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2 Islands thrown into the deep freeze



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PHOTO BY NANCY JOHNSON

HARBOUR LIGHT: Ganges Harbour is aglow as the sun rises last Thursday morning, Jan. 11 to a low of -6° Celsius. Temperatures would continue to drop until reaching a low of -12° Friday and rebounding to -3° on Saturday. As the Driftwood went to press on Monday, snow was expected Tuesday evening.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Two fires challenge firefighters

Calls come during unseasonably cold period

BY ROBB MAGLEY AND GAIL SJUBERG

Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue (SSIFR) firefighters dealt with two structure fires in less than two days during last week's brutal cold snap.

The most extensive fire saw almost two dozen firefighters battle against extreme cold and high winds for six hours on Friday, Jan. 12 after responding to reports of a residential structure fire at 8:12 p.m.

According to a SSIFR press release, upon arrival at 105 Cusheon Place off Beddis Road, crews found a fully involved, two-storey residential structure fire.

"Multiple lines were used to contain the fire to the building of origin and to protect adjacent structures and trees," states the release. "Eight fire apparatus and 21 firefighters responded to the scene and approximately 12,000 gallons of water was shuttled from the Beddis water system."

No firefighters were injured.

The structure, which was unoccupied at the time of the fire, was a total loss.

The fire is currently under investigation but does not look suspicious currently, said SSIFR firefighter Patrick Byrne in the press release.

SSIFR thanked the RCMP, BC Hydro, BC Ambulance Service and Emcon for their assistance at the emergency scene.

Salt Spring firefighters also extinguished a recreational vehicle (RV) fire on private property on Aust Way on Thursday, Jan. 11.

Sixteen firefighters and six trucks responded to reports of the blaze in the early afternoon, a robust response which SSIFR Deputy Chief Dale Lundy said was partly out of precaution and partly due to the need to bring water to fight the fire at what could have been a relatively remote site — up a road that was once a driveway on the west side of Fulford-Ganges Road.

"Most of what you saw rolling was the tankers that carry water," said Lundy, "because

where we were heading there isn't much. It's better to have and not need, than to need and not have."

Lundy said the initial report was also that the RV fire was threatening nearby homes, which thankfully was found to not be the case once they arrived; there was an outbuilding adjacent to the RV, but it wasn't affected. Nobody was home at the time, according to Lundy, who said he saw heavy flames and smoke as he arrived.

"It was good to have the manpower," he added. "We definitely used all the people fighting the fire."

The trailer was fully engulfed when the first firefighters came on the scene, Lundy said, and the blaze was successfully contained to the single RV. There were "too many variables" to be able to determine what started it, he said.

"But we can say that we didn't find anything suspicious," said Lundy.

Zen Master Wolfgang says:
 "Man who fight with wife all day
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LEADING DUO



PHOTO BY ROBB MAGLEY

Salt Spring Island Local Community Commissioner Gayle Baker, left, welcomes Saanich-Gulf Islands MP Elizabeth May to the regular Friday ASK Salt Spring forum held Jan. 12 at the Salt Spring Island Multi Space building. May visited with about a dozen islanders on topics ranging from healthcare to housing, and held a town hall at Gulf Islands Secondary School the following night.

WINTER WEATHER

Island copes with Arctic blast

Frigid aid, high winds on land and sea

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Near-record sub-zero temperatures struck the Gulf Islands last week, and despite relatively little snowfall, the impact of the season's first real winter weather was felt across the region.

Adverse weather and unsafe docking conditions caused delays and cancellation of several ferry sailings, as BC Ferries fought rough seas and high winds on the Vesuvius-Crofton and Fulford-Swartz Bay routes — and the Tsawwassen ferry was unable to land at Sturdies Bay on Galiano Island Thursday night through Friday morning.

Most areas on Salt Spring saw around two to four centimetres of snow on Thursday evening, and slick roads put a few drivers into ditches; but it was the wind and dangerously cold temperatures — measured as low as -12 Celsius on some parts of the island — that caused the most grief.

As icy winds swept through Ganges

Harbour Thursday afternoon, islander Norm Edwards sourced funds from a number of local businesses to quickly cover temporary moorage and electricity costs for local liveaboard residents who could bring their vessels to Kanaka Wharf or the Breakwater Dock to ride out the storm in relative safety.

On land, BC Transit buses meanwhile went to limited “main road” service late Thursday, with several routes taking well into Saturday to come fully back online. Emergency crews contended with separate fires at an RV and a two-storey structure, but Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue Deputy Chief Dale Lundy said despite the biting cold, firefighters’ response was unhindered.

“Most of our equipment is kept indoors, so we don’t have to worry about pumps freezing and that sort of thing,” said Lundy. “Any apparatus we have outdoors, we drain all the water out. But we haven’t had to chain up our trucks.”

Lundy said the cold proved a good reminder of the importance of being mindful of space heaters and other things that might start fires — as well as tending to exposed pipes and water lines that might freeze.

The emergency shelter at Island Community Services (ICS) announced activation of its Emergency Weather Response (EWR), which increased overnight shelter capacity to 34, according to ICS operations manager Rob Wiltzen, who said they had a warm dinner, a safe, supervised place to stay overnight and breakfast for community members needing shelter while temperatures remain low.

“For us it meant we needed to convert the downstairs of the main building into a temporary overnight shelter,” said Wiltzen. “That means staffing, bedding and nutrition for another site.”

On Monday Wiltzen said seven people accessed the EWR program, so there was still capacity; anyone in need should contact the shelter office at 250-537-9971 ex. 244 with any questions or to arrange an intake.

Other ICS programs weren’t impacted, he added, as the EWR program is only for overnight and not during the day, when other programs would be running and using that space.

A slow warm-up occurred in the past few days, with a high probability of snow expected for Tuesday evening, changing to rain on Wednesday.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

District updates regulations on pets at school

New rules address categories of animal visits

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Showing off a new puppy at school might get a little more complicated, but new rules don’t block students’ support animals from classrooms within the Gulf Islands School District (SD64).

Nor do the new administrative practices surrounding animals spell the end of their being used during instruction, according to SD64 staff and members of the Board of Education, who repealed an existing policy during their Jan. 10 meeting.

“This does not take dogs out of schools,” said superintendent Scott Benwell. “It brings a lens of responsibility for the training of that dog, [and] a balance of competing interests and rights.”

Benwell and trustees were responding to concerns about the new administrative practices — or, more specifically, about plans for repeal of the old policy and

procedure, which since showing up on board agenda documents and the district website has held the attention of many in the school community.

