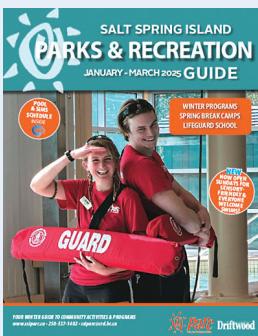


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7 Local musicians shine in Salt Spring Groove



2 Mayne Island fallow deer in CRD sights

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- Buckerfield's
- Canadian Tire
- Country Grocer
- Home Hardware
- Lifestyle Markets
- London Drugs
- No Frills
- Pharmasave
- Thrifty Foods



Driftwood

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FERRIES

Ferry advisory groups scuttled

Community reps surprised by out-of-the-blue announcement

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Fallout continues after last week's surprise dissolution of BC Ferries' longstanding ferry advisory committee (FAC) system, as local officials question whether the goal is more about "controlling the message" from the company.

Committee members were taken by surprise Monday, Nov. 25 during a conference call where they expected to hear an update on a report on fleet-wide short-term priorities. Instead, they were told the 13 all-volunteer FACs would be "retired" by the end of April 2025.

An email the ferry company sent to FAC members indicated it had been in conversations with local government representatives to inform its decision, and the press release that accompanied the announcement included quotes of support for the plan from some B.C. elected officials, including mayors.

But elected representatives on Salt Spring or the Southern Gulf Islands were not among them.

Gary Holman, the Capital Regional District (CRD) director for the Salt Spring Electoral Area and a FAC member, confirmed the announcement was a "complete surprise to every FAC in the province," and said the lack of an opportunity to suggest ways to improve communications left him suspicious of the ferry company's motives.

"My perception is that moving to a 'modern' digital approach isn't about improving communication, but controlling the message," said Holman, who also serves on the elected Salt Spring Local Community Commission.

FACS continued on 3

CHRISTMAS BOUQUET: Rachel McLaughlin of Stay Shiny jewellery, one of the Fulford Artisan Christmas Fair vendors, holds a bouquet from the Felt Florist booth operated by Amanda Chudak. Several craft fairs plus the farm stand tour took place on the weekend. For more holiday event photos, see page 6. For upcoming seasonal entertainment and other happenings, see our What's On calendar on page 8.

PHOTO BY ROB LOWRIE

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PHOTOS BY ROBB MAGLEY

HARBOUR CLEAN-UP: A Salt Spring Island beach clean-up on Saturday, Nov. 30 brought more than 20 volunteers and managed to fill most of a 12-yard haul-away bin with post-storm trash on the shoreline at Ganges, according to organizer Katie Ford, who said supporters included Salt Spring Garbage and Recycling, Moby's Pub and Windsor Plywood. "With all the floating styrofoam and garbage, I felt like I had to do something," said Ford. "It turned out everyone else here cares just as much." Leftover resources will be rolled over to offset costs for future clean-ups at other island beaches in the coming year.

WILDLIFE

CRD advocates on Mayne Island fallow deer

Officials will ask province to fund population control efforts

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A Mayne Island group has successfully recruited regional officials to help tackle an animal problem there, as the Capital Regional District (CRD) board will be urging the B.C. government for sustained funding to control Mayne's invasive fallow deer.

Michael Kilpatrick, representing the Mayne Island Fallow Deer Committee, lobbied the CRD's Electoral Area Committee Wednesday, Nov. 13, explaining the discussion was not surrounding black-tailed deer, the island's native species, but a now-invasive European deer.

"These deer were introduced to Mayne Island 30 years ago under a permit from the province," said Kilpatrick. "It was an agricultural permit to farm and raise the deer as game."

Some of those deer escaped — or possibly were released — almost immediately. Kilpatrick said there were about 50 roaming non-native deer counted just six years after the farm operation opened, and while it was unclear whether they were deliberately let out or found a way through fencing, the population today stands between 1,100 and 1,800 animals.

Given Mayne's relatively small size — 2,300 hectares, or 21 square kilometres — the impact has been felt across the island. Kilpatrick shared photographs of landscapes turned to what he called "green desert," where grass, saplings and even ground cover for native birds have dropped dramatically due to deer browsing.

"This was originally a provincial problem," said Kilpatrick, "but 30 days after their escape, they become designated as wildlife — and because they're considered game, the province will not [automatically] recognize them as being invasive."

Kilpatrick said Mayne Island's residents had tried for years to gain traction with the federal government, which had

indicated it was not their matter to address, and had consulted lawyers on whether the farm's original owners could be held responsible — a course of action unlikely to yield results, he said.

Some changes in provincial legislation will be necessary to allow for large-scale culling of the deer, Kilpatrick said, noting that hunting with a rifle is banned on Mayne Island.

"These sorts of things have to be negotiated through the province," he said, "and we have to get to a level where we can negotiate. But right now, we can't get in the door."

Electoral area directors worried the problem could easily spread to other islands, and agreed the letter should emphasize both the environmental and economic destruction the deer leave in their paths, as Mayne farmers struggle to keep crops from hungry deer populations that have coalesced into large, distinct roaming herds — and acknowledged that cramped animals are at increased risk of diseases, some of which could spread to livestock.

"We should have dealt with it 30 years ago," said Kilpatrick. "But we should deal with it now."

AGRICULTURE

Flock safety advised as avian flu strikes region

H5N1 found near Saanichton, say officials

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza subtype H5N1 at a backyard poultry flock south of Saanichton, marking the first detection of the virus inside the Capital

Regional District (CRD) since Salt Spring Island in 2022.

Jean-Guy Forgeron, CFIA executive vice-president, declared a primary control zone Wednesday morning, Nov. 27, six days after the virus was first detected. Per the Health of Animals Act, the order restricts both commercial and non-commercial poultry, including eggs, by-products of the poultry, and "things that have been exposed to such a bird" from travelling into, out of, within or through the zone, centred on Interurban Road.

With a restricted area that extends from James Bay in the south to as far north as Saanichton — and with 2022's discovery of H5N1 near Ganges relatively fresh in mind — local flock owners are being encouraged to follow biosecurity protocols. Salt Spring Island Poultry Club president Elsie Born said the club had advised its members and directed them to protocols from the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and that there had been some discussions about promoting biosecurity measures.

"Most folks seem to be keeping their flocks in for the winter regardless," said Born.

CFIA data indicate more than 50 sites in B.C. — mostly commercial poultry operations — are actively dealing with avian flu infections. In late October, a petting farm in Campbell River shuttered and destroyed about 50 chickens and ducks after H5N1 was discovered in their flock.

At press time, over 7.4 million birds in the province are estimated to have been affected, according to CFIA.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

No evidence Blackburn fire suspicious: RCMP

Three halls respond to blaze, no injuries as cabin burns to ground

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Reports of flames and an explosion sent crews from all three Salt Spring fire stations to an early morning blaze that destroyed a cabin, according to fire officials.

No one was injured, according to Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue (SSIFR) Deputy Fire Chief Dale Lundy, but the roughly 600-square-foot structure on Fulford-Ganges Road near Blackburn Lake was completely consumed by fire early Wednesday, Nov. 27.

The first firefighter on scene arrived just minutes after the 5:22 a.m. call-out, according to Lundy, as they lived in the neighbourhood — but discovered the small cabin's metal

roof had already collapsed downward, covering a pile of burning debris. Arriving crews focused on fully extinguishing the fire and keeping it from spreading, he said, noting protocol calls for all fire halls to respond to a structure fire.

More than a dozen firefighters worked with water from their trucks, Lundy said, as there was no hydrant nearby.

"People would've seen a half-dozen trucks shuttling water from the fire hall [in Ganges]," said Lundy, "bringing somewhere around 12,000 to 15,000 gallons in total."

Salt Spring Island RCMP detachment commander Sgt. Clive Seabrook said Thursday that SSIFR and the RCMP agreed there was no evidence to suggest the fire was suspicious.

Praising the speed of response — and the good fortune no one was hurt — Lundy said fire crews were able to leave the scene at around 9:30 a.m. and return to the hall in Ganges.

"And crews from other halls were kind enough to hang around and assist with getting all the apparatus back in service," he added.

Windsor Plywood

CRAMMIN' THE CRUISER



PHOTO BY ERIN MAGLEY

Salt Spring RCMP vehicle collects non-perishable donations for the island's food bank, operated by Island Community Services, at a Cram the Cruiser event outside Country Grocer. Three more donation events are planned in upcoming weeks, with exact details not known as of the Driftwood's press deadline.

