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Gulf Islands Driftwood

THIS WEEK'S INSERTS

- Ganges Village Market
- Thrifty Foods
- Channel Ridge Insert
- Ganges Pharmasave
- Fields Stores

INSIDE

Back in the saddle

Stan Lam is back on Salt Spring after an accident last summer. Page B19



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Weather

Clouds and light rain are in the forecast right through the weekend. Highs to 8 C (Thursday); overnight lows to 1 C (also on Thursday).

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Community mourns loss of island youth

By CAREY RUDISILL
Staff Writer

Family, friends and community members filled Community Gospel Chapel to capacity Monday afternoon to mourn the loss of 17-year-old Salt Spring youth Clark Little and to celebrate his life.

Little died in a car accident on the evening of Tuesday, December 9 in the 2100 block of Fulford-Ganges Road.

Church pastor Chris Cormack said the memorial service offered a time for people to connect with one another.

"None of us wants to be here," he said.

Cormack had gathered with Clark's friends last Wednesday, he said, and they told him stories of the Grade 12 Gulf Islands Secondary School (GISS) student who loved God, his family, friends, poetry and

country music.

Cormack recited Psalm 46, which he had also read to Clark's friends: "God is our refuge and strength, therefore we will not fear."

Clark's Sunday school teacher Mike Hunsberger read the eulogy prepared by the family.

Hunsberger related the tale of Clark's birth where his umbilical cord was wrapped three times around his neck. A family friend told mother Leah that this was a sign that her child had a special mission in life.

The eulogy reflected Clark's influence on other family members and friends. Older brother Dustin called Clark "Corky" as a young child.

This wasn't the only name his younger brother would wear. Other nicknames were Spider Monkey, Living Link and Wild Man.

Clark's mother said she called him Living Link because when he was little Clark used to wrap himself around her legs.

He enjoyed the company of his parents, wasn't attracted to the idea of leaving home and became a "pre-school drop-out."

Hunsberger also spoke about Clark's good heart.

"He viewed friends as family," he said.



GRIEF: High school students gather and leave flowers at the site of Clark Little's accident the day following the crash.

Photo by Derrick Lundy

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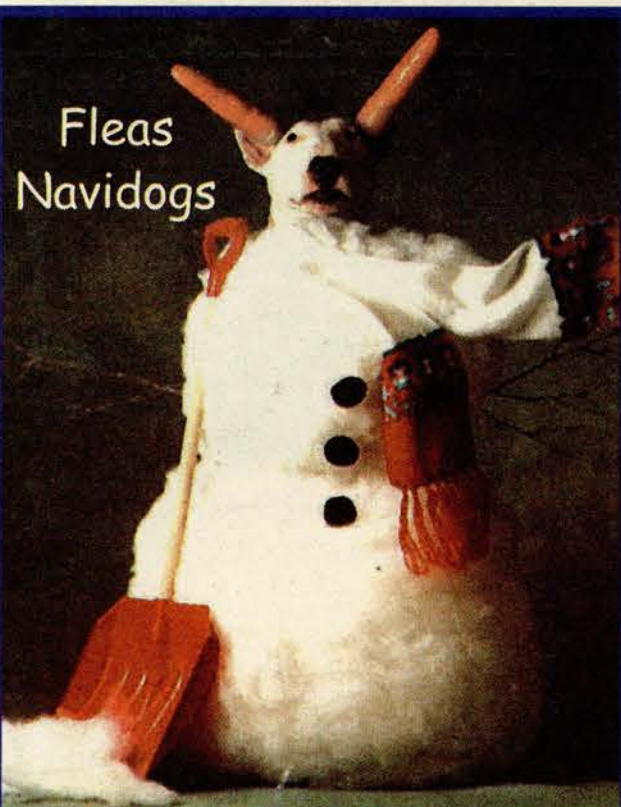
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Classified Deadline:
5pm, Monday, Dec 29th

Too Late Too Classify Deadline:
Noon, Tuesday, Dec 30th

Please note our office will close Dec. 24th at noon

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desire to help others.

Family members choked up while trying to share their memories. Girlfriend Jess Carpenter read one of Clark's poems titled "Let's Pray."

Hunsberger recited more stories and reiterated that people will "miss everything about Clark."

GISS vice-principal Neill Armitage said he was honoured to be asked by the Little family to speak.

Armitage said that before the Monday service, he sat down and read Clark's report cards.

"I read comments, including ones about Clark's compassion, and that he was a valuable addition to the peer counselling program. His interactive abilities were enjoyed by SIMS students."

Armitage added that Clark was also "Mr. Procrastinator" and he had met with him in the past to discuss possible solutions.

"I remember telling him he didn't have a mean bone in his body," he said.

Other friends related their stories on Monday. Family friend Marianne Banman read a cookie recipe that detailed how the Little family made cooking caramel cookies a family event.

The youth had left an "awesome mark in life," said Clark's uncle Brian



Clark Little

Little. "You will be remembered," he said.

People sang the hymn It is Well With my Soul and listened to prayers from Cormack.

Clark's sister Emily recited another of his poems and his brother explained how he turned to Clark's name for guidance.

"I looked up the meaning of Clark's name. It means 'scholar.' He searched for truth and lived by the truth," Dustin said.

Clark's father Duane said the event had shaken him.

"A week ago, I didn't know if I could go on. As Christians, we know Clark is in a good place."

He said he had worried about Clark's tender feelings when he was younger and now saw how those feelings were also his legacy to others.

"Clark shared his tender feelings with all of you and because of that you're all part of our lives."

The eulogy ended with Clark's favourite country song "I'm Already There" and was followed by a reception at the chapel.

According to Salt Spring RCMP, Little was killed when he lost control of his 1994 Eagle Summit, crossed into the southbound lane on Fulford-Ganges Road and was struck by a 2002 Ford Explorer driven by Pat Akerman.

RCMP determined that alcohol, speed and road conditions were not contributing factors to the accident.

Fulford-Ganges Road was closed for approximately five hours while the scene was examined by local police and an RCMP traffic analyst.

150 people turn out to Channel Ridge open house

By GAIL SJUBERG
Staff Writer

Trail preservation, logging plans, water use and housing styles were among topics touched on at a Channel Ridge Properties Ltd. open house at the high school Saturday afternoon.

About 150 people came by in the two-hour time period, with 21 of those completing survey forms, said Deborah Folka from the company's community relations department.

"Ten of the 21 surveys were totally positive," said Folka. "Of the remaining ones, three commented on building forms and eight on environmental aspects."

Several members of the Channel Ridge Property project team gave short updates and answered one-on-one questions from individual residents.

Landscape architect Don Vaughan restated the company's position that logging of the 87-acre site where building will occur should be done all at once in the next few months.

Reducing the total amount of time when current and future residents are disturbed by logging activity was among the reasons cited.

Folka said Tuesday that Channel Ridge has not yet chosen a contractor from those submitting bids.

Trees will be trucked out on an old logging road/trail to Sunset Drive that will also act as the development's emergency access route.

Vaughan estimated the company had a three-month window to do the logging work, which is set to commence soon.

Preservation of existing trails is in the development plan, said Vaughan.

Following project team members' walks with islanders familiar with the area landscape, "What came home very clear to us was the importance of the trails," said Vaughan. "We have very much left the important trails in place."

Mark Holland, the development's "sustainability planner," described various ideas for making the homes as energy efficient and environmentally sensitive as possible.

He said the company has directed that both paving and parking areas be minimized. Vehicle impacts could also be reduced through establishing an auto co-op and using electric vehicles, he suggested.

A system of rainwater collection from roofs is envisioned. That water, stored in two reservoirs and treated, will be used first, followed by the already-permitted St. Mary Lake supply, said Holland.

He also said the lands would be re-planted with native species, berries, vines and orchard trees following this winter's logging.

Architect Stuart Lyon described some residential and commercial buildings' layout and characteristics.

Phase I plans include 165 multi-family and single family dwelling residential units, ranging in size from 1,200 square feet to 2,600 square feet.

Some 25,000 square feet of total commercial space — about 17 units — is also in the plans for Phase I.

Another public meeting is anticipated in the next few months.

Documents missing for Duck Creek Park

Ownership of Duck Creek Park has surfaced as an unresolved issue in Salt Spring land-use history.

While community members may have assumed the Capital Regional District (CRD) owns the whole park, local salmon enhancement biologist Kathy Reimer has pointed out that Channel Ridge Properties Ltd. still owns the widely used field areas of the park, although a trail easement through most of the lower valley was dedicated to the CRD in the late 1980s.

"We were told at that time that the rest of the donation would take place during the second phase of Channel Ridge's development," Reimer writes in a recent letter to the Islands Trust.

Deborah Folka, of Channel Ridge Properties Ltd.'s community relations department, said she has discussed the issue with past islands trustee Grace Byrne, who was clear about the agreement with former landowner Mark Lindholm and says that paperwork

exists to prove it.

However, to date no parties can locate any documents outlining a second-phase Duck Creek Park transfer plan.

"This stuff is all of course discussable," said Folka. "If there is no documentation that says this was a dedicated park for this amount of land with this name and for this purpose, then let's start talking again about what you see being there."

Channel Ridge Owners' Association representative

John Myers said he is aware of the Duck Creek Park issue but is confident it will be resolved like the watershed land transfer to the Water Preservation Society this fall.

"Some of the background data appears to be missing, and some of the paperwork, but I have no fear that we will lose Duck Creek as a park."

The Living Word

Matthew 1: 23

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Dixon art wins cover contest

Impressed with the high quality of submissions from high school art students, Driftwood judges had a tough time choosing cover art for this year's Christmas edition.

Of the five favourites, Rebecca Dixon's whimsical art was selected as the winner.

The judges liked its colourful, clean look and overall Christmassy theme.

Second place winner, featured on Page B1, is Rocio Fonseca's beautifully detailed submission.

Other top entries — by Gabriela Sandoval, Amanda Sykes and Ye ji Koo — are highlighted alongside Driftwood story contest winners in the Christmas Feature section, pages B6 to B10.

AT THE PUMPS

Gas pump prices as of Monday, December 15, were as follows:

Salt Spring Payless	84.9
McCull's Shell	82.9
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Crofton Shell	71.9
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Contractor dispute in court

Bad blood between an off-island contractor and two islanders transformed a bar room brawl into a court appearance.

In Ganges Provincial Court December 9, Nanaimo contractor Scott Wood was given a conditional discharge, 12 months' probation and ordered to pay a \$150 victim surcharge fee for assaulting Donald Butler.

Judge Michael Hubbard prohibited Wood from seeing Butler or another man named Steve Forbes and from visiting Salt Spring Island except with his probation officer's permission.

Wood said the argument originated from a

dispute over a right-of-way at the Fulford ferry terminal when he blocked an entrance to keep others from driving through his work space.

On April 27, Wood engaged Butler in a physical altercation at the Fulford Inn.

Defence lawyer James Pasuta said Wood's actions were a "complete aberration for his lifestyle" and that the Nanaimo man had no previous criminal record.

Hubbard also ordered Wood to attend counselling if directed to do so by his probation officer.

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Flu bug bites Salt Spring schools and Lady Minto

By **SUSAN LUNDY**
Staff Writer

High absentee rates in Salt Spring schools and confirmed cases of influenza at Lady Minto Hospital have signalled the start of local flu season and prompted hospital staff to restrict visitors.

Student absentee rates peaked early last week when up to a quarter of students called in sick.

At Lady Minto Hospital, influenza has been confirmed in one patient each in

the extended and acute care wards, and several other residents are displaying flu-like symptoms.

"It's not a huge outbreak," said Karen Davies, manager of client care for the southern Gulf Islands, "but we want to be really careful."

Three residents with symptoms were isolated Friday, and by Monday hospital visitors and activities had been restricted.

"We want to have a really cautious week and then reassess next Monday. Then,

hopefully we can have a nice Christmas week."

Only immediate family will be permitted to visit the hospital this week, and even they should check with nurses before dropping by.

Davies urges people with flu-like symptoms to stay home, unless they are in need of emergency care.

The caution was prompted in part by memories of the highly contagious Norwalk virus which went through the community "like wildfire" this time last year, Davies said.

"We're watching and being careful."

In the meantime, business is hopping at local pharmacies, with the whole gamut of cold and flu remedies disappearing off the shelves.

"Everything is going," said Chris Steffich at the downtown Pharmasave. "They're buying Neo Citron, Sudafed, Tylenol Cold and Sinus . . . there's definitely a lot of people with sore throats."

She also said that for a number of children with

asthma or other compromising ailments, the flu bug is moving into bacterial respiratory infections and forcing use of antibiotics.

According to health nurse Pam MacKenzie, the flu season appears to have started in island schools.

The health office is required to keep school absentee records once the numbers exceed 10 per cent. Last week, the middle school, Salt Spring Elementary and Fulford Elementary recorded up to 25 per cent of students absent.

Absenteeism peaked last Monday at Fulford school with a quarter of students and three teachers missing, including principal Judy Raddysh.

Middle school secretary Judy Boylan said 72 students were absent from Salt Spring Island Middle School on Monday, with numbers generally improving towards the end of the week.

At Fernwood School, a steady stream of absences

started two weeks ago, but the number of students missing on any given day has not been as high as elsewhere.

Teresa Lang at Gulf Islands Secondary School also noted lots of students off sick, and indicated most were staying home three to five days.

The first symptom is usually a sore throat followed by gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, and then respiratory problems usually associated with colds.

Although children often recover quickly from influenza, MacKenzie said, "they are not bouncing back quite as fast this time."

Many students are returning to school with lingering coughs and sniffles.

Two types of flu have been identified in the Capital Health Region, including the new-to-Canada A/Fujian and the A/Panama strains. The A/Panama flu is one of three strains included in this

year's flu vaccine, which, according to Health Canada information, will also "provide some level of protection" against the A/Fujian strain.

MacKenzie said Monday that the island flu bug had not yet been confirmed as the A/Fujian strain. However, 70 per cent of strains Canada-wide have been identified as the new version.


Whatever the bug, it will keep young carollers out of facilities like Greenwood's where the elderly reside.

Once school absentee rates exceed 10 per cent, regional regulations prohibit clusters of youths from entering care facilities.


"That certainly cuts out all the elementary schools and the middle school," noted MacKenzie.

In the meantime, islanders can take precautions against spreading the flu by washing their hands regularly, staying home if they show signs of illness and getting flu shots.

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20 SA	0355 9.5 0710 8.9 1250 11.5 2035 1.3		

RCMP hand out warnings, take licences

RCMP members reminded four drivers about the consequences of drinking and driving during road checks held Saturday, December 13.

RCMP REPORT

The drivers had their

licences suspended for 24 hours. Police said they want residents to be aware that seasonal road checks are ongoing and people should arrange for safe rides.

A 33-year-old Salt Spring man was charged with impaired driving on Friday, following a minor car crash at Robinson and Starks roads.

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Cooling-off period ended longer 1977 ferry strike

By **TONY RICHARDS**
Staff Writer

A legislated cooling-off period was used to end the last strike by coastal ferry workers, which occurred more than 25 years ago.

The eight-day strike, which stemmed from job security and hours of work issues, took place in October 1977. The provincial government ended the walkout by imposing a 90-day cooling-off period.

Water taxis, fish packers and other private craft were pressed into service at the time to move people and freight to the islands. Even

the provincial government's float plane was offered by MLA Hugh Curtis to bring in supplies.

The Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce tried unsuccessfully to have the Vesuvius ferry run four days a week to bring in essential supplies.

Fuel was not one of them. At the time, local fuel distributors had their own storage tanks located on-island. As well, the Burgoyne Dairy was operating so islanders had a ready supply of milk.

Sentiment at the time was not favourable to ferry workers. The Driftwood reported that several local merchants were angry about the strike and one restaurant was reported to have refused service to ferry workers.

The owner of Harbour Low Cost then was Bob Blundell, who didn't pull any punches in his criticism of ferry employees. "They think a 40-hour week is too long. They're getting a damn good wage for what they do."

Blundell was bringing in supplies for his store on his 26-foot pleasure boat. Meanwhile, the Gulf Islands Trading Co. and K&R Your Food Store had engaged two locally based fish packers to bring in stock.

