



Driftwood

GULF ISLANDS

Monday, December 24, 2012 — YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1960 52ND YEAR — ISSUE 52

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Cover artwork by Hannah Martens, Grade 10 student at Gulf Islands Secondary School.

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13:52	3.1	10.2	23:26	0.6	2.0
21:50	0.6	2.0			
27 06:17	3.4	11.2	30 07:36	3.5	11.5
TH 11:08	2.9	9.5	SU 13:08	2.7	8.9
14:30	3.1	10.2	16:29	2.9	9.5
22:22	0.5	1.6	23:58	0.7	2.3
28 06:45	3.4	11.2	31 07:59	3.5	11.5
FR 11:49	2.9	9.5	MO 13:51	2.6	8.5
15:08	3.1	10.2	17:15	2.8	9.2
22:54	0.5	1.6	JAN 01 00:30	0.8	2.6
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NEWSBEAT



PHOTO BY SEAN MCINTYRE

WORTH CHECKING OUT: Salt Spring Island Public Library volunteer Carolin Wentworth, right, assists patron/off-duty volunteer Audrey Wild as the new facility quietly opened without fanfare on Thursday, Dec. 20. Its first children's program, a Magic Santa show, also took place on Friday. The library's official opening ceremony will be held in February. Detailed schedule and service availability information is available at www.saltspring.bclibrary.ca or calling 250-537-4666.

ISLANDS TRUST

Ganges shoreline improvements sought

Comment also sought on Star Barks property application

shoreline area near The Local Pub and Liquor Store to the Trust's Advisory Environment Committee for comment.

slumped into the fore-shore.

In other LTC application news, the owners of property along Fulford-Ganges Road near Garner Road want to amend the island's official community plan and land use bylaw to increase the range of uses permitted on their land.

The application requests changes to allow compliance of the Star Barks landscape and pet supply

store at 1429 Fulford-Ganges Rd. The business operates under a temporary use permit while property owners address the zoning conflict.

A more flexible industrial zoning will allow the business to operate as a primary commercial use and comply with land-use regulations. The change requires redesignation of the subject property from Rural Neighbourhoods to Industrial and Commercial Services.

"This proposal does not include any new construction but would enable additional commercial/industrial uses not currently permitted by zoning," reads part of a Nov. 22 staff report presented to LTC

members.

The report notes that an application for commercial use on industrial land "should be considered within the context of a potential shortage of industrial land."

Salt Spring Local Trust Committee members forwarded the application to the Advisory Planning Commission, Advisory Agriculture Committee, Advisory Environment Committee, Salt Spring Transportation Commission, BC Transit, Ministry of Transportation and the Agricultural Land Commission for further review.

A formal public hearing is required before any LUB or OCP amendments are considered.

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A wave of change could soon wash over a shoddy section of the Ganges Harbour shoreline.

At their Dec. 13 meeting, LTC members referred an application to reinforce part of the

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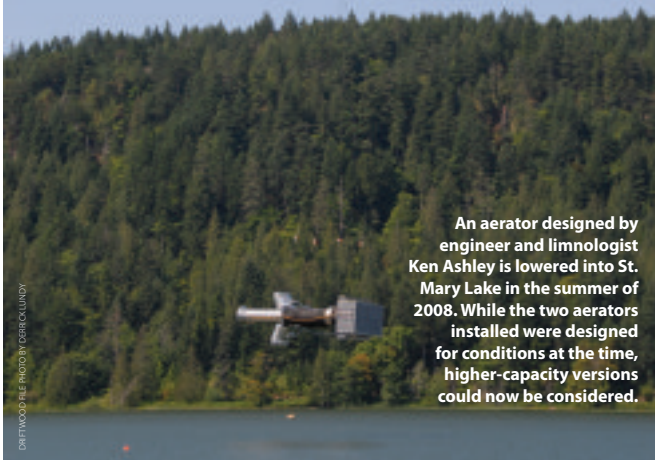
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Tipping Point

PART FOUR



An aerator designed by engineer and limnologist Ken Ashley is lowered into St. Mary Lake in the summer of 2008. While the two aerators installed were designed for conditions at the time, higher-capacity versions could now be considered.

DRIFTWOOD FILE PHOTO BY GERRI ROUNDAUD

Domestic phosphorus reduction (septic tanks)	Estimated phosphorus concentrations (ppb)	Outcome
none (no change)	20	excessive blooms
33 per cent	16	moderate/high blooms
67 per cent	12	moderate blooms
100 per cent	8.3	less frequent blooms

Even if the St. Mary aerators could eliminate 80 per cent of the nutrients that enter the lake via lakebed sediment, more work will be needed to lower the level of phosphorus released from watershed sources like septic tanks.

Source: St. Mary Lake Watershed Management Plan

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

The search for a cure

As if the task of understanding the intricacies of algal blooms wasn't hard enough, solving the problem has grown to include a variety of options that range from the costly and dubious to the downright crazy.

That's according to a veteran limnologist and engineer who spoke to a Dec. 1 gathering of nearly 100 islanders concerned about the future of St. Mary Lake.

"There's a lot of man-made solutions. If I had a dollar for every snake-oil salesman who called me up, I'd be retired by now," said Ken Ashley.

That's saying a lot given that Ashley is the guy communities call when they're struggling with strained freshwater resources.

"You're not alone," he said. "This problem that you're experiencing here was predicted long ago and it's right on cue and it's happening around the world."

The North Salt Spring Waterworks District consulted Ashley in the lead-up to the purchase and installation of the St. Mary aerators in 2009. Back then, as with today, there was an unending array of quick fixes and miracle cures.

Algaecides, for example, are chemical concoctions used to reduce algae levels. Though results can yield cosmetic benefits, products often affect "non-target" species and encourage more blooms by decreasing oxygen in the lake's lower level.

"It's an idiotic idea," Ashley said.

Dredging is another option that's been suggested as a cure for St. Mary. Whereas the removal of sediment could reduce the lake's largest source of phosphorus, problems arise

when the muck is brought to the surface.

"It's not just a supply of good topsoil because there may be some things in it that you don't want to see. There's a logistical problem," he said.

Unwanted surprises can include a host of "legacy pollutants" from farms and roadways that have slowly accumulated on the lakebed for decades.

Other options like floating wetlands that are reported to remove phosphorus, blasting algae with sound waves or use of alum treatments to trap phosphorus are costly options with questionable results, Ashley said.

Instead, resources are best spent on addressing the sources of phosphates that enter the lake from points throughout the watershed. These efforts can include educating homeowners about phosphates, making informed consumer choices and stewardship efforts like the Salt Spring Water Preservation Society's protection of nearly 275 acres of sensitive watershed lands. It could also mean consideration of a costly and politically volatile proposal: implementation of a sewer system to collect liquid waste from properties around the lake.

"Treating the symptoms is not a good investment," said Ashley.

"There's a lot of people who want to sell this and they sort of prey on your incomplete knowledge to convince you that something will work and it won't. Any other lake situation must complement watershed management because that's the ultimate solution."

Solutions for St. Mary

Options for troubled waters

Lowering phosphorus levels needs broad base of tactics

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

When a landmark community effort resulted in publication of the St. Mary Lake Watershed Management Plan nearly four years ago, the public appetite to solve the lake's problems had finally reached a pivotal stage.

Besides outlining the problem and charting specific recommendations, the report coincided with installation of a new set of aerators at the lake's north end by the North Salt Spring Waterworks District.

The project, undertaken at the NSSWD's expense, is generally considered to be the most significant step towards addressing the issue of phosphorus loading and subsequent algal blooms.

"It is not their responsibility to cure the lake, but they hustled and found some grants to help," said John Sprague, a retired professor of biology who sat on the management plan's steering committee.

Since the bloom-fuelling phosphorus that's trapped in lakebed sediment gets released when oxygen levels in the lake's lower layer plummet during the summer, aerators are designed to bring that deep water to the surface, where it is "oxygenated" before being returned to the depths.

Since the aerators were activated in the summer of 2009, the process has essentially capped the lake's leading source of phosphorus by creating an oxygen-rich layer of water along the lake's bottom.

"It has helped," said Denis Russell, chair of the NSSWD. "I hate to think what the lake would be like without the aerators."

Except for September 2011, when a sudden and as-yet-unexplained surge in phosphorus caused pre-aeration levels of almost 50 ppb (parts per billion), the aerators have effectively halved the lake's phosphorus to approximately 25 ppb.

Problem is, that's not nearly enough to meet the management plan's reduction targets of between 10 to 15 ppb.

According to the plan, lakes with anywhere between 10 and 15 ppb of phosphorus are generally safe but can still experience "moderate and occasionally strong" algal blooms. Any lake with phosphorus levels above 20 ppb is generally considered prone to severe algal blooms.

Assuming that aerators will continue to perform as predicted, more measures to control the flow of phosphorus into the lake are essential if there's any hope to bridge the gap between current levels and the management plan target level.

Strides in algal bloom-related research during the past 30 years have led to new solutions, many of which disappoint. (See Under the Microscope sidebar.)

What's more certain, at least to observers like Sprague, is a need to reduce, if not eliminate, phosphorus that enters the lake from domestic sources like septic systems.

"Any temporary cure applied to the lake itself will be just that — temporary," Sprague said.

Because even septic system upgrades and monitoring programs won't entirely reduce the flow of phosphorus, Sprague said he believes such shortsighted solutions will amount to little more than a waste of time and money.

"It would be counterproductive to first worry the citizens about upgrading, then later ask them to abandon their systems and switch to a new one," Sprague said.

"Local authorities should call in an expert on the options for stopping the septic input. They should get advice on which options would be suitable and effective."

Among the more talked-about plans to date is installation of a sewer system and a "pump and haul" system to serve properties near the lake. The latter would replace septic tanks of seasonal properties with a storage tank that could store waste for treatment offsite.

Determining a cost, outlining who should pay and making the prospect of change "financially attractive" should be the leading priority of community groups and government agencies who are in the position to enact some real changes, he said.

Part of that effort got underway during this past summer's lake-side resident outreach campaign organized by the Salt Spring Water Council, a body made up of representatives from several island water districts.

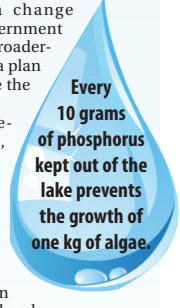
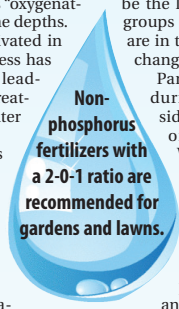
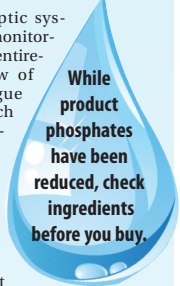
"Those interviews clearly showed that there is significant public concern about St. Mary Lake from water users, property and resort owners, and people who use the lake for recreation," said water council chair George Ehring.

This desire for a change encouraged local government officials to launch a broader-based effort to devise a plan that's hoped to reverse the trend.

The group of representatives from local, regional and provincial government bodies who want an action plan to reduce the level of phosphorus and subsequent algal blooms that occur in the lake began meeting earlier this fall and hopes to release a plan by the middle of 2013.

"The problem is serious, it's recognized as serious by the community and there's a real wish to do something about it, so we will be moving as quickly as resources permit to come to a solution, and we will be doing that with all the relevant agencies," said George Grams, chair of the St. Mary Lake Working Group.

"It will take a little time to put building blocks in place, but there's a real hunger to address the problem in a meaningful way."



NEWSBEAT

FUNDRAISER

Mask-making class to benefit Spark! Circus project

Relief team visits Thailand in January

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Island artist Andrea Russell is offering a mask-making class just in time to voice intentions for the new year, with a fundraiser benefitting Burmese refugee children living on the Thai border to be held on Sunday, Dec. 30.

Russell has directed Spark! Circus for the last seven years, bringing performers, toys and art supplies to thousands of disadvantaged children annually. She first discovered play as a form of relief working with the traumatized children of Khao Lak, Thailand, after the devastation of the 2004 tsunami. Since then she has become ringmaster to a group

of volunteer performers who travel to the village of Mae Sod and visit schools, refugee camps, hospitals, clinics and orphanages for six weeks each winter.