COMMUNITY AID

Food and fund drive set up for Penelakut

Donations online or at grocery stores Saturday

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring is stepping up to assist its neighbours after an extended power outage led to a devastating loss of food stores on nearby Penelakut Island.

An island-wide food- and fundraiser is ongoing, organizers said, as Penelakut Tribe members have lost moose, elk and other food stored in freezers after hundreds lost power in the wake of the "bomb cyclone" extreme weather event, which slammed the islands Tuesday, Nov. 19.

Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce president Jason Roy-Allen is spearheading an effort that has organized food drop-offs to take place at both Country Grocer and Thrifty's on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. — as well as an online fundraiser spread through social media by Transition Salt Spring and other island organizations.

Funds gathered through that campaign, at gofundme.com/f/help-our-neighbours-in-need, will be used to support the Penelakut people — and along with the food supplies, that money is being received gratefully, according to Penelakut councillor Kurt Irwin.

"It's neighbours helping neighbours," said Irwin. "Our people don't have much money on Penelakut, and coming into Christmas and several upcoming cultural events, they're happy to receive some help."

Irwin said it was not uncommon for the small island to lose power for an extended period of time during a significant weather event, and BC Hydro officials said damage

from last week's storm impacted communities from Port Renfrew to Port Hardy. Hundreds of spans of wires, dozens of poles and electrical equipment across Vancouver Island were damaged, according to BC Hydro public affairs coordinator Karla Louwers.

BC Hydro crews were finally able to complete restorations to the distribution circuit serving both Penelakut and Thetis islands on Nov. 22, Louwers said.

"Some people were out for days," said Irwin. "Unfortunately, when they opened their fridges and freezers, everything was spoiled."

Salt Spring's deep ties to the Penelakut people are the result of a long history of cultural and ancestral connection between the neighbouring islands. Irwin's family have called Salt Spring home for generations, and a recent reunion at Fernwood hosted hundreds of descendants.

Irwin said there were immediate needs — he noted non-perishables would be a welcome addition to food being donated Saturday — and some that were more long-term, such as developing better freezer capacity and dependable backup power.

"I'd like to get a walk-in freezer and cooler with a generator," said Irwin, "so in the future when they lose power, families won't lose all the game and fish they've harvested and hunted."

To support those solutions — and because GoFundMe donations are not tax-deductible — the Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust has also set up a second donation portal online through which tax receipts are issued automatically, according to board member Jon Cooksey.

That link is give-can.keela.co/food-emergency-on-penelakut-island.

SALT SPRING FORUM

Big tech and media topic in focus

Professor Taylor Owen guest on Saturday

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Salt Spring Forum continues a busy fall season with guest speaker Taylor Owen at Beaver Point Hall on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 3 p.m.

Owen holds the Beaverbrook chair in Media, Ethics and Communications at McGill University, where he studies the impacts and ethics of "big tech," social media and artificial intelligence on our public and private lives.

"It's often said that those who control the media control the mind," states a Salt Spring Forum notice about the event. "Newspaper barons used to shape the thinking of the masses, but now it's the algorithms of social media."

The question posed at Saturday's event is "Will big tech save humanity or destroy it?"

According to the Salt Spring Forum, "professor Owen believes that our future lies somewhere between these two extremes, but just who is regulating these companies?"

Tickets for the Saturday afternoon event are available through a saltspringforum.com link or at the door.

BCF cites digital input preference

FACS continued from 1

"It's a pretty shitty way to treat hundreds of knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers," said Holman.

Salt Spring FAC chair Harold Swierenga — who has served on the body since 2006 and been its chair since 2007 — confirmed no notice had been given, although he had observed a drop-off in BC Ferries' engagement generally since the pandemic interrupted the ability to have regular in-person meetings.

In the past, Swierenga said, BC Ferries staff attending FAC meetings had included higher-level staff — such as the marine superintendent or vice president of finance — which meant time-sensitive decisions could be made at the meetings. More recently, he added, the meetings were attended largely by public engagement personnel, who could only pass on FAC concerns to operational staff.

"I was surprised with what they said [in the call]," he said, "but not totally shocked."

Indeed, some planned in-person FAC meetings were halted last September, after a member of the public attending the Sunshine Coast FAC reportedly said she would "take a gun to everyone" over a reduction of sailings under consideration. In the months that followed, some meetings eventually began to take place online, although many were repeatedly postponed.

Fewer scheduled meetings meant more ad hoc communications — possibly compounded, Swierenga said, by organizational and personnel changes at BC Ferries.

"The FAC concept is somewhat unique," Swierenga wrote in a note to fellow FAC members shared with the Driftwood, "and I suspect some of the new staff may have been uncomfortable with the concept."

The Nov. 25 email to FAC members said BC Ferries' plan was to develop a "digital-first, inclusive and representative approach that addresses the evolving needs of coastal communities and reflects the growing importance of online engagement."

BC Ferries has cited an August customer survey where it said 81 per cent of respondents "prefer to engage digitally" over the current format, although fewer than half of those responses indicated they were "aware" of the existing FAC model.

Holman said the bottom line for BC Ferries, and the goal of engagement efforts including the FACs, is the delivery of affordable transportation services, and despite the company's missteps, he felt Salt Spring's service was generally on the right track, citing upcoming shifts in 2027 to a two-ship service for summer months at Fulford and year-round at Vesuvius.

"I may be in the minority," said Holman, "but on the whole, with three heavily subsidized routes on which service levels have recently been enhanced somewhat, I think Salt Spring Island is pretty well served."



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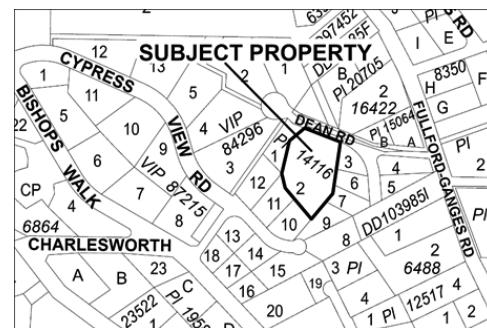
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SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 494 of the Local Government Act that the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee will be considering a resolution allowing for the issuance of Temporary Use Permit. The proposed permit would allow eight (8) bedrooms within the existing single family dwelling to be used as a boarding house on a lot within the Residential 9 (R9) zone.

The property is located at 129 Dean Road, Salt Spring Island and is legally described as LOT 2, DISTRICT LOT 24, SECTION 19, RANGE 4 EAST, NORTH SALT SPRING ISLAND, COWICHAN DISTRICT, PLAN 14116 (PID: 000-313-777).

The general location of the subject property is shown on the following map:



OPINION

Driftwood

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EDITORIAL

FAC facts

With the quashing of the ferry advisory committee (FAC) system, we have to ask: has someone been tampering with the navigation system at BC Ferries?

FAC members were advised without warning last Monday of their committees' demise set for the end of April 2025. An online meeting of the 13 FAC chairs from ferry-dependent communities was scheduled with BC Ferries (BCF) for that day, but the future of those bodies was not on the agenda.

Besides acting unprofessionally in not consulting with FAC chairs before deciding to pull the plug, we believe the corporation is making a fundamental error in judgement. BCF states that it wants to develop "a new engagement model that better addresses the evolving needs of growing coastal communities, reflecting the importance of more effectively incorporating digital engagement." From that statement it's hard to glean exactly what BCF is seeking. If it wants public input that is instructive, reasoned and useful, simply hearing more opinions from more people online is not going to achieve that goal.

A FAC's main purpose is not to be a conduit of public opinion, but a body where solutions to mainly operational problems could be worked out with BCF staff, individuals with expertise, and reps of local government and other groups sitting around the same table.

With a Covid-forced break from in-person FAC meetings and high turnover in middle-upper management staff at BC Ferries, it's understandable that many do not know how well the FAC system has worked in the past. BCF still appreciated it in 2022 when it posted articles featuring FAC chairs and areas FACs had assisted with. Those included "the complex use of Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) ferry service; developing new schedules for two-ship service for Gabriola and Quadra islands; adjusting and communicating service and schedule changes during pandemic recovery; and providing early input on terminal development plans." The well-used thru-fare system giving priority off-loading to people travelling to Salt Spring and the SGI from Tsawwassen via Swartz Bay also grew from FAC efforts.

