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Wednesday, December 22, 2010 — YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1960 50TH YEAR — ISSUE 51 **\$1.25** (incl. HST)

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

- Ganges Gift Wrap Centre
- Meet Santa & his Elves!

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OPEN LATE TIL 8!
PAGE B7



Artwork by Anna Melious, winner of the annual Driftwood cover contest, which features high school art students. More artwork Page B1.

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NEWSBEAT

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire expenditures unsustainable: Bell

District urged to revise tax methods

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A representative of Salt Spring's largest commercial property holder has been asked to get more support for his demand that the fire district reduce the tax burden on island businesses caused by its budget policies.

"The more weight there is behind the proposal the better," said fire board chair Michael Schubart in response to a presentation made by Mouat's Trading Co. Ltd. president Kevin Bell at Monday evening's trustees' meeting. "I would hesitate to institute change based on one person."

But Bell said the fire district's operating budget, which has risen from \$850,000 in 2005 to \$2.4 million in 2011, is threatening the viability of the island's commercial sector.

"A lot of these businesses are sort of living hand to mouth and I don't want to see us lose this diversity," Bell told trustees on Monday.

"These are huge [budget] numbers and I want to see you rein in these costs."

Bell's comments follow upon

a November letter to trustees in which he outlines that the proportion of tax on his company's 10 commercial properties that goes towards the fire district exceeds insurance costs he would have to pay if the island had no fire protection service.

"If there was no fire protection on Salt Spring, Mouat's insurance premium would increase by \$7,000 per year. This is substantially less than the \$21,000 we, and by extension our 35 tenants, are currently paying the SSFD," Bell writes in his letter to fire trustees dated Nov. 23.

Bell supplied trustees with an email from his insurance provider that confirms his findings.

He considers the prospect of continued budget increases "unsustainable" from a business perspective.

"We cannot afford what I see in the [fire district's 10-year] strategic plan," he told trustees.

"I don't know where it's going to end and I am afraid of where it is going to end."

Bell called upon trustees to seriously reconsider expenses laid out in the fire district's \$2.4-million 2011 budget. He'd like to see an immediate hiring freeze on new staff, revision

of the district's strategic plan and "a transition from a 'property class' tax methodology to a more equitable 'parcel tax' process."

Altering the level of taxes paid by commercial properties, however, could have an impact on taxes paid by residential property owners, Schubart noted.

"Most of the real estate on this island is under residential class and I would doubt residents would like to see their taxes go up so your taxes can go down," he said.

"I sympathize with your position, but you're in business and sometimes you lose and sometimes you win in business."

Schubart noted that three fire district board members own business properties and are subject to commercial property taxes. Commercial property owners on Salt Spring and other unincorporated rural areas pay approximately 2.45 times the residential rate. Taxation rates for improvement districts such as the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District are determined by the province.

Trustee Mary Gillies, who is among the board's three business owners, spoke of the need for representatives from agencies like the Islands Trust, the

Capital Regional District, the Chamber of Commerce and the fire district to meet and discuss issues of common concern.

"Taxation is totally crippling," she said. "We need to get together and discuss the economics of the village."

Trustee Ron Chamney, serving in his first year on the board, noted that the budget process is "difficult and hard to track." He said the board has considered Bell's concerns.

"You have been heard," he said. "You can take a deep breath and feel some reassurance."

Chamney said any decision to alter the budget will be conducted in the interests of protecting the community and fire department staff and volunteers.

"It comes down to the safety of the public and of firefighters and that cannot be compromised," he said.

Bell, who confirmed his support for a well-trained and well-equipped fire department, took exception to the board's request for more support from the island's commercial taxpayers.

"A valid point should be enough," he said. "I shouldn't need to get 10 people or whatever the number is."

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WHAT'S ON
PAGE B4

CRIME

Salt Spring man charged with fraud

Next court appearance Jan. 4

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring resident John Gregory Paterson has been released from police custody in Vancouver, where he was charged with nine counts of fraud and stock market manipulation.

Members of the RCMP's federal Integrated Market Enforcement Team arrested Paterson at his Dogwood Lane home on Saturday, Dec. 18 and flew him to Vancouver in advance of a court appearance on Monday, Const. Michael McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin said Paterson was released on bail early Monday evening. The RCMP is anticipating the next step in the criminal proceedings, with an upcoming court appearance set for Jan. 4.

"Our package is complete," McLaughlin said.

"It is done and we have nothing further to put into the already massive disclosure package."

Paterson is a geologist and a founder of the Vancouver-based mining exploration company Southwestern Resources Corp., a publicly traded company that was listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The 60-year-old, who made millions of dollars from a gold claim

in China, was charged with five counts of fraud over \$5,000, two counts of fraud on the stock market, one count of publishing false statements to induce persons to become shareholders of a company and one count of publishing false statements to deceive shareholders of a company.

A three-year investigation leading up to the arrest involved gathering more than 30,000 documents, which had to be translated to electronic files and then linked.

"It was a huge operation, certainly," McLaughlin said, adding that amassing the information was akin to inventing a separate internet for the case.

FRAUD CHARGES continued on A3

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Newsbeat

Heads up!

Christmas Day Dinner
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CHRISTMAS

Holiday investigation gets to root of tree debate

To trim or not to trim

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Talk to any of the Girl Guides or Boy Scouts selling trees in Ganges this week and there's little doubt which side comes out on top of the annual contest that pits real trees versus their artificial brethren.

The lot outside Windsor Plywood has experienced brisk sales as countless islanders reach for the tradition, authenticity and aroma of a freshly cut Christmas tree.

Those who fear the harvest of young pines, spruce and firs in the prime of their woodsy youth will only worsen the planet's dire environmental future can rest assured that even Greenpeace acknowledges them as the clear-cut eco-friendly winners.

Linda Gilkeson, the Salt Spring Island Conservancy's executive director, said the island-based non-profit hasn't come out with an official position on the matter, but falls strongly towards supporting real trees.

While an artificial tree might last between five and 10 years, it's often travelled more than 10,000 kilometres to reach your home and has been manufactured in an energy-intensive process that involves a toxic slough of metals and plastic derivatives.

Conversely, most of the trees that end up in the homes of Salt Spring Islanders, she said, are grown right here on island tree farms or cut by licensed harvesters on BC Hydro property.

When she's around long enough during the holiday season to justify a tree of her own, Gilkeson takes to her own front yard.

"Personally, when I do take a tree, I take one on my property where the power lines are," she said. "These are going to have come down anyway."

In other years, circumstances can dictate what is and isn't appropriate.

"It depends largely on wherever you are and where the tree comes from," she said.

One year, for example, while living in Montreal, Gilkeson used a gigantic potted rosemary bush to celebrate the holiday.

Aromatic indeed.

Every year, approximately 900,000 trees are harvested from tree farms across British Columbia. The purchase of a real Christmas tree helps local farmers and is lucrative for non-profit organizations, like our own Scouts

REAL TREES

Pros:

- Real trees are naturally biodegradable and carbon neutral
- Trees bought from local tree farms support local agriculture
- Nothing says Christmas like the smell of a freshly cut tree

Cons:

- Water and sweep, repeat for a month
- Cats appear to prefer knocking down the real thing
- Heated family debates in frosty parking lots/trees farms about which tree is the ideal tree

ARTIFICIAL TREES

Pros:

- Artificial trees can last up to 10 years
- Newer models are often made with recycled or recyclable materials
- No worries about tossing heirloom tree decorations into the chipper come January

Cons:

- Most trees are shipped thousands of kilometres before they reach your living room
- Most end up getting shipped to the landfill
- The smell of plastic and rubber clashes with shortbread and eggnog

and Guides, who get a cut from every sale.

Before you haul that faithful old plastic impostor to the transfer station, however, it's worth considering that the artificial tree receives redemption from an unlikely source.

In at least some circumstances anyway.

It might seem unusual for someone who's in the business of selling real trees to step out and claim that artificial trees can be justified.

Things get even more bizarre when Chris Schmah,

"[An artificial tree] only meets the minimum requirements."

CHRIS SCHMAH

Owner, Foxglove Farm and Garden Supply

owner of Foxglove Farm and Garden Supply, tells you he's got a fake tree standing proudly in his shop.

In a commercial display, where a tree can sometimes go up in early November, he said, a real tree simply doesn't have the endurance needed to make it into January.

When it comes to his own home, however, it's all about the real thing.

"You can argue it from every angle possible, but a real tree is part of the tradition of Christmas. Each tree's fragrance is unique and we always compare it to years prior," he said.

"With artificial trees, you pull it out of the box and the obligation is done. It only meets the minimum requirements."

Even David Griffiths, manager of Home Hardware, admits to having struggled with sales of the artificial trees on display at his Ganges store.

"We've hardly sold any," he said, adding that shoppers' Christmas spirit appears to neglect a yearning for artificial trees.

From a business perspective, it can be argued that selling artificial trees, which can last for up to a decade, can saturate demand for the product in no time.

Griffiths admits to having one real and one artificial tree.

The fake, he said, is a result of a last-minute Christmas Eve-effort to find a tree.

He was desperate.

Griffiths noted that artificial trees are ideal for people who choose not to handle the mess and the fuss of putting up a real tree. He said many of his older customers, who live in assisted living units or face mobility issues, choose artificial for the ease and convenience factor.

"They're basically a 10-year tree. It's something you don't replace," he said.

And it's a good thing, because he's still got plenty in stock, he added.

Island man released on bail

FRAUD CHARGES

continued from A2

The IMET investigation began on July 20, 2007, when it received a complaint that Southwestern had published false reports of its findings at a gold mine in the People's Republic of China, which it was developing as the Boka Project.

The investigation alleges that Paterson purposely increased Southwestern's share price by inflating gold assay results on the Boka Project. He reported these promising but false figures in a series of news releases issued by the company from 2003 to 2007.

On July 19, 2007, a month after Paterson's resignation, the company announced that there were errors in previously reported assay results for its Boka Project and withdrew all of its previously disclosed results for the proj-

ect. The resulting sell-off of shares in Southwestern led to an estimated one-day market capitalization loss in excess of \$153 million, according to the British Columbia Securities Commission.

Paterson has already faced an investigation by the BCSC and admitted to charges of fraud and insider trading for a settlement deal. The commission reported in June 2009 that as a result of the settlement, Paterson was permanently banned from trading in securities, acting as a director or engaging in any trading activities. He is also banned from preparing mining disclosures for investment purposes.

According to the Vancouver Province, Paterson and a group of defendants had previously paid about \$15.5 million to settle a class-action lawsuit related to the fraud with shareholders in Southwestern Resources Corp., finalized in September 2008.

News briefs

For the record

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has reported it has no intention of divesting Fulford, Vesuvius and Burgoyne docks at this time, contrary to a suggestion made by electoral area director Garth Hendren in a story about Fernwood Dock in the Dec. 1 issue of the Driftwood.

Also, in a Dec. 8 photo cutline, Gerry Munneke was incorrectly identified in a photo from the Transitions store.

Shelter open through Christmas

The Community Services In From the Cold shelter will be open on Christmas Eve and Christmas night this week, even if temperatures don't dip to the freezing mark.

The shelter is only funded for "extreme

weather," such as sub-zero temperatures, freezing rain or other hazardous weather conditions. However, said Cheryl Bell-Gadsby of Community Services, "We have decided to open because we know so many of our regular homeless people will have nowhere to go."

Frosty disappears

A Maliview Drive family is hoping the Christmas spirit will arrive in the heart of a thieving grinch who stole a seven-foot snowman known as Frosty on the weekend.

According to Salt Spring police, the Grinch had to crawl under a catamaran that was lit up in order to untie the snowman and steal him from the property's seasonal display. The family would like to see Frosty returned to his home in time for Christmas.

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NEWSBEAT

RECYCLING

Free Styrofoam, soft plastic recycling announced

Rainbow Road depot adds service

BY PETER GRANT
RECYCLING DEPOT MANAGER

The Salt Spring Island Recycling Depot on Rainbow Road is ever-evolving. Sometimes you see the changes — sometimes you don't. The latest developments are the results of much behind-the-scenes planning culminating in the announcement of the acceptance of a couple of "hard to recycle" items.

Soft plastic and expanded polystyrene (or EPS) will be accepted free of charge as of Jan. 4. While the depot did accept soft plastic for about five years, it had been discontinued when complications arose within the plastic markets. We have been loath to consider charging for these two items as they have no weight in small amounts and asking people to save up and store large amounts at home seems unfair.

We are always trying to make recycling relatively easy for our fellow islanders while still maintaining a high level of quality in our material.

The California EPA estimates the actual cost of recycling expanded polystyrene at over \$3,000 per ton, and one can only imagine what a ton of Styrofoam might look like — Mount Everest, maybe? EPS is 90 per cent air, so it makes no sense to ship it with all that air and processors want to receive it compacted since their space is limited.

The depot will accumulate approximately 40 cubic yards of Styrofoam, and then with the aid of the Nanaimo Recycling Exchange, bring in their new trailer-mounted Styro-



Bins of Styrofoam at the Nanaimo Recycling Exchange.

foam compacting unit (sponsored by Mid-Island Co-op and CIPA). The compacted material will then be delivered to Merlin Plastics in Vancouver.

Finally, a great way to get rid of all that bulky, white packaging foam, meat trays, clamshells, disposable hot liquid cups, plates and other EPS products instead of sending it to the landfill! There will be no charge for bringing either of these materials to the depot.

All we ask is that soft plastic be the stretchy kind — not the kind that is noisy when crumpled, and not be a compound of foil etc. The BIG request is, keep it CLEAN, free of decals and food residue.

A video clip of the machine in action can be viewed at: www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10150109523136145

In other depot news, EPR — Extended Producer Responsibility — Stewardship legislation has been changing the way many items at the depot are handled.

While some — such as the "Productcare" items (paint, pesticides, poisons and flammable liquids as well as fluorescent light bulbs and tubes) have been a plus for all involved — some schemes have yet to work out the kinks.

The depot has been accepting electronic waste, plastic and fibre dairy containers, household batteries and tires, for example, without receiving any compensation. We are hoping that this will change as the idea of EPR is to put the financial burden of collecting and recycling on the industry producing the material.

One interesting EPR scheduled in the next few years is "packaging." It is anticipated that this will cover a multitude of materials including Styrofoam.

The recycling depot is operated by Salt Spring Island Community Services.

In the New Year we will also be making the donation option easier with a "donation drop" on site. Many clients are already donating their refundable beverage containers. This is truly appreciated and goes a long way to help cover costs of dealing with some of the other materials.

The depot is regularly open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (The depot will be closed Dec. 24, re-opening Dec. 28.)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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	12:01	3.0	9.8	SU 09:17	3.6	11.8		
	15:32	3.2	10.5	16:01	2.0	6.6		
	23:27	0.2	0.7	20:15	2.4	7.9		
23	07:46	3.6	11.8	27	02:14	1.3	4.3	
	12:54	2.9	9.5		09:47	3.6	11.8	
	16:26	3.1	10.2		16:57	1.6	5.2	
24	00:09	0.3	1.0	MO	22:22	2.3	7.5	
	08:17	3.6	11.8		28	03:00	1.8	5.9
	13:55	2.7	8.9			TU 10:16	3.6	11.8
25	17:26	2.9	9.5	17:48	1.2	3.9		
	00:50	0.5	1.6	SA	08:47	3.6	11.8	
	08:47	3.6	11.8		14:59	2.4	7.9	
	14:59	2.4	7.9		18:39	2.6	8.5	

ENVIRONMENT

Oil spill a 'major threat' to region: Trust

Salish Sea leaders call for bilateral marine safety update

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The heads of the Islands Trust and San Juan County Council want the federal government to work alongside the U.S. and Canadian coast guard on a strategy to minimize the impact of an oil spill in the Salish Sea.

"A major oil spill is a very real threat in the busy waterways of the Salish Sea," reads part of a three-page letter cosigned by chair Sheila Malcolmson of the Islands Trust and San Juan County Chair Richard Fralick.

"Oil spills do not stop at international boundaries, and a major spill anywhere in the Salish Sea would be extremely damaging both environmentally and economically."

The Dec. 17 letter is addressed to coast guard officials in both Canada and the United States along with federal Transport Minister Chuck Strahl and Environment Minister John Baird.

Malcolmson and Fralick ask that funds and resources be allocated to support a bilateral review of marine safety standards to help streamline and co-ordinate international co-operation if there is a spill.

Considering data from 2009, cargo and tank vessels made approximately 10,000 transits through the waters of Puget Sound, the Strait of Georgia, Haro Strait, Rosario Strait and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Malcolmson and Fralick note that traffic is bound to increase as Canada and British Columbia push to increase trade through the Pacific Gateway project.

"Not only are oil spill risks

increasing with the growing number of ships in our region but the likelihood of a large spill is also going up as vessels increase in size," write Malcolmson and Fralick.

"As two of the local governments for the islands of the Salish Sea, we are extremely concerned about the oil spill risks presented by marine shipping in the area and the poor state of readiness to respond to a major spill in the Salish Sea," write Fralick and Malcolmson.

The Salish Sea's geographic and marine conditions could make clean-up of any spill especially difficult. According to the letter, responders would likely be unable to contain or recover more than five to 10 per cent of any spilled oil.

"The communities and ecosystems of the Salish Sea are depending on your leadership," the letter concludes.

In defence of its shipping policies, information on the Port of Vancouver's website indicates the port has had no navigational incidents involving oil tankers in 50 years of operation.

All oil tankers calling in at Vancouver are double hulled and subject to strict international, national and port authority standards that include stringent training requirements.

Tug escort and pilotage rules and transit windows are among measures adopted by the port's authorities to improve safety and identify risks before they become disasters.

"With security measures that meet or exceed North American standards, the Port of Vancouver has a well-earned reputation as a secure, safe and dependable place to do business," reads information at www.portmetrovan-couver.com.

BC FERRIES

Rough waters for Queen of Nanaimo return

Mechanical difficulties delay weekend sailings

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

BC Ferries engineers were still working to get the bugs out days after the Queen of Nanaimo returned from a major refit last week.

"We are having some teething problems with the refit since bringing the ship back on Friday," BC Ferries media relations director Deborah Marshall said Monday.

"I know our engineers are working really hard to rectify that."

On Friday morning the vessel left Long Harbour terminal an hour behind schedule for the first run of its return to action. By the time of its next scheduled sailing out of Long Harbour, the boat was running almost two hours late.

Marshall said the main prob-

lem lay with the fire suppression system. The heating system in the passengers' area was also an issue.

Further difficulties were encountered on Saturday morning when other mechanical problems combined with heavy winds to force cancellation of the sailing scheduled to leave Long Harbour at 6:30 a.m.

Marshall said the gyro compass, which was worked on during the refit as part of overall servicing of all bridge equipment, needed to be calibrated by a technician on Saturday morning.

A separate issue arose with a bow thruster, which Marshall said is necessary for driving into the wind.

The bow thruster was overhauled during the refit and the batteries were replaced, but on Saturday, Marshall said, "a control issue cropped up, which the engineers addressed."

Cancellation of the route's stop at Sturdies Bay on Mon-

day was due to extreme weather, Marshall said.

