

**Christmas Stories**  
Driftwood contest winners!  
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**A New Year**  
Salt Spring calendar  
INSIDE

# Driftwood

GULF ISLANDS



Wednesday, December 21, 2016 — YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1960 56TH YEAR — ISSUE 51 \$1.25 (incl GST)



Cover art by Grade 9 GISS student Alice Liu.

**Christmas Sales Continue**  
Salt Spring Books



**INSERTS**

- Country Grocer
- Thrifty Foods
- The Local Liquor
- Staples
- The Source

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RCMP

# Icy roads produce fender-bender frenzy

Police respond to 50 calls for service over past week

Poor driving conditions emerged as a predominant theme during the past week of wintry weather for local police who responded to multiple crashes.

A single vehicle went off the road shortly after 1 p.m. on Thursday afternoon in the 400 block of Cranberry Road. The 20-year-old Salt Spring resident behind the wheel is reported to have lost control of her Subaru on an icy corner.

"The vehicle rolled, but the driver did not sustain any serious injuries," said Cpl. Darren Lagan of the Salt Spring RCMP. "The vehicle sustained moderate body damage."

Police were called out again on Sunday, Dec. 18 around midday after the driver of a Jeep Cherokee lost control on snow-covered Alders Avenue. The 19-year-old driver was not injured, "although a set of Canada Post mailboxes did not fare so well," said Lagan.

Three separate incidents kept police busy to start off the work week early Monday morning near the intersection of Upper Ganges and Long Harbour roads. RCMP, BC Ambulance Service and Salt Spring Fire-Rescue crews were dispatched to the series of crashes shortly after 9 a.m.

In each case, Lagan said, the drivers lost control of their vehicles on a lengthy stretch of black ice near the base of Long Harbour Road. The driver of a GMC Sierra truck lost traction on the first hill heading eastbound on Long Harbour Road, causing his truck to slide backwards down the embankment, where it rolled onto its side. The driver, a local man in his 60s, sustained minor injuries in the crash,



PHOTO BY SEAN MCINTYRE

Salt Spring RCMP Sgt. Ryan Netzer checks the spot of one of three crashes that occurred on or near Long Harbour Road Monday due to black ice.

and his truck was significantly damaged.

The driver of the second vehicle, a Honda CRV, lost traction on the black ice, struck a road sign, spun around and crossed the roadway to rest in the opposing shoulder. The driver, a Salt Spring woman in her 70s, wasn't injured in the crash, though her vehicle was damaged after hitting the road sign.

The third vehicle, a Toyota Matrix, driven by a local woman in her 40s, sustained minimal damage after it left the roadway at the intersection of Long Harbour Road and Upper Ganges Road.

Road maintenance crews were dispatched to the area to salt and sand the roads while emergency crews assisted those involved and tow-truck attendants removed the vehicles.

Traffic was delayed for part of the morning as the road was closed to allow for maintenance and vehicle removal.

Monday accidents were also reported in the 100 block of Rainbow Road and on Sunset Drive.

On Tuesday morning, a vehicle rolled over on Musgrave Road. Further details were not available.

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SUNDAY <del>Closed</del> Dec. 25	MONDAY <del>Closed</del> Dec. 26	TUESDAY Open Dec. 27	WEDNESDAY Open Dec. 28	THURSDAY Open Dec. 29	FRIDAY Open Dec. 30	SATURDAY <del>Closed</del> Dec. 31
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## CRD office move delayed

Design tender expected in new year

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's CRD director Wayne McIntyre has been without an office since August while difficulties with a new administration centre in downtown Ganges are addressed.

Renovations meant to combine three units at the Creekside building on McPhillips Avenue stalled upon discovery of a structural deficiency which had to be repaired first, said Salt Spring's senior CRD manager Karla Campbell.

The lease agreement approved by the CRD Board in May is for three units totalling 1,856 square feet. An amount of \$41,017.60 was budgeted for annual

minimum rent plus taxes, insurance and common area maintenance for a five-year period to begin on July 1, 2016 and terminating June 30, 2021.

The structural problems discovered at the building have pushed the arrangement back by at least half a year, with a new move-in date targeted for the end of February or March.

Campbell said a redesign of the space will be necessary to work around the structural improvements. The office hopes to put out a tender by the new year.

CRD staff members who work out of the Portlock Park office have been experiencing overcrowding and difficulty accessing resources such as computer time, making an earlier move desirable, as reported at a parks commission budgeting session in August.

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# NEWSBEAT

**Heads up!**

**Swim With Santa**

Friday, DECEMBER 23

Rainbow Road Pool, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

**BRINKWORTHY PLACE**

## Low-income seniors fear parcel tax pinch for water

Brinkworthy owner files legal claim against NSSWD

BY SEAN MCINTYRE  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Residents of the Brinkworthy Place modular home park face an uncertain future as the North Salt Spring Waterworks District moves full steam ahead with proposed parcel tax increases set to take effect in 2017.

"There are some people who may have to move because of this and Salt Spring doesn't have an excess of affordable housing, so where to go?" said resident Maria Westlund.

The NSSWD currently charges Brinkworthy Place a single \$595 parcel tax as a piece of land over 10 acres in size. Under the new regime, set to take effect incrementally over the next four years, that single fee will be gradually levied to the owners of the development's 137 homes.

According to Raymond Heung, owner of Brinkworthy Properties Ltd. and parent company Tristar Communities Ltd., the NSSWD's decision leaves him no choice but to pass along costs to the park's residents, the majority of whom are on fixed incomes that afford

little space for such an additional annual expense.

"We're already feeling it. The majority of us are widows and not many of us have great pensions," said resident Cathy Thomson. "Savings just don't last anymore, and this is just one more hit."

Thomson said she's among residents who could be forced to relocate if the parcel tax increase becomes a reality.

According to information distributed in Brinkworthy Place's monthly newsletter earlier this fall, the total NSSWD parcel tax revenue from the Brinkworthy property is anticipated to rise from \$595 in 2016 to nearly \$90,000 in 2020.

"This significant increase in tax will result in a direct financial impact to you, the tenants, through the annual rent increase," reads part of the October 2016 newsletter.

If residents absorb the full increase, it would cost approximately \$650 annually per dwelling. What's got residents even more upset, however, is that they were never consulted about the plan and don't even have a vote in NSSWD board elections or borrowing bylaw referenda.

"This is taxation without representation," added resident Mary Lou McLean.

Backed by the will of its resi-



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH NOLAN

Seniors' housing at the Brinkworthy Place modular home park, where the NSSWD's parcel tax reclassification will see the tax gradually rise from \$595 in 2016 to \$89,146 in 2020.

dents, Heung and Brinkworthy Properties Ltd. are set to fight the proposed tax increase by attending the NSSWD's Court of Revision in February 2017. Since the appeal process is overseen by NSSWD staff and board members, the company foresees having to follow up with the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. If that doesn't work, the company will rely on legal action.

Marsh Heinekey, chair of the NSSWD's board, was not available for an interview but confirmed the

NSSWD has already been served with a legal notice from Brinkworthy Properties Ltd. He declined to comment further on the matter.

Heung said he filed the legal notice to get the process rolling in case he's faced with no other alternative but the courts. At issue, he said, is the NSSWD's interpretation of what constitutes a parcel and how parcel taxes can be implemented.

Brinkworthy already pays for actual water consumption, and Heung notes each dwelling uses

less water than the average residential dwelling on Salt Spring.

The NSSWD argues the changes are required to make the parcel tax system "more proportionately fair" across the district. Currently, parcel tax was based solely on the size of a given property, regardless of how the land is used.

Beginning in 2017, the new parcel tax will increase the types of property classifications to better reflect the uses of properties within the district's boundaries. Under the new tax structure, Brinkworthy would be considered "commercial residential." The new classifications will also affect multi-unit commercial properties, hotels and vacation-rental properties and commercial marinas.

According to information on the NSSWD's website, the changes will affect 12 per cent of the district's ratepayers.

Details about the NSSWD new parcel tax system can be viewed online by clicking the "parcel tax" category under the "billing and rates" tab at www.north-saltspringwaterworks.ca.

While the NSSWD had initially agreed to hold a Dec. 16 meeting with Brinkworthy residents, it cancelled that date and has denied a request for a rescheduled January meeting.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Red Letter winner

Colleen Shantz is the winner of the Driftwood's 2016 Red Letter Days Contest.

Shantz's entry was drawn from correct submissions that collected the "red letters" in a series of Christmas advertisements in the past five weeks to spell out the phrase: "Happy Holidays. May your year be full of fun, health, happiness and success."

Shantz won \$250 in "Drift-

wood dollars" redeemable at any of the contest's participating businesses.

### Rural accelerator rolls out

At a loss for what to do during the down time between Christmas and New Year's? Why not use the holiday lull to add some inspiration to your small business dreams or step up to help others thrive?

Salt Spring's Community

Economic Development Commission hosts its third and final public event on Wednesday, Dec. 28 to bring people up to speed on its new Rural Accelerator Program.

Beginning in January, the first of three cohorts will set out on a four-month program that will connect aspiring business owners with seasoned veterans. Emerging entrepreneurs can access the wisdom and practical advice about marketing, finances and business planning from estab-

lished business owners, who will receive an honorarium and the satisfaction of giving back to the community.

"They will participate in business training in all the key areas that are important," said Darryl Martin, chair of the CEDC. "The training will involve meeting other people in similar types of enterprises, and they will receive mentoring and coaching from selected individuals."

The first cohort will focus on people in the food and

beverage sector. Subsequent groups will cater to "green/sustainable" and "health and lifestyle" businesses.

The program is possible because of a grant of nearly \$75,000 awarded to the CEDC through the provincial government's BC Rural Divided Fund.

For further details about the Dec. 28 event set for the Salt Spring Inn at 2 p.m. and the CEDC's Rural Accelerator Program, contact RuralBusinessAccelerator@gmail.com.

## FOR THE RECORD

Last week's photo from the GISS Home for the Holidays Improv show incorrectly identified a masked student. The correct name is Peter Hoskins. As well, funds raised are for costs associated with attending zone and regional tournaments, not national championships — yet.



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MARINERS

# Pender Island singers bring carols to freighter crew

Hanjin Scarlet welcomes local delegation

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A crew of mariners from the Philippines and Korea who are spending this Christmas anchored aboard a bankrupt freighter received an afternoon of holiday cheer on Saturday in the form of a carolling session and visit from the Pender Islands.

The Hanjin Scarlet was left without a destination when its parent company went bankrupt in August. The skeleton crew of 16 staffing the now-empty vessel may be missing home but made new friends after the visit arranged by Ben McConchie, musical director of the Pender Island Choral Society.

"It was super awesome. It was amazing," McConchie said Monday. "We had such a great community vibe from the visit."

The Hanjin Scarlet was caught in mariners' limbo when it arrived off the coast of B.C. in late August. All ships within the Hanjin fleet were refused entry into ports because there was no money to pay for container offloading. After its crew spent nearly two months onboard, a deal with creditors allowed the Scarlet to unload its containers in Vancouver and send home half its employees. The ship was then moved to the Plumper Sound anchorage between North Pender and Saturna islands, with remaining members staying on board to maintain the vessel.

A group of about 15 Pender residents aged eight to 84 arrived at the Hanjin Scarlet Saturday, travelling on two boats that left from



Pender Islanders and crew members of the Hanjin Scarlet, a bankrupt Philippines freighter anchored in Plumper Sound.

PHOTO COURTESY BEN MCCONCHIE

Hope Bay, supported by the islands' Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue unit. Permission for the visit had been approved in advance by the captain.

Upon arrival the visitors had a tour of the empty boat and were then welcomed onto the bridge, where they sung a collection of songs from their recent holiday concert. Although the group had learned the workers were well stocked with fresh food supplies, they also delivered care packages containing items like holiday baking, wool socks and sweaters.

To their surprise, after singing, the Penderites were gifted in return by a huge lunch

prepared by the ship's cook. They have been invited back for Korean New Year in February, but McConchie hopes the freighter isn't stuck in limbo that long.

"What happened is that through the visit we've developed a friendship. I was really excited and enriched by the experience," he said.

A delegation from a Mayne Island support group organized by River Judd had originally intended to join Saturday's flotilla but decided not to go when they learned the crew had no immediate needs. Saturna Island residents were also interested in getting involved, and one of the boats used Saturday was loaned by

a Salt Spring resident.

"I told the crew everyone in the Gulf Islands is concerned, to just let them know: 'We're here for you guys if you need anything.' And they really appreciated that," McConchie said.

Peter Lahay, national coordinator of the International Transport Workers Federation - Canada, visited the Hanjin Scarlet when it was anchored near Prince Rupert at the end of September and has been monitoring the situation ever since. He reported that the crew members are being paid their regular salaries and their families are receiving their normal monthly wage allotment back home. Fresh food and supplies continue to be delivered to the ship by the union.

The B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers' Union and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, along with the Victoria Filipino Canadian Association, also prepared care packages for the crew with Christmas treats and staples from the Philippines and Korea. Representatives were scheduled to visit the ship and deliver the gifts on Tuesday.

"At this time the crew are in good spirits," Lahay wrote in a statement provided to McConchie last week. "They are excited for the islanders' visit on Dec. 17 followed by the marine workers' union visit on the 20th. Beyond that they are not in need at this time. Should the vessel's situation worsen there is no doubt that we will ask for the support that is already being so generously offered."