Trying to improve something as complex as our ferry system requires more than ideas coming from head office seeking reactions from people on a social media platform; or just broadly asking those same people what they think or want. Ferry users can already provide feedback at any time to BCF, with or without using a FAC member.

We urge BCF to get back on track and reconsider its decision to throw the FAC system overboard.

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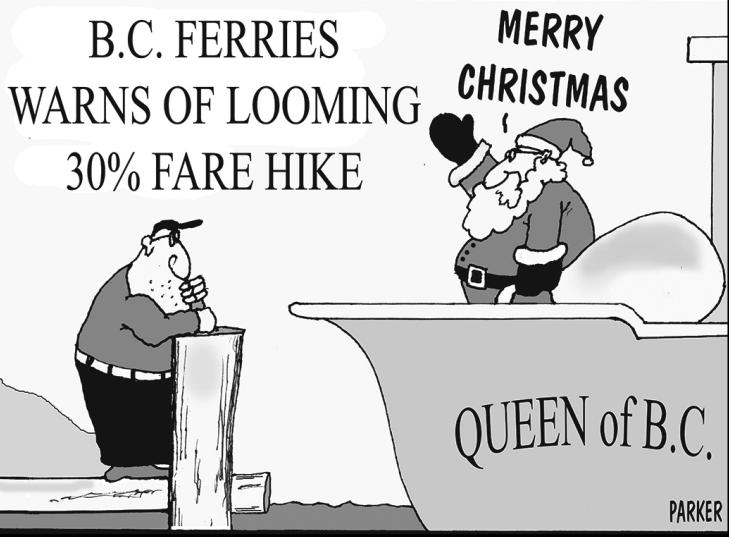
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Gold - Best All Round (for circulation Category C)
Gold - Community Service Award



B.C. FERRIES WARNS OF LOOMING 30% FARE HIKE



Allegations are misleading

BY TISHA BOULTER

In response to the Nov. 27 "Community Services responds to criticism" piece by Jennifer Lannan and Rob Wiltzen, I am one of the directors who resigned from the Island Community Services (ICS) board in July.

The "For the record" paragraph in their piece ironically has incorrect assumptions that I would like to address. It states, "For the record, the 'issues' originated with a director who resigned immediately following a bylaw revision proposal regarding conflict of interest, and who has since carried on a campaign to malign the agency and its leadership."

To clarify, the four directors' resignations in July had nothing to do with any of the four proposed bylaw changes and it is misleading to draw attention to the unrelated timing of resignations and the bylaw change proposal. There are also false allegations of involvement and intent regarding a "campaign" stated here, regardless of which director they may be referring to.

I personally have some very serious concerns about my time on the ICS board with the governance/operations culture, and am still reflecting on the pathway of my advocacy.

Island Community Services is an incredibly vital organization that offers critical programs, services and housing. The agency is fortunate to have many hard-working, caring and dedicated staff that carry out enriching supportive services

VIEWPOINT

to often our most vulnerable population.

During my time on the ICS board, I learned more about the great work that is being done in this society that operates multiple diverse and enriching programs. I also learned about systemic challenges within governance that have concerned me. I witnessed an ingrained culture where the operations of the agency manage the board of governance. I worked very hard to effect change in this area to support professionalism, accountability and responsibility to the public interest in my role as the vice-chair of ICS. Ultimately, the unprofessional and inappropriate influence of operations on the governance work of the board was why I resigned.

**Since I resigned,
I've witnessed
the community
appropriately
expressing concerns
about ICS . . .**

organization as a director and/or member since the bylaw changes made on July 24, 2024. I applaud folks for caring to be involved in the agency.

Many have reached out to tell me I'm "brave" to be willing to speak up and call-in good process (with my quotes in the story in the Oct. 16 issue of the Driftwood). I wish for all to feel safe to share their concerns without feeling fear of being threatened or not being believed. There are many truths still yet to be heard.

THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

**Should ferry advisory
committees be
disbanded?**

Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

**Is a 13.2 per
cent 2025 CRD
budget increase
acceptable?**



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

Ferry corp committee decision rankles

I was appalled to learn that BC Ferries (BCF) is suspending its 13 Ferry Advisory Committees (FAC) this coming April.

The FAC system was set up in 2003 when the BCF structure was changed and the corporation became a private company owned by the province. The FAC was one of the ways BCF would keep communications with the communities it serves open. Typically meetings were held once a quarter with BCF staff, where information and feedback were shared.

To a large degree it has been successful even if BCF frequently appeared to ignore advice provided by the FAC. The current proposal (we have yet to see a draft) of online communication seems far from adequate.

What seems to have been ignored is the members of the FAC who have put a huge amount of time and effort into the process. On Salt Spring, Harold Swierenga has been a member of the FAC since 2006 and its chair since 2007. He has worked diligently for our community and is well respected by BCF.

Except for a line in a BCF press release, so far there has been no indication of

appreciation from BCF, or for the other FAC members for that matter.

But that does not preclude our community from thanking Harold for his tireless hard work and dedication. He has set a high standard of community involvement and is an example to be followed by us all.

PETER GROVE,
SALT SPRING

ICS coverage important

Thank you to the Driftwood for printing information about the recent controversy over how Island Community Services (ICS) is being governed.

Information on this issue is important because ICS has an annual budget of over \$8 million a year, the majority of which is taxpayer money, from higher levels of government. Given this, their governance must be transparent.

I find their criticism of the Driftwood's coverage of this issue unfounded. A newspaper doesn't make up the news. They report it through interviews and reports of what others have said publicly.

We are the only Islands Trust island with a real newspaper that attempts to adhere to journalism standards and pub-

lishes all sides of a story. In this time of failing local media enterprises and social media misinformation, we are lucky to have our own local newspaper.

MAXINE LEICHTER,
SALT SPRING

Name calling at root of objections

I read David Rumsey's letter "Ignorance is not bliss" with sadness and dismay.

The Constitution of the United States prevents any president from becoming a dictator, despite what Trump jokingly said. He will sign many executive orders early, (Biden signed 60 in his first 100 days), there will be legal challenges and life will go on. Trump cannot call out the army and start rounding up his opponents, or invoke the Emergencies Act, seize their bank accounts and have them arrested, as has been done here in Canada.

My definition of a fascist is a follower of a political philosophy characterized by authoritarian views and a strong central government — and no tolerance for opposing opinions. Seems like our own prime minister fits the definition better than Trump.

Equating red MAGA hats with Nazi

armbands is reprehensible and sad. I do not believe that 76 million voters in the U.S. are Nazis, because they supported Trump. There will be fanatics on both sides of the political spectrum; most Trump supporters are decent people.

Mr. Rumsey, where is your proof that life will be much harsher for every group you mentioned? Life will not be harsher for legal citizens, regardless of their chosen identity. There are many laws against discrimination in the U.S.; it is not the 1960s anymore. Trump was elected by a surge in votes from minority groups. Does that make them "Nazis"? And Trump will not go after the press. Ratings, public opinion and sponsors will ensure that changes are coming to U.S. mainstream media.

In four years Trump will step down. He cannot seek a third term, the constitution prevents it, despite what his most rabid supporters may desire.

Saddest of all, Mr. Rumsey does not understand my objections to Paul McElroy's column. It was about the level of name calling he stooped to, and unfounded accusations, not to legitimate criticisms of Trump. That is why it is unworthy of being printed.

WILLIAM STEINER,
SALT SPRING

MORE LETTERS continued on 6

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"It's a pretty shitty way to treat hundreds of knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers."

GARY HOLMAN, SALT SPRING CRD DIRECTOR, ON ABANDONING OF FERRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE SYSTEM

Fear of having outdated technology does not extend to vehicles

Much excitement among the island's truckerrati in recent weeks. Someone spotted a Tesla Cybertruck in Ganges and could hardly contain themselves on Faceache. You know the one, has all the aesthetics of a slab of cheese and is apparently bulletproof, because goodness knows it pays to be bulletproof whenever the usual weekend gunfights kick off on the mean streets of Ganges.

Since this peculiar vehicle makes as much sense as an off-road Rolls-Royce, it does elicit quite a bit of interest from those among us who don't drive Volvos or tiny electric Fiats. And it's important that Tesla's Elon Musk is kept from poverty now that he's given up making ugly trucks for a while and is working with Donald Trump on even uglier ideas.

