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GULF ISLANDS Driftwood

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LAND USE

Logging noise inflames tension



PHOTO BY ALEX HARRIS

Aerial photo taken by Alex Harris shows private lands clearcut on Beddis Road in the past 18 months. Nearby residents have been told by provincial officials that forestry is an essential service and will not be halted despite people having to stay home due to COVID-19 while the noisy activity is underway. Harris has taken photos of other recently clearcut swaths of land on Salt Spring Island.

Private land logging continues as Islands Trust project unrolls

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Limited restrictions on the clearing of private land on Salt Spring continues to be a major concern for islanders who have seen clearcuts transform their forested neighbourhoods into stripped-down wastelands.

While most people are focused on the global pandemic right now, some are calling attention to the fact that controversial forestry practices are still continuing, and in some cases appear to be ramping up.

Peter McAllister, a long-time environmental activist who happens to live on the other side of the ridge from a 40-acre Beddis property that's been logged for the past 18 months, has been one of the loudest voices campaigning for a change to local regulations. McAllister says the situation has become even harder to take as work advances closer to property lines.

"We have literally been going crazy up here for weeks and weeks, ever since the

COVID stay-at-home order," McAllister said. "It's been horrible with the noise of industrial chainsaws. We can't hang around in town and we can't go to parks. It's driving the neighbourhood crazy and I fear for our mental health."

McAllister wrote to locally elected officials, MLA Adam Olsen, Health Minister Adrian Dix and provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry asking that logging be suspended, at least while people are being asked to stay at home. His official response from the province is that forestry is considered an essential service.

Property owner Gary Stunder was unable to respond to the Driftwood's request for a comment before presstime.

Alex Harris, a young documentary filmmaker and photographer living on the island, is also horrified by local clearcuts. She has a unique vantage on the impact through the aerial footage she's taken using an ultra-light drone. The sites she's photographed includ-

ing the Beddis property are visible from the road, but the overhead view provides the full scope of those clearings.

"As a young person, it's devastating to see ecological collapse," Harris said. "I'm only 26 and I've already seen shifts and changes."

"I wouldn't call myself an environmentalist or a tree-hugger," she added. "This is really about ecological collapse and saving the planet."

Recent clearcutting at an 11-acre property off Churchill Road is just the latest example of her concerns. Along with the impact of losing more of the island's biggest trees, she cites loss of island biodiversity, the damage to local watersheds and the heightened risk of wild-fire as some of the potential issues related to clearcutting anywhere on the island. But for now there are few barriers to removing forest cover.

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ISLANDS TRUST

LTC lends supports to uptown cannabis shop

New policy on bylaw enforcement also approved

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Country Grocer shopping complex could soon add a cannabis store to its list of retail services, with support for a new outlet approved by the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee during their first elec-

tronic meeting last week. The LTC voted April 28 to forward the retail cannabis application on to the BC Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch, finding no potential negative impacts to the neighbourhood and that the zoning and location were appropriate. If approved, the shop will operate in the unit formerly leased by Uptown Pizza and will keep the same 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. hours as the liquor store does at the other end of the complex.

Applicant Leigh Large of Cathay Western Properties Ltd., which owns the local Country Grocer branch and the liquor store, said the company was seeking to fulfill the government's request to provide a needed service. He promised the shop would conduct its business in a professional manner.

The LTC voted to also forward items of correspondence received regarding the application. The committee voted to forego the usual requirement for holding a public consultation meeting since COVID-19 restrictions on gathering and the LTC's move to an electronic meeting format make it not feasible for the foreseeable future.

Planner Geordie Gordon reported 17 pieces of

correspondence had been received about the matter. Six letters supported the venture, but there was also opposition to the site, as well as some confusion in the community about the presence of retail cannabis shops and a feeling there are already enough of those outlets in Ganges.

"Staff note that there are currently no provincially licensed cannabis retail locations in operation on the island, though the LTC has endorsed the application of one other, at 109 McPhillips Ave.," Gordon said in his report.

Trustee Laura Patrick suggested that community input be considered in future staff work, including a project on regulating cannabis production on the island.

"I fully support this location. I just wonder how we can deal with some of this correspondence, not regarding this location," Patrick said.

In other business conducted on April 28, the LTC voted to approve a change in policy regarding bylaw enforcement, as presented by the Trust's chief enforcement officer Warren Dingman. As a result, property owners who are undertaking an unlawful use on their property will continue to

be subject to enforcement action even if they have started an application process to become compliant. The new policy includes provision for such applicants to request temporary suspension of enforcement activity and for the LTC to endorse it, if they believe a case for community benefit has been made.

Dingman explained that property owners, especially those with unlawful commercial enterprises, had sometimes taken advantage of the previous policy that enforcement activity would stop as long as an application to become compliant through rezoning or a temporary use permit was started. Those applications could sometimes drag on for years or remain incomplete, Dingman said.

Noting the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee had approved the same policy change a few months ago, Patrick said she was proud of what that body was doing to change the culture of it being "better to ask for forgiveness than permission."

"This makes it really clear we want them to ask for permission first," Patrick said.

LTC chair and Trust Council chair Peter Luckham said he supported the shift in policy direction and would like to

see it adopted across the entire Trust area.

Also on April 28, the Salt Spring LTC finalized a bylaw to make long-term rental of seasonal cottages lawful for 411 properties. Patrick voted against adopting the bylaw as being insufficient to local housing needs, while Luckham and trustee Peter Grove continued their support.

"I'm hopeful we can create even just one opportunity for a family, but hopefully for many," Luckham said, adding he was looking forward to receiving more ideas from the housing working group that Patrick is coordinating.

While the April 28 LTC meeting was held on Zoom, provincial regulations required there also be a physical space for the public to participate. The Islands Trust's Victoria office was designated for this purpose. Since then the provincial government repealed and replaced its ministerial order under the Emergency Program Act to allow local governments, improvement districts and the Islands Trust to go completely electronic during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next Salt Spring LTC meeting is scheduled for May 26. Details on how to participate will be posted in the coming weeks.

TIDE TABLES at Fulford Harbour

MAY 2020 PST (UTC-8h)
When using Daylight Saving Time, one hour must be added to the predicted time in the table

DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	DAY	TIME	METRES	FEET	
6	0315	3.3	10.8	10	0053	2.7	8.9	
	1001	0.8	2.6		0515	3.1	10.2	
	WE 1707	2.9	9.5		SU 1249	0.2	0.7	
ME 2152	2.0	6.6	DI 2108	3.4	11.2			
7	0342	3.3	10.8	11	0214	2.7	8.9	
	1040	0.4	1.3		0550	2.9	9.5	
	TH 1810	3.1	10.2		MO 1336	0.3	1.0	
JE 2246	2.3	7.5	LU 2204	3.4	11.2			
8	0410	3.3	10.8	12	0351	2.7	8.9	
	1121	0.2	0.7		0625	2.7	8.9	
	FR 1910	3.3	10.8		TU 1424	0.5	1.6	
VE 2345	2.5	8.2	MA 2258	3.4	11.2			
9	0441	3.2	10.5	13	0538	2.5	8.2	
	1204	0.1	0.3		0702	2.5	8.2	
	SA 2010	3.4	11.2		WE 1514	0.8	2.6	
SA				ME 2347	3.3	10.8		

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Forest DPA project in early stage



PHOTO BY ALEX HARRIS

The extent of recent clearcut logging off Churchill Road near Ganges Harbour is clear from the air, as seen in this ultra-light drone photograph by Alex Harris.

LOGGING

continued from 1

Islands Trust bylaw enforcement officer Warren Dingman confirmed the Churchill Road property owned by Jean Barakett is not within any development permit areas. There are no regulations that would restrict tree-cutting there.

Barakett did not respond to a request for comment on why the land has been cleared, and her hus-

band Brian Milne declined to comment at this time.

The Salt Spring Local Trust Committee added Coastal Douglas-fir protection to its projects list in December 2019 following sustained requests for action from concerned residents over the previous year. The project's focus will be on creating a new development permit area. Correspondence received at the April 28 LTC meeting requested the Trust collaborate with other

organizations early on in order to make the end product more effective.

"It is exciting to see this DPA process moving along," wrote Island Forest Watch member Sheila Dobie, who continued, "the need for a comprehensive and deep collaborative community dialogue will be the most crucial component of this process."