A video of the Pender group's visit, which McConchie live-streamed from the ship, can be seen on the Saturna Island Forum & Message Board page on Facebook.

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BC FERRIES

# Skeena goes out for refit

Bowen Queen and Queen of Cumberland to share service

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Ferry passengers travelling through Fulford may face delays beginning next month, with the Skeena Queen scheduled for refit from Jan. 3 to Feb. 8.

BC Ferries says the work is part of regulatory and preventative maintenance planning for the vessel and is necessary before its next major overhaul.

"This refit will be the last work performed prior to a significant mid-life upgrade for the Skeena Queen," stated Mark Wilson, BC Ferries' vice president of engineering, in a news release. "Conducting this work is important to maintaining safe, reliable service and we have planned this work for what is traditionally the lowest traffic period of the year."

For the duration of the refit, service on the Swartz Bay-Fulford Harbour route will be provided by a combination of the Bowen Queen and the Queen of Cumberland. As the Bowen's vehicle capacity is lower than the Skeena's, BC Ferries will be deploying the Queen of Cumberland during busy weekday morning commuter runs to better meet demand.

Unlike last year's serious scheduling disruption when the Skeena Queen was placed on the Southern Gulf Islands route during the Cumberland's refit, the reverse arrangement should not cause many problems.

"The schedule will not change much for Salt Spring — that's the big difference this time," said Salt Spring's ferry advisory committee chair Harold Swirenga.

"I really don't see any major issues with it. It's to our advantage because the Bowen, I'm sure, would overload in the mornings."

Aside from the second two runs of the morning, the Queen of Cumberland will spend most of the day on its regular Southern Gulf Islands route, with the Bowen Queen providing service from Fulford to Swartz Bay during those sailing times. The vessels will swap routes each weekday, resulting in minor changes to the early afternoon schedule.

Leaving Fulford, the regular 1:50 p.m. departure will change to 2:10 p.m. during the work week. The regular 1 p.m. sailing from Swartz Bay will change to 1:25 p.m.

The schedule change can be found on bcerries.com under Service notices.

SALT SPRING HOSPICE

# Workshop navigates the holiday doldrums

Escape the doldrums and place yourself first

BY SEAN MCINTYRE  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Whiskers on kittens, bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens may be some favourite things of the season, but Christmas traditions and expectations can often turn the holidays into an emotional nightmare.

According to volunteers with Salt Spring Hospice, family gatherings, and the warmth and celebration so commonplace at this time of year can trigger powerful emotions for people dealing with personal tragedy such as the death of a loved one or family separation.

To help people navigate the holiday season, Salt Spring Hospice is hosting its second-annual Coping With Grief Over the Holidays session on Wednesday, Dec. 21 between 1 and 2:30 p.m.

JayaLynda Cole, who facilitates the event, said she expects up to 25 people at the free pre-holiday workshop, hosted in conjunction with the Salt Spring Island Public Library.

"It's held at this time of year for people who are grieving about a recent loss, or it could be a long-term loss," Cole said.

The emotional heft of the holidays and shorter daylight hours can create a heightened sense of isolation, homesickness and grief, she said.

For many people, the result manifests itself in a general sense of lethargy, fatigue and a strong desire for solitude. Insomnia and anxiety are often associated symptoms.

Cole said Wednesday's workshop aims to give participants some useful techniques and inspiration to make it through the holidays. Part of that process is acknowledging and talking through emotions and reminding loved ones about ways to be good listeners.

"What we're going to do there is do some self care to deal with emotions," Cole said. "It's important that they explain to people what is going on with them and explain to

people who will understand so they feel accepted and supported."

Social isolation and loneliness are especially prevalent among seniors, according to a 2015 report prepared by the B.C. Care Providers Association. Based on findings from 2008 and 2009, Statistics Canada found that more than 20 per cent of seniors wanted to be more involved in social activities during the holiday season.

"People really appreciate being able to say how they are feeling," Cole said.

Cole said a good strategy to survive the holiday doldrums is to place yourself first. Don't feel like decorating this year? That's fine. Not interested in tackling the greeting card list? No problem.

"I really encourage people to choose for themselves what they want, not what other people expect of them," Cole said.

**"People really appreciate being able to say how they are feeling."**

JAYALYNDA COLE  
Grief session facilitator

Another technique is to embrace change and be unafraid to tinker with traditions. New traditions can provide people with new positive memories that will persist in holiday seasons to come.

Cole encourages people who are grieving the loss of a loved one to consider different ways to acknowledge that person during the holidays. This can be by setting an extra place at the table or taking a moment to write out or share some personal memories about that person.

"Allow your emotions to be there. Have a good cry and allow yourself to feel," Cole said. "The sense of grief might deepen and disappear, or sometimes it takes us to a completely different place."

Friends and family members can lend a much-needed ear by simply taking a

moment to listen. Loved ones can also help out around the house with holiday wrapping, cooking or a trip into town for some of those last-minute necessities.

"People really appreciate being able to say how they're feeling," Cole added. "One thing I'd suggest for people who are grieving is to reach out and ask for support."

"You'll be pleasantly surprised."

Salt Spring Hospice occasionally hosts seven-week grief recovery workshops and provides a variety of other services to islanders at different points in the grieving process. For more information about the group, visit [www.saltspringhospice.org](http://www.saltspringhospice.org) or call 250-537-2770.

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# OPINION



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 Gold - Special Section (Best of Salt Spring Island) | Silver - Community Newspaper Magazine (Gulf Islander)  
 Bronze - Local Cartoon (Dennis Parker)



2016 BCYNA Awards  
 Silver - Environmental Initiative (Elizabeth Nolan) | Bronze - General Excellence

**EDITORIAL**

## A blast of winter

Just when you thought it was all behind us, our spate of wintry weather offered a jolting reality check as black ice on island roads sent at least five vehicles into the ditch within 60 minutes on Monday morning.

The incidents capped some wild winter conditions that kept RCMP, ambulance, fire-rescue and tow-truck crews busy as treacherous roadways sent vehicles crashing and careening into ditches, traffic signs and, in one case, a Canada Post mail box.

Despite much vehicle damage, it's encouraging to hear none of the people involved in any of the crashes were seriously injured. For the most part, police say, the mishaps were slow-motion incidents in which drivers lost control of their vehicles and were lackadaisically pulled off course.

**THE ISSUE:**

Winter roads

**WE SAY:**

Maximize safe driving skills

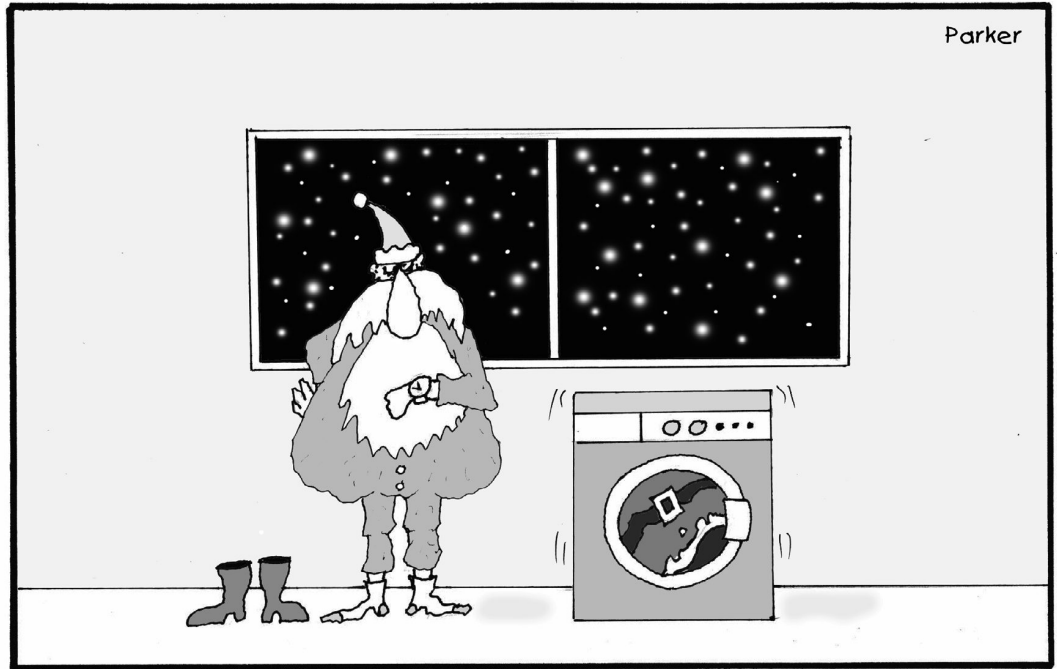
Given the range of Salt Spring vehicles in various states of winter readiness and our perpetual need to rush for a ferry, Christmas sing-along, things could have easily been so much worse, but it seems as though most island drivers get it.

When the snow flies and the roads freeze, always add some additional travel time and leave a bit more space between yourself and the next guy on the road. And if you've got doubts about reaching your destination safely, declare a snow day.

While most of us were huddled by the wood stove clenching mugs of almond nog, Mainroad Contracting staff were out in force fighting to keep up with multiple snowfalls and ensuing thaws on the island's challenging road network. There have certainly been valid complaints about a lack of sand or the time required to plow some of our side roads, but life on Salt Spring was surprisingly normal for two weeks of snowy conditions and subzero temperatures.

Given our "Mediterranean climate" and a general preference for puddles over permafrost, road crews, fellow drivers and helpful neighbours all deserve a big golden snow shovel for getting us through our taste of Canadian winter.

Now let's cue the snowdrops.



**VIEWPOINT** by Curt Firestone

## Health ministry should provide GPs

As a person who has commented several times on the sad state of primary medical care on Salt Spring Island, I want to make a few comments in regards to the Dec. 14 "GP recruitment remains concern on Salt Spring" article.

The Driftwood article recognizes that Dr. James White is retiring in 2017. This loss of a GPs is at a time when we are already short of an adequate number of GPs to serve our community. That's bad news.

The good news is Dr. Anik Mommsen-Smith arrived earlier in 2016 and as reported by the Driftwood is accepting "some" of Dr. White's patients. Those not accepted are called "orphan patients."

The Driftwood article failed to mention that as the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation has reported, Dr. Shane Barclay is also departing in 2017. Fortunately, the foundation says Dr. Barclay's patients will be accepted by Dr. Catherine Prendiville, who is taking his place at the Kings Lane Medical Clinic.

That is good news. Even better is that we have gained two women doctors, which is a great asset for the women on Salt Spring.

Some more bad news. In March 2015, the Salt Spring community was promised a comprehensive report detailing an updated model of primary health care for Salt Spring Island. That report has yet to be generated or shared with the community. Now Island Health and the Salt Spring Island Chapter of the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice tell us once again that the problems are complex, all of B.C. is experiencing family practice shortages and "the two bodies will share more news as it becomes available." In my opinion, they are not responsible for resolving our lack of primary health care providers; that responsibility lies with the provincial government.

More bad news: If you are an "orphan patient," Island Health is asking emergency rooms or a telephone nurse to act as your primary care provider. The good news is that Island Health recognizes that the province is failing to provide B.C. with enough GPs and nurse practitioners. Yet, we should not accept that Lady Minto Hospital's emergency department is our primary care provider. Yes, they provide good care, but emergency rooms are expensive and they are there for emergencies, not for routine physical exams and the treatment of flu and other common health issues.

Every person who does not have a primary care provider knows that we have a provincial shortage of both general practitioners and specialty doctors. This is not an issue that can be resolved by Island Health or the Salt Spring family MDs. This is a problem that continues to fester under the Liberal provincial government. Terry Lake is the health minister and he must be held accountable.

If you do not have a primary doctor or nurse, then you are not receiving the level of care that is experienced by 65 to 70 per cent of your neighbours. Yes, The Liberal government could do something about this if it was made a priority. And it is time to make it a priority. It is already an embarrassment.

In early 2017, candidates for MLA will be asking for your vote. Please ask them if electing them will improve your access to primary health care. Each and every B.C. resident has the human right to the same level of basic health care.

*The writer was formerly a member of the Salt Spring Health Advancement Coalition and its predecessor, the Physician Recruitment Committee.*

**This is a problem that continues to fester under the Liberal provincial government.**

**THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:**

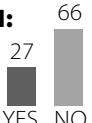
### Was road maintenance sufficient during the past weeks?

Cast your ballot online at [www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com](http://www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com) before 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:**

### Do public rallies have any political impact?



## Driftwood

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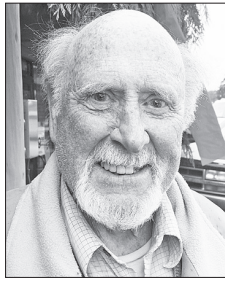
# ISLAND VOICES

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK: "Savings just don't last anymore, and this is just one more hit."**

CATHY THOMSON, BRINKWORTHY RESIDENT, ON NSSWD PARCEL TAX HIKE

## SALT SPRING SAYS

**We asked:** What is your Christmas wish for the world?



**TOM CARTWRIGHT**  
*Solid and lasting peace.*



**ROSS HOWARD**  
*My Christmas wish for the world is that Donald Trump doesn't screw it up.*



**DIANETTE MAYHEW**  
*End the greed, realize how blessed we are, and never take anything for granted.*



**MAGGIE SQUIRES**  
*Peace.*



**BABS O'BRIEN**  
*Peace within, and peace without.*

## Letters to the editor

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

### Further, not closer

Wayne Tepper writes in his Dec. 14 letter that a local community commission is not an option for Salt Spring, and proceeds to discount the idea.