I think I saw it going up (or down) Ganges Hill a few days ago, but it was one of those rare occasions when the traffic was actually moving so I didn't get a long enough glimpse to decide whether it was going forward up the hill or reversing DOWN it. Still, I'm sure it's fully

Salt Spring-proofed and the rest of us cack-handed drivers will simply bounce off it when we attempt a typical piece of Salty parking.

Of course we're all at liberty to spend our money however we like, assuming we've got some, and if throwing a hundred grand at the ugliest vehicle ever to come off a production line jingles your bells, so be it, although I've seen prettier slurry carts. It does, I suppose, have a certain jaunty asexual aesthetic, unlike, say, a Ram 1500, which is simply a testosterone substitute. Apparently . . .

(I tell a lie. The ugliest vehicle ever to come off a production line was probably the Russian Moskvich my dad bought in the Sixties which, apart from having the aesthetic of a Soviet prison block, was as dependable as a chocolate alarm clock. Not even the "luxury" cigar lighter worked and after six months the alleged car was towed away and never mourned.)

Anyway, enough of that. I'm sure Cybertruck owners are very happy with their electric trucks and goodness knows that my



Paul McElroy
+ ANOTHER
THING

12-year-old Hyundai hardly qualifies me as Motoring Writer of the Year, although I did once ride in one of the first Range Rovers with Princess Anne's first husband. (More on that later . . . or maybe not. That's about the full extent of the anecdote – I went for a drive with Captain Mark Phillips who is, or was, one of the least exciting men on the planet. Unless you were a horse.)

In truth, I'm not in any way averse to paying through the nose for the latest piece of technology, in fact I'm notorious for it and would probably be swanning around in my own Cybertruck today if I weren't a penniless pensioner. I'm as close to a technojunkie as my miserly stipends will allow and recently bought a robot vacuum cleaner

which Mrs Mac (and presumably our super-efficient young housekeeper) hate, but I could watch for hours as it beetles round the house, scrubbing floors, vacuuming carpets and humming to itself before returning to its little hut to recharge and recuperate. I've called it Robert (Robert the Robot?) which is bit unfortunate because, to judge from its voice and the fact that it seldom does what I tell it, it is quite obviously Roberta Robot. I bought it two months ago and now anxiously await the next version to come out which will inevitably be a marked improvement on the one I've just paid a small fortune for.

My watch, for instance, is also just a few months from being the very latest Apple iteration, but within a week of buying it the wretches at Apple played their usual trick of announcing a newer and, to me, more desirable model. As they did with my phone. And my desktop computer, so that I live in a constant state of disappointment and mortification at having outdated technology.

It's a peculiar 21st-century

phenomenon, but where once a wristwatch was for life, now it's merely until the next dubiously smarter, lighter, brighter version comes off a factory conveyor belt somewhere in China. For my 18th birthday, a hundred or so years ago, my Uncle Dave gave me a self-winding watch which was a miracle of the age and was wound by a shake of the wrist which apparently moved a tiny ball bearing inside. I only set it aside after drunkenly swimming in the Mediterranean with it on when it would no longer self-wind nor indeed tell the time at all.

Fifty years later I'm wearing an AI watch which tells the time to within a hundredth of a second, measures my heartbeat, nags me about my medications, holds my shopping lists, pays my bills, tells me if I don't stand up immediately I'll lose the use of my legs, and will call 911 if I fall over or crash my car.

I'm not entirely sure that it wouldn't write this column if I asked, but if it won't, next year's model most certainly will.

paulmcelroy@shaw.ca



PHOTO BY ROB LOWRIE

Part of the Beaver Point Hall kitchen crew for the weekend craft fair, which is a fundraiser for the community hall, are, from left, Lauren Klimek, Diane Thomas, Richard Forster, Ron Watts, Jeff Shatford and Briony Penn.



PHOTO BY ROB LOWRIE

Rosemary Berdan and Jim Knox sell their Creative Candy Wreaths, including sugar-free options, for the first time at the Fulford Artisan Christmas Fair.



PHOTO BY ROB LOWRIE

Eric Petitclerc shows his hand-carved wooden utensils at the Beaver Point Christmas Craft Fair on the weekend.



PHOTO BY ROB MAGLEY

Grand(m)others to Grandmothers group members celebrate the completion of their tree decorating job for the annual Festival of Trees at the Harbour House Hotel. People are encouraged to bring food bank donations to put under their favourite decorated tree from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily until the morning of Jan. 2, when the "winner" is declared.



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

Carole "the Bag Lady" vends her handbags made from upcycled materials at the SIMS Holiday Market.



PHOTO BY ROB LOWRIE

Wendy Taylor sells her shamanic, visionary and spiritual-themed artwork in card and notebook form at the Fulford Hall craft fair.

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Carry Byers - CFBH Recipient on how hearing aids has made his life better.*

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Keep being you **Love your ears**

MORE LETTERS

continued from 5

We can hope

When I caught up with the last two Driftwoods for November, I turned to "Letters" to see what other islanders were thinking. Three commented on the recent U.S. presidential elections. Underlying all of them were connections between hope and expectation — the dance between our private dreams and our personal image of reality.

"Hope is the thing with feathers," Emily Dickinson wrote, "That perches in the soul, And sings the tune without the words, And never stops at all."

Imperishable hope, ever-changing expectations. Hopes as big as the gap between what you want and what the world offers; expectations as big as worldly experience allows.

Politics is a well-polished dance hall. My first experience of it came in 1940 when my folks gave me a flag to wave from our city's sidewalk to cheer Wendell Willkie, Democrat-turned-Republican, running (unsuccessfully) against Franklin D. Roosevelt. Talk about innocents abroad! I absorbed the hopes of the crowd and, soon enough, my parents' disappointments.

I seem to have caught from them an uncanny ability to vote for losers. After a while I discovered the up side of losing: you can say, "See? I told you so." But I saw, pretty early, that the best place to live is on that middle ground between the easily won and the impossible, where modest wins are possible if you try hard enough.

That, I think, is the arena for letter writers Corrie Furst's and Wendy Cutler's hope that Canada will not meet its problems in the way the U.S. seems doomed to try. David Rumsey doesn't tell us what he hopes for, but that's easy to deduce from his list of things we should avoid. William Steiner hopes we won't get so angry at Trump's extravagant lies that we don't watch to see if what he does is worthwhile.

Early ecologist Aldo Leopold commented, "Deer

are herded about by the compelling orders of circumstance." So are we. Campaigning politicians should exaggerate and make promises they know they can't keep. Experience teaches us to discount them heavily. Our job is to judge whether their basic hopes are like ours, and the odds that we can move together for modest change.

In a democracy, leadership is mostly following from in front. Our job is to show where we want leaders to aim. If they balk, as Mr. Steiner says, there's always another kick at the can.

We hope.

BOB WEEDEN,
SALT SPRING

Shop local year round

To repair or discard — that was the big question after my favourite desk lamp stopped working.

In the true spirit of the "fix-it revolution," I decided to replace the switch rather than discard the whole lamp. But some things are easier said than done.

As I had appointments in Victoria, I decided to check out replacement switches at a couple of major DIY centres. But, alas, the selection was very poor and did not include the top-turn switch I needed.

With my handyman dream fading fast, I dropped by Mouat's to see what was on offer in their newly renovated store. To my surprise I found exactly what I was looking for in the well-appointed downstairs department.

Anyone who has not been to Mouat's for a while may wish to check out the many changes. The store offers tremendous variety and has a special historical atmosphere that is both interesting and unique. And the staff are amazing.

I encourage all islanders to shop first and foremost at local businesses, not just at Christmas, but all year round. They need our support and we need them.

FRANTS ATTORP,
SALT SPRING



ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT

MUSIC SCENE

Salt Spring Groove unleashed

Magazine and photo exhibit showcase local musicians

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Anyone who follows local music on a major social media platform has no doubt seen Andy Doyle-Linden's striking close-up photos of Salt Spring Island musicians.

With a hot-off-the-press first edition of Salt Spring Groove magazine and exhibition in the ArtSpring lobby space from Dec. 3 to 20, people can now enjoy Doyle-Linden's photographs in a physical format.

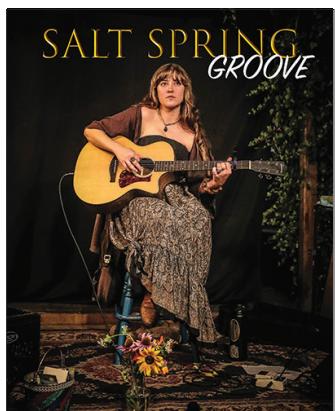
Doyle-Linden photographed football games in Calgary for 10 years, which he started doing because his son played the game. As a form of action photography, taking pictures of live musical performances is similar, he said.