While the political climate appears to have shifted in Burma, Russell said the refugees who fled the country need help now more than ever.

Russell said there are 200,000 registered refugees living in the Thai camps, but the total number including illegal migrants may be double that. With recent steps toward political reform in Burma, the Thai government is threatening to send the refugees "home" and aid organizations are pulling out.

But for many of the people living around Mae Sod, there is no home to go to and it isn't

safe to try to find one. Hill tribe villages were burned and access points land-mined. Children who were born in the camps or live in orphanages may have no tie to Burma at all.

"Those kids can't go anywhere. And their needs haven't changed even though the political perception of the problem has," Russell said.

Though Russell has been at the centre ring of Spark! Circus since its inception, it was doubtful whether she would be able to travel for the 2013 trip, which goes from Jan. 5 to Feb. 23. She has spent the last year recovering from the effects of a brain tumour, surgery to remove it and a subsequent pituitary disorder.

Now cleared for travel by her medical team, Russell will go along to supervise the two



Salt Spring's Andrea Russell with Burmese orphans in Thailand as part of Spark! Circus project.

interns she trained to take over her role and make sure the manual works properly. All team members donate their time, provide their own food and accommodation and fund-

raise in their home communities to support the project. Russell's mask-making class takes place from 2 to 5 p.m. on Dec. 30. This time around she is asking people to think

about bringing a symbol, animal totem or shape that has deep significance to bring with them into the new year. Cost is \$55 for a partial face mask or \$75 for full face. Pre-registration is required by Dec. 27. Contact Andrea at 250-931-7117 or thaifirefly@gmail.com.

Examples of the water-hardened leather masks can be seen at www.museumasks.com, the Waterfront Gallery, and the former Mark's Work Warehouse building.

In addition to the mask-making class, the organization also has a fundraising campaign with indiegogo and is a little more than halfway to its \$10,000 goal.

More information and a place to make donations can be found at www.indiegogo.com/Spark2013?c=home.

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MEDIA

Driftwood makes shape and style changes

January 2 edition first for new look

The Driftwood is pleased to announce the launch of a new format beginning in the new year.

The paper will be slightly

more compact for easier handling, and will no longer be folded. That means it will have a much cleaner look since the flyers will not be hanging outside of the paper.

A few style changes have also been implemented to

make the paper even more appealing.

We look forward to delivering our new look to you.

Next week's paper, which will come out on Wednesday, Jan. 2, will be published in the new format.

Readers are also remind-

ed that the deadline for editorial submissions for that paper is earlier than usual — on Friday, Dec. 28 at 4:30 p.m. Send them to news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com, use the form on our website, fax to 250-537-2613 or drop them off at our office.

TRANSPORTATION

Surveyed drivers support car stops

Bus shelter survey input still needed

Respondents to a survey on Salt Spring hitchhiking have demonstrated clear support for the new car stop program, which allows drivers to pick up passengers at safe pull-outs on designated routes.

The Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission and Transition Salt Spring worked together to implement the pilot program on two routes earlier this year, serving Boddis Road and Robinson Road to Walker's Hook. Both routes were

areas transit users had requested for consideration for future bus service.

The survey, which was launched online this fall, sought community input to gauge the program's success. Survey Monkey results showed that while 47.4 per cent of 19 respondents rarely hitchhike, around 37 per cent do so on a weekly basis. Around 53 per cent said they would be more likely to hitchhike on roads with car stops.

Fifty per cent of drivers said they pick up hitchhikers on a weekly basis compared to daily (25 per cent), less than once a month (12.5

per cent) and rarely (12.5 per cent), but 92 per cent said they would be willing to pick up passengers "who were waiting at a designated, signed car stop with a safe place to pull over."

The transportation commission is also looking for community input into the design of two bus shelters to be located on Lower Ganges Road at Crofton Road. Members of the public can respond to a poll and enter their comments on a special website devoted to the project at <http://ssibusshelters.wordpress.com> until the end of this month.

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NEWSBEAT

ROADS

No Ganges Hill flood solution in sight

Citizen action only help

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A Salt Spring resident's effort to stem the flood of rainwater running into town on Fulford-Ganges Road may be the only form of maintenance the community can expect for some time, according to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

On Monday, Dec. 17, Tracy Stibbards could be seen by the side of the road just up the hill from Embe Bakery, where she was excavating a small trench to divert water back into the gravel verge. Drivers have been beset with cascades of water in the southbound lane of traffic every time it rains for something close to two years.

"It's ridiculous," said Stibbards. "This isn't rocket science."

While local maintenance crews at Mainroad Contracting have



PHOTO BY GAIL S.JURBERG

Tracy Stibbards redirects some of the water pouring down Ganges Hill into the roadside ditch by excavating a small trench in the gravel shoulder.

received countless complaints about the problem, which apparently started with the installation of a French drain after a housing development went in up the hill, a ministry spokesperson

has said there are no plans for action in the near future. Instead, the department is waiting for a bike lane feasibility study funded by CRD Regional Parks before it undertakes any work.

According to an email from MoTI communications officer Kate Trotter, "The ministry regularly works with the CRD to identify and prioritize cycling and pedestrian improvements. The CRD is in the early stages of completing a feasibility study on the topic of road widening and adding bike lanes/pedestrian facilities on Ganges Hill. "Pending the results of the study, there may be an opportunity to address drainage issues as part of the proposed road-widening project."

Trotter added, "In regards to the issue of rainwater running down the road, the ministry has implemented drainage improvements over the last year to address this issue."

A resident of the area who regularly walks the hill during good weather said it appears that improvement work was performed in the wrong area, since water can be seen bubbling up from the road in the same spot.

Drivers will also attest the problem has not gone away — although it had apparently improved since Stibbards' rogue roadwork.

The ministry confirmed on Thursday there are no immediate plans for work on the hill.

"While the feasibility study is underway, the maintenance contractor is regularly monitoring the area to ensure the safety of the travelling public," Trotter wrote. "Once the study is complete, the ministry will review potential options and decide on next steps for construction or maintenance in the area."

CRD facility coordinator Brad Drew said he was not aware the ministry was interested in the study, which is still in its initial stages. Surveying work has been completed and data analysis is being done, with basic information as to whether the road might accommodate bike lanes to be ready sometime in February.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Trust Council demands halt to 'cycle of decline' in ferry service

Regional government wants fare stabilization above all

Islands Trust Council is calling on the provincial government to treat ferries as an essential part of B.C.'s transportation infrastructure.

Council made four specific requests in a Dec. 20 submission to the provincial government in response to the B.C. Coastal Ferries consultation process.

"Ferries are lifelines for coastal communities and businesses; just like highways are in the rest of the province," said Sheila Malcolmson, chair of the Islands Trust Council. "The current approach to the marine transportation system is failing us and the future is predictable. As fares go up, ridership goes down, and as ridership goes down, fares go up yet again. As services get cut, coastal economies weaken further. This cycle of decline has to stop and the root of the problem lies with chronic provincial government underinvestment."

"The cost of using BC Ferries is a crucial issue for our constituents — every community we represent is dependent on the ferry system,

and the substantial cumulative fare increases over the last decade (up an average of 80 per cent and up 133 per cent on some routes) are hurting families, businesses and community well-being," said Malcolmson. "Ferry fares cover 85 per cent of operating costs, which is more user-pay than any other form of B.C. transportation, but we just can't pay more."

Malcolmson added that businesses and families invested on the islands based on repeated and consistent promises from the provincial government that it would sustain affordable, reliable ferry services.

"In this context, we were astonished to read a Dec. 17 provincial announcement of billions of dollars of investment in highways and public transit that makes absolutely no reference to ferries. Infrastructure funds flow freely to other regions of the province, yet the province is relying on ever-increasing ferry fares to pay for the ferry system infrastructure deficit. It is hard to imagine the provincial government proposing to curtail access to northern or interior communities while also suggesting new local taxes to pay for overdue repairs to provincial highways,

yet that's what's happening on the coast."

"The provincial government needs to return to the fundamental principle that built this coastal province: marine transportation is an essential part of B.C.'s prosperity. The provincial government must take full responsibility for capital costs and immediately provide sufficient funding to significantly reduce fares on the minor routes. By reinvesting in the minor routes to reduce fares and jumpstart ridership, the provincial government can help restore the economic and social health of ferry-dependent communities and the province," Malcolmson said.

"Islanders want to help with service efficiencies and have proposed great ideas over the years, but a consultation process that asks whether ferries should convert to natural gas is disingenuous — that's like asking the public what kind of fuel airlines should use. We are calling for more detailed and specific consultations with island communities before any significant service changes or cuts are considered, and we think this will work best if ferry fares are first stabilized."

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Open for usual business hours on Thursday Dec. 27

DEADLINES FOR THE JAN. 2ND PAPER:

Display Advertising Deadline: Thursday, December 20, 4pm
Classified Display Deadline: Thursday, December 27, 11am
Classified Word Deadline: Thursday, December 27, noon

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Opinion



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EDITORIAL

Washing away

As heavy winter rains returned this fall, so did a familiar Salt Spring phenomenon: the Ganges Hill torrent, AKA “the blurking road.”

It seems incredible that such a persistent stream of water is allowed to continue spewing from beneath the island’s major thoroughfare at the Fulford-Ganges and Drake Road intersection.

Excuse our ignorance of civil engineering matters if we’re making a river out of a rivulet, but shouldn’t a near-constant flow of water clearly travelling where it shouldn’t be on a primary road be a concern to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure? It’s their roadbed, after all, and, as the only route connecting Ganges with all points south, a rather important one.

THE ISSUE:

Ganges Hill drainage problem

WE SAY:

Transportation ministry should fix it now

Islander Tracy Stibbards was so annoyed by the situation recently she fashioned a small trench in the gravel to help some of the water and muck find its way into a ditch where it belongs. A main-road employee appeared to be improving on her design the other day. (But don’t get confused: this is not the fault of our

maintenance contractor.)

As puzzling as the problem itself is the MoTI’s official response to Driftwood queries. In one instance MoTI claims to have fixed the problem last year. In another the ministry advises it is waiting for a Capital Regional District bike lane feasibility study for the hill to be completed before considering further action. Pending that study’s outcome, “There may be an opportunity to address drainage issues as part of the proposed road-widening project,” states a ministry spokesperson.

What if the road isn’t widened? Even if it is, that certainly won’t be done quickly, as funding is, as always, to be determined.

If it wasn’t for a recent Supreme Court ruling in which a \$50,000 MoTI claim against a private property owner was dismissed, we might view the Ganges Hill situation as an isolated one. But Justice Elaine Adair’s Dec. 12 Reasons for Judgement document, which outlines the MoTI response to floods in the Park Drive area five years ago, raises concerns about this ministry’s willingness to dig in its heels while chaos ensues. Looking at the Ganges Hill situation in that light isn’t too reassuring.

All we want for Christmas is a safe, stable, (mostly) dry hill leading in and out of our main town. Is that really too much to ask for?



Climate challenge needs courage

BY JEAN GELWICKS

It is irrefutable that climate change is real. In case you hadn’t heard, this was the hottest year in history, the Arctic ice cap has disappeared by half and weather extremes, like Sandy, are becoming normal.

Humanity has never faced a challenge so daunting. The challenge is so huge that many people can’t really accept how serious the situation is. If we do, we are faced with a stark choice: give up on our future or set aside virtually everything else to contribute to the effort to prevent runaway climate change. And who wants to face such a stark choice?

But maybe we can see that this crisis can be a wonderful opportunity. In a recent article titled I’d Rather Fight Like Hell, Naomi Klein’s Fierce New Resolve to Fight for Climate Justice (<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/12/13>), Klein points out that the climate struggle is not about dropping all our other worthwhile projects, but really about “supercharging those fights, and weaving them all into a common narrative.”

She says, “Climate change lends urgency to our fights for social justice, like nothing else before. We have to win these battles against free trade; we have to win these battles to re-localize our economies. This isn’t just some little hobby.”