"I am concerned that the allocated resources are not in range of what will be needed to make this a successful project. Specifically — the kind of facilitation expertise and partnerships for bringing such divergent views into the same room in a spirit of creating something positive," she wrote.

Groups doing complementary work who Dobie said should be involved include Transition Salt Spring, the Salt Spring Island Conservancy and the Climate Action Plan 2.0 committee.

The LTC directed staff to consider the letter while drafting the project charter.

The Coastal Douglas-fir protection project will potentially create some restraint on how and where logging can be done, but people like Harris who have seen the damage say they fear more hectares of island forest could be lost in the meantime.

FIRE DISTRICT

Ganges hall rebuild ruled out as replacement

Significant work needed in short-term

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Salt Spring Fire Protection District Board has voted to not pursue rebuilding the Ganges fire hall and its foundations and to instead concentrate on a different location for a new hall.

The decision came after review of two professional reports on the facility and fire department needs.

The board's Fire Rescue Advisory Committee received reports this month from Herold Engineering and FireWise Consulting, both of which confirmed the current facility is not suitable and that rebuilding on the site would not make sense financially. The focus will shift to the Brinkworthy property owned by the fire district as the primary alternate option, although variables such as water servicing still have to be determined.

"The board as a whole really wants to move forward, and our approach all along has been to have all the information to have the best evidence-based case," said fire board chair Ron Lindstrom. "It's been somewhat time consuming but necessary for two reasons. One is to rule out the current site and the second is to provide the rationale to explore the Brinkworthy site in

more detail."

The seismic assessment update provided by Herold Engineering and the baseline needs report done by FireWise identified several deficiencies in the current hall and the downtown property that support making a move.

Herold Engineering has found the site is not seismically sound, since it was built on infill without pilings to support it, and it may not withstand a major disaster, reducing the capacity of emergency services to respond. The cost of a seismic retrofit, according to the estimates provided in the report, is in the range of \$1.5 to \$2 million. This does not include the additional costs to renovate the building.

FireWise determined the Ganges hall is poorly placed, does not meet operational requirements and is at risk from several potential natural disasters. The report contends recent emergency events have shown having "resilient facilities that can support a professional team tasked with managing the impacts of an emergency is critical to the safety of residents."

"Equally important, the facility has to be able to support the health and safety needs of the full time and paid on-call personnel who serve the department and community. Careful assessments have shown us that this is not the case in the current facility."



PHOTO COURTESY SALT SPRING FIRE RESCUE

Salt Spring firefighters pose in front of the Ganges hall when it was still almost brand-new in 1962. The building is now past its optimal lifespan.

In light of the problems identified with the building, the board accepted a recommendation from the advisory committee to obtain estimates for the immediate work necessary to make the existing hall safe and useable until a new facility can be built. This will include evaluation and repairs of the electrical system, roof repairs, termite damage, assessment of vehicle exhaust extraction systems and evaluation of air ventilation systems.

While previous boards may have been holding off on major investments since they hoped to have a new hall completed, Lindstrom said the items identified above can no longer be ignored.

"In the short-term we clearly need to look after the current site's deficiencies. As each year goes by the situation doesn't get any better, it gets worse," Lindstrom said.

Salt Spring Fire Chief Arjuna George agreed with the short-term and long-term assessments.

"It's always been something management, the board and even the public has known, that the hall is past its prime and has some issues," George said. "We've kept pushing the timeline down the road but it's come to the point that some repairs have to be done to make the hall safe for Salt Spring Fire Rescue. And it's always been pretty evident that we'll have to

find a new location for the main fire station."

With the Ganges site now ruled out, some potential issues with the property next to Brinkworthy Estates now have to be resolved. Confirming water supply will be at the top of the list. On April 30 the North Salt Spring Waterworks District board denied the fire district's request for water service at that site due to its moratorium policy. There are also questions about BC Hydro transmission lines and how they might impact radio communications and safety, and about septic/sewer servicing.

Lindstrom said the advisory committee will need to determine whether a well can provide potable water for the site.

"We'll have to do onsite testing if that is a definitive no," he said about the NSSWD decision.

"We own the property, which is a huge bonus financially, but before we go ahead, we have to make sure it's adequate for everything," George said. "We will have to make sure we absolutely dot our I's and cross our T's to make sure it's the best option for the taxpayers of Salt Spring Island."

Information about the fire hall replacement project is available online at saltspringfire.com. People can also sign up to receive emailed updates at saltspringfire.com/fire-rescue-advisory-committee/.

WATER

NSSWD changes restrictions

More flexibility should aid CRD and school fields

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD EDITOR

The North Salt Spring Waterworks District has made some changes to its bylaw governing water restrictions.

Acting district manager Meghan McKee said changes were prompted by public feedback the district has received about the previous bylaw over the years and ensuing research about other jurisdictions' practices.

"In revising these restrictions we tried to make them closer in line with those of our neighbouring jurisdictions that have similar water supply issues to us, so that would be the Cowichan Valley Regional District, the Nanaimo Regional District and all the municipalities and improvement districts in that area," she said.

Notable changes will allow cars and boats to be washed at any time in Stage 3 (previously called Level 3), and driveways and buildings for certain purposes with a special permit. Public parks and fields could be watered upon receipt of a permit in Stage 3.

Consultations with School District 64 and CRD Parks and Rec officials revealed that fields could be allowed to go dormant at certain times in summer months without serious consequences, but that they needed water at other times, such as a couple of weeks in advance of a field being used.

"It's not necessarily that they will be allowed to water all summer long but that we can have the flexibility to let them do it at the end of August and times like that when they really need it," said McKee.

Restriction changes will use data from drought management guide curves being

developed by a water resources engineer and based on water models for St. Mary and Maxwell lakes and water-use reduction targets during times of drought.

"We have relaxed some things in this bylaw, but it's important to be aware that for Stage 4, while it's an outright watering ban, we are only expecting to go there every eight to 10 years, and I think about every five years for Stage 3."

The new restrictions can be viewed on the NSSWD website.

Financial relief

In other NSSWD news, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has informed the district that it cannot extend the March 16 due date for parcel taxes to provide COVID-19 financial relief as it had hoped, because the due date had already passed.

The district was able to change late penalty dates, however, so that the first penalty of 10 per cent would not come into effect until June 1. An additional five per cent will be charged on overdue amounts on Sept. 1 and a further five per cent on Dec. 1, 2020. For toll penalties and service interruptions, the usual 10 per cent penalty on unpaid water consumption bills will not come into effect until June 16.

Staff restructuring

Several changes have taken place following a staff restructuring at the district. Meghan McKee is now acting district manager. Ron Stepaniuk, who plans to retire in December, has assumed the new position of (acting) operations manager. McKee's former environmental manager position has been eliminated. Tammy Lannan has been appointed office/financial manager, replacing Ken Roggeman.

NORTH SALT SPRING WATERWORKS DISTRICT

NSSWD WATERING RESTRICTIONS HAVE CHANGED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT
NORTH SALT SPRING WATERWORKS DISTRICT
IS IN

STAGE 2 WATERING RESTRICTIONS

Stage 2 Watering Restrictions:

SPRINKLING

- Even/odd numbered addresses can sprinkle on even/odd dates between 7 am and 7pm up to a maximum of 2 hours per day.
- New lawns can be sprinkled during the hours stated above or outside those times with a special permit.

MICRO OR DRIP IRRIGATION OF TREES, SHRUBS & GARDENS

- Even/odd numbered addresses can water trees, shrubs, and gardens with micro or drip irrigation on even/odd dates before 10 am or after 5 pm up to a maximum of 4 hours per day.

HAND WATERING OF TREES, SHRUBS & GARDENS

(with a bucket or hose with spring-loaded nozzle only)

- Even/odd numbered addresses can hand water trees, shrubs, and gardens on even/odd dates at any time up to a maximum of 3 hours per day.

WASHING OF VEHICLES & BOATS

- Vehicles and boats can be washed anytime using a hose with a spring-loaded nozzle.