“What we’re learning as we’re moving through this process is that some of our policies and procedures were quite prescriptive, and went out of the bounds of our responsibility,” said Mayne Island trustee Deborah Luporini. “So what we’re saying is that how animals in schools are managed is an operational practice.”

Gulf Islands Teachers’ Association local president Ian Mitchell read a letter from Fernwood Elementary intermediate teacher Dorianna Chessa, which mostly expressed concern about the impact a complete no-dogs policy could have on youth who “thrive” from dog interactions — some of whom have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that explicitly include dogs. IEPs can involve support animals provided by the students — not by the district, it was pointed out — at the recommendation of a medical professional.

“We know that dogs help regulate our nervous systems, just like being on the land,” said Mitchell, reading the letter. “One of the most challenging students at my school right now has been spending time with dogs, and that is written directly

into their IEP.”

Staff and trustees reiterated that nothing in the new practices fundamentally changed how support animals engaged with students at school.

“That’s not what we’re doing here, that’s a misunderstanding of what’s happening,” said Benwell, adding there was “no one answer” to dogs in schools.

“It is an area requiring balance,” said Benwell. “It’s not one size fits all. So a board of education needs to have an enabling policy with limitations that allow for us and principals to say, ‘that dog was in an altercation and bit a student, that is not appropriate,’ or preferably have a requirement for training in place before it gets to that point.”

Board chair Tisha Boulter agreed the new practices were intended to proactively address problems.

“It’s about ensuring that each animal that is allowed in the school is vetted through a proper process,” said Boulter. “We’ve had many students bit repeatedly by dogs in schools — and parents and teachers complaining of dogs biting.”

Another concern from Chessa expressed by Mitchell spoke to teachers themselves who benefit from bringing dogs to school. “It is not just housing that is creating the

teacher shortage,” read the letter. “It’s job satisfaction. Having a top-down, strict, no-dogs rule increases job dissatisfaction for many teachers.”

Benwell said all students have a right to a safe and healthy environment — both those who benefit from animals, and those whose education can be hindered by them, such as those with allergies or anxieties surrounding them. SD64 secretary-treasurer Lori Deacon said the intent was to take a highly generalized policy and clarify ways schools can plan for different kinds of animals.

“When you bring your pet [once] because you have a puppy and want to show your class, that’s not the same as ‘doggy daycare,’” said Deacon. “Or having chickens to hatch eggs — those fall under instructional purposes. And of course we have legislation around service dogs in schools, so we have language that ensures that’s all done in a safe fashion.”

“It says yes, there are students with needs,” continued Deacon, “but discarding the [concerns of] students who have fears and allergies is just not appropriate.”

The administrative practices replacing the repealed policy and procedure can be found at sd64.bc.ca/page/1198/administrative-practices.

PUBLIC SERVANTS

Islands Trust CAO announces retirement

Hiring committee to be set up

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

After eight years with the Islands Trust — which followed four as chief administrative officer (CAO) for the Strathcona Regional District — CAO Russ Hotsenpiller has announced he will be retiring in June.

Hotsenpiller, who began work with the Trust as CAO in 2016, said his time in the job had been rewarding.

“My experience at the Trust has been fantastic,” said Hotsen-

piller. “The preserve and protect mandate of the Trust is unique in local governance across the country. It has been an honour to work towards a better future for the region.”

This month the Trust’s Executive Committee will begin coordination of a CAO hiring committee, according to Islands Trust Council chair Peter Luckham, which will consist of both Executive Committee members and chairs of Trust Council’s committees.

“We offer great thanks to Russ Hotsenpiller for his service to the Islands Trust,” said Luckham. “Russ has advised Trust Council through three terms of office and consistently demonstrated strong judgement, good humour, dedication, and a commitment to the preserve and protect mandate.”

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EDUCATION

SD64 achieves record grad completion rates

District far above provincial average; B.C. resident rate at 100 per cent

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Gulf Islands schools reported the highest grad numbers ever, according to administrators, with 100 per cent of B.C. resident students crossing the stage last year — for the first time in island history.

School officials and the Ministry of Education track what's known as the six-year completion rate, which measures the success of three distinct cohorts of students — B.C. residents, Indigenous students, and students with diverse abilities — from the first time they enroll in Grade 8 to the time they leave school. "Completion" means they earned a certificate of graduation (or adult diploma) within six years of that enrollment.

And this fall, metrics for all three cohorts were far above provincial averages, landing at record-high levels for the Gulf Islands School District (SD64) — 100, 96 and 94 per

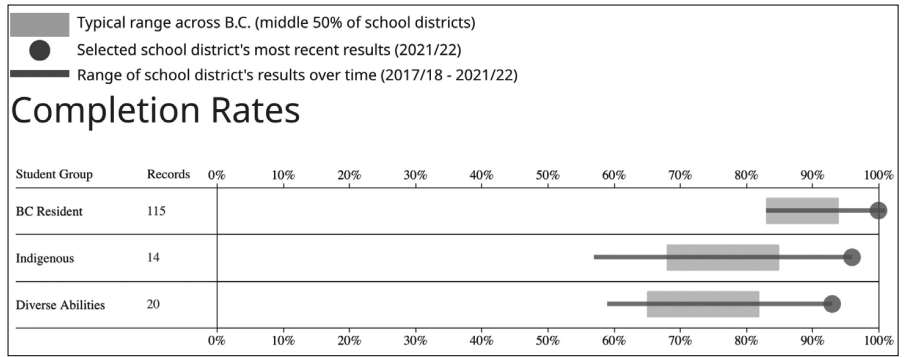
cent respectively. The numbers were reported — and indeed, celebrated — during the Board of Education's meeting Wednesday, Jan. 10.

"We are in the company of two districts with this result this year," said superintendent Scott Benwell. "And this isn't based on just getting kids through, this is based on an extraordinary amount of hard work by dedicated educators."

"It's not everything we do, but it's the outcome of everything we do," he continued. "With gratitude for all of the people of SD64 that have worked alongside students, the families that have invested, the students themselves that take work home, attend to their studies — all dedicated to that outcome."

Trustee Deborah Luporini acknowledged the occasion as exceedingly rare, and delightful.

"It happens because the parents supported their kids, the programs were made available, the principals supervised what they needed to and supported all the instructional practice, and the teachers sat down . . ." Luporini paused, recomposing herself amidst the emotion of the moment. "Sat down with a kid who



Graph showing completion rates for Gulf Islands School District students followed since Grade 8.

said, 'I don't get it.' And they got through it with them. It's just incredible."

