



Driftwood

GULF ISLANDS

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inside:



**DRIFTWOOD
STORY CONTEST**
Holiday Story Contest
winning stories
on pages 6,7,8,11.



9 Islander fundraises for well
in Tanzania.

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Cover artwork by Jane Holmes



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Driftwood

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SCHOOL DISTRICT

Grad rates keep rising

Most recent Indigenous learner outcomes an exception

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Gulf Islands School District (SD64) will be reporting a graduation rate of 93.2 per cent for the 2021/22 school year, and for the first time in more than a decade will exceed the provincial average.

The glad tidings on SD64's "Six-Year Completion Rate," as it's technically measured, came at the final meeting of the district's Board of Education Wednesday, Dec. 14, in a sort of preview offered to trustees in advance of a more full-some report expected in the new year.

The Six-Year Completion Rate is measured annually, based upon a cohort of students who start in Grade 8, identifying how many of those students succeed in obtaining their B.C. Certificate of Graduation. SD64's rate is 1.6 percentage points higher than the B.C. average of 91.6 per cent.

"For a superintendent and staff, there's no better winter break present than having this lens on the system," said superintendent Scott Benwell. "We see the

outcomes of a system that's contributed to by our support workers, our bus drivers, our teachers, administration, central office, parents and the students themselves."

Speaking to the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, Benwell also struck an optimistic tone, noting both numbers had risen and the gap was shrinking over time — despite a backslide in 2021/22.

"Last year in this district, the gap was [even] reversed," said Benwell. "Indigenous learners outpaced all learners, their outcomes were higher than all students."

"We raised the bar, and we will undertake to keep that bar high, and ever higher."

SCOTT BENWELL
Superintendent,
School District 64

This year's gap switching back is concerning, he added, but less so when considering the volatility inherent in smaller sample sizes. SD64 is a small district with a correspondingly small number of Indigenous learners, and the performance of one or two students can swing statistics drastically. The gap still resided "significantly" above provincial averages, as SD64's Indigenous students were crossing the stage at a 10 per cent higher rate than average for B.C.

"As a representative of staff — folks, we never aspire to average," chuckled Benwell. "As a former trustee reminded us, 'Why not 100 per cent, Mr. Superintendent?' So I take up that challenge. We raised the bar, and we will undertake to keep that bar high, and ever higher."

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SUNDAY Closed Jan. 1	MONDAY Closed Jan. 2	TUESDAY Open Jan. 3	WEDNESDAY Open Jan. 4	THURSDAY Open Jan. 5	FRIDAY Open Jan. 6	SATURDAY Open Jan. 7

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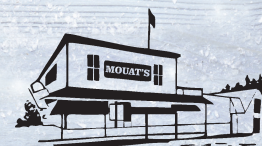
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LAND CONSERVATION

Susan Bloom Trust boosts Reginald campaign

Outright and matching donations

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Susan Bloom Trust is once again making a big difference to fundraising efforts on Salt Spring Island by supporting the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) Reginald Hill campaign.

The NCC announced last Wednesday that

trustees of Bloom's estate have pledged to contribute \$150,000 directly to the project, and to match all donations made by others starting Dec. 15, up to an additional \$150,000.

A total of \$500,000 is needed by Jan. 31, 2023 to finalize the \$7-million purchase of 400 acres of land on the south end of Salt Spring.

"We are so honoured to receive this gift," said Krista Sheppard, senior director of development and communications with the NCC, in a press release. "Susan has left an incredible legacy for nature and for the island communi-

ty that she called home. She was always bold and encouraging about getting conservation done. It's heartwarming to see her continue to encourage others to support conservation, even though she is no longer with us in person."

Anyone wishing to help conserve Reginald Hill can make a donation online at www.natureconservancy.ca/reginaldhill or reach out to bcoffice@natureconservancy.ca.

A long-time Salt Spring resident and quiet philanthropist, Susan Bloom died Dec. 6, 2021. Since her death, conservation-

related donations announced by her estate include \$100,000 to the Islands Trust Conservancy, an undisclosed amount through the Salt Spring Island Foundation to secure the 75-acre Salt Spring Community Park acquisition on Mount Maxwell and support for the Salt Spring Island Conservancy's campaign to preserve the Creekside Rainforest. One of her last major giving acts while alive was an anonymous \$1-million donation to the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation's emergency department campaign, allowing her name to be attached to the donation posthumously.

ISLANDS TRUST

LTC wades into Malahat corporation's mine expansion

Trustees ask for assessment, public engagement

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's Local Trust Committee weighed in last week on a resource project's request to expand its aquatic lease, joining several municipalities in officially expressing concern about the potential for contaminated soil to spill into Saanich Inlet.

A unanimous motion passed Tuesday, Dec. 13 was among the new committee's first, as returning trustee Laura Patrick was joined by newly elected trustee Jamie Harris and newly appointed LTC chair Tim Peterson in their first public meeting — the last of 2022. Salt Spring's resolution closely follows one passed last month by North Saanich and Central Saanich's councils, and asks the province to more closely examine long-term environmental impacts

before issuing permits to the Malahat Investment Corporation for that company's plans to expand its shore-lease near Bamberton.

The lease expansion lies within the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area's coastal and marine shore-land boundaries, and as such the Crown referred the matter to the LTC for comment. Regional planning manager Chris Hutton referred to a submitted management plan, which noted the existing lease had been in place since 1989; proposed uses for the expansion included the loading and unloading of "barges of contaminated soils, creosote piles, cement powder, scrap metal, aggregate and fuels."

"As this is a referral from the Crown, there's no public input process to follow here," said Hutton. However, he added they had received a "fair bit" of unsolicited correspondence. Committee members agreed to hear from long-time area diver Frank White, who was in favour of a letter from the LTC.

"What they want to do is to expand the mine by 47 per cent,"

said White. "To be expanded by 50 per cent, you have to have an environmental study. They've increased [the size of the lease] this way twice."

White said Islands Trust, and specifically Salt Spring's LTC, was in a unique position to ask questions, due to its mandate as a steward of the natural environment.

"You have the mandate to say, 'hold on, are you going to hurt the environment?'" said White. "Or, 'so, what is the contaminant? How are they going to store it? Is it going to be on that slope above the water and wash into the ocean?' There are a whole bunch of questions."

"One of the things that stood out for me was hearing that [the project] expanded a couple of times, always in amounts just below the threshold of causing a public engagement process," said Peterson. "So it's clearly been done at least a couple of times to try to expand as much as possible without having to hear from the public."

Harris pointed out the complexity of the situation, noting that while the applicant was a numbered corporation, it was owned by Malahat First Nation — and activity there had been going on for several years.

"They are following the rules," said Harris. "Is it something we could ask, something along the

lines of, 'can some sort of solutions be put in place to ensure that the environment will be harmed as little as possible?'"

"My suggestion is that we respond," said Patrick, "and recommend that potential longer-term environmental impacts be understood and mitigated before permits are considered."

"That's pretty reasonable," said Harris.

The LTC's resolution ultimately also requested additional public consultation be conducted.

More information is available through the Environmental Assessment Office website. Search for "Bamberton Projects."

WATER

Lake levels slow to recover

Low precipitation has major impact

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Water levels at Maxwell Lake — and in Salt Spring's other freshwater basins — are finally creeping up, according to monitors, but the process certainly seems to be taking its time.