For more details, visit the NSSWD website to view the Summary Table of Watering Restrictions.

www.northsaltspringwaterworks.ca

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OPINION



2019 CCNA Awards
 Gold - Best Editorial Page | Gold - Best Feature Series (Gail Sjuberg)
 Bronze - Best News Story (Elizabeth Nolan) | Bronze - Community Service

2019 BCYCNA Awards
 Gold - Best Arts & Culture Writing (Elizabeth Nolan) | Silver - Best Environmental Writing (Gail Sjuberg)
 Silver - Best Multimedia Feature (Marc Kitteringham)
 Silver - Community Service | New Journalist of the Year (Marc Kitteringham)



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EDITORIAL

Reach out for wellness

May 4 to 10 marks Mental Health Week in Canada, coming at a time when more people than ever are suffering from anxiety, depression and substance-use issues.

From worry about one's own physical health or the health of loved ones to stress arising from loss of income and fear of the future, COVID-19 has ramped up the triggers that can erode the mental health of even the most solid of individuals.

While it can be difficult to admit one's mental health is suffering and to reach out for help, it is critical to break through the barrier of resistance and to seek help from qualified sources.

THE ISSUE: Mental health

WE SAY: No need to suffer in silence

Knowing that COVID-19 is impacting citizens' mental health, the federal government has created a new online portal called Wellness Together Canada. David Norget, the co-chair of the Salt Spring Health Advancement Network, has also compiled a long list of resources beyond the portal. Those range from free mental health online, video and phone-based supports through the B.C. government's health ministry website to the Mental Health Commission's First Aid COVID-19 Self-Care & Resilience Guide. Locally, Islanders Working Against Violence has a 24-hour violence and abuse help line, and the Vancouver Island Crisis Line is also accessible to Gulf Islanders. A complete list with links follows the online version of Norget's opinion piece titled "Support Mental Health During Difficult Times" on the Driftwood's website this week.

A new local mental health fund has also just been created by a Salt Spring family affected by the tragedy of mental health struggles and suicide. The Devon James Bolton Mental Health Fund is being administered through the Salt Spring Island Foundation and is now accepting contributions. As well, the foundation is urging charitable groups to apply for money from its COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Relief Fund for activities that benefit islanders' emotional and mental health.

"Good mental health is so critical to our well-being, and yet it is often dismissed as less urgent or deserving of our care and attention," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated on Monday in relation to Mental Health Week. "This leaves far too many to suffer in silence, fearing discrimination or stigma."

With so many options for seeking help these days, suffering in silence does not have to be endured.

PARKER



Mother's Day and peace

BY JAN SLAKOV

It's fascinating to look at how Mother's Day morphed over the years. It can be traced back to Ann Reeves Jarvis, who organized Mothers' Day Work Clubs to improve health and sanitation. (Imagine how it must have been for her to lose most of her children to disease!)

During and after the U.S. Civil War, Ann worked to overcome the animosity of the opposing sides and eventually organized a "Mothers Friendship Day" for soldiers and their families from both sides. It was during this period that Julia Ward Howe spearheaded the movement to honour Mother's Day as a day to resist militarism and to work for peace.

Ann's daughter Anna built on her mother's vision, and lobbied the U.S. government to declare a special day to honour mothers, which it did, in 1914. But it wasn't long after that that commercial interests realized this was a holiday they could exploit. Anna Jarvis was appalled at the commercialization and trivialization and eventually created a petition to rescind the holiday; near the end of her life she reportedly said she "... wished she would have never started the day

VIEWPOINT

because it became so out of control . . ."

Reading about this history gives rise to reflections on what people hold sacred, be it health, peace and reconciliation, motherly love or making money. Isn't it amazing to see how the world we create is so much determined by our thoughts and the culture we create?

We know that we're in the middle of a crisis much more threatening than the pandemic: the threat of ecological and also social unravelling. Our economy rewards actions that worsen the crisis and our media and political parties are largely controlled by those who can't/won't work to bring in healthier economic options. That Mother's Day could be a portal to ways of overcoming these obstacles!

It turns out May 10th is also #BearWitnessDay, a day to uphold "Jordan's Principle" — the conviction that all children should have equal access to essential services, whether they live on reserves or in wealthy neighbourhoods. What a coincidence that this effort to improve children's health falls on Mother's Day, which was originally also focused

on improving family health. The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society website describes several COVID-safe ways for families to honour this day and further Truth and Reconciliation Committee calls to action.

The coincidence extends further; to honour the origins of Mother's Day as a day for peace and justice, we are called to be peace-builders. Like Julia Ward Howe, we may denounce "great nations [exhausting] themselves in mutual murder." We do need to recognize the ways that war and militarism undermine our thinking and ultimately our chances for survival. But peace activism can be more positively focused by learning about Indigenous-inspired ways of being. A less judgemental worldview, more focused on listening, gratitude and appreciation of the natural world, is at the root of peace-building. The simple yet profoundly powerful technology of talking circles can help us build understanding and connection across the many things that divide us.

Taking time to reflect on the history of Mother's Day, and how we can build on its roots, laid down over two centuries ago, may help us build a future worthy of our children.

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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Should logging near residences be halted during the pandemic? Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Has your mental health been impacted by COVID-19? YES NO

Cast your ballot online at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com before Tuesday at noon or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 4:30 p.m.

OPINION { QUOTE OF THE WEEK: }

"We have literally been going crazy up here for weeks and weeks, ever since the COVID stay-at-home order."

PETER MCALLISTER, SKY VALLEY ROAD RESIDENT

SALT SPRING SAYS

WE ASKED: *How will you be celebrating Mother's Day?*

EDWARD MCKEEVER



Eggs Benedict in bed. My wife stays in bed all day and I take the kids for multiple long nature walks. Flowers and kids' cards for sure.

SHIRLEY COMMAND



I'll be gardening and thinking about how blessed I am to be a mother to two amazing daughters.

ANDREW THOMAS



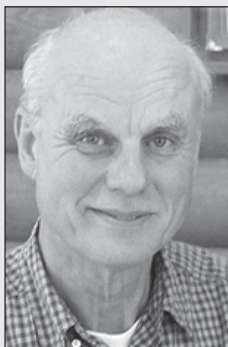
This year I had a plan to meet in Vegas for a buffet. Plans have changed to a phone call. Love you Mom, Happy Mother's Day!

AMY HAYSOM



My daughter Mayana said she would give me a full spa with a massage. Otherwise you'll likely catch us hiking up a mountain and singing songs while taking selfies in yoga poses.

PETER GROVE



Remembering that my mother taught me so much about being positive and kind to others, no matter what. I wish all mothers joy on this special day and especially during these difficult times.

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

What is considered a COVID case?

Our health system is quite good at doing what it was designed to do: treat disease. That is the focus of those who run it. For them, the unit of analysis is the case. A case is someone to whom you can assign an official diagnosis. Once you have the diagnosis, you can then decide on a treatment and receive payment for doing that.

Public health is a very different matter. It is mainly about prevention and risk factors. Action to reduce risk often has no immediate, visible benefit for an individual. The benefit accrues to an entire society and is visible

when averaged over large numbers of people.

This distinction has become clear during the COVID-19 virus pandemic. Daily in the mass media and on government websites we are given facts about cases, while the level of risk receives scant attention. Cases look at what has already happened, whereas risk anticipates what is likely to happen. To plan policies wisely, we need to know about risk.

The COVID-19 virus cannot live by itself. It must have a host in order to reproduce. It hijacks the host's molecular machinery to make more virus. The unit of analysis in this situation is the infected person or an infection. For COVID-19, many who are infected will show no or very mild symptoms, yet they can

still transmit the virus to others. Transmission of the virus creates a significant public health risk. Measures to reduce transmission, such as social distancing, need to be evaluated by assessing the number of infections, not just cases.

To know the actual number of infections, we must test large samples of people from the broader population regardless of illness in order to reduce the bias introduced by concentrating the testing on cases of the overtly ill. It appears that the number of new cases has declined substantially because of social distancing, but what is happening to the number of infections? We simply do not know.

DOUG WAHLSTEN,
SALT SPRING

Library awesome all the time

The April 22 "Little library that could" article by Lavone Leong was great!

The library is one of my favourite places in this community. My grandsons hang out there, it's safe, they can play games and attend all sorts of sessions: movies, chess club, and more.

And especially now I am in awe of our library: I can still order any book, I can read e-books at the click of a finger and even have books delivered at home if needed.