Benwell, who was marking his last meeting as superintendent since starting the position in January 2019, recounted a moment he has referenced during previous completion reports, when former trustee Shelley Lawson acknowledged what was then a record-high number — after which, Benwell said, she asked, "Mr. Superintendent, why is it not 100 per cent?"

"I, and we, took that to heart," said Benwell. "If you

"It's not everything we do, but it's the outcome of everything we do."

SCOTT BENWELL
SD64 superintendent

see a teacher, thank them."

Turning in her seat, board chair Tisha Boulter smiled broadly and aimed her phone at the completion graph projected on the wall.

"I took a picture," she said.

"I'm going to text it to her. 'Shelley, guess what it is!'"

To view SD64 completion rates and other metrics, visit studentsuccess.gov.bc.ca/school-district/064/report/completion-rates.

SD64 reported a headcount enrolment of 1,508 students (1515.75 FTE) on this year's Sept. 30 funding report to the ministry. Based on the ministry's adjusted design capacity numbers, according to the district, there is currently room for 45 more students in SD64 Salt Spring Island elementary schools.

ISLANDS TRUST

Mandate to top website

Move hoped to quell closed-meeting imbroglio

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Islands Trust (IT) plans to give greater online prominence to a recent reinterpretation of its mandate, while simultaneously seeming to downplay its significance.

Members of the IT Governance Committee indicated they thought much of the recent criticism of that reinterpretation came due to the public misunderstanding it — and placed blame on a communications process that resulted in a summary being released via a "business highlights" newsletter.

The committee voted Monday, Jan. 15 to re-post the full three-paragraph statement of consensus in a "prominent and easily accessible location" on the Trust's website — and that "any other summaries or highlight statements on the website be removed."

The committee advanced the plan having received a promised memo on the issue from Bowen Island municipal trustee — and committee chair — Judith Gedye.

"I think that there was some nuance lost in the summary," said Gedye. "This was talking about the legality of Section 3 in the legal interpretation; it doesn't change policy."

Gedye and other trustees have been subjected to a barrage of public input since the consensus statement emerged last fall. In a two-hour-long

closed-to-the-public discussion held on North Pender Island in September, trustees had what was called a "lengthy discussion" about the interpretation of Section 3 of the Islands Trust Act, commonly referred to as the "object" or "mandate" — specifying what the body aims to "preserve and protect."

Rather than a formal rise and report, the Driftwood — and the wider public — had its first look at the statement of consensus when a link to it was embedded in a file published as part of the Trust Executive Committee's Oct. 11, 2023 meeting agenda packet.

A subsequent "highlights" release included language from the consensus statement that seems to have caused the biggest stir — that the "unique amenities" the Trust protects were "broad-ranging and may include issues such as, but not limited to, housing, livelihoods, infrastructure and tourism."

The consensus statement does continue in later language, left out of the "highlights" — but printed in the Driftwood's Oct. 11, 2023 story — which added that land use planning "must always include a focus on preserving and protecting the environment and communities."

As of press time, the consensus statement could still be found via the "Business Highlights" page (islandstrust.bc.ca/document/september-2023-trust-council-decision-highlights/); direct links can be found by scrolling back on the Trust's LinkedIn and Instagram pages.



Islands Trust

Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee
NOTICE OF FIRST READING
Draft Bylaw No. 537

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to s.467 of the Local Government Act, that the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee will consider first reading of draft Bylaw No. 537, cited as "Salt Spring Island Land Use Bylaw, 1999, Amendment No. 2, 2023" at its Special Meeting scheduled at 1:30 p.m., Monday, January 22, 2024, via Zoom, Electronic meeting.

What is Draft Bylaw No. 537 about?

Draft Bylaw No. 537 will, if adopted, amend the current Salt Spring Island Land Use Bylaw No. 355 to allow Accessory Dwelling Units, such as secondary suites, cottages, or garden suites, to be established on select properties island-wide.

The Local Trust Committee is not holding a Public Hearing for this Bylaw under the authority granted in Section 464(2) of the Local Government Act that states that a local government may decide not to hold a Public Hearing on a draft Bylaw if an Official Community Plan (OCP) is in effect for the subject area, and the draft bylaw is consistent with the OCP. Draft Bylaw No. 537 is consistent with the OCP for Salt Spring Island.

How Do I Get More Information?

A copy of the proposed bylaw may be viewed at the Islands Trust Office, 1-500 Lower Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, commencing Thursday, January 11, 2024 and ending Monday, January 22, 2024 during regular business hours (8:30 am – 4:30 pm) or on the Islands Trust website (www.islandstrust.bc.ca/ss-ltc-bylaw-no-537).

Enquiries or Written Comments may be directed to Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager by email ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca, or phone at 250-537-9144. For toll-free access, request a transfer to the above telephone number via Service BC: in Vancouver at 604-660-2421 and elsewhere in BC at 1-800-663-7867. Written submissions must be received at the Islands Trust Salt Spring Office via email to ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca or 1-500 Lower Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island BC V8K 2N8, no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, January 19, 2024.

Rob Pingle, Deputy Secretary

OPINION

2022 CCNA Awards
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Silver - Best Local Editorial (Gail Sjuberg) | Silver - Best Local Cartoon (Dennis Parker)

2022 BCYNA Awards
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Silver - Community Service Award



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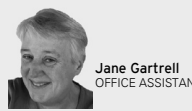
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EDITORIAL

Market movement

Revitalizing Centennial Park's plaza was not really a priority a few years ago.

When it came to the now-disbanded Salt Spring Parks and Recreation Commission recommending the re-allocating of hundreds of thousands of Community Works Fund dollars to revitalize the plaza, no one put the project anywhere near the top of their personal "island project" wish list.

But, as our local Capital Regional District (CRD) director has said, sometimes you go where the grant money leads you — and in this case it led to something of a bargain, as we saw workers break ground on a million-dollar project for a fraction of that cost, thanks to a substantial Pacific Economic Development Canada grant that turned out to be a good match for sprucing up the home of our oft-admired Saturday Market.

THE ISSUE: Saturday Market operations

WE SAY: Move to local society positive

While construction certainly seems to have taken quite a breather over the holidays, there has been a flurry of activity behind the scenes as a new Salt Spring Island Saturday Market Society has taken the reins of the complicated venture, set to spread out over the new surface this spring. The society has islanders wearing many hats on its board; in addition to vendors, representatives of the broader business community and non-profit organizations like Salt Spring Arts will continue to weigh in as the vitally important market launches into 2024.