But in doing so he vastly understates the scope and budgeting capacity of an LCC and ignores the fact that it would be locally elected. He accepts without question that the province failed to offer this alternative during the current incorporation study, although it had done so as late as 2013. Most important, he ignores that this option would be gone forever if we incorporated.

Mr. Tepper foresees efficiencies under incorporation, as a single body

would coordinate fire, water and other services. But is this a solution in search of a problem? What improvements to water service, for example, would come about under incorporation? Coordinate all you like, St. Mary Lake will not get any bigger. More to the point, what improvements could come about only if we foresaw vast new expenditures?

One difficulty that pro-incorporators face is that theirs is the big government option. This is not unreasonable if we judge that the island would get value for money. But when Bowen incorporated, their study predicted a need for five municipal staff. They now have 35. With three times the population of Bowen, what would our municipal establishment be? The Salt

Spring Island Incorporation Study Committee's Final Report, perhaps wisely, does not care to predict.

Those who favour incorporation are also keen for greater on-island decision making. But is this another straw man? The Islands Trust Council, at least, has never reversed a local decision on Salt Spring.

As for the CRD, single local directors have been very effective. We have an arts centre, a swimming pool, a magnificent new library, a bus service and a growing volunteer-led pathway system, all under the CRD. You know, all those things we can't have because we are not incorporated.

Moreover, our final court of appeal for an ill-advised local decision is now Trust Council, made up of 26 islanders from the Trust area.

But under incorporation, the town council gets to end run Trust Council and appeal not to fellow islanders of the Trust area, but to the minister of the day. Would this provincial politician share the vision of the legislature which unanimously placed the islands in trust? Or would this become a device for increasing development?

Under the incorporation model, governance gets further away from us, not closer.

**DAVID BORROWMAN,**  
VESUVIUS

### More on meter issue

We want to thank you for the Dec. 14 article about BC Hydro's heartless, unconscionable and deceptive treatment of the Weigel family by dis-

connecting their electricity.

Many of us have opposed being forced to accept "smart" meters and have received disrespectful treatment by BC Hydro. Those of us who still have analog meters are paying an extra \$32 each month for this "privilege" that BC Hydro assured us we would be able to continue to have. Recently it seems that they are treating many Salt Spring Islanders (and others within the province) with contempt and bullying, forcing them to take unacceptable so-called "turned-off" meters while refusing to supply them with analog or digital meters. (Many have already accepted smart meters who could not afford the extra fees.)

Sharon Noble, who was

quoted in the article, is a tireless advocate against the electro-magnetic radiation generated by so-called smart meters. There are numerous health and safety issues. Check out the Coalition to Stop Smart Meters website for important information.

Our analog meter expires in 2018 and we are fearful that we could have our power cut off, regardless of paying the fees, if we refuse a smart (or even a radio-off) one.

We urge others in our communities to take notice and inform yourselves of this blatant disregard for our health, safety and rights.

**WENDY JUDITH CUTLER**  
**AND CORRIE HOPE FURST,**  
ROLAND ROAD

**MORE LETTERS** continued on 8

# Keep up the search for St. Mary Lake solutions

BY JIM STANDEN

I have always been impressed with innovation. Especially in the form of outside-the-box creativity. The kind of solution that hits our forehead with "Why didn't I think of that?"

From the North Salt Spring Waterworks District board reporting, we see that evaporation is the largest consumer of our water from St. Mary Lake, and that struck me as not only surprising and shocking but a problem that some creative thinking and action could mitigate. Since evaporation is so huge, perhaps a reduction of that activity by a small amount, say five to 10 per cent, is enough to get us through the hard times (paired with conservation and our own storage solutions, of course).

I was so pleased to see Greg Ast write "Reservoir idea worth exploring" about innovative solutions in the Dec. 7 Driftwood, and Alan Cunningham's follow-up piece ("Incorporation could aid water woes") in the Dec. 14 issue. I had been thinking of writing a similar letter encouraging the same theme of innovation solutions.

Was it during my travels in France,

cycling along the extensive European canal network, where I realized that some brilliant person way back in history decided to plant huge trees along the canals? Hundreds of miles of big trees. Why? They are beautiful but they are also very practical. The shade they produce reduces evaporation in the summer when they are fully leafed out. The power requirement is zero and you don't even have to water the big fellas.

Or was it the Warka water towers in Ethiopia that fill with condensation, or mist gathering cloth, both of which can produce safe drinking water in remote locations, again with no power. Or the amazingly outrageous inventions at <http://landartgenerator.org>. Innovation abounds.

But to the problem at hand, St. Mary Lake. From what I understand, raising the lake is the current plan. But those septic fields, yikes! I really appreciate Greg's thoughts on creating an additional reservoir, which could provide a great solution, perhaps at significantly less cost.

## INDEPTH

But instead of raising the lake, why not lower it or maybe change it?

Jim has finally flipped out, you say? I respond that it used to be popular to say man would never fly.

Let us pursue my theme. Archimedes would say that for every thing removed, water would rush in to replace it.

If we were to somehow dig down, and remove some bottom silt, sand or soil, then for every wheelbarrow extracted we would have a wheelbarrow of additional water stored. The extracted material could be a commercial product (as soil is pretty rare on Salt Spring). Interesting? The evaporation would stay the same. As more material is extracted, the water would be deeper, and maybe would warm up less, resulting in less evaporation and maybe even less weed growth. It would also serve to remove some of the silt that enters the lake every year and reduces the water supply.

Are there things under that water we don't need or want? I am thinking abandoned car bodies or just junk. Removing those is probably a good idea for a lot of reasons and every piece removed

helps. Maybe some volunteer effort could be part of a solution.

Or, if those solutions do not appeal, back to the surface: how about a floating barge, which covers the water in a similar fashion to the balls Greg mentions, but above the surface, and has a solar-powered water condensation engine. That would do double duty of reducing evaporation from beneath the barge and employing condensation to return water to the lake. It might cost a few bucks, but so is the proposed weir raising.

How to do any or all of these things? Not sure. But alternatives are always good to consider. Just putting it out there.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say to the North Salt Spring Waterworks District board that you need to find a short and long-term solution for Fraser's Thimble Farms. It's an island icon that has made every effort to be part of the solution and needs to be fully supported.

*The writer lives in Vesuvius and says he thinks way too much.*

## MORE LETTERS

continued from 7

## Keep us rural

What a nice succinct letter from Jim Erickson ("Let Ganges incorporate") in the Dec. 7 Driftwood.

In all of my wordy arguments during the last round of contentious incorporation debate (circa 2001), I always wanted to state the simple fact that most of us live out in "the boonies" somewhere, far away from street lights, sidewalks, sewers or even a community water system, and have no need or desire for all of the imagined "amenities" that incorporation would never bring our way, no matter how high the taxes rise.

So yes, let Ganges, and Fulford too, if they want, incorporate to kingdom come, but please leave the rest of us rural folks out of the equation.

**JIM RUSSELL,**  
SUN EAGLE DRIVE

## Gratitude from GIFTS

During this season of giving and hope, it is with immense gratitude that Gulf Islands Families Together Society would like to thank our many benefactors.

Since 2001, GIFTS has been supporting people with diverse abilities by recognizing their right to employment, social and recreational access, educational access and housing. These supports have been made possible through the generosity of many. We are so very fortunate to live in such a supportive and welcoming community.

This time last year, GIFTS was celebrating becoming the proud new owner of 152 McPhillips Ave. This purchase was a dream-come-true for the society and was made possible by a \$200,000 donation from Norm and Diane Elliott. This year, we are

busily planning renovations to the building in order to better meet the needs of the people we support and our community. Our first steps toward these renovations involve gathering estimates and drafting plans. Thanks to a recent grant of \$6,900 from the Salt Spring Island Foundation, this process is now underway.

Christmas has come early this year, with another donation of \$19,000 from the Elliott family. This money will be invaluable in helping us maintain our current services and will assist us in implementing much-needed improvements. The Elliotts' help has come at just the right time. Norm and Diane's personal commitment to the funding of GIFTS has helped us tremendously in meeting our financial responsibilities head-on, and cannot be understated. Without their thoughtful generosity, it would have been difficult

to maintain our current services.

We at GIFTS offer our sincere gratitude for their continued kindness.

**GULF ISLANDS FAMILIES TOGETHER SOCIETY**

## Find creative way with water

I am writing in support of Fraser's Thimble Farm Nursery. They are truly a farm, propagating many of their own plants, extremely knowledgeable and helpful.

They deserve consideration for their efforts to reduce their water consumption far below any other nursery in Canada.

We as a community need to support family-run businesses like this that have been going for 45 years, which is longer than most of us have been on Salt Spring Island!

Surely there is a creative way to allow their water needs to be met without punishing them and hav-

ing them run their business with such uncertainty about the future.

And the most important thing to remember is that they are doing everything they can to reduce these needs and run a successful and renowned nursery as well.

**BABS O'BRIEN,**  
SALT SPRING

## Complaints about Mainroad

Are you sick and tired of having your road dangerous and virtually impassable to normal two-wheel-drive vehicles for up to six days in a row?

Do you feel that the strategy of "if we ignore it for a few days it will warm up, start raining and the problem will disappear" is a sorry excuse for road maintenance?

Do you feel that calling our local Mainroad Contracting in the mid-

dle of the afternoon on a weekday with a serious road issue and getting an answering machine directing you to call Victoria does not serve us?

Do you feel appalled by the fact that every year for the last five years Mainroad Contracting received a performance bonus from the government?

If so, please call Ryan Evanoff, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure operations manager at 1-250-952-5575, or email at ryan.evanoff@gov.bc.ca, and if you get no satisfaction, our elected voice in Victoria is Gary Holman 1-855-955-5711 or gary.holman.mla@leg.bc.ca.

Perhaps if everyone who is disgusted with the status quo floods the office with their complaints we can shed some light on the abysmal situation that is our winter road maintenance.

**BOB ELSEA,**  
DUKES "ICE" ROAD

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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



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## Prime Minister Trudeau should reconsider Site C dam decision

The following is a letter sent to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and filed with the Driftwood for publication.

**BY JEAN AND DEREK WILKINSON**

It's time for you to push the re-set button, and get back on track with your policies.

During the 2015 federal election campaign you vowed to strike a new, respectful relationship with First Nations, and put a greater emphasis on protecting the natural environment. Your recent decisions to approve the Site C dam and Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline are in direct conflict with these commitments. We urge you to keep your promises and reverse these approvals.

Having written to you twice lately regarding the pipeline, this letter will focus on Site C concerns. The negative impacts of this proposed mega-project on the lives of indigenous peoples in the region would be immense and irreversible. This was recognized by the joint federal-provincial environmental assessment, which found that many gravesites, sacred places and areas of cultural importance would be lost if the dam were built. The First Nations' ability to hunt and fish as formerly would be severely diminished, and their health, welfare and cultural identity would be seriously eroded.

Indigenous rights are supposed to be protected under the treaties, as well as Canadian and international laws, so why was the significance of these statements not acknowledged and

## INDEPTH

respected? The fact that Amnesty International has focused on this issue as one of its top ten human rights priorities worldwide should be enough to make you pause and reverse your approval of this project.

The rights and livelihoods of Peace River Valley farmers, and the high value of the region for food production need also to be recognized, but your decision ignores these, too. With future food security being such a critical issue, especially in light of global climate change, it is beyond foolish to flood this extremely productive valley.

**Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and geo-thermal, could easily be developed in B.C. for a much smaller price-tag than building the Site C dam.**

Furthermore, the Site C dam would be hugely damaging to the natural ecosystems and to wildlife in the region, as the Peace River Valley is an important migratory corridor for numerous species. Why is this

special place being sacrificed?

The B.C. government has not even allowed an assessment of the need for more electricity to be done by the B.C. Utilities Commission. Many other alternatives exist to conserve and produce electric power without the massive damage that would be created by the Site C dam.

Increasing energy efficiency in public buildings, homes and business would reduce costs and lower demand while creating jobs throughout the province. The electrical output of current dams could be maximized by replacing old machinery with more modern technology and by adding generating capacity. For example, 500 megawatts could be produced simply by installing the sixth turbine that was originally planned for the Revelstoke dam.

Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and geo-thermal, could easily be developed in B.C. for a much smaller price-tag than building the Site C dam.

We ask you to carefully consider these points, and to think long and hard about the legacy you wish to create. We hope you will choose to keep your campaign promises and protect indigenous rights and the environment.

Please stop the construction of the Site C Dam. It's not too late to save the Peace, and restore the country's faith in you.