He began putting island musicians through his lens in May of this year, with no expectations of what he might do with those photos, except share them on Facebook.

Doyle-Linden said he takes 600 to 700 shots each night at places like the Tree House Cafe, Moby's Pub or the Legion. He goes through them immediately after getting home, selecting the best 15 or 20 for potential sharing.

"Sometimes I'm up until 2 a.m.," he said.

Doyle-Linden aims to get the photos out as soon as possible while the event is fresh.



PHOTOS BY ANDY DOYLE-LINDEN

Salt Spring saxophone player Monik Nordine, above, and the cover of Salt Spring Groove magazine with Tyger Jackson's photo at left.

"People don't want to wait," he said. He credits island musician and artist Sherry Leigh Williams with inspiring him to view his photography passion as having more of a documentary purpose, having mentioned how this was a "golden period" in music on Salt Spring that should be recorded visually.

"She's been very supportive and encouraging and directed me to see this person or that person," he said.

The Salt Spring Groove magazine includes photos of some 63 island musicians, along with anecdotes or song lyrics from them. It will be available to purchase at Salt Spring Books, Black Sheep Books and ArtCraft Winter beginning Dec. 7, and at ArtSpring from Dec. 4 to 6, including for a musical event in the gallery space

on Friday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. That's when Salt Spring jazz-pop musician Kate Trajan and band will play songs from her new Ancient Fires album. Performers include Iain Duncan on sax, Ryan Tandy on bass, Hans Verhoeven on drums and Margaret Trajan on vocals. The Iain Duncan Quartet will play an opening set.

Doyle-Linden observes that Salt Spring may not be seen as a place to visit primarily for its live music, but that it could be. The quality of local musical acts is excellent, he said, and he has enjoyed some incredible performances along with others in the crowd this year.

He is grateful for help with Salt Spring Groove provided by Craig McKerron (design and layout), Susanna Braund (editor) and Shawn Tolleson (writer), and for a Salt Spring Arts grant to help with the exhibition at ArtSpring, which consists of 50 photographs.

LITERARY EVENTS

Bowen Island poet at library open mic

Jude Neale on tap

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

On Thursday, Dec. 5, the Salt Spring Island Public Library will host the monthly Poetry Open Mic event with featured poet Jude Neale from Bowen Island.

Neale is a Canadian poet, vocalist, spoken-word performer and mentor. She has

been shortlisted, highly commended and a finalist for many international competitions, including: Canada's Pat Lowther Award, the Gregory O'Donoghue International Poetry Prize (Ireland), and four U.K. events: the International Poetic Republic Poetry Prize, the Mary Chalmers Smith Poetry Prize, Wenlock International Poetry Competition

and the Carers International Poetry Prize.

Neale is the author of 12 books of poetry. Her most recent is Water Forgets Its Own Name, a collaboration with Bowen artist Nicholas Jennings.

The book is described in press material as "a sumptuous, indulgent mash-up by two incredibly driven cre-

atives: a poet and an artist, who divest everything except for raw, visceral responses - to a small island that shapes who they are, and which makes their hearts sing. With its juxtaposition of poetry set to art, this book comes as close as anything ever has to encapsulating the shared depth of gratitude of small community for its unique island home."

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Holiday Story Writing Contest
Enter by December 6!

Write a story of 500 words or less whose topic relates to Christmas or the holiday season. The deadline for our annual writing contest is December 6. Win a Salt Spring Books gift certificate for a story of up to 500 words.

All Gulf Islands youth in Kindergarten to Grade 12 are eligible.

Stories will be judged on quality of writing, clarity of presentation and originality of theme.

Winning entries will be published in the Driftwood in December.

The name, age, address and telephone number of the writer must be written on the back of each entry.

Mail or drop off entries to the Driftwood, 241 Fulford-Ganges Rd, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2K7; email to news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com.

For more information, call 250.537.9933.

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CONCERT PREVIEW

Singers span centuries for concert

Gregorian chant, Vivaldi, fanfare and modern carols for festive Christmas event

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring Singers have a special Christmas treat ready for island audiences when they open the doors at All Saints by-the-Sea church next weekend.

Gloria Gloria – From Vivaldi to Brubeck runs at the church on Park Drive on Friday, Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 14 at 2:30 p.m.

"The program revolves around the word 'gloria,' which is part of the first message of Christmas from the angelic forces above talking to shepherds below," explained choir director

Don Conley.

Selections from Vivaldi's beautiful Gloria masterpiece are featured in the concert's first half, with special guest Cicela Måansson singing the Domine Deus soprano solo in that piece and Deb Smith and Connie Holmes singing the Laudamus Te. Works from contemporary composers Morten Lauridsen and Ola Gjeilo are also in the first half, along with a 16th-century Spanish carol.

Conley said a very special concert selection is "one of the earliest chants of Christmas that goes back to Gregorian chant, which is really quite ancient, that the tenors and basses are going to sing, called Puer Natus Est, and they're doing such a beautiful job with it."

Conley has been teaching the group singing techniques from the monks of Solesmes Abbey, which is a place where Conley has spent time.

"They were the ones instrumental in reviving the chant in the mid-1800s and are still consid-

ered experts in Gregorian chant."

The second half will open with gusto thanks to A Christmas Fanfare by Ron Nelson, with guest brass players Simon Millerd, Earl Rook, Marc Sira, John Whitelaw and Jim Raddysh. Instrumentalists Jim Schultz on guitar and choir member John Moore playing tenor sax will also perform in the concert.

Other second-half pieces include Vince Guaraldi's Christmas Time is Here — the theme from A Charlie Brown Christmas; Charles Ives' A Christmas Carol; and an Appalachian carol called As Joseph Was a Walking arranged by James Fankhauser and featuring soloist Jean Brouard.

The Gloria theme returns with jazz icon Dave Brubeck's Christmas cantata called La Fiesta de la Posada, and other familiar seasonal songs will also be shared.

Concert tickets are available through ArtSpring or at All Saints before the show, if available.

what's on this week

Wed.

Dec. 4

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Tea à Tempo: Sue Newman. With some Christmas With Scrooge cast members. All Saints. 2:10 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Festival of Trees. Bring donations for the food bank and put under your favourite decorated tree. Harbour House Hotel. Daily through Jan. 1.

Forest of Miracles. Silent auction of decorated trees in support of Greenwoods and Copper Kettle. Harbour House Hotel. Daily until Dec. 17.

Islands Trust Council. Quarterly meeting in Victoria. Watch via islandstrust.bc.ca 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Best of the Fests: Any Other Way: The Jackie Shane Story. ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.

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

Thur.

Dec. 5

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Poetry Open Mic. With featured poet Jude Neale. Salt Spring Public Library program room. 7 p.m.

Time for Gertrude Stein. Musical and theatrical tribute to the cubist-inspired writer, curated by Peter Hatch. ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.

Open Mic. With Rough & Tumble at the Legion. 7:30 p.m.

Improv Night. Mateada. 8 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Islands Trust Council. Quarterly meeting in Victoria. Watch via islandstrust.bc.ca. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Thursday Lunch. Delicious lunch and conversation at the Seniors Centre. Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Call 250-537-4604 to reserve seats.

Transition Salt Spring's Toy Swap Donation Day. Drop off clean unwanted toys to SIMS. 3 to 6 p.m.

Fri.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Kate Trajan. Performs songs from new Ancient Fires album with band at ArtSpring gallery. Opening set by Iain Duncan Quartet. 7 p.m.

Karaoke. With Drew at the Legion. 7 p.m.

Whiskey River Band. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m.

Jacquest! and Rising Tide. Double bill at Mateada. 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Winter Wonderland Scavenger Hunt Collage Workshop. Led by Rosie Schinners for kids aged 6 to 12 at Mahon Hall. 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Register through saltspringarts.com.

ASK Salt Spring. This week's topic is the proposed Chuan Society community space. SIMS. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wreathmaking Workshop. With Camille Schmah at Foxglove Farm & Garden Supply. 2:30 to 5 p.m. Register through saltspringarts.com.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Memorial hosted by IWAV and The Circle in the Centennial Park gazebo. 5 p.m.