The CRD had been running the day-to-day operations of the market, the responsibility for which landed in its lap as part of its broader commitment to Centennial Park itself. And while it may have made a certain amount of sense, it has been unique in the province; no other such market is run by a parks department.

Regional officials deserve praise for their flexibility in working through the financial implications of a non-profit-run Saturday Market; while details have not yet become public, our suspicion is that Salt Spring may have seen yet another bargain here. And the people here on the ground who stepped up, formed a society and took on the challenge deserve our support as well.

It is important that such a special island resource and tradition remains "governed" — if anyone could be said to be able to do such a thing — by Salt Springers. We look forward to welcoming back the Saturday Market to its new digs under new leadership on March 30.

While construction certainly seems to have taken quite a breather over the holidays, there has been a flurry of activity behind the scenes as a new Salt Spring Island Saturday Market Society has taken the reins of the complicated venture, set to spread out over the new surface this spring. The society has islanders wearing many hats on its board; in addition to vendors, representatives of the broader business community and non-profit organizations like Salt Spring Arts will continue to weigh in as the vitally important market launches into 2024.



Bylaw 537 and due process

BY RONALD WRIGHT

VIEWPOINT

There's only one reason why the latest version of Bylaw 530 has mysteriously become Bylaw 537: to dodge the legal requirement for a full public hearing before it can be passed by Salt Spring trustees. The province recently waived public hearings for new housing bylaws that do not breach an official community plan (OCP). For the past two years, trustee Laura Patrick was telling us — against obvious evidence — that the former version of Bylaw 530, which would have doubled zoning density over most of the island, did not breach the OCP. But she and trustee Jamie Harris had to abandon that fantasy in the face of legal advice and stiff opposition. Now a slimmer version, originally floated last March as "Phase 1" of Bylaw 530, suddenly becomes the "new" Bylaw 537 — and public debate is sidestepped.

In last week's Driftwood, our trustees posted formal notice that they will give Bylaw 537 "first reading" at a special meeting on Monday, Jan. 22, by Zoom. If it were only first reading there might be less cause for alarm, as three readings — normally spaced over several months — must be held before a bylaw can be sent to Trust Executive for sign-off. But Laura Patrick has already let slip that she intends to pass all three readings of Bylaw 537 in one go. Trust staff have confirmed this could indeed happen on Jan. 22. If it does, the official notice will have seriously misled the public.

Such gaming of due process is not the only reason for mistrust. Yet again, the trustees are telling us this rezoning bylaw "is consistent" with our OCP. If Bylaw 537 stayed within the map attached to its latest draft, perhaps it might be. But trustees are also seeking ways to grow the bylaw's reach through "spot zoning," which means encouraging landowners to apply for extra

density piecemeal almost anywhere on Salt Spring. The end result might become much the same as that of Bylaw 530's most extreme version: haphazard suburban sprawl.

Laura Patrick has always claimed Bylaw 530/537 is urgently needed to tackle the housing shortage, especially the lack of affordable long-term rentals for islanders. If this is true, why does no version of the bylaw even mention affordability or contain any means to achieve it? Why focus only on the free-market auxiliary dwelling unit model, which has failed to ease housing problems in big cities and small communities alike? Why no interest in promoting co-operative or public partnership housing, such as Salt Spring's successful Croftonbrook? The Trust could also be pushing harder for Salt Spring to be included in the Speculation and Vacancy Tax, and B.C.'s new law to control short-term holiday rentals.

Judging by their deeds so far, our trustees' main interest seems to be exploiting the housing shortage to unleash mass private development in a legally protected area. The next big project in their cross-hairs is to "revise" our OCP this year and next. They have already obtained \$120,000 of public money to hire outside consultants. Salt Springers must watch this carefully and be sure to make their voices heard. The many twists and turns with Bylaw 530/537 do not bode well for an open and above-board process.

Questions and comments on Bylaw 537 should be sent to our trustees Patrick, Harris, and committee chair Tim Peterson, and to planning manager Chris Hutton, with "Bylaw 537" in the subject box: ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca.

The writer is a founding member of Keep Salt Spring Sustainable.

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LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

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ISLAND VOICES

LETTERS to the editor

Drinking water at risk

We have owned property on Cusheon Lake for over 45 years. We draw all of our drinking water from the lake, so we are very concerned to learn that the Islands Trust is considering changes or amendments to the Community Plan, which would put our watershed at risk.

The water in Cusheon Lake is a precious resource relied on by hundreds of people, families, households. Maintaining the health and integrity of the watershed must be sacrosanct.

We do not know exactly what is going on at this Salty Dog place at 130 Blackburn Rd., but what we see is very worrisome: a group of trailers and tents and other temporary accommodations . . . it looks like a low-rent campground. And then we hear rumours of dog kennelling, of rescue dogs and more. Salty Dog's Salt Spring web page states:

"Our pet centre facilities offer Grooming, Daycare and Boarding with specialized behavioural and medical care options to help with any of their needs such as: Socialization, Training, Recovery, Maternity & Palliative . . . Our business model is focused on providing a complete spectrum commercial services and direct profits to reha-

ilitating and rehoming rescued animals. To help us with all this, we offer working opportunities and onsite accommodations to individuals facing mental health struggles, homelessness and other crisis; creating a powerful vocational rehabilitation and therapeutic program that's shown to be invaluable.

The Cowichan Valley operation is described this way:

"Canine Petcentre & Rescue offering Boarding, Daycare, and Rehoming services along with specialty care for rehabilitation, recovery, maternity, and hospice. We also feature a Wolfdog Sanctuary which offers educational, therapeutic, and recreational tours along with volunteer and youth to adult mentorship programs!"

It all sounds very laudable, and I'm sure there is a place somewhere on Salt Spring for such an operation . . . just not in the Cusheon Lake watershed.

They say that to be a plumber, all you have to know is two things: shit runs downhill, and payday is on Thursday. Well, we are not plumbers, but we do know that the effluent from an illegal campground and dog kennelling operation at 130 Blackburn Rd. will flow straight downhill into the Cusheon Lake water system.

This must not be allowed to happen.

BRUCE AND BARBARA HOUSER,
CUSHEON LAKE ROAD

Personal journey with Truth and Reconciliation

Sometimes I find that things slip out of my mouth and I have no full awareness of where certain terms or idioms come from.