"So our lakes are recovering very slowly," said North Salt Spring Waterworks District (NSSWD) operations manager Vaughn Figueira. "Yes, we've had some snow, but it's not nearly as much precipitation as we would have expected normally."

Figueira presented data to NSSWD trustees Thursday, Dec. 15. Since August, he said, rain levels have been well below normal. Last year, he noted, heavy rains in the fall quickly filled lakes after a long, dry summer. "In November [2021], we really started to come on with some heavy rains, and that helped us recover," said Figueira. "Unfortunately, that's not happening at the moment."

The crawling pace at which lakes are refilling is the product of several months of stubbornly low precipitation, well below not just 1981-2010 "climate normal" averages, but also less than Environment Canada's more recent recordings. There have been far drier summers, where Salt Spring experienced lower lake levels than 2022, but few wet seasons have been this slow to effect a refill.

Figueira said longer-term predictions are difficult to make — Environment Canada offered a "60 per cent chance we'll get rains above normal," he laughed — but barring large weather events, it will be well into January, or even February, before lakes reach normal capacity.

"If we got an atmospheric river? We need probably a couple to get us back in shape here," said Figueira.



Islands Trust

2023 Regular Meetings of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee

The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee will be meeting to consider various matters of general business such as applications received, bylaw reviews and meeting notes.

Regular Meetings are scheduled for:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Thursday February 9	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday March 16	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday April 13	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday May 18	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday June 22	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday July 13	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday September 14	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday October 12	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday November 16	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)
Thursday December 14	9:30 AM	64 Learning Hub, 122 Rainbow Road (In-Person)

The proposed meeting agenda is usually available one week prior to the meeting and may be obtained at the Islands Trust office or on our website.

Please note that correspondence received from the public may become part of a meeting agenda that is published online.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/location/salt-spring/>

CONTACT US AT 250-537-9144 OR: ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca

OPINION

2022 CCNA Awards
 Gold - Best Special Section | Gold - Best Local Cartoon (Dennis Parker)
 Silver - Best Editorial (Gail Sjuberg) | Bronze - Best Editorial Page

2022 BCYNA Awards
 Gold - Best All Round (for circulation Category C)
 Bronze - Community Service Award



EDITORIAL

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Tony Richards, MANAGING DIRECTOR



Nancy Johnson
 PUBLISHER

nancy.johnson@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Gail Sjuberg
 MANAGING EDITOR

gail.sjuberg@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Lorraine Sullivan
 PRODUCTION MANAGER

lorraine.sullivan@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Sky Marcano
 ACCOUNT MANAGER

sky.marcano@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Derek Capitaine
 OFFICE MANAGER

driftwood@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Elizabeth M. Zook
 OFFICE MANAGER

driftwood@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Robb Magley
 REPORTER

robb.magley@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

Time for gratitude

The holiday season usually brings out the best in most people.

It's a time when those with some extra cash are motivated to donate to worthy causes like the food bank or other social-service-related agencies. The impetus to buy gifts helps local small business operators and artisans. And it provides an opportunity to step off the treadmill of busy life for a brief time, at least, to enjoy spiritual and cultural traditions of this time of year, and to connect with friends and family members close by and farther away.

It also provides time for reflection about things we have been grateful for in the past year.

Those include the extraordinary efforts of the islands' not-for-profit groups, whose staff and volunteers work diligently and often quietly behind the scenes to make things better for the most vulnerable, the elderly, the young or the sick; or to enrich our lives with arts, cultural, sports and spiritual activities.

THE ISSUE:
 Holiday season

WE SAY:
 Generosity and gratitude should prevail

Health-care workers and those who work for various government agencies have had an extra-challenging year and deserve our kindest consideration and appreciation.

As we are currently buried after a heavy pre-Christmas snowfall, we will be grateful to all the people in emergency services who will be doing their best to keep us safe; and to those who will inevitably be needed to restore electrical service. It's been said by many people in the past two years, but we will say it again: Emcon Services Inc. rocks it in inclement weather when compared to their predecessors.

From the impacts of runaway inflation and an ongoing labour shortage to widespread mental health challenges with varied sources, it's been a difficult year.

If you have the means to help others at this time, please do. If not, some words of gratitude towards any individual or group that you have appreciated will go a long way towards making things better than they would otherwise be. And if you'd like to widen your circle of gratitude and connection on Christmas Day, the community will gather at Fulford Community Hall with the now-traditional Christmas Ball at Fulford Hall event. All are welcome and encouraged to enjoy companionship, music, food and more.



Advocating still effective

BY DAVID COURTNEY

Gary Holman, our 30-year veteran of local and B.C. politics and recently re-elected CRD director, appears to be amazed at what fellow ratepayers and guests to our community can achieve when we come together as one ("Island's ferry committee on right track" letter, Dec. 7 Driftwood).

We, the patrons of Route 6, have advocated with passion and persistence since Dec. 22, 2021 for better ferry service and infrastructure on Route 6. Sadly, this has been done without the director's vociferous support and that of others within his camp.

Released on Sept 30, 2022, BC Ferries' Performance Term 6 (PT6) submission to the BC Ferries Commissioner included a new two-ferry service for Route 6, along with new terminals at Vesuvius Bay and Crofton targeted for completion by the fall of 2026. This came about through the absolute dogged persistence of a few like-minded patrons who regularly use the route and simply have had enough of the situation on the Vesuvius Bay-Crofton crossing. The current support of 2,216 fellow petitioners and climbing at Change.org is what keeps the campaign alive and well.

It was another good week when we learned that the finalizing of Crofton terminal upgrades, Concept 2 with slight modifications, is well underway. As well, BC Ferries is supposed to hear on Dec. 22 from those shipyards that intend on quoting for the construction of the four

VIEWPOINT

Island Class vessels to be built between now and 2026.

What's next? Continued campaigning to ensure the funding is approved by the

BC Ferries Commissioner for the improvements contained in the PT6 submission. In the very near future we intend to conduct an ad hoc survey of the residents and patrons of Route 4 Fulford Harbour to Swartz Bay. We will collate the results and submit them as a comment to BC Ferries' PT6 prior to the March 31, 2023 deadline for public comment.

In the very near future we intend to conduct an ad hoc survey of the residents and patrons of Route 4 Fulford Harbour to Swartz Bay.

Finally as we close out the year 2022, it's been a great year for advocating. Advocating and persistence still works within our community to affect positive change. We would be remiss if we didn't extend our sincerest gratitude to the following supporters: MLA Adam Olsen, past North Cowichan Mayor Al Siebring and now the new Mayor Rob Douglas and council of the Municipality of North Cowichan, the chairs of the Chambers of Commerce of Chemainus, Duncan, Ladysmith and Salt Spring Island, Transportation Minister Rob Fleming, BC Ferries board chair Joy MacPhail and BC Ferries vice president of community engagement and strategy Brian Anderson.

The most important ingredient was our fellow petitioners/supporters, who came together as one. Now that was remarkable and sincerely appreciated. Happy holidays, everyone!

241 Fulford-Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2K7 | PH: 250-537-9933
 Email: driftwood@gulfislandsdriftwood.com | Website: www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com

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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Will you be having a more modest holiday season this year than last? Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Do you generally trust information from government press releases?
 YES 62 NO 71

Cast your ballot online at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com before Monday 2 p.m. or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 2 p.m.