Winter Wander Late-Night Shopping in Downtown Ganges. Many participating stores. 5 to 8 p.m. See the decorated windows and vote for your favourite at saltspringchamber.com/christmas-on-salt-spring-2/

Mouat's Winter Wander. Includes live music, hot dogs, hot chocolate and more at Mouat's stores. 4 to 8 p.m.

Jam Factory & Friends Holiday Block Party. At 319 Upper Ganges Rd. 4 to 7 p.m.

Sat.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Evening of Christmas Music. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 7 p.m.

Sacred Saucy: Safiya Labelle + Kaya Ko + Sun Rose. Mateada. 9 p.m.

Dec. 6

ACTIVITIES

Goddess Fair. A Holiday Market of Empowered Feminine Arts. ArtSpring Gallery. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Indigenous Art Market. Salt Spring Public Library. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Market in the Park. Centennial Park. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Foodraiser for Penelakut Tribe. Country Grocer and Thrifty Foods. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Transition Salt Spring's Toy Swap. Shop for free at SIMS. 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Christmas Market at Poppy's Place. At 125 Rainbow Rd. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Salt Spring Forum: Will Big Tech Save Humanity or Destroy Us? Taylor Owen of McGill University is the guest. Beaver Point Hall. 3 p.m.

Glowtini Contest. Vote for your favourites at the Legion. 6 to 8 p.m. Fundraiser for Santa's Workshop for youth and teens.

Sun.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Handel's Messiah Singalong. Bach on the Rock Chamber Choir & Orchestra. All Saints by-the-Sea. 2 p.m.

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

Sunday Sessions With Guest Artists. Moby's Pub. 5 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Santa Ship. Gulf Islands Lions Clubs bring Santa to Ganges Breakwater Dock at 2 p.m. before heading to Mouat's Mall to meet with the kids.

Tues.

Dec. 8

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

ArtSpring Presents: Juliet: a Revenge Comedy. ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.

Country and Folk Singers and Songwriters Night. With Sherry Leigh Williams. Legion. 7 to 10 p.m.

Dec. 7

Tues.

ACTIVITIES

Salt Spring Chamber AGM and Holiday Mixer. Lions Hall. 5:30 p.m.

Wed.

Dec. 11

ACTIVITIES

Best of the Fests: Us, Our Pets and the War. Screens at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.

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

ART EXHIBITIONS

• **16th Annual Christmas Exhibition of Small Works,** featuring all Gallery 8 artists, runs daily through Dec. 31.

• **Salt Spring Gallery presents Small Works** by gallery members until Dec. 21, with an opening reception on Friday, Dec. 6 from 5 to 8 p.m.

• **Different Perspectives: Photographs by John de Bruyn and Stephen Morris** is the library program room exhibit until Dec. 29. Public talk with the photographers on Thursday, Dec. 5 at 3 p.m. (Note different date from last week's calendar listing.)

• **Arcraft Winter** — the Salt Spring Arts show and sale of work by Gulf Islands artisans — runs at Mahon Hall daily through Dec. 24.

• **Salt Spring Groove – A Photographic Collection of Salt Spring Musicians by Andy Doyle-Linden** is the ArtSpring lobby exhibit from Dec. 3 to 20.

• **Laurel Lemchuk-Favel** is showing her paintings at the Country Grocer Cafe for the month of December.

Santa Ship

Santa arrives by boat at Ganges Breakwater Dock and heads to Mouat's Mall Sunday, Dec. 8 at 2 p.m.

THRIFTY FOODS

Ganges, Mouat's Centre 7:30am to 9pm
Customer Service 250-537-1522

LIVE THEATRE

Shakespearean deaths overturned in comedy



PHOTO BY PINK MONKEY STUDIOS

Actors Lili Beaudoin, left, and Carly Pokoradi, who along with Ryan Gladstone will bring the Monster Theatre comedy *Juliet: A Revenge Comedy* to ArtSpring on Dec. 10.

Feisty heroine perspective on stage at ArtSpring

BY KIRSTEN BOLTON
FOR ARTSPRING

What if Shakespeare's Juliet decided not to die?

This is the central question in Monster Theatre's break-out hit *Juliet: A Revenge Comedy*, co-written by Pippa Mackie and Ryan Gladstone, bringing its madcap production to ArtSpring on Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m.

A send-up of Shakespeare classics, the story sees the titular

character (played by Lili Beaudoin) — suddenly realizing she is only 13 and has known Romeo but for a few days — break out of an endless loop of turning the dagger on herself to search instead for the reason of her tragic demise.

To find her answer, her journey jumps her from play to play recruiting some of the Bard's most famous, and similarly fated, female characters to find out why they too were all forced to die. Can they alter their fate or are they doomed to play out the same tragic tales for the rest of eternity?

"We've heard from the community that many people would like to see more theatre and some light-hearted options at ArtSpring during our season," said Howard Jang, executive and artistic director. "This production definitely fits that bill with a clever premise, fast pace and lots of humour. It's been very well received elsewhere, and we hope it is here as well."

Gladstone, who also directs, plays a haughty powder-faced version of Shakespeare himself, pursuing his rebellious heroines before they completely subvert his canon. Carly Pokoradi reprises her Jessie award-winning role embodying over 20 support characters, including Lady Macbeth, Ophelia, Cleopatra and even Romeo.

Amid the over-the-top accents, laughter and good-natured jabs at Shakespeare's multi-syllabic pronunciation, the whimsical conceit also brings home weightier themes about his depictions of female characters. As NOW Toronto describes it, it is "a delightful tale that's equal parts feminist critique, Renaissance romp and bravura acting not to be missed."

The creators insist one does not need to be an expert in Shakespeare to be immersed in the story or get the jokes. Younger audiences will be able to connect with the irreverent themes and perhaps be introduced to Shakespeare's work but from the perspective of a feisty and modern teenage heroine.

Founded in Vancouver in 2000, Monster Theatre bills itself as a theatre company committed to "repackaging history and mythology for today's audiences" by re-imagining and re-inventing the boundaries between high-brow and low-brow. It has created over 40 original plays and toured across Canada and the U.S.

Tickets are now on sale, including youth tickets for \$5 and Theatre Angel Program tickets for \$15, making the performance accessible to a community-wide audience.

ArtSpring thanks Debbi and Mark Toole for sponsoring this performance.

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DOCUMENTARIES

Acclaimed film for pet lovers screens

Best of the Fests series continues at ArtSpring with Us, our Pets and the War

BY STEVE MARTINDALE
FOR SALT SPRING FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

If you love animals and are concerned about the war in Ukraine, you won't want to miss *Us, Our Pets and the War*, an award-winning documentary screening on Wednesday, Dec. 11, as part of the Salt Spring Film Festival's ongoing Best of the Fests series at ArtSpring.

When the Russian bombardment of Ukraine began in early 2022, the massive exodus of refugees from the war zone was distinctly unlike any other humanitarian crisis. Involving not only an estimated 12 million displaced people, it was also the largest mobilization of animals in human history. As Ukrainians fled their homes, most of them refused to leave behind their beloved pets.

In the panic of war, however, not everyone was able to take their pets with them, and regrettably some animals were abandoned. Amidst the worst of circumstances, courageous fellow Ukrainians subsequently returned to the war zone and risked their lives under ongoing Russian bombardment to rescue animals left behind by those forced to flee.

From dogs and cats miraculously surviving in demolished buildings and abandoned shelters, to exotic wildlife helplessly stranded in the nation's zoos, unbelievably complex rescue efforts were mounted to extract animals from the war zone and transport them to safety.

Some of the rescued animals unexpect-



FILM IMAGE

Anastasia Lunyova with her Persian cat Shafa, who are featured in *Us, Our Pets and the War*, about evacuation and rescue of people's pets at the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022.

edly became online celebrities, such as Patron the Jack Russell terrier — awarded the Order of Courage by President Volodymyr Zelensky for his work locating unexploded landmines — and Anastasia Lunyova's Persian cat Shafa, who became a national symbol of the Ukrainian spirit of resistance and resilience after being trapped for two months in a destroyed apartment block.

Inspiring the very best of the human spirit in the face of mortal danger, ordinary people do extraordinary things in this astonishing celebration of our bond with animals, co-presented by the Salt Spring Friends of Ukraine Committee and the Salt Spring BC SPCA.

Directed by Ukrainian YouTuber Anton Pushkin, who has been barred from entering Russia for the next 50 years for

speaking out against the Russian invasion, this uplifting and profoundly moving film won the Audience Choice Award at the Irish Film Institute Documentary Festival in September.