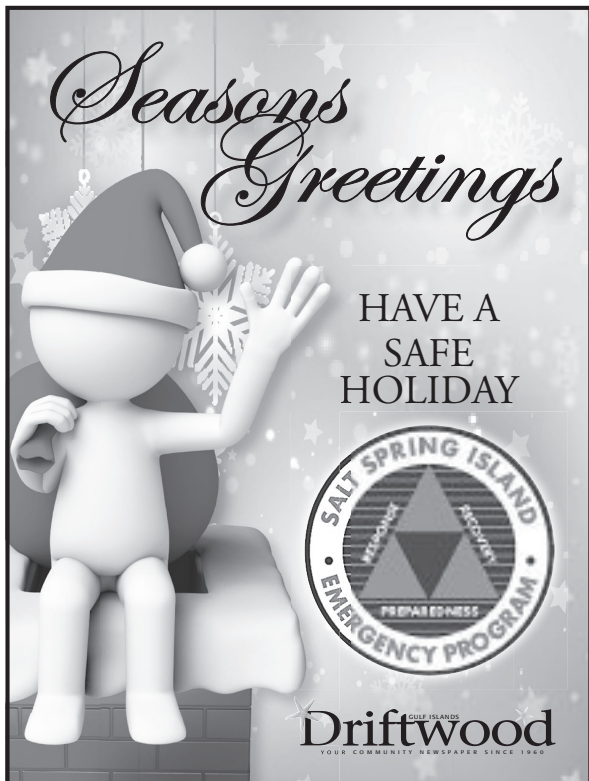
The writers are Salt Spring residents.

Seasons Greetings

HAVE A  
SAFE  
HOLIDAY



**Driftwood**  
YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1940





# Snowy story contest thrives

This year's Driftwood Christmas story-writing contest felt more seasonal than usual, since the island was wrapped in a snowy deep freeze during the week when most stories were submitted.

Some students were unable to complete stories because of "snow days" at school, but teachers and parents went above and beyond to get finished entries to us.

Many thanks go to our dedicated judges, who also braved the elements to pick up and receive their assignments, or knew when a delivery from Driftwood staff was the safer option. Judges were Victoria Olchowecki, Louise Nye, Janet Smith, Marilyn McDowell, Barb DuMoulin and Driftwood staff.

Following are first and second-place winners, and honourable mentions. First and second-place winners appear throughout this issue of the paper.

Age 4-6: First place, Pasley Hayden, *The Sled that Got Caught on the Roof*. Second place, Mayana Boparan, *Reindeer Fun*. Honourable mention, Kai Walsh, *Jaden Havelaar, Ever Wirth*.

Age 7-8: First place, Kailen Pillay, *Hello Christmas!* Second place, India Hart, *The Lost Reindeer*. Honourable mention, Renee Hayden, *Freya Simoneau, Maya Stenstrom*.

Age 9: First place, Maia Reinhardt, *Candy on the Mountain*. Second place, Emerson Hayden, *Santa Gets Lazy*. Honourable mention, Flynn Shugar, Nolan Brainerd, Zoe Sanchez Wickland, Benjamin Atkinson.

Age 10: First place, Matthew Ohnona, *Christmas Star*; Jay McKay, *Too Much Eggnog*.

Age 11-12: First place, Olivia Sugden, *Twenty-four Hours*. Second place, Tashin Liutkevicius, *Christmas Story*. Honourable mention, Alexander Croft, Laura Colwell.

Age 13-14: First place, Taeven Lopatecki, *Isabel's Violin*. Second place, Aidan Hughes, *Hotnog for Christmas*. Honourable mention, Katie Cooper, Cody Kerr.

ESL at GISS: First place, Kayo Yamagata, *Fairies of Noel: Amazing Gift of Love*; second place, Eddy Rodrigo Aguirre, *December Feelings*. Honourable mention, Tamaki Yoshihara, Aldo Pacheco.

First and second-place winners can pick up their cheques (\$25 for first place and \$15 for second) at the Driftwood office after Dec. 28) or contact us at inquiries@driftwoodgimedia.com or 250-537-9933 to arrange for mailing.

Winner of the cover art contest is GISS student Alice Liu, who will receive a \$50 cheque.



PHOTO BY JAN FELLENIUS

**LIFE-SUSTAINING:** During the recent cold snap, a hummingbird visits a feeder at a property overlooking the Salt Spring Sailing Club. Many island residents were regularly replacing their frozen feeders to ensure a steady supply of nourishment for the tiny birds.

# Twenty-four Hours

BY OLIVIA SUGDEN  
AGE 11-12 CATEGORY  
FIRST PLACE

Christmas carols drift over the wind, coming from shop windows and happy mouths.

Occasionally I sing along to songs I know, like Jingle Bells. My snow clothes are torn and ragged, barely keeping me heated. It's been the coldest winter months I can remember.

I turn around, slipping back inside the shack that is our house. It has to be a little warmer in there, at the least.

When I come inside, my mother is leaning down beside the furnace, poking at it with a long metal tool.

"We've run out of coal," she says, distressed. My dad scowls, walking over to look.

\*\*\*\*\*

I have 24 hours, that's all. When me and Isabelle were little, Papa used to tell us stories about Santa Claus, and how if you did bad things, you would get coal on Christmas. I had exactly 24 hours to get on Santa's naughty list.

But what would I do? I could get hurt if I did something very bad.

Maybe just small bad things, perhaps then I would get on the list.

I stroll down the street, urgently looking for something mean to do. I know in my heart that it isn't right, but I must get coal for my family.

Down the road, I spot a group of kids, laughing and playing around the shops. Their clothes look very warm. What could I do?

In one of the kid's hands, he holds a bag of sweets, sharing them around with his friends. I can run up to him, snatch the sweets from his hands, and run off.

*That's wrong.*

A voice in my head speaks to me as I step towards the kids. One of the children makes eye contact with me, whispering to his friends. I know I look like a mess, and to a well-treated child like him, a beggar. I run in the other direction, away from the kids.

I have no shot at it now, I think as I lay my stocking over the fire. Dad asked me what I wished for. I tell him I wished

for coal.

I wrap my arms around myself, shuddering in the cold. The furnace is empty and black. Of all years, we had to run out of coal on the coldest.

I fall asleep quickly, despite the cold.

When I wake, all is quiet. There is no sound but the soft breathing of Isabelle. Despite knowing there will be nothing for me downstairs, a spark of happiness comes. It's Christmas, you can't avoid it.

I tiptoe into the living room, spotting my stocking hung over the empty furnace. But wait... I'm warm.

I gasp, running over to the fire. A stack of coal sits beside the furnace, and inside is a fully lit fire. I pick it up, running the coal between my fingers. A note, in neat writing, is taped to the stack.

"Always believe that miracles are possible."

I say it out loud, quietly to myself. It really was amazing. Who had gotten this coal? Santa Claus?

Always believe that miracles are possible.

## Hello Christmas!

BY EDDY RODRIGO AGUIRRE  
ESL AT GISS CATEGORY  
SECOND PLACE

December is the happiest month. There is not a day that a smile is not on your face. You can really feel happiness, not only at home; you can feel it everywhere.

December is the month when you can see all those lights around you. Shining in the darkness one by one. Imagining that the stars have fallen from the sky, and now they only shine for you. They surprise you with an immense amount of colours. Some shine more than the others but all of them, in general, make you feel the warmth of Christmas Eve.

One of the most prettiest things that you can see in December, thanks to nature, is snow. It's gorgeous to see all covered by this white, cold mantle. You can imagine being somewhere in heaven, walking in the cold clouds. Everything is silent, everything is beautiful.

In this month, you see old friends and family that you haven't seen for a long time. People you appreciate but, for different circumstances, they have been absent. When you see them again, it's like when you taste your favourite food for the first time. It's impossible not to smile and run to give them a hug.

Christmas does not necessarily mean presents and seeing how much you can get. It means union. It means family.

Salt Spring Auto Service

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

from everyone at  
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Firestone  
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Good Year

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Come to a free info session:

Wed, Dec 28<sup>th</sup>, 2-4  
at Salt Spring Inn

Holly MacDonald

For more info or to request an application form, email  
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Proudly supported by the CRD  
We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia

# arts&entertainment

**SALT SPRING INN**

**WEDNESDAY PRIME RIB DINNER**

Closed from 3pm Dec 24 until 9am Dec 27th

## Sharing the Carols



PHOTO ABOVE BY SEAN MCINTYRE; PHOTO AT LEFT BY JEN MACLELLAN

Salt Spring Elementary children, above, sing carols by Mouat's and the Tree House Cafe on Thursday. At left, some Salt Spring Singers choir members do the same at TJ Beans as part of a downtown "tour" on Monday.

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**COMMUNITY**

## Yes, there's room at the inn for everyone

Christmas Day dinner at Meaden Hall

BY HELEN HINCHLIFF  
DRIFTWOOD CONTRIBUTOR

I'll never forget the Sunday morning when Gary Fletcher stood up in the back of Salt Spring Island United Church and made the following announcement: "We should put on a Christmas dinner. It should be on Christmas Day and we should invite everyone in the community who has no place else to go." Was that really 17 years ago?

We took the bait and made room at the inn, a.k.a. the lower hall at the United Church. At first, we tried to do it all by ourselves and it was a bit of a shemuzzle in the kitchen. But as we waited — and waited — to celebrate our Christmas feast, we kept ourselves warm and cheery singing

Christmas carols with old friends and newcomers who had somehow heard about it.

Gary's legacy carried on at the United church until there really was no room at the inn. Then the Legion started welcoming us to Meaden Hall and, it seems, the whole community pitched in to help. And you've kept helping ever since, providing proof of the essential truth in the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000.

This year 20 local Salt Spring businesses have made generous donations of turkeys, ham, salmon and veggie lasagna, hot and cold beverages, and fruit and dainties for dessert. And volunteers from all over the island are stepping up once again to help church organizers John and Diane Lugsdin.

We are delighted that Richard Dick and Marina Roland will once again be busy whipping up the food and "whipping into line" the

kitchen volunteers. Mary Richardson, who heads up our dining room troop, is welcoming back many returning volunteers who greet and serve our guests.

**Gary's legacy carried on at the United church until there really was no room at the inn. Then the Legion started welcoming us to Meaden Hall.**

On Christmas Eve morning, Heidi and Dean Crouse and family will return again to help "deck the hall" with greens and

poinsettias donated by Foxglove. They'll be peeling the veggies, too. Also helping to make "the season bright" are Tim O'Connor, John Dolman and Dave Vollrath, who arrange sound systems and background music.

Shirley Bunyan will accompany us singing Christmas carols led by the choir. Word has it — believe it or not — that a pineapple express will also blow in with live Hawaiian music.

Everyone is welcome at the Community Christmas Dinner on Sunday, Dec. 25. Meaden Hall doors open at 11:30 a.m. with live music and coffee; food service begins at 12 noon and celebrations continue until 2 p.m. So please share in this gift to the community from the community.

And just think: it all started with Gary Fletcher's announcement on a Sunday morning at Salt Spring Island United Church.

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Sat Dec 31 ..... 10-2pm  
Jan 1 ..... CLOSED  
Jan 2 ..... 8-4pm

**NEW YEAR'S EVE**

## Moby's celebrates with Roots Roundup

Vancouver icons visit Salt Spring

Moby's Pub is offering a special night out to celebrate New Year's Eve on Saturday, Dec. 31 with a festive dinner and music by legendary West Coast band Roots Roundup.

Roots Roundup plays a high-energy hybrid of globe-spanning music, mashing up the sounds of rock'n roll, reggae, ska, afro-beat, folk, funk and punk. Originally formed in 1985 in a small apartment in East Vancouver, they became widely known through the late '80s and early '90s as one of Canada's "hardest-working, hardest-touring and hardest-rockin' world-beat dance bands." They have released numerous independent recordings.

The band's lineup has evolved over the years as members pursued various musical interests, including performing, writing, recording and teaching. Core Roots members reunited in 2005. The band kicked off a new cycle of touring in 2014.

The evening at Moby's includes party favours, midnight



PHOTO COURTESY ROOTS ROUNDUP

Vancouver band Roots Roundup plays Moby's New Year's Eve.

champagne and midnight appies. Guests can either purchase tickets that include a New Year's dinner starting at 7 p.m. or ones just for the party, which starts at 9. No minors.

# Candy on the Mountain

BY MAIA REINHARDT  
AGE 9 CATEGORY  
FIRST PLACE

Candy the pony was in her usual shed, eating her usual hay. What wasn't usual? It was snowing and it was CHRISTMAS EVE! Finishing her hay, she lay down in the cozy wood chips and closed her tired eyes.

She was dozing off when "BANG!" Candy bounced onto her feet. She looked up to the top of Mount Maxwell and saw something glowing on and off. Just then, her friend Burt the turkey vulture flew into a tree.

"Burt! Burt!" said Candy, "I saw the most amazing thing!"

"I know," Burt coughed, "it's Santa's sleigh." Burt coughed again.

Candy waited for him to finish, then asked, "But why is he up there?"

"He crashed!"

"Oh no," said Candy, "that's awful, we need to help him!"

"Sorry, I need to get home. The kids might be kicking the feathers out of Julie," Burt said, pretending not to cough. "Why don't you lend a hoof?"

"I guess I could," Candy said nervously.

"Good luck!" Burt said, coughing as he flew away.

Candy galloped as fast as she could and jumped the gate! Blocking cars, zig-zagging around people, she headed toward the light and finally reached the mountaintop. Candy could see the sleigh in the snow now but there were no reindeer attached to it! She walked over to where

the real live Santa was sitting!

"Hello Santa," said Candy.

To her surprise, he replied, "Just the horse I needed to see! I lost all my reindeer! And some presents!"