ISLAND VOICES

Letters to the editor are welcome, but writers are requested to keep their submissions to 350 words or less. For details about deadlines, and word limits for the Viewpoint and other longer opinion pieces, contact the editor at the email address below, or phone 250-537-9933. All submissions may be edited for brevity, legality and taste. Writers are asked to provide a telephone number where they may be reached during the day, and to sign letters with their full name. Letters published do not necessarily reflect the views of Driftwood Publishing Ltd., its staff or advertisers. Send letters to: news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

LETTERS to the editor

Tsartlip-BC Ferries agreement a positive step

On Friday, Dec. 9, Chief Don Tom of the Tsartlip First Nation and Acting CEO of BC Ferries Jill Sharland signed an agreement designed to enhance the process by which the First Nation and BC Ferries work together on issues of mutual concern.

As a number of BC Ferries terminals are located on First Nations territories, including here on Salt Spring Island, the agreement will become an essential part of the planned redevelopment of the Vesuvius and Crofton terminals and future work on the Fulford Harbour terminal.

I was honoured to attend the signing ceremony, held at the Tsartlip Health Office building at Brentwood Bay, and was very taken by the spirit of renewed co-operation evident and, in particular, the deeply felt comments by Tsartlip elder Tom Sampson, reflecting on the somewhat problematic

past relations between the two entities. The agreement will be a positive step forward for the further evolution of Salt Spring Island ferry service.

HAROLD SWIERENGA,
CHAIR,
SALT SPRING ISLAND FERRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Islanders' Ukraine support recognized

Last week, from Ukraine and via the internet, I received an award from the Chortkiv District Military Administration and Chortkiv District Council.

In translation, the award is "...for...charitable and volunteer activities, significant and systemic support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and on the occasion of Volunteer Day."

This award, with my name on it, belongs to the generous people of Salt Spring, who starting with the Help Ukraine fundraiser in April, have donated over \$54,000

to Ukraine over the last seven months. In Chortkiv, where my late husband's relative has a parish, some of those funds have paid for an ambulance (found in Germany) and a jeep (Latvia), both of which were needed to transport supplies, refugees and the injured. Temporary shelter, food and clothing have been provided for people fleeing to the west, mostly women with children and the elderly.

The latest support, again through Fr. Oleg Olchowecki, has been for a commercial kitchen and bakery, built in the basement of the church. Meals are prepared and wrapped by volunteers for transport to soldiers and refugees. Oleg called today and spoke about the award and his heartfelt appreciation for the support from the people of Salt Spring.

As we know, the situation in Ukraine remains dire. The Help Ukraine Account, #10314 at Island Savings continues to welcome donations.

My sincere thanks.
VICTORIA OLCHOWECKI,
SALT SPRING



Award given to Victoria Olchowecki.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"If we got an atmospheric river? We need probably a couple to get us back in shape here."

VAUGHN FIGUEIRA, NSSWD OPERATIONS MANAGER, ON UNUSUALLY SLOW-TO-FILL LAKE LEVELS

Salt Spring RCMP officers don't deserve abuse expressed online

I grew up admiring and respecting police officers.

As a journalist for more than 50 years that respect occasionally wavered but never died. I have worked with them, sometimes against them, have been (deservedly) arrested by them and was once even sued by them. One of my closest friends in the U.K. was a very senior policeman.

They are, in my experience, principally dedicated, diligent servants of the state doing what has become an increasingly impossible job, spending far too much of their time dealing with issues they were never intended to deal with.

And it is for that reason I found the recent online assault of the local Mounties on a local Facebook site so ugly, a shameful attack on exemplary officers simply doing what most decent islanders expect them to do — maintaining the law.

First, the hyperbole, that they were "raiding" a shop that was, in fact, illegally selling "magic" mushrooms. They did NOT descend on the store like a SWAT squad. My understanding, based on the account by the business operator, is that they simply visited the shop, spoke courteously to the proprietor, confiscated illegal substances, and left without charging him. That is all.

And yet the venom levelled at them on the Salt Spring Face-

book page was as shameful as it was depressing. In some cases, the Facebook postings even accused the police of "stealing" the confiscated mushrooms for their own use, an absurd calumny that if levelled at anyone other than the police could easily result in a libel action, a slander that the police, as with so much of the regular invective that is thrown at them, are forced to take on the chin. That and the smug "I know more about this than I can say" without offering a single stick of evidence.

This is Salt Spring, for crying out loud, not some Cairo bazaar!

Most of the postings were the usual rants: that the police were going after the wrong people, that they should be hunting down the fentanyl dealers, the molesters and sex pests instead of hounding a perfectly innocent shopkeeper going about his business.

But the fact that he and his supporters disagree with a law doesn't make it any less of a law and the local RCMP were simply doing what they are mandated to do, which is upholding that law. Whether or not the local cops even agree that it is a silly law is irrelevant, it is still a law and it was being broken, regularly and brazenly.

And there are plenty of us on this island who still believe that if you break the law, in this case



Paul McElroy
+ ANOTHER THING

with apparent impunity, the police are obliged to act. Bleating about using OUR taxpayers' money to fund an action you don't personally approve of is laughable. You don't get to pick and choose which laws to obey and which to ignore because they are antithetical to your particular lifestyle.

A cursory read of the local RCMP detachment's quarterly report to the local media is, or should be, a salient education into the kind of challenges the police on this island are regularly faced with, a thankless litany of suicidal teenagers, drug-addled adults, wife beaters, thieves, crooks, charlatans, street drunks, drunk drivers, cocaine dealers and even belligerent boaters.

Try to take that on board, that your working day could pendulum from talking to schoolchildren about life, law and order to coping with a distraught woman who had already cut herself and was threatening worse. Or from loading the back of your police

SUV with food collected for the food bank to dealing with the lifeless body of one more young victim of fentanyl.

Ask yourself who has the greater interest in getting fentanyl and the appalling people who trade in it off the island and behind bars. The police — or people who read or hear about these tragedies but never have to confront them?

A cursory read of the local RCMP detachment's quarterly report to the local media is, or should be, a salient education into the kind of challenges the police on this island are regularly faced with

...

When was the last time YOU knocked on a door to tell a parent their child was dead from an overdose or that a partner had died in a road traffic accident? When was the last time you intervened in a violent domestic dispute or confronted a drunk waving a rifle?

The suggestion that an island that can't even establish proper governance should ditch the Mounties and employ its own police force is as naïve as it is stupid.

There are no mean streets on Salt Spring, no gangs, and guns are few and far between and are mostly used sensibly. The island is, on the whole, a friendly, neighbourly place and our local constabulary mostly reflects that. Take away the fentanyl and the closest we've come to an urban crime wave was the young prat who spray-painted his illegible twaddle on signs throughout Ganges. And he was nicked, though had his wrist slapped and for some reason wasn't made to clean up his handwork himself.

Most of what the police do is overlooked and undervalued until, like any of us, they screw up; the capacity for the rare rogue policeman to poison the barrel is limitless. In this case, on this island, they were simply doing what they are expected to do by many of us and upholding a law. Those who had the temerity to criticize them for it should be grateful for a decent and conscientious island RCMP detachment and hope that they are never on the receiving end of a lone copper bringing dreadful news.

paulmcelroy@shaw.ca



HOLIDAY STORIES

SALT SPRING INN 250-537-9339

Merry Christmas!