The other day I referred to myself as being at the bottom of the totem pole — taking a stance that I was in a position of low status. As soon as those words left my mouth I felt a pang in my heart that what I had stated may have been offensive, yet not knowing if it was. No one called me on the statement and I did not make it an issue then, yet my heart has not let it go. Since then, I investigated the term and learned why it would be hurtful. I now write this note as an apology for its use.

Colonization has caused me, as well as many of us, to become familiarized with the use of terms that are hurtful and disrespectful to others. Although ashamed by my use of this language, I now feel somewhat humbled by this experience as I know I needed to self-reflect.

In brief, what I learned is that the bottom position of a totem pole is often seen as the foundation and most important position. In addition, I learned that in some Indigenous communities that the

actual term "totem pole" is also viewed as offensive because a "totem" is specific to a belief system.

There is so much more to learn about the diversity among us. I appreciate it so much when individuals challenge me and open my eyes around such subjects. I also feel for those who don't, acknowledging feeling of pain, frustration or maybe just being too kind in fear of embarrassing me.

Whatever, the stance I personally like is when persons questioning my actions and make me grow into the kind of person I want to be.

SHAE HOUSTON,
SALT SPRING

Road work missing in action

I've just come across the front page of your June 7, 2023 edition. The headlines feature Transportation Minister Rob Fleming trumpeting the upgrade of Fulford-Ganges Road, to be started last October.

What happened?

EARL MATHESON,
SALT SPRING

MORE OPINION continued on 6

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"It's better to have and not need, than to need and not have."

SALT SPRING ISLAND FIRE RESCUE DEPUTY CHIEF DALE LUNDY

Capital Regional District budget update provided by elected officials

BY EARL ROOK AND GARY HOLMAN

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Board approved a provisional budget, including that for delegated Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission (LCC) services, on Oct. 25, 2023.

The board will approve a final budget in March. The final budget will be based on further public input, updated property assessments and 2023 year-end surpluses or deficits for various CRD services.

The unique aspect of this CRD budget is that the operating and capital budgets for most of our local, island-wide CRD services are now decided by the LCC. 2024 is a particularly challenging budget year, but the difficult decisions that this budget requires will be made by an elected body of five, not a single CRD director. All of these decisions must now be made in regularly scheduled public meetings, agendas for which include provision for delegations or presentations from the community. This, and the consolidation of service delivery, previously overseen by four separate, appointed volunteer commissions (to whom we owe a great debt), represents a fundamental improvement in local governance.

The LCC is facing a particularly challenging budget in its first months of operation. Not sworn in until June 2023, the commissioners were presented a provisional budget by CRD staff at their September meeting proposing a 20.5 per cent increase in the 2024 requisition over 2023. So, in addition to facing a steep learning curve regarding the CRD budgeting process and the details of over a dozen individual service budgets, the commissioners have only had a very short period of time to try to mitigate the impacts of significantly increased costs. The LCC has already made difficult decisions in order to reduce the tax impacts related to their delegated services, and will be considering further possible measures to reduce taxpayer costs over the coming weeks.

Overall CRD Proposed Requisition 2024

The total proposed 2024 CRD (including LCC) and Capital Regional Hospital District (CRHD) requisition is \$8.37 million, 9.6 per cent over 2023. The requisition for the "average" residential property 2024 (valued at \$1.1 million in 2023) would be \$1,276 (\$106 per month). The total proposed requi-

GUEST COLUMN

sition for LCC delegated services is \$5.478 million, an increase of 12.7 per cent over 2023, and comprising about seven per cent of the overall 9.6 per cent increase.

This requisition, plus user fees for some services, funds a range of CRD services and amenities, including local LCC services such as parks and recreation, transportation, liquid waste and community economic development. Region-wide CRD services include parks, recycling, hospital facilities, land banking and housing, and emergency telecommunication. Sub-regional CRD services include building inspection, noise and animal control, and emergency planning.

Major Contributing Cost Factors

The most significant cost factors contributing to the proposed requisition are: core inflation and negotiated CRD staff wages and salaries; Covid-related 2023 deficit carry-overs for services that are partly reliant upon fee revenue (e.g., parks and recreation, SIMS

and transit); and restoration of local capital reserves, particularly for the local parks and recreation service.

The most significant 2024 requisition impact regionally is for affordable housing and regional parks. Any changes in Salt Spring's share of regional services will be determined by changes in Salt Spring's share of overall assessed values in the CRD, data for which is not yet available.

With respect to local LCC services, the top priority of commissioners is to maintain the level of local services it oversees. Cost increases beyond LCC control make maintaining service levels difficult without a significant requisition increase.

Parks and recreation represents by far the largest portion of the requisition increase for LCC services, for all of the reasons cited above. Requisition increases for public transit (increased BC Transit bus lease fees); the library (volunteer declines forcing staff increases); liquid waste (increased hauling fees); and grants-in-aid (restoring the requisition to historic levels), in that order of significance, also contribute to the proposed LCC tax increase. The community economic development requisition

was reduced due to a large operating surplus and reserve resulting from refocusing this service in a more project-oriented strategic direction.

The proposed CRD budget for service for 2024 can be found on the CRD website in the agenda package for the Jan. 18 LCC meeting. The LCC will also be discussing the budget at a special Feb. 1 meeting, also to be held at the SIMS boardroom. The LCC will meet every third Thursday of the month thereafter during 2024, with evening meetings to be announced.

If you want to present to the LCC, or have any questions or comments on the CRD budget, please email LCC chair Earl Rook (erook@crd.bc.ca) or CRD director and LCC vice-chair Gary Holman (directorssi@crd.bc.ca), and your comments will be shared with all LCC members. LCC commissioners also maintain office hours most Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the CRD offices at 108-121 McPhillips Ave. Feel free to drop in (no appointment needed) to talk with a commissioner.

Earl Rook is chair of the LCC; Gary Holman is LCC vice-chair, and Salt Spring's electoral area director to the CRD.

Arrogance of certainty has no place in science

BY OSMAN PHILLIPS

I would like to comment on a recent article published in the Driftwood on Jan. 3, under the wonderfully titled "Messiahs of Misinformation." This response could take up several pages so I will restrict my comments to remarks made concerning the Covid virus and the use of a mRNA delivery system to combat the pandemic.

The technique used by columnist Paul McElroy to discredit anyone who has the audacity to have a different belief than himself is to indulge in character assassination, the lowest of journalistic skills. After all, how could a "weaselly little Brit and self confessed sex addict" have any valid opinions on the topic of science? It's the same technique used by Trudeau when he told us, referring to the unvaxxed that "they are mostly either racists or misogynists."