In an editorial the Driftwood was critical of the provincial government for allowing a dispute between the ferry service and its employees to cause hardship for islanders. "How can we ensure that . . . the people of the islands are not forever in the future the whipping boys of labour-management unrest in the ferry fleet?"

The question might still be asked today.

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Maliview sewer suffers back-up

By MITCHELL SHERRIN
Staff Writer

Two households on Maliview Drive suffered an unpleasant awakening as a result of a backed-up sewer pipe Friday morning.

"When they got up, there was sewage on the floor," said Capital Regional District (CRD) Environmental Services manager Jim McFarland.

"It was not pleasant, of course."

Local maintenance crews cleared the blockage within 30 minutes of the call received at 8:30 a.m. Friday, but one household was still not able to return to their home Monday.

"One house had water on the floor and we arranged other accommodations until the situation could be fixed," McFarland said.

Upon inspection, it appeared the sewer pipe probably suffered a blockage caused by an accumulation of grease, he noted. The debris was easily cleared from the pipe with a hydraulic rodding machine.

Over the course of the day, maintenance crews cleaned the rest of the line that serves 94 households, but they found no other significant problems, he said.

The CRD plans to conduct a thorough investigation of the sewer line using a TV camera in the new year just to make sure there are no other surprises lurking around in the near future.

"Hopefully we'll find something that will answer the questions."

He hopes that the camera inspection will become a regular occurrence.

"Every three-to-five years is when people normally inspect a pipe."

The Maliview sewer system had another blockage last year that stemmed from a misaligned pipe, he said.

Previously, a service-connection problem also caused the sewer to back up in a Maliview household five or six years ago, said McFarland.

The CRD has been waiting for over a year to get a joint provincial-federal infrastructure grant to upgrade the treatment facility for the Maliview sewer.

"We're still waiting for the grant . . . It's been a long wait," said McFarland.

But he believes last week's problem with the sewer back-up is not connected with the need to upgrade the treatment facility.

"It's probably unrelated. But anything to speed it along would be great."

The Maliview sewer, which is more than 30 years old, is out of compliance with its waste-management permit because the CRD currently provides only primary treatment for the effluent.

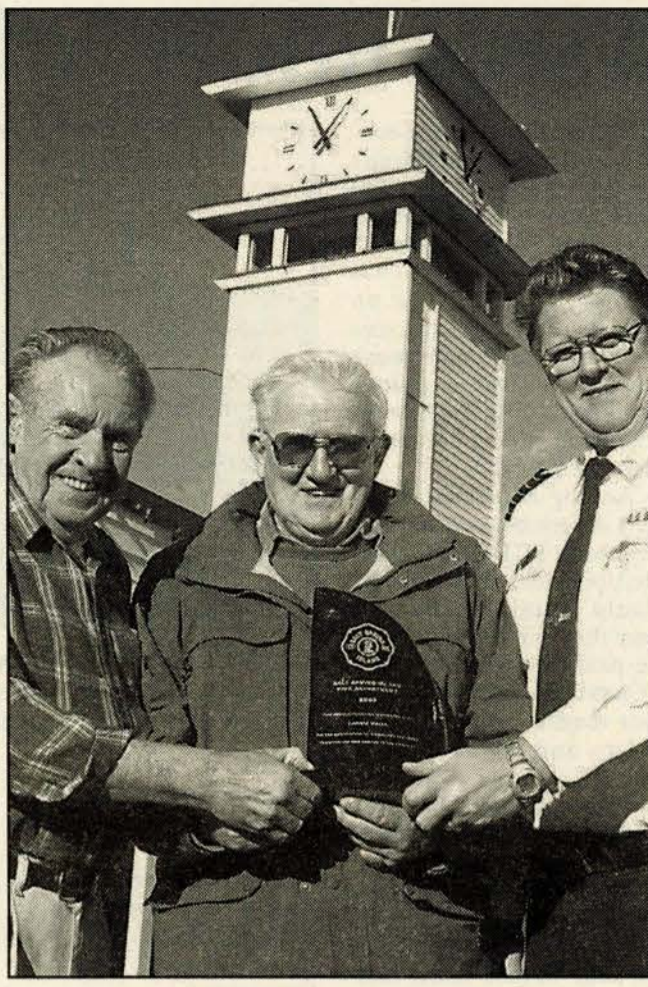
"What we proposed was to put in a secondary plant that would far exceed the requirements."

The secondary-plant plan was budgetted at \$195,400 in June 2002. Local ratepayers would pay \$65,500, while the remaining two thirds of funding would come from the infrastructure grant.

"We phone them on a regular basis but we don't get any word, either way."

McFarland is still optimistic that the grant will be soon forthcoming.

"We might actually get some information before the end of the year. That would be a positive story."



CLOCK WORK: Ben Martens, left, and fire chief Dave Enfield, right, present a glass plaque to Lawrie Neish for his work on the clock tower. In accepting the honour, Neish stressed that he had lots of help from Reg Taylor.

Photo by Derrick Lundy

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Minister backtracks on teachers college scheme

Local teachers are feeling cautiously optimistic after Education Minister Christy Clark announced a December 10 proposal to return control of the B.C. College of Teachers (BCCT) to the voting membership.

"We're saying, 'Oh boy, this looks good.' But we have to be like a chicken and get scratching," said Gulf Islands Teachers' Association (GITA) president Jean Claude Levesque.

"There are an awful lot of questions that need to be asked."

And since Clark has acted without consulting B.C. teachers once again, said Levesque, they have lost faith in the education minister.

"There will be years of building trust before we can ever trust her."

He was appalled when Clark announced a \$145-million "surplus" in November after school districts across the province closed schools and laid off staff to accommodate funding shortfalls.

"She still does these things without talking to anyone."

During last Wednesday's speech, Clark proposed amendments to the new Teaching Profession Act (Bill 51) that governs the BCCT and provides licensing requirements for teachers.

Currently, the majority of B.C.'s 37,000 teachers have refused to pay their mandatory membership fees to the BCCT as a protest to Bill 51 and sent their money to a trust fund controlled by the B.C. Teachers' Federation (BCTF). The BCTF also launched a legal challenge of Bill 51 that is currently sitting before the B.C. Supreme Court.

The refusal to pay fees to the BCCT has placed school districts in an uncomfortable position since all teachers must be members of the college in order to teach in public schools. And the BCCT was preparing to cancel memberships of teachers who had not paid their dues on December 31.

A November 30 deadline for the fee was already extended to avoid suspending members.

Conceding to teachers' demands on Wednesday, Clark suggested the BCCT could be headed by 12 elected educators and eight government appointees, a reversal from a spring decision when she dissolved the existing board and passed Bill 51.

The Teaching Profession Act passed in May called for 12 appointees and eight elected members, changed from a previous organiza-

tion of 15 elected members and five appointees.

Bill 51 also aimed to enhance parents' capacities to complain about teachers, to create clear standards of teacher competence and ensure independence from the BCTF. Annual college fees also jumped from \$70 to \$90.

But the BCTF is still concerned about other aspects of Bill 51 and the current BCCT board, which will remain in place until March.

"They already have created a whole bunch of standards that are scary," said Levesque.

"If they go ahead with a 'snitch clause' [requiring teachers to report any suspicion of unprofessional conduct by their peers], there is no way we can get it removed."

According to the BCTF, the BCCT has recently heard complaints from B.C. parents about teacher conduct as result of: a child who didn't make it onto a sports team, a teacher who wrote a letter to the editor about an issue of public concern not related to education and a case of student discipline where the teacher was supported by the school board.

Members of the BCTF will meet and vote in response to Clark's proposal this week.

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...THE REVIVAL OF A SALT SPRING CHRISTMAS TRADITION

Ferries return to seas under arbitration steam

By MITCHELL SHERRIN
Staff Writer

Islanders can resume travel with assurances that ferries will continue to run at regular service levels now that B.C. Ferries and unionized employees have agreed to binding arbitration.

"We are fully participating in the binding-arbitration process. There are no plans for job action," said B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers' Union (BCFMWU) business agent Dan Rowe.

Ferry workers returned to serve island communities noon Friday after a 46-hour strike isolated coastal communities during labour negotiations between the BCFMWU and B.C. Ferry Services Inc. (BCFSI).

"Shutting down the ferry service is not an action we have taken lightly. We realize how great an inconvenience and disruption it has been for many people," said BCFMWU president Jackie Miller in a press release Friday.

Miller and BCFSI CEO David Hahn agreed to binding arbitration after negotiators were unable to resolve an impasse in bargaining by 2 a.m. Friday morning.

A BCFSI press release noted that the company accepted the recommendation of special mediator Vince Ready reluctantly "due to the fact that the company has been unable to engage the union executive in a meaningful bargaining dialogue ever since the parties first met on September 8."

BCFSI president David Hahn said, "We believe that a bargained solution is always the best solution, however, we do understand that the first priority is to restore service to the public. We also recognize that Mr. Ready's recommendation is a way to achieve this important objective."

Once the parties agreed to arbitration, ferries were shuttling Salt Spring passengers from Vesuvius Bay by 11:40 a.m. Friday.

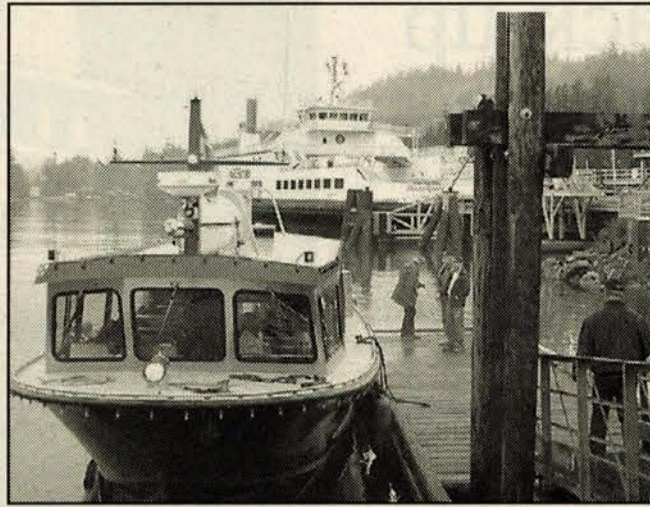
BCFSI had tabled a contract offer just four hours before binding arbitration was recommended but it was "too little, too late," said Rowe.

"For them to come up with this at the very last second may have had some impact if we had some time, but I don't think there was a lot of patience on the part of the government."

Among numerous items in a comprehensive contract proposal, BCFSI suggested that pensions and benefits could remain unchanged and that employees would be paid for increased hours of work (contrary to an earlier request for increased hours and no additional pay).

The company also proposed a reduction in overtime-wage provisions — from double-time to time-and-a-half — with a five-minute grace period and pay for time worked rather than measurement in half-hour increments.

And the employer



TAXI ON TAP: Passengers disembark from a water taxi as a "beached" Skeena Queen sits in the background during last week's ferry action. Photo by Mitchell Sherrin

relationship with our employer that serves the general public and the company, and certainly our members. Our members have a right to a fair and reasonable collective agreement."

Rowe doesn't believe that a new class-action lawsuit launched against the union to claim damages from the strike will be productive toward building relationships.

"These actions exacerbate the situation."

Strikes are a normal part of a labour dispute, he said.

And he reminded islanders that they saw greater reduction in service as result of the snowstorm in 1996.

"You have to ask yourself a question of, 'How much money was lost?' ... At the same time you have to recognize that we had to do what we had to do to protect our rights because our rights were being assaulted."

Members of the public should look beyond the actions of union employees to understand the causes of the strike, he said.

"If they want to ask themselves, 'Why there was a shutdown,' maybe they have to look further than at ferry workers; maybe they need to look at the controversial acts of the labour minister and the position that was being taken by BCFSI."

requested wage reductions and graded increases for new employees. (For example, a new catering attendant would receive \$14.75 instead of \$19.28, with increases to \$17.35 over three years.)

Merit would be the new criteria for promotion, rather than seniority.

The union was also asked to accept contracting-out provisions stipulated under the new Coastal Ferry Act.

But the BCFMWU had simply hoped to maintain the labour agreement that was previously in place before negotiations began on September 8, said Rowe.

"The union position is fairly similar to what it was

on day one."

The employer dismissed every proposal the union made, out of hand, said Rowe.

"They just wanted to have it all and we feel that they never intended to negotiate."

And the union was forced to act when the provincial government interfered with bargaining, as exemplified when Labour Minister Graham Bruce imposed an 80-day "cooling-off" period.

"What they did was take any pressure off the employer to bargain."

Meetings to discuss binding arbitration were scheduled to begin 1 p.m. Wednesday, Rowe said.

"We want to rebuild the

Impaired driver loses licence

A drink too many during a pub dinner in November cost a Salt Spring man his licence for one year.

Ronald Junker was fined \$600 after pleading guilty in Ganges court December 9 to a charge of driving with a blood alcohol level over the legal limit.

When asked by Judge Hubbard why he chose to drink and drive, Junker said he didn't believe he was drunk.

"I weigh 135 pounds. I guess .08 is not much alcohol for my body weight," he said.

In other court news:

• Two island men were given conditional discharges, nine months' probation and 35 hours of community service after they pleaded guilty to charges of possession of a

COURT DOCKET

controlled substance.

As explained in court by Crown counsel Jamie Dunlap, Dylan Webb and Wilson Sutton-Atkins were driving in the early hours of October 2 when they were stopped and questioned by police officers. They were found in possession of three bags of marijuana totalling 547.4 grams, said Dunlap.

Judge Hubbard took the two men's relative youth, early guilty plea, first court appearance and future plans to attend university into consideration when making his decision to grant conditional discharges.

"I realize the effect a criminal conviction can have," Hubbard said.

• An island youth learned that stupidity has consequences. Charged with breaking and entering at a Rainbow Road home on July 9, the youth received a conditional sentence.

Judge Hubbard also issued a 30-day deferred custody order during which time the youth has to report to his supervisor, reside where directed and follow a 10 p.m.-7 a.m. curfew daily except with permission of a youth worker. He also received 50 hours of community service to complete by July 2004.

In the break-in, a TV and an old computer were taken.

Defence lawyer James Pasuta said his client regretted the "spontaneous, stupid action."

During the trial, Dunlap noted the youth's previous convictions in 2000 and a conviction on the day before the break-and-enter.

Near the end, the youth asked what would happen if he breached his probation orders.

"You go away for the rest of the time," Judge Hubbard said.

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Ferry union may face class action

Island businesses could recover losses from last week's ferry shutdown following a class-action lawsuit filed against the B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers' Union (BCFMWU) on Monday.

The lawsuit was filed at B.C. Supreme Court for damages suffered by a Victoria-based fish business that was unable to ship its products during the strike.

But the class action proceeding could potentially encompass every business affected by the job action, said Sidney lawyer Denis Bernsten.

"Once it's been classified as a class action, then every business in B.C. that fits the class, meaning that they've lost money as a result of the illegal strike, would automatically be included in the action."

While islanders who suffered losses will want to contact Bernsten in the near future, there is no rush to contact his office, he said.

"With a class action, people don't need to list or register at this stage. We file on behalf of one representative plaintiff under the Class Proceedings Act, then we'll do a certification application in five or six weeks."

If the courts determine that the case meets criteria for a class-action lawsuit, Bernsten's firm would then

place newspaper ads and notify various business associations to collect a list of plaintiffs, he said.

"That would be the start of the quantification stage, where we try to determine how much we can show each individual business lost."

The courts would then have to approve the method of quantifying damages, currently estimated at \$5 million, he said.

"For example, in the hotel industry you might have people who lost bookings as result. Obviously, if they've taken good notes and can say they've lost 30 bookings over the period and people have called in to communicate why . . . If they've taken those kind of notes, that can help."

Another method of quantifying damages could be a comparison of business totals between the strike period and the same time on previous years, he said.

But even a court decision favourable to businesses would take a long time before damages were paid by the union, Bernsten said.

"It will be two years before they see the money."

For more information about the class action case, call Bernsten toll free at 1 (866) 780-3800.

'Angry trucker:' tired and headed for home

An island business owner has been surprised by responses from supporters and detractors after he appeared on a BCTV newscast regarding the B.C. Ferries job action Thursday.