RESERVATIONS & HOLIDAY HOURS AT SALTSRINGINN.COM

CONTEST

Youth holiday stories enchant

Congratulations to winners, and gratitude for participants, judges and sponsor

BY GAIL S JUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Imagination and narrative skills are alive and well in Gulf Islands children, as the Driftwood's annual holiday story contest proved once again.

No entries came from the older teen crowd or high school students for whom English is not a primary language, but the younger writers happily picked up the slack. A whopping 49 stories were entered in the 10-year-old age category!

Thank you to our community judges for the time and care they took to read the stories and select the winners: Joan Gage, Sheila McEachern, Donna McWhirter, Victoria Olchowecki and Janet Smith.

Below are the first and second place winners, who receive vouchers for Salt Spring Books gift certificates, and the judges'

honourable mentions.

Age 6 to 8 category: First place, Tate Maile; second place, Meadow Johnston; honourable mention, Ana Cowan McKenna and Nola Moritz.

Age 9 category: First place, Galini Heitzmann; second place, Destiny Spencer; honourable mention, Aurelia Lukow.

Age 10 category: First place, Benjamin Massey; second place, Jack Bowland; honourable mention, Milo Moritz, Darwyn Chan and Isabelle Javier McGrath.

Age 11 category: First place, Roslyn Harrison; second place, Kanska Hasegawa.

Age 12-14 category: First place, Orly Griffin; second place, Ana Roy; honourable mention, Maia Duquette.

First and second-place winners receive vouchers for Salt Spring Books gift certificates. The vouchers must be taken to the store by Jan. 31, 2023 to be exchanged for gift certificates.

Cover artwork winner this year is Grade 12 student Jane Holmes, also receiving a Salt Spring Books voucher for a gift certificate.



A Driftwood cover art entry by Fernwood school student Evelyn Crist. See our website for more holiday season artwork from GISS and Fernwood elementary students.

Where's the Reindeer?

BY KANSHA HASEGAWA
SECOND PLACE - AGE 11 CATEGORY

'Twas almost Christmas! Santa was busy making presents when he realized that he needed to pick the leader of the reindeers. So he went to the reindeer's shed and looked around to see who was the strongest reindeer.

Then Santa saw Dasher and said, "I think he will be the leader for this year."

Right away Santa started making more presents.

The next day Santa heard his elf scream: "SANTA THE REINDEER ARE GONE!"

The elf yelled so loud that Santa's ears almost fell off. Santa flew out of his bed and ran to the shed. The shed was empty except for a little box in the corner.

A little voice came out. "Santa is that you? I am stuck in this box." Santa quickly went to the box and opened the lid. A little reindeer came out of the box. The reindeer was called Rudolf. Santa said to Rudolf, "Where are the other reindeer?" "Somebody with a little dog stole them. I hid in the box so I was OK."

Santa knew that it was the evil Grinch

because Santa knew that the Grinch would do something awful like this. Santa climbed onto Rudolf and started flying. Soon Santa came to a mountain and found a den.

Santa said, "Let's stay in the den until the snow stops."

Then Santa heard someone talking. The sound came from the den that they were just entering.

Santa went into the den and said to Rudolf, "Go and free the reindeer. I will distract the Grinch."

A few minutes later Rudolf freed all of the reindeer and said to Santa, "I freed all of the reindeer. Let's go back before it gets late."

When Santa was going back to his house he said to Rudolf, "You did very well today. You can be the leader this year."



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All Saints, Ganges (110 Park Drive) St Mary's, Fulford (2800 Fulford-Ganges Rd)

Thursday, December 15 • 4:45 pm
Blue Christmas, All Saints

Wednesday, December 21 • 2 pm
Carols for Christmastide, All Saints

Saturday, December 24 • 4 pm
Christmas Eve Family service with pageant, All Saints

Saturday, December 24 • 7 pm
Christmas Eve, St Mary's

Saturday, December 24 • 10 pm
Midnight Mass, All Saints

Sunday, December 25 • 11 am
Christmas Day, All Saints

Sunday, January 1 • 11 am
New Year's Day & Epiphany, All Saints

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Christmas Eve Mass • 11 pm
(Carols begin at 10:30 pm)

Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God Masses
Our Lady of Grace Church
Saturday, December 31 • 5 pm
Sunday, January 1 • 10 am

Holiday Stories

The Pelican Who Saved Christmas



BY ORLY GRIFFIN
FIRST PLACE - AGE 12-14 CATEGORY

I was perched in the cozy branches of my tree as I watched the twinkling light of thousands of faraway stars reflect on the ocean. I looked away from the mesmerizing movement of the waves below and turned to see the nearby village decorated in string lights glowing in red, green and white, for tonight was Christmas Eve.

I was about to fly from my view on the willow branch I was perched on when a strange movement caught my eye. A sleigh pulled by reindeer streaked through the sky, dodging planes and birds, as it wove its way to a dark red roof. The sleigh soundly landed on the roof with a quiet thud. The reindeer huffed and stomped their hooves, impatient to continue on their journey. Suddenly a big red figure stepped out of the sleigh. He strode up to the chimney, and gently tapped it with a candy cane, a cloud of ashes erupted into the air before

slowly falling to the ground with the snow.

Santa Claus, I whispered under my breath. He was real! I stared as Santa jumped above the chimney and pirouetted in mid air before disappearing through the gerbil-sized opening. I could've sworn I heard one of the reindeer mutter "show off" under its breath.

I flew to the house Santa had entered and peeked through an open window. In the house a Christmas tree stood near a fireplace that cast a warm glow on the room and an ill-looking Santa Claus who held a cookie in a shaking hand. He looked away from his cookie and glanced out the window to see me, quizzically looking at him.

"Oh, hello!" said Santa in a trembling voice, "please come in! Could you help me? I've been eating cookies all night and don't have any more room for more cookies. You're a pelican so your beak is perfect for carrying food. Please, if i don't eat the cookies I will be too ill to deliver presents! Will you help?" Santa stared at me with puppy dog eyes, silently begging me

to say yes.

Maybe it was his pitiful begging or maybe I was still in shock that Santa was real, but whatever the reason I didn't hesitate when I answered. "Yes."

So for hours before the sun of dawn peeked over the horizon like a chick peeking over its shell, we travelled around the world visiting millions of homes leaving gifts and taking cookies.

I have flown many times before but this, this was amazing. The wind whistled past my ears making my eyes water, the tears still falling through the air miles behind as we sped through the sky. I looked at the beaming face of Santa sitting beside me on the plush seats covered in soft pillows.

That morning my belly was full, but so was my heart, knowing that children knew that Santa had come and I had saved Christmas.

Pickles' Adventure With Santa

BY TATE MAILE
FIRST PLACE - AGE 6-8 CATEGORY

PART 1

Once upon a time there was a kitten named Pickles. His owners were out that morning and he heard on the news that there was a new virus named Covid-19. He realized that Santa could get sick from Covid-19 and not deliver presents the next year so he decided to go to the North Pole. When he got there, he saw the North Pole flag

and decided to go underground and see if Santa's workshop was there. Turns out it was.

Santa's workshop was pretty. He ran to the nearest elf and told him that he needed to see Santa to tell him the urgent news that there was a new virus called Covid-19. He was led to Santa's room and he told him that he shouldn't go out on Christmas Eve to deliver presents. After that Santa refused and he wanted to deliver them anyway.