Thank you, Salt Spring library, you're the best!

MARGRIET RUURS,
SALT SPRING

Birthday inspires hanging up the knife and fork

It was a milestone by anyone's definition; a moment to celebrate with pipe bands and decking the island with bunting. Several weeks ago I turned 70. Hurrah.

I know, I know. You'll look at the photo there and wonder "How can this be? Full head of hair. Complexion of an unsullied debutante. Surely he's not much older than 35?"

But there it is, I've cracked the three-score-and-ten bit and it can only be downhill from this point onwards, although how you can go downhill if you are already languishing somewhere near the bottom of the heap is a mystery to me.

Without wishing to bore you with a réchauffé of my not-very eventful life I will say that a half century or more of clean living and an entirely wholesome disposition have allowed me to keep my winsome good looks, but when I was much younger and a more spiteful man all the old fellas I encountered seemed to me mostly to smell of pipe tobacco, stale beer and wee, and I had pretty much decided then that I wanted none of it. Life, however, intervened and has dumped me on the threshold of great antiquity. Finito. Hand me my pipe, a small pale ale and a flagon of eau de cologne.

I suppose I'm being churlish to complain since the men in my family have seldom survived long after their 65th birthdays and are invariably carried off a few years into their pensions by heart attacks. But they didn't have the bountiful Brenda Akerman to harry them through her Dances of Longevity three times a week in the Rainbow Road pool. Nor a pacemaker which, if the truth be told, saved me from setting an unenviable family record and moving into the McElroy mausoleum before I'd seen 50.

Anyway, here I am. Seventy years old and none the wiser for it since I



Paul McElroy
+ ANOTHER THING

can count on one finger the lessons I have learned in my seven decades. One of the many things I haven't learned, for instance, is never, ever make a New Year resolution. I made one again this year, pretty much the same one I've been making for half a century and have never once seen out beyond February. It is to stop being fat.

In my early and considerably more sylphlike days as a newspaper sprog, a regular chore was the obituaries, death knocks to cajole something interesting out of the recently bereaved, great training for a young journalist destined to spend much of his working life leeching off other people's misery or at least capitalising on it to sell a few more copies of the newspaper.

Back then, as a callow 19-year-old reporter who began his working days with calls to the three local undertakers followed by a visit to their latest customers' grieving families, two things occurred to me in a time of my life that wasn't much given to deep thinking. The first was that most people led very ordinary, very dull lives and that there wasn't much copy in an existence driven by an ambition to grow the biggest onion. The second was that I was only ever invited inside to interview women. It seemed that the dearly departed were inevitably men and that widows by far outnumbered widowers, which seemed grossly unfair and rankles to this day.

One other thing I noticed then and now is that the long-lived are seldom chubby. I don't have any evidence beyond my own observations, but it seems to me that there are fewer porky pensioners than scrawny ones, which is encouragement enough to shed a few bucketsful of lard. To quote one of my mentors, Miss Piggy: "Never eat more than you can lift."

So I've hung up my knife and fork. Not really, but I have embarked on what I have interpreted as a sausages-only diet. It's possible that I've misunderstood the instructions, but this appears to require you to eat everything you once held to be anathema to slim hips and a six pack — butter, pork chops, cheese, and full cream provided they are accompanied by cauliflower. Bread and potato are verboten so I've had to forgo my customary mashed potato sandwich for lunch, but that is a small sacrifice since bacon and cheese have become obligatory. If I have the measure right, this diet is a doddle and breakfast now can compromise as many sausages as you can eat and still get up from the table.

I've also discovered something called konjac, an inscrutable oriental vegetable which contains no calories, no carbohydrates and has absolutely no taste but can be eaten by the trough load as a substitute for real food. Despite the fact that there is more taste and nutrition in its plastic packaging, konjac is intended as a surrogate for rice and pasta and consequently has the similar smug appeal of a hair shirt. Konjac Bolognese, for instance, has all the flavour of wallpaper paste and a strikingly similar texture, but if you can eat a plateful of the stuff and still lose weight, what's not to like?

Happy new decade!

paulmcelroy@shaw.ca

Support mental health during difficult times

BY DAVID NORGET

I have felt so many things during this unfolding time of the COVID-19 pandemic — the challenge of adjusting to the unknown; grief in what is happening in the world; care for our elderly and immunocompromised; appreciation for my own life slowing down and my own privilege when I know that there are so many in our world and in our community experiencing hardship. There are more.

As I read the news and observe comments and reactions, it seems to me that the pandemic is showing us where there are gaps in society. Some have safety nets; others do not. Disparity in income, race, ability, the haves and have-nots, is being revealed to all. I have greatly appreciated leaders like Dr. Bonnie Henry who have shown themselves to be knowledgeable, pragmatic and caring. I also appreciate how many people are coming together. There is a different kind of reaching out occurring, whether it is people reaching out to family, friends, people they haven't contacted for a while, or building connections with complete strangers.

Many in our community have led the way to deepening connections, and these efforts are now being drawn on. The POD system is one such example, but it is far from being the only one. Then there are new community pieces. Regular reports from the Lady Minto Hospital medical staff are reassuring,

both in their tone and in their leadership and concern. I believe we all feel comforted hearing how people are coming together to support and extend care.

Since 2013, the Salt Spring Health Advancement Network (SSHAN) has been paying attention to building connections. We believe that through being connected we can be stronger as a community. The health network was born seven years ago out of a physician recruitment committee and a realization that attracting GPs to the island involved creating a community that was working together around health and well-being. Since that time many who believe in the importance of collaboration have been dedicated to deepening this.

SSHAN's mission is To Improve Community Health and Well-being through Networking, Advocacy, Information Sharing and Collaboration. While our focus is on issues around mental health and seniors, we note how intricately linked social determinants of health, like housing, water, recreation, and employment and income, are to overall community health and well-being.

In the current circumstances of COVID, SSHAN wants to let people know that there are good things happening in our community. The Emergency Operations Committee is meeting — virtually, of course — twice weekly to discuss logistics, and note and address community needs.

Representatives of the school district, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Salt Spring Community Services, a doctor, public health nurse, and more, continue to meet regularly (also virtually) to discuss vulnerable children and their families.

There are a number of organizations supporting insecurely housed community members, many of whom are living with the effect of serious abuse in their past.

See the online version of this piece on the Driftwood website — gulfislandsdriftwood.com — for a list of mental health resources.

The Business and Farm Emergency Response and Recovery Task Force has been created and is working to improve food security and sustain local business. They are also reimagining a new and strengthened Salt Spring.

The health network is noting the stress in our community — COVID means some are thinking about life and death, there are massive adjustments to daily routines, and many are experiencing fear. Mental health is an issue. SSHAN notes that

there are marginalized and vulnerable communities on our island. These include children, youth and families who have less income or where there is domestic violence/abuse, seniors and immunocompromised, frontline staff who are dealing with the risk of getting COVID-19, the less able/disabled, insecurely housed people, our Indigenous community, many in the LGBTQ+ community, and diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health individuals. It may be the calm before the storm in terms of mental health.

SSHAN was already working on a one-year mental health initiative (2020-21), part of a five-year vision, when COVID arrived. It is now working with the Salt Spring Community Health Society to look into addressing immediate mental health needs in the community.

Given the current need, a number of mental health online and telephone services are available. Know that you do not need to reach a crisis point to get support. These resources are for you or someone you know who is/are feeling emotional challenges or simply wish to be proactive in your care.

SSHAN is continuing to check in with partners about the mental health concerns they have—both within their organization or for those they serve. We are currently mapping vulnerable communities, noting what supports they are receiving or gaps in service. The work of community continues.

What can you do to help?

Continue to support the community health guidelines coming from Dr. Bonnie Henry. This goes a long way to supporting health and therefore community care. Look after yourself and those in your "bubble of care." Reach out for mental health support to strengthen your well-being. Donate money (rather than food) to the food bank — there is a great need. Reach out, using physical distancing, to neighbours or those you think might be vulnerable; they will appreciate it. Strengthen your POD. Reach out to Salt Spring Emergency Services Emergency Program coordinator Charles Nash at ssiepc@crd.bc.ca to find out how to do this. Some PODS are very active, others non-existent. Keep staying connected. There are ways of physically distancing while connecting to neighbours and others. I note how many of our neighbours are taking regular walks and chatting together on our street.