I admire Naomi. She has real courage.

I have read that 88 per cent of Canadians believe the environment should be protected, even if this slows down economic development. If 88 per cent of us would stand up and say, “I am going to fight like hell,” I think we just might do it. Goodness knows this is what is required of us. We are

VIEWPOINT

Humanity has never faced a challenge so daunting.

not going to change runaway climate change by simply changing light bulbs or setting greenhouse gas reduction targets.

We must change the way our economy works; unless it becomes much fairer, we really have no hope that it could become less ecologically destructive. And as we change our economy, we will need to build stronger local communities — another thing of great value in itself.

Look for two events coming up in the new year to help us do what needs to be done. On Jan. 20, Elizabeth May and Lisa Barrett, who is studying international law as part of her effort to address climate change, will be on Salt Spring for an evening update and discussion on the climate issue and how we as citizens can help make the changes we need.

In March or April, Transition Salt Spring and the Climate Action Council are hosting an event that will link the global issue with our local reality. Mike Lewis, co-author of The Resilience Imperative: Cooperative Transitions to a Steady-State Economy, will talk about shifting our local economy towards sustainability.

Just as the climate crisis is an opportunity to move forward with social justice and revitalizing local economies, it is also an opportunity to create healthier communities.

Einstein said, “Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex and more violent. It takes a touch of genius — and a lot of courage — to move in the opposite direction.”

I am making a New Year’s resolution to become more courageous.

The writer is a local climate change activist.

THIS WEEK’S QUESTION:

Do you like Salt Spring’s new library?

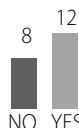
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Monday at midnight or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 4:30 p.m.

Yes No

LAST WEEK’S QUESTION:

Has media coverage of the Newtown shootings crossed the line?



Driftwood

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Amber Ogilvie
PUBLISHER
aogilvie@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Gail Sjuberg
MANAGING EDITOR
news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Lorraine Sullivan
PRODUCTION MANAGER
production@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

Editorial: Sean McIntyre, Elizabeth Nolan | Front office: James Burton, Johanna Walkner
Advertising: Leanne Brunelle, Sheena MacLeod, Drew Underwood

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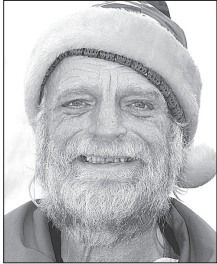
QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"If I had a dollar for every snake-oil salesman who called me up, I'd be retired by now."

KEN ASHLEY, LIMNOLOGIST & ENGINEER

SALT SPRING SAYS

We asked: What holiday gift would you like to give Salt Spring Island residents?



REG AAFKINK

One thing Salt Spring really needs is a new coat of paint on all the parking stall lines in Ganges.



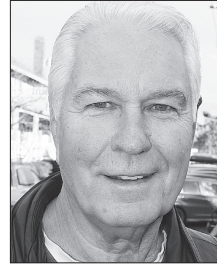
KAREN BRENNAN

Lots of family and friends nearby.



TATIANA CHARLESWORTH

A light show with enough lights to light up the harbour.



WAYNE MCINTYRE

Clean and cheap potable water.



BRUCE DUNBAR

A hockey rink.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor are 2, 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.

So much for input

Here we go again: "Public input sought on SD 64 calendar" declares the headline in the Dec. 12 Driftwood.

Turn to Page 5 and superintendent Jeff Hopkins is saying that "... the financial situation hasn't changed significantly since the four-day week was established" (NB established, not introduced) and goes on to say that they could not reinstate the five-day week without "maintaining a responsible level of contingency funding" (estimated by him to be more than \$500,000). Really? How do the great majority of SDs in the province manage to offer a five-day school week to their students?

We have heard for years about all the special programs (mostly in the high school) that would be lost with a five-day week, but what about the elementary schools? I know that there are many students who need a five-days-on, two-days-off educational

week as opposed to a four-days-on, three-days-off program. Don't the teachers we employ and the trustees we elect know this? Those few essential beginning school years where children do or do not become established readers and writers (plus many other things) should be our most basic consideration. How many students are still entering the middle school or even the high school without these skills? Can we not afford to run a five-day week for these students?

So, I muse, I will once again make my case for at least an elementary five-day school week for this public input that SD64 wants, but I continue reading on Page 5 where Mr. Hopkins is saying "for the same reason, bringing in different calendars for primary and high school students will probably not happen. This was an option that was discussed and then rejected ... nine years ago" So much for public input.

JACQUELINE THOMAS,
KING ROAD

Architects important

Doug Smith from Sunset Drive wrote to the Driftwood editor in the Dec. 12 paper that he is distressed over our range of cost estimates for the new fire hall. His suggestion not to use an architect wasn't helpful.

If Mr. Smith had attended our public meetings on the new fire hall he would have learned that decisions on fabrication materials have not been finalized. The design for the new fire hall will be fitted to the specific needs of Salt Spring Fire-Rescue, Search and Rescue, and Emergency Operations Centre.

The blueprints won't be based on drawings not intended for a seismic area like Salt Spring Island.

Every site and project is unique and out-of-the-box solutions are seldom the most efficient or cost effective. We don't know how Mr. Smith can presume that a

steel building could be built at a fraction of the cost when there are no designs at present to even start a responsible effort to price out such a complex building.

The type of materials used on the new fire hall should be chosen for cost effectiveness, structural integrity, sustainability, aesthetics, building codes, environmental sensitivity, availability, and that these materials be useable by local island tradesmen.

The trustees have long since decided to use an architect, the cost of which will be a modest percentage of the entire project. An architect's design specific to the needs of Salt Spring will be invaluable in the benefits brought to the construction process and produce a fire hall islanders can be proud of.

We invite all Salt Spring Islanders to visit our www.firehallinfo.com website and leave comments and questions they feel important to share with us.

SS FIRE DISTRICT TRUSTEES

Offer to meet

In the Dec. 12 Driftwood there was an open letter to myself from two Beddis Water District subscribers. This is the third open letter on Beddis water issues to me this year and I appreciate the identification of some current concerns.

Earlier in the year, in response to the first open letter, I outlined specific actions that would be taken to improve the delivery and management of CRD water services on Salt Spring Island. Included in my outline of actions was the plan to start moving CRD support resources from Victoria to Salt Spring. This has been done and the feedback from the CRD water districts during the transition period has been positive.

I was unable to attend the Dec. 6 Beddis Water District annual general meeting, but I prepared a statement, which was read out at the meeting. One element in my statement was an offer to meet

with Beddis subscribers in an informal town hall format to cover off any outstanding issues and concerns. This format, which I propose would be held in the evening, would provide an opportunity for input from and dialogue with a much larger base of Beddis subscribers.

I am always open to public consultation on community matters.

Subject to the wishes of Beddis subscribers, expressed through their commission board, I welcome the opportunity to meet with them in the New Year.

WAYNE MCINTYRE,
CRD DIRECTOR,
SALT SPRING ISLAND

Editor's note: The Dec. 12 open letter referred to was also penned by "Ann Wheeler and friends in the Beddis Water District," in addition to BWD subscribers Michael Friedman and Zwanette Pereboom, who were solely credited.

MORE LETTERS continued on 10

Old attitudes, guns and culture in America

BY GWYNNE DYER

Here's an interesting statistic: the second-highest rate of gun ownership in the world is in Yemen, a largely tribal, extremely poor country. The highest is in the United States, where there are almost as many guns as people: around 300 million guns for 311 million people.

But here's another interesting statistic: in the past 25 years, the proportion of Americans who own guns has fallen from about one in three to only one in five. However, the United States, unlike Yemen, is a rich country, and the average American gun-owner has four or five firearms. Moreover, he or she is utterly determined to keep them no matter what happens.

What has just happened in Newtown, Conn. is the seventh massacre this year in which four or more people were killed by a lone gunman. The fact that this time twenty of the victims were little girls and boys six or seven years old has caused a wave of revulsion in the United States, but it is not likely to lead to new laws on gun controls. It's not even clear that new laws would help.

Half the firearms in the entire world are in the United States. The rate of murders by gunfire in the United States is almost twenty times higher than the average rate in 22 other populous, high-income countries where the frequency of other crimes is about the same. There is clearly

a connection between these two facts, but it is not necessarily simple cause-and-effect.

Here's one reason to suspect that it's not that simple: the American rate for murders of all kinds — shooting, strangling, stabbing, poisoning, pushing people under buses, etc. — is seven times higher than it is in those other 22 rich countries. It can't just be guns.

And here's another clue: the rate of firearms homicides in Canada, another mainly English-speaking country in North America with a similar political heritage, is about half the American rate — and in England itself it is only one-thirtieth as much. What else is in play here?

Steven Pinker, whose book *The Better Angels of Our Nature* is about the long-term decline in violence of every kind in the world, is well aware that murder rates have not fallen in the United States in the past century. (Most people don't believe that violence is in decline anywhere, let alone almost everywhere. That's why he wrote the book.) And Pinker suggests an explanation for the American exception.

In medieval Europe, where everybody from warlords to peasants was on his own when it came to defending his property, his rights and his "honour," the murder rates were astronomically high: 110 people per 100,000 in 14th-century Oxford, for example. It was at least as high

in colonial New England in the early 17th century.

By the mid-20th century, the murder rate in England had fallen more than a hundredfold: in London, it was less than one person per 100,000 per year. In most Western European countries it was about the same. Whereas the U.S. murder rate is still up around seven people per 100,000 per year. Why?

Pinker quotes historian Pieter Spierenburg's provocative suggestion that "democracy came too early" to America. In European countries, the population was gradually disarmed by the centralized state as it put an end to feudal anarchy. Only much later, after people had already learned to trust the law to defend their property and protect them from violence, did democracy come to these countries.

This is also what has happened in most other parts of the world, although in many cases it was the colonial power that disarmed the people and instituted the rule of law. But in the United States, where the democratic revolution came over two centuries ago, the people took over the state before they had been disarmed — and kept their weapons. They also kept their old attitudes.

Indeed, large parts of the United States, particularly in the southeast and southwest,

still have an "honour" culture in which it is accepted that a private individual may choose to defend his rights and his interests by violence rather than seeking justice through the law. The homicide rate in New England is less than three people per 100,000 per year; in Louisiana it is more than 14.

None of this explains the specific phenomenon of massacres by deranged individuals, who are presumably present at the same rate in every country. It's just that in the U.S., it's easier for individuals like that to get access to rapid-fire weapons. And, of course, the intense media coverage of every massacre gives many other crazies an incentive to do the same, only more often.

But only one in 300 murders in the United States happens in that kind of massacre. Most are simply due to quarrels between individuals, often members of the same family. Private acts of violence to obtain "justice," with or without guns, are deeply entrenched in American culture, and the murder rate would stay extraordinarily high even if there were no guns.

Since there are guns everywhere, of course, the murder rate is even higher. But since the popular attitudes to violence have not changed, that is not going to change either.

The writer is an author, speaker, historian and independent journalist.

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OPINION

A Season for Singing



PHOTO BY RICK NEUFELD

Fulford Hall was a glorious spot to be on Dec. 16 with the Salt Spring Chamber Orchestra and Choir leading the community singing of Handel's Messiah.



PHOTOS BY JEN MACLELLAN

Salt Spring Singers members, led by Don Conley (at right in above photo), entertain Christmas shoppers in Ganges near Mouat's Home Hardware with seasonal carols. At right, choir member Bob Francis follows his song sheet while keeping warm by wearing a fancy elf hat.



Be a friend to your immune system during times of stress

Once again fall and winter are dancing hand in hand in the seasonal spotlight.

We awaken to morning landscapes glazed over by frost and the ominous sound of sneezing punctuating Christmas classics. Those who are lucky dispense tissue paper and those who are less fortunate are on the receiving end. But why is sickness more prominent around this time of year?

As it turns out there are a number of different reasons contributing to our immune systems' debilitation. However, they come together in a neat little Christmas package.