Passengers travelling on the Queen of Nanaimo today (Dec. 22) and on Dec. 29 and 30 should be aware of potential delays, according to a service advisory bulletin. The vessel will be refuelled at Tsawwassen on those dates prior to the 10:10 sailing.

Marshall explained the vessel normally refuels in Long Harbour on Saturday nights, but this year's calendar means Christmas Day and New Year's Day both fall on a Saturday.

BC Ferries stated in the bulletin the refuelling process takes approximately 40 minutes to complete, but the company "will make every effort to minimize the impact of this fuelling and apologizes for any inconvenience."

Passengers are advised to check <http://www.bcferreries.com/bcferreriesnotices> for up to date information.

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NEWSBEAT

RECREATION

PARC reins in local dog walkers

Canines turfed from Portlock and Centennial parks

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A Salt Spring Island dog owner feels like she's received the short end of the stick after learning that regulations prohibit her and her dog from using Portlock and Centennial parks.

"The SPCA says I have to walk my dog every day," said Becca Dekker, an island resident who used to walk her dog Benji around the Portlock oval twice a week. "Now I can't take him to the park, I can't take him to the beach and if I walk along the side of the road I could get killed."



Becca Dekker and Benji.

PHOTO BY SEAN MCINTYRE

"I could understand if the dog was pooping on the fields, but if a dog is on a leash and under control, I think it should be allowed."

BECCA DEKKER
Dog walker

While starting out on one of her walks last week, Dekker discovered several large "no dogs allowed" signs posted in and around Portlock Park.

"I could understand if the dog was pooping on the fields, but if a dog is on a leash and under control, I think it should be allowed," she said. "We're going to get cabin fever."

Dekker said the park is the ideal spot for her and Benji to take a stroll given that it offers a safe and pleasant environment. Benji, a basset hound-black lab cross, tends to get overexcited and out of control when he meets fellow dogs at other designated dog-walking spots like Duck Creek Park.

Unfortunately, not all dog owners are as responsible as Dekker and that's caused quite a stink among some of the park's other users.

The island's Parks and Recreation Commission had the signs installed at Portlock and Centennial parks as a result of dog owners' failure to clean up after their pets, according to Kees Ruurs, PARC's general manager.

In spite of a longstanding Capital Regional District bylaw that excludes dogs from the Portlock Park playing fields and playground, Ruurs said, canines have generally been permitted on the track so long as owners don't leave a mess behind.

"We've decided that the rules have to be enforced," he said. "Enough is enough."

A similar situation has played out in Centennial Park, where well-concealed turds have stained more than the occasional picnic or Frisbee match, Ruurs added.

He said dog owners and their pets can choose to walk at Duck Creek or Mouat parks and the soon-to-be-completed dog park in front of the Rainbow Road Pool complex.

Dog owners caught with their pets in Centennial or Portlock parks are subject to minimum fines of \$50, according to CRD Bylaw No. 2930.

CAMPAIGNS

Conservancy nearing goal in Musgrave deal

Tax receipts available for greenbelt contributions

The Salt Spring Island Conservancy has been inundated with pledges and donations since the launch of its campaign to purchase and protect a 320-acre property along Musgrave Road last week.

"The campaign is doing really well," said Linda Gilkeson, the conservancy's executive director.

Despite the strong start, the island's preeminent conservation group requires another push to reach the \$235,000 needed to buy the \$2.6-million property.

Conservancy staff and volunteers spent most of 2010 working diligently to secure approximately 91 per cent of the property's cost from the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the B.C. Nature Federation and private donors.

Gilkeson said it's imperative that people come through with pledges and continue to spread awareness about the project.

"There's pledges and then there's money," Gilkeson said.

The deal will preserve an extensive swath of forest land next to the Capital Regional District's Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve. Once purchased, the lot will link existing parklands and result in a nearly 6,000-acre greenbelt. The deal represents the largest property acquisition campaign in the conservancy's 16-year history.

Contributions of cash or equities can be made by following the links at www.saltspringconservancy.ca or calling the conservancy office at 250-538-0318.

Potential donors have until Dec. 31 to receive a valid 2010 tax receipt.

Gilkeson said she will have an update, including a total amount of funds raised, by early January.

"We're so close," she said.

NEWS UPDATES Follow the Driftwood on Twitter
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Advertising Deadlines

Deadlines for the Driftwood - Wednesday December 29th
Display Deadline: Wednesday, December 22nd, 4:00pm
Classified Display Deadline: Monday, December 27th, 4pm
Classified Word Deadline: Tuesday, December 28th, 10am

Deadlines for the Driftwood - Wednesday January 5th
Display Deadline: Wednesday, December 29th, 4:00pm
Classified Display Deadline: Monday, January 3rd, 4pm
Classified Word Deadline: Tuesday, January 4th, 10am
Classifieds may be placed on-line at: gulfislandsdriftwood.com

Please note the Driftwood Office will be closed:
Friday December 24th & Friday December 31st.

Regular Deadlines will apply for the Driftwood of Wednesday January 12th.

The Driftwood Weekender will not be published:
Friday, December 24th & Friday, December 31st

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Salt Spring resident and contractor Norm Elliott on the site of the stalled Norton Road project.

PHOTO BY SEAN MCINTYRE

Development dilemma stalls Norton Road housing project

Private sector housing project highlights public concerns

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

In the more than a half century he's spent as a contractor and self-made construction magnate, Norm Elliott has overseen plenty of massive projects across Western Canada.

His main contracting company, based out of Delta, completes anywhere between \$60- and \$100-million worth of projects in an average year.

Pick any sector of Canada's economy and odds are good that Elliott and his crews have built a building to contain it.

Forestry, sports and recreation, aviation, mining, trucking, oil and gas are the bread and butter of Elliott's Permasteel brand.

His latest projects include a major upgrade to the Vancouver International Airport for the 2010 Winter Games and completion of a massive new shipping terminal along the Fraser River.

In Elliott's world, putting up buildings as large as 80,000 or 100,000 square feet are just another day at the office.

But Elliott's passion for construction doesn't begin and end with the steel behemoths Permasteel has erected across B.C. and Alberta; he's also dotted the landscape with smaller industrial facilities, churches, extended-care facilities and modest residential projects.

In spite of his success in completing projects across such a wide spectrum of industries, however, it's one of the residential projects he proposed to build right here on Salt Spring Island that has proven the most irritating thorn in Elliott's career.

Elliott proposed a 26-unit affordable housing project back in 2003 as a way to give back to the island.

"I'm a contractor and, being well off, I figured 'what could I do for the community?'" he said during a recent interview.

The goal was to give young island families a "Brinkworthy-like opportunity" to enter the housing market and get on with being constructive members of the community.

"The idea was starter homes between 1,050 and 1,250 square feet which would be two and three bedrooms," he said. "These would be small but functional slab-on-grade units."

Elliott and his team had organized financing through Islands Savings for units priced at roughly \$225,000.

"It had a really warm and fuzzy feeling," he said.

Elliott had even satisfied any project's biggest concern: the neighbours. The seven-acre site of the proposed Norton Road project is pretty much in Elliott's front yard.

After investing nearly \$285,000 in the Norton Road proposal, getting the rezoning application to third reading, the process stopped in late 2008.

According to Elliott, it all came down to a high-stakes battle over who would control the development.

"They wanted to control it," he said.

"They" refers to the Islands Trust, the island's land-use authority and the main

source of Elliott's frustration for the multi-year struggle for the Norton Road project.

"With the travelling I do in Canada and the United States and with offices in two provinces, if you and I want to buy a lot and develop it and we go through in accordance with the bylaws and the National Building Code of Canada and signed and sealed drawings by LEEDS architects and our engineers, we get a permit. Period," he said. "There's a formula. It's like baking a cake — but here, no, they want their finger in the cake."

What Elliott perceived as a need for control, Islands Trust trustee George Ehring and former-trustee Peter Lamb perceived as a responsibility to preserve affordability.

Without adequate measures to preserve affordability, the ultimate non-monetary cost to rezone land and offer Elliott the opportunity to benefit from the sale of a 26-unit housing development was simply too high, trustees argued back in 2008.

"If you compute those numbers and it turns out that no teacher, no nurse, no RCMP officer, no extremely well-paid Islands Trust planner could afford to buy a house, then we are sort of barking up the wrong tree," said Ehring in a Driftwood article about the Norton Road predicament back in October 2008. "At some point, I really would like to see the numbers produced that say, 'this is the income, this is the affordability factor and these homes can be built and sold for this number.' That's the thing that is missing."

Trustees eventually decided to have staff work with the applicant to resolve outstanding issues and bring a housing agreement to completion.

The minutes from the Nov. 6, 2008 meeting provide a curt summary of how things turned out:

"Planner Starke spoke to

her report. The applicant was not present. It was unclear how this report will advance a decision and it was determined to defer consideration."

The gap between trustees' interest to ensure affordability and a developer's desire to complete a project on time and on budget are, according to Elliott, a phenomenon unique to the island.

"In a place like Ladner, there's development going on all over the place," he said. "We do a development like the [Norton Road project] and sell it out. Once it's sold it's over. You pay the money, we make a few bucks and we're gone and you're the owner and it's your Goddamn problem."

"You pay your strata fees and that's normal living in most parts of the country."

But not here, he adds.

When questioned about the provincial government's creation of the Islands Trust in 1974 to preserve and protect the islands' unique natural beauty for generations to come — to avoid turning places like Salt Spring and the other Gulf Islands into a mirror image of the Lower Mainland — he said: "This isn't Jasper, Alberta" he said. "Why not protect the people that live here and serve the people that live here?"

"The end result is that you can't build and it forces the prices of existing buildings up. It's the law of supply and demand."

As prices outpace incomes, he said, "We lose the soul of the community, the guts of the island and the passion."

Assessing affordability — according to CMHC

It's crucial to realize that from its inception in 2003, the Norton Road proposal was never intended as a purely market-driven project.

Trustees' decision to rezone seven acres of agricultural land to permit construction of 26 housing units was based largely on assurances these units would help alleviate the island's desperate shortage of non-market housing for islanders.

In Elliott's own words, the project was specifically conceived as a kind of Brinkworthy for the 20-, 30-, and 40-something set.

Based on discussions held as part of the housing agreement negotiations for Norton Road back in 2008, trustees demanded that affordability of the units be consistent with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation standards of affordability.

According to the CMHC's standards in 2008, "an expenditure of 30 per cent or less of gross income on shelter costs is deemed to be affordable."

Shelter costs for homeowners, the CMHC states, include mortgage payments, property taxes, utilities and any strata fees.

Affordability in the Norton Road context required that units be affordable for modest income earners. That means residents with incomes estimated at between 80 and 120 per cent of the 2008 median Salt Spring family income of \$63,817.

Considering those figures, modest income earners of between \$50,000 and \$75,000 would need to spend no more than between \$15,000 and \$22,500 per year on total shelter costs for a Norton Road unit in order for the homes to be considered affordable under the CMHC guidelines and deemed acceptable under the conditions set out by the Islands Trust.

Given that the Norton Road units could have sold for between \$225,000 and \$235,000 (based on the developer's 2010 cost projections), it turns out they would have failed to address their intended recipients.

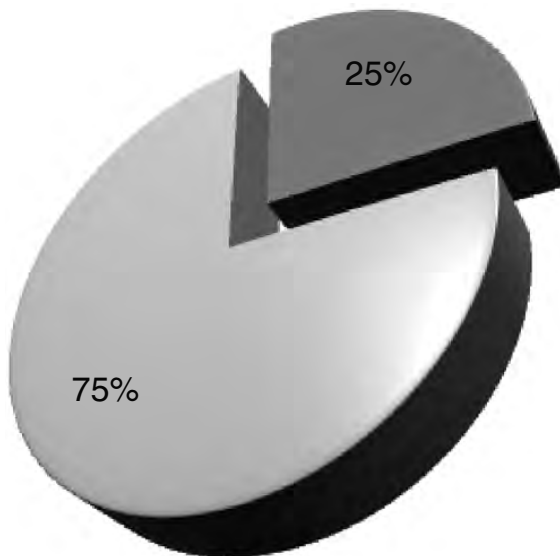
Information made available through a 2004 housing survey and republished in 2009's Phase I of the Islands Trust's Housing Needs Assessment states that only 10 per cent of island renters would qualify for a mortgage of over \$150,000 and only half of those could afford payments on a mortgage of \$180,000.

"Of those who could afford these mortgages, only about half had sufficient funds to make the down-payment," reads the report.

"Given that there is no housing available under \$200,000 [including units proposed in the Norton Road project], it is likely that very few renters will be able to enter the homeownership market in the foreseeable future," the report concludes.

- Could afford to buy
- Could not afford to buy

source: Salt Spring Housing Needs Assessment Phase 1 (2009)



Only 25 per cent of the 604 homeowners questioned as part of the island's 2004 homeowner survey (the most recent available) said they could afford to purchase the home they were currently living in based on current land values.

"A match of housing stock to Salt Spring's current family composition and income profile would yield a median average [affordable] purchase price of \$196,500."

- Salt Spring Housing Needs Assessment Phase 1 (2009)

NEWSBEAT

ISLANDS TRUST

Trust gets climate action plan primer

Salt Spring trustee outlines island actions to reduce GHGs

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD EDITOR

Trustees from other Trust islands were impressed earlier this month after hearing an update about the Salt Spring Climate Action Council and the list of community activities undertaken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in recent years.

"We're a little speck on the planet," said SSCAC chair Christine Torgrimson during a Dec. 8 presentation in Victoria, "but I see us as the little community that could. We're planting trees, making pathways, making sure local products are in stores on the island, building climate-friendly buildings . . . it's a very inspiring and encouraging hub of activity."

Torgrimson reported that Salt Spring had been successful in holding its GHG emissions at 2002 levels, which was a goal of the Salt Spring Energy Strategy, the first island-wide project that focused attention on reducing GHGs locally.

"Transportation was really the key to our early success," she said. "ICBC says we have about 1,000 more light vehicles now than we did in 2002 — meaning hybrids, Smart cars and electrics — and islanders are driving less."

The well-used bus system introduced in 2008 was another contributing factor and GHGs actually dropped slightly between 2007 and 2010, she said.

Torgrimson outlined SSCAC membership, which includes representation from the Islands Trust, Capital Regional District, Salt Spring Transportation Commission, Salt Spring Water Council, Salt Spring Agricultural Alliance, Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce, Island Pathways, Salt Spring Conservancy, Earth Festival Society, Transition Salt Spring and the Institute for Sustainability Education and Action, plus five members at large representing groups such as schools.

"I think this is the kind of partnership that local government can ignite to actually achieve the GHG reduction targets embedded in our official community plans," she said.

Salt Spring's OCP goal is to reduce emissions by 15 per cent by the year 2015, 40 per cent by 2020 and 85 per cent by 2050.

"We know we're at the beginning here," said Torgrimson.

"We have to keep supporting this. It's something that's going to go on for years and years."

Torgrimson said the climate action plan being drafted by the council aims to reduce emissions in areas of transportation, food and agriculture,

"We're planting trees, making pathways, making sure local products are in stores on the island, building climate-friendly buildings . . . it's a very inspiring and encouraging hub of activity."

CHRISTINE TORGRIMSON
Islands Trustee

homes, businesses and institutions, individual and government actions, land use and conservation, and local renewable energy, with the first two areas being most important.

An initial draft of the climate action plan should be done by late January 2011, followed by a "community engagement process" launched in February or March.

Following receipt of broad public input, it's hoped the plan will be completed by April.

HOMELESSNESS

SSICS seeks solutions for onsite campers

Ethical dilemma arises from leniency

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's need for housing is perhaps nowhere as visible as at the very steps of the island's Community Services offices.

A homeless man who's made a camp under the main building's stairs has been joined by at least three other people as staff's unofficial decision to look the other way has produced unintended results.

"It started with one person," said Salt Spring Island Community Services director Rob Grant.

"We knew his context and his situation and were planning around that, but in hindsight, that opened the door."

SSICS' policy is not to allow anyone to stay on site, but that didn't prevent an additional person from erecting a tent on the property last week. Grant said using the existing facilities as the emergency shelter has probably allowed homeless people to view the

grounds as a place to stay.

The situation tends to escalate as more people join in to form a critical mass, Grant said, noting similar problems in Fulford and at the United Church in the past.

"As soon as there's a group, anyone who's walking by there is going to think, 'There's a welcoming place.'"

Staff are sensitive to other Community Services clients and building users, at least one of whom has expressed feeling uncomfortable entering the building with a group

of people smoking and drinking right beneath the stairs.

But on the other hand, social workers working to shelter the homeless aren't in the business of ejecting people with force, either.

"We're not going to turf someone right off the property without knowing where they're going," Grant said.

SSICS staff are currently working on solutions to find better housing options for the colony under the stairs. The person with the tent has found another safe place to camp.

CANADA POST

Christmas holiday packages overwhelm Ganges post office

No candidates in sight for retail outlet

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD

Employees at the Ganges post office are putting a heroic effort into dealing with holiday traffic that may be four times higher than their regular work load.

The season normally amounts to double the volume of mail passing through, according to Lillian Salchner, Canada Post manager of media and community affairs. But the Ganges office is seeing twice that again due to the closing of the retail counter formerly located at Country Grocer.

Salt Spring resident Richard Dick spent three periods of 45 minutes each waiting for service last week. On Wednesday morning there was a line of 10 people before the doors had opened; 10 minutes after opening, the number had increased to 17.

"There's no good time to go," Dick said.

"It's slow all the time there now — you always, always wait."

Salchner said Canada Post continues to look for a retail business as a replacement dealer for Country Gro-

cer, but so far no one has offered to take it on. To alleviate holiday lineups, the company has adjusted staffing to cover peak hours and brought in an additional person for Saturdays.

But Dick believes Canada Post should be doing more to advertise faster methods such as its "mailers" package program, in which special boxes and the postage are paid up front.

"You pay first and then stuff it with as much stuff as you want — it doesn't matter the weight," Dick said.

"You just fill out the slip and drop it in the mail."

Salchner also noted options for simple matters like stamps, which can be bought as singles at Harbour Foods Market and the Vesuvius Café. Books of stamps are available at grocery stores and Pharmasave.

As for rumours that the Fulford post office might close down, Salchner said there are changes to staffing hours coming, but no changes to customer hours.

"Customers will not feel the impact at all," she promised.

Any retail business owner in Ganges interested in applying to be a postal dealer can call Ruby Regts at 604-662-1606, ext. 21511.

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Wishing you all the very best in 2011.

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Opinion



Gold - Best Special Publication - "AQUA - Gulf Islands Living"
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 Gold - Newspaper Promotion Award - "Owner's Manual" / Bronze - Best Overall Newspaper
 Bronze - Best Special Section - "Derrick Lundy Retrospective"
 Bronze - Best Sports Photo - "John Cameron - Slugger"
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 Gold - Best Overall Newspaper / Silver - Best Editorial Page / Silver - Best Front Page
 Silver - Best Special Section - "AQUA Gulf Islands Living"
 Silver - Best In-House Ad Campaign - "Owners' Manual"
 Bronze - Best Community Service - "Residents Card Program"
2010 Canadian Community Newspaper Association Awards



EDITORIAL

Standards of opinion

As a member of the media, the Driftwood will always speak on the side of protecting open debate.