"I am simply a person who asked to be taken home," said reluctant "celebrity" and Foxglove Farm and Garden Supplies owner Chris Schmah Monday.

Schmah was among those participating in an impromptu truck blockade at the terminal.

Following the newscast, some customers went to his store with applause while others condemned his comments at the Tsawwassen ferry terminal, he said.

Schmah didn't even realize the news program had labelled him an "angry trucker" who was protesting against the ferry strike.

"There were a lot of cameras and we got to voice our concerns," he said.

But Schmah had made no

comments, either positive or negative, about the union or the company, he said.

"This is between administration and the union. We haven't been informed of the issues and we haven't been party to the negotiations."

During a Driftwood interview, Schmah noted he is concerned that the strike could leave a residual effect on the islands' economy if travellers perceive ferries as an unreliable travel option.

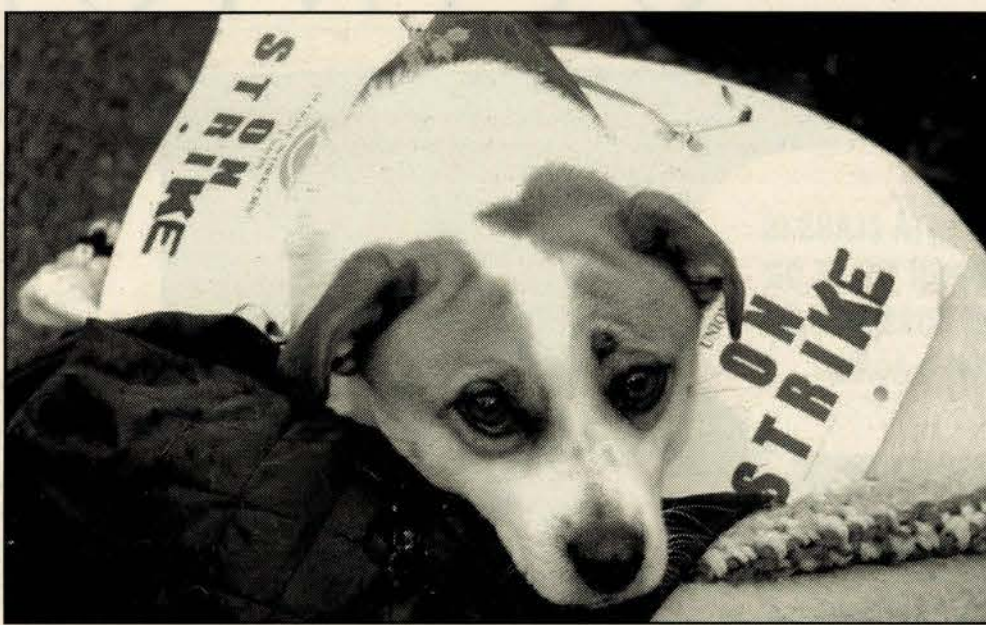
But he counts many ferry workers as friends.

"We all have to get along."

As an additional note, it's possible the news crew had mistaken Schmah's fatigue for anger since he had only managed to get four or five hours of sleep the night before.

And the sleep deprivation was not a direct result of the strike. It was linked to the supply trip Schmah needs to take to the mainland after work each week, he said.

"That's what I look like every Thursday night."



STRIKE DOG: Oliver, the striking hound, takes a break from the picket line during last week's ferry action at Fulford Harbour.

Photo by Derrick Lundy

Stranded islander finds kindness

An islander found some human compassion when she attempted to return to Salt Spring with perishable cargo during last week's ferry strike.

Admiral's Specialty Foods owner Pam Booth found herself at the Tsawwassen ferry terminal at 12:10 p.m. Wednesday, just moments after ferry workers went on strike and cancelled service to the islands.

"They wouldn't let us hand in the ticket booth in there," she said.

Though island-bound ferries returned to their home ports, the parking lot was almost empty after striking workers closed the ticket booths and only a few cars could have been carried aboard, she said.

But Booth waited at the terminal for six hours, optimistically hoping that service would resume, with her cargo of organic meat worth \$1,500.

Fortunately, she met Beth Ferguson, a friendly B.C. Ferries employee at the terminal, who offered a place for Booth to store her meat.

"She says, 'Now Honey, you go down to Ladner to the Buy and Low grocery store. I know these twins that own that store there. You ask them to let you put it in the cooler there.' They didn't have a clue as to who she was, but they were very nice," said Booth.

The grocery store owners even offered for Booth to stay at their condo and borrow their credit cards, she said incredulously.

But she declined their offer and stayed at a hotel, she said.

Booth optimistically returned to the ferry terminal on Thursday in hopes that vessels would run, but she left after another seven hours of waiting.

Once again, Booth was overwhelmed by generosity when Ferguson offered to store her meat products and put up the islander.

"She said, 'I can put it in my fridge.' I think one box would fit and I have 20 boxes."

Booth declined the offer and stayed Thursday night in Richmond with the supplier who provided the organic meats.

And she was happy to

return home Friday after another five hours waiting at the ferry terminal.

But she hasn't forgotten the kindness of the people who offered assistance during her trials and tribulations.

"These people were so nice and thoughtful."



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Salt Spring spirit

The spirit of Christmas is certainly alive and well on Salt Spring Island at this time of year, but for many islanders it is a spirit that endures year-round.

It can be seen in the outstanding and ongoing generosity of those who give money, time or goods in support of community causes and charities.

It can be seen in the outpouring of support from the community when individuals or families are struck by tragedy.

It can be seen in the stellar efforts of islanders in support of international humanitarian efforts.

For many people, Christmas on Salt Spring begins with the arrival of Santa Claus by boat or by plane. For others it can begin with the first musical performance by a school or community choral group. Shopping for Christmas gifts in local stores or at craft fairs is yet another signal that the season has begun.

Just as we have different ways of identifying the start of the Christmas season, we have different ways of celebrating. There are, in fact, many great differences among us, yet the strength of community — aided in large part by geographical considerations — overcomes many barriers and erases many differences. It serves, in fact, to enhance and extend the spirit of Christmas.

On the other hand, many people are jaded by the commercial influence on Christmas. No sooner have we put away the Remembrance Day poppies, it seems, than we are bringing out the holly and the Christmas lights. We are bombarded with advertising messages exhorting us to buy this or that special gift and join the throngs of mall-goers in a wild frenzy of Christmas shopping.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Because Christmas is what each one of us feels in our hearts. We can enjoy the arrival of Santa, the songs of the season, the holly and the ivy and even the sometimes daunting act of Christmas shopping, if we choose to do so.

It is up to us. It is up to each one of us as to whether we catch that Christmas spirit. It is up to each one of us as to whether we can make that spirit endure longer than the seasonal decorations. Thankfully, on Salt Spring there are many among us who are able to do just that: capture that spirit of giving and generosity and hang on to it.

Communities spring from a human need; special communities spring from the special people of which they are formed. Have a special and merry Salt Spring Christmas.

Driftwood

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Bottom-line mentality doesn't address safety or trust

By DOROTHY DRUBEK
 "They should fire the lot of them!"
 There has been so much spin revolving around the dispute among the B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers Union, B.C. Ferries and the B.C. Liberals.

However, when the government imposed the 80-day cooling off period, it showed that it is still maintaining control over the workers for the "good of the public" while keeping totally out of the actions of the private company it created.

Can we see any connection between B.C. Ferries' refusal to move anywhere on their demands — which include contracting out, breaking up the workers' pension plan, rolling back wages (some to

VIEW POINT

1984 levels?!) — to our arriving one day and finding the whole parking system has changed, with no public input, to an expensive nightmare?

With the "bottom line" management, can we be assured that when the smoke has cleared that our ferries will still be affordable and safe? We should trust this company?

Apparently if we paid the ferry workers what they are "worth," the company would be "efficiently" run, and yet we are told we get what we pay for when hiring

CEOs.

B.C. Ferries is now facing a shortage of ships officers, which is both a worldwide and industry-wide crisis.

In 1999, B.C. Ferries realized that they would need "to put greater emphasis on recruitment and development of officers to ensure that future requirements would be met."

The advantages of B.C. Ferries in the global market for marine jobs included stability, working conditions and opportunities. Since all these are eroding under the privatization and stripping of B.C. Ferries, it will become more and more difficult to recruit officers.

Adding to this shortage of ships officers is the fact that in the next

four years as many as half of the B.C. Ferries senior officers will retire.

B.C. Ferries wants ships officers to work longer hours for the same pay. Why? Because they don't have enough ships officers now. It is these individuals who are ultimately responsible for the safety of our ships. As technology and system safety requirements advance, they will have higher demands put on them, requiring more complex training and performance testing.

Remember that ships officers are the ones who say we can't run this ship safely with a chute system for evacuation when there are those aboard who can't use the chute. It is the company who says we won't let those who can't use

the chute on the ferries — simple!

And do we really want cashiers and other non-marine positions on the ferries to be minimum wage casual labour? All crew members must be trained and drilled to handle emergencies. Is there a price tag to safety?

Private company mismanagement was the reason B.C. Ferries was made a Crown corporation in the first place. Private companies serve the stockholders, not the public. If we want to insure that our communities are served by a safe, affordable and stable ferry system, B.C. Ferries should return to the public sector.

The writer is a Salt Spring puppeteer and Meadow Drive resident.

I don't have the time or the money to get a Christmas gift for everyone on Salt Spring that deserves something special, so I thought I'd just mention a few of the most deserving folks this year.

Here's my list, I checked it twice; it's full of folks both naughty and nice:

For Eric Booth: A sandbox to play in.

Eric's decision to abandon Trust Council meetings is childish (and unfair to Salt Spring residents). If we all stomped out in a huff when things didn't go our way, there'd be no politicians left in office and no volunteers left serving on the boards of organizations. That sort of behaviour should disappear about the same time as acne.

If, on the other hand, it's not a snit, and he really believes his absence serves us better than his participation, then maybe he's right.

A little something for everyone . . .

new bench. And an angel to make more and more and more of them, and place them all over the island so we're constantly reminded of Dorothy and people like her whose hearts are always in the right place.

For Dave Enfield: A plaque to hang above his mirror (so he sees it every time he puts on his Fire Chief's suit and Fire Chief's hat before getting into his Fire Chief's SUV) that says: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

For Rick Barbieri: A gift certificate for tuition from

ISLE SAY!

WITH JOHN POTTINGER



Ethics in Business and the Community.

For Gordon Campbell: A voucher for unlimited taxi rides in Maui over the holiday season.

For Rita Dods: More hugs than there are deer on Salt Spring. If Rita had a dollar for every muffin or cake she's baked for someone else over the years — she'd give it away.

For our proud and patriotic prime minister, Paul Martin: A copy of the new Canadian board game "Trivial Pressed Suits."

Paul: Name the multi-millionaire Canadian CEO whose billion dollar corporations carry Canadian names but are registered off-shore so they don't have to pay Canadian taxes, or wages, or meet Canadian labour and safety standards. Wow! What a surprise, Paul! It's you!

For B.C. Ferries CEO David Hahn: A book of 10 foot-passenger tickets for the Skeena Queen. A couple of return trips will give him a hint of what it's like for students, commuters and other regular travellers condemned to the Skeena day after day, week after week.

If the cold hard seats don't get him, the vibration will. If the constant humming of his bones and teeth don't get him, the ambient noise level

light aluminum hull and heavy diesel engines should send him fleeing back to the relative calm and quiet of New York City.

For Liz Nickson: Copies of all her columns from the National Post that aren't about her, her ancestors or other members of her "class." Hmm. I don't think I'll even need a stamp to mail that one.

For businesses that masquerade as "island" businesses but really aren't: A lump of coal in your stocking.

And a virus on your website that causes a little animated guy to pop up and say, "We don't really live here. We don't really work here. We don't really employ any islanders. If we were

www.welooklocal-butwearen't.com."

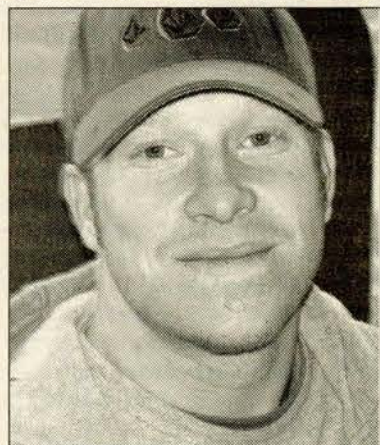
For all those islanders who volunteer their time, quietly but consistently, to local projects and organizations: Thank you, thank you, thank you. All the government money and programs in the world can't equal the community building that comes from people helping each other.

For me: A voucher for a course in time management, money management and organizational skills. It'll probably have to be a full-time course. For three years. Do they offer that on Mount Tuam?

For all of us: Another ferry strike. One that lasts weeks, months or even years. We'd be forced into using local food, local workers and local solutions. Then we'd really have to work together and get to know

SALT SPRING SAYS

We asked: *How did the ferry strike affect you?*



David Carson

I never leave the rock. I love Salt Spring. My job doesn't make it so I have to leave the island.



Arlene Dashwood

Because I try to shop on-island it hasn't affected me adversely.



June Dashwood

I had to cancel a medical appointment in Duncan. Now I have to re-book with the surgeon.



Linda Davidson

My friend had a heart attack in Ladysmith and was taken to Vancouver. I got stranded in Vancouver, and his family couldn't come.



Derek Shelley

My parents work for ferries. I think it's a message to the U.S. CEO. He makes \$36,000 a month and calls ferry workers 'gravy drinkers.'

Letters to the Editor

Respect covenant

Over the years in Whistler we have seen some creative ideas, which have resulted in transfer of development rights from one place to another.

For example, development rights were recently transferred away from a productive valley bottom wetland to an already developed site, which is slated for a higher commercial density. As our overall community size is restricted by a limited number of what we call "bed units," it served the purpose of wetland protection and placed the development in a built-up area which was identified years ago as being suitable for higher densities. There are of course similarities to the concept of density transfers — we call them bed unit transfers or floating bed units.

The part I don't understand in the proposed Isabella Point density transfer is the completely new and original concept of a self-destructing property covenant. A restrictive covenant is placed on a specific property in a specific

location. Covenants don't float around nor lend themselves to being transferred from one place to another. They are specific to the piece of land they are attached to. Period.

It is fortunate that the Isabella Point proposal has created discussion and awareness around the concept of density transfers as they exist within the OCP, but it seems there is some difficulty in keeping the important issues distinct from one another. A density transfer is one thing, but the existing covenant restricting any further subdivision that was placed on this specific property is not something for discussion by developers or planners. It is something to be respected in perpetuity, or at least as long as our society respects civil law.

ECKHARD ZEIDLER, JR.,
Whistler and Isabella Point

Neo-feudal nirvana

Upon announcing a truce in the ferry war, CEO Hahn urged the public to not be nasty to the ferry workers — the inference being that all right-thinking persons blame

said workers for the debacle.

Mr. Hahn is misinformed. My wife and I were among those who were less than joyful about being stuck for half a day at Tsawwassen, and we had plenty of time to find out who was getting most of the blame from the stranded citizens. It was not the workers.

It wasn't even Mr. Hahn, who, it was recognized, was only using the skills for which he had been imported. That leaves the B.C. government.

Who else could it be? We've had its wretched agenda for two-plus years, lots of time to recognize the modus operandi as, peddling or trashing our public and social services, it shoulders its way towards its neo-feudal nirvana of gated communities for the rich, food banks for the working poor, and pepper spray for the unruly homeless.

The realization of these dreams depends, of course, on the delusion that we in B.C. are a quiescent, easily cowed citizenry, horrified by the very thought of disobeying an injunction, however oppressive, however manipulative.

As the ferry workers have demonstrated, such a belief is unfounded. Perhaps the government would do well to ponder something said by Thomas Jefferson, one of Mr. Hahn's most celebrated countrymen:

"I hold that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."

ANDREW GIBSON,
Rainbow Road

Distressed

Ever since the Campbell government assumed office in 2001 it has been engaged in breaking trade unions.

It has done this by arbitrarily tearing up existing work contracts, contracting out unionized government services to non-union entrepreneurs, privatizing public enterprises and denying its workers continuing economic rights, and now (as I write) threatening legal action against ferry workers who are faced with the possible dismantling of the B.C. ferry system.