Next week it was Christmas Eve. Santa came and delivered 20 presents to Pickles.

Pickles was soooooo happy. His owners came back that day and were so surprised to find 20 presents all addressed to Pickles!

PART 2
When Pickles woke up he was sooo happy to open presents. Getting out of bed, he put on his special Christmas bow and went downstairs to open presents. He opened the biggest present first. It was a sled, a rad sled, a beautiful sled. He was so happy. "Thank you, Santa!" said Pickles. Then he ran to the next present. It was a

hat, a Santa hat. He was so happy he ran to the rest of them and so on and so forth. He was so full of catnip that he turned into a round ball.

His owners had to roll him out the door.



The Boy Who Found Santa

BY JACK BOWLAND
SECOND PLACE - AGE 10 CATEGORY

Once there was a boy who loved Christmas like a baby loves its mama. But there was one little problem: in all the movies and stories about Santa Claus, he delivered presents by coming down the chimney. The boy couldn't help but worry because he had no chimney or fireplace, so how was Santa going to deliver his presents?

"What if Santa never comes?" he worried. "What if he can't get in?"

It would be a tragedy if Santa never came, so the boy set a mission: to find Santa in the North Pole and tell him he has no chimney. His friend thought he was crazy but he didn't care. He told his parents he was going to go to the North Pole no matter what.

He made up a plan and packed everything: food, water, metals and different objects to make a plane to fly to the North Pole. He got engines and strong metal sheets from a scrapyard. With his dad's help he installed heaters and an extra-large gas tank for the long, cold journey.

They flew and flew and finally stopped. When they landed in the North Pole the boy immediately ran outside to find Santa. He bundled up extra warm and set off with his dad. His dad knew Santa wasn't real but still thought about being in the newspaper if they found him.

They went on the longest walk ever until they saw something on the horizon. They reached it but it was just a

mountain of snow. They kept walking and walking. They thought about the possibilities of where Santa's workshop could be.

They walked in different directions: left and right they went but no luck, until they went backwards. They saw something pop up. His dad brought out his camera as they walked a bit closer. They found it! They actually found Santa's workshop!

They sprinted towards it and knocked. Santa opened the doors and welcomed them in. They talked about their journey to get there but then the boy remembered he'd come to tell Santa that he had no chimney or fireplace so he'd have to go in a different way.

"I'm sorry, but I can't do it," said Santa. "But I have another idea."

The boy, his dad, Santa and some elves went in Santa's sleigh to the boy's house. They arrived in seconds and the elves began building the best and fanciest fireplace. It was done in a few days and the boy was impressed, but most importantly, he was happy that Santa could deliver presents.

The magic fireplace got the boy and his dad into the newspaper after all. They had proof of Santa's power, and they got so much love and attention that their faces went global. Billions of people knew about them, and people came every day to meet them and take pictures. Billions of parents who thought Santa was made up in the movies discovered that they'd been wrong.

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Holiday Stories

The Reindeers Got Loose

BY GALINI HEITZMANN
FIRST PLACE - AGE 9 CATEGORY

Once upon a time one snowy Christmas eve Santa was getting ready to go on his sleigh ride. He was going early to get the reindeer ready. But when he got to the stables the reindeer weren't there! When he turned around they were flying away in the distance!

He called all nine — "Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blixen, Rudolph" — they did not come. Santa went to the workshop where the elves were making the final presents. All the elves turned around. An elf named Cookie came up and asked what happened.

Santa explained everything. Another elf named Candy Cane said to Santa, "There's a letter for you."

Santa opened the letter and it said, "My name is Pine, I have stolen your reindeers. If you want your reindeers back you have to give me what I want. I know you were going to give me coal. I want a real present. I want one of Mrs. Claus' healthy cookies. See you in one hour in the heart of the forest." So Santa went to Mrs. Claus and asked if she could make a batch of cookies. After Mrs. Claus made the cookies Santa took three elves with him and off they went to the heart of the forest.

When they got there Pine and the reindeers were waiting for them. Santa gave Pine the cookies. Pine called out unexpectedly and said, "I have tricked you. If you want your reindeers back you have to answer my question. Why do you do Christmas?"

Santa paused for a moment. "I do it because I care about people. Doing kind things makes me feel good."

"You've answered your question wisely and because of that I will give your reindeers back."

Pine turned around and let the reindeers go. Santa thanked Pine and said he shouldn't do this again. Pine said he wouldn't do it again and was sorry, and then Santa went off on his sleigh ride. Christmas was amazing.

Dedicated to my dad, who is great with solving problems and always making things right. Thanks, dad!



The Christmas Mystery

BY DESTINY SPENCER
SECOND PLACE - AGE 9 CATEGORY

Once upon a time there were a bunch of animals heading to a large cabin. Then some disco lights turned on in the cabin. A bunch of animals were having a Christmas party.

"I'll go make some cookies," said a capybara.

"I'll make some hot chocolate," said a dog.

Then they noticed that Christmas was tomorrow and they didn't have any decorations. So they set off to the forest.

They found a cabin with lots of decorations on it so they went in and then they hear something. And then a goat with a tennis racket hopped out of the shadows.

"Who are you?" asked the goat.

"We mean you no harm," said a bear.

"We just want some decorations," said a rabbit.

"OK, if you prove that Santa is real," said the goat.

The animals were walking out the door when they saw hoof prints in the snow. They decided to follow the hoof prints. The hoof prints led them to Santa's workshop.

And then they saw Santa!
"We don't have any decorations," said the animals.

"It's alright, but you can't be here because it's Christmas Eve and I have to deliver all those presents. So I'm sorry."

"OK," said all the animals.

So the animals went home and their home was all decorated! All the animals were so happy but so tired so they went to bed but while they were sleeping the mean goat came and stole all the decorations off their cabin.

All the animals woke up and they noticed that someone stole all the decorations. They all were so sad.

Santa saw them crying and he noticed all the decorations were gone, so he came down.

"I'll help you find that crook," said Santa.

"Thank you," said the animals.

So the animals and Santa went to the woods. They saw the goat's cabin with all their decorations on it!

Santa said, "Follow my lead, OK?"

"OK, said the animals.

"Caught you!" they all said.

The goat froze. Then the goat saw . . .

"Santa!" he said.

"That's me," said Santa.

"I'm sorry for stealing all your decorations," said the goat, and the goat gave the animals back all the decorations and the animals and the goat all had a big Christmas party at the animals' cabin.

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Little Belle

BY MEADOW JOHNSTON
SECOND PLACE - AGE 6-8 CATEGORY

Once upon a time there was a girl named Belle. She loved Christmas. She was worried that Santa wouldn't make it because Santa was really far away.

So she got all of her stuff to go to the North Pole. She said goodbye to her brothers and sisters and to her mom and she started her march.

She found Santa. She saw all the elves working. It was the night before Christmas. She saw Santa sitting in his high chair. Right beside Santa was his dog Paws. Paws was so cute. He always stayed by Santa's side.

Belle went to see Santa. Santa said, "You should not be here. You should be home with your family. Kids do not travel to the North Pole."

"Well, Santa, I need to tell you something. Something really important," said Belle. "It's something about my mom. She works so hard that I really want her to be happy. Since you're Santa, maybe you can make my wish come true."

"I'll do my best," said Santa.

"Good," said Belle.