The Best of the Fests series continues in the New Year with three more films, including new documentaries about the much-loved Canadian band Blue Rodeo on Jan. 22 and the Fairy Creek anti-logging blockades on Feb. 19, as well as a provocative post-apocalyptic Canadian drama on Feb. 5, all at ArtSpring on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$14 each and are available online at artspring.ca; in advance by phone (250-537-2102) or in person when the box office is open (Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.); or at the door starting an hour before each film.

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ASK THE EXPERT

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



Expert: Reza Montana,
Branch Manager, Ganges

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TC File #W2024-503468

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TC File #W2024-503338

28' black hulled sailboat beached in Ganges Harbour, Salt Spring Island, B.C.
TC File #W2024-503342

"Ta Aroa" 38' wooden sailboat currently sunk near Goat Island in Ganges Harbour, B.C.
TC File #W2023-502654

"Chechko Lady" yellow fishboat beached in Ganges Harbour, Salt Spring Island, B.C.
TC File #W2023-502920

Should you have any questions, you may contact, Transport Canada at NPPPAC-PPNPAC@tc.gc.ca or 604-775-8867.



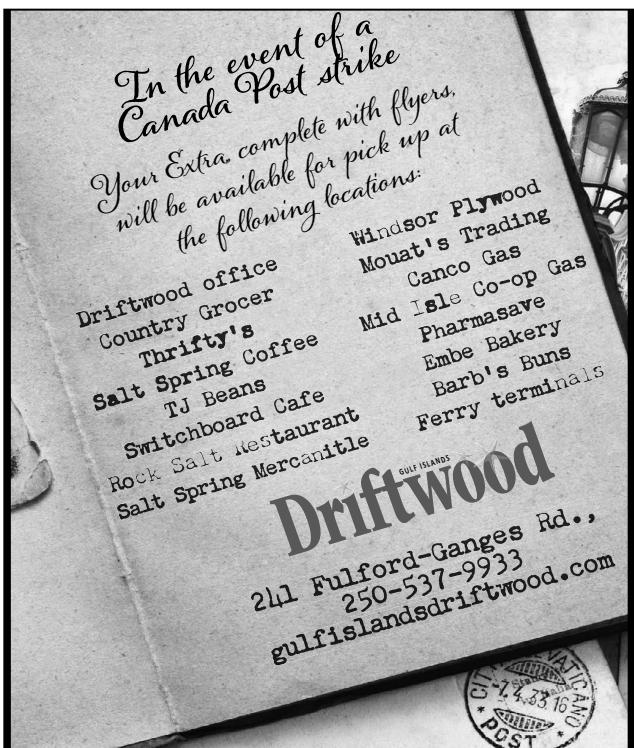
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TIDE TABLES at Fulford Harbour

DECEMBER PST (UTC-8H)

When using Daylight Saving Time, one hour must be added to the predicted time in the table

DAY	TIME	FEET	METRES	DAY	TIME	FEET	METRES
4	0:00	0.6	0.18	8	2:59	3.2	0.98
	8:43	11.2	3.41		11:09	11.4	3.47
	14:20	9.4	2.87		18:06	6.6	2.01
	15:47	9.5	2.9		21:49	7.2	2.2
	0:42	0.8	0.24		3:49	4.6	1.4
5	9:24	11.3	3.44		11:37	11.3	3.44
	15:36	9.1	2.77		18:44	5.2	1.58
	16:29	9.2	2.8		0:16	7.3	2.23
	1:26	1.3	0.4		4:45	6.1	1.86
6	10:03	11.4	3.47		12:02	11.3	3.44
	16:41	8.6	2.62		19:23	3.6	1.1
	17:35	8.6	2.62		2:25	8.2	2.5
	2:11	2.1	0.64		5:33	7.5	2.29
7	10:38	11.4	3.47		12:25	11.3	3.44
	17:26	7.7	2.35		20:02	2.2	0.67
	19:22	7.8	2.38				

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SOCIAL ISSUES

Dec. 6 memorial takes place in Centennial Park



PHOTO COURTESY THE CIRCLE EDUCATION

Islanders gather in the gazebo in Centennial Park for the 2023 memorial on The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This year's event is also in the gazebo on Dec. 6 at 5 p.m.

'A small thing we can do as a community to show we care,' say agencies

SUBMITTED BY THE CIRCLE EDUCATION

Dec. 6, 1989 was the day an armed man walked into an engineering class at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal and killed 14 women and injured 10 more. This Friday, on The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, Islanders Working Against Violence (IWA) and The Circle Education are hosting the annual Dec. 6 memorial in Centennial Park. The event is held not only to remember the victims in Montreal but all the other women who have been victims of gender-based violence since then.

It has been 35 years since the Montreal Massacre, but gender-based violence — harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender — is not diminishing. It's happening in all corners of the world, and Canada and Salt Spring Island are no exception. This year so far, 165 women and girls, including trans women and girls, have been killed in our country because of their gender. (See femicideincanada.ca.)

At the Dec. 6 memorial, we reaffirm our commitment to ending all forms of violence and to create supportive, caring communities.

"Coming together and standing in memory is one small thing we can do as a community to show we care," said Alicia Herbert, executive director of IWA.

The vigil will be held on Friday at 5 p.m. at the gazebo in Centennial Park. As a practical and symbolic gesture, the participants of The Circle Education's Pass it On Boys program will light the way for vigil attendees towards the gazebo, and also read the names of the 14 women who were killed in Montreal.

"We are very pleased to have the boys involved in this year's vigil," said Janine Fernandes-Hayden, executive director of The Circle Education. "It is a powerful statement that highlights the importance of involving young men in conversations about gender-based violence and the role they can play in fostering a more equitable society."

Pass It On Boys is an after-school program focused on building healthy relationships. "It is a unique program for boys in which we give young adults the tools to communicate, regulate emotions and seek help if they are struggling," said program facilitator Eland Bronstein. "We want them to be able to navigate challenges and problems in a constructive way."

Gender-based violence and consent are among the topics covered in the weekly sessions. "It all comes down to building empathy and respect," Bronstein continued. "We talk about privilege, power dynamics, allyship and how we can stand up when we see injustices. Being part of this memorial is a way of growing awareness. Together we can break the cycle."

All community members are welcome and encouraged to participate as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.



ISLAND LIFE

HOLIDAY EVENTS

Santa Ship sails again Sunday



DRIFTWOOD FILE PHOTO

Santa and Mrs. Claus in Ganges during the last sailing of the Bellingham-based Lions Santa Ship in 2019, with visits supported by Gulf Islands Lions clubs. This year the tradition is being revived with Canadian-only clubs.

Claus arriving at Ganges by boat Sunday, thanks to Lions volunteers

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

In a revival of a briefly lost, much-beloved island tradition, once again Santa Claus is coming to town by ship — arriving at Ganges' Breakwater Dock at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 8.

Restarting the Santa Ship took a collaboration between Lions Clubs across the Gulf Islands, according to Salt Spring Lions Club president Don Cunningham — and the availability of a 28-foot Nordic tug, set for "sleigh duty" thanks to Mayne Island club past-president Brian Dearden — but the seafaring Santa is finally back for his pre-Christmas multi-island tour.

"We'll have Santa Claus' chair ready for him at Mouat's Mall," said Cunningham. "There will be hot cocoa and marshmallows in front of the Coast Guard office, then the kids can come down the walkway and go into Mouat's on the Pegasus Gallery side, walk down the hall and meet Santa."

The right jolly old elf will be bringing his sack of goodies, and handing out gifts and chocolate, Cunningham said, as well as candy canes and mandarin oranges. A large number of Lions

volunteers will be on-hand to make the event as special as possible. Salt Spring Lions Club member James Sikora is helping Santa get ready, Cunningham said, but may be suspiciously missing whenever Santa is around.

A Christmas ship visit for Salt Spring has been absent for years, but it's a tradition with a long history. More than 50 years ago, Cunningham said, Santa's ship was an international project taken on at the time by the Bellingham Jaycees, with Santa and his helpers staying at the Harbour House Hotel when visiting here and delivering Santa to the school courtesy Salt Spring's fire truck.

"That lasted about 20 years," said Cunningham, "after which the Bellingham Lions Central, the Bellingham Evening Club and Bellingham Breakfast Club got together and said, 'OK, we'll take it on for a five-year stint if we have the support of the Canadian clubs.' And we all said, 'Sure!'"