Perhaps Paul would like to define what "legitimate science" is apart from being his idea of the truth. In

INRESPONSE

the article we are led to believe that if a thousand scientists say something is true, it must be so, and we must accept this completely without further discussion. In my experience it's hard to get five scientists, working on the same problems, to agree entirely. One has only to look at the history and development of the scientific method to see how "nutty" this statement is. Throughout our fight to understand the nature of things, the powers that be have repudiated new understandings, with contempt and even imprisonment for daring to suggest that the real situation is different. Galileo, Darwin and Einstein were all ridiculed for their views. By and large we now accept most of their work as fact. Science progresses, through correcting mistakes in our understanding, in the light of new information.

The research into the MRNA approach is very new, maybe 20 years old and extremely complicated, and as far as I know has not been used in human medicine previously. So it is hardly surprising that there are significant problems for those who have been jabbed, particularly bearing in mind that Pfizer, one of the makers, is one of the most successfully sued companies in the medical field, for misinformation regarding their medicines. One has only to read the original Covid research papers published by Pfizer to see that there would be troubles ahead. The idea that there is a "very limited amount of laughable literature" just means that the author is looking in the wrong places. Just covering all the information, and variety of theories on how the Covid virus started would take many months of concentrated reading.

The article mentions that the "blessed Bonnie Henry" touts the minimal precautions necessary, yet

B.C. is now the only province that still insists that health workers like nurses, must have had the minimal two jabs. The virus has moved on, through mutation, thankfully to be less severe, than in the past. The hundreds of unvaccinated nurses still cannot work in B.C. Many have left the profession, have moved to other provinces to work, taken early retirement, and all have suffered severe economic and other consequences. The continued ban on these people returning to work, especially as there is a desperate need for their services, can now only be considered as punishment, for not taking the jabs, even though the original concoction would have no useful effect now that the virus has mutated many times.

As I understand it, the original ban was based on two criteria, namely that the vaccine would give some immunity against recurrence of infection and more importantly that if vaxxed one would not be

able to pass on the infection. Both these criteria have long since been exposed as untrue. I have made several attempts to clarify with Adrian Dix why the ban on healthcare workers is still in effect, of course without any response. Perhaps Mr. McElroy has a valid science-based reason.

Since the time I was involved in biological research there has been an increase in political interference and the rise of research funded and owned by companies whose primary function is to make money. Not the best combination for unbiased scientific research.

The arrogance of certainty has no place in scientific endeavours, especially when we are dealing with new concepts. Finally it might be reasonable to expect Paul to follow the advice of his heroine, Bonnie Henry, and that is to be kind. At least I hope we can agree on that.

The writer lives on Salt Spring Island.

Pseudo-science claims challenged as 'strange times' continue

BY DULCY WILSON

In hopes of keeping free speech alive, something we hope our democracy will still honour, I am writing this.

We have all been living in very strange times these last four years. In 2020 we were all together with the pandemic looming ahead. Being "good Canadians," most of us complied with what our public health system told us to do. But then there was a great divide created by the narrative given to us on all mainstream media. People, doctors, scientists were vilified, ostracized, for asserting any opinions that differed from the narrative. Did you not find that a bit odd? Only one opinion or belief was allowed. This does not sound very scientific to me. Science is supposed to be a continual discussion of evidence and proof with differing ideas on the table. Well, this was just not allowed.

Many very reputable doctors and scientists lost

INRESPONSE

their jobs just because they dared to question "the narrative." They were concerned about their patient's health, a valid and honourable concern. This great divide harmed many people. Friends and family were pitted against each other, when supporting each other was crucial. All kindness left. A quote by Kahlil Gibran says it well. "Kindness is like snow, it beautifies everything it covers." Perhaps we need more snow? Unfortunately the divide still exists.

Meanwhile, in the midst of this, people were censored on social media and unable to question anything. The narrative had to reign supreme. And why did this happen? Follow the money . . . "Big Pharma" gives huge buckets of money to government agencies, universities, hospitals, doctors, politicians and public health agencies. They want to ensure that their profits are big and that no one is going to interfere with the sales of their products. If any of these entities want to keep their funding, they have to follow the dictates of Big Pharma. You know the saying, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." We were all told to follow the science, but they never actually gave us any verifiable scientific proof, and we were supposed to take that as the truth. The Narrative given to us was pure propaganda.

Fear is a commonly used psychological method to get a population to comply with what you tell them. Fear mongering to keep us all in line. Fear helps suspend one's ability to exercise critical thinking. Critical thinking clearly was not the norm or allowed without being gaslighted, a most despicable behaviour of division.

And then came all the mandates which were based a lot upon modelling, which I believe turned out to be very wrong as time has proved. Over these years much evidence, research, data and intelligent analysis has been

gathered. The lockdown harmed many, businesses lost, school children set back, jobs lost and the horror of not seeing loved ones in care homes and hospitals or attending funerals or gathering in any groups. Sweden did not lock down and fared no worse than countries that did. And then came masks. At first Bonnie Henry said they would not help, then she changed her tune and mandated them. I believe they were mostly theatre.

Fear is a commonly used psychological method to get a population to comply with what you tell them.

There was no treatment protocol for Covid allowed except the oh so reverent "vaccines." Ivermectin was vilified, yet in 2015 it received a Nobel prize, being a very good drug with no major side effects. That fact was just buried under the rug. Now, the proverbial rug is getting quite lumpy with so much information stuffed under it. All this because Big Pharma and friends wanted the vaccine to be the saviour. In order for it to be approved on the fast track emergency path, there could not be any other drugs that successfully treated Covid. So just vilify any other substances and gaslight people for even thinking of them. This clears the way for all that money to be made on worldwide mass vaccinations. Don't forget to follow the money, honey.

And we were all told the vaccines were "safe and effective," so most of us, myself included, trusted public health and got the jabs. We really could not give our informed consent since we were not informed of any possible problems with the jabs.

And now that much time has passed, solid scientific data has come out showing that they ended up not stopping transmission or illness. Hum, isn't that

what a vaccine is supposed to do? And there have been a huge number of people injured or killed by the vaccine, but these facts are just more lumps under the rug. I call that an example of "disinformation" given to us by public health, government and the media.