"So, Belle, what am I going to do with you now?"

"Well, Santa, I will stay here. I'll come with you when it's Christmas."

The next night it was Christmas. She got all her stuff and got onto Santa's sleigh. Belle said goodbye to the elves and to Paws. Then Santa dropped her off at her house, safe and sound. Her mom was so surprised, she didn't know that Belle would reach Santa from that far away. So she invited Santa in to have a cup of hot chocolate.

He came in and sat down on their red couch. Then Belle came and gave Santa his hot chocolate. Santa said, "Come here, Belle, sit down on the red couch. I need to tell you something. You can make your mom happy by being good."

Belle said, "OK Santa, I'll be good."

Then Santa hopped back onto his sleigh and delivered presents.



INTERNATIONAL AID

Trip inspires fundraiser for well in Tanzania

Salt Spring resident spearheads drive

BY MELANIE FURMAN
SPECIAL TO THE DRIFTWOOD

My 13-year-old son and I recently returned from a month long vacation from Tanzania. We were mostly on the tropical island of Zanzibar, enjoying the white sand beaches, warm Indian ocean and rich food from the melting pot of Muslim, Indian and Indigeno cuisine.

But it didn't take me long to notice a change from the last time I visited Zanzibar 15 years ago while working for a local NGO in Zimbabwe. There is now an enormous population of the semi-nomadic cattle-herding Maasai peoples living here. I befriended a few of the young men who graciously and generously welcomed my many questions about why they are here now, and how their lives have changed in the past few years.

The more time I spent with my new Maasai friends I began to notice a trend in their answers.

"I left school in Grade 4 because it was too far to run. I would be late so my teacher would beat me. I told my parents that I would rather be herding cows than being beaten," Ole said.

I heard the same story from Matema and Moy. It turns out most of the young men between the ages of 24 and 28 had similar experiences. Things have changed for the Maasai people in a very short time, and they are feeling the effects of this big change in their nomadic, pastoralist way of life. Climate catastrophe, encroaching maize farms, and land displacement due to game parks and sport hunting. These are the big three impacts that are changing the lifestyle and sustainability of this ancient culture and people. Because of this, the Maasai cannot have as many cattle as their parents and since the cattle are not only their way of life culturally, they are also their main economy. There isn't enough water or land to sustain them. These young men are supporting their families by uprooting themselves to go and make a small scrap of money off the tourist industry to offset the lack of cattle they would normally sell to bring in income.

Adam, who has been coming to Zanzibar since 2018, says he makes \$100 USD a month as an overnight security guard for a bar. He stays awake from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. every night. He sends this money home to pay for his niece's school bus fees. When he doesn't have enough to send home for school bus fees, she walks (or runs) one and a half hours to school and then back again five days a week. This is the only way she can get an education. He knows this and feels proud to sacrifice his life and time away



PHOTO COURTESY MELANIE FURMAN

Family in Tanzania where Salt Spring's Melanie Furman is fundraising to build a well, which will have a positive impact on the community there.

from home so she and their family can survive in this new world. He is putting his hope in her that she can get a better job than him. It's this pride and loyalty that I noticed in all the Maasai men I met. Adam said that at age 15 they start their rights of passage into adulthood, and one of the main pillars of the teachings is to protect and care for your people.

Ole invited my son and I to his family boma, and he told me I would be the first white person to visit. We took him up on his generous offer and headed out from Zanzibar to mainland Tanzania.

It was a long journey: 14 hours from Dar es Salaam to Kimana by taxi, bus, dala dala and, lastly, a 45-minute walk under the clearest darkest, starriest sky I have even seen. No electricity for kilometres will do this.

We were welcomed into the family's guest hut made of mud and sticks. There was a raised bed made of cowhide. It is the typical home of the Maasai and the architecture was stunning both in its beauty and its engineering, due to the use of natural materials that created zero waste.

The next morning I understood the heavy impact of drought and climate catastrophe first hand. After being taken over by the beauty of the people, complex culture and lifestyle, and now

witnessing the fragility of all of it, I got to see the burden these young Maasai warriors are willfully taking on for the survival of their people. I now understood why they are having to pivot from living with their land and family and relying on their cattle as economy, to resorting the tourist industry in order to bring in any money they can.

I asked what the most useful resource is for their way of life to continue. The resounding answer is water. I soon learned of a few organizations that implement wells of various types, depending on how much and where the water in the ground is, and am now fundraising \$8,000 to sink a well in Kimana.

With every donation of \$50 or more, a gift of Zanzibar spice will be brought to you from the Spice Island of Africa. If you would like to contribute, please check out our www.culturalivefoods.com/spice/ website. E-transfers and PayPal are set up for donations.

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Sat, December 24th - 9am to 2pm
Sun, December 25th - Closed
Mon, December 26th - Closed
December 27-31 - Open
Sun, January 1st - 10am to 7pm

what's on this week

Wed. Dec. 21

ACTIVITIES

Carols for Christmastide.
Carol-based service at All Saints by-the-Sea. 2 p.m.

Festival of Trees.
Display of decorated Christmas trees with people invited to put food bank items under their favourite; or donate to the Copper Kettle. Harbour House Hotel. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. **DAILY** through Jan. 1.

Music Bingo.
Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.

Thur. Dec. 22

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Open Mic.
At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.

Craig's Karaoke.
Moby's Pub. 7 to 11 p.m.

Fri. Dec. 23

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Karaoke.
At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.

Friday's With DJ Boomtown.
At Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Fri. Dec. 23

ACTIVITIES

StoryWalk.
This week's story leading from the library through Mouat Park is The Snowman.

Sat. Dec. 24

ACTIVITIES

Salt Spring Christmas.
Community Gospel Chapel. 3 p.m.

Christmas Eve Family Service.
With pageant. All Saints by-the-Sea. 4 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service.
St. Mary's church (Fulford). 7 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service.
Salt Spring Island United Church. 7 p.m.

Christmas Eve Mass.
Our Lady of Grace Church. 7 p.m., with carols beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Mass.
St. Paul's Church (Fulford). 11 p.m., with carols beginning at 10:30 p.m.

Midnight Mass.
All Saints by-the-Sea. 10 p.m.

Sun. Dec. 25

ACTIVITIES

Christmas Ball at Fulford Hall.
Doors open at the hall at 11 a.m. with brunch available. Music, games, and gifts for kids on all day. Day and evening jam sessions. Potluck (optional) dinner begins at 6 p.m.

Christmas Day Mass.
Our Lady of Grace Church. 10 a.m.

Christmas Day Service.
All Saints by-the-Sea. 11 a.m.

Mon. Dec. 26

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Boxing Day Party With The Best Laid Plans.
Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Tue. Dec. 27

ACTIVITIES

Trivia Tuesday. Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.

Wed. Dec. 28

ACTIVITIES

Music Bingo. See last Wednesday's listing.

CINEMA

Black Panther Wakanda Forever is held over and showing from Friday, Dec. 23 to Tuesday, Dec. 27 at 7 p.m. but closed Dec. 24-25.

EXHIBITIONS

- Thursday, Dec. 22 is the last day for **Art-craft Winter**, the Salt Spring Arts sale of work by Gulf Islands artists and artisans, at Mahon Hall. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Art Jam Rolls On show and sale is in the Mahon Hall annex for the same period.
- **Gallery 8's** 14th Annual Christmas Exhibition of Small Works runs through Dec. 31.
- **Pamela Thornley** exhibits work in the **Salt Spring Public Library's community program room** through December.
- **Sonja Barnard** has artwork in the **library's display case** this month.