That five years turned into decades, he said, and Santa toured the San Juan and Gulf islands from a home port in Bellingham regularly — winter weather notwithstanding.

"It could get pretty rough coming out of Bellingham Bay sometimes," chuckled Cunningham. "Some winters when the Santa Ship has come in, it's been a blinding blizzard."

As the event grew, Cunningham said, it adapted to changing times. Fireworks, for example, which had been part of the festivities for some years, weren't allowed on U.S.-flagged vessels after Sept. 11, 2001. When U.S. Homeland Security changed its regulations, he added, Canadian Lions Club helpers had to begin and end their voyage from Bellingham — often requiring several days of travel and hotel stays to participate.

But participate they did, right up to Christmas 2019 when Santa and his entourage stepped off the 96-foot Victoria Star II and greeted Salt Spring's children — and went on to visit those on Saturna, Pender, Mayne and Galiano islands. Then, in 2020, the Covid pandemic struck; and even after the border reopened, international standards for vessels sailing between the two countries changed beyond what clubs on either side could manage.

But with a local, more modest boat available this year — and with the enthusiastic efforts of multiple Lions Clubs — it's time for the Santa Ship once again.

"It's a great preview to Christmas," said Cunningham, who said the club and community were delighted to help bring the event back to Salt Spring.

"If it clicks, hopefully it'll be a forever kind of thing," he said.

LIBRARY

Salt Spring library goes 'fine-free'

Reducing barriers to users rationale for change

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Salt Spring Island Public Library (SSIPL) has made the move to be officially fine-free.

As of Dec. 1, SSIPL has permanently removed late fees on all adult materials, after previously waiving fines on young adult and children's items. The change follows the Vancouver Island Regional Library's announcement that it would eliminate all late fees and wipe out existing fines at branches in 2023, and the Greater Victoria Public Library eliminating all late fees and fines earlier this year.

"For the board of trustees, the removal of fines on adult items was an important step in our commitment to reducing barriers to our services for people on Salt Spring Island," said SSIPL board chair Adrian Wright. "We know that the imposition of fines can have negative impacts

on families, seniors, people experiencing homelessness and so many others, and I am proud that our board was able to ensure equal access to library materials for everyone on the Island."

At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, late fees on young adult and children's materials were removed in response to Covid-related restrictions. The rising popularity of ebooks and other digital materials that do not accrue overdue fines and the "lenient" approach to fine collection during the Covid pandemic has meant that the revenue generated from overdue fines has decreased in recent years. In 2023, the library checked out over 127,000 physical items and over 59,000 digital circulations.

"This decision means more families will have access to reading and educational materials, more seniors will be able to connect with their library, and no one will suffer the indignity and embarrassment of punitive fines restricting their ability to read, watch and listen to the 58,000 physical items in our collection," said Julia Wagner, SSIPL's assistant library director. "I would like to thank staff for their advo-

cacy and vision to make our library fine-free, and our board for supporting this values-aligned outcome."

To help encourage borrowers to return their items on time, several email reminders are sent in the lead-up to and after the due date. The library will still charge a fee for lost or damaged items. After an item has been overdue for 90 days, SSIPL will mark the item as lost, and will charge the replacement cost to recoup the cost of the item.

On the library's 12th anniversary of opening the new building on Friday, Dec. 20, anyone with existing overdue fines will also have them removed from their account as part of this change. Wagner said finances should never be a barrier for people wanting to use the library.

"We trust our community to care for the library's collection and to return items when they are due," she said.

SSIPL noted that fine money accounted for just 1.3 per cent of its revenue in 2023. Due dates and late returns are not an issue with digital materials, which now constitute one third of the items borrowed by residents.

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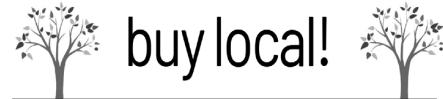
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PHOTOS BY GAIL SJUBERG

GETTING TOGETHER: Just some of the 20 people enjoying the Nov. 28 Thursday lunch at Salt Spring Seniors are, from left, Dawn Randall, Kathy Weisner, Mollie Colson, Lynda Turner, Bev Kaye, Donna Smith and Ernestine Crawford. At right, Penelope Stephenson stirs the homemade smoked salmon chowder she made to serve guests, along with fresh focaccia bread. Stephenson was one of seven volunteers making the event happen. This Thursday sees a special dessert of sticky puddings made by Lucille Marcotte. Thursday lunches continue until Dec. 19 before taking a break for Christmas. The seniors centre is located at 379 Lower Ganges Rd. Call 250-537-4604 to reserve a seat at an upcoming lunch, which runs from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., drop in to the centre or visit saltspringseniors.ca to get more information about the centre's many activities.

PHILANTHROPY

GIFTS earns support from 100+ Women group

Charitable organization meets next on Feb. 26

BY LINDA ADAMS
FOR 100 WOMEN WHO CARE SALT SPRING

Following three compelling five-minute presentations, including from the Salt Spring Singers and the Beaver Point Hall Community Association, the presentation by Perry Ruehlein on behalf of Gulf Islands Families Together Society (GIFTS) received the most votes during the 100+ Women Who Care meeting on Nov. 12. GIFTS was

awarded the collected total of over \$12,000 to go towards their operations.

Founded by local families in 1999, GIFTS is a local charity that supports people with developmental disabilities by recognizing their rights to employment, social, recreational and educational access, and housing on Salt Spring Island.

"We are so excited by this news," said Amanda Myers, GIFTS executive director. "And the timing is perfect, given our upcoming projects. We feel this type of support from our community acknowledges our past success and helps us open the door a bit further for our folks."

Ruehlein noted that about five per cent of Canadians live with a developmental disability, translating to about 500 people in a community the size of Salt Spring Island. She highlighted several well-known community members who have gone through the local school system and then had the good fortune of support from GIFTS when they were done.

"These sons and daughters have grown into incredible adults who brighten the very fabric of Salt Spring," she said, noting their participation in everything from Special Olympics BC to work at the local fire department and island businesses.

"We have a group of wonderful people who want the same level of inclusion as everyone else in our community," said Myers. "We are at a point, with some of our people becoming seniors, when we really need to address some big-picture issues. We continue to have challenges about housing and youth transitioning out of school. These funds will be so helpful as we work to address these critical issues."

The 100 Women Who Care initiative, launched in 2006, is a collaborative fundraising model that enables women to pool their resources in support of local charities. Each member contributes \$100 and votes for one of

three nominated charities three times a year. There are now over 700 chapters active across North America.

Celebrating its sixth anniversary, the Salt Spring branch has now raised over \$300,000 for 18 causes, including Search and Rescue, early child support and education, therapeutic riding, wildlife care, IWAY and elder-care.

The next 100+ Women Who Care Salt Spring Island meeting will be at ArtSpring on Feb. 26, 2025, with nominations closing on Jan. 29, 2025.

Visit 100womensaltspring.org for more information, including how to join the group.

CLIMATE

Thermal imaging tool available at library

Cameras join suite of climate action tools to borrow

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

If you're wondering where the heat in your home is going, a new tool available on loan from the library might help.

The Capital Regional District (CRD) recently partnered with local libraries to launch new thermal imaging camera kits and an updated Climate Action To-Go Kit, both now available to borrow at the Salt Spring Public Library.

The new and updated tools are designed to help residents understand and take action on climate change, organizers said — an interactive way to take meaningful action, according to CRD Climate Action Program manager Nikki Elliott.

"These kits include practical tools and activities for reducing household greenhouse gas emissions," said

Elliott, "especially from sources like transportation, buildings and waste, which are the region's largest contributors — preparing our homes and communities for current and future climate impacts."

The new program loans out high-tech thermal cameras to help residents see drafts, insulation gaps and heat loss through walls, all of which can have big impacts on energy bills. Winter is the best time to use the tool, officials said, when 10-degree or greater differences between indoor and outdoor temperatures make it easier to identify areas of heat loss.

The kit also contains additional resources including tips for DIY draft-proofing and support from the CRD's Home Energy Navigator program for those looking to undertake larger home energy retrofits.

In addition to the new thermal imaging kits, the library also has the CRD's updated "Climate Action To-Go" kits, which include "Kill-A-Watt" electricity use meters and thermal leak detectors for walls and windows.

Kits can be checked out for up to one week. For more info, stop by the library or visit crd.bc.ca/actionkits.

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