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Thank you to all of the local heroes who continue to contribute to a stronger Salt Spring Island!

The writer is co-chair of SSHAN, a father of two, a counsellor, an emergency mental health clinician, and a member of the community since 1989.

Easy ways to order groceries Online Market, Email or Phone

Salt Spring Mercantile, a rural agency general grocery store authorized by LDB to sell liquor, continues to honour its essential service designation while **minimizing the risk of exposure to Covid-19 to both its customers and its team.** Only team members are physically in the store, sanitizing, ordering, receiving and picking orders.

Order from:

- Our Online Market at saltspringmercantile.com with a special section for Salt Spring producers
- Email store@saltspringmercantile.com
- Or phone in 250-653-4321 between 9am and 1pm

Pickup will be arranged between 2pm to 6pm the same day or delivery is available Fridays.

You can also always give your verbal orders at the front door to a team member from 11am - 6pm daily.

Residents suffer due to logging

The following is an open letter sent to Dr. Bonnie Henry and filed with the Driftwood for publication.

BY KATHLEEN MASER

Dr. Bonnie Henry, it is undeniable that you radiate kindness, knowledge and tremendous expertise, and thus have become a pillar of strength for the vast majority of us during this pandemic.

You are an authority that B.C. residents trust implicitly. I find myself glued to the radio or television as you update us on the corona virus, express your genuine concerns for us all and elaborate on the many programs and plans in place, or those coming out soon. Quite honestly your kindly manner, your directness and practical solutions are soothing, and greatly reduce my fears and concerns.

Due to the sincerity of your directives we remain isolated in our homes, tending our gardens and walking in our neighbourhoods and parks, those of which are still open to the public. These activities allow us to maintain a positive outlook, good mental health and give us the desire to "hold the course" that you so wisely request. I know you are aware of the coming wave of mental health issues expected to follow this corona virus crises. My daughter, a psychiatrist in another province, is involved in the planning for this probable mental health tsunami.

Sadly, and, as you know, we have a situation on this island, where residents are literally fighting for their mental well-being due to the intolerable noise of a commercial logging operation. A form of psychological torture, says a nurse living in the area. To preserve their sanity, residents are fleeing their homes on Sky Valley Road in direct violation of your stay-at-home directive! This situation is untenable and entirely coun-

terproductive for preserving public health. Both Salt Spring CRD director Gary Holman and MLA Adam Olsen have been notified of the extreme distress of these islanders.

After contacting the public health line here on Salt Spring, these residents were told there was nothing they could do except to contact the police. Finding no help from either the police or public health these people went further and sent you a letter, and then a second letter, believing that you would see an immediate need to issue a stop work order.

Your response came via Thomas Guerrero, executive director with BC Health, stating that nothing could be done because logging was now an "essential service!"

We are utterly shocked. Then how dismissive to be told in a further page and a half about all the services and resources that Anxiety Canada can provide for people in a stressful situation. You and I both know that what is required is to stop this untenable logging operation for the period of the stay-at-home orders.

Our Prime Minister Justin Trudeau repeatedly tells us that his governments efforts during this pandemic will be evolving as time goes by. Any reasonable citizen would think that our B.C. government would follow suit, remaining flexible, evaluating each situation as it arises and then giving the most humane response. This particular logging operation on Salt Spring Island is not happening for the benefit of the BC Government coffers. It is far from an essential service.

You have the power Dr. Henry, to say: In this situation, on Salt Spring Island this operation needs to stop while self-isolation orders are in effect.

I know you will be moved by this request and I implore you to remain true to the extraordinary reputation you have earned.



PLEASE SUPPORT OUR Local Farmers!

This profile is the fifth in a series of Salt Spring Island farm profiles the Driftwood is running to support island growers, many of whom have been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis.

FARM NAME: Foxglove Farm
OWNERS: Michael Ableman & Jeanne-Marie Herman

Contact information:
 250-537-1989
 foxglovefarmbc.com/csa-2020/
 Instagram @foxglovefarm

Origins: Michael and Jeanne-Marie have been farming full-time since 1976, and started operations on Salt Spring in 2001.

Crops and Products: We produce a great variety of fruits and veggies, grains and pulses, and also eggs and pork.

How has COVID-19 affected your farm?

All of our restaurant accounts on Salt Spring, Vancouver and Victoria are now closed, as is the Saturday market. This robs us of a huge amount of our income, as well as the fulfilment of providing for our coastal community. To respond to this unprecedented situation, we started a "Drive Through and Delivery" produce box program, which is now full to capacity until renewal in July. We do still have space in our Farmers' Market CSA, a program we have been operating for over 10 years. We are also providing a number

of produce boxes anonymously for low-income residents of the island. In addition, we will be opening a produce stand on our farm in late May.

Where can Salt Springers buy your produce?

Through the Tuesday Farmers Market, our CSA food share program, and at Foxglove Farm on Mount Maxwell Road (hours to be announced).

What message do you want to convey to Salt Springers at this time?

It may be that the current crisis is providing us with an opportunity to create a food system that truly reflects who we are, where we live and the reality that we may no longer be able to rely on the industrial food system that still supplies the majority of our food. We live on an island, and we are now being asked to think like one. The financial impacts of this crisis will go on long after the disease

has diminished. This year there may be more members of our community who simply cannot afford to access fresh food. The responsibility for this, for making sure that everyone has a place at the table, belongs to all of us, not just the tiny percentage of our island population we call farmers. This too can be an opportunity.

We may feel paralyzed when faced with the enormity of our modern dilemma, but we have enormous power in and around the places where we live. This is our time to come back home, to support all those who are re-imagining and replanting our island — one seed, one farm, one meal, one individual at a time.



PHOTOS COURTESY FOXGLOVE FARM

Jeanne-Marie Herman and Michael Ableman of Foxglove Farm; farm-fresh asparagus and strawberries.



To access more online Salt Spring market vendors go to the Salt Spring Community Market's online ordering portal at www.localline.ca/salt-spring-community-market

GARDENING

Ways to water with drought in mind

Tips for plants at all stages

BY LINDA GILKESON

We are now in May, prime spring planting time. At this point the soil is so warm that you can probably plant most things. If we do get a cold night, the warmth in the soil should protect tender plants if you cover them with plastic or floating row cover. Hold off on planting cucumbers, melons, corn and beans until after the middle of the month, depending on how the weather goes.

Because of climate change, our summers have been generally warmer and drier than in the past, with heat waves and prolonged dry weather occurring as early as May in some years. We have already had a dry spell in April this year that required some gardeners to start watering. Vegetables need regular water all summer so you need to plan how you are going to water your garden most efficiently.

Hand-watering can be practical for small gardens or temporary beds, such as community gardens, and is a necessity when water districts restrict water use in dry summers. To hand water, use a gentle spray nozzle or water breaker on the hose. Rather than holding the hose in one place, pass the stream of water quickly back and forth, quickly covering the whole bed, then go back and repeat as needed until you have laid down one to two centimetres of water. (Place a couple of

tuna tins here and there to catch water so you can measure it.)

For larger gardens, drip irrigation systems or soaker hoses, which can be hooked up to automatic controllers, allow you to use water efficiently and save work. Such systems range from low-cost, self-installed systems on a simple timer to expensive, professionally installed systems that can be reset from a smart phone. Lee Valley Tools has a free online publication that is useful to learn about options (search for Irrigation Design Guide on their website).

Since heat waves can happen any time and we don't know when the rains will cease for the summer, here are some lessons I have learned from past hot, dry summers:

1. Be extra vigilant in staying on top of watering and shading seed beds and young plants. Seedlings are easily killed in a heat wave because their leaves are delicate and their roots are close to the surface. Anything can be used to shade plants for a couple of days, including upside down pots or latticework plant trays, sheets of newspaper or fabric supported on a framework. If the heat wave goes on for longer, such covers should be deployed just in the hottest part of the day to allow plants to receive light in the morning and late afternoon. You might want to invest in

horticultural shade cloth or build wood latticework screens to shade plants. These let in enough light that plants can continue to grow, which means it can be left in place for a prolonged heat wave.