It starts with the turning of the weather. We West Coast folk shield ourselves from the cold winds by coming indoors. Those feeling adventurous with the holidays in full swing may saunter through stores in search of gifts and groceries for upcoming gatherings. In close quarters, that one casual cough is given the opportunity to spread itself to a variety of new hosts — and it will not turn it down!

Unfortunately, one of our immune system's biggest enemies is stress. Seeing as stress has basically incorporated itself into our annual Christmas affairs — procuring presents, reconnecting with relatives and the like — sickness may sound imminent but it does not



Brooke Middleton

LIFELONG LEARNER

have to be. While it is true that exhaustion can harm the immune system by elevating cortisol levels, that gives all the more reason to take some time to relax.

West Coast winters seldom supply our skin with sun. Nothing new about that. Without those rays, however, our Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) levels are radically reduced.

So what can we do about it? Well, thankfully, replenishing our levels of Vitamin D is as simple as eating the right foods. Mackerel, salmon, cod liver oil, mushrooms (for those participating in veganism) and eggs yolks are all Vitamin D rich foods.

As you may have guessed, milk also makes the list, however, the pasteurization process is known to destroy health-enhancing nutrients including Vitamin D. True, there is fortified milk, but the vitamins incorporated during the procedure are difficult for our bodies to accept. If possible, try to get hold

of raw milk.

Exercise is your friend (although at times you may rather avoid it). By performing "moderate exercise, immune cells circulate through the body more quickly and are better able to kill bacteria and viruses," states exercise physiologist Elizabeth Quinn in her online article "Exercise and Immunity."

If you take your activity outside there is a chance you might catch a glimpse of sunshine while simultaneously removing yourself from the crowded confines of cough-central.

All the clichés apply to your winter-wellness too, so bundle up, wash your hands and remember, "You are what you eat!" Give yourself a fighting chance by fueling your system with high-octane nourishment — tread lightly in candy-cane caverns.

Try to drink lots of water, keep well rested and remember to unwind. Sometimes, with the cold wind blowing against your window and flames licking at the fireplace, it is good to pour some tea, sit down and take a deep breath.

If you are like me and have already fallen prey to illness, then pour yourself a cup too. Might as well enjoy yourself either way!

The writer is a Grade 12 GISS student.

OPINION

Opportunities for moral evolution

BY JAN SLAKOV

As the year comes to a close, I believe many of us look back and wonder how well we have done and then, look forward: how might we do better in the future?

Looking at human evolution, we see that we have, as a species, become so powerful that this time is being called the anthropocene; our influence is such that we are now even affecting the earth's climate and geology and all other life forms. The net effect is so frightening that some people think humanity is basically an evolutionary mistake.

But others who are fully aware of the dark side of human nature are also in love with what is beautiful and special about humans and this world we live in.

This deep love is what fuels people like Jane Goodall to work towards a better future, even in the face of overwhelming odds. In her book, Reason for Hope, Goodall looks to our ability for moral evolution as a way forward in this time.

Underlying our tendency to destroy the earth is a natural human desire to strive for more, to excel, to achieve new heights.

In his book, Life, Money

INDEPTH

and Illusion, Mike Nickerson points out there is "one area in which we can grow indefinitely: [...] through the development of ourselves" — such things as acquiring skills like musical ability, or deepening our social and spiritual connections.

I believe tough decisions such as these offer us an opportunity to advance our moral evolution.

In other words, we need to change our direction and instead of measuring our success in terms of economic growth, we need to strive for overall well-being for ourselves and the rest of the natural world.

This all sounds pretty straightforward, but in real life, the decisions we need to make are not easy. For instance, the Ministry of Transportation and BC Ferries are required to cut their deficit. They are looking at cutting some routes altogether, having fewer sailings and raising taxes.

And our trustees must make a decision soon about whether or not to proceed with rezoning the land where the Salt Spring Metal Recycling business is located, from split residential/rural zoning to industrial.

On the one hand, the business has dealt with lots of waste from vehicles, appliances and other relics of our consumer culture. On the other hand, the owner established an industrial business in a neighbourhood that is not zoned for that so the neighbours have, understandably, voiced strong opposition to the rezoning proposal.

Approving the rezoning application would, arguably, encourage other people to do whatever they want with their land, regardless of its zoning.

With all the attention focused on this one business, people might assume,

as I once did, that the services offered there are unique. In fact there are several other island businesses offering much the same services.

What is unique about this business is the amount of support it has gotten, especially from members of the Chamber of Commerce board.

I believe tough decisions such as these offer us an opportunity to advance our moral evolution. Can we find win-win solutions?

For instance, when I filled out the ferry survey, I closed by suggesting they look into an idea George Monbiot put forward, that of using sail power to supplement fossil fuel power for ships. One likely downside, more difficulty keeping to a predetermined schedule, might offer an upside — that we would be forced to learn to adjust our way of interacting with time to one that is more patient and flexible.

The Salt Spring writer promotes social justice and environmental causes.

Post your comment to this piece online at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com

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RANTS and Roses

Roses

Thanks to Al for getting me out of the slush and off of Mount Tuam on Wednesday, Dec. 19. Chris

A truck-load full of fir and cedar-scented roses to Josh, who gifted us with some much needed firewood. Asking for help is never easy, but you made it a pleasure. Thanks to your generosity, our family will be warm and toasty over the holidays! Many blessings to you and yours, and may the whole world follow your example.

A big buffet of roses to the Clubhouse Bar & Grill for hosting our lovely Christmas party. Mitch, the turkey dinner you prepared was wonderful. Jim, as always, you were a gracious and helpful host. Thanks also to Heather, Emma and Josh. We are so grateful for your generosity and warm welcome. Everyone had a great time. With warm thanks from all the clients, staff and families from Community Initiatives, Choices and the GIFTS programs.

Flour power to Penny's Pantry for hav-

ing the most choices of gluten-free baked goods on the island. We so appreciate you for doing so.

Sparkly roses of all different colours to all the wonderful Salt Spring community and friends who came through for me during my time of illness and recovery, donating money, goods, services, bringing food, offering rides, making tea . . . you made it possible for me to get through this difficult time! I couldn't have done it alone. It has been an overwhelming honour to be the recipient of such thoughtfulness and care from an entire community. I am so grateful for the support and the love! Extra big bouquet of roses to a spectacular friend, Nycki Samuels, who has been by my side all the way through, who made the fundraising event happen, and drew all you wonderful people together for the cause. You rock! I am healing now, the tumour is gone, and I hope to be well enough to resume a more normal life this spring, and reciprocate in any and all ways possible. Thank you, Salt Spring! Andrea Russell

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OPINION

There auto be a law about automobiles

I think that the substitution of the internal combustion engine for the horse marked a very gloomy milestone in the progress of mankind.
—Winston Churchill



Arthur Black

WIT & WHIMSY

mately one Canadian every six days; motor vehicles kill one Canadian every four hours.

What they do to us socially is even more alarming. Marshall McLuhan predicted that mass transportation such as subways and trains was doomed in North America because “a person’s car is the only place he can be alone and think.”

That’s what our vehicles do — they separate us. We don’t walk or stroll or — beautiful word — “promenade” anymore. Cars box us in. We jump in our boxes and join streams of other boxes that take us to work or to play or to shop — as often or not in boxy office towers, boxy rec centres or big box stores.

Happily, attitudes are changing. Many towns and villages — and even the tiny island I live on — are putting in pedestrian

pathways and bike lanes for all those little trips that really don’t require motorized assistance.

Cities too — and no city more comprehensively than Paris, France. There, the city fathers have okayed Velib, a bike-sharing network that allows citizens to pick up a bicycle at one location, ride it to their destination and leave it there. They have also eliminated 23,000 parking spots downtown, narrowed cross-town expressways and replaced pavement and parking lots with nearly 10 acres worth of parks, floating gardens — even a flower market.

All of this in downtown Paris, which just a short time ago was characterized by honking horns, squealing tires and cursing drivers, all emanating from crawling daisy chains of cars and trucks courting terminal gridlock.

Has it changed the fabled City of Lights? Bien sur. For one thing, you can actually see those lights now that the blue-black curtain of auto exhaust is dissipating. Car use in Paris has dropped a whopping 25 per cent over the past decade. In the same time, bicycle use has doubled. One half of all

trips in Paris are now made on foot.

Vehicular diehards are agast. They predict massive traffic jams and widespread chaos. The head of one pro-car lobby harrumphs “We can no more eliminate cars from Paris roads than empty the Seine of water.”

Fulminate away, monsieur. Other large urban jurisdictions are moving in the same direction as Paris. Across the channel, the city of London now levies a daily \$16 “congestion charge” on all private vehicles travelling downtown. The cities of Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa have already set up bike-sharing programs; Vancouver’s working on it.

Personally, I think McLuhan was just a hair off the mark. Men don’t love their cars because they allow us to be alone. That’s what the bathroom’s for. Men love their cars because it’s the last place they can be in charge. Comedian Rita Rudner says car love is the reason most men are afraid to make a commitment to a woman.

“It’s because we can’t be steered.”

Farm housing

I attended the Trust Council meeting on Dec. 5 to hear the chair of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) speak about the challenges they face protecting farmland in the province.

I heard a man who was, in equal measure, passionate about his mandate and frustrated by a lack of resources to

MORE LETTERS

carry it out.

As a farmer on Salt Spring I was impressed by his “farmers first” stance, until the issue of farm-worker housing was raised and my heart sank. Despite three members of the Trust Council identifying the lack of farm-worker housing as a serious concern on their islands, the

chair remained immutable in his position. He has seen too many housing proposals abused to have faith in good intentions. Temporary farm workers can live in seasonal, mobile units like trailers; farmers who lease can live off-farm and commute.

What this raised for me was a philosophical breach between the ALC’s mandate to protect farmland and the twin necessity of making that land farmable in the broadest sense. Protecting farmland without a farmer to work it is akin to creating a park.

The way I see it, the problem for small-scale farmers isn’t whether arable land is available, it’s whether it’s affordable. For many, it’s not. If communities want to support a vibrant local food economy, they will need to encourage creative solutions like secure, long-term farm leases with year-round accommodation for the farmers who work the land.

Commuting to leased land might work for an orchardist or a livestock farmer, but it presents unique challenges for farmers engaged in intensive vegetable production, like ourselves. Daily commuting is costly and inefficient. The day-to-day problems that besiege a farm, like blown water lines or damage from peckish deer, can’t be monitored properly. All of this translates into financial loss.

In addition, affordable housing on Salt Spring is in short supply and renters are always vulnerable. Farmers who lease on the island face the real possibility of losing their home while operating a farm business at another location. Farm-

ing has enough challenges without throwing an insecure living situation into the fray.

I decided to test ALC chair Richard Bullock’s commitment to farmers as the other half of the farmland equation by airing my concerns when the meeting ended. His hardline stance softened, and he conceded that a “good case” would always be heard. That’s reassuring for me.

I just wish he hadn’t closed the door on the Trust Council.

MELANIE PLATZ, SMALL EARTH FARM

Clear message

The following letter has been presented to members of the Islands Trust. For the benefit of community residents I present it again for their thoughtful consideration. Our family farm borders 440 Rainbow Rd. on three sides.

I am not here to reiterate the lengthy debate that has continued over the years regarding the metal recycling business operated at 440 Rainbow Rd. Please note, however, that a number of other businesses on the island have provided this service for many years. Unfortunately, this business is inappropriately located in a residential area on too small a piece of property for the magnitude of the operation.

There are two points I wish to make abundantly clear.

Many months ago the Trust ordered John Quesnel to “cease and desist” the metal recycling business at 440 Rainbow Rd. In response, the business has continued to operate and expand. By reconsidering your decision, giving in to this bullying tactic and

allowing a temporary arrangement, the Trust is rewarding and reinforcing defiance of your rulings. Such a response makes a mockery of the authority, laws and guidance endowed to the Islands Trust for the preservation of the islands.

Secondly, it is very clear that if the property is rezoned or in some way is allowed to continue with the recycling of metal etc., the Trust is giving a very clear message to all island residents that everyone should be able to move on with their desired projects regardless of zoning and Islands Trust regulations. Those of us on Rainbow Road (or anywhere else, for that matter who wish it), should automatically receive industrial zoning, as well as 440 Rainbow Rd.