We will also never view publicly expressed criticism of public figures' decisions and behaviour to be a heinous thing, regardless of the issue or individuals in question. Democratic tradition holds that as soon as taxpayers' money is involved in any enterprise, the public has a right to demand accountability for how that money is spent and to question the methods of those doing the spending.

Some people do a better job than others of raising concern about public issues without being hurtful or trying to incite a riot. It's unfortunate that not everyone who chooses to make their views known does so in the most tempered and eloquent of language, whether by choice or due to their skill levels in the communications field.

Then there's the questionable choice of at least

THE ISSUE:

Political discourse

WE SAY:

Personal accountability important

one island resident to criticize local political activities without attaching a name to his or her opinions and to go for the jugular via an anonymous website and by posting a video that portrays Salt Spring trustee George Ehring as Hitler.

This individual's submissions don't meet the community standard of any publication anywhere, so they clearly feel they've had to go it alone and will deal with the personal fall-out when their identity ultimately becomes more widely known.

For a newspaper or other media outlet, it's a balancing act to ensure concerns are not suppressed while also heeding Canada's libel laws and not knowingly perpetrating falsehoods. That does not mean every statement of opinion that is expressed should be backed up by a string of "facts." Ground-truthing an opinion is just not possible — and demands for that kind of standard to be applied before anything is published are ridiculous.

When someone with an opinion expresses it through a news story or a letter to the editor, they're accepting the responsibility that comes with that act by having their name attached. They may face a direct challenge by others both in print or other form of media or on the street, or they may be warmly praised by people of like mind.

The Driftwood is happy to provide that forum, for better or for worse, with the identities of contributors clearly shown and both vulnerable and accountable to the entire community.



Community healing, one person at a time

BY WAYNE FRASER

Consider the following scenario: A crime is committed resulting in criminal charges being laid. The offender must pay the penalty society deems appropriate.

Often the penalty is jail time, fines, or some combination of the two, and a criminal record that can restrict their freedom indefinitely. Once in the legal system, the youth or adult offender's life is changed.

As a result of this "due process" of law, what learning experience does the offender get?

Jails are often viewed as training grounds for further crime.

What about the victim, who is often left angry and traumatized? Will they ever feel safe again?

What has due process done for our communities? Increasingly overcrowded jails and severely backlogged court rooms do not reflect well on our current justice system.

Local police are often the ones taken to task for not ridding the streets of drug dealers and crime, yet they are kept busy re-arresting the same folks repeatedly only to have them back on the streets because our legal system deems it too expensive to prosecute and/or trials can take years to make it to the docket.

Now imagine living in a community where volunteers facilitate meetings between offenders and those they have harmed. Offenders meet face to face with their victims, explaining why and how they committed their offence.

Victims get to ask why: Why me? Why did you do this terrible thing?

Both parties provide a thorough sharing of consequences

VIEWPOINT

suffered as a result of the offence, and finally they agree on a plan for the offender to repair the damage done to the victim.

When the reparation is completed the issue is brought to an end. This is a process of healing and positive growth for all involved.

Restorative Justice is not about "going easy" on offenders.

There is nothing easy about sitting down with someone you have harmed, making amends in front of your peers, discussing the unintended consequences of your actions, then agreeing on a plan to make things right.

I challenge anyone who has caused harm to others to voluntarily go through this process.

In fact, would it not be refreshing if we all did this when mistakes are made? Restorative Justice is about community healing one person at a time.

The Salt Spring Restorative Justice Program provides such a service and has been doing so since 1998.

The majority of our cases are referred from the police when both the victim and offender voluntarily agree to this alternative process. Referrals also come from the schools and citizens at large.

If you would like to participate in the Salt Spring Restorative Justice Program, please contact us at tossy@telus.net, Wayne Fraser, 250-537-4953; Mary Richardson, 250-537-8707, or Robert Campsall, 250-537-1066.

The writer is a SSI Restorative Justice volunteer.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

Should dogs be banned from Portlock Park?

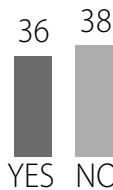
Yes No

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Monday at midnight or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 4:30 p.m.

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Do islands trustees deserve higher pay?



Driftwood

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Peter McCully
PUBLISHER
sales@gulfislands.net



Gail Sjuberg
MANAGING EDITOR
news@gulfislands.net



Lorraine Sullivan
PRODUCTION MANAGER
production@gulfislands.net



Eva Kuhn
OFFICE MANAGER
ekuhn@gulfislands.net



Claudia French
CIRCULATION
cfrench@gulfislands.net

President: Frank Richards **Editorial:** Sean McIntyre, Susan Lundy, Derrick Lundy, Elizabeth Nolan, Amy Geddes
Production: Kaye Segge, Amy Geddes **Advertising:** Rick MacKinnon, Karen Hepp, Kim Young, Erin Jory
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IslandVoices

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"Taxation is totally crippling . . . We need to get together and discuss the economics of the village."

MARY GILLIES, FIRE TRUSTEE + BUSINESS OWNER

SALT SPRING SAYS

We asked: What puts you in the Christmas spirit?

**TAI WHELON**

Snow (if there is any).

**LIAM JOHNSTON**

Nothing.

**DEIRDRE TESSMANN**

Smelling cut greenery. It makes me feel like a kid again.

**(BANANA) JOE CLEMENTE**

Looking through palm fronds at the ocean and knowing we're going to have a green Christmas.

**JACOB MULDER**

Egg nog really puts me in the Christmas spirit.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor are welcome, but writers are requested to keep their submissions to 350 words or less. Letters may be edited for brevity, legality and taste. Writers are also asked to furnish a telephone number where they may be reached during the day, and to sign their letters with their full name. Thank you letters will not normally be considered for publication. **Read and reply to letters online at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com under the Opinion tab.**

Democracy at risk

Salt Spring: we have a problem.

Civil discourse in our community is under siege. The recent growth of angry personal attacks threatens to destroy the commonality that connects us all as islanders.

Over many months, we have been subjected to increasingly inflammatory rhetoric whether in Tea Party rallies, web postings or newspaper diatribes.

Until a few days ago, the Islanders for Self-Government website had links to an anti-Trust Nazi video posted in two different places on their site. This video had been linked on the ISG site (by two separate posters promoting the video) for some time.

The ISG web manager(s) may not have initiated these posts but, if that is the case, they did fail to monitor their very active site allowing these links to appear for over a week.

The Nazi video not only personally attacks trustees, but Salt Spring's own official community plan, land use bylaw, the Salt Spring Conservancy, various individuals who have written in support of the Trust, Robert Bateman, etc.

The hate-filled dialogue is peppered with the obscene "f" word, total falsehoods and even has a statement referencing a death threat i.e. calling for a Bowen councillor's "head on a pike."

This is hardly a debate about forms of governance! Such venomous rants are injecting a dangerous toxicity into the human fabric of our community. Allow-

ing vicious personal attacks and ridicule as a method of addressing differences of opinion stifles reasoned debate.

Many of our neighbours will no longer speak at meetings nor write letters in fear of being personally vilified.

We may disagree with a specific decision of our elected representatives, but to subject them to hostile, personal abuse puts our very democracy at risk.

Can our community survive in a mob mentality that promotes bullying and seems to be envisioning governance by intimidation?

Salt Spring: we have a problem. It is time we raise the level of public debate and restore respectful, fact-based, solution-oriented comments from individuals, groups and definitely

members of the print and web media. Our community would be far better served.

SHARON MCCOLLOUGH,
SALT SPRING

Bitter debate

There is a politically motivated YouTube video making the email rounds on the island. You could say it has gone viral based on the number of hits to the website the last few days.

At first viewing the video does what it was intended to do . . . make you laugh at George Ehring. Then for me, it made me think just how inappropriate this kind of humour is.

As a former islands trustee, I have been the brunt of many political attacks and jokes and gawd knows what else. I have stood in George's shoes, so to speak.

As a political attack, I

think this video crosses a line. It goes too far. No matter how much you may disagree with George and his politics, or how much you dislike him . . . no politician deserves to be attacked in such a way. Not even George.

Think about it . . . would you run for local politics to fill one of the three positions we have if you felt you would be attacked in such a manner?

There will be an election in less than a year and, as a community, we are going to want credible and hard-working candidates to put their names forward to run.

Do you think anyone is going to consider running for office if they are going to be made the brunt of these types of nasty political jokes?

I have been experiencing

some disillusionment with Salt Spring Island lately, particularly over our inability as a community to come together over the topic of governance.

We are adults, many of us have university educations, professional careers and we care . . . yet some of us choose to act like school yard bullies and thugs.

Why can't we talk about governance without attacking one another? What are we so afraid of?

There is a saying that "the truth will set you free" . . . maybe we need to stop squabbling and get to work on seeking this truth so our community can be set free from this bitter debate that is tearing our community apart at the seams.

KIMBERLY LINEGER,
FORMER SS TRUSTEE

MORE LETTERS continued on A10

Double-lined insulated chimneys one of Santa's problems

#1 Arctic Way
North Pole.

Hi kids on Salt Spring,

This is Santa writing. I realize how unusual it is to be reading a letter from Santa at this time of the season. In the past, it has been you sending me thousands of cards and letters assuring me of how good you have been all year, and reminding me of a few things you would like me to drop off at your house on the night of Christmas Eve.

Well kids, it's been a tough year at the North Pole. The worldwide economic slump has had its trickle-down effect right here in the frozen tundra, and even Santa has had to cinch in his belt a couple of notches (no easy task, let me tell you). To make matters worse, the hole in the ozone layer, as well as the rise of ocean levels from the melting icebergs (due to global warming), has caused severe flooding in Santa's workshop. We may have to relocate to higher ground, like Mount Everest!

As you can well imagine, the resulting working conditions have created quite a bit of resentment and unrest among the elves. I have had to deal with incessant job action such as assembly line slowdowns and "work to rule" study sessions from Local #8959 of the Elves Union. Now with just a few more hours to go before departure, they are demanding to be paid shift benefits and overtime. Whatever happened to the good old days?

As if the elf issues weren't bad enough, I also find myself having to deal with inquiries

from the SPCA regarding my treatment of the reindeer. How was I to know there were regulations in place all along requiring me to licence them and supply them with identification tags? Apparently, I have also been negligent in keeping up their veterinary shots and vaccinations. As it turns out, not only has Rudolph been flying for years without a permit, but most of the time he has actually been doing his behind-the-scenes work for me while out of season! And now the Arctic Trust is piling on old Santa by insisting that I have to bring my sleigh into the Inspection Station to make sure it meets all the safety and emission standards. Heck, it may be a "beater" sleigh, but it still gets Santa around.

As if I didn't have enough problems already, Mrs. Claus has really been on my case lately on account of my more than ample waistline (I guess the belt tightening only makes it look worse). She wants me to drop 30 pounds and stay away from the milk and cookies that you kindly leave for me when I visit your house on the night before Christmas. She may have a point as recent changes to the building code on Salt Spring are now enforcing double-lined insulated chimneys which are making it harder and harder for me to squeeze my way down with my bag of presents. And getting back up is a killer!

As I said earlier, we have been having

**Shilo Zylbergold**

NOBODY ASKED ME BUT

great difficulty keeping up with your demand for toys and playthings. Even if the elves don't go on strike, we may all have to "suck it in a bit" and you may have to settle for a little less from Santa than you expected. Luckily, the workshop has become overstocked with

several items that have been discontinued over the years and we would love to eliminate . . . er . . . donate these items to your toy collection.

We've got dumpsters and dumpsters full of dolls that are past their prime. Perhaps some of you may be willing to give up your hopes for a Malibu Barbie Glam House and instead enjoy hours of retro-fun with a 1950ish "Chatty Cathy" (pull the string on her back and she says things like "I like Ike"). Or maybe you wouldn't mind having a "Betsy Wetsy" doll (she cries real tears if you don't make her your Facebook friend). Then there is "Tressie" (push her belly button and watch her hair grow) — she could really use a leg waxing by now.

I'll tell you what kids, because you've been so nice and not naughty all year, old St. Nick is going to throw in some Cabbage Patch Kids, Tickle Me Elmos and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles on the condition that you take a couple of Pee&Poo Plush Dolls as well (they've been mouldering away in the workshop for a few seasons and they simply MUST go! Although from the smell

in there, it seems some of them must have "gone" already!)

I have to admit, kids, that I've been feeling a little depressed after reading through many of the requests you've been making of me. Everybody, it seems, is only interested in getting stuff for themselves. Every letter is full of "me, me, ME." Even all the electronic toys are all about the same theme: iPods, iPhones, iMacs, iPads, etc. What about thinking in terms of the word "us"? The other day I got a little hopeful when Mrs. Claus informed me that we were starting to get a whole bunch of kids using the word "we" in their letters. Imagine my disappointment when I learned that they were actually asking for the new Nintendo "Wii" console for playing their electronic games.

Nobody asked Santa, but why do all these games have to be so violent and full of death and destruction? It doesn't seem to matter whether you're on Xbox, Game Cube or Play Station, the games have names like ThrillKill, Total Carnage, Carmageddon or the ridiculously popular World of Warcraft from Blizzard Entertainment. Whatever happened to peace and good will? I suppose a video game called "Joy to the World 3" isn't likely to make a huge dent in the gaming market.

Well, that's about all I have to say for now, kids. I have to get back to making my list and checking it twice. Remember this: Christmas is not so much about what you get as what you get rid of. Ho, ho, ho.

Signed, S. Claus

Xmas

2 FOR 1 SALE
Nov. 30th - Dec. 31st

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OPINION

MORE LETTERS
continued from A9

Work together

It is very unfortunate that an attempt to stifle a recent town hall meeting sponsored by Islanders for Self-Government has created a response such as the nasty and inflammatory "Ehring Bunker" video that has been circulating around Salt Spring Island as of late.

Islanders for Self-Government does not condone this kind of personal attack. More importantly, ISG had no part in creating this video.

It is the mandate of ISG to gather and present as much information as possible to educate the people of Salt Spring as to what would be involved to establish a municipal government that includes the Islands

Trust and operates under its mandate.

It is time for Islanders for Self-Government and the Islands Trust to work together for the future of this island.

KEN MARR,
FOR ISG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Overdue mandate

In response to Peter Lamb's letter of last week, it is unfortunate that it was deemed necessary to legislate a code of ethical conduct between elected officials of the Islands Trust.

Nevertheless, it demonstrates perfectly the need to pass an equally seemingly ridiculous resolution: That the elected officials demonstrate an ethical code of conduct, including "respect and courtesy," not only to themselves, but towards the general Islands' public. It is obvious from Lamb's dismay at the negative press that this mandate is long overdue.

JAQUALINE ROUSSIN,
RAINBOW ROAD

Money lure

I would like to put a word in edgewise on the "truth" du jour, it being that we will, in the not too distant future, get better trustees than we now get because, willy nilly, we will pay them more. (Dec. 15 "Value for money" Driftwood editorial.)

The higher pay-scale was voted in by the current trustees in a show of selfishness and resolve to improve the quality of the breed.

More pay may attract those who would do it for money. But less pay leaves the field to those who would do it because they care about

islands and islanders. If for one have a strong preference for those who do it for pleasure over those who would do it for money.

TOM VARZELIOTIS,
BOOTH CANAL

Outrageous portrayals

It looks like quite a few people are under the impression that our trustees, perhaps the Islands Trust in general, is not as democratic as it should be.

There may be some legitimate reasons for such concerns, but recent portrayals of our Trust government as anti-democratic have gotten pretty outrageous.

For instance, the editorial of Dec. 8 argues that both the politicians who object to the Wikileaks disclosures and George Ehring frown upon dissent and would reduce the political process to little more than a public relations campaign.

Woah! Comparing George Ehring's proposed amendment to the "standards of conduct" for trustees to the way in which some politicians are lashing out in the wake of the Wikileaks disclosure is going too far. It would take pages to fully explain why that comparison is unwarranted; suffice it to say that calls for assassinating those responsible for Wikileaks are not comparable to what George Ehring was attempting to accomplish with his proposal.

As the Driftwood's Dec. 15 editorial points out, our trustees are working under "relentless public pressure." Some of that pressure is downright nasty, as

many islanders know. I feel we are very lucky to have trustees of the calibre of Christine Torgimson and George Ehring willing to take on the job, in the face of such nastiness.

By the way, if people would like to express their solidarity for the 22-year-old private, Bradley Manning, whoseincebeingaccused of leaking documents to Wikileaks is being held under conditions qualified as "cruel and inhumane," check out the Courage to Resist website or contact me for more information.

JAN SLAKOV,
SALT SPRING

Angry years

Recently, I came across a clipping from a July 24, 1966 article by Bea Hamilton in Victoria's Islander magazine called "Salt Spring Island's Angry 10 Years," describing the turbulent decade of incorporation from 1873 to 1883 when the island was, according to Hamilton, "run by a council of seven men, (it was the men who started all this so the ladies can relax.)"

In the context of the latest angry cycle of whether to incorporate (incorporation was proposed and defeated again in 1966) it is a useful exercise to go back and revisit Hamilton's lively accounts of why "those days were the worst that the island has ever been through" and why islanders ended up begging the province to annul the legislation that had established the short-lived municipality of Salt Spring in 1883.

Here direct from the past . . . and if this historical account sounds a little familiar, take comfort from the fact that history always repeats itself.

"Salt Spring Island was booming according to references and with all the prosperity, several of the more ambitious settlers began to agitate for unification of the island under a municipal council. No one had any coherent plans but everyone had his own idea . . . A handful of men now got busy, got signatures to a petition asking for incorporation of the island and finally got themselves, the government and the whole of the island into civic disputes of violent proportions . . . It seemed that as incorporation came in, goodwill and the peaceful tenor of the island flew out. A radical division appeared between residents which boiled into furious arguments . . . The climax came when the hardworking farmers discovered the councillors had incurred a debt of \$300 — a huge sum in those days — and the burden of paying this off fell on the shoulders of the people. The only

comparatively calm people seem to have been the seven councillors who were sitting pretty in their office . . . From oldtimers memory, those 10 years were something like living on the edge of an active volcano . . . Hard words, followed by harder fists, at times flew across the island."

Hamilton goes on to cite a litany of disputes, including allegations of fraud during municipal elections, petitions and counter petitions, assault, violations against the Municipal Act until finally on "May 12, 1883, the Corporation of the Township of Salt Spring Island was dissolved. From then on, Salt Spring Island was back to normal."

Shopping local

About the expansion of Mark's Work Warehouse — I read Jonathan Yardley's Dec. 8 Viewpoint defence of his client, Mr. Aptekmann, and his decision to expand his business.

I understand that Mr. A. has done everything legally and that he has the right to expand. We all have rights to do lots of things we often choose not to do. For instance, I have always chosen to "shop locally" wherever I have lived and I do it diligently on Salt Spring, even when inconvenient.