2. Be ready to start regular irrigation any time now, depending on the weather and your garden soil and drainage. Watering less often and deeply makes roots go deeper in the soil. When your water district restricts outdoor watering, deep rooted plants handle it better than shallow-rooted plants.

Ample and even soil moisture is most critical from germination and transplanting time until roots are well established. Vegetables with shorter roots (lettuce and leafy greens, corn, celery, celeriac, onion family) need regular water throughout the season. Cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower need more water while heads are developing. For fruiting crops (e.g., tomatoes, squash, etc.) regular irrigation is especially important during flower and fruit development. Later on in the summer, well-established tomatoes in deep soil can manage with less water, but don't stint on watering young plants, plants in pots or in shallow soil (such as raised beds built on rock). Allowing the soil to dry out, even intermittently, is the main cause of blossom end rot in tomatoes.

3. Mulch, mulch, mulch. For early

season heatwaves, put mulches in place as soon as possible around young plants. Lawn clippings are excellent for this because they are soft and fine enough to sprinkle around tiny seedlings. Old leaf mulch from last year is also easy to crumble into a fine-grained mulch. As the plants grow, put on thicker layers of coarser mulches (straw, leaves from last fall, waste from finished crops).

4. In mid-summer, when you will be sowing seeds for the winter crops, the soil can be too warm to germinate carrots, lettuce and some other seeds. After seeding and watering, cover the seedbed with burlap, old beach towels or other material to cool the soil for germination. Be sure to remove it as soon as the first tiny green tip appears.

5. Greenhouses aren't the best places to grow tomatoes and peppers if they get too hot in the summer. The pollen is sterilized by temperatures over 30-32°C, which causes flowers to fall off and not make fruit. Cool a greenhouse by increasing ventilation to dump heat (you may need to install a fan) or by using shade cloth over the top or on the south side of the greenhouse. If you are growing basil or sweet potatoes in your greenhouse, however, as long as they have enough water, they will enjoy the high temperatures.

Enjoy the spring weather and get out there and garden!



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ORGAN DONATION

Kidney donation forges new bond

Transplant patients recovering after life-altering gift

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Enforced quiet time under the COVID-19 pandemic is no trouble at all for two Salt Spring women who have spent the past two months recovering from kidney transplant surgery: Karen Tottman as the organ donor and Brenda Bowes as the extremely grateful recipient.

Strangers before Tottman's decision to help was made, the islanders now refer to themselves as "kidney sisters." Their successful transplant procedure took place at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver on Feb. 10, to Bowes' continuing astonishment.

"When this possibility came up I thought, 'What a beautiful woman to even think about that. How wonderful that she would do that for me,'" Bowes said. "I just couldn't believe it. I still can't believe it, to tell you the truth. I just can't get my head around it."

Bowes, who turned 76 last week, was first diagnosed with progressive kidney disease in 2001 during an annual physical check-up. She had been managing her condition to some degree through diet and exercise, but after her kidney function fell to just 14 per cent a few years ago, she was forced to go on dialysis in order to remove waste and toxins from her body.

The process meant travelling off-island three days per week, and by no means equalled a cure. The average lifespan for a patient of Bowes' age on dialysis is five years. Her kidney function eventually fell as low as 11 per cent.

With doctors' advice to pursue a transplant as soon as possible, Bowes went through and exhausted a list of potential friends and family members. She reluctantly turned to the community with her first public appeal for a living donor published in the Driftwood in November 2017. Although a few people contacted her for more information, it didn't seem to go any further.

Tottman, who is 61 and has three adult children, came across Bowes' situation in an online ad posted last April. After discussing it with her husband she decided to explore the potential for donating. She contacted Bowes, who put her in touch with St. Paul's Hospital. That's where contact between the two women would end for many months.

Bowes only learned the transplant was a possibility a few months before it took place. She and her husband ran into Tottman's husband, who informed them his wife was "still" pursuing the donation.

Little did Bowes know at the time, but Tottman had been undergoing a vigorous process of medical testing and emotional/psychological monitoring all through the summer and fall of 2019 to make sure both that she was a good donor candidate and that she continued to want to be one at every step of the way.

"Throughout the entire process they always gave me the opportunity to ask questions and to change my mind. I



PHOTO COURTESY KAREN TOTTMAN AND BRENDA BOWES

Kidney donor Karen Tottman, left, and Brenda Bowes, kidney recipient, following their respective surgeries at St. Paul's Hospital in February.

thought that was very sensitive," Tottman said.

Progressive tests showed Tottman was in excellent physical health and that she had good kidney function. Activity slowed down over December but then in January 2020 she finally received the sign-off from the transplant team.

"It gave me a lot of time to make sure I was comfortable with what was happening. It wasn't fast, it wasn't rushed. I had a lot of time over eight months to discuss it with my family and to check in with the social worker," Tottman said, adding, "They were so thorough checking out my health that really gave me the comfort level. I knew I would physically be in the best condition I could be in or I wouldn't have gone through with it."

The lengthy screening process also gave her confidence in her choice.

"I realized how committed I was and how disappointed I would be if this didn't work out," Tottman said.

Once the match was secured, Tottman asked for the earliest surgery date possible. To everyone's surprise, an early February date was offered, giving the families just a few weeks to make arrangements.

"Usually it's six months to a year, but this was three weeks. It was like a whirlwind," Bowes said.

"Thank goodness it happened when it did because now all those surgeries are on hold," Tottman observed. "Brenda got in just under the wire."

Both women reported feeling calm and unworried going into the surgery. They were up and walking around the hospital together within 24 hours. While Tottman's surgery was less invasive, it did

mean six to eight weeks of recovery time and she will be rebuilding kidney function with her single organ over the next year. Fatigue is the main impact she is feeling now.

Bowes had a more intense operation and has a longer journey to go but has received good reports on her recovery as well.

"It's a long process — it's probably nine months to a year until you're really back to where you were, but I'm as happy as a clam," Bowes said. "It's a new lease on life, that's for sure."

There are good supports to help people complete the donation process. The Living Organ Donation Expense Reimbursement Program, administered by the Kidney Foundation of Canada, can reimburse expenses including travel, accommodations, parking, meals and potential loss of income. Tottman noted that as a donor, she would also be at the top of the list for a new kidney if she were to ever lose function herself.

The donor also can be happy knowing their gift has either saved a life or dramatically improved the quality of life for someone else. For Tottman, it's especially meaningful that it happens to be another person in the same community.

Bowes said although she was initially reluctant to ask the community for help, she would certainly recommend others make their needs known.

"For anyone else thinking about doing it, it's not as scary as it seems. But you need an angel," Bowes said. "Karen will be my heart for the rest of my life, as well as my kidney. I just think she's marvellous."



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

COMMUNITY SHOPPING: Copper Kettle Community Partnership volunteer Shamana Ali gets set to deliver groceries ordered by a resident unable to go to grocery stores due to COVID-19. Ali is one of 15 core volunteers (along with 10 spares) who are participating in the program. More than 200 deliveries had been made as of last week. Anyone needing the free service is asked to contact Copper Kettle at copperkettlessi@gmail.com or phone 250-537-5863.

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LIBRARY SERVICES

Kids get special May Day delivery

Materials distributed in activity bags

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

May Day was an occasion to celebrate for 73 Salt Spring families who received a special delivery from the Salt Spring Public Library to their homes on Friday.

The library assembled and delivered 129 activity bags for kids aged 10 months to 14 years with reading materials and other items to help keep them occupied while the physical library building is closed.

Head librarian Karen Hudson said she came up with the idea after attending a Zoom seminar called "Cities in the Time of COVID: How will the role of public libraries be changed?" The seminar featured a panel of urban library directors, including Maureen Sawa from the Greater Victoria Public Library system.

"During the discussion, I heard that a library out east was delivering activity bags to children in their community, so I came up with a plan to deliver May Day activity bags to families in my community," Hudson explained. "The response from our local families has been great, with many heartfelt thankful messages."

A notice inviting families to sign up was posted online. The comments section of the form reveals parents were indeed grateful for the opportunity.

"Thank you very much, it's really a great idea and I sincerely appreciate it. I am sure



PHOTO BY GAIL SJUBERG

Children and a goat kid get set to explore the contents of their Salt Spring Public Library May Day activity bags delivered by librarian Julia Wagner.

the kids will be thrilled," Serena Picca posted.