Should you go ahead with allowing this industrial operation on this property, please ensure that you are fair to the surrounding residents by giving them the same right to industrial zoning and that this is pre-approved by all levels of government.

ETHEL MAGNUS, RAINBOW ROAD

Fritz’ fate

I haven’t been here very long, but I found the Aug. 3, 2005 Driftwood article about Fritz the Cat (on the theatre’s website) very disturbing.

It seems like Donna was right, but it’s made out that alternative concerns took precedent. Now we have a theatre named after a dead cat who might have been a live cat if he’d been properly looked after. This isn’t very Salt Spring.

DANALEE GOLDTHWAITE, TWINFLOWER WAY



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

BOOKS

Brett meditates on northern journey

Wind River Variations

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Award-winning writer Brian Brett has released his first new collection of poetry in many years

with an illustrated volume dedicated to raising awareness of the Yukon's Peel River watershed.

The Wind River Variations sets Brett's creative musings of a memorable canoe journey against the crisply beautiful black-and-white photographs

of the region taken by Fritz Mueller. Both contributors were participants in an expedition jointly sponsored by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the David Suzuki Foundation that brought artists, environmentalists, writers and First Nations elders to the Three Rivers region in 2003.

"This is an incredibly fragile area," Brett said during an interview with the Driftwood, describing the tracks made by a bulldozer in the 1950s that still scar the landscape. The region is home to an endangered herd of caribou, and wilderness camping is now done with guides who remove all traces of occupation, including the remains of camp fires and used toilet paper.

"It's such a crucial area. You can't muck around with it because the damage will still be there 10,000 years later," the Salt Spring resident said.

Brett evokes the region's stark beauty in his trademark voice — one that manages to include wonder at the natural world, social commentary and self-effacing humour all at once. His precise manipulation of language serves him equally well in short

poems, multi-layered narratives and prose-poem essays. Through his words we come to appreciate an ancient landscape that includes mountains of crystals and walls of fossils, as well as goofy adolescent wolves and birds that sing at a midnight dawn.



He brings to life the humans most deeply connected to the pace — trackers who can call in a herd of caribou and elders who serve up blood soup as well as white bread and Velveta sandwiches.

With Mueller's photos, the sweeping Arctic landscape of bare mountains, striated rock and huge skies comes through in sharp detail.

"This is where all of the rocks of the world are born," Brett says in The Stones of Wind River.

Seeing them by the riverside, tumbled by ancient flood waters, you feel the truth of this idea.

The fate of the Peel

River watershed is one that's been hotly debated in the Yukon Territory House of Representatives this year, with politicians vowing to support mining development and environmental groups and First Nations equally opposed to protecting the vast wilderness area.

Representatives from both sides of the controversy came together to form the Peel Watershed Planning Commission in 2004. After lengthy consultations, the group came to a tough compromise in 2011 that called for the permanent protection of 55 per cent of the region.

In February of this year, Premier Darrell Pasloski announced a new plan to use eight core principles to guide land use in the area, none of which were included in the commission's process — and which ease the way for substantial industrial development.

The Wind River Variations carries on with the ongoing work by artists, conservationists and First Nations groups to bring attention to this little-seen area and make its protection part of the wider conversation. The book can be found at Salt Spring Books and on amazon.ca.

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People & Community

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HOBBIES

Board game frenzy rolls into Ganges

Game night livens up downtown core

BY SEAN MCINTYRE
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Don't roll up the sidewalks just yet, there's a new game in town.

Make that about 100 new games.

When Bryan Dubien picked up a board game to liven up his Salt Spring Island social life a few years ago, the last thing he expected to do was spark a craze that's got people learning and laughing like never before.

"I wanted to have a social hobby besides just potlucking," Dubien said during an interview held while he prepared the scene for what's become a weekly occurrence in Ganges.

One game led to another and it wasn't long before Dubien's penchant for board games grew into an extensive collection of new and used sets. These days, Dubien enjoys teaching recruits of all ages and abilities the basics of Carcassonne, the Settlers of Catan, Ticket to Ride, Agricola or any other of the titles among the stacks of enchantingly colourful boxes he hauls out during game nights.

"I started realizing I should put this out to more people in the com-



PHOTO BY SEAN MCINTYRE

Bryan Dubien, standing, shows the ropes of Merchants and Marauders to a gathering of game night participants at the Salt Spring Coffee Co. cafe.

munity," he said.

A strong turnout for Dubien's inaugural game night in the Thrive Lifestyle Boutique on McPhillips Avenue last month encouraged him to see if management at the adjacent Salt Spring Coffee cafe would stay open later and make some of their space available.

By the fourth week, he said, there were no fewer than 70 people taking part in the event.

"Salt Spring has needed something like this for a very long time," said Koby Trociuk, a veteran Magic player who's become a regular.

For David and Simon

Norget, a father and son team about to set sail in the Caribbean for a high-seas session of Merchants and Marauders, the event has proven a great way to get out, meet interesting folks and try something new.

"It's fun and this is very different. It does bring a wide variety of people and it's interactive," said David Norget. "The games we know little about we just venture into them and it's interactive.

"I like the cooperative aspect and there's challenge in working together so those games I appreciate a lot more."

is relatively recent, the board game renaissance has been on the rise for at least a decade.

The introduction of elaborate strategy games with beautifully decorated components has fostered a new appreciation of the genre by people disenchanted with the bland and repetitive mass-marketed board games of their youth.

It's an ironic twist of the internet age that much of the board game revolution was spread by bloggers and through online forums.

"It's kind of bridged that gap," he said. "I think a lot of people just thought they weren't geeks for a long time, but it turns out if you hang out for a couple of hours on the internet socializing that's pretty geeky, so now you're open to anything."

Board game nights take place on Fridays between 6 and 10 p.m. at Thrive Lifestyle and the Salt Spring Coffee Co. on McPhillips Ave. in downtown Ganges. Admission is free of charge.

See related video footage at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com

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CHRISTMAS DAY: Tuesday, December 25th:
10am at Our Lady of Grace

NEW YEAR'S EVE: Monday, December 31st:
5pm Vigil at Our Lady of Grace
MIDNIGHT MASS: at Our Lady of Grace (Adoration at 11pm)

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CHRISTMAS STORIES



PHOTO COURTESY RUSSELL LOGAN

LOOKING OVER HIS SHOULDER:

Santa gives a wary eye to Xena the Princess Warrior as the silver Bengal cat makes her annual visit to the Mouat's Pet Photos with Santa fundraiser for the SPCA held this year at Santa's Workshop.

More Winners

This issue of the Driftwood contains 10 of the 16 winning stories in our annual Christmas story-writing contest, with the first six published in our Dec. 19 paper. Due to the record-breaking number of entries (and resulting categories), we had to spread them out over two issues.

See the story on Page 15 of the Dec. 19 issue or online at gulflanddriftwood.com in the Community section for more details.

Winner of our 2012 Christmas cover art competition is Grade 10 GISS student Hannah Martens. Congratulations, Hannah!

The 12 Hours of Christmas

BY SARAH KYLE

GRADE 12 CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

Midnight EST: A group of young adults gathers around the kitchen of a New York City apartment. "Hey, it's midnight! Merry Christmas everybody!" The smell of roast turkey, cranberries and a hint of pinot noir wafts through a cracked window. The fragrance is caught in the wind and rises up into the air.

2 a.m. EST: After a journey of 3,600 miles, the scent lands in a small town in Northern Africa. The 7 a.m. morning sun illuminates a new mother joined by a midwife as she embraces her beautiful baby boy. Ceremonial herbs, henna plant and saffron are whisked into a dust cloud and travel up from under a curtain hung in the doorway.

4 a.m. EST: The collection of spices journeys north and swirls down on a French family asleep in their beds. It is 10 a.m. and their bellies are still full from the extravagant meal

they consumed last night. The children's shoes are filled with gifts, evidence that Père Noël paid a visit. Breaded oysters, and chocolate buttercream cake mixes with the smoke of a dying log on the fireplace and travels up the chimney, and slowly reaching the air current.

6 a.m. EST: It is now 3 p.m. in the fast-moving city of Moscow. The French scene arrives in the door of a cab where a woman has just arrived. She carries a basket brimming with gifts for a successful Christmas dinner that will take place in two weeks. As the cab takes off the smell of buttery pancakes and wonderful meat stew emerges from the bustle among the crowds and floats like a cloud through the snow that has just begun falling.

8 a.m. EST: The fragrance of Russian food descends upon a middle-aged man who struggles home to his family after a gruelling day at work. His home is not what we might expect for a man this hard working. He is

a man of the slums of Delhi. As he walks he passes row upon row of small tin cubicles; his neighbours. The smell of decay and smoke lifts through a crack in the tin roof, rising up like a balloon into the darkening sky.

10 a.m. EST: Tokyo is alive at midnight. The scent travels through a lit-up park and lands upon a young woman dressed in her work uniform. She is taking her break from her job at KFC. The aroma of her fried tempura blends with the smell of the cigarette she put out, as it takes a drift in the city breeze.

12 p.m. EST: It's 9 a.m. Christmas morning on the small island of Salt Spring. A family gathers around a well-decorated tree they bought locally a week prior, while a fresh pot of holiday blend Salt Spring Coffee is brewing. The scents are comforting and festive, but if you do a few deep breaths, relax and open your mind, you will catch a whiff of something that has been travelling along with us; the smell of love.

A Greedy Christmas

BY ELIZABETH WOODLEY

GRADE 5 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

"Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa la la la la, la la la la," sang Dingle and his twin Jingle as they finished painting a wooden monkey. Just then they heard Santa talking in a worried voice to the chief elf about Christmas.

Pringle and Pingle tip-toed over there to eavesdrop. A few seconds later they ran over and set off the emergency elf meeting alarm. Pringle then whispered, "Santa's worried, Santa's worried!" Then he leaned in closer to tell them why.

Meanwhile...
"I want everything on this list!" yelled Charlie as his helpless father stood and watched as Charlie took a baseball and hit a \$500 lamp with a well-aimed shot.

Charlie was a curly-haired, eight-year-old boy who had a little bit of trouble with Christmas. Each year he would write a two-page letter to Santa Claus full of things he wanted and if he didn't get everything he had written down he would throw

the biggest tantrum imaginable.

He had one sibling, a sister that adored him except on Christmas. And he was not going to spoil this Christmas.

Back at Santa's Workshop...
"So now the chief elf has been watching this Charlie and it seems that that monster has put everything in the 'Ba humbug' mood, and his friends are now greedy for everything too!" Pringle told everyone.

"I know what to do!" said Jingle suddenly. "And Dingle and I are going to do it!" he said as he ran toward the reindeer grabbing Dingle's arm on the way.

Back at Charlie's house...
Sarah, Charlie's sister, was looking up at the clouds when she saw a red spot with something pulling it coming toward her. Closer and closer it came.

Sarah finally realized it was aiming to land in her exact position. She ran behind a tree as eight reindeer and a red sled landed in her back lawn. Luckily it didn't cause a big commo-

tion because Sarah's back lawn was hidden by trees.

She peered into the sled slowly and saw an eye looking back at her. No, wait, there was another set of eyes now.

"Hello, we are Santa's elves, Jingle and Dingle! What's your name?" Dingle asked.

"Sa-Sarah," she stuttered.
"So you're the Charlie's sister, eh?" Jingle asked. "I have to ask you to fetch Charlie, please."

"Sure." She ran off.
A few minutes later a chubby Charlie came out holding a toy pig.

"That's him," whispered Dingle to Jingle.

Finally, Charlie saw the elves and opened his mouth to scream.

"That's right, boy, we are elves, and if you don't smarten up and get in the holiday spirit all you will get is a lump of coal," said Jingle and started toward the sled.

Charlie was too stunned to speak so he fell backwards in amazement, and thought about how he had behaved.

"You sure frightened him!" Dingle laughed and they were back just in time for Christmas.