Mr. Aptekmann just happens to own a piece of property that I call "The Face of Salt Spring." When newcomers arrive at the Saturday market, the shops across the street are the first they see and the shops they have seen over the years are alluring and charming. Now they will see a store they can see anywhere, Mark's. That, to me, does not represent Salt Spring, it represents corporate Canada.

If Mr. A. needs office space, why not locate it behind the building and leave space for real Salt Spring businesses in the front? He must know how difficult it is for small Salt Spring businesses to find space. His decision to ignore the strong opposition to his plan indicates to me a man who values his business more than his community.

I ran a business for 30 years. I know the temptations between business and community. So Mr. A. has made his choice and I have made mine. Normally at this time of year I buy lots of clothes for my family at Mark's but no more. I no longer consider Mark's as a local business and I shop locally. What next, the parent company, Canadian Tire?

LEEZEE PORTER,
SALT SPRING

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SUNDAY Closed Dec. 26	MONDAY Closed Dec. 27	TUESDAY Open Dec. 28	WEDNESDAY Open Dec. 29	THURSDAY Open Dec. 30	FRIDAY Open Jan. 31	SATURDAY Closed Jan. 1
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holiday Gift Guide

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 IN SALT SPRING CURRENCY

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Go up Rainbow Rd turn left on Juniper and turns into Spring Gold Way. Sign on left side.

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Winners announced in the Driftwood of Dec 29th.

First Prize - \$250 | Second Prize \$150 | Third Prize - \$100
IN SALT SPRING CURRENCY



OPINION



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

CLUB CALENDAR:

From left, Kaya Hunter, Alex Vick and Becky Mason sell copies of the Salt Spring Pony Club's calendar.

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MORE LETTERS

continued from A10

Veggie options

The Dec. 10 Weekender article about what to make for Christmas dinner was extraordinarily meat focused.

I agree with Bruce Wood that tofu turkey is an aberration of nature. However, here are a few vegetarian and vegan ideas: walnut balls or loaf with rosemary gravy; garlic mashed potatoes; cabbage braised with walnut oil, fennel, garlic, white wine vinegar and hazelnuts; steamed Brussels sprouts with nutmeg sauce and an alarming amount of butter; a bit of Moonstruck cheese; Heather's bread and veggie pate; winter beer with ginger, nutmeg and vanilla; gingerbread cake with lemon sauce. Cheers!

WENDI GILSON,
SALT SPRING

Thou shalt not steal

Last summer I was caught shoplifting at the Country Grocer. I know times are tough and Christmas is right around the corner, but I encourage you not to steal. You will only harm yourself and the retailer.

My hope is that my issue will be resolved, and I can once again be a customer.

There are resources for food

and meals on the island. You can contact Community Services. There are also ways to budget and stretch supplies.

I am truly sorry for what I did and I wish no one else to have the experience. I want to thank all who have met with me concerning this matter.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and the freedom to shop legitimately.

NAME WITHHELD AS PART OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM

Support for local charities

As the year winds down, I want to thank all those who have contributed to the library's 2010 Annual Giving Campaign. We are now close to being able to fund all the initiatives for which we requested community assistance though, frankly, a few more gifts are still needed.

But whether it's ArtSpring, the conservancy, Lady Minto, the library or any one of the many other deserving Salt Spring charities to which you personally relate, now is the time to help that organization. These are difficult financial times for many of our neighbours, but that's all the more reason that those of us who can make an extra effort to help do just that before the end of the year.

STAN SHAPIRO, CHAIR
LIBRARY ANNUAL GIVING

Gross insult

The worst aspect of the infamous Nazi video making the rounds, previously linked from the Islanders for Self-Government website and now removed (after how many days?), is not its attacks on me personally, nor on other supporters of the Islands Trust. It is the fact that it debases and belittles the horrible experience of the real victims of the Nazis.

The Nazis began by publicly humiliating German Jews and stealing all their property. They wrote the Nuremberg Laws to sanction state discrimination against them. They ghettoized the Jews, horribly tormented them, and starved them to death in work camps. Finally, of course, they engaged in a hideous genocidal campaign to exterminate all European Jews and managed to murder six million innocent people. At the same time, they also went after intellectuals, communists, Roma peoples and homosexuals.

To compare, in any possible way, Salt Spring's political scene with the reality of that experience is mind-numbingly stupid and a gross insult to the victims of the Holocaust and their descendants.

In truth, the video says little about me, and lots about its creator and the people who think it's clever.

GEORGE EHRLING,
SALT SPRING TRUSTEE

RANTS and Roses

From Debbie and all the staff at the Ganges post office — thanks to everyone for their patience and understanding in recent weeks, and a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

A carload full of exquisitely fragrant Salt Spring roses to Richard Murakami and his crew for your helping hands, professional expertise, kind hearts and generous spirit at a time of distress. This is the second time you have bailed me out of car trouble at short notice. Others might take advantage of the situation, but not you, Richard. You are an island treasure. With deep gratitude, Ursula Livingston

A bouquet of purple baby roses, children's daisies and YA lilies to Sue King. Fables Cottage will be sorely missed. We wish you health and happiness. The YA Book Club

Christmas roses to all who attended the community caroling Carols for Christmastide at All Saints' Church. You raised \$355

for the food bank! Many thanks.

A huge tropical bouquet for Louise who was kind enough to give me half her book of stamps so I wouldn't have to wait in a huge line-up at the post office. You saved me a lot of time and your generosity was greatly appreciated. Have a Merry Christmas! Banana Joe

To the ambulance and crew and first responder Bruce Patterson, a big bouquet of thanks for taking care of me during that snowing early morning of Nov. 20 at the south end. Merry Christmas to all.

Dog Father's of Fulford Harbour would like to thank everyone for their support and donations during Merry Monday. We would like to let everyone know as an island and a community that we were able to raise \$671 through hot dogs for donations.

Origami roses to the patrons of Admiral's Specialty Foods. Many of you have purchased the Admiral's shopping bags that contribute to the Pamela Booth

Culinary Arts Scholarship. What a souvenir of a store that's been bringing fine, "special" food to the island . . . and, what a loving memory of the Sushi Queen, Pamela.

Oink! Bruce! Sorry I ran away on Friday night but I was afraid you would turn me into crunchy Alberta bacon. I shall return ASAP Pig E. Bank

A roadside hedge of wild roses for Peter of Windsor Plywood and the Home Hardware staff, who were so helpful when our pipes froze and broke in November's power outage and cold spell. They managed to locate and obtain the no longer common plumbing materials needed for the repair. Service like that is why we like to shop on island. Tom and Annie

To the turkey man at Ruckle Park: Please accept my apologies for the mix-up. I thought the turkeys were self-serve. I left \$30 at the farm stand. Sorry.

MORE R&R continued on A17



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Keep Smiling...

Thoughts & News

from Dr. Richard Hayden

Keeping your teeth for a lifetime.

I saw an elderly lady the other day who had spent a lot of time, effort and money over her life to keep her teeth. She was now getting cavities in spite of her very good care. What was going on?

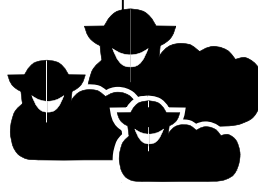
As we get older we tend to have less saliva to keep food moving. We also tend to have gingival recession which means that the roots of teeth become exposed. The root surfaces are far more prone to decay than the enamel covered parts of the teeth.

Sometimes we get less dextrous and are not as able to clean our teeth as effectively.

Some solutions that might help are... Drink lots of water particularly after eating. Have regular hygiene appointments with your dentist. Use a fluoride mouth rinse.

For the lady I mentioned earlier we made a custom fluoride tray and showed her how to use it at home. She will hopefully have her teeth for a lifetime.

Please talk to your dentist about strategies for preventing tooth decay as we get "less young."



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*Best wishes
for Christmas*

Tom Varzeliotis
www.alcy.ca

OPINION

Community: knit it together or rip it apart?

BY CHRISTINE
TORGRIMSON

Raised in a lively small community, I've long been aware of the challenge of serving as an elected official in a rural place. It has been a rude awakening, however, to actually sit in that hot seat on Salt Spring.

One of the most frequent comments I hear is "I don't know how you can endure the kind of abuse that trustees get on Salt Spring." What a sad commentary on our community.

Our sole community newspaper, the Driftwood plays a central role in the island conversation, and it isn't always constructive. News articles, columns, letters and editorials —

INDEPTH

sometimes incomplete, slanted or inflammatory — provide fodder for shocking personal attacks posted on the community website and e-mail list, as well as nasty gossip. I've chosen largely to stay out of the fray, but think it's irresponsible to remain silent, because of the increasingly vicious discourse and the misinformation going viral on the internet.

Particularly appalling this past week was a disgusting and profane "Nazi" video attack on trustee George Ehring, also maligning me and other community members, which was accessed by two links posted by individuals on the Islanders for Self Government website.

ISG now disavows the video as "nasty and inflammatory," but they chose neither to publicly distance themselves from the person who posted this hateful trash and thought it was funny, or the coward who created the video, which remains on the internet.

A recent Driftwood editorial added fuel to the conflict over governance. That divisive editorial unfortunately suggested that "half our island's population" has a "top priority" of

"ensuring their luxurious lifestyles are kept intact."

And in the Dec. 15 Driftwood, the editor printed a letter from Norbert Schlenker that demands correction. The Driftwood continues to tarnish its reputation by publishing personal allegations without confirming their accuracy.

Mr. Schlenker says that I recently "tried to dissuade Peter Frinton and Alison Morse from speaking to anyone on Salt Spring." Had anyone bothered to check the facts, they would have found that I have had absolutely no written or verbal communication with Bowen trustee and municipal councillor Alison Morse about her recent appearance here.

And my recent communications with Bowen municipal councillor Peter Frinton were initiated by him. They included a brief and respectful explanation of my concerns about his participation in a program sponsored by a group decidedly on one side of a conflict-ridden community issue. It's quite an exaggeration to claim that I tried to dissuade Mr. Frinton from speaking to "anyone" on Salt Spring.

Mr. Schlenker also twists the truth when he says the "trustees voted

to shut people up and keep their electorate in the dark" by supporting a recent Trust Council resolution. That resolution simply encourages trustees to "consult" with fellow trustees before diving into community conversations outside their local Trust area. It merely provides non-binding, sensible communications guidance, and was supported by the two Bowen trustees.

Some tend to forget or don't understand that Salt Spring is one of 13 local Trust areas, with 26 trustees working side by side quarterly to govern Trust-wide land-use matters. Our collegiality and mutual respect support effective governance of our islands' community. To encourage respectful communication is hardly an effort "to muzzle off-islanders" and "disrespect... free speech," as Mr. Schlenker claims.

I am saddened by the growing rancour about the form of governance in our community, which unfortunately too often descends into poisonous communications and personal attacks.

I remain disappointed that the province did not support the governance review requested by Salt Spring's three elected community leaders. The ministry firmly told us twice that

they would not fund or support a study in this term. We had worked diligently to design a problem-solving process to engage the community in a constructive dialogue to help settle entrenched conflicts. The ministry even told us not to finance our own study, as they would not consider it legitimate.

The trustees consequently turned our full attention to and are now completely immersed in other important community business — affordable housing, industrial lands, potable water, climate change, land use planning applications, farming and food issues, development permit areas and other matters. As a Driftwood editorial reported last week, we each work more than full-time at this all-consuming job.

During this holiday season, I hope we will all reflect on our words and actions of the past year and consider how they have affected our community well-being. Let's resolve to have more perspective about the intensity of our judgments and quality of our interactions. It's a small island, and we can choose to knit our community together or continue to rip it apart.

The writer is an islands trustee.

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Pipeline proponents see smooth sailing

BY CHRIS GENOVALI
AND MISTY MACDUFFEE

This past week, Saanich-Gulf Islands MP Gary Lunn asserted that professionals should be left to decide on tanker routes for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project. We wonder if Gary Lunn's concern extends to Enbridge or is it just limited to the official opposition?

This past week also saw Enbridge CEO Pat Daniel confidently state that his company's pipeline and oil tanker scheme "will get the green light from Canada's regulatory authorities." It would appear Daniel either has a crystal ball or has insider information that the fix is in at the National Energy Board to approve the Northern Gateway.

It is astonishing that Enbridge would boldly predict victory in the regulatory process when the NEB's Joint Review Panel for Northern Gateway hasn't fully commenced. It not only smacks of arrogance, but reveals a profound disrespect for the public interveners in the JRP, who are operating under the assumption that their concerns will be legitimately examined in the federal hearing. It does, however, substantiate the apprehension of many British Columbians who view the review process with a jaundiced eye. That cynicism will likely intensify as a result of Daniel's braggadocio.

While Lunn argues that "decisions on the safety of supertankers transporting oil through BC's northern waterways" should be

left to some vague, undefined cadre of "professionals," professional scientists at Raincoast Conservation Foundation have been analyzing the risk associated with Northern Gateway, producing a comprehensive report (What's at Stake: the cost of oil on British Columbia's priceless coast) that is available for download on the Raincoast website.

The marine approaches to the coast of northern B.C. and the port of Kitimat are a dangerous coastline for ships. This area is at least as dangerous as Prince William Sound, where the Exxon Valdez hit Bligh Reef in Valdez Arm. An estimated 225 supertankers per year would enter Kitimat to load approximately 318 million litres of oil for shipment to American and Asian markets.

More than 400,000 vessel movements occur annually on the B.C. coast, so it is not surprising that accidents, including collisions, groundings and fires are common.

Should an accident occur off the B.C. coast involving a large ship, serious inadequacies in response capabilities would hinder rescue and containment operations. The south coast, for example, relies heavily on the availability of American rescue tugs based out of Washington state to respond to incidents. Procedures between the B.C. government and the federal government to coordinate responses to large vessel incidents are not well harmonized.

A November article by Post-media News revealed that according to an internal audit "The Canadian Coast Guard lacks the training, equipment and management systems to fulfill its duties to respond to offshore pollution incidents such as oil spills... The audit paints an alarming picture of an agency that would play a key role in Canada's response to a major oil spill off the world's longest coastline." The article also identifies the relatively paltry budget of \$9.8 million for the coast guard's environmental response unit.

Economists have tried to predict the costs of oil spill cleanup. Globally, the cost to industry for spill cleanup averages \$16,000 US per tonne not including the costs to restore habitat or repair socio-economic damages to the communities impacted.

In 2003, the cost of cleaning up a 378,000-litre heavy fuel oil spill in San Francisco Bay was an estimated \$93 million.

The Exxon Valdez spill was the most expensive in history; the true costs were estimated to be \$9.5 billion, of which only \$2.5 billion were related to clean-up. While Exxon-Mobil paid more than \$1 billion, U.S. taxpayers ended up footing the bill for the rest.

Chris Genovali is executive director of Raincoast Conservation Foundation. Misty MacDuffee is a conservation biologist with Raincoast.

NEWSBEAT

DONATION

PFLAG builds gay, lesbian resources

Library donation includes new books, DVDs

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

People on Salt Spring will find a great deal more information on gay, lesbian and transgender issues at the local library with a generous new donation from PFLAG.

Salt Spring's group for Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays has spent most of 2010 building up a collection of books and DVDs that address what it's like to have a nontraditional sexual or gender orientation. They officially presented the collection to the library on Monday morning.

The resources were funded by a grant of \$1,500 from the Salt Spring Foundation awarded at the end of last year. PFLAG was happy to share the benefits with the larger community rather than keeping them confined to the group, member Jill Simpson said.

"We thought the best way to get it out there and to give everybody access to the informa-



PHOTO BY CLORISA SIMPSON

From left, Brigitte Peter-Cherneff and Karen Hudson from the library, and Jill Simpson, Wendy Judith Cutler and Bill Turner of PFLAG with some of the books donated to the library by PFLAG thanks to a Salt Spring Foundation grant.

tion was to put it in the library," she said.

"We approached the library and they were only too thrilled to take them."

The resources were carefully selected to meet a broad cross-section of issues and age ranges. There are picture books for kids, including the lovely fairy tale King and King, which tells the story of whom the prince finally decides to marry. Pinky and Rex and the Bully is

a "ready to read" chapter book about a boy whose favourite colour is pink.

Other titles include novels for teens and adults, books of essays on what it's like to be gay, and resources for transgender people, children of gay and lesbian parents, and parents of gay and lesbian children.

"We made an effort to be balanced and make sure all the areas and ages were covered,"

Simpson observed.

PFLAG has also been able to provide a DVD package to Gulf Islands Secondary School through an outreach program called Out in the Schools. Simpson said the GISS group Gay Straight Alliance has arranged for the Vancouver-based program to come and speak to Grade 10 students several times. The PFLAG donation will make the information available there permanently.

In other positive news for the group, Simpson said PFLAG has continued to build its membership over the past year and now has a private meeting place, which makes people feel comfortable.

"We've increased the numbers at meetings. That's encouraging — but we'd still like to have more parents feel comfortable in coming," Simpson said.

"We always have the goal of building our membership, and not just parents but youth as well, that might be having a time of it."

For more information about meetings, email pflagssi@live.com.

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RANTS and Roses

MORE R&R

continued from A15

A huge bouquet of "brand new" roses to all the thoughtful people who bring us all those yummy baked goods and treats throughout the year and especially as we near Christmas. It is truly appreciated. The staff at the Recycling Depot

A huge bundle of mistletoe to Tim and John of Island Star Video for their terrific community spirit and generosity. Thank you both for the warm fire, excellent hot chocolate — complete with marshmallows and holiday cookies — in honour of the first annual Viva Voce Christmas choir outdoor caroling event. What a pleasant treat for the choir, Santa and all of the "late" downtown shoppers. You guys rock!

A tub of colourful inflated water lilies to pool manager and swim teacher Jim Raddysh, who nurtured my grandson's confidence and courage with a magical combination of patience, kindness and silliness. "Child honouring" in action.

A big bunch of Christmas roses to all the wonderful volunteers who make Thursday lunch for seniors at Seniors possible. Have a happy Christmas and stay well. You are needed. Thanks also to Country Grocer for all their help. Joan Dennis

A bouquet of poinsettias to my neighbours, especially Gail and Melinda, the ambulance drivers, Lady Minto emergency room staff for their help last week. Also thanks to Santa for a white Teddy bear and cookies. Marilyn

A sleigh full of roses for Country Grocer for their donation of food to the middle school store. Have a good Merry Christmas.

To the Salt Spring Folk Club and all the

folks attending Monday, Dec. 13's event, heartfelt copper roses. How warm and welcoming you are and how beautiful is Fulford Hall. And thank you for all your generosity. From the folks at Copper Kettle Community Partnership

Roses to Lady Minto Hospital for finding my hearing aid and returning it. Dick

Special fragrant roses from the Apple Festival to our great volunteers making up The Apple Team. They are so helpful, knowledgeable and enthusiastic during the Apple Festival. Visitors marvel at the special treatment that they receive from our volunteers and are caught up in their apple enthusiasm. As Valdy says in one of his songs, "Can't get this train over the mountain without you." Thank you.