"I know who can help," said Candy, and cantered down the icy mountain.

Halting in front of a dog house, she whispered, "Mist, are you home?"

"Yep, how can I help?" asked Mist, a young border collie.



"Hop on my back," Candy said.

"Yee haw!" Mist howled as Candy stormed up the mountain.

At the top, Mist slid off and gasped, "You don't say..."

"Hi Mist," said Santa "Could you lend a paw and round up my reindeer?"

"It would be an honour, sir!" Mist said and raced away.

"Candy, can you find the presents?"

"Of course, Santa!" said Candy and trotted off.

After 10 minutes, Mist came back, steadily herding the reindeer.

"Mist, you're definitely on the nice list," Santa said.

"Here Santa," Candy puffed, "I'm back with the presents."

"Thanks you two," said Santa, "I could give you a ride home but Rudolph is limping."

Candy stood tall. "I can pull if you can lift Rudolph into the sleigh!"

Santa hooked Candy to the sleigh, and once everyone was in, he called, "On Dasher, now Dancer, now Prancer and Vixen, on Comet, on Cupid, on Donner and Blixen...now CANDY! DASH AWAY ALL!"

They dropped Mist off, wishing her luck with her training. After delivering all the presents they flew back to Salt Spring, dropped off Candy (because Rudolph's leg felt better), and wished her a Merry Christmas.

(Now how do I know all this? Well, Candy is my pony and I'm the only person who can understand her, except for SANTA!)



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## Christmas Star

BY MATTHEW OHNONA  
AGE 10 CATEGORY  
FIRST PLACE

Dad said he would be home before Christmas, but I didn't think so. He was in the Navy as an engineer. I worried that something bad could happen to him. The war was still raging and the ship he was on had been subject to multiple attacks.

It was only three weeks until Christmas and all I had seen of my Dad were post-cards. Christmas would not be the same without him. He was crazy about the holiday season. We always put up our Christmas tree early. In fact, we were putting it up that night.

Most of our Christmas ornaments were really old. They were covered in dust and full of memories. I went through the boxes trying to find the star we put on our tree every year. I finally found it lying underneath some newer

ornaments. It was painted gold with some lapis-coloured blue spots. Because Dad always puts the star on the tree, I wouldn't let Mom do it. I placed it on the table.

And then it was Christmas Eve. The tree was up. There were decorations, but still no sign of Dad. Mom was worried something happened to him, even though the latest postcards promised everything was going well. I feared they were lying.

I got into bed, just as Mom came in to check on me. I tried to hide my red face under the covers. I didn't want her to know that I'd been crying.



"I know you miss Dad," she told me. "But we have to stay positive. I got you a lot of nice things this year!"

"I don't want presents or money!" I told her. "Christmas isn't about things! It's about family... and I'm missing a part of mine."

"I know, Ben. It'll be okay. Goodnight."

Christmas morning, I woke up and crawled out of bed. I looked out my window and saw that it was a white Christmas. Dad loved snow and every year we'd make a giant snowman. We always name him Fred. Those memories made me sad, as I headed downstairs. I made my way through our hallway, which is covered in family pictures.

I walked into the living room, and I almost cried with what I saw! My Dad was hanging the star on the Christmas tree. "Merry Christmas, Ben."

I wondered how he got back, but I decided to ask later. I was too amazed by a Christmas miracle.



## The Sled that got Caught on the Roof

BY PASLEY HAYDEN  
AGE 4-6 CATEGORY  
FIRST PLACE

Santa got a big bag of presents. He wrapped them up. He quickly ran to his sled and then he called his reindeers over. He told them to go up in the air. Then they flew and they flew to somebody's house and put a present under their Christmas tree.

Then he went back up the chimney but he couldn't move because his sled was stuck. There was too much snow. So he quickly got an idea that he would make a new sled. So he jumped down from the roof and he landed on his feet. Then he got some wood and started to make a sled.

He started to fly but it didn't work because the reindeers were still on the top of the roof. He couldn't get back up onto that roof, so he said, "Oh man! I can't get them down."

So he thought and he thought and he thought but he couldn't get an idea. Then he quickly had an idea. He got a ladder and he climbed up it and when he got up it, Santa Claus chopped the leash. He gave them a carrot and they all got down.

Santa got on Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer's back and then he quickly put the leash on the other sled. But the sled didn't work because it didn't have enough magic. So Santa got sad.

He said, "Christmas is over." But he only had one more present so he walked to the next house of a little kid and put the last present under the tree.

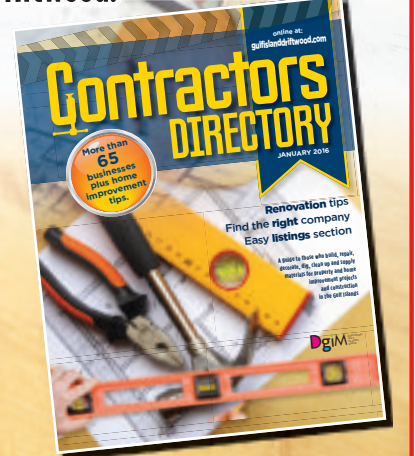
Then he called a taxi that brought him all the way back to the North Pole.



## COMING SOON

### The GULF ISLANDS CONTRACTORS DIRECTORY

will be published in January, watch for the magazine in your Gulf Islands Driftwood.



If you are building, renovating or repairing, this guide is essential in helping you find professional contractors and suppliers to help you get the job done right. Call 250.537.9933 for more details.



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PHOTO BY JEN MACLELLAN

**KEEPING THE LIGHT:** Celebrating 19 years of Transitions Thrift Store operation are employee Sky Young, left, and manager Roberta Temmel. Each year Barb Slater provides a beautiful birthday cake to mark the occasion for the venture that supports Island Women Against Violence projects, including its transition house.

# Hello Christmas!

**BY KAILEN PILLAY**  
AGE 7-8 CATEGORY  
FIRST PLACE

This story takes place a long time ago when Christmas was just beginning. Santa was new at his job. He lived in the Candy Cane Forest. Beside it was a volcanic wasteland. The inhabitants are deeply disfigured monsters. The monsters disliked Santa. They disliked him so much that they begged him to let them break off from his island and float out to sea but he said, "No."

When Christmas came around, the monsters started to break off anyway. The smoke from the monsters working caught the attention of some men. So they went to check it out and found the monsters. They thought they could make friends with the monsters; it worked.

Cheeky the flying squirrel saw what was happening and climbed to the tallest candy cane and flew to tell Santa what was going on. When he got there, a huge battle between the animals and the fire tribe of monsters (which no one even knew existed anymore) was happening. The battle was in his way to Santa's palace so he joined the battle. They won and they told Santa and he stopped the monsters. And that's how Christmas began!

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### NOTICE OF OFFICE CLOSURE

The Islands Trust Salt Spring Office, located at #1 - 500 Lower Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, will be closed for the holidays from December 26th, 2016 to January 2nd, 2017 inclusive. We will re-open for business on January 3rd, 2017.

We apologize for any inconvenience and look forward to serving you in the New Year.

Visit our website at: [www.islandstrust.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca)  
email: [ssinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:ssinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca)

*Season's Greetings!*

## The Lost Reindeer

**BY INDIA HART**  
AGE 7-8 CATEGORY  
SECOND PLACE

One night Santa was delivering presents at the village. Suddenly a dog jumped out at them. It scared the reindeer and Santa. The reindeer fled in all different directions.

Santa went back to his castle and called his elves to him.

He said, "Go round up my reindeer."

The elves searched for a very long time. They could not find the reindeer.

Santa on the other hand was beginning to feel worried about his reindeer, especially his reindeer named Rudolph. Rudolph was his lead reindeer. He meant a lot to Santa. Finally one of the elves brought news.



"The elves cannot find your reindeer, sir."

"No, I cannot deliver presents without my reindeer. Keep looking," said Santa.

The elves decided they would look in one last place... the village. In the village they looked in the chimneys. They looked down the alleys. Finally they looked in one last house and they found the reindeer eating cookies! The elves brought the reindeer back to Santa.

Santa said, "Yippee!" He was so excited now he could deliver presents to the children. Santa and his reindeer and his elves lived happily ever after.



## Too Much Eggnog

**BY JAY MCKAY**  
AGE 10 CATEGORY  
SECOND PLACE

Jackson woke up extremely excited in the middle of the night. He snuck downstairs quietly while his parents were asleep. He turned the corner, checked to see if the coast was clear.

He ran over to the living room and looked under the tree.

"No presents," he gasped, and Jackson was right, there were NO PRESENTS!!



He was looking for an answer in his mind but he just couldn't find it so he decided to go back up to bed and wake up later.

After three hours of sleeping he woke up to his little brother screaming from the living room.

He went downstairs and went to the tree and saw still NO PRESENTS!

He was in awe. He had to figure this out, so he went outside in the snow to get his Dad's ladder. He propped it up on the side of the house and with a jump and a leap he was on the roof that was covered in snow.

He climbed to the peak of the roof and checked if Santa was in the chimney. He wasn't.

Maybe he could find the reindeer tracks on the roof, even though it was snowing all of last night. But there were no tracks, no Santa. Nothing.

"How about you go over and ask your friends?" said his little brother, who was watching

from below.

So that's what he did. He went over to his friend Michael's house to ask him.

Jackson knocked on his door and it swung open and hit him while doing so.

Michael was standing there and yelled, "DID YOU GET CHRISTMAS PRESENTS? I DIDN'T" in quite an angry fashion.

Jackson replied, "No, that's the reason I'm here, to ask if you did."

"Well, the answer is no!" Michael replied in a quick burst of anger.

"Calm down, Michael," said Jackson. "So you and I didn't get any presents. Weird! Let's go see if Santa is still at the North Pole."

And then poof, they were just teleported to the North Pole through the power of Christmas legend. There in front of them was a large snow castle that looked very ancient. Being

adventurous kids they went to the door of the castle. There was a guard at the door. They asked the guard, "Where are we?"

In a small but high-pitched voice the guard said, "Santa's castle home."

"Can we go inside?" Jackson and Michael asked.

"NO!" screamed the guard. They walked away.

"We gotta get in there," Jackson whispered.

They sprinted as fast as they could to one of the windows.

"JUDO THROW ME," screamed Jackson.

"Here we go. 1... 2... 3 NOW," Michael yelled.

"Ow," they both said as they fell in a heap.

They looked over at the window. It was wide open! They climbed through and there they saw Santa on a bed groaning.

Jackson asked Santa, "What's wrong?" and Santa replied, "Ugh, too much eggnog!"

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# What's on this week



## Wed. Dec 21

### LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

**Carols for Christmastide.** Annual community carol sing at All Saints By-the-Sea. 2 p.m.  
**Family Christmas at ArtSpring.** Families, children and Salt Springers of all ages are welcome to ArtSpring for a free winter holiday celebration. Free hot chocolate and goodies from Country Grocer served by SSE students, Santa Claus and crafts start at 5 p.m. Sing-along starts at 6:30. Bring a food bank donation.

### ACTIVITIES

**Festival of Trees.** Enjoy decorated Christmas trees from several community groups and businesses. Vote for your favourite tree by placing an item for the Salt Spring Food Bank under it and/or donating money for Copper Kettle. At the Harbour House Hotel. 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., every day until the morning of Dec. 30.

### Coping with Grief Over the Holidays.

Salt Spring Hospice will explore ways of coping with the loss of a loved one and provide some helpful materials and strategies to support the journey. Salt Spring Library Program Room. 1 to 2:30 p.m.

### SongJam.

A pub-style singalong to the soundtrack of our lives. Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.



## Thur. Dec 22

### LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

**Open Mic With Dave & Ross.** Every Thursday at Moby's Pub beginning at 8 p.m.

### ACTIVITIES

**Salt Spring Local Trust Committee Meeting.** Regular public meeting at Lions Hall. 9:30 a.m. business meeting starts. Town hall session begins at 12 noon.

### Rest & Digest: a Special Seasonal Yoga Class.

Join Sarah-Jane for a special class designed to help ease the body and mind during the busy holiday season. Suitable for all levels of experience with yoga. This class will be held at regular room temperature. Dress in layers and bring a blanket. The Nest Hot Yoga. 7 p.m.

### Festival of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.

## Fri. Dec 23

### LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

**Angry Hippies.** Rock/dance band at Moby's Pub. 9 p.m.

### ACTIVITIES

**Super Meat Draw at the Legion.** Twice the prizes and two 50/50 draws. Legion Lounge. 5 p.m.

### Swim With Santa.

Christmas celebration at Rainbow Road Pool. 6:30 to 8 p.m.

### Festival of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.

## Sat. Dec 24

### ACTIVITIES

### Christmas Eve Saturday Market.

Weather permitting there will be vendors ready to help with last-minute shopping needs at Centennial Park during the day on Christmas Eve. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### Christmas Eve at All Saints.

Family service at All Saints Anglican church at 4 p.m., or "Midnight Mass" with carols and candlelight at 10:30 p.m.

### Christmas Eve Mass.

Family Mass at Our Lady of Grace Church at 7 p.m. Carols at 6:30 p.m.

### Christmas Eve Service.

At Salt Spring Island United Church. 7 p.m.

### Christmas Eve Anglican Service at St. Mary's.

Carol Eucharists with Blessing of the Crèche. St. Mary's Church in Fulford. 7 p.m.