Festival of Trees

View trees at Harbour House Hotel and put a food bank donation under your favourite and/or donate to the Copper Kettle. Daily until Jan. 1.

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Obituaries **Obituaries** **Obituaries** **Obituaries** **Obituaries** **Obituaries** **Information**

Natalie Anne Jameski Horel
February 1923 - November 2022



Our beloved Mother, Natalie Anne Jameski Horel, a few months from her 100th birthday, passed away on November 25th in the Extended Care Unit of the Lady Minto Hospital on Salt Spring Island. She was born in February 1923 to Anna and Walter Jameski in the original Lady Minto Hospital. She was the eldest of 4 girls.

She is survived by daughters Cherri (Vaughn), Glynnis (Dave), Wendy (Roger), Tarri, son Michael (Sharon), 9 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren and her sister Bernice. She was preceded in death by our dad Chuck in 1998.

Natalie grew up during the Great Depression, attended the old Divide School in the Cranberry and graduated from high school in Ganges. After graduation she trained as a nurse at St Joseph's Hospital in Victoria, later going on to obtain a specialty in Surgical Nursing at St Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. Looking for adventure after the war, she joined TransCanada Airlines as a stewardess, based in Toronto.

She and our Dad Chuck Horel were married in September 1949 at Niagara Falls, Ontario. They lived in various places in Alberta and BC before returning to Salt Spring in 1956 and settling permanently.

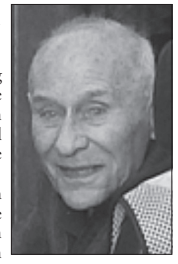
Natalie was the ultimate mother, grandmother and friend. Her greatest joy was spending time with her family and hosting the many gatherings of family and friends. She was loved by all who knew her, opening her heart and home to all, first on the farm at Cusheon Lake and later at Beaver Point. She was known to host entire families, pensioners and others needing a place to stay. She was happy to include friends' children who needed to spend time on a farm and frequently included them in family travel and vacations. She helped many a pensioner who lived in cabins along Cusheon Lake Road to maintain their independence as long as possible.

She was an avid gardener and her homes were graced with beautiful flower and vegetable gardens. Natalie was also an accomplished seamstress and knitter and the family benefited greatly from her skills. She wasn't afraid to try her hand at demolition, carpentry, furniture repair or anything else that was needed by her or others. She was a beautiful soul.

We wish to thank her care providers who helped her remain in her home and lately provided additional care during her time in Extended Care. Special thanks to Diane, Marina and Josie, Barb for her van service, and the hospice volunteers for their vigil during mom's last few nights. We would also like to thank Dr. Magda Leon and the staff of the Extended Care Unit of Lady Minto Hospital for her care this past year.

A celebration of her life will be held at a later date. Any donations in her name may be made to Lady Minto Hospital Foundation for the Extended Care Unit, or to the charity of your choice.

BERNARDUS GERARDUS 'BEN' MEYER
February 28, 1925 - December 5, 2022



Ben was taken to Lady Minto Hospital on November 27, 2022 for final palliative care. It was also his 70th wedding anniversary with the love of his life, Nel.

In addition to his wife Nel, Ben is survived by his sons Eric (Barb) and Norman (Tori), grandchildren Melissa (Mike), Logan (Megan) and Devin (Stacy), and great-grandchildren, Nahlia, Teyven, Zarin and Hallie. He also leaves behind family in The Netherlands and the Okanagan.

Ben was predeceased by his father, Ben, in 1929 when Ben was just 4 1/2 years old, and his mother, Nel in 1996, 6 weeks after her 100th birthday.

After his father passed, Ben was much loved by his mother, her sisters and a friend of his father, who taught him to sail when he was 8 years old. Ben continued to enjoy sailing until arthritis made him stop at age 87. He passed on his love of the water to his own family.

During WW2, Ben became involved with the resistance in Amsterdam. His group was betrayed and he had to go into hiding. After a year he could not stand staying hidden any longer. Outside he noticed a bicycle, hopped on it and went for a ride. He was caught when the German soldiers closed down both sides of the street. All men between 18 and 40 were put aside to be transported to labor camps in Germany. While they were marching, a commotion occurred at the end of column, which distracted all the soldiers. Ben instantly took advantage of the opportunity, threw the bicycle to the man next to him, and stepped out of the line. He saw a woman watching, took her arm and said "walk". They walked for a very long time without further conversation until Ben was able to catch a ferry to complete his escape.


He then went back into hiding until the end of the war. In June 1945 he joined the Canadian army in The Netherlands until his unit was taken over by the restored Dutch army.

In 1957 Ben emigrated with Nel and Eric to Canada. The family spent nine months in Vancouver, then they settled in Fort St John in northern BC and the adventure began. Norman came in 1959 and Ben worked hard to build a small shack into a house for his family. Ben enjoyed hunting, fishing, skiing, skidooning and sailing. He helped to create a ski hill, and later a sailing club and a table tennis club. In 1982 Ben and Nel retired to Salt Spring Island, where once again Ben did most of the building of their new home. He loved being able to sail almost all year round, and enjoy his garden.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to all the dedicated homecare workers, Israel Cohen, Maureen the foot nurse, and the patient paramedics whose efforts allowed Ben to stay at home, being tended to by Nel, until almost the very end. Thanks also go to the nurses and doctors at LMH, Cathy and Dr. Gorenson, and the staff at Hayward's Funeral Services for their care and compassion during Ben's final days and after his passing.

The family will be together later this summer to spread Ben's remains.


*"Write in sand the evil done to you.
Chisel in stone the good things done to you."*
- GUIDO GEZELLE



Celebrating the Ancient Pagan Rite of Saturnalia
from Dec. 17 to Dec. 24, highlighted by the Winter Solstice, 1:48 pm on Dec. 21.

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

Andy & Candace Heitman



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Obituaries **Obituaries** **Obituaries** **Information**

RICHARD CHARLES ILLINGWORTH
1949 - 2022



Richard Charles Illingworth, 73, of Saltspring Island passed away on December 11th, 2022.

Richard is predeceased by his parents Dick and Audrey. He is survived by his children Christy (Mike) and Jake (Pamela); his grandchildren Tyler, Jessica and Leo; siblings Jeannie (Chris), Lois (Dave), Carol (Greg) and Jim; nieces and nephews Laura, Bonnie, Mackenzie, Kevin and Keith.

Richard, who always went by Ritch ("don't forget the r") was born in 1949. He grew up in North Vancouver and graduated from Carson Graham Secondary in 1967. He worked with the City of North Vancouver until the age of 23 when he moved with his young family to Prince Rupert to work with the Canadian Coast Guard. Working away from home on the Coast Guard wasn't easy for Ritch, so he took a job with Acklands in Prince Rupert. In 1975 he moved to Campbell River and continued his career at Acklands. Ritch loved exploring new places and meeting new people so his time as a traveling salesman was memorable for him.

Ritch took his role as a father seriously and together with his wife of 20 years, Poppy, raised Christy and Jake in Campbell River. He loved sports, playing rugby in his early years (even won rookie of the year) and coaching the kids in minor softball. He also loved camping, fishing, reading and was a master at chess. He was a great gardener and loved his time in his yard tending the veggies, playing badminton and hanging out with friends.