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CHRISTMAS STORIES

Good Things Come in Small Packages

BY SOFIA PICKSTONE
GRADES 9-10 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

'Twas Christmas Day and the Baxter family stood in the knee-deep snow, tears flooding their faces as they watched their mansion burn to the ground. There were no firefighters, since they lived up north in the outskirts of Rudgwick (the midst of nowhere).

On this calm afternoon, Mrs. Scott was walking her dog Jimmy when she heard cries of despair coming from the Baxters' manor. She struggled through the snow up to where the smoke was ris-

ing. The Baxter family just stood there sobbing, shivering and covered head-to-toe in ash, as Mrs. Scott approached. Understanding the situation, she patted Mrs. Baxter on the back.

"Now, now," she said in a comforting tone, "at least you're still alive. You're lucky enough to have insurance, you know, some of us can't afford things like that."

The Baxters just cried harder in reply. Mrs. Scott sensed that she wasn't helping, so she started to resume her dog walking.

As she continued on, she realized walking away

like that at Christmas time was not very charitable, even if she considered the Baxters to be selfish and snobby. She turned around (knowing this would not please Mr. Scott) and hollered, "Baxters, you're welcome to come over for dinner at our house if you want. It won't meet your standards, but at least it will satisfy your appetite."

The children had already fled from their parents' embrace, hurrying towards Mrs. Scott, while Mr. and Mrs. Baxter stood in each other's regard. Finally, and to Mrs. Scott's enormous

surprise, they all followed her to her house, which was on the edge of being downright ramshackle.

With the children laughing and a fire blazing, the scene couldn't have been more festive.

The Baxters all squished through the door huffing and puffing, while kicking

the snow off their shoes. Surprised by this unexpected visit, Mr. Scott was completely taken aback, but calmed down once his wife quickly explained what had happened.

As guests were not anticipated that Christmas, the Scotts hadn't prepared enough dinner for all. Mr. Scott rummaged through the pantry, coming back with four cans of beans, two large homemade sausages, a block of cheese and a big bag of potatoes.

By now, the two children were playing jubilantly with Jimmy. Mr. and Mrs. Baxter were peeling

potatoes with Mrs. Scott, and Mr. Scott tended to the fire before hanging a big cauldron full of water over it to boil. It was quite the ambiance: two usually distant families happily working together, eventually even singing carols in the tiny rustic kitchen. With the children laughing and a fire blazing, the scene couldn't have been more festive.

As the clock struck seven, it was time to eat. They all squeezed in around the Scotts' table and tucked into the most wonderful Christmas feast they had ever experienced.

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Counselling

Christmas, are you missing the message?

Although it happened 2000 years ago, within its story lines lives a most encouraging and inspiring message. If you allow the holiday fever to rush you past Christmas and in to the New Year you will most certainly miss it. That would be sad. The message has little to do with gifts and everything to do with you. It can be summed up in one simple statement: God entrusts extraordinary things to ordinary people. This truth is right there in the lives of the participants – Mary the poor virgin, Joseph the carpenter, and shepherds guarding sheep in a stinky field. I wonder why God used ordinary people when he could have used kings and queens. Connect that to what we're doing here and perhaps our purpose is more than we realize. Are we here to survive life, to barely make it through or are we here to live to the best of our ability and engage in life with passion? Hopefully the latter! If you feel like you've been surviving for awhile now and would like to make a change consider giving yourself a Christmas present and learn how to live life to its fullest. Give me a call. Merry Christmas and God bless.



ELSJE HANNAH

Fitness Expert

Managing Stress

Stress is the mental or physical tension that can result from any kinds of demand on our body and systems. Stress is not necessarily a bad thing. Stress can actually be good for us. However too much stress can harm us. So it is important to recognize where stress comes from, and what we can do to manage stress in positive ways.

Stress can be caused by the day to day things noise, the demands of children or a argument with your spouse or boss. It can also come from hurriedness-the pressure to get things done and not enough time.

Ways to manage stress: 1) Take time for yourself, exercise listen to music, read a book, watch a movie 2) Plan ahead to avoid a hassle, leave extra time getting to work, do not shop at the busiest time of the day Modifying Stress; 1) Go for a walk swim, play tennis exercise relieves stress 2) Get enough sleep and rest 3) Do not try to cope on your own, talk to someone Adapting To Stress: 1) Do not try to be "super human" recognize your limits 2) Set realistic deadlines so your active not hurried Testimonies:

Love the camaraderie out of the group as we workout. Susan Hayes
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Merry Christmas To All & Best Wishes For 2013



BRENDA AKERMAN

Mechanic

Holiday trips in cold weather may require more than a well prepared vehicle.

All the regular things like snow tires, antifreeze, new wiper blades etc. are a top priority and should be checked before heading out on a holiday trip.

As well as all these things give some thought to a survival kit. No one wants to think about getting stuck in their vehicle in adverse conditions but it does happen and a small kit prepared ahead of time could make the difference between being uncomfortable and being dangerously hypothermic.

One website has a rather extensive list of materials for your survival kit and attached to it are a few paragraphs of excellent advice on what to do in case you are stranded in your vehicle. Check out <http://www.21stcenturyadventures.com/advice/lists/winterSurvivalChecklist.html>



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BC Family Law Act

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- to create awesome memories of love, love, love this Christmas
- to make this a time you and your family are relaxed and safe from all forms of domestic violence
- To be ready and optimistic for our future on this glorious isle....

The FLA comes into effect on March 18, 2013. Learn your rights and responsibilities as parents & grandparents; family schedules, property division-debt and tax consequences, restraining orders...

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A Time For Thanks...



JAN MACPHERSON

As this holiday season advances we are all reminded of how blessed we are to live on this island, in this province, and in this country.

To my clients, friends, and colleagues in real estate, I continue to enjoy and appreciate working with you especially during these times of change and transition.

In 2013 it is my hope that our sense of world community deepens and that we can work together to find creative solutions to address our challenges ahead.

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CHRISTMAS STORIES



PHOTO BY JEN MACLELLAN

HAPPY DANCERS: Harvey Moore, left, and Russ Spencer have a quick laugh during a performance with the Scottish Country Dancers at Braehaven last week. The group also paid a visit to Greenwood on the same day.

BY JULIA SUTHERLAND
GRADES 6-8 CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

It was Christmas Eve and Santa couldn't believe the blizzard outside. His face was cold as he peeked outside. He could hardly breathe. The snow flew into his eyes and cheeks stinging like needles. The howl of the wind filled his ears.

The elves were cold and tired. They shivered as they tried to finish their work.

"This might be the worst weather we've seen for Christmas," they declared to each other.

The reindeer were comfortably waiting in their stable and Santa came out to visit. He tacked up Rudolph and took him outside. His nose wouldn't light and he begged to return to the stable to be by the fire.

A great sense of concern developed as Santa, the elves and the reindeer began to realize that they may not be able to visit all the children around the

Christmas Miracle

world. Just the thought of so many sad children was more than they could bear.

Santa gathered up his best courage and with his kind face and shining eyes he appealed to his team.

"Come along everyone," he beckoned.

So the elves and the reindeer finished up their work, summoned their determination and assembled out by the sleigh. They loaded up the sleigh. It was time, despite the bitter cold, for the elves to bid Santa and the reindeer farewell and to wish them a safe and successful journey.

Santa climbed onto the sleigh once the reindeer were harnessed. The wind roared and the snow churned. He took the reins and cried out to the reindeer and off they tried to fly.

Santa's skin began to prickle, even in his heavy clothes, and his toes burned as if they were on fire. He shut his eyes against the sting of the sharp

snowflakes and held on tight to the reins. The reindeer team struggled to fly. They laboured through the storm but couldn't become airborne. They brought Santa and the sleigh

They had found a

greater power

within themselves,

determined to believe

they could make the

Christmas Eve trip.

back to the stable.

Out of the cold and the storm, Santa and the reindeer trudged back into the stable.

Everyone was quiet as they discussed their terrible problem. The elves quickly came to

the stable, having realized the sleigh had returned. The group considered their options.

Finally, one of the brightest young elves had an idea to share. "If we all fill ourselves up with the abundance of love we have for the children and people of the world, maybe with a change of attitude and approach we can make this work!"

The attitude in the room shifted as the thoughts from this one wise old elf landed in the ears and hearts of every animal and person there.

One by one, the team gathered and rallied, summoning up all of their inner strength. They had found a greater power within themselves, determined to believe they could make the Christmas Eve trip.

Santa hopped back into his sleigh. With a great burst of energy, the sleigh flew. The elves cheered. The true meaning of this joyous day had prevailed.

HOW A SNOWFLAKE FALLS

BY LINA LOSIER
GRADES 6-8 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

I gently press my hand against the windowpane. Snowflakes dance in the crisp winter breeze like doves with wind under their wings.

My breath swirls around me. I pull my shawl closer, to ward off the cold. The world is still, in peace. No one is awake. White covers the world like a big, warm quilt. Snow has embraced the trees. Birds play in the sky, riding the wind, free.

The snowflakes settle in my curly, amber hair, my cheeks are rosy from the frost. The hem of my nightgown is frozen.

I can hear the church bells in the distance, the laughter of children through town. Ladies

are out for their morning stroll. Just as an elderly lady walks by, I dash inside my house... I hear her mutter "Children these days."

The fire crackles, the flames dance fading to smoke. I sit on the chesterfield reading. I hear my two sisters Marie Claire and Catharine Grace talking.

"What would Christmas be like without presents?" says Marie Claire.

"It would be terrible! I am so glad that we are not poor," says Catharine Grace.

"It would not be bad, as long as you had a loving family like us. We are blessed," I say, looking up from my book.

My sisters say, "You are so kind Eva."

"It just would not be Christmas," adds Marie Claire.

I went to the window; the snowflakes full of light... the world was at ease.

Laughter rang through the air. Youngsters skated over the frozen lake. I closed my eyes and could not believe Christmas was so near.

"Annabelle?" She was lying in the snow making a snow angel. "Skating... the way you glide on the ice, it is like dancing," she said dreamily.

We made our way through town, skipping on the snowy cobblestone streets. Joy was in the air. People wished each other a Merry Christmas. The carolers sang hymns, making my town feel like a dream.

We came to Annabelle's house, her windows glowed a warm welcome. She smiled. "Merry Christmas Eva," looking over her shoulder.

I walked through the evening, horses and sleighs around me. How the snowflakes fall, they give us all a gift. I yearned to give joy to someone. I stopped by a store window. Silhouettes of light shone on the most beautiful pair of skates. A red-haired girl stood beside me. Her clothes looked worn, but patched with love.

"I always wanted a pair of skates. When I play on the lake I always watch the girls with skates — it seems like magic."

"There is magic," I say and carefully I take my skates and place them in her hands. "These are for you, may you find the magic."

"God bless you." The girl had tears like stars in her eyes. Snowflakes fell upon us and truly gave us the gift of friendship.

The View From Four Feet

BY EMILEE KIRKPATRICK
GRADE 12 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

Let me just start out by saying, I hate Christmas. I, Jingles the Elf (the Third) detest everything that is the holiday season.

So when C-Day rolled around again this year, no one could have been more surprised than me at what happened.

Now you're probably wondering how an elf could hate Christmas. Perhaps I should explain. Every year I work my butt off making toys for millions of ungrateful little brats all over the world. Constant hammer-

ing, painting and wrapping, and what do I get?

Nothing. Sure, maybe the big guy will add a couple of gumdrops to our paycheques, but what can I get for that, a new pointy hat? Maybe some icing to tile my floors?

You know, I never asked for this life. Who knows, maybe I would have wanted to be a professional basketball player, or even a lawyer. But no, I had to come into this world with pointy ears and a predisposed addiction to peppermint.

All my childhood, posters of Mexico and Bermuda adorned my gingerbread walls. I would

stare at those glossy white beaches for hours, longing to cast off my scratchy green suit and warm my snow-chilled bones in the Caribbean sun. Hours of work went by in blurs of red, white and green, while I dreamed of a life in the sun. But, when that bell rang every afternoon, I would come back from that sun-soaked dream world, still just a little elf in a big snowy world.