### Christmas Eve Vigil Mass.

At St. Paul's Church in Fulford Harbour. 11 p.m. Carols at 10:30 p.m.

### Festival of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.



## Sun. Dec 25

### ACTIVITIES

### Christmas Day Mass.

At Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church. 10 a.m.

### Christmas Day at All Saints.

Everyone is welcome to join in Christmas Day service. All Saints By-the-Sea. 11 a.m.



## Sun. Dec 25

### ACTIVITIES

### Christmas Celebration at Fulford Hall.

Everyone welcome to free and optional potluck community event. Brunch starts at 11 a.m., dinner about 6 p.m., with gifts for kids, games, music and evening jam session.

### Community Christmas Dinner.

Traditional and vegetarian entrees and all the trimmings along with music and good times. Everyone welcome, no charge. Doors open at Meaden Hall, downstairs at the Legion, at 11:30 a.m., food service from 12 noon, and celebrations until 2 p.m.

### Festival of Trees.

See Wednesday's listing.



## Mon. Dec 26

### LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

**Dope Soda.** Ska/reggae/hip hop band at Moby's Pub. 9 p.m.

### ACTIVITIES

**Festival of Trees.** See Wednesday's listing.

## Tue. Dec 27

### ACTIVITIES

**Festival of Trees.** See Wednesday's listing.

### EXHIBITIONS

• Photographer **Annie Palovcik** presents *Places and Faces: A Retrospective at Fernwood Road Cafe* this month.

• **Celia Meade** exhibits oil paintings with themes of transcendence and spirituality in the **Salt Spring Library Program Room** through December.

• Five artists from the Salt Spring Painters' Guild — **Judith Borbas, Amanda Kuehl, Judy Nurse, Margaret Threlfall**

and **Wendy Wickland** — have winter seasonal paintings in the **Country Grocer Cafe** through December.

• Fifteen **Salt Spring Photography Club** members show photographs at the **Harbour House Hotel** through the month of December.

• **Renee Sanden's** installation called *Trinity: the Mother, the Daughter and the Holy Spirit* shows in the window of **ArtSpace Gallery**, #17 in Merchant Mews.

• **Salt Spring Photography Club** members have photographs on display at **Salt Spring Coffee Co. Cafe**.

## Wed. Dec 28

### ACTIVITIES

### Food & Beverage Business Accelerator Info Session.

Community Economic Development Commission program to see if local food and beverage producers qualify for up to \$5,000 in free training, mentorship and more. Salt Spring Inn. 2 to 4 p.m.

### Festival of Trees.

See last Wednesday's listing.

## Community Christmas Dinner

Traditional and vegetarian entrees, music and good times. All welcome. No charge.

**Sunday, December 25th • Meaden Hall**  
Doors at 11:30 a.m. and food is served from noon to 2 p.m.

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# This Week's Horoscope

by Michael O'Connor  
www.sunstarastrology.com | sunstarastrology@gmail.com  
1.250.352.2936

**TIP OF THE WEEK**

This is it. The last week of 2016 is here. And, oh yes, it is Christmas time too. On the other side of Solstice, the Sun's light has begun to increase in terms of hours in the day. These constitute three good reasons to rejoice and there are many more. While the bad news usually gets the press, there is always so much more that is good going on. The timeless recipe to see the good is to look for it.

Astrologically, things are a bit complex, admittedly. Mercury retrograde in Capricorn and Mars in Pisces conjunct the Moon's South Node along with Neptune suggests tendencies to escape from the realities of the world and relish in sweet dreams and comfortable denials. Jupiter in Libra and Venus in Aquarius meanwhile lend to a festive, social atmosphere. The twist is that 2017 is likely to be a challenging one, as is often true during a Universal 1-year.

Navigating these turbulent times is where astrology can prove very helpful. Gaining a clearer sense of your own destiny amidst the larger social trends can inspire clarity, vision, strategy and confidence. I can help you to feel more centered and certain with what constitutes your own priorities and objectives so that whatever else might be happening in the world, you will be in-tune and on track with your journey. This will help you to remain strong and centered and will inspire the same in others too.

**Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 20)**  
The festive season is bringing in a whole host of gifts and surprises. One of them is just how much your focus is rapidly zeroing in on your career, social status and reputation. Where you were rebelliously just a short while ago, you are less so now. One of the gifts is the realization of who are your true friends.

**Taurus (Apr 20 – May 21)**  
Seeing the bigger picture includes stepping back to see just how much your world has changed over the past couple of years. While you can probably trace the steps and measures taken, you may still be in awe and wonder about it all. Chalk it up to destiny and be prepared to navigate more changes yet. Fortunately, the current will be slower.

**Gemini (May 21 – Jun 21)**  
You probably take this time of the year more seriously than others. Whether your focus is on Solstice, Christmas, and Hanukah or otherwise, it is the spirit of this time that interests you most. Still, this year you are likely to favor a quieter, more introspective atmosphere. In this respect, it could prove more peaceful than ever.

**Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)**  
Sharing quality time with family and close friends may prove more important and inviting than usual. The flip side is that you would like to escape the maddening crowd. Where you simply must engage, you may find yourself paying more lip service than you might prefer. For best results, play the game then get back to home and hearth.

**Leo (Jul 22 – Aug 23)**  
Taking things a little slower is inspiring your actions now. However, you may also be experiencing the pull to cover a lot of bases. Hmm... this could be the recipe for frustration. Yet, with awareness and effective time management you should be able to pull it all off. Give more time for everything and do is more slowly.

**Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22)**  
Sometimes the fun and games are more accurately interpreted as a lot of work. You could find yourself feeling this way now. If so, the solution is to turn the tables. Focus on the work and make it a game so it feels fun. If your focus is upon the cultivation of talents and skills and if they hint at increased returns, you will be especially satisfied.

**Libra (Sep 22 – Oct 22)**  
Sometimes we feel the need to expand, while at others to contract and, occasionally, we feel pressured to do both simultaneously, like now. The question is, and only you can precisely answer it: how do you make sense of expanding and contracting in rhythmic harmony? A good answer will feel like a big gift.

**Scorpio (Oct 22 – Nov 21)**  
Your mind focus has suddenly become particularly sharp. As if the clouds obscuring a wider vision have suddenly cleared, you now see what was previously hidden and it is wonderful. In some respects, you know where you have to give more to succeed. It also remains true that you need to draw on your reserves of faith.

**Sagittarius (Nov 21 – Dec 21)**  
As if suddenly, you feel like you have landed and have come down to earth again. The first thing you want to do is be social, meet people and exchange thoughts, ideas and share good old quality time. Somehow, your curiosities have peaked. The presiding challenge stands to be a clash of beliefs. Celebrate the spirit of debate.

**Capricorn (Dec 21 – Jan 19)**  
The Sun in your sign signifies a time to take new leads. As much as you want to, you may feel blocked or delayed by existing circumstances and responsibilities. Your best initiative now, therefore, is to be quieter than usual, to listen more, to be more patient and to understand more than to be understood.

**Aquarius (Jan 19 – Feb 19)**  
While Jack Frost is nipping at your nose and windows, this is your cue to nip inside, out from the cold. The urge to be cozy and to go within, one way or another, is extra evident now. Many thoughts are running through your mind yet you are not so inclined to discuss them. Yet, you are excited about cultural opportunities and activities.

**Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)**  
You are in a somewhat serious, but at best, visionary mood. You are beginning to see new possibilities. Yet, you may wonder if you are dreaming or if your visions are realistic. This is a call for patience, both with yourself and circumstances. Things may require a bit more time than you thought. Embrace the magic in the moments and trust the flow.

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### CINEMA

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### EXHIBITIONS

• **Gallery 8** presents its annual **Christmas Exhibition of Small Works** until Jan. 3.

• Artists from the **Fringe** group members present new work at **Mahon Hall** as part of **Wintercraft** daily through Dec. 22.

• **Wintercraft show and sale** presented by the Salt Spring Arts Council runs daily at Mahon Hall through Dec. 22, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

• **Into the Light: A Winter Solstice Art Show** of work by multiple artists runs at **Salt Spring Gallery** until Dec. 22.

• **Alan Wood** and **Anna Wood** present the 2-Ply exhibit at **Fault Line Projects** in Grace Point Square through Dec. 31.

• **Gabrielle Jensen** shows new monoprints at **Auntie Pesto's Cafe** through December, and releases a collection of small **LeRoy Jensen** drawings at **Gulf Islands Picture Framing**.

• Today, Wed., Dec. 21 is the last day to see **Patricia Brown** paintings in the **ArtSpring lobby**.

# people&community

**D.W. Salty is looking for material for his column, Streets of Salt Spring Island**

If you have information on any of our streets, please contact us at: 250-537-9933 or [dwsalty@driftwoodgimedia.com](mailto:dwsalty@driftwoodgimedia.com)



**ISLAND AUTHORS**

## Joys of planting measured out new book

Jim Warren releases third story collection

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN  
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Jim Warren may have dedicated his life's work to the human body as an orthopedic surgeon, but the quiet lives of plants, fruit and flowers have offered him just as much interest, and probably a lot more joy.

Warren pursued a gardening hobby over many years in Vancouver and his seaside Salt Spring home off Rourke Road, where he and his wife Joan moved to in 1979 and lived until recently downsizing to Kingfisher Cove.

Observations and memories of many events in Warren's life formed the basis for stories in two books the 82-year-old islander has

published in the past five years. People shopping for the garden buffs in their lives now have the perfect gift idea in Warren's third book, *Listen to Your Garden*, which brings together gardening and nature stories from each of the earlier books in a new dedicated collection.

One of Warren's main models in life and in writing is Dickens' Bleak House character Esther Summerston, who found the gift of seeing "the extraordinary in the ordinary." As he recounts early on in his new book, the scene in which Esther recognizes this gift takes place outside after she has suffered a long illness indoors. Warren's stories reveal how the natural world provides many such opportunities, if only one looks, as well as the way the garden can have healing properties.

Fauna Change is a lovely

passage on the fall season, where the writer's scientific eye is turned to returning winter birds and spiders and the last throes of fruit flies. Warren nimbly describes loping otters and walnut-sized quail chicks, as well as the human population's ambivalent co-existence with deer.

"There are a few runty fawns still around, late gestations, and I fear for them this winter as they have little flesh. In the winter there is often a corpse under the tool shed or the leaf piles," Warren writes, evoking the melancholy aspects of the coming season.

The garden can be the source of much heartbreak and frustration, but these elements often provide the springboard for Warren's keen sense of humour. Evergreen Magnolia recounts the way a tree (or possibly shrub)



of disputed origin came to block the Warrens' sea-view and then unaccountably became treasured by the writer for being "The fattest magnolia on Lotus Island." An "arresting" growth of gunnera threatens to take over the garden in another story, with its move from another location requiring use of an excavator to transfer three giant root balls.

"The plant is large, coarse, spectacular, tropical and in your face. It is probably a man's plant," Warren drolly concludes.

As Warren reflects in his introduction, a gardening practice can help humans to grow, as well as the plants they are tending. Thinking and reflecting on the challenges and rewards of such a practice is likewise an expanding experience.

"In the garden we live with inhabitants that are rooted, some who scamper and some who flutter. We have to figure out what they need. Since we are one with them all, they need what we need," Warren observes.

*Listen to Your Garden* is available at Wintercraft (open through Thursday, Dec. 22) and Salt Spring Books. Watch for an upcoming reading event in 2017 at All Saints Church.

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**VOLUNTEERISM**

## Mentorship pilot fits management skills

Short-term volunteer program offered

Islanders looking for short-term, time-limited and task-specific ways to volunteer their time and skills might consider the new Management Mentorship pilot offered through Volunteer and Community Resources.

The initiative is an attempt to address the governance and administrative needs that so often confound the ability of not-for-profits to effectively focus on

achieving their missions.

"Many of this island's residents come here with a wealth of knowledge and a depth of experience that they are willing to share and that our not-for-profit organizations should tap into," said John Binsted, a VCR program volunteer. "A mentoring program such as the one being launched by VCR is an innovative and low cost way of building the capabilities and effectiveness of the community organizations we rely upon."

VCR is searching for people to share their knowledge and act in a facilitative

role in areas such as organizational leadership skills, board governance, accounting/financial management, marketing and social media, website development and maintenance, legal, strategic and operational planning, human resources and administration, and more.

Interested individuals can contact Janine Fernandes-Hayden at Volunteer and Community Resources via [admin@vcrsaltspring.org](mailto:admin@vcrsaltspring.org) or 250-931-0039, or visit the website at [www.vcrsaltspring.org](http://www.vcrsaltspring.org).

**FARMING**

## Salt Spring Abattoir turns four

Facility 'too small to fail'

BY TONY BECK  
SS ABATTOIR SOCIETY

Some 160 Salt Springers gathered at Fulford Hall on Nov. 12 to celebrate our abattoir's fourth birthday.

We ate local food; drank wine from Salt Spring Vineyards and Mistaken Identity, local beer and cider, kombucha and apple juice; and listened to music by Yael Wand and emceed by Arthur Black. And special thanks go to the Pegasus Gallery of Canadian Art and Country Grocer for their contributions to the silent auction.