"My kids would love to participate in this program. They will be so excited, they have really missed getting books from the library," said Megan Colgan.

The library primarily used materials weeded from their juvenile and young adult collections, and put them into Salt Spring Public Library bags with a J.K. Rowling quote. Each child received a DVD or audiobook, two or three books, colouring pages, crayons and stickers, or

parents received a Books for Babies bag. Every bag also included a library card registration form, a poster featuring the library's kids writing contest and one on the weekend Story Walks in Mouat Park.

"We ran out of picture books today after one of the elementary schools sent our notice out, but our partner Salt Spring Literacy helped out with two boxes of new books, and we bought every crayon in the toy store," Hudson said Thursday.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Salt Spring Fall Fair cancelled for 2020

Book and jewellery sale also postponed

The Salt Spring Fall Fair and Salt Spring Literacy's annual book and jewellery sale are the two latest casualties of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"We are following the announcement of Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, that there will not be any mass gatherings in order to ensure that everyone in our community is safe and stays well during this pandemic," the fall fair board of directors stated in a May 1 press release. "Our fair attracts over 8,000 visitors to the grounds over the weekend and is a collective place to meet and socialize with friends and neighbours. This celebration of our community is something to look forward to but realistically the safety and well-being of our guests is more important."

The next fair will be held Sept. 18-19, 2021, when the 125th anniversary of the first fall fair on Salt Spring is celebrated.

In the meantime, the board says it is "putting together some fun ideas for fundraising that may be practical to achieve. We will keep you informed."

Revenue generated by the annual fair helps maintain and improve the Farmers' Institute facility for community use.

One of the groups using the institute is Salt Spring Literacy, which has also announced the cancellation of its November book and jewellery sale.

Volunteers normally begin collecting, sorting and cleaning books in April.

"We are unable to collect the books due to the need for social distancing and limiting the exchange and handling of goods," said the SSL board of directors. "The volunteers who contribute the countless hours to make the sale possible would be put at risk should we begin collecting before it is entirely safe to do so. Please hang on to your books, as we depend on your donations. We will communicate as soon as we can coordinate a book collection in a safe manner."

Because jewellery donations are easier to manage in a safe way, a collection bin will be available in Island Savings beginning this month.

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New mental health fund initiated

Family and foundation aim to help
others on island

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD EDITOR

The Salt Spring Island Foundation is putting a focus on short and long-term mental health needs on the island with a new memorial fund and a call for charities to apply for COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Relief Fund dollars.

"Increased isolation and stress [due to COVID-19 restrictions] are currently taking a toll on the well-being of those who already suffer from mental health issues," the foundation states in a press release. "The foundation's COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Relief Fund is accepting applications from charities that assist vulnerable individuals in the community, including those who suffer from mental health challenges."

As of Monday the relief fund had received \$161,000 in donations. Some \$83,033 had been disbursed to Salt Spring charities.

The foundation is also looking to provide continued support for mental health needs on Salt Spring through the Devon James Bolton Mental Health Fund. Long-time island

residents Terry and Bev Bolton established the fund following the death of their son Devon in December 2019. The Boltons said they do not want to see families go through the same sadness and stress as they did trying to cope with the tragedy of suicide.

"Those who wage a lifelong battle against bipolar disease are doubly impacted trying to survive the current abnormal stress level," said Terry Bolton. "Their life path often ends in suicide, sometimes years later. We can't limit our vision to the immediate crisis. Bev and I know only too well the human cost of such outcomes. That is why we provided seed money to establish a mental health fund in our son's name."

The Devon James Bolton Mental Health Fund is part of the endowment of the foundation and created as a memorial to help with mental health issues for many years to come. Anyone wanting to make a donation to the Devon James Bolton Mental Health Fund can contact foundation administrator Shannon Cowan at shannon@ssifoundation.ca or by calling 250-537-8305.

Donations to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund may be made at ssifoundation.ca or by mail to: Salt Spring Island Foundation, Box 244, Ganges PO, Salt Spring Island, B.C., V8K 2V9. People should indicate on cheques that the donation is to be directed to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

BOOKS

Sea otter story explored in new book

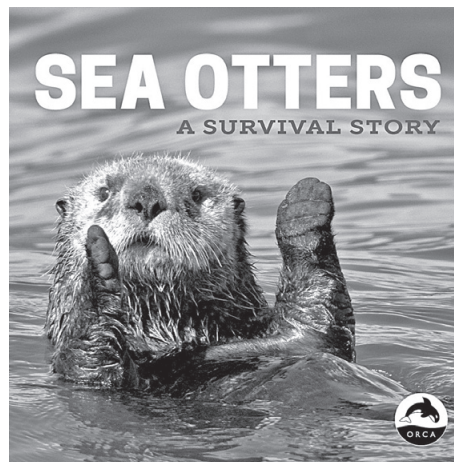
Bateman Gallery of
Nature to hold virtual
launch Thursday

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The remarkable story of how humans wiped out a key species on the west coast of North America and also initiated a thriving recovery effort is the subject of a new book by part-time Salt Spring resident Isabelle Groc.

Sea Otters: A Survival Story is a non-fiction book for middle years students with stunning wildlife photography by the author, the result of more than a decade spent researching and observing sea otters in the wild. The book will be released this Thursday, May 7 with a virtual launch and webinar hosted by the Bateman Gallery of Nature as part of the Bateman Foundation's Nature X series.

The sea otter's incredible journey as a species and growing realization of the important role it plays in local eco-



systems are part of the reason Groc has spent so much time following and documenting the animals, and why she felt the material should be directed at youth.

"Sea otters are very charismatic animals. They are adorable, the females are very hard-working moms, they are one of the few non-primate species to use tools — all of that makes them attractive to children," Groc observed. "But more importantly, I really wanted to convey that everything is connected in the environment. When you remove a keystone species like this predator it has multiple impacts, and I wanted to convey to children that important relationship."

The fact that sea otters were hunted to extinction in most of their range during the 18th and 19th centuries is sometimes a surprise to people who are used to seeing otters along the shoreline. That familiar species is actually the river otter. Sea otters spend all their time in the ocean and are only glimpsed now by the lucky few.

Hunting of the species was finally banned with an international treaty in 1911, but by then it was too late for most of the range, which extended as far as central California.

"The last sea otter was shot in the 1920s; 99 per cent were killed. That was it for sea otters in British Columbia," Groc said.

It took a reintroduction program that relocated some surviving sea otters from Alaska in 1969 to bring otters back to the west coast of Vancouver Island. There are now around 7,000 sea otters in B.C.

Groc has spent time with scientists out on the water in California's Monterey Bay, the Tofino area and the south coast of Alaska. She has taken wildlife tours and kayaked

her way to their colonies.

"It's been many years of watching them from a distance with a very long lens to respect their life cycle," Groc said. "But now more and more people get to see them, which is delightful, and they're expanding their range."

While Groc encourages people to see otters in the wild if they can, her photographs provide an excellent alternative. The book also explores what makes sea otters' fur coats so special, explains how their voracious appetites help kelp forests thrive and demonstrates how the species is critical to every part of its ecosystem.

As scientists have discovered, sea otters get a lot of nutrition from sea urchins and love eating the larger specimens. As much as they love the spiny delicacy, sea urchins have the same mania for kelp and will eat an entire forest if not kept in check. Having sea otters in their proper place keeps kelp forests in balance, providing important fish habitat, helping combat erosion and aiding with climate regulation.

While the ban on hunting and conservation efforts are helping sea otters get re-established on the coast, more needs to be done. Groc explained the animals are vulnerable to oil spills and to pollutants that originate on the land; protecting the ocean will help otters survive, along with all species in the marine environment.

There's also information in the book about how humans can learn to live with sea otters and the long-term benefits of doing so, with acknowledgement they compete for the same shellfish human groups might rely on.

"They were absent for so long, so we have to learn to co-exist again," Groc said.

Groc is thrilled to have her book launched by the Bateman Foundation, noting Robert Bateman is a hero of hers and is known for his sea otter illustrations. Another exciting aspect for her is the book's foreword was written by sea otter advocate Dame Judy Dench and David Mills, who is the founder and owner of the British Wildlife Centre.