Last week, however, everything changed.

It happened last week after work, and I was trudging home down the brightly lit streets of Santaville. Stopping at the mailbox, I got out

my candy cane key and opened the little door. I could see one small red envelope resting far back in the slot.

Thinking it was just spam from the Christmas Ornament Emporium or maybe a bill, I sighed and glanced at the front. Written in a messy child's scrawl across the front was "Mr. Jingles the Elf (the Third), 43 Candy Cane Lane, Santaville, North Pole." I tore open the top, more than a little curious. Elves don't usually get letters from kids, and when they did, it was only the high-classed elves in the electronics department. I tucked the ripped envelope into my satchel and

unfolded the piece of paper. Then I froze. In my trembling hand, I held one round-trip ticket to Mexico and a note that simply said, "Thank you."

So, I guess not all those kids were as ungrateful as I thought. Maybe there are a few that understand how hard us elves work. I still hate going to work — and I would really rather not have to step on a stool every time I want something from the cupboard — but at least now, while I'm slaving away in the hot cookie-smelling work room, I'll know that there are some out there who understand. And I'll have a killer tan.

With our thanks for your readership!

We hope the holiday season delivers an abundance of glad tidings to your doorstep.

We appreciate your loyal support and look forward to your continued readership.

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What's On This Week

www.driftwoodgimedia.com/calendar



What's On - the go!
Scan this barcode with your smartphone to download, instructions below.

Mon. December 24

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Christmas with Scrooge Piano Bar.
Join Karen Arney on the piano and Patrick Cassidy for glorious and contemporary carols and songs from the Newman Family Productions' Christmas with Scrooge. Driftwood caroling songbooks and lyric sheets will be handed out. Harbour House Hotel, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

ACTIVITIES
Carol Eucharists with Blessing of the Creche. All Saints By-the-Sea. 4 p.m.
Candlelight and Carol Service. SSI Baptist Church. 7 p.m.
Carol Eucharists with Blessing of the Creche. St. Mary's Church, Fulford. 7 p.m.
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Community Gospel Chapel. 7 p.m.
Christmas Eve Mass. Carols at 6 p.m., service at 7 p.m. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church.

Mon. December 24

ACTIVITIES
Icons, incense & Candlelight. "Midnight Mass" at All Saints By-the-Sea. 10:30 p.m.
Midnight Mass. Carols at 11 p.m., service at midnight. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church.

Tues. December 25

ACTIVITIES
And the Word Became Flesh. Holy Eucharist (BCP) service at St. Mark's Church. 11 a.m.
Gary Fletcher's Community Christmas Dinner. Doors open at 11:30 a.m., food service begins at 12 noon, and celebrations continue until 2 p.m. Along with desserts, beverages and even more veggies this year, there'll be music, fellowship and decorations for Christmas. Everyone welcome.

Wed. December 26

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Run for Cover. Rock/dance band. Moby's. 8 p.m.
Tryst. DJ sets by Madd Hattr, Prigidal Sun, AppleCat, Lawrence and Je'Daia and healthy snacks by Seed of Life Catering. All ages, no intoxication. Mahon Hall. 8:30 p.m. Yoga pre-dance warm-up at 7:30 p.m.

Fri. December 28

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Vaughn Fulford. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.
Barefoot Thieves. Rock/dance band. Moby's. 8 p.m.

Sat. December 29

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Phoenix Lazare. Tree House Cafe. 6 to 9 p.m.
Barley Bros. Acoustic bluegrass/country music. Salt Spring Inn. 6 p.m.

Sun. December 30

ACTIVITIES
Leather Mask-Making Class. Taught by Andrea Russell. Fundraiser benefitting Burmese orphans. 2 to 5 p.m. Info/registration: 250-931-7117 or thairfreely@gmail.com.

Mon. December 31

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
New Year's Eve at the Legion. Newfie New Year's with Valdy until 8:30 p.m. followed by dance with live acts featuring The Pinkertons, Auntie Kate and more. Legion Branch 92. 6 p.m.
Beat the Clock with Beat & the Sneaks. Fulford Hall. 7:30 p.m.
Jon & Roy. All ages New Year's Eve bash with special guests Barefoot Thieves, InBliss, & Billie Woods. Beaver Point Community Hall. 8 p.m.
The Coalition. Rock/dance band. Moby's. 8 p.m.
Jose Sanchez and the Cuban Party. Ticket includes New Year's party favours & champagne at midnight. Harbour House Hotel. 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES
Midnight Mass. Adoration at 11 p.m. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church.
New Year's Eve Vigil. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church 5 p.m.

Tues. January 1

ACTIVITIES
Vesuvius Beach Polar Bear Swim. Check our online calendar at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com for confirmed time.
New Year's Day Mass. Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. St. Paul's Church. 8 a.m.
New Year's Day Mass. Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church. 10 a.m.
The Naming of Jesus. New Year's Day service with Eucharist in Celtic Christian tradition. All Saints By-the-Sea. Noon.

Wed. January 2

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Open Stage with Richard Cross. Every Wednesday at Moby's. 8 p.m.

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We are not allowed to accept any passes for The Hobbit.

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www.driftwoodgulfislandsmedia.com/calendar/events/

view our new online comprehensive interactive calendar of events listings

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CINEMA

- The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey** — Bilbo Baggins is approached by the wizard Gandalf, to join a company of dwarves led by legendary warrior Thorin Oakenshield. They must reclaim the lost Dwarf Kingdom of Erebor, which was conquered by the dragon Smaug. The journey takes them through treacherous lands and ultimately leads Baggins to find a magical gold ring tied to the fate of all Middle-earth.

Special notes: The theatre cannot accept any passes for The Hobbit.

EXHIBITIONS

- Gallery 8's** Christmas Exhibition of Small Works by the gallery's artists runs through Dec. 30.
- Salt Spring Gallery of Fine Art** features Peter Allan, Heide Van Impe, Ken Ketchum, Dawn Davies, Lorne Shantz, Bob Rogers and Saltspring Fancy.
- Rachel Vadeboncoeur** shows mixed-media and glass works at Island Savings.
- A Part, Apart** — an exhibition of photographs by Avril Kirby — runs at the Harbour House Hotel through December.
- Alura Gilbert** shows photos from Kenya at Fernwood Road Cafe.
- Photographic Improvisations** — First Set: Works by Michael Wall show at Café Talia through December.
- David Baughn** has an exhibition in the ArtSpring lobby until Dec. 21.
- Gilleon Proctor** shows photos from his Botanicals and Pillars of Strength series through December at Auntie Pesto's.
- Steffany McAren** has paintings on display at Penny's Pantry.
- Salt Spring Photography Club** member Margaret C. Benmore shows images at Country Grocer Roaster Cafe titled Hollywood comes to the Salish Sea, inspired by a trip to the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre in Sidney.
- Carol Adam** shows her artwork at Salt Spring Books.

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COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMING EVENTS

JAPANESE Garden Society
AGM - Jan. 10th, 4pm info:
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INFORMATION

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMING EVENTS

Community Christmas Dinner

**Meaden Hall
Dec. 25th 12 - 2pm**

Doors open at 11:30am
Meals served from 12 noon

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Happy 45th Anniversary, Val

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INFORMATION

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

ENTERTAINMENT

COLD AUDITIONS will be held for actors, male and female, interested in Colin Higgins two-act play "Harold and Maude" for 6 shows March 7-16th, 2013. Rehearsals will not be on Mondays. If you have an interest in any of the many supporting roles backstage, in the front of house or in helping with props or painting, please contact 250-537-5537 or email lymck@telus.net. This promises to be a great show, being directed by Suzanne Rouger, of last year's "Murder by Membership Only", a black romantic comedy with a strong resemblance to the popular film of the same name. The play will not be suitable for children under the age of 12. Please check out the play online but do not watch the movie version to preserve your own authentic relationship with the character. Dec. 20, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at Central, PARC portable behind the Office.

INFORMATION

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IN MEMORIAM



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This Week's Horoscope

by Michael O'Connor
www.sunstarastrlogy.com
sunstarastrlogy@gmail.com
1.388.352.2936

Tip of the Week:
A New Year is upon us. The emphasis on Mayan Cosmology speaks of a great new cycle and many have and do look to this as indicative of a 'great awakening'. That the world is changing very quickly is evident. That the pace of change has been accelerating progressively is also true and there are no obvious indications that this pace of change will decrease, quite the opposite in fact. While the world marvels at the wide array of technological wizardry, especially linked to communication devices that are increasingly available and affordable, as well as in transportation, alternative fuel supplies and many others, we must also contend with other more sobering realities. Social, economic and political unrest abounds. We are disturbed daily by the ravages of apparent random acts of violence. Our technologies have upset the natural order at many levels, the biosphere, atmosphere, water, air and the animal kingdom. Our apparent advances and gains are offset by losses which are not only deeply saddening and disturbing; they also stand to be very undoing. Thus, this 'great awakening' can also have the word 'rude' spliced in the middle of the phrase. If ever there was a time for humanity to be that much more 'on purpose', at both individual and collective levels it is now. This is where Astrology is and can be of valuable assistance. Happy New Year!

Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

This week's Full Moon suggests that the year is hardly ending with a whimper. For your part, you are in a revolutionary mood. You are ready to make some big moves and on a variety of fronts. You will shake-it up alright and not later, but now. This will become increasingly obvious this week as 2012 yields to 13! Taurus (Apr 20 - May 21) Visions of the future are dancing in your mind. Feeling secure about it would be nice. Moving forward with confidence amidst so much naughty change can be a challenge. Yet change also offers openings and opportunities. The key is to be alert, aware and prepared. The wise men are saying to you: gather knowledge, get trained and stand ready. Gemini (May 21 - Jun 21) A growing determination to push through and beyond opposition, whether within or without, is the twinkle in your eyes. Fresh perceptions and perspectives are egging you on. Hardly a spectator of life, you are excited to participate. So many people to meet and creative ideas and feelings to express - what abundance!

Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22)

The Full Moon in your sign is stirring you up! This is an emotional time of the year as it is, and it likely feels larger than ever. As with spirits, it is often best not to mix too much. In this case the emphasis is on mixing too many thoughts with too many emotions. Give yourself the gift of full presence of heart and mind rejoicing in gatherings of friends and family. Leo (Jul 22 - Aug 23) There is excitement in your air space alright! Many creative ideals are pouring in; a veritable deluge of inspirations. Rather than gawk with wonder and awe, take note and capture as many as you can before this celestial weather pattern changes. Be open and receptive and smart enough to accumulate creative visions.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22)

A creative cycle has begun! A steady learning curve is implied. The time is right to be adaptable, flexible and willing to implement creative changes into your usual approaches. Although the festive season can present opportunities to relax, you may be wise to maintain a steady pace of clearing the old to make way for what's new. Libra (Sep 22 - Oct 22) Just as with the waxing cycle of the Solstice Sun's light, you can sense and

are ready for a new day. Many thoughts, ideas and visions are flowing through your mind, possibly too many. Yet, you can simply enjoy the abundance of possibilities they imply. It may take a little while yet to make good of these, so for now simply rejoice in the glow of prospects.

Scorpio (Oct 22 - Nov 21)

You stand ready and set for the New Year. If ever there was a time when you felt the desire to get a jump on your goals, it is now. You have come through a lot these past few years; a new you is rising. Your sense of potential, feeling of possibility and reserves of talents and opportunities are twitching. On you mark...!

Sagittarius (Nov 21 - Dec 21)

Out with the old and in with the new is a classic cry for freedom. Whether it is from inner or outer blocks and barriers, or to express yourself fully, true freedom requires discipline. Vision followed by initiative, then consistent follow through, that is the ancient recipe. Meanwhile expand your scope of contacts as luck and magic are linked to social connections.

Capricorn (Dec 21 - Jan 19)

Your engines are revving and you are eager to shift into gear. There may be some unfinished business you need to attend to before you do so, however. Various facts and details from yesteryear require some attention. These may simply amount to a creative review. What was it you dreamed about that you hope you can remember? Take some time to reflect and review.