In its fourth year of operation, the abattoir is pretty much debt-free, close to breaking even financially and employing four staff. Not only that, but this year we completed a \$30,000 upgrade, introduced hog processing and are

ready to begin processing beef when the abattoir opens for a new season in spring 2017.

Riley Byers, the abattoir operations manager, is going on a 10-week training course in Kamloops in the new year.

Numbers of animals going through the facility are increasing every year and we like to think that the abattoir had a role to play in the growth from 2008 to 2015 reported in the 2015 Salt Spring Livestock Inventory.

While eating less meat is beneficial, animals have an important role to play in local sustainable food systems. What's the alternative if we don't have a local abattoir? Animals shipped off island for slaughter, which is stressful for both farmers and animals, farms going out of business, and more meat imported from distant, inhumane and polluting factory farms in Alberta by truck or plane. That's why our abattoir is too small to fail.

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**CHRISTMAS EVE: Saturday, Dec. 24th:**  
7pm Family Mass at Our Lady of Grace (Carols at 6:30pm)  
11pm Vigil Mass at St. Paul's, Fulford Harbour (Carols at 10:30pm)

**CHRISTMAS DAY: Sunday, Dec. 25th:**  
10am Mass at Our Lady of Grace

**SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD: Saturday, Dec. 31st:**  
5pm Vigil Mass at Our Lady of Grace

**SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD: Sunday, Jan. 1st**  
8am Mass at St. Paul's, Fulford Harbour  
10am Mass at Our Lady of Grace

*May your Christmas be filled with Peace, Joy and Love and full of God's blessings in the New Year!*



"O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray."

*The Anglican Parish of Salt Spring Island*  
Christmas Services for 2016

**Saturday, December 24th**  
Carol Eucharists with Blessing of the Crèche  
4:00 p.m. All Saints, Ganges  
7:00 p.m. St. Mary's, Fulford  
Icons, Incense, Carols & Candlelight  
10:30 p.m. "Midnight Mass" at All Saints

**Sunday, December 25th**  
"And the Word became flesh"  
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist at All Saints, Ganges

**Sunday, January 1st**  
"The Holy Name of Jesus: New Year's Day"  
10 a.m. Eucharist in Celtic Christian Tradition at All Saints

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Today's BC Liberals

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# Fairies of Noel: Amazing Gift of Love

BY KAYO YAMAGATA  
ESL AT GISS CATEGORY  
FIRST PLACE

The tinkle of a bell sounds as if from nowhere. Colourful lights dance with snowflakes. Lots of love are wrapped with shiny green and red. This beautiful island, Salt Spring, is ready for the most exciting day of the year: Christmas.

Everything can happen in this joyous season. Even something that you never expected. To tell you the truth, I had never believed in magic and never liked Christmas . . . until this unbelievable thing happened to me.

A sunny, cold wind-blown day, I found a card with fairies wearing red Christmas robes on my desk. I didn't have any such Christmas card so I opened it with curiosity to see what was written. "Come to Mount Erskine and find us. We have something to show you." That was all it said.

As soon as I finished reading, I grabbed my coat and put on my boots, thinking, "What a great way to invite me to go hiking! My friends must have written this card. They are so playful!"

The hiking course was filled with yellow and red leaves. Cold wind stroked my cheeks. I was getting worried. I



could find no one but I kept walking, wishing I was on the right way.

Under a huge tree, I found something sparkling like glitter off a Christmas bow. I stepped up to it and found out that it was a fairy door. It was a red sparkled door with a fancy little wreath. There was the same kind of card that I found on my desk. I was so surprised and excited. The card said, "Here is the thing that we wanted to show you." I pulled the gold doorknob with a shaking hand because this was my first time to receive cards from fairies!

Looking inside, there was a dark room and me during childhood, asleep

after being tired of crying. I remembered this. This was the Christmas when I was a child. I was waiting for my parents. I was so disappointed that they didn't come back home from their work to have Christmas dinner. Seeing this situation made me so heartbroken. Since that day, I had been hating Christmas. A teardrop fell from my eye.

Another card fell down from the sky. That card said, "See the fact. Understand love." My parents appeared in the room. They hugged the childhood version of me so tight.

"I am sorry that we couldn't spend Christmas with you but we promise that someday we can give a special present to you. Do you remember that you said you wanted to learn English and make friends all over the world? We are working to make it come true. Please forgive us."

Now, I am thankful for everything that happened. It has been almost a year since I came to Canada. My dad and mom have given such a wonderful experience to me! I took out a Christmas card and started writing: "To my loving family, I wish you a very merry Christmas from Salt Spring Island!"

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# Isabel's Violin



BY TAEVEN LOPATECKI  
AGE 13-14 CATEGORY  
FIRST PLACE

Isabel lifted her sleeve and wiped away the frost that was creeping over the window on the upper floor of the old wooden farmhouse. Outside, the snow covered the fields like a vast, downy quilt, broken only by a thin dirt road that meandered towards the house from over small hills in the distance. The old house was cold, and the window at the top of the stairs by which Isabel sat was the only source of light. She sighed and scrubbed at the window again, staring unhappily out at the cloudy fields.

Soon figures appeared over the crest of the hill; five people dressed in fur and blankets, trudging up to the house.

"Mother!" Isabel turned and darted down the stairs. "The first guests are here."

She moved into the kitchen, taking in the warm smells of baking that filled the room. Joy had always filled Isabel at the sight of her mother decorating the old house. Joy and exhilaration for the moment when she would throw open the door to see the neighbours and friends that came to the lonely house. This year

wasn't the same.

"Could you get the door, Izzy?" her mother called from the living room. Yes, that was it. And every year her answer was the same.

"Not Izzy again."  
"Well then, Isabel, the door is waiting."  
She smiled at that and flung open the door.

"Isabel!" It was the Morrissions, the neighbours from over the hill. "It's so good to see you. Where's your mother?"

"In the living room. Yes, it's good to see you too." She was soon lost in greetings and smiles as guests poured in the door.

"Isabel..." there was a tug on her sleeve. It was Thomas, the youngest Morrission. He was two years younger than her, being twelve, and had grown up with her like a sibling. "What's wrong? You look sad."

How could she hide it from him? She didn't answer, but he was persistent.

"Is it the war? I know, it's scary... like a veil that dims Christmas' light. Can you make it go away, Isabel? Make it fade with your music?"

She stared at him, sadness well-

ing in her stomach. She pictured her violin, sitting in its case, untouched since the day she heard that her father wouldn't be coming back from the war. Playing it would bring back the pain. He seemed to read her thoughts.

"My father is out there fighting, but I think the music helps." He gave her a little half smile, lifting up the case that hid his flute, reminding her of them happily playing together. "Don't give up." He led her to the living room, then opened his flute case.

That night music drifted from the house in the fields. Cutting through the melodies was the joyful ring of Isabel's violin. Happy, despite the sorrow; joyous for the gathering of Christmas had brought a new light to Isabel's heart.



BY TASHIN LIUTKEVICIUS  
AGE 11-12 CATEGORY  
SECOND PLACE

He heard a thunk and something being dragged across the floor. The bed creaked as he slipped out of the blankets, lowering himself down to the floor. The carpet was soft under his small feet.

He slowly descended down the stairs, barely able to reach the banister. There was a large figure in front of the fireplace, the light casting shadows on him. He was dressed in red from his toe to his head with velvety fabric. There was a large

bag full of wrapped boxes.

Suddenly the man stood up, grabbed the bag and lumbered towards the door, swinging it open as the boy jumped behind the banister. The man stepped over the doorstep, his jovial face bouncing around. The boy scampered after him, a curious smile on his face.

The cold air nipped at his nose as he trod through the ice cold snow. The man dressed in red was walking towards a sleigh. The boy ran towards the man and yelled out a greeting but his voice was hoarse from the cold air and it only came out as an inaudible squeak.

He ran closer to the sleigh, his footsteps muffled by the snow. He started to climb in to say hello to the man.

Suddenly they soared off into the sky at an incredible speed, the wind was like daggers on his face. They finally slowed down and it was almost like

they were floating midair and time seemed to slow down. He crawled over bags and bags of presents till he was right behind the man.

"Hi," the boy squeaked.  
All of a sudden there was a loud grinding and they began to plummet back down to the ground. Suddenly a shimmering cloud appeared around the sleigh, slowing them just before they crashed onto the ground. The big red man came thundering over.

"What do you think you're doing! You could have killed yourself!" he yelled.

"I-I-I am sorry," he stuttered.  
"Now how am I going to deliver the presents," he mumbled.

"Arrr — are you Santa?" the boy asked.

"Yes indeed I am," he chuckled.

"I'm really sorry about the sleigh. Why did it crash?"  
"Well you see umm . . . what

# Christmas Story

is your name?"

"My name is Noah."  
"Well, you see Noah, I don't know if you'll understand, but the sleigh relies on magic, which comes from people who believe in me and the Christmas spirit. Over the years, fewer children believe and my magic has become weak and I couldn't hold up the sleigh any longer. But if more children believed in me and the Christmas spirit, I would have all the magic I needed to deliver all these presents."

"I believe in you Santa," said Noah.

Just then the wreckage started swirling in a shimmering cloud. Seconds later the sleigh was good as new. They both climbed back into the sleigh and soared into the sky.

"Now, Dasher! Now, Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen! On, Comet! On, Cupid! On, Donner and Blitzen!"

# Hotnog for Christmas

BY AIDAN HUGHES  
AGE 13-14 CATEGORY  
SECOND PLACE

"Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart." (Washington Irving)

Hope watches as family after family comes out of the bustling grocery store carrying large overflowing bags stuffed with food for the holidays. Even before I lived on the street, my family never had Christmas dinner like those families are getting ready to make.

Now I sit on freezing pavement, feeling the harsh December air nip at me through the light jacket I am wearing. I am ravenous. It feels like I have a black hole in my stomach. The sun is starting

to dip below the horizon; the darker it gets the colder and hungrier I become. I had planned on picking up bottles to make a little money, but a volunteer group had come and picked them all up the day before.

"Excuse me."  
I look up to see a boy about my age, 14, looking awkwardly down at me.

"Yes?" I reply as a question, because people never talk to me.

"I, uh, bought some hotnog."

I giggle like a little girl before he can finish. I had thought only my family called hotnog that.

The boy blushed a bit and continued, "I bought it and don't want it. Would you like it?"

"Yes, yes, please," I stammer a bit in my excitement.

He smiles and hands me the warm cup. I can smell the sweetness. I take a small sip and it instantly warms me, exploding in my mouth with creamy goodness. It has been a long time since I tasted something so delicious. It is better than anything.

I look up to thank the boy but he is gone. I feel a small blossom of sadness at being alone again.

Then a small flashing out of the corner of my eye catches my attention. I wonder what it could be. I get up and see one of the new plastic 20-dollar bills lying on the ground. I snatch it up and look around to see if anyone has dropped it, but no one is around. Score!

This is turning out to be the best Christmas in a long time.

here's my card

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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS	FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS	FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS	FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS	FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS	FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS	FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS	FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS
DEATHS	DEATHS	DEATHS	DEATHS	DEATHS	DEATHS	DEATHS	DEATHS

*Celebration OF Life*  
**PATRICIA ANNE TAYLOR**  
May 28 1933 - Dec 9, 2016

Please join family and friends to celebrate Patricia's life.

Funeral Service Mass will be held at:  
**Our Lady of Grace Church**  
135 Drake Road  
Wed. Dec. 28, 1pm  
Father Scott will be conducting the Service.

*Celebration of Life will follow in the church hall.*

### FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### CELEBRATIONS

*Celebrating the Ancient Pagan Rite of Saturnalia*  
from Dec. 17 to Dec. 24 highlighted by the Winter Solstice. 234 am Dec. 21.

We wish our friends & neighbours enjoyment of the longer, brighter days!

*July & Caroline*

### IN MEMORIAM

**Salt Spring Hospice**

**Coping with Grief over the Holidays**  
Wed. Dec. 21st  
1:00 - 2:30  
In the SS library Program room  
presented by SS Hospice  
sponsored by SS Public Library

250-537-2770  
[saltspringhospice.org](http://saltspringhospice.org)

**BENGE, Joe**  
1931-2016



Joe Benge, whose full and varied life journey began in a Chicago suburb and led to the Canadian wilderness, died November 16, 2016, at age 85 in his home on Salt Spring Island. Joe's life was filled with many chapters, each prefaced by what he referred to as his "epiphanies." There were remarkable people who shared this time with him and all can attest to his many talents as musician, ornithologist, photographer, teacher, raconteur, artful linguist, endless reader and thoughtful gift-giver. Joe's life force and curiosity were boundless. One of his photographs recently won the jury prize at Artspring's Surfacing show. A lifelong passion for birds, photography, history, airplanes, literature, wilderness and music brought a wide range of good people into his life. COPD weakened his body, but his brilliant mind, memory, curiosity and spark never faltered. Joe was a graduate of Evanston High School. He studied German at Amherst and was the drummer with the Delta Five jazz band, which toured Europe. Joe continued his education at Northwestern University, earning a Master's Degree in German. After a year as Fulbright scholar in Austria, he turned down a scholarship to Princeton to take advertising positions in Chicago and Seattle. Meanwhile, National Geographic sent him through the Louisiana swamps in search of the Ivory Billed Woodpecker, and Esquire published a piece on WWII airplanes. Joe created the well-known lonely Maytag repairman ad campaign which pictured an idle washing machine repairman waiting for repair calls that never came. Joe changed direction in 1972 when he traveled north to a park in Ontario. There, he managed The Voyager Wilderness Program. In talks and slide shows in Canada and the USA, he asked listeners: write authorities to ban logging and motor vehicles there. The mass of letters helped lead to the creation of Quetico, a wilderness-class park. Joe then spent several years teaching in northern Manitoba, in communities reached by dog sled, skidoo or bush plane. Finally, Joe worked for Parks Canada as a naturalist in the mountain parks. He retired in 1991, traveled for several years while watching birds, then finally parked himself on Salt Spring Island. At the last, Joe was bedeviled by increasingly serious COPD that literally took his breath away. He used the new Canadian law permitting physician-assisted death as the best ending.