The virtual event starts this Thursday at 3 p.m. Ticketed registration is available for the webinar in different price ranges at batemanfoundation.org, with all funds raised supporting the foundation's charitable work and environmental programming.

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Adina Hildebrandt - Salt Spring Books



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Advertising Deadlines Change

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Please note that the **Gulf Islands Driftwood** office will be closed on **Monday, May 18 - Victoria Day** and will reopen for usual business hours on **Tuesday, May 19.**

Deadlines for the Gulf Islands Driftwood Wednesday May 20 edition will be as follows:

Display Advertising deadline; Classified Display Deadline; Classified Word Deadline:
Wednesday, May 13, 12 noon

Until further notice our **OFFICE HOURS** are: 10am - 2pm Monday to Friday
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The Moon's Nodes entering Gemini and Sagittarius on May 4/5 for their 18-month cycle and the Full Moon in Scorpio, are spotlight themes. Full Moons in water signs heighten the emotional noticeably. When in Scorpio, moods tend to swing wildly from great heights to deep lows and quickly like an emotional roller coaster. Since Mars is in revolutionary Aquarius still, we can expect the beats of that pulse to come to a crescendo as we head into the weekend.

As for the Lunar Nodes, expect the social dialogue to enter a whole new level of determination. Due to the presence of Jupiter in Capricorn, however, it may feel like sergeant dad showed up for little Jimmy's birthday party in his usual serious and stern mood. Yet, this lockdown of opinion will prove especially challenged while Saturn is in Aquarius until July 1st which will activate a rebellious response.

Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19)
A busy cycle continues as you attend to a variety of projects, chores, and errands, despite the lockdown. Yet, it is likely that much of your time has been directed to your hobbies and talents, including your garden, if you have one. If not, then it is the garden of your mind that you have been tilling and planting seed ideas of every original sort.

Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)
One way or another, you have entered new territory of late. It likely includes new investments of your time, energy, and money. Generating multiple streams is your style and helps keeps things interesting. An innovative, inventive and explorative theme is also indicated as you try new angles and venture into unfamiliar territory.

Gemini (May 21 - Jun 21)
Splitting the difference between retreat and creative self-expression continues. Yet, the two are not so separate as the arts and crafts side is its own form of retreat for you, a retreat into your imagination. With the Moon's North Node entering your sign this week, you will experience an even stronger urge to play with fresh angles of beautiful.

Cancer (Jun 22 - Jul 22)
Experimenting with what makes you the individual that you are and are not is a central theme of late. At worst, you are not sure anymore, or at least less than you once did. This is because you have entered a metamorphic cycle destined to continue for the next few years. In the shorter term, make efforts to suspend what you think you know and feel secure about it.

Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 23)
The Sun in Taurus is activating Uranus there as well and together they are synchronizing with some pretty big moves. These may be literal as in re-locating but could also refer to actions taken that are having a big impact on you and others too. This process includes new thoughts, ideas and personalities on your stage destined to influence your public and professional status.

Virgo (Aug 24 - Sep 22)
Can you be both visionary and practical? Of course you can and you probably are inclined that! Currently, the focus is directed to creativity and on a variety of fronts. You yearn to make a bigger impact and once that brings about changes too, both in you and others. Stimulating new income streams is a motivating factor.

Libra (Sep 23 - Oct 22)
When it comes to finances you tend to be shrewdly realistic or is that realistically shrewd? Either way, the topic is on everyone's mind these days and you are on board. Dealing with a blend of confidence and insecurity comes with the territory. With Mars soon to enter Pisces, you are probably wise to at least have a plan ready.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)
Building and strengthening your relationship ties is a priority now. Yet doing so is not so straightforward currently. It appears that you are encountering two distinct types, realists and innovators. The secret sauce, however, stands to be getting both to enter into deeper communication in which you play the role of the maestro.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
With each new day, your entire lifestyle is changing. In many respects, these changes are proving unexpected. Yet, it is true that you have been defying the odds and pushing against the current. Positively, these rhythms and actions are leading to new levels of harmony and happiness on relationship fronts. Get ready to dig even deeper as Mars enters Pisces.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
The stellium of planets in your sign are the culprits causing all the trouble, at least from those in high places. Sun and Uranus in Taurus is contributing some brevity as they tickle you into playing. But then Venus is seriously positioned, or is that in a serious position, either way, she is serious about what Mercury is up to except she may not fully realize that he is clowning around.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 19)
Deep, fat beats are the source of the pulse in your stride. I mean, it is not easy to walk lightly when everything is so heavy or breathe easy when anxious neurosis is clanging on the airwaves every day. Yet, somehow amidst it all, you are able to maintain a focus. It is a focus with many facets, it is true, but it is this very non-linearity that is uniquely you.

Pisces (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
It is a good thing that variety is the spice and that you like things spicy because you are getting plenty of both. Original ideas have been rising like water from a mountain spring in... spring. While Mars entering your sign may prove mystifying for many, it will put you in your element and assertively so. But don't expect things to be entirely straightforward; you are the fish after all.

COVID-19

Dr. Henry inspires local gift of appreciation

Islander makes necklace for health officer

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

While times of crisis can create resentment against authority figures, provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has earned nearly universal acclaim for her

leadership in British Columbia.

Members of the public have stated their appreciation for the way Henry can ease anxieties with her genuine but calm demeanor, while others have also taken note of her fashionable side, which includes a fondness for Fluevog shoes and distinctive necklaces.

Salt Spring's Erica Ross is one of those who has been impressed by Henry's



PHOTO BY ERICA ROSS

Necklace of Tibetan turquoise and black onyx stones made for Dr. Bonnie Henry by Erica Ross.

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character. To show her admiration and thanks, she recently put a handmade necklace of turquoise and onyx stones into the mail with a destination of the provincial health officer's work headquarters.

A champion amateur tennis player who's been grounded with the closure of the island courts, Ross found herself turning to another favourite hobby during the pandemic.

"I haven't made this stuff for quite a while, but when I got the inspiration to make something for Dr. Henry I sat down and I did a few things," Ross said.

Ross has noticed during the daily briefings that Henry seems to like wearing big, chunky necklaces, which is the style she also prefers. She selected larger Tibetan turquoise stones and smaller onyx accent stones with Henry's personality specifically in mind. She had the materials on hand thanks to her frequent visits to Tucson, which hosts the largest bead show in the world.

"Dr. Henry has been so great. I think we feel confident in her," Ross said. "She's so calm and strong but gentle at the same time."

"I think a lot of B.C. is surprised by how well we're doing, and I think a lot of it is due to her," Ross continued. "She seems to really care about us, which I

just love."

"We're social creatures and it seems a little quiet, but there are other things to do, as we're finding out. We can re-evaluate things and find our inner resources."

It turns out Ross isn't the only islander to want to translate their appreciation into a gift. When she called to get Henry's office address, the person who answered told her someone else on Salt Spring had called for the same thing, because they wanted to send Henry flowers.

Ross is hoping Henry will like her gift, and she would be thrilled to see her wearing the necklace during one of the upcoming briefings.

"I'll be really pleased, I really will," Ross said. "It just seemed to symbolize her somehow. I just hope it's something that makes her realize how much we appreciate her."



PHOTO COURTESY ERICA ROSS

Erica Ross in her habitual pre-COVID domain, the tennis court.

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LIBRARY

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Island kids from pre-kindergarten to Grade 10 can try their skills at story writing with a contest sponsored by the Salt Spring Public Library open to May 15.

One winning story will be selected in each of three age groups and awarded a gift certificate to Salt Spring Books. Winning stories will be published on the library website and via social media. The library is also exploring having a guest reader read winning entrants aloud by video.

Prize groups are pre-K to Grade 2, Grade 3 to 6 and Grade 7 to 10.

Stories must be an original work of fiction created by the writer/writers. No fan-fiction or adaptations will be accepted. Stories must also be typed — writers who cannot or don't know how to type can ask a parent to help — and may not be longer than 1,000 words.

Sibling writing teams are allowed, but stories must be entered into the age bracket of the oldest participating sibling.

Contest entries must be submitted to librarian@saltspring-library.com by Friday, May 15 at 5 p.m. See <https://saltspring.bc.libraries.coop> for the complete rules.

Helpful writing suggestions can be found at <https://thewritepractice.com/short-story-ideas>.