These are tried and tested ways to undermine democratic society and I am distressed that this government is so willfully arrogant and unjust.

I have never belonged to a union. But I read history, and I learn there that the emergence of strong unions was essential for the building of Canada as we know it today.

Two points are central. First, many industrialists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and beyond have resisted every effort of workers to climb out of the abysmal life assigned to them in a world as portrayed by Charles Dickens.

Only by the consistent efforts of wage labourers to organize into trade unions, and by fighting (sometimes literally) for a decent life, did our society gain our present level of human rights in the market place.

Second, we should recall the answer of the industrial tycoon Henry Ford to criticism by other owners of capital when he collaborated with labour: "If I don't pay my workers a decent wage, who will buy my automobiles?"

Without an equitable distribution of the wealth generated in industrial society, the system eventually breaks down.

I know very well that there is widespread criticism of

unions in our society. In part this is due to bad press, as their deficiencies are trumpeted in the media and their humane accomplishments almost totally ignored.

Because many of us appear to manage in the workplace without unions we forget their continuing and essential contribution to the general well-being of all workers. My wages rose over the years in part because union struggles were gradually raising the average social wage. Without their just and insistent demands, many of us would have worked or would still be working for much less reward.

The level of democracy we presently enjoy, including the honoured place of trade unionism in our society, is under attack from the Campbell government.

Tragically, they prefer to manipulate the lives of workers rather than to encourage fair and open negotiations between management and labour. They deserve to be denied another term in office.

BOB WILD,
Hedger Road

MORE LETTERS A10

Nature walk: an enlightening Christmas Day tradition

Christmas comes nine months after Easter, the symbolism of which is clear.

Christian leaders have arranged the celebrations of Jesus' beginnings and endings (separate from historical evidence) to have him conceived in spring, when the earth renews itself, and born when the light begins its post-solstice return.

To have his conception when he died and his birth in the dead of winter provides a neat two-way view of how we come full circle every year. Those who set up our calendar may have consciously chosen these dates or arrived at them by trial and error. It doesn't matter which, because what speaks through them

is a deep resonance with the Earth and nature.

That's why they fall best when they do, and if we pause to feel these holy days, i.e. holidays, from the ground up and the heavens down, we'll stay in touch with what they're for and serve to connect.

My sister, a theology student graduating soon, wrote to me, "Ask Mary to help us to be patient as we think and grow large with anticipation of His birth. It isn't about the hustle and bustle of buying things. It isn't about long lists of

things to do. No, it is about waiting. The exact opposite of what our culture would like us to embrace."

Waiting for what? Jesus' birth in Christian lore, but I know, as an agnostic product of the Anglican church, that it's bigger and deeper than anticipating the arrival of any boy to show us the way and the light.

Too much male-dominant ideology has been heaped on the magical meaning and oneness of life on Earth in its seasons.

SPRINGBOARD

BY BRENDA GUILD



Too many stories and rituals have obscured the bare, raw, powerful wonder of it.

We rush and scramble to get the form of Christmas right, to live up to church and commercial expectations, and our overtime work at it disconnects us from the very essences and enlightenments we're supposed to be embracing and embodying.

Mystic Andrew Harvey said: "When we consider Mary being pregnant . . . we open ourselves to an illuminated wholeness of being and an integration of heart, mind, body, and soul that the Mother aspect of spirituality is trying to birth in all of us."

It is this integrated and unified being in whom all the ancient dichotomies

between mind and heart, body and soul, that 'transcendence' and 'immanence' have been hinting at."

What traditions would get us back into grace with the season?

Anne Buckley of Salt Spring said that when her son Aidan, now 11, was first growing into awareness of Christmas, she wanted to start at least one never-fail ritual for him to carry through life.

When she was single and travelling, she'd had Christmases far from home, with nothing familiar to make the day special, yet she couldn't shake her need to make it so.

She gave herself a walk in nature, as best she could find wherever she was, to mark the day.

This is what she gives her son now. Oh sure, there are decorations and presents, grandparents and good food, but as the years go by, these loved ones and treats won't always be there for him. The gift of nature is always at hand, however.

She and her boy have a great stroll and commune over earth and under sky, feeling the season and noting its unfolding.

Many others do this to celebrate the solstice or stretch their legs on the 25th, especially when the weather's nice. It would be even nicer if, rain, snow, or shine, we all got out and got connected, and re-connected, this way.

mail@bguild.com

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Faint hope

I am appalled that our community is being put into jeopardy by a proposed quarry situated on the headwaters and wetlands of Stowell/Weston catchment basin.

If allowed to proceed, quarry activities will threaten this wetland. Increased truck traffic over Stewart Road, which is already too dangerous for school buses, will be made even more dangerous.

Our fight to stop the quarry continues but we are also becoming concerned that a

subdivision of the lands that include the quarry site may pose similar threats.

On Friday, December 5, a Stewart Road Residents Association (SRRA) delegation asked Islands Trust Council to preserve our community and its environment by adopting a model bylaw that local Trust committees could use to regulate quarry activities.

There are many places in the Gulf Islands where soil, sand, gravel and rock are removed daily with little or no regulation. We asked council to consider a recent bylaw adopted by Metchosin. This bylaw clearly defines commercial removal, specifies the amount of material that can be removed, the level of allowable noise and hours of operation.

While this bylaw may not stop the Stewart Road quarry, it will certainly regulate the commercial quarrying that has been occurring in this area with no permits and no apparent repercussions.

The bylaw is not intended to stop normal land development. It will help regulate commercial activities that have a huge impact on the landscape, threaten ecological sensitive areas, disturb neighbourhood serenity with blasting and heavy equipment noise, and further deteriorate our roads and their safe travel.

All our members owe a huge thank-you to Rosey Brenan, who made a passionate appeal to Trust Council to save our community and preserve its sensitive environment.

Trustee Kimberly Lineger deserves our heartfelt thank-you for making the motion to council to ask its local planning committee to draft a model bylaw. This will enable Trust Council to consider approving a soil

removal bylaw at its next meeting in March 2004.

We hope this process will speed along to ensure that Salt Spring's unique environment can be protected from further erosion.

JOE WEBBER,
Stewart Road

Bashing

I would like to respond to letters published in the December 10 Driftwood from Mike Gluss and Tom Vikander.

SWOVA's candlelight vigil to remember the murder of 14 women was a lovely service. The people who participated took a moment to reflect on the tragedy and to hope for better understanding and peace.

The statistics quoted in the December 3 Driftwood article promoting the vigil did deal specifically with violence towards women because that is what the vigil was all about — a gender-based homicide.

According to Statistics Canada (and countless other sources), men are more violent than women, despite what Mr. Gluss chooses to believe.

SWOVA has not ever been about "man bashing." The group has targetted a societal problem and is taking positive action to educate people on how to deal with it.

SWOVA members promote anti-bullying techniques and the building of respectful relationships between all people, regardless of gender. Why would anyone want to undermine such a worthy cause?

It would be wonderful if the two men who wrote the critical letters would use their verbal spouting to actually do some good, instead of bashing an organization working to make the future a better place.

MARIT MCBRIDE,
Salt Spring

Hard hats

Many people on the island are worried about a possible cougar on the prowl.

Here in the Beddis Beach area we are worried about an irresponsible archer on the

prowl since we received an arrow through our roof!

We would like to warn people to wear hard hats when walking in our area.

ERICA DUNN,
Cusheon Place

No rhetoric

It was the last sailing from Crofton and as the ferry approached the dock in Vesuvius, it turned and bumped one side of the dock, then the other.

It wasn't windy but they seemed to be having a hard time docking the boat. The deckhand didn't look too concerned as the boat churned water and made another attempt. They were looking up at the wheelhouse and ... laughing?

Was something funny?

Was it the fact that we were now late?

And each and every one of the crew were eligible for ... you guessed it ... overtime!

A week later, members of the ferryworkers' union went on strike and I'm really trying to dig up some sympathy, but it's difficult after a stunt like that. It is also hard to sympathize with a government which has treated its employees with disregard.

Which is it? B.C. Ferries making moves to bust a union? Are the ferry workers indeed living in a dream world?

The reality is a contract between the two has expired and I don't think many of us are convinced that either side cares in the slightest what happens to the rest of us in the process.

Being subjected to propaganda from both sides doesn't help. That seems to be par for the course whenever there are contract negotiations between public sector employees and government. I understand that the ferries are now a private corporation but ultimately we're still paying the bills.

Unfortunately, whenever these disputes take place we are the ones who get stuck in the middle (or our children do as was the case involving

teachers ... what was the idea behind a work stoppage just before exams?)

Maybe it's time the most powerful group of all stepped in — those who pay the wages of the parties involved. We expect to be told what the real issues are without either side resorting to propaganda. Don't try to con us into believing that:

- A suddenly "responsible" corporation is attempting to save us money which they have repeatedly squandered. We don't trust you!

- This is a "public safety" issue when in fact it is a union trying to protect a sweet deal for its members. We can't help it if you're bored!

So to B.C. Ferries and the ferry workers' union ... the people who pay both your wages are entitled to examine the offers from both sides. We want facts, not rhetoric. This is a democracy! Is there a problem with that?

I don't care what B.C. Ferries or the union has to say. I care what it's going to cost! Get it?

A. CREASEY,
Fulford-Ganges Road

Best and cheapest

I would like to comment on a point made in a December 3 letter by Denis Browne.

In his letter, Mr. Browne suggests that if the Islands Trust approves the transfer of densities to a designated property on Isabella Point Road, "there is no point in the Salt Spring Conservancy or any other like body putting a covenant on any property."

Conservation covenants, Mr. Browne, are legal agreements between a landowner and a conservation agency like the Salt Spring Island Conservancy. However, they are not the same as Highways covenants, such as the one you refer to in your letter. In the case of the conservation covenant, the landowner — and all succeeding owners of that parcel of land — agree to the terms of the covenant, which are monitored by one or both of the two covenanting organizations. The covenant contains a "rent clause," which extracts a monetary penalty from the landowner to regress any transgression of the covenant.

Conservation covenants usually prevent the development of part or all of a property in favour of preserving the land's natural values. This results in a kind of downzoning. While theoretically it might be possible to transfer densities to that property, there could be no way that the landowner could do anything with them.

Conservation covenants have been used to protect the natural environment since about 1995. They represent the best and cheapest way we have of protecting the natural features of our land.

CHARLES KAHN,
Above Duck Creek Park

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More letters

Supportive

I would like to personally thank this community for its heartwarming and overwhelming support during the recent labour dispute that caused the ferry shutdown.

The few negative comments I simply dismissed as coming from the misinformed or those who chose not to accept the facts. This was a difficult time for everyone and your encouragement was greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the ferry workers, let me wish you a happy holiday season in the hopes that the bad times are truly behind us.

N. TRANTER,
Howe Sound Queen deckhand

Recipe for success

To hold a successful Christmas craft fair, it takes:

- six board members to try to figure everything out;
- two people to organize a weekend kitchen, top to bottom;
- one person to clean the hall inside, before the fair;
- one to tidy the outside grounds;
- three people to shop for kitchen groceries;
- four to shop for hall items;
- two to phone community members for dessert and food donations;
- one to phone for weekend kitchen staff and servers;
- 13 lovely folks to decorate the hall over two days;
- two people to greet vendors, and set them up;
- one charming fellow to print our gorgeous menu, on short notice;
- at least 25 dessert and food donators, over three days;
- at least 50 kitchen staff and servers, over three days;
- sleepover people for two nights;
- laundry slaves for Friday, Saturday and Sunday;
- three people counting money;
- 40 vendors to fill our gorgeous hall, and;
- hundreds of community members, islanders and visitors to shop, dine and socialize.

Many, many thanks to every single one of you. The December 5-6 weekend represents over 350 hours of volunteer time. You help make this a very special hall.

BEAVER POINT HALL COMMITTEE

Mindfulness

Salt Spring has many people who are concerned about the environment.

I am disturbed that the awareness is being lost in everyday activity. Thirfty's is a daily "paper or plastic" question. Why don't people bring their own cloth bags?

The library, the schools and other businesses are using unrecycled paper for printing. More trees and more pulp emissions.

The high school cafeteria is a huge source of daily landfill material. There are giant bags of styrofoam, paper, plastic and mixed-in food wastes going out of there daily. The cheapest,

most practical solution would be for each student and staff member to bring his/her own plate, bowl, utensils and wash them. This would save several education dollars and promote environmental mindfulness.

Perhaps some students and parents could get the school board to approve.

Recycling is part of the Earth Charter.

KALIMA BROWN,
Bittancourt Road

Transparency

The B.C. Local Government Act states that all board of trustees meetings be both open and transparent when dealing with issues brought before them by taxpayers.

Regrettably, the past few months have revealed that the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District is governed by trustees who are uncomfortable with both openness and transparency in dealing with the voluntary firefighters and their taxpayers.

When one of the trustees resigned from the board in September over the termination of two senior captains, his position should have been posted and a mandatory by-election held within 60 days. This did not happen. Only after considerable pressure has the board agreed to post the position during December and to hold a by-election at the regular January meeting.

I attended the regular meeting of the board on December 8 and got the feeling I was imposing on their "club." Most of the proceedings were carried on in such a way that the public could not hear what was being said or reported. It seemed that the trustees were almost desperate to get to their "in-camera" session before anything was brought up by the taxpayers in attendance or the press or a need to answer any questions asked. There were no motions from the previous month's "in-camera" session brought to the public part of the meeting for discussion or debate.

Besides the upcoming by-election, any taxpayers like myself who are outraged at the unexplained terminations will be able to get involved in the replacement of the trustees coming off their three-year terms at the AGM in March. Maybe we, as taxpayers, should demand that all the present trustees resign in March and be replaced by a new slate.

We deserve to know what is really going on in this vital part of our community. Transparency and openness is what it is all about, folks. Let's have some.

TED HINDS,
Salt Spring

Awesome

Punk rock is rock and roll at its most visceral, energetic and youthful, delivered with technical virtuosity to an enthusiastic crowd.

I saw it last Saturday night when local bands Atrium and Steel Bananas rocked the Core Inn with almost three hours of high-energy, contemporary music a la

Nirvana, Sum 41 and Offspring. I've seen a few punk gigs in Vancouver during the early days and this gig was right up there. Atrium filled the floor with their opening song and the action didn't let up until Steel Bananas closed the show hours later. Good value for three bucks on this island!

Thanks to Island Escapades, Trish Nobile and especially the bands for an awesome and professional show.

CHRIS ARNETT,
Walker's Hook



BE-WREATHED: Mary Tanti is set for Christmas with this wreath as she takes part in the annual Christmas craft fair at Fulford Hall two weeks ago.

Photo by Derrick Lundy

MORE LETTERS A14

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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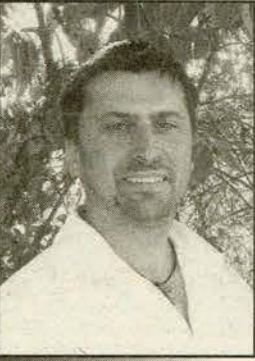
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Here's a great recipe for Holiday baking, carefully crafted by
 Colleen Bowen of Flour Power Catering (250-653-4003).
 Your guests will love Blackberry Cheesecake with Blackberry Port Coulis.

Blackberry Cheesecake:

for the crust: 1 3/4 cups of wafer crumbs
 1/3 cup of butter, melted and hot
 1 Tbsp of granulated sugar

For the crust: Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine the
 crust ingredients in a small bowl, mixing well.
 Press into the bottom and up the sides of a
 10 inch springform pan. Bake for 8 minutes.

For the filling:

1 1/2 lb of cream cheese softened
 1 1/4 cup sugar
 5 eggs
 2 tbsp of vanilla extract
 3 Tbsp of all purpose flour
 1/4 cup of blackberry coulis (strained)
 1 Tbsp. orange zest
 1 cup of sour cream

Filling: Using an electric mixer, beat cream cheese
 and sugar until smooth, about 5 minutes. Beat
 eggs one at a time, add vanilla, blackberry coulis,
 flour, lemon zest and sour cream, mixing until
 just blended. Pour into prepared crust,
 bake for 60 minutes or until the cake is just
 set in the middle, but still soft. Cool.