But anyone saying anything opposed to the safety of the vaccines was labelled a "conspiracy theorist" spouting "misinformation/disinformation" and vilified. FYI, the term "conspiracy theorist" was popularized by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for anyone telling truths that the CIA did not want us to know, "inconvenient truths." "Kill the messenger."

Robert Kennedy has been maligned as an anti-vaxxer. If anyone actually ever listened to him, he clearly has stated that he is not against vaccines in general. He and his family had all the vaccinations before Covid. He only wants the manufacturers (Big Pharma) to do sufficient safety testing, proving their safety, before rolling them out into people's arms. And he thinks the Covid shots did not have all the necessary testing to be really sure they were safe. That is all he is saying and for that he is ostracized. Big Pharma has immunity from any harms from their vaccines. Back to that terrible divide that has been put upon our society.

We keep hearing about the terrible shortage of doctors and nurses all across Canada, especially in B.C. which by the way is the only province that still mandates Covid shots for health care workers. B.C. has many who lost their jobs because they did not want to get the vaccine. We could really use them now, but Bonnie Henry and Adrian Dix will not let us. Very illogical. Reminds me of the saying, "If logic prevailed, men would ride sidesaddle."

All of my information has been gathered from lots of research looking at solid science (all verifiable), not the pseudo science we have been fed. We need to heal the divide for the sake of our country's soul.

The writer lives on Salt Spring Island.



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ARTS + ENTERTAINMENT

ARTSPRING ANNIVERSARY

Cuddy headlines concert



PHOTO BY HEATHER POLLOCK

From left, Jim Cuddy Band members Steve O'Connor, Bazil Donovan, Joel Anderson, Jim Cuddy, Anne Lindsay and Colin Cripps, who will perform at an April 20 concert benefitting ArtSpring and celebrating its 25th anniversary during an April 17 to 20 festival.

SUBMITTED BY KIRSTEN BOLTON
FOR ARTSPRING

ArtSpring has announced Canadian music treasure Jim Cuddy and his Jim Cuddy Band will be performing a fundraising benefit for ArtSpring during its upcoming 25th Anniversary Celebration Festival running from April 17 to 20.

Tickets for the Saturday, April 20 concert went on sale Tuesday for limited-time early bird prices, which will be in place until the end of January.

As one half of one of Blue Rodeo's songwriting partnership, Cuddy has one of the most recognizable voices in Canadian music thanks to omnipresent hits such as *Try*, *5 Days in May*, and *Bad Timing*.

"We are thrilled to be able to present such a popular and beloved talent to our community," said ArtSpring executive and artistic director Howard Jang. "It also turns out to be a bit of a full-circle moment in our history, as I recently came to learn Blue Rodeo performed over 25 years ago to help raise funds for the construction of our building."

Both as a solo artist and with Blue Rodeo, Cuddy has received nearly every accolade Canada can bestow upon a musician, including 15 Juno awards, the Order of Canada and, along with bandmates Blue Rodeo, he has been inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, received the Governor General Performing Arts Award, and a star on the Walk of Fame.

In 1998, in between Blue Rodeo projects, Cuddy released his first solo album *All in Time* and hit the road with the eponymous Jim Cuddy Band featuring Colin Cripps (guitar), Anne Lindsay (fiddle), Joel Anderson (drums), Bazil Donovan (bass) and Steve O'Connor (keyboards).

Since that first release, Cuddy recorded three more solo albums: *The Light That Guides You Home* (2006), *Skyscraper Soul* (2011), *Constellation* (2018). Jim's latest release, *Countrywide Soul*, is described as a "celebration of sorts – a celebration of music and the musicians who join him on stage each night."

Countrywide Soul was recorded live at Cuddy's family farm in southern Ontario on the top floor of his barn to keep it "as natural as possible to retain the woody sound of the barn board room and the energy that only comes from playing together live." Audiences can anticipate a variety of new solo music and old Blue Rodeo favourites at the April 20 concert.

Opening for Cuddy will be recent Gulf Islands Secondary School (GISS) graduate Salome Cullen, who at only age 18, has already made a name for himself as a singer-songwriter, producer, and multi-instrumentalist in west coast country music and folk. He was



PHOTO BY SYDNEY WOODWARD

Salt Spring singer-songwriter Salome Cullen will open ArtSpring's 25th anniversary concert for the Jim Cuddy Band.

the youngest artist to play last August's Sunfest in Cowichan Valley, headlined by country superstar Blake Shelton.

"I grew up here, and as part of the GISS music program, I intersected with Blue Rodeo's music through our music teacher who had selected their song *Lost Together* as the main song to be performed at our ArtSpring concert," explains Cullen. "I feel honoured to have learned how to perform on ArtSpring's stage and that I now have the opportunity to grow and learn alongside such masters of their craft as Jim Cuddy."

Concert tickets are available online and at the box office at early bird prices through Jan. 31 at \$75 for adults and \$37.50 for youth 18 years of age and younger. As of Feb. 1, adult tickets are \$90 and \$45 for youth.

The 25th Anniversary Celebration Festival in April will feature local community artists and performers, food trucks, demonstrations, dance parties and historic installations with mostly free activities appropriate for the whole family.

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DANCE

GISS dancers present 'Affinity' at ArtSpring

Performances run Wednesday and Thursday nights this week

BY DRIFTWOOD STAFF
AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Gulf Islands Secondary School (GISS) Dance program students take the stage at ArtSpring this week, with shows titled *Affinity* on Wednesday and Thursday, Jan. 17 and 18 beginning at 7:30 p.m.

As dance teacher Sonia Langer explains, students study hip hop, jazz, ballet and contemporary dance and create their own choreographic work while in the program. Their newest pieces are featured in *Affinity*.

"Our vibrant and enthusiastic youth have been working hard in the studio to create grooves and moves to enliven our time together at ArtSpring," she said last week.

The *Affinity* shows will include a heartfelt duet from Gulf Islands School of Performing Arts alumni Claire Whitelaw and Clair Hunkwicks to the music of Mitski, as well as solos by both dancers.

Also included in the show is a lively jive piece to Elvis Presley's *Jailhouse Rock* and a full group piece to Beyoncé's *Break My Soul*.

