase events for the younger cohort coming up through coach Karthikeyan's tennis training sessions.

On the heels of this local tournament, the newly created Gulf Islands

Secondary School (GISS) tennis team sent a strong contingent of players to the mid-island tournament held at Brentwood College on April 22. This nascent team claimed third place out of five school teams. Not only did the students play great tennis but they also comported themselves well both on and off the courts. Special thanks to our own Marj Blackwood, Blair Carley and John Lapointe for assisting with coaching during this event.

Individual successes include Fiona Huang, at age 9, being the youngest player ever to represent B.C. at the Junior Nationals; Sidney Bush, 7, competing in the red ball rookie tour events; Tao Prikoda, 9, playing in rising star tourneys; Kray-Gibson and Gordon competing in 2-, 3- and 3.5-star events; Goddard, Filbert Zhang and Jason Fan competing in the selection series and provincials; and Elyse Walsh, Rio Lloyd-Karr, Sacha Miller, Katya Miller, Fionn Byrne and Renee Hayden helping the high school team move toward the island finals.

All these young players have worked hard on their tennis and we congratulate them, their families and their coaches on these outstanding results. The association also thanks the many SSTA members who have donated generously to assist with court and coaching fees.

See saltspringtennis.ca for more information.

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