Blackberry Port Coulis:

1/2 cup of sugar
 2 Tbsp of cornstarch
 1/4 cup of blackberry port
 1 Tbsp. of orange juice
 4 cups of blackberries

For the topping:

Combine the sugar and cornstarch in a
 medium saucepan. Stir in the juice, zest.
 Mix until smooth and then stir in the
 fruit. Cook over low heat, stirring
 occasionally, until the fruit releases
 some juice. Increase the temperature to
 medium and cook, stirring occasionally,
 until the mixture thickens and begins to
 boil. Cook for 1 minute, stirring
 constantly but being careful not to
 bruise the fruit. Cool slightly
 before pouring over chilled
 cheesecake. Chill thoroughly
 before removing the
 cake from the pan. Store
 refrigerated in a closed
 container for up to 4 days.

RANTS & ROSES

RANTS

Use your turn signal! We
 can't read your distracted
 mind.

Rants to the dog-walkers
 who do not scoop the poop,
 especially at Fernwood
 Dock.

Rants to PARC for not
 having insurance that let's
 us gather in our public park.

ROSES

A dozen roses to the staff
 at B.C. Hydro for illuminat-
 ing the true meaning of
 Christmas! May you have a
 happy one!

Roses to the person who
 found my wallet and left it
 and the credit cards on a
 post for me to see. I hope
 you enjoy spending the \$80
 cash — a nice Christmas
 present! PD

A rose to all the people
 who made a donation to the
 Fulford Hall Storage Project



NO RANTS HERE: Roses go out this week to the dec-
 orators at Hydro (above), and fundraisers at
 Curves. (Here, Curves manager Cheryl Leukefeld pre-
 sents a cheque for over \$2,000 to Salt Spring
 Transition House executive director Nancy Boyce as
 proceeds from a December 4 auction.)
 Photos contributed and by Derrick Lundy

at the Christmas Craft Fair
 — your donations are much
 appreciated! A very special
 rose to Gail Martin, who
 won the Christmas Basket
 Draw and gave it away to a
 needy family!

To Honour and Bernie and
 the girls: thanks for a won-
 derful south-end bash. Good
 luck on your new life in
 Spain. We will miss you.

A huge bunch of roses to
 all the Curves members for
 their support and contribu-
 tions to our dinner and auc-
 tion.

A huge bouquet to Rob
 Owen of Ace Courier. He
 always goes out of his way
 to accommodate home
 deliveries and helps in any
 way he can. His excellent
 service to this island is much
 needed and truly appreciat-
 ed. We wish Rob, Lisa and
 sons a Merry Christmas and
 Prosperous 2004. SA and JA

A big bouquet of roses for
 staff on the Queen of
 Nanaimo from Tsawwassen
 to Long Harbour on
 November 16 for being so
 gracious and helpful to me
 with my medical handicap.
 GM

Roses to everyone who
 supported us during our fer-
 ries strike. We received
 many amazing donations of
 food and wood. I would like
 to thank you all individually,
 but it would take up the
 whole of the Driftwood. You
 are all amazing. Thank you.

A large bouquet of roses
 to Laurie Hedger, who
 donated his time and his
 boat to ferry Salt Spring
 members of the Crofton
 Airshed Citizens Group to
 our meeting in Crofton on
 Thursday. May the scent of
 roses someday overpower
 the smell of the mill. Thank
 you Laurie, EW

Lots of big red roses to the
 groups of young people we
 see picking up the garbage
 from the sides of our island
 roads! What a wonderful
 contribution to our commu-
 nity. Thanks for making our
 beautiful island home even
 more beautiful. Maggie and
 Terry Warbey.

Thanks to the ladies who
 have set up the Thrift Shop
 window displays over the
 years.

A Christmas rose to the
 young man outside

Pharmasave, who stopped
 me driving away while my
 purse was on the roof of my
 Honda!

Many thanks to everyone
 for supporting the SPCA
 pet photos with Santa! Also
 thanks to Foxglove Farm,
 Santa Ilija, Jena, Sharon,
 Maria and Cassie, the elves;
 the photographers Linda
 and Bob, Brenda; Apple
 Photo for the developing;
 Barb's Buns, Carol and
 Toby for their delicious
 treats.

A rose to everyone send-
 ing a slice of bread to
 Ottawa as a way of saying
 "no" to GE wheat.

Roses to the United
 Church for hosting the Dec.
 6 vigil about violence
 against women. JM

Wild Nootka roses to all
 the sharp-tailed snake
 lovers who came and built
 the retaining wall and
 hibernaculum, and cleared
 out gorse, daphne and
 broom.

Roses for the salesman at
 Salt Spring Auto Parts who
 sold and then installed
 windshield wipers to my
 Subaru Impreza last
 Tuesday. It was way
 beyond the call of duty.
 Many thanks.

Gallons of off-white
 roses to Alex Arnett for his
 professionalism and dedica-
 tion to doing the job right.
 HM

Boxes of roses to Blair
 and Melissa of RPM
 Property Management for
 working around the clock
 to keep home-owners and
 their tenants happy and
 stress free. HM

To the lovely young
 woman who stopped to
 help us on Kitchen Road
 when the car stopped
 Sunday. Taxi came. Thank-
 you. B&E

Roses to Linelle for
 being helpful and under-
 standing on the day my
 truck broke down.

Roses to the kind people-
 who gave me a lift recently.
 And extra roses if you find
 my delicate earrings in the
 front seat of your car and
 return them to Greenwoods.

Christmas is coming!

Your chance to win two return tickets
 on WestJet-Victoria to Calgary, Edmonton or Kelowna
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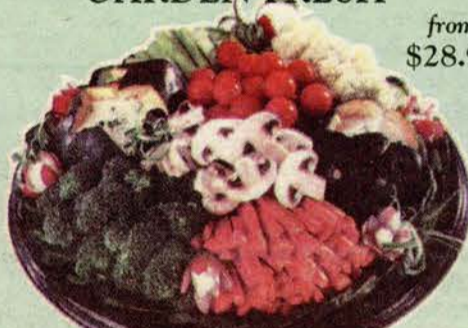
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More letters

Backwards

The ferry strike may well have turned out to be a learning experience that opened the eyes of not a few people who thought that it was just another (unreasonable) demand for more money by (undeserving/greedy) ferry personnel.

The events as they developed became an unmistakably transparent demonstration of how much the social climate in this province is deteriorating under the blows of a government leader and his cohorts, mesmerized by their witless pursuit of creating a completely privatized society; a society where the wage earners, on whose work such private enterprise depends,

are reduced to the status of serfs condemned to fretting day-in day-out whether their jobs are secure and their income, however, modest, is enough to support their families with a modicum of comfort.

This government's attempt at creating such a basic upheaval (and associated upheavals) at the present time of growing social awareness would, by itself, no doubt self-destruct was it not for its collusion with the purely profit-driven business practices of ever-expanding large corporations that are lacking in a social conscience and empathy and are bent on dominating all profitable fields of human endeavour and needs.

We are witnessing the ongoing dismantling of years of hard-won progressive legislation, agreements, institutions and decisions, all in order to facilitate corporate operations with no loyalty but to themselves. As a result, ordinary citizens, including small business people, and wage-earners, are increasingly insecure and at risk in this social climate at the hands of a regime that has lost sight of its mandate, which is to rule for the benefit of the people and to nurture and safeguard their well-being but has instead shown its real intentions — backing into the future with its eyes firmly riveted on the social climate of the 19th century.

A caller to a recent radio morning program that invited instant comments on the strike clearly wanted to go back to that time, the Victorian era, vehemently stating that she wanted (in exactly these words) "those ferry workers fired and replaced by a proper labour force displaying deference and gratitude."

Charles Dickens, in the mid 1800s, put it in a nutshell:

"Oh, let us love our occupations,

Bless the Squire and his relations,

Live upon our daily rations,

And always know our proper stations."

JOHN LAMMERS,
Salt Spring

Heart gifts

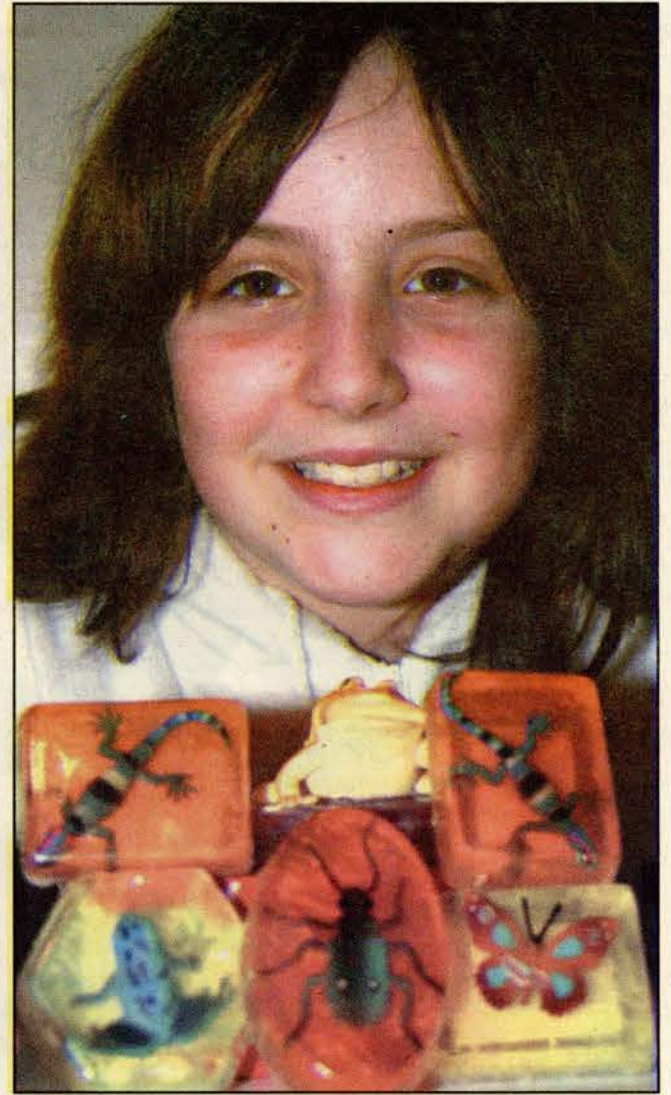
Salt Spring has the wonderful (and earned!) reputation for being a generous community.

The recent fundraiser for Thai orphans of AIDS and HIV really brought together all aspects of this on our burgeoning island.

The venture was made so successful because neighbours, friends, poets and local businesses alike gave so unstintingly of time, effort or money.

The raffle will have been drawn on December 15 by the time this letter gets read, but I wish to acknowledge how truly heartwarming a success the fundraiser was.

My neighbour Linda, whose thing "isn't poetry," gave a donation of lovely homemade jams; local poets (some total strangers to me personally) turned out to share and inspire by



CLEAN CRITTERS: Julie Paul has been doing the craft fair rounds as she sells her line of handmade "kid soap" at various Salt Spring locations.

Photo by Derrick Lundy

turn. (Thanks Peter, Shirley, Cherie, Heather, Jane, Wendy, Leah and Mark).

Friends generously helped, as did Salt Spring Books (especially Adina, Andrew and Tina).

Despite the many charities all local businesses support at such times and especially so at Christmas, I am moved to say a huge thank-you to Hannah (Natureworks), Ganges Village Market, Ron

(Ropey Fishing Co.), Marilyn (Foxglove) and all at Embe, Pharmasave, Tree House South, the elementary, middle and Phoenix schools, and all those too numerous to list, whose enthusiastic warmth of spirit gave me the energy and courage to ask for help.

Thank you all. Have a lovely festive Salt Spring Christmas.

ANNIE MACGUFFIE,
Salt Spring

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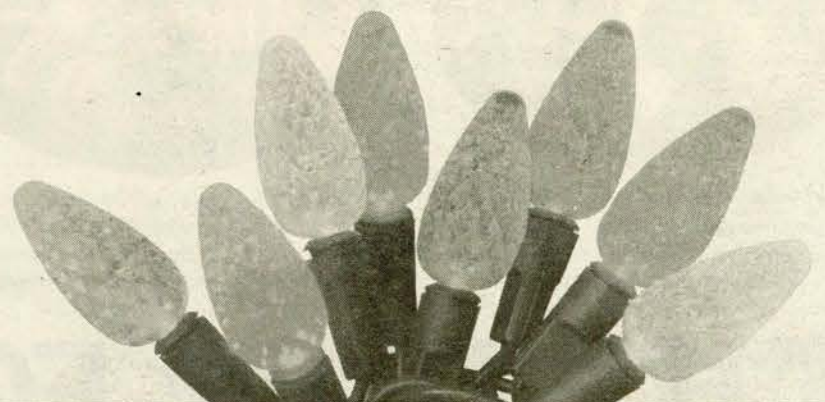
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Call centres will also be closing early on December 24 and 31 and will be closed all day on December 27.

We wish you a safe and happy holiday.



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Gravesite disturbances counter Penelakut beliefs

By AUGUST SYLVESTER

I am a respected Elder from the Penelakut First Nation, which is a band pursuant to the Indian Act that makes up part of the Coast Salish Nation. I am a speaker of Hul'qumi'num.

To be an Elder to our people, you have to know all the laws and ways of the Coast Salish people. This knowledge includes the laws of the longhouse, about children growing up, raising a family, hunting, fishing, gathering and how to teach those children to be adults.

Elders have to remember Indian laws so that we may teach them to the youth in our community. If we do not know the laws then we cannot become Elders in our community. In order to become an Elder you must be able to carry on the laws and try not to change them. It is important to keep all the laws and teachings the same all the time.

The Elders in our community now are the people that listened when the old people of the past were talking. They learned the laws and traditions from the old ones and it is our role in our community to pass this knowledge on.

As an Elder in my community, it is also my family's responsibility to be the caretaker of the people who pass on. Only certain families in our community are charged with this important responsibility. It is difficult to explain what this responsibility means but it is sacred and it is a great responsibility to be the caretakers of the gravesites.

The Coast Salish people have used the waterways as highways. They have been travelling throughout the Pacific Coast by canoe for a very long time. They travelled to harvest foods for winter, such as fish. In April, the spring salmon came and they knew the sockeye were coming so they would take the canoes out to meet them. They would stop along the way and use places to camp.

Syuhe'mun (Walker Hook) was one of the traditional places they would travel to and camp. They used to go to meet the salmon at Pender Bluffs before travelling on the Fraser River to meet the

IN DEPTH

salmon there.

Syuhe'mun is the location of a Coast Salish village. There used to be longhouses built there. It is also the site of a substantial clam midden. We know that Coast Salish people have used it for hundreds of years because the clam midden is so deep.

As a child, my family continued to travel to Syuhe'mun to camp while we were fishing. We would also buy wool and trade salmon for canned goods. We would trade for apples, pears, canned vegetables and other goods there. If we did not camp overnight there, we used to stay for two to three hours talking and visiting approximately two to three times a year. We usually travelled there in the springtime when the salmon came in.

Syuhe'mun hosts a graveyard in which many of my Coast Salish ancestors are buried.

The Sablefin Hatcheries Ltd. (the 'Hatchery') located their business on Syuhe'mun.

The Hatchery has been given a waste management approval to dig trenches and wells on Syuhe'mun to use the site for sewage treatment.

During the digging of the trenches and wells, approximately nine human remains were found and my family was called to supervise the removal of the bodies and their possessions; and to rebury the ancestors on our territory.

The remains of two people were pushed back into the ground by the crew digging the trenches on Syuhe'mun. We were told the Hatchery would need another permit to remove them, so they would be left there and to the best of my knowledge they still remain there.

Most of the exposed human remains were removed and reburied at Kuper Island. My wife Laura Sylvester and I witnessed the removal. We attended the site for four days. We brought the remains back to Kuper Island, where all but one of

our ancestors were reburied.

We reburied one of the bodies, a medicine woman, at a different location at Syuhe'mun. We knew she was a medicine woman because she was buried with red ochre. She was covered with obsidian and she was found covering her eyes.

Since I saw that the narrow, shallow trenches that were dug had a number of bodies in them and I know that two ancestors remain there, I believe there are many more human remains on the site of the proposed effluent discharge.