Red fragrant roses to Country Grocer for continuing (in an even better fashion) the cash register tape redemption program that is such a financial help to many charities on the island. Pink fragrant roses to all those customers giving to Beaver Point Hall (#63) and Fulford Hall (#11). Yellow fragrant roses to everyone who donates to any charity on Salt Spring.

An enormous bunch of assorted roses — healthy, fit and trim — for Leslie Wiens, personal trainer extraordinaire at North End Fitness. They are being sent by one of her clients, now approaching 77 but feeling far healthier than when she started training with her some years ago. You can exercise at home or at a gym without a trainer but there is no substitute for a customized program and continuous personal attention. Although most of those who use Leslie's services are considerably younger, I would urge more of my fellow seniors to make use of a personal trainer. After all, isn't it quality of life and not just longevity that we are after?



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There's been lots of folks who have come and gone in that time, and we actually tried to figure it out - but realized Claudia was the only one who would be able to compile the names.

Claudia - you are known and loved by countless numbers of Islanders.

So after December 30th, enjoy a break from your full time duties, and we'll see you again at vacation time, when you give us a hand at the front counter!

- Your fellow Driftwoodians.

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7:50 pm	9:00 pm

Gulf Islands secondary school basketball

upcoming schedule of events

• **Thursday, Dec 30 - ALUMNI GAMES 10:00 to 4:00**

This years GISS Jr and Sr team members and GISS Alumni will show their incredible basketball moves on the 30th - challenging to play, fun to watch - a great way to spend holiday time. See you at the Court!

full schedule: www.gulfislandssecondary.ca/homeschedule.html

Meet the Team

Senior Team success. With five grade 11's on the roster: **Paul Jordan, Zack Kilbourn, Adrian Alonso, Dain Swinburnson** and **Jordan Chien** all have an intense passion for basketball. And eight grade 12's: **Clay Upex, Ben Hunter, Marc Speiss, Kevan Brown, Rhys Hardy, Steven Hardy, Ben Barter,** and **Charlie Holmes** bringing speed and strength to the court. The Senior Boys Team have started the season with success to build on, already they have placed second in 2 out of 3 tournaments played. Come out, cheer them on, and watch them play some exciting basketball - on three "Go Scorpions"!

Happy Holidays!

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MOUNTAIN BIKING

Dialed in to a dual-suspension dream

Rising star seeks support for Canada Cup 2011

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Dexter Robson has come a long way since he used to cruise around Salt Spring's winding country roads and backcountry trails on a barebones hard tail.

"I just got the itch," Robson said during a recent interview about the 2011 mountain-biking circuit.

Thanks to plenty of support from his father Lari, Robson began with an interest in old-school mountain biking videos and transformed his penchant for riding into something close to a full-time job.



PHOTOS BY ROB CRONIN

Dexter Robson, above and at right.

And he isn't finished yet. "I want to eventually race on the World Cup circuit," he said. "I want to earn a living off mountain biking."

Thanks to a healthy thirst for adrenaline and a strong set of cycling skills, Robson has succeeded in getting sponsorship deals with Outdoor Gear Canada, Duncan's Experience Cycling, Faultline.tv, X-Fusion, Hygia and Beaver Buzz.

That modest hard tail has long since been replaced by a top-of-the-line, dual-suspension marvel that can handle all of the big air, tight turns and constant punishment that today's competitors face on a daily basis.

At 18, Robson has already posted a number of top-10 finishes at B.C. and Vancouver Island cup events.

He's toured throughout the region and continues to rise steadily up the ranks.

"I want to earn a living off mountain biking."

DEXTER ROBSON
Competitive mountain biker

What's even more exciting is that he's even had a chance to star in some mountain biking videos of his own.

When he isn't racing against some of the best racers on the continent in events across British Columbia, Washington State and Oregon, Robson can still be found tearing up the track at mountain biking hot spots on Salt Spring, the Sunshine Coast and at Mount Prevost and Mount Tzouhalem just outside of Duncan.

In the off-season, which usually runs from the end of October until early spring, Robson trains alongside other island athletes under the guidance of Sue Spencer at Gulf Islands Athletic Training. He'll spend most of his time working on endurance and improving core strength until the start of the 2011 race season. That's when the island's aspiring mountain-biking hero hopes to propel his cycling prospects to new heights at the Canada Cup at Mont Saint Anne in Quebec this summer.

Despite support from his sponsors and his family, Robson hasn't yet managed to cash in on the full potential that a solid mountain biking career can offer.

He's at the point where he's got enough to cover transportation, equipment and registration costs throughout the West Coast circuit, but Robson needs financial support to help him raise nearly \$2,000 to fly himself and his bike to the Canada Cup in June.

Island residents can get more information about Robson's race to the top by checking out his videos at www.pinkbike.com/video/142863/ or on the Driftwood's Facebook site: facebook.com/gulfislandsdriftwood.

Robson can be reached via email at dexter@faultline.tv.



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U15s top Cowichan

SOCCERKICKS

A downpour didn't dampen the effort by Salt Spring's U15 girls during their last game played at home before the Christmas break.

Captain Maggie Birch started the action off minutes into the game against Cowichan with a touch pass to Brenna McIntyre, who sent a crosskick to Zorah Wiltzen, who scored for 1-0. Zoe Savage and Jasmine Cooper blocked shots, but Cowichan got in a high kick for 1-1. Soon after, McIntyre outran the keeper to the ball and just caught the corner for 2-1.

In the second half, Abi O'Donnell assisted Birch on a goal for 3-1 early in the half, and soon after O'Donnell hit Birch again, and took the pass back to attack the goal through the keeper's hands for 4-1.

Salt Spring's defence stayed strong for the rest of the game, and Birch passed to McIntyre who landed a high shot over the keeper's head securing the 5-1 win.

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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHS

Miyuki & Jessen Dakin
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Louis Jokei Dakin

Born December 6th, 2010
 Weighing 8lbs
 In Akashi, Hyogo, Japan

To the absolute delight of:

Grandparents: Hitomi & Satoshi, Richard & Karen
 Great-Grandmothers: Fumiyo and Valerie
 Aunts Haruka and Natsumi
 Uncles Tyler and Remy

DEATHS

McCoy, Mary
 (1919-2010)

Passed away peacefully, on
 Thursday, December 16, 2010 at
 Toronto Grace Health Centre.

Loving mother of Lynda Charish and
 late husband Gerald, Janice Baron and husband
 Jean, Joyce Joyal and husband Bruce.
 Proud grandmother of Kristi and Sean Charish.
 Loving wife of the late Dale McCoy. She will be
 sorely missed but fondly remembered by her
 family and her close friends and neighbours.

Friends are invited to visit at Rosar-Morrison
 Funeral Home & Chapel, 467 Sherbourne St.
 (south of Wellesley) on Wednesday,
 December 22, 2010 at 12 noon.

Funeral Service to follow at 1 o'clock in the
 Coach House Chapel. A private burial will take
 place in the Spring in Collingwood.

Memorial Donations to the Canadian Cancer
 Society or the Heart and Stroke Foundation
 would be gratefully appreciated.

Condolences - www.rosar-morrison.com



FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHS

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN MEMORIAM

Brian Lloyd Jewell

Dec. 25th, 2008
 Thank you for giving me
 wings to fly,
 I miss you every day.
 You will be a part of me
 forever.
 All my love Michelle



COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEATHS

Jones,

Mona Jean
 (nee Beech)
 1919-2010



Peacefully in her 92nd year, surrounded by
 loving family following a brief illness on Salt
 Spring Island on December 19, 2010. Beloved
 and devoted wife of the late Lcdr. Frederick
 Alun Jones. Predeceased by son Keith, brother
 Jack and sister Marjorie. Mona is survived
 by her brother, Geoff and daughters, Linda
 (Martin), Marlene (Eric) son, Paul (Laurie) and
 grandchildren, Cameron, Vanessa, Ian, Sarah,
 Geoffrey and Ben. Her marriage to a Royal
 Canadian Navy man took her far and wide:
 England, Victoria, Shelburne NS, Norfolk VA,
 Kanata and finally Salt Spring Island, making
 many lifelong friends along the way.

Over the past weeks Mona was fortunate to
 have shared smiles and good-byes with many
 old friends and all her family. Mona's kindness
 and laughter will be missed by many around
 the continent as well as her family at Heritage
 Place in Ganges. Heartfelt thanks to the
 wonderful staff at the Lady Minto Hospital in
 Ganges, BC and to Dr Resnick. Donations to
 Lady Minto Hospital in Ganges, BC would be
 appreciated.

There is a service Wed. at 2 pm, St. Mark's
 Anglican Church on Salt Spring Island

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS CORNER

SMILEY DOG GROOMING SPA

would like to wish all
 their customers, new
 and old, four-legged
 and two legged a very
 Merry Christmas and
 a happy healthy New
 Year. Your support this
 year has been much
 appreciated.

Love
 Michelle
 & Jake



Photos are available
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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEATHS

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS CORNER

Wishing everyone
 a happy Christmas
 season

Remember
 Lorraine Dods Moth



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COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 ful holiday season. See you
 Jan 2, 2011

INFORMATION

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMING EVENTS

**Artist in the
 Community**

Professional
 Development
 Workshops

**Creating
 Intuitively:**

Embracing the Artist Within
Sat 29 Jan 9am-4pm

**The 4 Keys to
 Success**

in a Juried Art Competition
Sat 5 Feb 1pm-4pm

**A Picture
 is Worth
 1000 Words:**

Photographing 2D Art
Sat 5 Mar 1pm-4pm

**The Courage
 to Create:**

Demystifying the Artist Block
Sat 26 Mar 9am-4pm

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more info in January

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COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

TENDERS

LYACKSON FIRST NATION Request for Proposal Notification Deadline for Submissions: January 15, 2010 The Lyackson First Nation is implementing the "Lyackson Eyes on the Island" Program One aspect of that program is the phased development of a Yurt Campground on Valdes Island. Phase one of the Yurt Campground entails the following three components: 1. Grey water management 2. Rainwater catchment or well water supply 3. All aspects related to construction of 2 yurts Contractors may submit for all or part of these three components of Phase One, please clearly identify which component(s) are being applied for in the submission. Please detail qualifications and experience in the component(s) the submission is focused on. All components must be completed/coordinated by: March 31st, 2011 The Project Details are available on the Lyackson Website: www.lyackson.bc.ca. Or you may email kathleen.johnnie@lyackson.bc.ca and salishkat@yahoo.ca for more information. Address your submission to the attention of Kathleen Johnnie, Lands & Resources Manager 9137 Chemainus Road, Chemainus, BC V0R 1K5 Lyackson does not warrant a contract will be issued as a result of this Request for Proposal.

**WHAT'S ON
PAGE B4**

INFORMATION

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

INFORMATION

"Peace in Your Heart"
by Gail Glode

This little red book is available at The Village Cobbler and Salt Spring Books.

All proceeds to Salt Spring Literacy.



A uniquely Salt Spring stocking stuffer.

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INFORMATION

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PETS REMEMBERED



Atisha — our furry friend for these many years passed on. She made us laugh harder and longer than ever before, taught us many things and showed how much patience one being could have. She walked me all over the island and through the streets of town. Rode on the deck of the kayak as we paddled the ocean waves. Then she rode on the scooter as I zoomed into town to attend the Saturday Market. She was the house hold greeter and watchdog combined. She was as good a being as we have ever known and we will miss her. Thanks to all who were her friend and stopped to share her joy. - Phyllis & Matthew Coleman

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PETS



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PETS AND LIVESTOCK

PETS REMEMBERED

My beautiful girl Utah crossed the rainbow bridge in the early hours of Saturday, December 11, 2010.

A lady to the end, she chose her time and place.

A short time in my life, A lifetime in my heart.

Jean, Odie, Albert and Louie



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RENTALS

HOMES FOR RENT

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1 BEDROOM house in Vesuvius \$1100. Contact Island Explorer Property Management 250-537-4722.

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3 BDRM, 2 bath, lovely ocean view home, 2100 sq.ft., newly renov., large garden, 2 min. to town, on quiet street, priv. fence, HW & tile floors, solarium, 5 appl., NP, NS, Jan. 1 \$1800 plus util. 250-537-8431.

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3 BEDROOM Near Town \$1075 Contact Island Explorer Property Management 250-537-4722.

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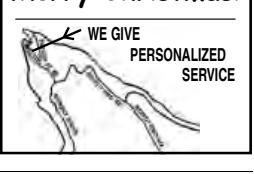
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20% OFF EVERYTHING Dec 22 - Dec 24
Clothing, Jewellery, Scarves, Bags, Hats, "Om Grown", & Tie-dye. Sale items too. Taxes included.

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- 1 Bedroom Cottage**
Available immediately, long term, approx 600 sf ocean view, utilities included, shared property\$950
- 3 Bedroom Near Town**.....\$1075
- 1 Bedroom house in Vesuvius**.....\$1100
- Oceanfront Town Home in Ganges**, 2 bedroom plus office, 2 1/2 baths, propane fireplace, one car garage, N/S, N/P, avail. Immediately\$1900
- Large Channel Ridge View Home**, 2 bedrooms with 1 bedroom in law suite, extensive landscaping, fabulous ocean view, N/S, N/P, long term, available November 1st.....\$1995

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1-800-800-9492

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SPORTS & RECREATION

PARKS & REC

PARC: looking back and ahead

Accomplishments for 2010 and projects to come

BY KEES RUURS
PARC MANAGER

As 2010 comes to an end, it's time for PARC to look backward and to report both on what was accomplished and what remains to be done. It has been a very busy year for the Parks and Recreation Commission and department.

The main push has been for the implementation of some of the top priorities identified in the strategic plan completed in 2009 and endorsed by the commission in early 2010.

Our top priorities included continuous improvement of the trail network, more beach access points and the creation of a leisure guide.

Significant progress was made in all three of these areas.

For the first time ever, a dedicated trail crew was hired.

This made possible the upgrading of many existing trails and the creation of appropriate signage for the greatly improved Channel Ridge trail system, a system that has already been enjoyed by many Salt Spring Islanders.

Three new beach/water access points were also developed (Kingfisher Cove, Madrona Bay off Long Harbour Road

PARCCOLUMN

and a new access at Drummond Park). As well, a new spring and fall PARC Leisure Guide that listed all the leisure services available on the island was produced.

But that's not all PARC did this year. Early this summer, three of the four tennis courts at Portlock Park were resurfaced and a little later the Peace Park was upgraded through the addition of an underground sprinkler system.

This fall saw the development of a dog park at Rainbow Road Park. The upgrading of the mechanical system at the swimming pool was completed and the area in front of the pool was, finally, landscaped.

However, the year was not without its disappointments. In particular we failed in our first effort to provide the community with additional playing fields. However, other options are now being explored and, hopefully, a way of providing the sorely needed playing fields will soon be found.

And what else is on the agenda for 2011? Next year's priorities include the development of the second phase of the Channel Ridge trail system as well further upgrading of the shorter trails around the island such as those in Bryant Hill Park, Peter Arnell Park,

Duck Creek Park and Moutat Park.

All these trails will be properly signed, an improvement that should make hiking in the island's community parks much easier.

The Leisure Guide will be published at least twice this year and work will begin as well on a new website that presents similar information.

The Fulford tennis court will also be repaired, resurfaced and then reopened in the spring of 2011 and three or four more beach access points will be developed.

Also in 2011, an island-wide park planning effort will identify those areas on the island where additional parks ought to be created. Similarly, PARC's Trail Advisory Committee will be proposing an island-wide trail system that would connect many of Salt Spring's shorter trails and trail systems.

Last but not least, a master plan for the Rainbow Road property will assist the commission in determining what else can and should be developed in that park.

In closing, we wish to thank all those islanders who responded to PARC's 2009 and 2010 surveys of the community.

The information so many of you provided in large part determined both what was done in 2010 and what will be done in the years to come.

This Week's Horoscope

by Michael O'Connor
www.sunstarastronomy.com
sunstarastronomy@gmail.com
1.888.352.2936

Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

The momentum has shifted into high gear in your public and/or professional life. A growing commitment to long term goals is likely. Yet, getting a clear focus on how to plan and proceed may not be so easy just now. It's the season to take a break and be more festive, so don't fight it. Your progressive momentum will continue strong well into January so rejoice now and work later.

Taurus (Apr 20 - May 21)

A period of training and attaining new knowledge and skills remains active. You feel the urge to push more than usual. Increasing your social connections is also a central theme. You want more passion and excitement and don't want to provide reasons why. You want answers, but may not be so inclined to offer a lot in return. This may be true in your close personal relationships as well.

Gemini (May 21 - Jun 21)

This is a good time to dissolve old contracts and make new ones. Whether you do this literally or figuratively, or both, depends on you. New resolutions and intentions for the New Year linked to feeling strong and exercising more personal power is a good idea. For now, aim to share what you think and feel honestly and avoid simply saying what you think others might like to hear.

Cancer (Jun 22 - Jul 22)

A lot is shaking on relationship fronts now. Given the time of the year, it comes as no surprise. Thoughts about what is true and fair and ethical may be on your mind. Sharing these with others feels natural; you can hardly contain yourself anyway. You want to be more aware and you would like others to be so as well. If you are on a course you do not like, your exit window will close soon so decide.

Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 23)

A process of refinement, healing and repair is destined now. How can this best apply to you? Perhaps it is literally your health or that of your lifestyle or your home or with family members or your business or all of the above. Yet, you may find it hard to concentrate and may otherwise scatter your focus. Aim to complete tasks and pay attention to what is rather than what could be.

Virgo (Aug 24 - Sep 22)

Some cycles are more active and dynamic than others, like now for you. Reviews of the past in one manner or another are featured. Where these touch upon your own history, you could lose perspective as old emotions flood your mind. This fog period will begin to clear before the official New Year yet it may take the better part of January before you feel fully present in the now again.

Libra (Sep 23 - Oct 22)

A lot is shaking close to home. Setting a clear course amidst the activity may be a challenge. Obtaining new appliances or other possessions is likely and implies some measure of renovation or furniture moving to accommodate them. Meanwhile, healing bonds with friends or severing some altogether continues and will for some months yet. For now acknowledge your home as your haven.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

A restless cycle continues. Hopefully, you have a healthy outlet. The grip of prior interests is slipping daily and you may wonder if there will be anything of the old you left. Possibly not much.... A change of lifestyle is simmering yet will only become really evident in late winter. The good news is you don't have to be anybody or anything other than who you feel you are now.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

If the returns coming in these days are positive, you can be sure you have been doing your homework. Otherwise, you may have some catching up to do. Either way, your focus is strong in a way it has not been before. Maintaining a steady focus of effort to support your ambitions is on your mind. At best, you are experiencing a lot of love coming from others. Be willing to receive.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

You are on a roll now. A strong determination to push through and beyond is rising. You may also have a lot to do behind the scenes in terms of organization and communications. You may also sense some mental confusion getting in the way of your plans and ambitions. Avoid trying to be understood at this time. Rather be understanding of yourself and others. Allow for dreamtime but don't get lost in it.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 19)

A big wave of energy and activity will subside for a while now. This is your opportunity to rest and dream before the New Year sweeps you into its dynamic momentum. You may still want to acquire and/or refine certain skills and sharpen your tools. Downtime is perfect for making sure that all your equipment is working and where you easily locate it. Trust the flow and recharge.