*Joe's last days before his "Fly Away" were spent with life-long friends, lively conversation, laughter and good music.... pretty much how things often were at Benge's.*

**ERIC CHARLES WIKLUND**



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Eric at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital on December 16, 2016. Devoted and loving husband for 51 years and best friend of Judy (nee Cannell). Judy and Eric originally met as members of the UBC Varsity Outdoors Club in the fall of 1964, and they continued to share a life-long passion for hiking and camping. Eric was a wonderful father to Kristina, Johan, Karl, Katherine and Brendan, and proud grandpa to Chloé, Gwendalyn and Evelyn.

Graduating from UBC in Electrical Engineering (MSc Eng.1965), Eric went on to work for Atomic Energy of Canada in 1965 and Ontario Hydro in 1970 retiring as Supervising Design Engineer at Ontario Hydro after 24 years. Eric was a longtime resident of Bronte. He touched the lives of many within the community through his involvement in the Bruce Trail Association, the Bronte Harbour Yacht Club and his devotion to Scouts Canada. Eric worked enthusiastically as the Rear Commodore of Training for the Bronte Harbour Yacht Club for many years and as a Scoutmaster for several decades. His work with these groups gave him purpose, meaning, and great joy. Friends and family were received at Oakview Funeral Home, 56 Lakeshore Rd. W., Oakville, Ontario, Monday, December 19 from 5-8 pm with a Funeral Service on Tuesday, December 20 at 11 am, in the Oakview Chapel. As expressions of sympathy, donations to OTHH, Bruce Trail Conservancy or Scouts Canada, would be appreciated by the family.

**Roy William Kaighin**



Roy died December 2nd, 2016 after suffering at length with Parkinson's Disease. He leaves behind his wife of 26 years Diane, and a daughter Sharon Welsh (Graham) from Scotland and two grandsons Joshua & Sean.

Roy was born in England July 15, 1951 and raised by Annie and William Kaighin of the IOM. By the age of 5 he played the piano and violin, by 9 he was playing the trombone and trumpet and at the age of 16 he became a professional musician when he joined the Royal Marines Band as a flute/piccolo and piano player. Roy was a gifted musician, composer and musical arranger. He had a full career with the marines playing in various bands as a principle flute player and was an instructor at the military School of music in Deal. Roy retired in 1994 and moved with his wife, Diane, to North Vancouver.

He conducted the 15th Field Regiment Band in New Westminster before accepting a position with the Naden Band in Victoria 1997-2012. During this time, Roy composed and arranged hundreds of pieces of music, and was the only musician in Canadian Military History to be awarded the esteemed Navy Bravo Zulu award for his legacy of music. The Kaighins moved to Salt Spring Island in 2008 with retirement in mind. In 2012 Roy was personally selected by the Honorable Steven L. Point Lieutenant Governor of BC to receive the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee medal.

Roy composed his own songs and arranged songs outside of the military for The Canadian Tenors, The Tenors, Ken Lavigne, Destino, & Tenore [et.al]. Last November Tenore did a tribute to Roy at Art spring and the Naden Band did a touching tribute to Roy at their Christmas concerts at the Royal Theatre in Victoria Dec 5-7 that including his arrangement of Leonard Cohen 's Hallelujah. The Victoria Symphony Orchestra will be playing Roy's composition "Santa's Journey" during their 2016 Christmas Concert.

When not playing, or writing music Roy was an avid sailor, hiker and astronomer. He loved spending time with his family and beloved dogs. Roy was a true gentleman, who touched the hearts of many and will be sadly missed by people from all around the world.

With great gratitude to Dr. James White for his compassion care and respect for Roy.

If I could leave you with any thoughts let it be this. Canadians need to change their mindset about assisted death. It is not killing someone it is relieving their suffering. Please support Dying with Dignity Canada. It is inhumane for the unnecessary suffering of the person who is ill and their families who have to watch. Thank-you.

Online condolences to be made at:  
[www.haywardsfuneral.com](http://www.haywardsfuneral.com)  
250-537-1322

### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### COMING EVENTS

**Community Christmas Dinner**

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

Doors open at 11:30am  
Meals served from 12 noon to 2:00pm

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*Michael Arthur LeDucron Larmour*



April 3, 1937 - Dec. 11, 2016

Michael passed away in the extended care unit at the age of 79. Michael lived on Salt Spring Island since 1947 and worked with the North Salt Spring Waterworks for 33 years, 10 of them as a manager.

Michael is survived by his wife Kacey Chee (156 Bradbury Rd, SSI, BC, V8K 1L8), his children Skye (Tomos) and David (Kim).

A funeral service mass was held at Our Lady of Grace Church on Dec. 17, 2016 at 1:00pm.

Very special thanks to Dr. David Beaver, Dr. David Butcher and their staff. With great gratitude and many thanks to Catherine Green (head nurse), Jen Ritson, all the nurses, all the care workers, housekeeping staff and the kitchen staff. You were my family who helped take care of Michael.

Book of Memories can be found at: [www.haywardsfuneral.com](http://www.haywardsfuneral.com).

In memory of Michael, please make a donation to SSI Water Preservation Society, Ganges PO Box 555, SSI, BC V8K 2W3.

### IN MEMORIAM

**Nairn Howe**  
April 30th, 1957 - December 25th, 2005 (48 years)

**11 YEARS AGO**  
CANCER IS NOT SO POWERFUL!  
THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS IT CANNOT DO...

*I cannot cripple love.  
I cannot shatter hope.  
I cannot concede faith.  
I cannot destroy peace.  
I cannot kill friendship.  
I cannot suppress memories.  
I cannot silence courage.  
I cannot invade the soul.  
I cannot steal eternal life.  
I cannot conquer the spirit.*



NAIRN HOWE

*For those who love, time is not. Missing you today and always.*

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COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Michelle, Kay & Jasper

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Christmas Season ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Please note the Gulf Islands Driftwood office will be closed on Friday, Dec. 23.

Open for usual business hours on Monday, Dec. 26.

ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR THE DEC. 28TH PAPER:

Display Advertising Deadline: Wednesday, December 21, 4pm

Classified Display Deadline: Monday, December 26, 2pm

Classified Word Deadline: Tuesday, December 27, 9am

Please note the Gulf Islands Driftwood office will be closed on Friday, Dec. 30.

Open for usual business hours on Monday, Jan. 2.

ADVERTISING DEADLINES FOR THE JAN. 4TH PAPER:

Display Advertising Deadline: Wednesday, December 28, 4pm

Classified Display Deadline: Monday, January 2, 2pm

Classified Word Deadline: Tuesday, January 3, 9am

**Driftwood**  
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PHOTO BY FIONA FOSTER

**NO DOUBT ABOUT IT:** Proudly holding ribbons for winning both Best Overall and People's Choice awards for the village scene in the Mouat's Home Hardware window for the Driftwood's annual decorating contest are Mouat's employees Barb Kinnear, left, and Rick Wilson, with Sharon Sykes — scene designer and owner of the village pieces. Other award winners this year were PARC for Centennial Park lights, Salt Spring Gallery, Love My Kitchen and the Ganges fire hall.

COMMENTARY

A man and his dog . . .

As I watch my dog Woolly sniff her way down the driveway, a fragment of an old folk song runs through my mind:

*Old Blue she died, and she died might hard  
Dug little holes all around the yard.*

Woolly's got the "old" part down. She's 15 and a half, which makes her about 108 in dog years. That's practically prehistoric for a half-golden retriever, half-border collie "of a certain girth."

She's not digging holes or showing obvious signs of immediate demise, but she's definitely fading. Her black pelt is now streaked with grey and she sports a muzzle that looks like it was dipped in a sugar bowl. She relies on her nose more than her eyes or ears. If a cat or a rabbit happens to cross her path she treats it like a bad smell, averting her eyes and pretending it's not there. Her rickety hind legs won't propel her over fallen logs or up steep hills anymore. When she "runs" (which is seldom) she moves like a rocking chair making a break for freedom.

A few days before her last birthday she took it upon herself to galumph arthritically down the street after a Jack Russell.

Not a smart move. She could barely walk the next day. Now she's on a daily dose of what the vet calls "the senior's cocktail" — a witchy brew of pills with multi-syllabic names like gabapentin, tramadol and meloxicam.

It would clarify the situation if she was drooling, whining with pain or senile, but she's not. She's the same sweet mellow dog she's always been. She loves people, tolerates other canines (Jack Russells excepted) and eats like a lumberjack.

Woolly is the latest in a long line of dogs that have graced my life. There was a fox terrier, a hound, a German shepherd, a dalmatian, a bearded col-



Arthur Black

WIT & WHIMSY

lie . . . but mostly they were mutts of indeterminate provenance and, though tempered by swirling eddies of exasperation, I loved 'em all.

But Woolly? She's a special case. Some dog owners are lucky enough to see their puppies being born; I saw mine being conceived.

We were in the car on our way to town, my sweetie and I, when we beheld on a neighbour's front lawn a glorious golden retriever enthusiastically bestowing his affections on an obviously grateful border collie. "Hmmm," we both thought as we continued on our way. When we returned from town about an hour later, they were still at it on the lawn.

We knew what we had to do. We drove up the neighbour's driveway, roused him from an afternoon nap and asked him if he owned a border collie with a touch of floozy, character-wise. He did. We informed him as to what she was up to (or under). We also told him that we would like to purchase one of the (inevitable) pups. Fifty dollars, a twenty-sixer of Dewar's and a few months later we did just that. We got the pick of the litter and the pick was Woolly.

Best deal I ever made. I've been owned by close to a dozen dogs in my life and I adored every one of them, but Woolly is unquestionably the sweetest. She doesn't bark; she talks with her eyes. Those eyes are clouded with cataracts now and she spends more time asleep than awake. Most likely one of these days she won't wake up at all.

Will I get another dog? I doubt it. Hell, I'm about 512 in dog years myself. 'Way too old to take on a puppy; 'way too wary to take a chance on a "previously owned" canine.

Besides, it would be unfair to any incoming pooch. Woolly's going to leave four paw-prints that'll be impossible to fill.

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# Reindeer Fun



BY MAYANA BOPARAN  
AGE 4-6 CATEGORY  
SECOND PLACE

Once upon a time Santa was going to his sleigh, but suddenly the sleigh was starting to fly. Santa ran as fast as he could but it was too high that he could not reach it. The reindeer thought that Santa was in

the sleigh.

"Come back here right now!" he shouted. But they did not hear him and the reindeer instead went to the museum to look at the animals that were there already.

Rudolph said, "It's time to go home."

The other reindeer shouted, "We want to go get some ice cream!"

"Oh fine."

They all shouted "Hooray!" so they did. Then they went to the park and they played and played and played.

Then they decided to go back home and they were on their way until they found a big house that they could stay in. They stayed the night. They finally went home and Santa delivered the presents and Santa got back home to the North Pole.

# Santa Gets Lazy

BY EMERSON HAYDEN  
AGE 9 CATEGORY  
SECOND PLACE

At the North Pole, Santa felt rushed to get all the presents ready for Christmas. It was Christmas Eve and he still had 857 more presents to make.

"I want a break!" said Santa.

He got his skis and went outside. The snow was falling softly like tiny feathers. Santa walked to the top of the hill and put on his skis, then off he went.

He zoomed past trees, going faster and faster till SPLASH! Santa had fallen in the lake. After he got out, he walked back to his workshop. As soon as he returned, Mrs. Claus was waiting.

"Why did you go skiing when you still had 857 more presents to make?" she shouted.

That night, Santa packed his sled, got all his reindeer and then he flew away. There was an ocean breeze, which felt like standing under a fan with wet blades. He went from house to house, dropping off present after present, eating cookies and drinking milk. Suddenly, he got to a house and did not have a present for the kid who lived there.

"This must be the house of one of the 857 kids I did not make a present for," he said to himself.

The next morning, on Christmas day, a boy named Dave woke up and went downstairs to see if he had any presents. Disappointingly, he did not have a single present.

He trudged to his parents' room and said, "I did not get a single present this year."

"You must have been naughty," they said.

Then he noticed a letter in the corner. Dave picked it up and read it. This is what it said: "Dear Dave I'm very sorry I did not make you a present. From, Santa."

That morning, Dave decided to go to the North Pole. After all, he was 14 years old. When he got to the North Pole, Dave took a taxi to Santa's workshop. When he arrived, Santa said, "Why are you here?"

"I wanted to help you finish the presents because lots of other kids did not get presents and it makes them really sad," said Dave.

"I'm so sorry. Next time, I will do my presents early so that I can go skiing in December."



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