Aquarius (Jan 19 - Feb 19)

Getting away from it all sounds like the gift you hope to get. If not then you may well decide to gift yourself that very opportunity. 'It all' refers more to duties, responsibilities and chores than people. In fact you are happy to socialize, to meet and greet. Either way, woe the one who tries to sway you from your goals, to get away and do exactly as you say!

Pisces (Feb 19 - Mar 20)

Your sense of individuality is peaking and may be leaving you feeling a little punchy. Yet, any strikes and blows will be directed more towards inner enemies, doubt demons and the like. You want to be seen and heard and the only person who may be standing in the way is you. Look for the right tools for the job, to affirm your worth and share your dreams and visions.

NOTICE OF 2013 REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE

The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee will be meeting to consider various matters of general business such as applications received, bylaw reviews and meeting notes. Starting at noon, up to 45 minutes will be available for the public to discuss local land use matters with the Local Trust Committee. Those who wish to present a more formal petition, or make a delegation to the Committee as an agenda item, must make a request to the Islands Trust staff at least 14 days in advance of the meeting. Regular business meetings are scheduled for:

Date	Time	Location
Thursday	January 10	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	January 31	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	February 28	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	March 21	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	April 11	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	May 2	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	May 23	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	June 20	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	July 25	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	August 22	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	September 19	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	October 3	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	October 24	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	November 14	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.
Thursday	December 12	9:30 AM Hart Bradley Hall, Lions Club, 103 Bonnet Ave.

The proposed meeting agenda is usually available one week prior to the meeting and may be obtained at the Islands Trust office or on our website. Please note that correspondence received from the public about general matters may become part of a meeting agenda that is published online.

Visit our website at: www.islandstrust.bc.ca
Contact us at (250) 537-9144

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CHRISTMAS STORIES



PHOTO BY JEN MACLELLAN

TWO FOR TWONIES: Leticia Taylor, left, and Sophie Gold are twoonie-collecting elves at a Country Grocer food bank fundraiser held last week.



PHOTO BY JEN MACLELLAN

ALL IS BRIGHT: While a glitch meant the Tree House Cafe wasn't entered in the 2012 Light-up decorating contest, it's still a beautiful sight in Ganges. In other Light-up news, winner of the People's Choice Award in the 2012 Light-up decorating contest was the Ganges Fire Hall, which had already won Best Overall and Best Use of lights prizes. Runner-up in People's Choice (and Best Overall) was Penny's Pantry.

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Salt Spring Island Public Library

The Wonderful Story of the Little House

BY AZALIA VACHON
GRADE 11 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

There was a little Christmas tree and a pretty decorated house and the tree dropped a seed and it fell in the dirt so a new Christmas tree began to grow.

There was a little house in the forest and a little man found the little tree for his

house. The little man from the little house started to decorate the tree. There were pretty little sparkling balls and they pinned up candy canes on the tree.

The man found a nice little woman. They had a little party at nighttime. They served a big cake with Santa icing on it. There were cupcakes, a yummy vegetable

soup and a basket filled with some bread. After the party they watched a movie and ate some popcorn.

The little man told his wife, "How about we have another party tomorrow?" The little woman said, "Alright" and they lived happily ever after.

At night they went to sleep. There were a lot

of beds for all the guests because it was a Christmas sleepover party.

They all went to sleep but the little children that were at the party were still hungry so they ate all of the candy apples before they went to bed but they were still hungry. They found some candy ladybugs and ate them. Then they went to sleep.

CHRISTMAS NOT MISSED

BY JASMINE COOPER
GRADE 11 CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

Laughter filled the old train station, bouncing off the walls and floating out into the icy air. For the first time in years, lights twinkled out through the single-paned windows.

A broken-down steam train sat dark and silent on the tracks outside of the building.

A solitary person, walking to the tiny village nearby, stared in amazement at the festivities

and smiled at the children playing in the snow. Inside, the adults smiled tentatively at one another and put up the meager decorations they could find, while others prepared the various foods they had to make one big supper for everyone.

The 18-year-old girl sitting in the corner took part in nothing. She didn't talk or laugh. Every so often someone would try to talk to her, but upon seeing how upset she was, they settled for just giving her sympathetic glances.

She sat with her knees pulled up, facing the wall, her body pulled into a protective ball. Unfortunately this didn't protect her from her emotions, which were far worse than any physical feeling. Stella's world was falling apart.

How was it that everything went wrong on her favourite day of the year? It was Christmas Eve, and instead of being at home, as she had promised, she was stuck in some stupid train station still miles from her family. It wasn't only that no one had checked the engine before they left that night, but her whole trip had been messed up beforehand. She had missed a boat, her car had run out of gas, and now her only

hope of travel had broken down in the middle of nowhere.

And now, on the most magical day of the whole year, even though the ground was covered in snow, not a single flake fell from the sky.

Stella tilted her head back to stop the tears from falling. The room was too stuffy and everyone was too happy. She got up and walked out of the room, pulling her coat tightly around her. Her eyes stung in the sudden cold and the moonlight glinted on the tears caught in her eyelashes. She stared up at the Christmas star, hanging high in the dark sky, and a little sob escaped her lips.

The young girl's look of despair melted into a smile of complete happiness.

Stella's misery was not reflected by the children who were sledding on parts of old cardboard boxes down the slope behind the station. She watched them slide around getting soaked in the drifts on the edge of

the road. They had been making snowmen before and the white figures stood in clumps with the snow scraped away from the ground by their feet.

One little figure caught Stella's eye. It was a little snowman standing on the edge of the group. It had no head. The young girl who was making it was not tall enough to place it on top and none of the other children were helping her.

Stella watched for several moments, thinking of her own little sister and how she wished she was at home with her. Then as she saw the difficulties of the younger girl she put aside her troubles and jumped off the stone steps and crunched her way over to the snowman.

It only took her a few seconds to lift the head on to the snowy shoulder, then she lifted up the little girl so she could finish the face. The young girl's look of despair melted into a smile of complete happiness. She grasped Stella's hand and pulled her over to the sledding slope.

They chose a big piece of cardboard and, with the little girl sitting on Stella's lap, they raced down the slope, the freezing wind biting deep into their skin. The snow flew up whenever Stella's boots touched the packed ground and

coated them in a white blanket. They rolled off the makeshift sled at the bottom of the hill, laughing and blowing on their fingers to warm them up after holding on to the edge of the sled for so long.

Several rides later, a grandmother, coming to tell the children that dinner was ready, stared for a few moments, in a shocked silence, at the sight of the children clambering around a happy young woman walking back up the slope with a small girl perched high on her back. The smile on her face was genuine and complete.

As they ate a mixed dinner in an old abandoned train station it never faltered. As they prepared beds on the scratched wood floor and old benches her smile prevailed.

Finally, as she stared out one of the windows at the Christmas star that night, before she climbed into the worn blankets that were her bed, she understood that she didn't need to be with familiar faces to enjoy Christmas, because Christmas is a time to set aside all your worries, and to embrace the joy that is all around us in the world.

And as she stared out into the silver night, the first few snowflakes fluttered down from the sky.

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CHRISTMAS STORIES



GISS COVER ART: Finalists in the Driftwood's 2012 Christmas cover artwork contest for high school students are, from left, Gabrielle Spiess, Eden Nelson and Lauren Utter.

SANTA CLAUS

BY LEO MOLINES
ENGLISH AS A SECOND
LANGUAGE AT GISS CATEGORY
FIRST PLACE

There are just a few people who know that fairies exist. Fewer people who have ever seen them. They live in a forest far away, where no humans could go. At least that's what they expected.

One day, walking through the woods, the fairy queen suddenly heard loud crying coming from the bushes. Moved by her curiosity, she approached where the crying was coming from and saw a baby, a human baby.

She was frightened. "How can a human baby be here?" she questioned herself. Looking at the baby she felt an odd sensation. You see, fairies can't have children. They're born from the laughter and happiness of children.

In an innocent and greedy

desire she took the baby. The queen hid him under her clothes and made her way back home. At the palace, she went to the throne room to see her husband, the king.

She showed him the baby and explained how she intended to keep him with her. At first the king didn't agree with such a foolish wish.

"How can a human live with fairies?" he asked. After much discussion, he finally agreed.

The baby, now named Nicolau, started growing in the forest, having pixies as teachers and elves as friends.

Many years passed by, and Nicolau was now a fully grown man. Even though he had everything there, he felt that something was missing. He was too weird to other fairies — bigger than elves, smaller than trolls.

The king and queen saw how sad he was and had an idea. Nicolau should try to live with humans. He cheerfully accepted the suggestion.

One night he packed everything, and was ready to leave. A little elf named Swarley was with him. He was Nicolau's best friend and wanted to see the human world with his own eyes.

They travelled for many years, finally settling in a little monastery. Nicolau had become an exquisite toymaker, bringing toys for the children in the village with Swarley helping him. The peasants then started calling him "Santa Claus" for his kindness.

Unfortunately, like all humans, Nicolau got old and weak. Soon he was badly sick. Swarley, afraid, went back to the forest. He wanted to talk to the king

and queen. He wanted to make Nicolau immortal.

"It's impossible!" said the king.

Swarley then started telling how Nicolau brought joy and happiness to people, bringing light to the world.

Moved by those words, the king granted an oath of immortality to Nicolau, but there were rules. He should live away from humans and work just one day a year.

He gladly accepted and chose Christmas for being a date where people open their hearts.

To help him, a hundred elves and magical flying deer were presented. In the North Pole, lights and loud noises came from the new factory, working day and night.

And if you pay real attention, you can hear on Christmas Eve a loud and cheerful laugh being blown by the wind.



Your BC SPCA Salt Spring Island Branch expresses great gratitude and well-wishes to all animal lovers and supporters!



BCSPCA
www.bcpetsearch.com

Canadian Winter

BY ANDREW JORDAN
GRADE 11 CATEGORY
SECOND PLACE

That wink that he gave me every now and then couldn't be erased from my memory.

In the middle of July of 2011 my grandpa Alfred passed away. He would give me a sharp wink that would always leave me guessing what it meant. He would always call me Jane, even though my name was Jimmy. I never questioned it.

I wish I had a little more time with him, or could have matured more to understand his wisdom. I couldn't let any more of these thoughts enter my head.

It had snowed here in Calgary for the first day of the year. I walked out into the snow with the vibrations under my feet from the compacting snow crunching under my boots. I couldn't sit inside when I could build a snowman on the back patio of my mom and dad's new apartment patio. They had just moved.

I always built a snowman with the three balls stacked up on top of each other, and not the lame pile of snow with the head on it; those were corny and lazy snowmen. I rolled one ball for one and a half hours with no help from anyone. The balls were wider than a car tire; heck, they were bigger than a semi tire.

I wanted the snowman to stand more than six feet tall, but couldn't help but wonder how I was going to get a 200-pound ball up six feet when I am just over five and a half

feet tall.

That didn't stop me. Nothing could, and it was the first snowfall of the year.

I stopped to take a break by looking deep into the grey sky with little pieces of snow falling gently onto my face then quickly melting. I had all the balls lined up, only thinking, what would the Egyptians do?

So I jerry-rigged some contraption and got the three balls stacked on top of one another. It was done!

It looked so plain to my eye. I gasped. I'm a Canadian boy, I know this: It needed a mouth, nose, eyes and arms. I was shocked I had forgotten that I needed accessories. At my old house I could look for sticks and rocks for the facial features in the bushes and just around the old property, but now I had nothing.

I couldn't go inside and use a spatula as an arm, and a grill cleaner as another arm. I simply had nothing. It felt like winter was a fail.

I sat in my room peering out my window, the size of a book. I began to hate this new apartment. The snowman wasn't really a snowman but three boring balls stacked.

I pondered about my snowman all night till I fell asleep. The next day the sun shone on the snowman. It wasn't mine. It had a top hat, button eyes and lips, a carrot nose and branches as arms.

I could have sworn the snowman gave me a sharp wink.

Wishing our staff a wonderful holiday season. Make sure to take some time to enjoy family & friends.

Kim and David

Home Owners helping Homeowners