Pisces (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Sometimes we get the attention we need, sometimes what we want and sometimes both. Knowing what we truly need is another story. Dealing with feelings of insecurity in your public and professional life may be lingering but won't last so don't yield to these. Jealousies in love relationships may also be at issue these days. Be willing to make or allow for needed changes.

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SPORTS & RECREATION



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

HOOPSTERS: Young basketball enthusiasts participate in a one-day camp at Salt Spring Island Middle School.

SWIMMING

Lifelong gift of swimming appreciated

Swimming pool manager's dedication extraordinary

BY NISSA PILLAY
SPECIAL TO THE DRIFTWOOD

As a swimming instructor for six summers at the old seasonal pool on Salt Spring, I came upon many children who had a fear of putting their face in the water.

For some children it would often take many lessons and lots of hard work for both the child and their instructors.

Several years later I had my own child who had to face this fear. Given my past as an instructor, I was embarrassed that I could not seem to bring my own child to overcome this challenge.

I enrolled my son Kiran in swim lessons at Rainbow Road Pool. Admittedly, when I saw half the class being dedicated to walking on obstacle courses, (benches under the water) and generally having fun, I was skeptical about my son's chances of learning how to swim in the near future. However, I knew that learning how to have fun in the water instead of being afraid of it was the first step to becoming a swimmer.

Progress with Kiran was slow and I patiently brought him back four times to re-do



Kiran Pillay and Jim Raddysh at the Rainbow Road Pool.

the level one swimming. By the end, he was putting his face in the water with the help of a snorkel and mask and dunking his head under, holding his nose. Now I could see how important those fun activities were in getting him over his fear.

With the general busyness of a family with two young kids (flu, colds, starting kindergarten) we hadn't been swimming for awhile.

Jim Raddysh, the manager of Rainbow Road Pool and one of Kiran's instructors, noticed

Kiran's absence and expressed a keen interest in getting Kiran to the next level in his learning. Jim offered to work with Kiran free of charge until he learned to swim.

Jim informed me that he would be "going slow" and the first job was to get Kiran completely comfortable in the water, so out came the benches and the fun piggy back rides down to the deep end, which I now saw playing a vital role in Kiran's progress. Also, now that Kiran had a play date at the pool every

week, it gave me as the parent the discipline to get him to the pool consistently, which was another important factor in his skill development.

Imagine my joy and gratitude when I saw Kiran swim for the first time, from the stairs to the wall, no hands and with his face in the water.

Jim said that he wasn't quite done, that his goal for Kiran was to jump off the edge of the pool into the water, turn around and swim back to the edge — a skill he would need if he were to ever fall into the water. With two more lessons Kiran was doing just that, also jumping into the deep end and swimming to the lane rope.

Jim Raddysh's commitment to the safety and well being of my child brings tears to my eyes.

I am astonished at Jim's ability to connect with so many kids using humour and to make swimming so much fun. I am so grateful that the lifelong gift of swimming was given with such enthusiasm.

We are so blessed to have such extraordinary people like Jim in our community who make such a difference in people's lives.

The writer may also be known on Salt Spring as Crystal Sheehan.

HIKING

Trans-island trail gains momentum

Hiking proposal enthuses committee

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Volunteers on the Parks and Recreation Commission's trail advisory group are picking up the pace on a proposal to develop a trans-island trail between Cape Keppel and the island's north end.

"It's pretty early days, but I think we actually have a little bit of momentum," said Rob Wiltzen, chair of the Salt Spring Island Trail Advisory Committee.

Wiltzen said the idea of a long-distance trail across the island has been on the committee's radar for some time. It wasn't until islander Gary Quiring

publicized the story of a trek he undertook this past spring, however, that interest in the trail resurfaced.

Quiring's 30-kilometre "high-peaks route" connects trails and long-abandoned logging roads from the end of Mountain Drive to the ridge at Mount Tuam, north towards Mount Bruce and Mount Sullivan, through Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, past Bruce Peak and on towards Mount Belcher and Mount Erskine.

Today, Wiltzen noted, Quiring has earned himself a spot on the trail advisory committee and offers invaluable experience for the project.

Wiltzen said completion of such a monumental trail would offer an unparalleled recreation opportunity.

"I think Salt Spring Island could be a hiking destination," he said. "I think this is something that people would travel to."

Any work on the trail is contingent on meeting with government and individual stakeholders about jurisdictional and access issues.

Speaking at PARC's monthly public meeting on Dec. 6, manager Kees Ruurs said work on the trail has been identified as the trail committee's top priority.

"Quite frankly, it's an exciting thing because it will enhance the opportunities for residents and visitors," he said.

Plans are underway to obtain specific GPS co-ordinates for Quiring's original course and map other possible routes.



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MORE COVER WINNERS: Picking up second and third place honours in the Driftwood's annual Christmas cover contest were submissions by Grade 11 student Ruby Barnard (above) and Grade 12 student Sierra Lundy (below). Top spot went to Anna Melious, whose work appears on the front page of this edition.



STORY CONTEST

Winners capture spirit of giving

Kids aged four to 18 participate in annual event

BY GAIL SJUBERG
 DRIFTWOOD EDITOR

One of the Driftwood's favourite annual traditions carried on in 2010 with the Christmas story writing contest.

While there were fewer entries than in the past few years, as some "regular" participating classes took a time-out, the 109 stories still ran the gamut from age four to 18, with a number of writers submitting their entries from home rather than school.

STORY CONTEST continued on B2

CHRISTMAS ANGEL

BY ISAAC BURCH
 AGE 4-7 CATEGORY
 FIRST PLACE

Once upon a time long ago in the North Pole was Santa's elves. They were working on toys for Christmas.

One of the elves said, "This is too many toys. We need help."

And then poof — an angel appeared.

"I'll help," she said.

"OK," said one of the elves.

So the angel did help the elves. The elves were really happy.

They thanked the angel and by Christmas Santa's sleigh was loaded with toys for Christmas. Santa was really happy with his elves. But he wasn't with Grumpy because Grumpy didn't help.

RUDOLPH GETS LOST

BY ZADIAN ST.-GELAIS
 AGE 4-7 CATEGORY
 SECOND PLACE

Once upon a time there lived a reindeer called Rudolph. One day he went in the forest of Christmas spirits. Santa and the elves looked everywhere for Rudolph.

But the elves couldn't find him. At night they could see Rudolph. They could see his nose.

One elf gave an apple to Rudolph. But the elves were so busy looking for Rudolph they didn't even make a toy.

So when they got back they made all the toys the elves can make.

When the elves were done they were exhausted. As soon as Santa got all of the toys on the sled he gave all the toys and they lived happily ever after.

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CHRISTMAS STORIES

Judges laud naughty and nice characters

STORY CONTEST
continued from B1

This year's judging panel contained a few new faces. Long-time judging coordinator Alex Mitchell called it quits this year, confessing that he felt he was "just too old" for the task. The Driftwood thanks Mitchell for his many years of service as the coordinator, apologizes for not putting his photo into the paper every year to acknowledge his contribution and would like to remind him that he is an immortal among mortals.

Victoria Olchowecki, also a judge for several years, took Mitchell's spot and was joined by Janet Anderson, Audrey Isaacs, Betty Poole and Pam Mastenbroek.

First and second-place winners receive \$30 and \$20 cheques, respectively, from the Driftwood. Those can be picked up anytime from today, Wednesday, Dec. 22.

Winners in the various age categories are as follows, with

the first and second-place stories found in this section of the paper.

Ages 4-7: First place, Isaac Burch, *The Christmas Angels*; second place, Zadian St.-Gelais, *Rudolph Gets Lost*. Honourable mentions: Seth Evanochko, *The Magical Christmas*; Julianna Akerman, *The Chris Star*; John Quesnel, *The Day Santa Got Sick*.

Age 8: First place, Seth Crouse, *Snow Help*; Second place, Cheyenne Sawchuk, *A Christmas Miracle*. Honourable mentions: Lukas Fisher, *My Dog's Christmas*; Arama St. Gelais, *The Great Christmas Candy Battle*; Samantha Shoore, *A Very Fairy Christmas*; Taylor Akerman, *The Pink Jacket*; Eve Green, *The Little Lost Kitten*.

"It is interesting to note the change in the young children's perception of the Christmas season," said judge Poole about stories written by the 38 eight-year-olds in her group. "The emphasis seems to be less on the getting and more on the giving."

"The emphasis seems to be less on the getting and more on the giving."

BETTY POOLE
Story judge

Age 9: First place, Grace Schure, *Fishy and Santa Fish*; second place, Desmond Finn, *The Bad Kid of Christmas*. Honourable mention: Reed Goddard, *The Truth of Christmas*.

"It was a pleasure to read the essay entries submitted by 24 nine-year-olds," said judge Isaacs. "What great imaginations. There was a vast array of characters both 'naughty' and 'nice,' which included a menagerie of animals, domestic and wild. One chase scene involved the interaction of two gingerbread cookies. All

the stories had suitable introductions to the varied main plots, events and adventures as the young authors honed their story-telling skills. Happily for everyone, Christmas received an A-OK billing for a final theme of giving and kindness."

Age 10: First place, Ty Davies, *Light the Way*; second place, Lina Losier, *The Star Keeper*. Honourable mentions: Lina Losier, *One Christmas Eve*; Yashna Love, *Ben Saves Christmas*.

Ages 11-13: First place, Charlie Beaver, *The Rats' Christmas*; second place, Sofia Luttmmer, *A Real Christmas*.

Ages 16-18: First place, Pierce Newman, *Life is Cold, Very Cold*; second place, Eva Olynyk, *No Small Feat*.

As well, winner of the random draw for classes that had 100 per cent student participation was Linda Burgess' Grade 2-3 class from Fulford Community Elementary School. The Driftwood provides a cheque for \$100 to the class' charity of choice.



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

SEASONAL SALES: Andrea Sanchez sells holly in the Christmas market, held Saturday in Centennial Park.

SNOW HELP

BY SETH CROUSE
AGE 8 CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

My family is home with me. We live on a farm on Salt Spring Island. It is winter and snowy outside.

One day, me and my sister go up to a neighbour's house where my friend Jackson lives to toboggan down their big hill. We make a jump. Then we toboggan over the jump lots of times. After one crazy slide, I get a face plant in the snow.

After being outside for a long time, we go inside to have dinner. Jackson's mom sees my injured face and says, "Wht happened?"

I say, "Oh, nothing. Just a major face plant in the snow."

She says, "Okay, just thought I'd ask."

Jackson and I go back outside. While tobogganing, we see that the older lady's house next door does not have her lights on.

I ask, "What is your neighbour's name again?"

"Her name is Joanne," says Jackson.

"Let's go see if she is alright," I say.

"OK," said Jackson.

We then go up to her house and knock on the door. Joanne answers. We ask her if she is OK and she says that she is very cold. We ask her what we could do to help her.

She says, "Can you please make me a fire? I can't see well in the dark."

"Go find some wood, Jackson. I will get the matches to light the fire," I say.

Then Joanne says, "Can you please light some candles for me?"

We do. "Now there is light for you. Is your power out? What happened?" We both ask.

"There has been a tree over my power line for the past two days. And I live alone," says Joanne.

"Is there anything we can do to help?" we ask.

"No, the fire and candles are lit. Now I can see and now I will be warm. Thank you boys for your kindness."

Jackson says that we should probably go now. Joanne says, "Don't go yet. I have a gift for your good deeds."

"The gift is two hand-knitted hats."

Jackson and I say our thanks and leave to go back to his house.

At Jackson's house we tell everyone about the neighbour Joanne and how cold she was. My sister thinks we are making up stories again, but we tell her it was true. My sister and I are on our way back to our home and we pass Joanne's house. Joanne sees us walking by and calls to us. She says, "Do you want some hot chocolate? You were so kind to me, helping to get my house warm!"

We both say, "We would love to."

After we finish our hot chocolate, we see that there was a nasty snow storm coming. It was too cold for us to walk home. So we had to stay the night at Joanne's house. Tomorrow is Christmas Eve. When we woke up the next morning it was nice enough to walk home. We said, "Thank you and goodbye," to Joanne.

We invited Joanne and Jackson's family over for Christmas dinner to celebrate our new friendship.

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CHRISTMAS STORIES

LIGHT THE WAY

BY TY DAVIES
AGE 10 CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

Far, far away in a village made of winter white, a magical place exists. Tiny igloos glisten on a blanket of fluffy white snow. Sleeping in these igloos are families of well-fed penguins.

One very special penguin, Theo, spends Christmas Eve carving magical gifts. These icicle carvings glow, fed by the northern lights of the sky.

On Christmas Eve, Theo silently tip-toes through the village, placing each decorated icicle over the arch of every doorway. Theo finishes his work and snuggles into his cozy little igloo, falling fast asleep.

High up in the sky, a tiny sleigh appears. Santa's sleigh can see the way! The village below glows with the colours of the northern lights. Santa can see his way to each and every igloo.

Santa sings, "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

SANTA SING: Santa and friends have a romping good time as Fernwood Elementary School holds its annual Christmas concert.

LIFE IS COLD, VERY COLD

BY PIERCE NEWMAN
AGE 16-18 CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

Life is cold, very cold. This could go beyond you and your everyday life.

For winters are cold, very cold. When you can't get to town to get more of the thing that gives you heat (propane, wood) — that's cold.

When you have to sleep with bundles of blankets, that's cold.

Or when you're with a group of people and all you're hearing from them is how warm and wonderful their weekend was, while yours was freezing cold and you had fights with

your parents. That's cold.

When some people complain that their power went out and their pipes froze, and you had neither in the first place, that's cold.

When you miss the school dance because you had to go off to the hospital, and you hear how great it was the next day, that's cold.

Or when teachers don't like your work because of the way you do it, that's cold.

Now I'm sure when you look back at your winters, they're either warm and cozy or you had to walk 10 miles up hill (both ways) to school and home in the blizzard.

I'm curious what the defini-

tion of "a hard life" is, and I don't mean as in the musical, Annie.

I mean as in a hard life, like your car breaking down a lot and you have troubles sometimes paying the bills. Or is a hard life like you don't have a car and you have difficulty paying your grocery bill, never mind your heating bill, because you don't have a rent or power bill to even speak of?

Or is a hard life like the African kids who live in shacks and get shot at by the gun-toting idiots with blood diamonds?

I wonder sometimes when it's okay to say I have a hard life.

FISHY AND SANTA FISH

BY GRACE SCHURE
AGE 9 CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

If you go way down to the bottom of the ocean, to the big reef, and down Sea Lane, at 81 you will find the Flounder family.

Mr. and Mrs. Flounder live there with their little son, Fishy, a cute and funny fish.

One day Fishy woke up feeling as cheerful as ever. He brushed his gills and combed his fins and then ran out to the table to eat. Mrs. Flounder was up making small worms. Mmmmm! Fishy's favourite!

"Where's Daddy?" Fishy asked as Mrs. Flounder put his plate on the table.

"He had to go to work early," she said.

"Okay," said Fishy, slurping up the last worm on his plate.

"Get ready, Sweetie, or you will miss the Jelly Fish," said Mrs. Flounder as she zipped up his backpack and pushed him out the door.

Outside the water was blowing hard. Fishy zipped up his coat and swam to catch up with his friend Joe. Fishy asked Joe if he believed in Santa, and Joe said, "No way! Do you?" "Oh, no," said Fishy, but really he did.

At school, Miss Puff had the class write a story about Santa. Joe didn't like the idea, but Fishy did the best job of anyone in the class.

At recess, Fishy asked everyone if they believed in Santa.

They all said, "No!" or "Why? Do you?"

When Mommy came to pick him up, Fishy told her

what had happened at school. Mommy said not to worry and that they would talk at dinner. When they got home, Fishy did his homework and then watched his favourite TV show, the Fish Net. Dinner was on the table and the family sat down to dinner. Mommy and Fishy told Dad what happened at school and Dad said, "The kids at school won't get any presents if they don't believe." That made Fishy feel better. He had to cheer up for tomorrow was Christmas Eve, his favourite time of year.

After breakfast on Christmas Eve, Fishy asked if his cousin John was coming for Christmas.

"Yes," said Mom.

"Awesome!" said Fishy. His cousin was SO cool! "When is he coming?" Fishy asked.

"Right now," said mom as the door opened.

"John!" yelled Fishy. "You are here!"

"Ya, little dude," said John. "I am here."

That night they had mussels, shrimp and crabs for Christmas Eve dinner. After dinner, they went to put their PJs on and get ready for bed.

Then they went to make a snack for Santa, they hung their stockings over the fireplace and jumped into bed. Fishy couldn't fall asleep so he got up to look for Santa.

He waited but Santa did not come.

Soon it was morning and Santa still did not come, so when everyone got up, there were no presents under the tree. It was all Fishy's fault!

"Where are all the presents?" asked John.

"I stayed up all night and Santa did not come," said Fishy. "I just wanted to see him."

"I'm going home!" John shouted and ran to the bedroom to pack. Ten minutes later he came out, ran to the door, put on his shoes and coat and was gone.

Fishy started to cry. He was so sad that John had left. John was his favourite person in the whole world.

"It's okay," Mommy said. "He's just mad that he didn't get anything."

The next Christmas, John came down again but was still mad.

"I'm sorry, John. I know you're still mad but can we just get along for Christmas?" said Fishy.

There was a long silence and then John said, "Okay."

"Dinner!" called Mr. Flounder.

"Coming!" called John and Fishy.

After dinner they hung their stockings over the fireplace, made a snack for Santa and then jumped into bed.

In the morning there were presents in the stockings and presents under the tree. Fishy got a toy fish, a new movie and a book called Fish Pet.

John got a cool cap, a new movie and a book called Cool Fish.

After breakfast, John went home and Fishy turned on the TV to the Fish Net. He was very happy. He had gotten the Christmas he wanted.

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What's On This Week

www.gulfislandstourism.com/calendar.htm



Wed.
December 22

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Lloyd English Trio.
Live jazz every Wednesday at the Harbour House.
Open Stage.
Wednesdays with Stephanie Rhodes at Moby's. 8 p.m.

Thurs.
December 23

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Lane 31.
Live band at Moby's.
Oscar Kempe.
Live at the Tree House Cafe. 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Open Mic.
Thursdays at the The Local pub. 6 to 10 p.m.
ACTIVITIES
Climbing Wall.
Open from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Santa & His Elves.
At Pharmasave Downtown, 5-6 p.m.; Island Star, 6-7 p.m.

Fri.
December 24

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Photos with Santa.
In exchange for a food bank donation at Rainbow Road Pool. 11 a.m. to noon.

Sat.
December 25

ACTIVITIES
Gary Fletcher Memorial Christmas Day Dinner.
Free dinner at Meaden Hall. Doors open at 11:30 a.m., dinner at noon, followed by entertainment. Sponsored by the SS United Church.
Harbour House Christmas Day Dinner.
With music by Vaughn Fulford & the Folk Fiendes, three-course turkey dinner & regular menu. Harbour House Hotel. Call 250-537-4700 for reservations.