After his time in Campbell River Ritch enjoyed island life on Saltspring where his parents lived. He worked as a painter and enjoyed the kind community on the island. Ritch loved his family and friends and was always up for a good discussion on sports, politics, or social issues. He was curious, loved learning and always had a newspaper by his side including in his final days. The next time you read a newspaper and ponder the world, think of Ritch.

A memorial will be held in the spring. In lieu of flowers please consider donating Victoria Hospitals Foundation: <https://www.victoriahf.ca/>
Ritch's family is grateful to everyone at the Saltspring Hospital and Victoria General for all the care over the years, particularly during his final days.

If you are in physical pain - feeling stuck, depressed, confused, or anything other than hopeful - I would like to try to help.

I have suffered with chronic pain most of my adult life, and only recently discovered that I don't have to be mad or sad about it. If I can make that shift, anybody can. "Resistance" was my middle name. FIND AND FOSTER YOUR INNER HEALER workshop, made up of 3 meetings, might just be what you need. January 12-19-26 from 2:00-3:30 at the Ganges Yoga Studio.

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Holiday Stories

A Journey Home

BY ANA ROY
SECOND PLACE - AGE 12-14 CATEGORY

I ran as fast as possible, the snow gliding over me, and my ears flopped as I gathered speed. I couldn't see anything; I only knew that my owner was always by my side.

I could hear the wind as I rushed past and the crunch of my paws dipping into the ice-cold snow. I could make out trees in the cold sleet and snow. The wind wrenched me in a cold embrace. I felt fearless then, with nothing to hold back. All of a sudden, the rope to my harness went slack. I turned to see that my lifeline had come loose from the sled. I saw nothing around, not

even the faintest of shadow in the ever-increasing white of the blizzard. I went back, and soon I lost track of which way I had come. I searched for hours, and I lost my owner with every inch of ground I covered. I trotted for hours, but my owner was nowhere to be seen.

I travelled for so long that the snow had settled, my paws were hurting, and I was weary from walking for hours on end. Far in the distance, I could see a thicket of long thin willows and a frozen pond that reflected the orange and red sunset on the horizon. I decided to go to sleep under the encampment of leaves. I curled up under the willow

strands capped in snow, and quickly the sky turned to deep midnight. The stars glittered overhead like fireflies flitting across the Milky Way.

When I woke, the sky was yellow-gold. I decided to stay the next night. I was already cold from the night's freezing wind that howled through the branches of the frozen willows. Before night fell, I dug through the snow to make a hollow to sleep in. It was just big enough to cosy up in and warmer than the cold fresh snow that had fallen the other night.

I woke up at the brink of dawn. The clouds were a warm pink as the sun rose over the trees. I was hungry

and thirsty, so I decided to try to crack open the icy pond to drink. The ice was thick and cold under the pads of my feet. I licked the ice desperately, trying to drink the water beneath. I had no such luck, and the ice remained over the water as my belly turned against me. Deprived of my owner, food and water, the life I had sewn for myself was slowly unravelling. I lay down to rest, ready to give up. The cold enveloped me; then, the sky turned midnight blue.

My head turned to the sky, then I saw a shooting star that crossed the expanse of empty sky. My eyes followed it, and in a tree, a red ornament sat, and under the tree was my owner.

How Mittens the Kitten Saved Christmas

— for Aunt Mary —

BY ROSLYN HARRISON
FIRST PLACE - AGE 11 CATEGORY



Mittens is a kitten who lived in a small village on a small island just off the coast. Her owners named her Mittens because her paws were white, so it looked like she was wearing mittens.

Mittens liked pouncing on mice and playing with Tiger the dog. Tiger told her that on Christmas Eve the humans would give each other presents and that good children would get presents from a fat man in a red and white suit and a night-cap with a pom pom.

"Why is he so fat?" asked Mittens. "All the children who were good that year put milk and cookies out for him."

"Doesn't he get a tummy ache?" "Nope," Tiger said. "He's magical, that's how he gets through the chimney."

"What if the children don't have a chimney?"

"You ask too many questions," said Tiger.

That night Mittens was thinking about Santa Claus. She wanted an electric treat blaster so that she and Tiger could have unlimited treats. She even had a dream about it. She dreamed it was Christmas morning and she had just opened her electric treat blaster and was filling her mouth with delicious treats, but then she woke up. She woke up to a clanging sound.

"Tiger, wake up," she said, "What's that noise?" he asked. "I don't know," said Mittens.

They heard muffled screaming. They ran to their owners' room. Their owners were still sleeping. They ran to the living room and saw a bunch of little people putting duct tape on Santa's mouth.

"Oh no," said Mittens, "We have to help him."

"You're too late," said one of the elves, as they all ran out the door. Well, they struggled under the door carrying Santa and he was very heavy, so he slowed them down.

"We have to follow them," said Mittens.

"OK," said Tiger, "let's go." They ran to the roof and jumped into

the sleigh. None of the elves noticed, they were too busy trying to lift Santa into the sleigh. Mittens and Tiger hid in a particularly large pile of presents.

"On Dasher, on Dancer, on Prancer, on Vixen, on Comet, on Cupid, on Donner, on Blitzen — let's do this, ladies," said an elf.

"We have to save Christmas," said Mittens.

"You're right," said Tiger, "but how . . . ?"

The electric treat blaster. They started looking through the presents.

"I found it," Tiger said.

"No you didn't," said one of the elves. They tried to grab it.

"Mittens — catch!" Tiger yelled.

He threw the electric treat blaster across the sleigh. She caught it.

"You're going to pay for that," said one of the elves.

She turned the blaster to full power and blasted all the elves off the sleigh. She had saved Christmas.

"Merry Christmas," she yelled.

On Christmas morning she opened her present, an electric treat blaster.

I knew it wasn't a dream, she said.

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FROM THE ISLANDS TRUST SALT SPRING OFFICE!

Islands Trust Offices will be closed to the public from Monday, December 26, 2022 through Monday, January 2, 2023.

Regular office hours will resume at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2023. We look forward to serving you in the New Year.

To leave a message, please call 250-537-9144 or email, ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca



Thank you

Soccer on Christmas

BY BENJAMIN MASSEY
FIRST PLACE - AGE 10 CATEGORY

One wonderful day at his soccer field, Tommy was with his best friend, Timmy. Tommy loved soccer! But Timmy was the best of the two.

Today was Christmas! Everybody had already gotten their presents, but they still had to play soccer too! They were so happy coming to soccer . . . until they realized that the field was covered in snow. Everybody there didn't really care until they started playing.

Their clothes got soaking wet and they were freezing cold! Some of the kids weren't as cold as the rest. Those kids tried to make a fort for the other kids so they could stay warm while they

waited for their parents.

A few minutes later, they saw a flash in the sky. One second later there was a huge sleigh with a person inside. He came out of the sleigh with a big red coat and a huge, puffy, curly beard. It was Santa!

Santa asked everybody what they were doing cramped in a tiny fort on Christmas.

They all answered back, "The snow is too hard to play soccer in."

Santa said, "No problem, I'm Santa after all!"

Santa magically fixed the field in no time. The kids watched as the snow all melted away and their clothes dried instantly. Everybody had a great day after that!

Oh, and Santa's pretty good at soccer too.

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