The people who removed the remains did not use small archaeological instruments to remove the remains. They used a bobcat for digging.

The Hatchery is using the burial ground as a sewage treatment plant. The use of the ancestral burial ground as a sewage treatment site is very hurtful to our people. It is counter to all of our beliefs.

Our burial grounds are sacred to the Coast Salish. There are rules to follow at gravesites. For example, you are not allowed to even spit on that ground. On that ground you do not drag your feet or kick the rocks. If you had to dig in that ground you first have to put on a handkerchief, red ochre and pray. This is pursuant to our laws on how to treat all graveyards.

Before we camp there we have to ask permission. You can't build a fire on it; you would have to build the campfire on a beach or away from where the sacred site is.

I know the First Nations have sacred ground. They would look at a place and survey it pretty good before they walk on it or walk around it. We still continue to do this today.

I believe the Hatchery ought to have known that this site was a First Nations burial ground because of the large amount of clam midden present. I am outraged that the digging did not stop once human remains were unearthed.

Possessions belonging to the ancestors that were buried with them were taken from the gravesites and given to a museum in Victoria. There was one blade made out of bone, one anchor made out of rock, one arrowhead and many pieces of obsidian glass.

It is a Coast Salish belief that you should not remove items that are buried with the dead because it belongs to the people that have passed on and they need it on their journey. Those possessions should be reburied with the people. Even if they were buried with gold we would not take the items because they belong to the people who have passed on. We equate the taking of possessions from the ances-

tors after they have passed with robbing the dead; those people who took the items are grave robbers.

It is a Coast Salish belief that there are consequences for disturbing graves; bad things will happen to you and your family. It is important to guard against this by showing respect to graves and the ancestors.

We, the Coast Salish, would not and do not treat anyone's burial ground the way the Hatchery proposes. If we used a city graveyard for a sewage treatment site we would probably be put in jail.

It is imperative that Coast Salish gravesites are treated with respect and honour. It is unimaginable that our sacred sites are being treated with such wanton disrespect all in the name of the all-mighty dollar.

I strongly question how it is legal to desecrate any Coast Salish gravesite when it is clearly illegal to desecrate non-Native gravesites.

Using this sacred site as a sewage filtration system is the ultimate dishonour to the Coast Salish history, traditions and beliefs.

The above is an affidavit filed in support of the Environmental Appeal Stay Application of Waste Management Approval AE-17356, pertaining to the Sablefin Hatcheries Ltd. development at Walker Hook.

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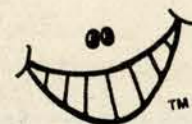
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Bring the Yule-father back to Yule

By DAN RALPH MILLER
Special to the Driftwood

Winter solstice holds a special significance in many religions.

Today, with our consumer culture, the holiday season has deteriorated into a commercial and economic concern.

Some, objecting to this rampant materialism, call for a return to a more spiritual basis for the holiday.

Often heard is the lament that "the Christ" needs to be "put back into Christmas," while others assert that the true origins of Yuletide custom stem from long before the coming of Christianity to Europe, and are making a call to put the original Yule-father, Odhin, "back into Yuletide."

Many Yuletide traditions still practised today have their beginnings in the ancient pagan religion of the Germanic tribes, also known as the Teutonic or Nordic peoples.

Yuletide customs, which are so integral a part of our modern experience of this holiday, have been very well preserved by the descendants of those ancient tribes, right to this very day.

Traditions such as large family and community gatherings, bonfires, decorating of trees and, of course, the Yule log, the hanging of

wreaths, holly and mistletoe, the feasting, toasting, the wassailing songs, the giving of gifts, all-night dancing, drinking and merrymaking, only to name a few.

Yule traditions have survived despite numerous historically documented attempts by various powerful Christian groups to ban such "heathen practices" as Yule. These attempts were only ever partially successful.

The Norwegian practice of drinking Yule-beer in honour of the old pagan gods could not be eradicated completely, so it was made law, about the year 1000, that all Yule toasts had to be made in honour of Jesus and Mary.

Even as late as 1964, Norway's Christian Sobriety Council tried to ban the use of the term "Yule beer," saying it was unchristian. Commercial brewers were able to argue that Yule had nothing to do with the Bible and had much deeper roots in Norway than Christianity.

The English still prepare a special brew at Yule called the "wassail drink," prepared with ale, wine and cider mixed with fruits and spices. The word "wassail" comes from Old English "wes thu hal," meaning "to your health."

Wassail-drink is the pre-

ferred drink to "go wassailing," which today is known as carolling.

In heathen times, these were songs of praise and blessing not only presented to the neighbours, but also to fruit trees in hopes of their continuing fruitfulness. Songs and libations were offered and bits of toast were floated in a "wassail bowl," which was then perched in the branches of the tree.

Shades of this tradition survive throughout the Western world in the formal "toasting" in someone's honour or to their health.

The Orkney Islands of Scotland were a rest-stop on the sail from Norway to Iceland a thousand years ago.

To the Norse settlers there, the preparation of "Yule-Ale" was very serious business.

Strict penalties were brought against those who refused to drink on Yule night, including heavy fines.

The origins of the word "Yule" are shrouded in mystery, but most scholars agree that it is likely related to the root-word for "wheel."

It is thought to refer to the wheeling, or turning about, of the sun in its seasonal journey. The god Odhin, seen by many as chief among the Nordic gods, has

numerous sacred names, including "Julfodhr" or "Yule-father." It is likely that Odhin himself is the original Yule-elf, the gift-giving elf.

To the ancient Teutonic tribes, the sun was seen as a goddess in the form a golden sow, or boar. The golden boar is closely associated with Freyr, King of the Elves, and his twin sister Freya.

They are the goddess and god of love, peace and plenty.

Pork is still a traditional Yule dish, especially in Norway, a custom traced back to the ancient heathens.

According to a thousand-year-old Norse saga, "On Yule-eve vows were made: the sacrificial boar was led in, men laid their hands on him and swore dear oaths as they drank from the hal-lowed cup."

The boar was then humanely slaughtered and cooked to eat at the great Yule feast.

In later times, a loaf of bread baked into the shape of a boar would take the place of the Yule boar.

The history of the baking of special breads and pastries at Yule is a subject worthy of an article unto itself. Throughout the West, the practice of creating edible symbols of the holiday come down to us

from pagan times.

Heathen Yule traditions have been preserved generation after generation by folk who may not even be aware of the origins of the customs they observe. Why would folks supposedly converted to Christianity still preserve pagan rites, even for thousands of years? The answer, whether spoken in Dutch, English, Icelandic, German or Norwegian, would likely be the same: "Because we have always done it this way."

And though it has been heard that "Christ" should be put back into "Christmas," upon closer examination it would appear that he barely made it there to begin with. Save for the image of the babe in the manger, and an impressive anthology of Christmas carols, most other modern traditions surrounding the mid-winter holiday are hardy survivals from the heathen religion of the Germanic tribes.

The writer Miller is a director with the Asatru Freehold of B.C., a society dedicated to the furtherance of aboriginal Germanic religion and culture. The Freehold hosts its second annual Viking Yule potluck feast at Beaver Point Hall, 6 p.m. on December 20.

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Costs have risen steadily over the past decade.

Like all businesses, our costs have increased since 1993. Factoring in inflation, rates have actually gone down during the past decade relative to other household expenses.

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We need to invest in our infrastructure.

Our ability to continue to produce and distribute low-cost, reliable electricity for British Columbia depends on reinvesting in our publicly owned infrastructure. Our dams, generating facilities, transmission system and distribution wires require increasing maintenance and, at times, replacement. We need to continue to take care of our electricity heritage for today and for future generations.



HOME AT LAST: The first sailing of the Queen of Nanaimo arrives at Long Harbour Friday following two days of workers' action.

Photo by Derrick Lundy

Cougar suspected in deer killing

By MITCHELL SHERRIN
Staff Writer

Tell-tale signs of a suspicious deer kill near Fernwood Elementary School indicate that a cougar could be prowling the north end of the island. And residents are warned to exercise reasonable caution when spending time outdoors.

Fernwood resident Jim Hamilton found a deer carcass on his three-acre property Thursday that caused him to consider a cougar attack was likely.

"As I saw the leg was off, I realized (the deer) hadn't just died there."

He also saw paw prints and chunks of fur on the scene and he recalled that his horses had broken out of their fencing into his backyard Monday morning.

"I was wondering, 'Why wouldn't they have bolted into the big pasture?' They

literally bolted through the electric fence."

But the location of the deer kill helped clarify why the horses had bolted through the fence, he said.

Hamilton called the local animal control officer to investigate the recent deer kill.

"Judging on the prints and the background story, it was definitely a cougar," said Capital Regional District animal control officer Wolfgang Brunnwieser.

He found paw prints from a cougar along with indicators that the carcass had been killed and eaten in a feline fashion.

"If it had been a dog, there would have been a big mess."

Brunnwieser also noted that distinctive cougar paw prints are rounder than ovoid dog prints. Canine prints also show claw marks while a cougar only has claws extended during an attack.

"You could see prints with claw marks and prints without claw marks."

Brunnwieser estimated that the deer had been killed on the previous Monday or Tuesday and that the cougar could now be almost anywhere on the island.

"The range would cover the whole north end of the island."

He's been monitoring reports of sightings and live-stock kills and believes there are possibly two cougars currently living on the island, one in the north and one in the south.

"They come over when they run out of food on Vancouver Island."

He advises islanders to walk in groups and make noise while spending time outdoors so they don't startle a cougar. But he stresses that cougars rarely pose a threat to people.

"A cougar will not attack

unless they have a damn good reason."

Though the deer kill was found just across the road from Fernwood Elementary School, RCMP advised principal Richard Bennett to maintain the "normal precautions" of not letting small children play outside individually or unsupervised.

"They haven't advised us to put out a panic notice," Bennett said.

Brunnwieser asked islanders to contact his office (537-9414), RCMP and the provincial conservation officer in Duncan (1-800-663-9453) immediately upon any cougar sighting or suspicious animal kill.

"It's important to leave a message with your name, telephone number, time of sighting and the location of the sighting."

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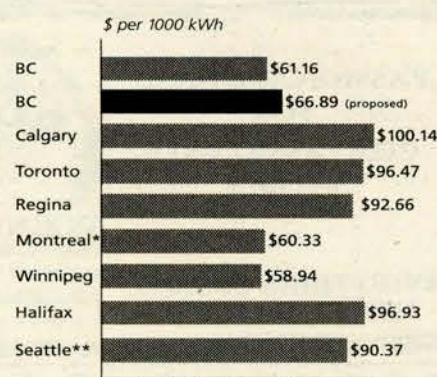
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**Based on USD/CAD exchange rate of 0.76.

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Apartment†	\$34.71	\$37.96

*Based on non-electrically heated house using 11,500 kWh per year
†Based on electrically heated apartment using 6,500 kWh per year

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If you'd like more information about BC Hydro, or our application to the BCUC, please visit us at www.bchydro.com.

BC Hydro

Majority of locals surveyed want modified foods labelled

A Salt Spring survey found islanders feel foods containing genetically engineered (GE) ingredients should be labelled.

Members of Saltspringers for Safe Food (SSF) conducted the survey on GE foods at Ganges Village Market (GVM) and Thrifty Foods over a two-week period in late November, said a SSF press release released this week.

Over 93 per cent of consumers surveyed felt foods containing GE ingredients should be labelled and four per cent had no opinion. Only 2.5 per cent of respondents felt that labelling wasn't necessary.

Even people with little knowl-

edge of the issue felt foods with GE ingredients should be clearly identified, surveyors found. One respondent suggested GE ingredients should be listed in red.

In the works for more than six months, the group's latest project took countless hours before it was ready to go public.

"We wanted to get a good cross-section of consumers, which is why we chose to do it at the island's mainstream supermarkets. It was also important to us that we conduct as professional a job as possible in order to produce meaningful data," said SSF co-chair Michelle Grant.

The volunteer group hoped to

poll 400 to 600 islanders during the three six-hour shifts conducted at each supermarket. Results far exceeded expectations and 1,170 consumers (more than 15 per cent of the island's over-19 population) were surveyed.

The poll doesn't portray a new sentiment towards the labelling of modified food in Canada. In a recent poll released by the Consumers' Association of Canada, 91 per cent (or 1,820 people) of 2,000 Canadians surveyed wanted food labels to list GE ingredients and 88 per cent felt these labels should be mandatory.

The island survey contained

four questions to determine consumers' level of concern and knowledge about GE foods. More than half of the respondents knew either "some" or "a lot" about GE foods while 46 per cent knew either "a little" or "nothing" about GE foods.

Results showed that four-fifths of respondents were concerned "some" or "a lot" by the fact that 70 per cent of all processed food contains GE ingredients. Individuals' reasons for concerns included inadequate safety testing, the potential for increases in allergies and the extent of multinational control over seeds and food supply. One respondent saw

the introduction of GE foods as "a betrayal of trust by the government."

When asked if they would like to see the two stores eliminate GE ingredients from their private house brands, 75 per cent of those surveyed said yes.

The group plans to send survey results to new federal Agriculture Minister Bob Speller and to the Consumers' Association of Canada, which will be formally asking the new government to introduce legislation to mandate labelling of GE foods. The information will also be shared with Ganges Village Market and Thrifty Foods.

Stream and salmon society restores Baker wetland area

A new wetland area has been created off Baker Road, providing enhanced fish habitat and increasing the amount of summer water in the Duck Creek watershed.

The Island Stream and Salmon Enhancement Society (ISSES) spearheaded the project, which saw an existing beaver pond expanded to create a wetland area more than five acres in size on three sepa-

rate private properties.

Work was paid for by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Pacific Salmon Foundation and private donations.

Salmon won't be the only ones happy with the changes. Separate deep and shallow pond areas aim to provide a variety of habitats for birds and frogs, explains an ISSES press release.

Large woody debris

such as cedar stumps, and rocks were added to ponds to provide cover for the fish.

A conservation water licence on the pond will ensure the water is protected for wildlife use only.

Over 150 plants and shrubs were planted, said ISSES, including cat tails, red osier dogwood, mock orange and black twinberry. The plants were fenced to protect them from beavers.

The wetland is considered very important for the health of Duck Creek's coho salmon because summer water will be very scarce once residents of the new village at Channel Ridge start using water from St. Mary Lake, said salmon enhancement biologist Kathy Reimer.

"We are trying to create as much storage as possible wherever we can in the watershed, because we may

not be able to count on any water from the lake, especially in drought years. We really appreciate the Charish, Savin and Hoen families, who have helped us to create this new habitat on their land," she said.

An Employment Canada crew did the planting and most plants were raised at the wetland nursery on Rainbow Road. Over 10,000 wild plants have been grown and used for

restoration projects on both Salt Spring and Vancouver Island since the wetland nursery project began in 1999.

The nursery houses over 2,300 plants that are still available for other projects.

Next spring, the crew plans to take cuttings to start a new generation of special shrubs for Salt Spring property owners interested in restoring natural areas on their land.

Flying 'monkey' entertains

Valhalla Road resident Joyce Townsend often has a "green monkey" join her at her window.

Townsend is talking about a green hummingbird that visits a feeder outside a window of her home.

"The little monkey comes, eats some feed and disappears somewhere," she said.

Townsend insisted the hummingbird was definitely all green and not one with a red spot under its throat.

Local birder John Sprague said the bird is likely an

Anna's hummingbird because that is the only species that stays when cold weather arrives.

"It's the only species that winters here and we're just about at the edge of its wintering range. If people keep a feeder out, they'll survive," Sprague said.

Female Anna's hummingbirds are green with a red throat patch and the male has a red head.

Sprague also noticed a female Anna's hummingbird at his own home on

Old Scott Road.

Townsend didn't know the species of her flying friend but enjoyed the company.

"He was here two weeks ago, then he disappeared. I thought he hitched a ride somewhere," she said.

Townsend has seen the same hummingbird for the last few years.

"He's tame. He waits up on the fence post until I take the bottle in and fed him," she said.

The little green bird is a favourite companion for Townsend but not for her pets.

"He dive bombs the cats."