Sun.
December 26

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Frivolous Party.
Hosted by Alchemi Living Arts at Beaver Point Hall. With Frivolous, DJ Someone Special, local hip hop group Double Dei; live art and installations; audience-participation old-school dance-off. Doors at 8 p.m.
Boxing Day Jazz Brunch.
Featuring Sue Newman & the Jazzmen at Moby's. 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Run for Cover.
Rock band at Moby's.
ACTIVITIES
Climbing Wall.
Open from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Mon.
December 27

ACTIVITIES
No activities scheduled at this time.
Tues.
December 28
ACTIVITIES
No activities scheduled at this time.

Wed.
December 29

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Open Stage.
Wednesdays with Stephanie Rhodes at Moby's. 8 p.m.



Happy Holidays

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CINEMA
The Chronicles of Narnia - The Voyage of the Dawn Treader — Edmund and Lucy along with their cousin Eustace are swallowed into a painting and transported back to Narnia and the magnificent ship The Dawn Treader. They join King Caspian and a warrior mouse named Reepicheep for a mission which holds the fate of Narnia itself. The courageous voyagers overcome their own greatest temptations, as they travel to mysterious islands; have fateful confrontations with magical creatures and sinister enemies; and reunite with their friend and protector, the "Great Lion" Aslan.

- EXHIBITIONS**
- **Random 8 Christmas Exhibition** featuring work by Janet Cameron, Jerry Davidson, Lynn Demers, Bly Kaye, Jan Sharkey Thomas, Dennice Stambuck, Ian Thomas and Janis Woode at Gallery 8. Runs daily to Friday, Dec. 31.
 - **Imaginary Landscapes**, an exhibit of paintings by Vancouver artist Andrew Gibbs, runs at Market Place Cafe through Jan. 30, 2011.
 - **Duck Creek Gallery** solstice week opening — Wednesday, Dec. 22 is the last day. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wood and bronze sculptures, photographic prints, art prints, art cards available.
 - **Pegasus Framing Gallery** presents work by the lino-cut master Richard Calver along with Bill Mayberry abstracts and hyper-realist oils by Christopher Walker.
 - See Lyman Whitaker's wind sculptures at Grace Point Square.
 - **Julianna Slomka** shows paintings of music and dance, as well as earlier drawings, at the Harbour House lobby through Jan. 1, 2011.
 - **Lou Ellis** shows photos at TJ Beans.
 - **New Paintings** by Paul Bryans are now on exhibit at Steffich Fine Art.
 - **Margaret Threlfall's** miniature original watercolours are now available in the ArtSpring lobby display case.
 - **Evelyn Russell** shows collograph and China ink paintings at Island Savings through the end of February.
 - **The Salt Spring Photography Club** displays photos by club members at the Salt Spring Coffee Company on an electronic picture frame, with updated photos every two weeks.
 - **Margaret Ann Argiro**, visual artist and photographer, has eight photos and one pastel painting hanging in Bruce's Kitchen. Images feature fruits, vegetables and the Northern Range as seen through the notch in Mt. Belcher.
 - **Shari Macdonald** shows new photos at Jana's Bake Shop.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

Deb Toole conducts Viva Voce carollers during Open Late Til Eight shopping in Ganges last Thursday.

DANCE PARTY

Alchemi invites community to get Frivolous on Boxing Day

Family-friendly dance event at BPH

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

An island-born musical prodigy now living in Germany will be at Beaver Point Hall for Boxing Day with a special performance by Frivolous, hosted by Alchemi Living Arts.

Talli Gadon, a member of the Alchemi Living Arts Collective, said Frivolous is known for his innovative approach to electronic music and performance. His art has won the former Galiano Island resident gigs at some of Europe's biggest night clubs, including Café Del Mar in Paris.

Frivolous has called his work the result of an "obsession with sound design for both dancing and living alike." His sound has been described as jazz-infused minimal or experimental house.

"What he does is construct his songs and integrate his own instrument inventions," Gadon said, naming a hand-cranked wooden music box and a robot that plays the xylophone according to Frivolous' movements among his creations.

Also on the bill for the night is DJ Someone Special (Gadon) and local hip hop group Double Dei, featuring the MC talents of Dano Hammer. Live art and installations

are part of the event, as well as an audience participated and judged old-school dance-off.

"We encourage individuals and groups — people who are amateurs, passionate and just want to strut their stuff," Gadon said.

Catering for the event is also being done by Alchemi, and will include raw organic chocolate, superfoods and elixirs mixed with the algae supplement E3live.

The Frivolous show, recent events like the Nightmare Before Christmas party and upcoming ones like a 1950s-style sock-hop planned for January are evidence of Alchemi's ongoing commitment to infuse more art (and fun) into the community. Gadon said the collective is continuing to evolve but remains dedicated to providing a centre for arts and culture from its home base in downtown Ganges.

"One reason why I'm very passionate about what we do here is I come from a culture that was very important [on the island] in the past," said Gadon, who was born on Salt Spring 35 years ago.

"That esoteric, hippy culture seems to be kind of dying off, so we're really happy to foster that and help bring it back."

The collective is home to a broad array of resident artists, who range from around 20 to 40 years in age. Alchemi events are even more broad-based, reaching all ages

and intended to be family friendly (depending on the theme).

People with young children are welcome to bring them to dances and to in-house events, since the collective realizes the difficulty there can be in participating in the arts otherwise.

Reaching out to the upcoming generation of artists is also an important goal.

"One of our major objectives is to give youth on Salt Spring a safe and comfortable environment to express their individuality," Gadon said, noting mature teens (16 years and older) and young adults are encouraged to explore the Hereford Street base, where in-house potlucks, music jams and an art gallery provide creative venues and a place for people to gather.

The collective is currently working on achieving status as a registered non-profit organization. Until then, Gadon said personal donations are welcome to help keep the Hereford house open and available to the community for the long term.

Tickets to the Boxing Day show with Frivolous are \$20 at the door or \$15 in advance, available at Alchemi Living Arts Collective, 133 Hereford Ave. or Salt Spring Sound, 131 McPhillips Ave. Doors open at 8 p.m.

For more information call Talli Gadon or Mya Hardman at 250-537-2013.

YOUNG WRITER

Youth finishes draft of novel

Callum Grant-Cawdell pumps out 50,000 words

A Salt Spring teen is among the successful participants of 2010's National Novel Writing Month.

Callum Grant-Cawdell, age 14, finished the first draft of his novel called Names for the international challenge.

Nicknamed NaNoWriMo, the event requires writers to start and finish the first draft of a 50,000-word novel within November's 30 days.

Grant-Cawdell finished on Nov. 29 at

8:40 p.m., completing 50,000 words in 29 days by keeping to a vigorous, self-moderated schedule. He is home-schooled on Salt Spring.

The total word count for the 2010 version of the NaNoWriMo was 2,872,682,109.

For more information, see www.nanawrimo.org.

Who reads us?

88% of Islanders read the Driftwood each week.

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- * **Recycle Depot:** Open Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 5pm, 349 Rainbow Rd., 250-537-1200.
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Jason Tudor

Despicable Me

Despicable Me is yet another "pretty good but not quite Pixar good" animated blockbuster. Clearly inspired by The Incredibles, this story instead deals with the trials and tribulations of being the villain.

Steve Carrell stars as Gru, a career bad guy whose greatest achievement so far is stealing the jumbotron from Times Square. He's got the secret underground lair, the legion of little yellow techie minions, but has yet to pull off that really, really dastardly scheme. Upstaged by the arrival of the younger Vector (Jason Segal), Gru is forced to put his plan of stealing the moon into effect.

The problem is that Vector has stolen the shink-ray gun needed to pull that off. When Gru sees that three orphan girls selling cookies have no problem getting into Vector's suburban fortress, the solution is clear. He adopts the three cuties and . . . well . . . from here it's pretty clear what happens. You know: the plan goes awry, the girls melt his heart, yadda yadda.

I realize that I'm not making Despicable Me sound very good, but it's a perfectly fun time. Kids will adore it (there's a fart gun, for crying out loud) and there's enough there for adults not to pass out due to boredom. But it's not one of those animated films that adults absolutely must watch, unlike those of the aforementioned Pixar.

There's just something missing. It's funny, looks great, and the celebrity performances aren't too obviously self-referential, but the emotional kick of Up, Wall-E, Ratatouille or The Incredibles just isn't there.

The film tries, quite valiantly, to establish some character growth for Gru by way of the three girls. The central conceit is that he's a parody of those "career dads" you see in kids' films, the ones that stay late at work and miss their sons' baseball games. But the very second we see these cute little girls and their uptight orphanage mistress, we know how the film will proceed. There's no surprises.

This element of creativity might be what separates Pixar from the rest. Kids haven't been subjected to a million stories like we adults have — we need something original to get us to care about what's happening on screen. Despicable Me, like other "almosts" such as How to Train Your Dragon, is perfectly well done as it is, but still feels like something we've already seen.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

GIANT SANTA:

Silas Omaley checks out a larger-than-life Santa outside of Island Star Video, during a late night shopping celebration last Thursday in Ganges.

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NEW YEAR'S EVE

Fine dining and wild dancing among the ways to greet '11

A roundup of Salt Spring events to help ring in the new year

wine with each course — HST and gratuities not included. For more details and to reserve, call 250-931-3399.

Dance at Fulford Hall

This benefit for Wolf Kids and Jamie Reimer features special guest appearances by Harry Manx, Bill Henderson, Valdy, Greg Pauker, Emily Braden and many more during an elegant evening of great music, delicious hors d'oeuvres and decadent desserts. Also a silent auction with fine arts.

Doors open 7:30 p.m. Participants must be 19 years or older. Tickets are on sale at Salt Spring Books and Stuff & Nonsense for \$30.

Bruce's Kitchen

Join chef Bruce Wood for an evening of great food at the communal table.

An extra-special three-course meal, plus surprise hors d'oeuvres, features shrimp and wild salmon rilletes with crab salad; dried porcini and cocoa-rubbed Quist Farm beef tenderloin with Sauce Diane served with twice-baked potato with lobster, chives and Riopelle cheese; and dessert.

The price of \$75 per person includes a glass of

HHH Winemaker's Dinner

Enjoy a five-course gala meal by chef Paul Stewart with wine pairings from Averill Creek Winery, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. \$95. See the full menu at <http://saltspring-harbourhouse.com>. Reservations are essential.

The dinner is followed by music and dancing with Sue Newman and a four-piece jazz band, 9 p.m. to midnight. The \$7.50 cover includes party favours and a champagne toast (complimentary to Winemaker's Dinner guests).

Bass Dojo's Gregorian NYE gathering

Music at Beaver Point Hall by DJs Adham Shaikh, Kreuger Singh, Grandpa Phunk, Bron Tron, Invisibling and Coi plus special live jam with CICO, 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. \$15 in advance at Alchemi Living Arts and Acoustic Planet. \$20 at the door. Dojo World cuisine and refreshments.

Moby's pub

Moby's Oyster Bar and Marine Pub is having a New Year's Eve party with Run for Cover. \$7 cover.

BOOKS

Zany stories featured in Dan Mooney's first book

Almost Paradise now available

Salt Spring resident Dan Mooney has just self-published his first book called *Almost Paradise*: a series of 30 humorous stories and five poems depicting the life and adventures of the author on the "wet coast" and beyond.

Seven stories in *Almost Paradise* are about Salt Spring. They include: *Shy and Retiring*; *The Mating Game*; *Tour De Farce*; *Gone To The Dogs*; *Obsenile Psychosis*; *From I Do To Adieu*; and *Return To Rough-House*, which includes a reference to *Fritz The Cat*.

"Fritz is the only real name I use in the book," said Mooney. "All the other names have

been changed to protect the guilty."

"I'm a recreational writer," he explains. "Putting pen to paper is something I do to amuse myself on long dark, wet winter nights. But the stories were piling up and my partner and self-appointed editor suggested we turn the pile into a book. We sent a sample story to a well-known B.C. publisher and it was returned about six weeks later with the following comment... 'very funny, really enjoyed it... you should get it published.' So we decided to self-publish."

"All the stories are based on real life experiences with the exception of the ones where cats and dogs are the narrators. The most outrageous story is based on one of our regular

visits to Quadra Island. After a lovely day of paddling, we were preparing dinner at Main Lakes Provincial Park when a carload of campers arrived and launched into a family feud with all the drama of a Shakespeare play. There was no escape, so we were trapped there until the bitter end."

"Other stories in the book include tales about my eccentric family members and friends, details of my weirdest travel experiences in Mexico, Arizona and B.C., and recollections about those odd jobs from hell. There's one sad story about the untimely death of my old friend in Saskatchewan and another about the challenges of dog-sitting a mutt who receives weekly postcards in the mail."

"There are also fictional characters like the billion-year-old man undergoing a mid-life crisis and thousands of female frogs dirty dancing to attract a mate. There's a detective agency run by cats and a jolly gent who operates a grow-op at the North Pole."

Almost Paradise was designed by Lorraine Sullivan and printed in Victoria by Island Blue's copy-on-demand service.

The book is available at Volume II Books in Ganges, Breakwater Books in Powell River and through the author.

Signed copies are available by calling 250-538-0998 or emailing claire77@telus.net. One copy has been donated to the Mary Hawkins Library.

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AFRICAN ADVENTURE

Island pair completes African odyssey

Kate Parker shares highest peak adventure

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
 DRIFTWOOD STAFF

If there's any doubt that travel is an ideal way to broaden one's horizons, one need only speak to Kate Parker about her three-month sojourn in Tanzania.

Most people who visit the East African country would probably consider their journey a success after taking in one of the nation's many world-class national parks, volunteering with a local NGO, touring the historic villages of Zanzibar or scaling the snows of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Parker figured she'd do all four.

The 20-year-old Salt Spring native has recently come home from an internship organized through Dalhousie University's finance and entrepreneurship co-op program and the Canadian International Development Agency.

Back in September, Parker set off from Canada with little more than

a healthy curiosity for other cultures, unbridled optimism and a hope to use her keen business sense to help those in less fortunate circumstances than herself.

Parker soon found herself just outside the northern Tanzanian city of Moshi at a centre to help impoverished street children.

When she arrived, the centre's skeleton staff and the nearly 60 children between the ages of six and 17 who call it home had a hard time paying their electricity and water bills.

Thanks to a modest bead-necklace enterprise and a lucrative new chicken coop that Parker established during her stay, however, the centre is back on its feet and has a promising future.

"I'm so happy to see that these are fully sustainable projects now," she said.

Having completed her time at Moshi, Parker took some time to view the menagerie of creatures at nearby parks and visited far-flung corners of the country, Parker set her sights on



Kate Parker, left, and Britta Rustad at the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro.

self hypnotized by the headlamps of other climbers in the distance as her chest tightened and breathing became increasingly difficult.

In spite of its reputation as the easiest of the world's seven summits, "Kili" is no walk in the park.

Altitude sickness claimed the life of a climber in a nearby party that very day and former tennis star Martina Navratilova had to turn back when she began to show potentially life-threatening symptoms of high-altitude pulmonary edema during the final 1,600-metre summit push only a few days later.

"The last day was so painful," Parker said. "I'm in my 20s and thought I was super fit, but I got so sick."

Step after laborious step, Parker said, the team made its way across the upper glacier and on to the summit where the temperature hovered just above the freezing point, a stark contrast to the Tarzan-like rainforest and banana plantations the group had walked through only two days earlier.

Suddenly, Parker added, the effort and the pain were but a memory as the entire continent spread out below.

The pair spent about an hour taking in the view, spotted a few other mountains they'd like to scale on a future trip and then wasted little time sliding down the mountain's loose volcanic rock towards the thick humid air below.

Now that she's back on the rock, that steep push up Mount Erskine never looked so sweet.

an even higher objective.

About 40 kilometres north of Moshi, at an elevation of 5,895 metres, sits the summit of Africa's highest peak. When some friends and local guides offered Parker an opportunity to make the six-day expedition, she couldn't resist.

Before long, she'd tracked down fellow islander and soccer star Britta Rustad, who happened to be in nearby Rwanda at the time, and made the pitch.

Rustad didn't hesitate

"The key was to distract ourselves any way we could."

KATE PARKER
 Climber

and soon found herself gearing up alongside Parker and the trekking outfit they'd hired to help them make it to the peak.

Though she's physically active and in great health, Parker's prior mountaineering experi-

ence amounted to only a few climbs up to the 448-metre summit of Mount Erskine.

Once the pair reached 4,267 metres, Parker said she was beginning to feel signs of altitude sickness. From that point to the summit, she found it hard to hold down any food and proceeded up the mountain at a snail's pace.

"The key was to distract ourselves any way we could," Parker said.

For much of the summit day's 15-hour slog, Parker found her-

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 Midnight Mass, Midnight at St. Paul's, Fulford (Carols at 11 pm)
 Christmas Day Mass, 10 am
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26
 Anticipatory Mass, 5 pm Saturday Dec 25
 Mass, 8 am at St. Paul's, Fulford • Mass, 10 am
NEW YEAR'S, JANUARY 01
 Anticipatory Mass, 5 pm Friday Dec 31
 Adoration 11 pm • Midnight Mass, 12 midnight • Mass, 10 am
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PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

PEOPLE

Claudia retires after 20 years

Fond memories recalled

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The woman who has been the public face of the Driftwood for the past 20 years will no longer be at the front counter as of Dec. 31, causing staff and customers to adjust to the end of an era.

There's no disputing that the face Claudia French presents to the public is a lovely one — during her teens in the '60s, she was crowned Miss Moose Jaw at the local air force base. But the personality behind the visage is equally winning.

As Driftwood sales rep Erin Jory, who worked closely with French for 18 months, put it: "Working the front desk, you're the first person people see when they walk in. And she was always, always willing to talk to anybody."

"It was so much fun and she just made it so great. She's an inspiration."

Publisher Peter McCully agrees.

"Claudia is one of those people everyone feels comfortable with. She's friendly and outgoing and as a result seems to know everyone. Of course when you know everyone, you're pretty much tapped into whatever is going on — and she is!"

French and her family moved to Salt Spring from Prince George. They had been coming to the island since 1979 and owned a small summer cabin here; through that connection, they kept a subscription to the Driftwood.



Claudia French at one of her favourite pastimes — quilting.

One day in 1990, French saw a job posting for the newspaper's circulation desk and decided to apply. She got the position and moved down two weeks later, leaving her husband to pack up the house.

French realized almost immediately that the newspaper office held a unique position in island life.

"I was fascinated by the idea that this was the community newspaper, and we were expected to be able find anything and everything — whether related to the newspaper or not," she said.

She also found her previous views and experiences were challenged by Salt Spring's quirky character. Within a couple of weeks of arriving, one of the feature stories focused on a witches' coven: a bit of a shock for the

"ultra-conservative, Christian, almost red-neck" woman she'd been when she arrived. ("My views have changed considerably since coming here," she added.)

On another early occasion, she looked through the front window to see Dietrich Luth arriving with the massive carcass of a dead sea lion strapped to the top of his car. The body was photographed before he delivered it to Vancouver Island for disposal.

During her years at the Driftwood, French has worked with four different publishers, three editors (including the company's managing director Tony Richards, who was also one of those publishers) and many reporters. She's seen controversies unfold (usually linked to proposed development) and even helped a police investigation after an arsonist came in looking for a photo of his work.

Within the office, French has been known as a great participator, coming out for every team event and acting as team captain for the Driftwood's first Relay for Life. She is the person who makes the day run smoothly by ensuring the coffee is stocked and made, with milk and soy creamer in the fridge.

Out front, she is the person who has not just patience, but a friendly word, for every person who comes in or calls.

Indeed, what she'll miss is "working with all the great customers that come in every week, or frequently, because over 20 years you sort of get to know

them a little bit."

French's retirement from the Driftwood won't mean a complete retirement from employment — she's looking out for some part-time casual work, perhaps in the medical field where she has some past experience — and she will also fill in as needed at the Driftwood.

But she's certainly looking forward to some free time, which will be easily filled with her passions for quilting and genealogy, swimming and volunteer pursuits.

"It's going to be nice to sit down on a Wednesday afternoon and read the Driftwood, instead of waiting until Saturday to get to it," French said.

Anyone who would like to say goodbye in person has until Dec. 30 to see French. The office will be closed Dec. 24 and 31.

Merry Christmas

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The Anglican Parish of Salt Spring Island Christmas Services for 2010

Friday, December 24th

Carol Eucharists with Blessing of the Creche
 4:00 p.m. All Saints, Ganges
 7:00 p.m. St. Mary's, Fulford

Icons, Incense, Carols & Candlelight
 10:30 p.m. "Midnight Mass" at All Saints

Saturday, December 25th

"And the Word became flesh"
 11:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (BCP)
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Sunday, December 26th

"On the Feast of St. Stephen"
 10:30 a.m. Eucharist in Celtic Christian Tradition at All Saints

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PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

Healing for the holidays

They survived the Brazilian Amazon! They endured the Australian Outback! They outlived the jungles of Madagascar! But nothing compares to what you will tolerate this December in your own reality series — Survivor Xmas! Who will be the last one holding the Turkey leg? Don't miss it!

Let's face it, if there is any time during the year when people need healing, it's the holiday season. In fact, the holiday season itself could use

some healing. It seems to be a little bipolar. This time of year, though jolly, can be uniquely stressful. It can be high-spirited to the point of frenzy. Lofty holiday inclinations can too easily be diverted by rabid consumerism, over-indulgent excesses, self-inflicted bouts of indigestion and eggnog hangovers. And if that's not bad enough, there's the in-laws.

For those of you who have in-laws like most — that is to say, overbearing, opinionated and

sporadically flatulent — this holiday season I am offering a spa treatment designed to help reduce your stress, basically by getting your in-laws out of the house for an hour. It includes foot reflexology intended to ease the many, many miles your mother-in-law has walked in her long, long life, all for the benefit of her children, don't worry about her, she doesn't need anything, she's fine. It also includes massage to your mother-in-law's incessantly nagging jaw

(think how sore that must get), and a belly rub to help clear your father-in-law's combustible intestines.

And if the in-laws aren't enough to stress you out this holiday season, what about Christmas fruit cake? Just what are those little green and orange neon chunks? Fruit? From where, Chernobyl? I'm sorry but I just don't trust food that glows in the dark.

Even Hannukah has its stresses (the least of which is trying to spell it). Consider the disproportionate amount of oil used to cook potato latkes. Add to that homes full of flaming candles and it's a wonder entire neighbourhoods don't simply explode during the holidays.

And then there's stress over the environment. If the planet goes belly up, that could put a real damper on holiday merriment. Don't get me wrong, I love holiday decorations. But I feel guilty over the huge carbon footprint all those electric lights are creating. Rudolph's nose



Stewart Katz

MISADVENTURES IN HEALING

alone can hasten global warming by six months.

But despite all the stress, the holidays are still potentially a time of great healing. They're a time to show gratitude, for all that we have, and for all the blessed stores that sell Tylenol and Pepto Bismol. They're a time to transcend the dark and cold, not with little electric coloured bulbs, but with the light and warmth of our hearts reaching outwards. They're a time to enjoy friends and family (preferably in short spurts), and to feel compassion for those who are alone and lonely. But perhaps most of all, the holidays can inspire us to be jolly and generous, not just while we're drunk and eating turkey, but all year long. Why not make every day a holiday?

Stewart Katz is a Registered Massage Therapist, author, playwright, comedian and actor.



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

WINTER FARE: Val Perkins, of Rainbow Road Farm, weathers the cold as she and other vendors set up the Christmas market, last Saturday in Centennial Park.

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Plantar Fasciitis
What it is and how to treat it

When your first few steps out of bed in the morning cause severe pain in the heel of your foot, you may have what is called Plantar fasciitis.

The plantar fascia is a tough fibrous band of tissue that runs from your heel bone to the base of your toes. Its main function is to support the arches of your foot. The latin ending "itis" means inflammation. So plantar fasciitis is a painful inflammation of the plantar fascia.

What's causing it? Usually plantar fasciitis is caused by constant or repetitive stress on the fascia. Misalignment-like overpronation or supination, very low and high arches, obesity, pregnancy, walking, standing/running on hard surfaces.

The best treatments for Plantar fasciitis are: rest as much as you realistically can, cooling, gentle stretching & massage, appropriate footwear, custom-made supportive orthotics with extra cushioning.

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CHRISTMAS STORIES

THE RATS' CHRISTMAS

BY CHARLIE BEAVER
AGE 11-13 CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

Like most eccentric aristocrats with strange names, mister Dugglewoof Igglesbough was decidedly ungenerous (a trait you might recognize from such characters as Mr. Scrooge, the Snow Queen and Mr. Mean).

He had no love in his life, save his love of riches and money . . . and it's going to remain that way throughout this story. I was just building, character, okay? Just because this is a Christmas story, you think he's the main character? What could be more wrong?

I think you're expecting some sort of "old-man-is-a-failure-because-he-hates-giving-but-then-learns-to-be-kind-on-Christmas-Day" story. Well, I hate to break it to you, but you're wrong.

This is a story about me, his resident rat. Yes, a rat. The number-one unexpected hero species for animated movies in the 2000s. (On that note, rats like me really do

build large cities out of trash in the sewers, are actually excellent chefs, and commonly star in popular movies).

But apart from our relative stardom, we are really decent creatures. We do our best to keep out of trouble and rarely try to steal food. We share some holidays with humans, like Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas (although we refrain from inviting relatives to our homes. The sight of thousands of rats swarming over the doorstep seems to turn most humans ballistic).

Mr. Igglesbough had not an inkling of our existence. He lived blissfully unaware of us, until one fine Christmas Eve when he was hosting a huge feast of glorious food and rich decorations. (Please note that he had not invited any guests.) My elder brother had decided that it was only right for us to participate in devouring the delicious food and drink ("It's our Christmas, too!") and so we (we being my 127 brothers and sisters and I) snuck out into the warm hallways of the house and into the dining room.

Mr. Igglesbough was not paying much attention to his surroundings. He was busy inhaling what seemed to be a whole leg of chicken slathered in gravy (a feat only achievable by drinking several pints of eggnog beforehand. This, children, is not recommended for your health).

I clambered up one of the table legs with my sibling and took note of the situation: Mr. Igglesbough was grabbing yet another chicken leg, somehow larger than the first. I wondered how this was even possible, but then all thoughts of Mr. Igglesbough's chicken legs left me. There were several large plates on the table, each filled high with turkey, roasted carrots, potatoes, chicken, sauces and even more delicious things.

Every plate had one large candle positioned above it, casting shadows all over the table.

The sight of food, warmth and the beautiful shadows made the speed of our climbing double. I was somewhere in the middle of the swarm when I scrambled

over the edge of the table. My elder brother was trying valiantly to control his younger siblings.

He was doing a kind of hopping dance of fury, waving his legs like a drowning man and shouting at the top of his lungs at any rat who would care to listen: "I said gather at the gravy dish, you foolish things! Do you understand?! Are you listening to me?!"

Taking pity on him, I shouted out too. "Oi! I think our ol' brother has something to say! I think he'll lose his cheese if we don't listen!" But our beloved older brother seemed paralyzed. He stared horrified at the other end of the table.

I followed his gaze. Mr. Igglesbough was looking in horror at us. (You would if you had 127 uninvited rats on your table.)

Just when it seemed apocalypse had come, he looked at the eggnog bottle in amazement, drunkenly muttered, "Blimey, that'sh shtrong" and passed out.

And so, we celebrated with a wonderful feast on Christmas Eve.

NO SMALL FEAT

BY EVA OLYNYK
AGE 16-18 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

Games are no small feat at our Christmas table. No; they are a loud, colourful bonanza of chocolate, tiddly winks and pennies used as makeshift Bingo chips flying left, right and centre, with the occasional penny falling on one's head like annoying faux-copper raindrops.

The noise starts quietly. If you're lucky you might hear a "B9" or "O56" or even a few snippets of Little Drummer Boy coming from the record player that nobody knows how to turn on, but somehow is always magically spewing out music.

However, this is rarely the case. You're much more likely to hear "BINGO BINGO BINGO!" yelled by a chocolate-reaching, jelly-bean-grabbing mix of people anywhere between the ages of eighty-something and four.

Cups are knocked, tablecloths are bunched into strange modern art forms, and all around people are laughing.

As the game play increases, so does the fervour of the players, who by now have probably won at least a couple of rounds and are therefore riddled with chocolate.

The poor chocolate-less people simply sit there and grumble, periodically shouting, "Oh, come on! That was one off!" in a

disgruntled and disbelieving manner, until some lucky chump wins the blackout by covering the entire board and the luckless souls are finally put to rest.

After that, the noise level as well as the hail of "tiddly winks," a game played by flinging see-through yellow Bingo chips across the table, gradually dies down.

After that, everyone waddles back to their chairs, resting their chins on their chests, the heads on each other's laps, returning to their turkey comas. When you look around, you see a gaggle of people gathered around an adult playing "Bop the Toy Story 3 Aliens on the Head," a gift to the baby of the family.

Or you may see two lovers napping, the girl with her head on the back of the soft, brown leather couch, her lover's head resting on her stomach, barely enough room for the two of them.

You can hear my Grama in the kitchen, washing dishes with kids running around her ankles and the snores of my Granpa as he rests in His Chair. Wrapping paper is spewed all over the floor like the aftermath of fireworks, with just as much colour and noise.

You'd never see an X-box at this Christmas, you'd never see an iPod; and you'd certainly never see a new TV. But it's so much better this way.

THE STAR KEEPER

BY LINA LOSIER
AGE 10 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

My name is Rose. If I remember right it was the first snowfall of the year. The wind blew cold and hard as I sat at the window. My hair was long and blonde, and I had a splash of freckles on my nose.

It was two weeks before Christmas and Papa was at war. I wished I could sneak out to war and be with him.

I have one older brother Tom, who is 15 years old, and a little sister Amy, who is five years old.

None of us are happy with Papa at war, so the house has no Christmas spirit.

The next morning, snow had settled on the trees and covered the forest floor. Icicles hung on the roof. The light

danced on the window. I was getting all bundled up with my little sister to go to school. While hurrying to clean up from breakfast, Ma handed me a red box from Granny. Granny lives in England and I was happy to get a package from her.

In school at lunch, I took time to open the box. Inside was a gold star necklace and a letter. It read:

October 23, 1944

Dear Rose,

When I was young my Papa was at war and this necklace helped me through hard times. I hope it will help you.

Love, Granny

Walking home I felt I had the Christmas spirit back. At home I searched through our book shelf to find a carol book. My town had no Christmas spirit because of the war. I

went outside again and started to sing Silent Night with my friends near the soup kitchen for all the poor people that did not have families. Their frowns turned to smiles and my heart glowed. We sang a few more songs, then left full of joy.

I opened the door to my house and there was a smell of gingerbread cookies. I helped myself to a cookie and saw Ma. Her face was sad and disappointment was in her eyes.

"Tom could not get a Christmas tree!"

I went back outside. It was bitter cold and my breath turned into a small cloud. I walked to the forest to find the perfect Christmas tree. I dragged it back to the house and we decorated it with popcorn strings, candles and a star on top.

We all said goodnight. The snow fell lightly as I drifted off to sleep.

In the morning I woke up and went to the tree.

I heard a faint knock at the door. I opened it and there stood my Papa. There was not a single present in the room, but we had an even greater present — the gift of family.



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CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

BY CHEYENNE SAWCHUK
AGE 8 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

Holly and her sister Rosie loved Christmas because their dad let them help make the wreath and their mom let them help make the gingerbread house and cake.

The Baker family thought this Christmas would be the best yet, until their Grandma got cancer.

The Baker family was so sad and so was Rosie. She made a cap in Grade 1 for her.

It became so hard to sleep in the Baker house. But if only they knew Santa was working on a medicine to help.

When it came time to get the gifts, Santa did not forget the medicine. In the morning, Grandma drank the medicine and she was OK.

The Baker family was so happy.

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and

DRIVE!

**Be Responsible
this Holiday Season**

**This message brought to you by these
community minded businesses.**


*Drinking and driving
is a gamble you can't win.*
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Happy Holiday*
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*Enjoy the Holiday Season!
Drive safely and*
DON'T DRINK & DRIVE
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Friends don't let
friends
drink and drive.
*- From your friends at the
Salt Spring Fire Dept.*
www.saltspringfire.com

Merry Christmas from Moby's
Management and Staff.
PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE



M.O.B.Y.'S
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CO-OP
MID ISLAND
CO-OP
HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY
HOLIDAY SEASON!
From the Staff, Management
and Directors of Mid
Island Co-op.

*Wishing you a safe & responsible
Holiday Season*

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*Think before you drink.
Do you have a safe ride home?*

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Stay Alive - Don't Drive

ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS SAFELY
Don't Drink and Drive

SEAFIRST
INSURANCE BROKERS
Mon. - Fri. 8:30-5 pm / Sat. 9 - 3 pm
250-537-5527 / 1-888-537-5527

**THE
HARBOUR
HOUSE** *on Salt Spring*

Celebrate responsibly with us!
Have a safe & happy holiday season.

CHRISTMAS STORIES



PHOTO BY DERRICK LUNDY

GIFT OF WORDS: Shekinah Parks appears to be having an in-depth conversation with Mrs. Claus as she visits Santa during last week's Santa Ship event, sponsored by the Bellingham and local Lions clubs.

CHRISTMAS BAD KID

BY DESMOND FINN
AGE 9 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

It was a beautiful, cold Christmas Eve and Santa was still reading the notes that all arrived on December 20th.

They were amazingly long. He had just read a very kind note, but the next one was not very kind at all!

It read:
Dear Santa,
Your elves smell like your socks and so do you yourself! And you're not real any ways! So if you were real, send me \$9,000 and one of your elves. I live on 346 Badkidslivehere Road. Ha!

From,
Harold
P.S. I was not joking about you and your elves and your socks.

What a nasty kid! Santa wanted to find out more about this so-called Harold.

Santa called up one of his elves and said to the elf as he pointed to the address.

"Can you go spy on this kid? He has written a nasty, disgusting, horrible letter to me."

The elf said in his little elf voice, "Of course I can. I'm the quickest of them all! Even though we are not quite tall..."

The elf went to Badkidslivehere Road and saw two teenagers walking down the street, in the middle of the road, but they were too far away.

All the elf could hear was: "Nice letter, Harold!"

"Harold!" thought the elf.

The elf snuck behind them to hear a bit more, but he could only hear, "Yeah, but don't you think

whoever gets the letter might feel a little sad?"

The elf tackled the man that just said that sentence!

"Get off me you guy in an elf costume!" yelled the teenager.

The other teenager grabbed the elf and threw him far.

The elf was flying, flying, flying, and flying farther and he luckily stopped flying when his head got stuck in a snowman.

He tried to escape, but it was no use!

But the elf could hear footsteps, footsteps indeed.

A kid came and yanked the poor elf out and the kid gasped as he saw who he pulled out.

"Whoa! You're an elf!" yelled the kid happily. "Dad, come see what I found."

A father came out of a small cabin's door and said, "He is so short, he could be an elf."

The elf was about to say, "Yes, it is true, I am really an elf."

But it was too bad, Harold and his friend were running up the slope and yelling, "Let go of that kid in the costume!"

But they all fell into silence. There was movement in the air! It was Santa's sleigh!

Santa swooped down, and said, "Hello, Harold, hello all!" as he grabbed the elf and threw down a present to Harold.

The kid said, "Hey, open it. All gifts from Santa are wonderful."

Harold murmured for a second and then ripped open his present. Inside was a young elf and that proved Santa was real, and it was the last time Harold tried to be mean to Santa.

A REAL CHRISTMAS

BY SOPHIA LUTTMER
AGE 11-13 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

I poke my head out from under the covers and pull it back in again quickly. It's cold!

As I snuggle back into the warm cocoon of my lumpy duvet, I try to think why I'm awake so early; suddenly it hits me — it's Christmas Day!

Scrambling out of bed I grab a thick sweatshirt and dash to Bean's room.

As I slowly open the door, I find her already awake whispering to Bexy; together the three of us tiptoe out to the living room where our stockings are hanging.

I see the Christmas tree all sparkling with light and lots of colourful packages underneath. I see three big knobby stockings.

We grab our stockings and run into our parents' bedroom. I jump onto my sleeping dad.

He groans, "It's too early. Go back to bed."

I like to watch everyone

else unwrap their first present before unwrapping my own.

There is dried fruit in my stocking as well as a fountain pen, a candy cane, socks, pistachio nuts, licorice and brightly coloured "colitas."

About an hour later we all sit down to breakfast of bacon (yum) and eggs (yuck). I'm thinking to myself, "Fast, faster!" as my parents calmly eat their food.

After breakfast I do the dishes; I'm glad I can use the dishwasher.

We gather around the Christmas tree for present time. It's my turn this year to be Santa, so I pick a present for everyone, then one for myself and the sound of tearing paper fills the room.

One of the things I get is a box of French chocolate. Yum!

After a while the living room looks like there's been a war.

Contented, I lie down on the crumpled wrapping paper, staring up through the bright Christmas light to the star on top of the tree.

When I squint my eyes the lights go all blurry... like a smoothie of lights.

Later the kids dash outside to chuck snowballs at each others' heads and toboggan shrieking off the edge of our lawn onto the pasture.

When we feel like icicles we come inside for hot chocolate and buttered toast.

At dinner that night I drink so many cups of sparkling apple juice I can hear my tummy sloshing as I move.

Our pet turkey, Pippin, is fortunately unrecognizable in his roasted state.

After apple pie and ice cream the grownups move into the living room and kick us kids out.

In my bedroom we kids check out our new stuff. I got a pretty cool silver locket. It's not a heart-shaped one; it's an oval, small and delicate. I look through my other presents.

Daddy comes in. "Dahlings, it's time for bed!"

Half an hour later, we're asleep.

To our friends on Salt Spring!
"Thanks for stopping by."
- Geoff

Geoff Hopps
Owner

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Holiday Greetings



from the staff
of the

Driftwood

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