Santa slips into Fulford Hall for annual Sunday breakfast

This Sunday, December 21, people can visit with Santa over breakfast.

Beginning at 9 a.m., volunteers will serve up another dose of good cheer at Fulford Hall's Santa Breakfast.

Hall manager Brian Finnemore said the event is a popular tradition that has run for a dozen years.

Finnemore volunteers,

along with 15 to 20 other men who put on aprons that morning.

"We do it for the kids," he said.

Sunday's menu includes pancakes, sausages, juice and Ometepe coffee.

In previous years, the event has drawn over 100 people.

The men share kitchen jobs while the women

help serve the morning meal.

Santa arrives at 10 a.m. with surprise goodie bags for the children.

Finnemore said Santa usually takes a "wild guess" at how many bags to bring, but no one goes home empty-handed.

The Santa's breakfast costs \$3 per person.

"It's the best deal in town," Finnemore said.



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BC FERRIES

Salt Spring Island Schedule
VESUVIUS BAY - CROFTON

CROSSING TIME: 20 MINUTES
YEAR-ROUND SCHEDULE

LEAVE VESUVIUS BAY		LEAVE CROFTON	
• 7:00 am	u 4:00 pm	*7:30 am	4:30 pm
x 8:00 am	5:00 pm	8:30 am	5:30 pm
9:00 am	6:00 pm	# 9:30 am	6:30 pm
10:00 am	7:00 pm	11:10 am	8:10 pm
11:40 am	8:40 pm	12:10 noon	9:10 pm
n 12:40 pm	9:40 pm	1:10 pm	10:05 pm
1:40 pm	+10:35 pm	2:15 pm	+11:05 pm
3:00 pm		3:30 pm	

u Wed. sailings will be replaced by dangerous cargo sailing. No passengers.
n The Mon. & Thurs. sailings will be replaced by dangerous cargo sailings. No passengers.
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IN EFFECT OCT 10/03-MARCH 31/04 CROSSING TIME: 35 MINS

Depart Fulford Harbour		Depart Swartz Bay	
6:20 am	Daily *	7:10 am	Daily except Sunday*
8:00 am	Daily except Sun.	9:00 am	Daily
10:00 am	Daily	11:00 am	Daily
12:00 noon	Daily	1:00 pm	Daily
2:00 pm	Daily	3:00 pm	Daily
4:00 pm	Daily	5:00 pm	Daily
6:00 pm	Daily	7:00 pm	Daily
8:00 pm	Daily	9:00 pm	Daily

* Cancelled Dec 25, 2003 and Jan 1, 2004

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DELIVERED BY BOAT: The annual Lions-sponsored Christmas ship arrived amid a blaze of colour last Saturday night, drawing youngsters of all ages to the Ganges Coast Guard dock. At top, Santa greets his waiting fans, while at left, Levi Cook gets a special greeting from the visiting Mr. Claus.

Photos by Derrick Lundy

United Way chair thrilled with Greenwood's staff's generosity

Greenwoods Intermediate Care Facility staff went the extra mile with United Way contributions this year, boosting their participation level to 82 per cent and raising some \$5,500.

"Last year 64 per cent of staff participated, and this year 82 per cent joined in, which is a significant increase," said Greenwood's staff member Bill Curtin, who is also the local United Way campaign chair.

"The whole health care system is under stress and we certainly are in danger too, so I'm just amazed at the generosity of the staff."

Curtin speculates that the increase is partly a case of staff responding to the generosity they witness each day.

"I think it has to do with seeing the generosity of the community towards Greenwood's and the amount the employers and residents receive from the community . . . I think it encourages a generous mindset."

Donations to the United Way from Salt Spring residents are down overall this year, however, and Curtin encourages people to donate now.

For Greenwood's fundraising success, a "slight contest" may have been a motivator.

All donors put their name into one pot; those who topped last year's contribution tossed theirs into another; while new contributors' names filled a third.

Names were drawn from the three pots, and they and their partners will be treated to a "decadent dinner party" hosted by "cook and bottle washer" Curtin.

"I think the real winners are all of the Greenwood's staff," he said.

Curtin said Greenwood's uses the staff payroll deduc-

tion plan, so that people don't miss the \$2, \$5 or \$10 per paycheque.

Tax benefits of the donations "make the bite even less," he noted.

Curtin invites anyone interested in donating, or employees or employers wanting to use the payroll deduction plan to contact him.

Salt Spring Community Services Society is the main beneficiary of United Way funds on Salt Spring Island, while local residents also use the services of several Vancouver Island-based agencies which receive a United Way grant.

Dollar deal offered for Christmas

Islanders should be on the look-out for the Salt Spring Dollars Christmas Coupon promotion, which sees buyers receive \$21-worth of Salt Spring Dollars for \$20 in Canadian funds when they redeem the coupons at one of 14 island businesses.

SALT SPRING SNIPPETS

Jim Scott, from the Community Economic Development project, is spearheading a campaign to create widespread acceptance of Salt Spring Dollars, and has been garnering great support from local business owners.

The coupons are ideal stocking stuffers and gifts for friends and relatives off-island, he notes.

They expire December 31.

Watch for Scott's contributions on the Salt Spring Dollars topic in future issues of the Driftwood.

The Lady Minto Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Shop will be closed for a week through the Christmas holidays, and wants no donations through that period as a result.

Rose Fewings, the hospital auxiliary's publicity director, notes the store will be closed from Wednesday, December 24, through Thursday, January

1. "The staff and all members of the auxiliary wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year," she writes. "And please, please, please hold your donations until January."

• Night Directions for the Lost is a new CD of Poems by Brian Brett set to music by Ramesh Meyers and Susheela Dawne, a n d r e l e a s e d u n d e r t h e g r o u p n a m e o f S a l t s p r i n g C o l l e c t i v e .

J o h n M o o r e o f t h e V a n c o u v e r

Sun said, "Brett's veteran poet's voice meshes perfectly with an eclectic mix of music . . . from jeremiads like Neruda's Dead Flower to the comic jazz Two Old Ladies and the hilarious poetic rant Mayo. It's nice to hear Dawne's voice used extensively as well.

"Meyers' professional

production makes this a CD that really shows what poetry and music can do together."

The CD was created with the assistance of a Canada Council for the Arts grant, and is available for \$18 at Salt Spring book and music stores.

• A province-wide seniors advocacy group wants Gulf Islands residents to know about its existence. Information about the Surrey-based Council of Senior Citizens Organizations is available from membership secretary Ernie Bayer at (604) 576-9734.



Meyers



Dawne

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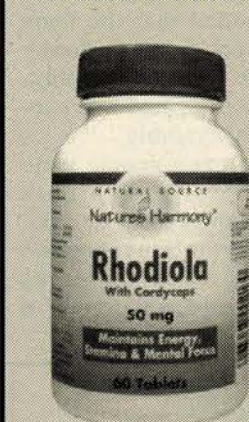
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GISS senior boys triumph in match against Chemainus

The senior boys basketball team slipped in a victorious game of on-island basketball against Chemainus last Tuesday, before the ferry shutdown halted inter-island sports activities.

Coach Lyall Ruehlen said the 67-54 game wasn't what it could have been.

"We pulled off a victory. However, it didn't reflect anything we've worked on in practice or that the kids are capable of."

Scorpions guard Bryan Hunsberger was the team's top scorer with 22 points, followed by John Buttery with 10 points and Gordie Akerman, Dave Barclay and Paul Hannah with six points each.

"Unfortunately when you play a team of Chemainus' calibre you blow them out of the water or play down to their calibre. We couldn't get off

and running and we played down to their level. It would've been nice to blow them out of the water."

He said he gave the GISS team credit, stating that the Scorpions "pulled it together" and went on a 14-2 run in the second quarter.

The team ended the half 36-24, and continued to build on their lead from there.

Ruehlen enjoyed watching Hunsberger score four three-pointers.

"It was nice to see."

He added that the team didn't get the opportunity to work on different plays because the game was simply "too scrumbly."

"Too many people were out of position on both sides of the court," he said.

The team's next game on-island is versus Brentwood College on January 13.



ON THE BALL: Gulf Islands Secondary School player Bryan Hunsberger works with the ball against Chemainus player Art Aranson. The basketball game was stopped short last Tuesday afternoon due to uncertainty regarding ferries. The local squad won the match, and Hunsberger was the high scorer with 22 points.

Junior girls take come-back win

Hard work and perseverance paid off for the Gulf Islands Secondary school (GISS) junior girls basketball team in a 49-40 win against the Cowichan Thunderbirds on December 9.

Coach Jack Barclay said it was a "really hard-fought game."

At the end of the first quarter, the Scorpions trailed Cowichan 9-8, with the same pattern taking place in the second, with a 17-16 score.

Play started to turn in the third quarter thanks to Catlin Hilyer notching three baskets. By the end of the quarter, the score was 31-25 for GISS.

Barclay highlighted the work of players Molly Hosie and Kylin Lee. Hosie scored five points

during the third quarter and was the game's lead scorer with 15 points. Lee helped the team with both defensive and offensive playing and she also scored eight points.

In the fourth quarter, the team tallied 18 points compared to Cowichan's 15.

Barclay said the game ended well due to hard work.

"The team came out on top because of good play by all the team members. Cowichan had a real strong defence with rugged, aggressive players. We were able to defeat them because of our strong offensive play."

The team's next game is versus Cowichan on-island Thursday, January 8 at 3:30 p.m.

Ferries action slashes local tournament trips

Last week's B.C. Ferries shutdown kept Gulf Islands Secondary School basketball teams out of scheduled tournament play.

Senior boys team coach Lyall Ruehlen said the timing was "unfortunate."

The senior boys Scorpions were supposed to play in the 12-team Mark Isfeld ice breaker tournament held in Courtenay on Friday and Saturday, but could not attend.

The junior boys team was supposed to play in a Lambrick Park tournament in Victoria last Friday and Saturday.

"It gives them a chance to see where they're standing," Ruehlen said of Victoria-area tournament participation.

Usually, the team plays league games versus central island teams, he explained.

"This was a chance to see how good the Victoria teams are and where [island teams] need to get to."

The GISS senior girls Scorpions were also left on the sidelines Friday and Saturday. The team planned to participate in the Victoria Christmas tournament, which is the largest senior girls tournament in western Canada.

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RK	Name	G	ASS	TP	DF						
1.	McMahon Don	158	239	397	42	28.	Burns Lorne	134	232	366	35
2.	Byron Nicola	152	245	397	44	29.	Redden Charlene	157	209	366	44
3.	Sanderson Robert	149	245	394	48	30.	Jarvis Gordon	146	220	366	42
4.	Hardy Connie	151	241	392	41	31.	Langdon Jack	146	219	365	40
5.	Huser Angela	135	254	389	37	32.	Newton Norma	142	222	364	37
6.	Lynch Kevin	143	246	389	46	33.	Hoban Rypawn	140	224	364	45
7.	Mussell Dorethy	159	229	388	41	34.	Maclellan Gary	147	217	364	51
8.	Mara Kathy	145	241	386	40	35.	Dunbar Bruce	146	217	363	42
9.	Johnson Cam	171	212	383	37	36.	McBride Richard	136	226	362	46
10.	Eyles Evan	161	221	382	36	37.	Strohmeir Monica	145	216	361	45
11.	Goldie Jim	145	236	381	44	38.	Buckley Arnold	142	218	360	33
12.	Devereux Mark	133	246	379	45	39.	Buckley Jim	124	234	358	33
13.	Jason Chris	148	230	378	31	40.	Campbell Faedra	151	207	358	35
14.	Smith Donald	148	229	377	46	41.	Hardie Madeline	147	210	357	42
15.	Steele Povene	149	226	375	45	42.	Warnir Amanda	156	201	357	46
16.	Morrison Joelle	148	226	374	38	43.	Gosnell Mairi	138	219	357	42
17.	Eyles Tobin	136	238	374	38	44.	Burns Marie	139	218	357	40
18.	Hardy Mike	144	229	373	36	45.	Shaske Ed	146	209	355	39
19.	Lam Huy	151	221	372	36	46.	Smith Shirley	140	215	355	43
20.	Tamboline Philip	144	227	371	38	47.	Gillham Jerome	132	222	354	29
21.	Anderson Dennis	144	226	370	47	48.	Mussell Byron	138	215	353	47
22.	Tamboline W	147	222	369	39	49.	Lynch Trudy	123	228	351	26
23.	Temmel Wolfgang	129	239	368	33	50.	Misanchuk Terry	149	201	350	33
24.	Bateman John	151	217	368	31	51.	Hitchcock Dorothy	119	231	350	33
25.	Albhoose Jack	161	206	367	30	52.	Byron Regan	145	205	350	44
26.	Cummings Paul	129	238	367	41	53.	Morris Liam	142	206	348	47
27.	Laycock Robert	146	220	366	39	54.	Calberry R.	140	206	346	41
						55.	Spencer Peter	151	195	346	42

56.	Lynch Seve	139	207	346	31	82.	Temmel Max	139	186	325	36
57.	Berni Mike	145	200	345	30	83.	Gillham Jeffrey	116	209	325	27
58.	Guedes Doug	134	210	344	46	84.	Rompain Sheldon	124	200	324	29
59.	Irwin-Campbell Ar	150	193	343	49	85.	Tamboline Grant	130	193	323	28
60.	Albhoose Sean	124	218	342	31	86.	Thomas Andrew	125	197	322	31
61.	Millerd Peter	142	200	342	29	87.	Cunningham Jean	135	185	320	31
62.	Rompain Kerry	139	202	341	39	88.	Macdonald Bob	139	175	314	40
63.	Funk Rainer	144	197	341	28	89.	Reynolds Paul	128	185	313	35
64.	Albhoose Paul	145	196	341	27	90.	Leask Lance	138	172	310	27
65.	Mussell Patricia	139	202	341	41	91.	Hitchcock Bill	125	184	309	28
66.	Tamboline Tina	135	204	339	32	92.	Charlebois Jason	130	179	309	39
67.	Reinholdt Kim	132	207	339	36	93.	Cameron Lorna	122	182	304	36
68.	Doerksen Hank	117	222	339	35	94.	Shaske Lucy	129	175	304	36
69.	Howe Scott	120	218	338	41	95.	Aeichele Jeff	113	189	302	31
70.	Forsyth Deb	140	196	336	33	96.	Moban Lind-E	123	176	299	34
71.	Shantz Lorne	135	199	334	37	97.	Broadbent Fred	122	175	297	23
72.	Villadsen Jeane	132	200	332	36	98.	Baker Brent	122	174	296	26
73.	Newman Keith	138	194	332	40	99.	Sloan Randall	118	178	296	30
74.	Shantz Colleen	136	193	329	34	100.	Forsyth Norm	114	181	295	28
75.	Nolan Elizabeth	118	211	329	35	101.	Courtney John	131	162	293	32
76.	Misanchuk Tamara	151	178	329	32	102.	Christensen Nils	108	176	284	38
77.	Mullan Erin	127	201	328	40	103.	Snetsinger Hannah	101	181	282	36
78.	Radford Brian	121	207	328	45	104.	Tanti Mary	106	172	278	35
79.	Anderson Caroline	128	198	326	38	105.	Cottrell Tracey	118	160	278	37
80.	Mullan Pat	127	198	325	33	106.	Marleau Gerry	118	154	272	21
81.	Mackinnon Baldy	125	200	325	35	107.	Marleau Deanna	90	176	266	27

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Families welcome at Boxing Day disc golf event

By MITCHELL SHERRIN
Staff Writer

Disc golf enthusiasts are invited to bring their families to the Sixth Annual Boxing Day tournament at Hart Memorial Disc Golf Park in Moutat Park next week.

"Come as a family on this family-oriented day. Bring your children," said event organizer Tanya Van Ginkel.

"It's a perfect sport to participate in as a family," she said.

Everyone can play at their own level of ability.

And competitors will get a chance to see a bigger array of quality play for the Boxing Day tourney, Van Ginkel said.

"It attracts all the top men and women players from the mainland and

Vancouver Island."

The Boxing Day event is part of the prestigious Duck Golf Winter Tournament series that matches top-notch players from around the province, she said.

The tourney has historically lured 60-80 competitors, but the tournament series is getting larger, she said.

Moutat Park is one of 12 Duck Golf tournament locations among sites in Bellingham, Tsawwassen, Pender, Coquitlam, Burnaby, Kamloops, Victoria, Vancouver and Nanaimo.

And Salt Spring has maintained a special dispensation to allow novice and amateur competitors to play alongside champions in the open and master divisions for the first round,

even though the tournament format has changed for other Duck Golf events, she said.

"It was 'grandfathered-in' because I said we really wanted it that way. It's a treat to play with people who play so well."

A second round will see players compete within their own divisions, she noted.

Van Ginkel, who won the women's division last year with a 106 (two under par over two rounds), might see some stiffer competition from Duck Golf tourney winners Michelle Wilson, Tara Logan and Alice Crawford (who won the local Hart Memorial tourney in May).

The event will also likely bring over the top open/pro-

men in the province, such as Dave Ross (five straight Duck Golf wins this season), Glen Oliviero and Dave Stropky.

Ross won the Boxing Day event last year with an 83 (26 under par) while Stropky came second with an 89.

Masters such as Mike Graff (who won last year's tourney with a 90), Randy Strohan (second last year with a 90 after a playoff) and Glen Whitlock (tournament record holder with an 82 in 2001) are also legends within the disc-golf community.

"We're looking forward to seeing some of the Salt Spring talent come out and stack up against this group," said Van Ginkel.

She recommends that players who haven't competed in a Duck Golf event

select an amateur or advanced division.

"But if you can shoot 10 under par, play open."

Nine divisions allow players to find the best fit for their ability: open men, advanced men, amateur men, open masters, advanced masters, open women, amateur women, novices and juniors.

Duck Golf fee schedules range from \$35 for open men to \$15 for juniors. Collected fees include an ace pot, closest-to-the-pin competition and prize money for top players in each division.

"All amateur and novice winners will receive prizes instead of cash," she said.

Van Ginkel was particularly delighted by some spontaneous sponsorship offered by Stan Lam of

Harbour Food Market.

"He's putting in extra prizes for local players."

Lam's sponsorship has been wonderful because Harbour Food Market has been such a great source for discs, she said.

"He'll order what you want at reasonable rates. He has the best prices bar none."

The Boxing Day event begins with registration at 10 a.m.

Competitors wishing to enter a second doubles event can register at 11 a.m. (\$10) on Saturday, December 27 at the private Mansell Farm course.

Attendance at the Duck Golf tourney will be a prerequisite for the doubles event since scores will be used to match high-low pairings, she said.

Golfers defend park users

Disc golfers have been re-organized following a recent election of directors for the Salt Spring Disc Golf Association (SSDGA).

The membership elected Scott Chapman as president, Paul Linton as vice-president, Gary Railer as treasurer and Shelley Mahoney as secretary.

Jamie Alexander and Gordon Murphy also agreed to be liaisons to the Salt Spring Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission.

The disc golf group is currently holding a membership drive to help support local tournaments, said SSDGA member Tanya Van Ginkel.

"It doesn't take a lot. We just need money for score-

cards and trophies."

The annual fee also gives members a voice regarding decisions about the course at Moutat Park, she said.

"The new U.S. president of the association decided we needed a bigger defence budget," joked Chapman.

But the group would like to see improved disc defences for park users, noted Van Ginkel.

"We would like to get some signs at the park."

One sign at the beginning of the course could remind disc golfers that pedestrians have the right of way, while a second set of signs at trail heads could warn pedestrians to be alert for flying discs, she said.

Van Ginkel would also like a sign indicating some general courtesy rules for the sport and course.

"They would be gentle reminders to be gentle to the course and considerate of other park users."

The SSDGA hosts individual two-round tournaments monthly (every third Sunday starting at 10 a.m.) under the guidance of Linton.

Chapman also manages one-round random-partner doubles tournaments weekly (11 a.m. Sundays, except during individual competitions).

"Everyone's welcome. It doesn't matter what your level of ability is," she said.

U12, U14 girls teams secure wins

• Salt Spring's U12 girls played an offensively minded, "smart choices" game last Saturday, beating a fast Gordon Head team 3-1.

"Now midway through the season, the girls are comfortable in their positions and showing it with lots of heads-up passing and smart, controlled play," noted a team write-up.

Goals from Alice Paveley, Danielle Severn and a first-ever goal from Silken Conradi led Salt Spring to the hard-fought victory.

Constant badgering all year from the coach to "go to the front of the net without the ball and good things will happen" paid off.

SOCCER KICKS

Fine goalkeeping by Kate Hosie and Erica Tarrissan — who both challenged at the right times and came up with some key saves — kept Gordon Head at bay.

The final game before the Christmas break ended with pizza, doughnuts and a skating excursion.

• Salt Spring's U14 girls played a dynamite game Saturday, winning 6-1 over Peninsula.

"It was a real treat to watch our team do some great passing," said coach Meror

Krayenhoff.

Hanna Snetsinger blasted in two clean goals and Kayla Gromme overpowered the opposition with two goals from out of nowhere. Kristi Lee drilled a marker from 25 yards out, and Jessica Harkema lit a fuse behind a ball for a first-class goal.

A great play came from Kate Parker, who drew the opposition to her, then chipped the ball over their heads to Sam Bowen, who had a near goal.

Peninsula was a gutsy team that kept its spirits up and deserves credit for coming to the island with only nine players to battle the number one team in their league.

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AT THE RINK: Jamen Stocks, far left, and members of the Core Inn hockey team meet Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays at 4 p.m. at Portlock Park's outdoor rink.

Photo by Carey Rudisill

Core Inn hockey program scores new equipment grant

Local youth who enjoy street hockey got a helping hand this month with a \$2,500 grant from the Salt Spring Foundation.

Core Inn hockey program coordinator Jamen Stocks plans to spend the money on new equipment, including nets, goalie padding, jerseys and sticks.

Salt Spring Foundation president Bob Rush said Stocks' application impressed foundation members.

The application described how the program assisted in

the transformation of youth, altered individuals' quality of life and helped build genuine self-confidence through direct interactions with peers and community members.

About 20 youth play at Portlock Park on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday at 4 p.m.

The program aims to help with the development of youth character, Rush said.

"Parents are happy," said Stocks. "Kids do their homework on time so they can go play hockey. Then,

they go home tired."

"We were very impressed with what Jamen Stocks was doing for the participants in the Core Inn hockey project," he said.

Stocks said he was shocked to get a phone call last week advising him the grant had been approved.

The Inn's hockey program is one of 20 groups who received foundation funding totalling \$42,000 in 2003.

Community endowment funding through the foundation was initiated in 1984.

Week's top bowlers named

Following are high scores in recent bowling league play at Kings Lane Recreation.

Circus League: Mary Tanti, 206; Ron Cunningham, 220, 215/620; Doreen Hewitt,

HIGH ROLLERS

251/615. Tuesday a.m. Seniors: Ken Robinson, 223; Marg Baker,

222, 222/601.

Tuesday p.m. Seniors, December 2: Clara Hicks, 203; Ken Robinson, 229.

Tuesday p.m. Seniors, December 9: Rita Dods, 204.

Tuesday Night League, December 4: Gerry, 216; Ken D., 230; Ron C., 259; Dan B., 315, 242/734; Shirley P., 248, 237, 254/739; Brenda L., 202, 233.

Tuesday Night League, December 11: Myles, 219, 207/611; Arnie, 235, 218/643; Shirley, 218, 282, 274/774; Russ, 200; Harold, 214.

Special Olympics: Stuart Elliott, 142; Gloria Dale, 147; Christopher Joynson, 186; Jimmy Beck, 193; Carlos Manzano, 214; Dominic George, 157.

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YOUR photo could be on the cover of the next Salt Spring Island Directory, coming out in June!

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Please mail your entry to: Lions Publications Photo Contest, 103 Bonnet Avenue, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2K8 with your name, address and phone number clearly marked on the back.

Open to amateur photographers only. Lions Publications reserves the right to decide not to use any of the photos submitted. Photos not selected can be picked up at 103 Bonnet Avenue after February 15.

Lions Publications

BRIDGE TRICKS

By CONHOR VANE-HUNT
Driftwood Contributor

On the first day of . . . sorry, that's December, not Christmas, Ima said to me, "I am NOT a partridge in a pear tree. WE are Ima Krayenhoff and Jill Evans."

Whether or not Irene Hawksworth and Ron Dickson are two turtle doves I wouldn't know, but they were second. Third were Mary Bingham and Blanche Poborsa, who tied with the Laundrys.

On the eighth day of . . . December, Ron Hall said to me, "I don't know much about milkmaids, but Bob Morrisette and I were first."

Isabelle Richardson and Joan Conlan were second, George Laundry and Yantra Walker were third and, although "colly birds" may not describe them accurately, Bill Buckler and John Jefferson came fourth.

Just in case you are wondering what the word "colly" means, I'll tell you. (Once a teacher of English . . .)

There are two distinct meanings: One, a long-haired sheep-dog — an alternative spelling of "collie," and two: as a verb, to begrime with coal-dust, or to darken; the adjective is "collied," which has nothing to do with dogs.

We want a noun, however. One meaning is "soot," so, since we are in avian territory for the first four days of your-know-what, we have us sooty birds. Since ravens or crows would be out of place, it seems that we have four blackbirds. (Not four-and-twenty, that's another story.) Aren't words fascinating?

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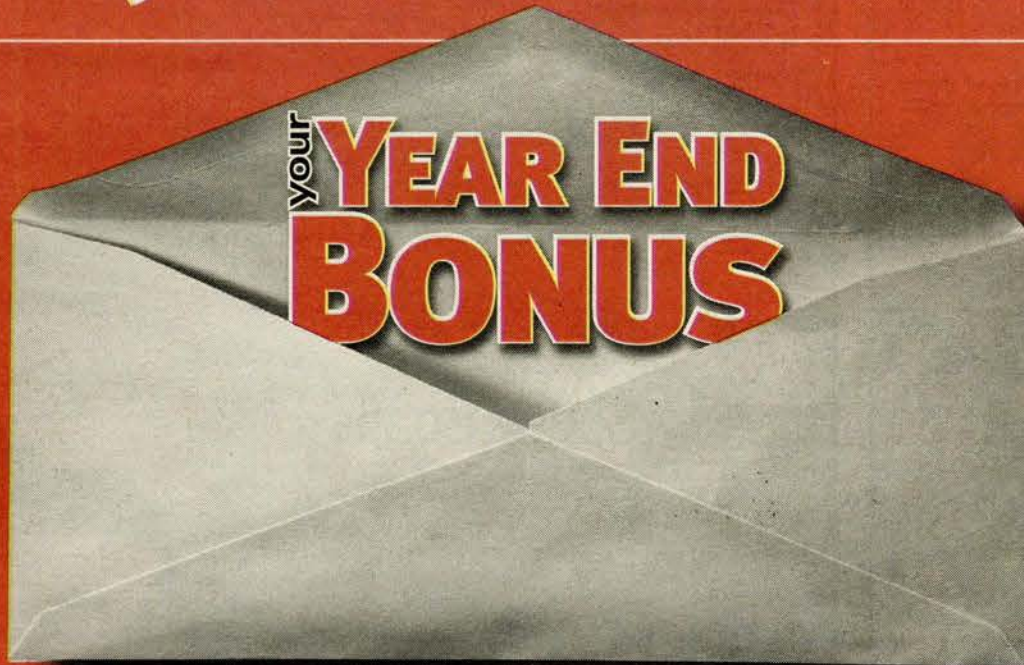
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HONDA

Did I ever tell you about the time I impersonated a cop?

Relax, sergeant — it was several years ago, in another provincial jurisdiction.

I lived in the sticks at the time, the hour hand had long passed midnight and some Party-Hearties in a house down the road were making noise. Way too much noise.

I took it for an hour and a half and then I called the cops. A bored dispatcher informed me that, as it was the weekend and due to budgetary cutbacks, no police were actually on duty, but an officer could be summoned from a nearby jurisdiction "in an extreme emergency."

I was younger then, with a shorter fuse and not nearly the level of urbanity and tolerance for which I am so justly renowned today.

Accordingly, I slammed down the phone, said some bad words, then put on my police hat and loaded my police dog into my car. Together we drove down the road and fetched up in the driveway of the aforementioned party house.

A word about my police hat. And my police dog: The hat was a nylon mesh cap I picked up after a charity soft ball game between a rural police detachment and the radio station I worked for.

(Over a post-game beer, the cop who played shortstop informed me that he coveted my CBC ball cap. We swapped.) The crest on the front of my new cap read ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE, SOUTH PORCUPINE. Not exactly a slogan calculated to strike fear in the heart of malfasants, but a collectors item nonetheless.

My "police" dog Rufus was, in truth, a mangy border

Park Place spots open

Park Place Village will begin construction early in the new year if the required number of leases are obtained for bank financing.

Owner Allen Cunningham said at one point the new 10,000-square-foot office and retail building next to the GVM complex was almost fully rented, but regulatory delays made final approval an extremely difficult process.

Although Park Place Village will have a good mix of retail and service businesses, Cunningham said he was disappointed that the Islands Trust would not allow a bank or liquor store, given the number of seniors in the immediate area.

Spots are still left for an anticipated May/June occupancy on both the street level and second floors.

If everyone interested reserves space, then there is just an opening for one restaurant or coffee shop and another tenant on the street level. The building can have up to nine units but division walls are not fixed, said Cunningham.

Upper and lower level parking lots will be accessible from both Lower Ganges Road and Park Drive. Cunningham can be reached at 537-2308 or through e-mail: parkplacevillage@salt-spring.com.

Pot hypocrisy rampant these days

collie/indeterminate mix, but I hoped that in the dark and from a distance he might pass for an Alsatian on duty.

I hammered on the front door, which was ajar, walked in, and in my best Lorne Greene voice of doom, boomed "WE'VE HAD SEVERAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE NOISE YOU PEOPLE ARE MAKING. IF YOU CAN'T TONE IT DOWN, I'M GONNA HAVE TO LAY CHARGES."

What I did was totally illegal, not to mention surpassingly stupid, but it worked like a charm. Know why?

Because it was a pot party, not a booze party. The place reeked of grass, and as I delivered my speech people all over the room were surreptitiously divesting themselves of baggies, stubbing out roaches and desperately trying not to exhale in my face.

What's more, they were all stoned. Instead of seeing me as the ridiculous impostor I clearly was, they figured the dope they were smoking was unusually excellent.

Know what would have happened to me if that had

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been a booze party instead of a pot party? There's a good chance I'd have been stomped into a carpet stain. And I'm not exaggerating. That very thing happened to a lawyer in Squamish, B.C. two summers ago. He went to a booze party at a neighbour's house to ask them to pipe down. Two of the knuckle-dragging juiceheads in attendance kicked him to

death on the spot.

All of which is a long-winded way of getting to my point, which is: why the hypocrisy about marijuana?

The federal New Democrats are doing backflips to distance themselves from their leader Jack Layton's rather brave endorsement of the substance. Politicos of other stripes are puffing themselves up to solemnly intone how they've never touched the stuff — and who can forget Bill Clinton's pathetic cavil, "I smoked, but I didn't inhale."

Well, I did, Bill — and what's more I don't personal-

ly know a single adult — not one — who hasn't tried pot at least once. It's no big deal, folks. Let's finally admit it.

Am I advocating that everybody smoke pot? No. I don't smoke it any more because it's too expensive, not worth the hassle and it makes me stupid. When I'm on grass I have all the verve and panache of a rutabaga.

It also makes me hungry and lazy — two conditions I have enough trouble grappling with when I'm clear-headed.

All I'm saying is: let's stop being two-faced about it. Booze causes a hundred times the grief, bloodshed

and property damage that pot does, but we turn a blind eye because through a fluke of justice and thanks to the twisted interpretations of seedy old perverts like J. Edgar Hoover and Alberta's own Emily Murphy, alcohol is legal and marijuana isn't.

The Canadian legal system is woefully staggering towards righting this absurdity, but it's not there yet, so think twice or even three times before you flout the law, even if the law is, to paraphrase Dickens, a demonstrable ass when it comes to weed.

And if you must smoke, keep it down. Because I don't want to have to put on my police hat and come over and bust you.

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