Tickets for *Affinity* are

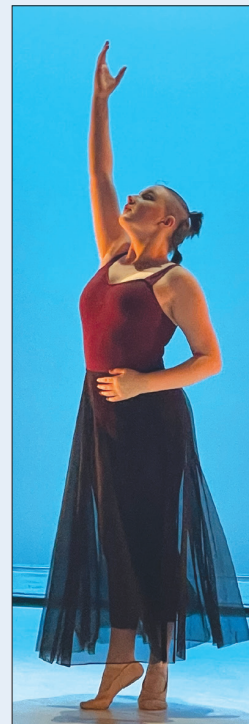


PHOTO BY SONIA LANGER

Former GISPA dancer Claire Whitelaw in the winter 2023 GISS Dance show at ArtSpring. Whitelaw returns in a duet and solo for the Jan. 17-18 productions.

available through ArtSpring, online or at the box office from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or before the evening shows.

Baltimore Consort
In *Angel's Weeds*:
Music for Mary Queen of Scots

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25TH ANNIVERSARY

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ARTS FUNDING

Island arts grants disbursed



PHOTO COURTESY EVOLVE DANCE COLLECTIVE

Evolve Dance Collective members, whose group has received a Salt Spring Arts Project Grant.

Artists and projects supported by Salt Spring Arts programs

SUBMITTED BY SALT SPRING ARTS

Salt Spring Arts (SSA) has been supporting local artists and projects of cultural significance through their Grants and Awards Program since the 1970s.

SSA recently announced the fall 2023 recipients for both Project Grants and the Susan Benson Fund for Visual Artists. These successful applicants will receive funding to assist in their creative pursuits through local events and projects. The follow-

ing projects were selected this grant cycle:

• **Tony Prosk — Music for Seniors and Shut-Ins**

Enriching the quality of life for seniors and shut-ins by bringing high-quality, professional musical entertainment to seniors residences and care facilities on Salt Spring Island. The value objectives of these performances include happiness, joy, inclusion, a re-capturing of youth, entertainment and social interaction for people in these facilities.

• **Seb Evans — GISS Student Photography Show**

This project supports production costs for GISS students to develop and showcase their photography in relation to the Spring Art Show at Mahon Hall. The exhibition will showcase students' digital work in a physical setting and allow them to develop a connection with the local arts community. Building youth connections is a key factor in creating a vibrant arts community that is inclusive of youth voices.

• **Lara Von Maydell — Evolve Dance Collective**

Evolve was founded three years ago as a grassroots, all-female modern/contemporary dance company. In their third season running, teaching and performing as a company, Evolve is creating a bigger show than ever, telling stories through dances that inspire audiences to feel deeper into themes and experiences through ritual-type performance.

• **Sue Newman — Christmas with Scrooge**

Originally produced as Christmas Madness in 1971, Newman Family Productions' Christmas with Scrooge celebrated its 50-plus birthday in 2023. The community show has had many incarnations over the years, always involving a "cast of thousands," as the late Ray Newman once noted. It brings together people of all ages and walks of life.

Susan Benson Fund for Visual Artists

The Susan Benson Fund was established by Susan Benson in 2022 to respond to her knowledge of the historical and continuing challenges faced by female visual artists, especially in regards to expenses related to creating and exhibiting works. In this grant cycle, Sherry Leigh Williams and Marie-Anna Michaud were awarded grants to assist in the development of their creative careers.

CONCERT PREVIEW

Mary, Queen of Scots era fêted

Baltimore Consort performs

SUBMITTED BY KIRSTEN BOLTON
FOR ARTSPRING

An accomplished ensemble that has enjoyed Billboard's award as Top Classical-Crossover Artist of the Year returns to ArtSpring for a show next Friday, Jan. 26 at 7:30 p.m.

The Baltimore Consort has been described as "perhaps the best balancing act of period authenticity, instrumental precision and sheer fun in the early music community today," (Times-Dispatch, Richmond, VA.)

The group was founded in 1980 to perform the instrumental music of Shakespeare's time with instruments common in this era. Shakespeare's music tapped into the popular repertory of the Elizabethan period; the tunes heard in taverns, on street corners, in the theatre, and accompanying dancing.


In 2020, the musicians were asked if they could perform a women-themed program to celebrate the centennial for women's right to vote in the United States. Angel's Wede: Music of Mary Queen of Scots was the result and features French music in addition to Scottish, with touches of Italian for Rizzio, her murdered lutenist (and papal spy?) and an English piece by William Byrd commemorating her martyrdom.

Instead of the usual six instrumentalists, this intriguing performance features five musicians who are joined by soprano Danielle Svonavec and captivating narration by Emmy Award-winning television and radio personality Robert Aubry Davis, a Washington-based lecturer and host of Millennium of Music, a program dedicated to music from the thousand years before Bach, now in its 44th season.

what's on this week

Wed. Jan. 17	Fri. Jan. 19	Sun. Jan. 21	Jan. 22	Jan. 23	Jan. 24		
<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>GISS Dance Presents Affinity. High school show at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Bridge. In the library program room. 12:45 to 4:15 p.m.</p> <p>Knit Purl Community. People of all levels of knitting/crochet/needlework skill meet every third Wednesday. Library program room. 5 to 7 p.m.</p> <p>Music Bingo. Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>Karaoke. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Fridays With DJ Boomtown. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m. til 12:30 a.m.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Story Time. Stories for young ones read by community members in the library's children's area every Friday from 11 to 11:30 a.m.</p> <p>Moms Stop the Harm Meeting. Salt Spring chapter meets on the 3rd floor of The Core at 12 noon.</p> <p>ASK Salt Spring. Reps from Transition Salt Spring Enterprise Co-operative, Salt Spring Island Foundation, Country Grocer and Lady Minto Hospital Foundation talk about ways to get projects funded on Salt Spring. SIMS. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.</p> <p>Youth Games & Chess Club. For ages 9 to 13. Libary children's area. 1 to 4 p.m.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>Jazz Jam. At the Legion. 3 to 6 p.m.</p> <p>The Flame Storytelling Workshop Performances. ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Spanish Conversation Group. Chat with other Spanish speakers or learners in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. All levels welcome. Library program room. 2 to 3:30 p.m. To join contact programs@saltspringlibrary.com.</p>	<p>CINEMA</p> <p>• The Boys in the Boat runs Friday, Jan. 19 to Tuesday, Jan. 23 at 7 p.m. each night plus a 3 p.m. matinee on Sunday. AND a showing on Saturday, Jan. 20 at 3 p.m. is a fundraiser for the Salt Spring Island Rowing Club.</p> <p>See thefritz.ca for more movie info.</p> <p>ART EXHIBITIONS</p> <p>• This Is Us, an exhibition by a group of artists of the Yellow Submarine, is at the Salt Spring Public Library Community Program Room through Jan. 29.</p> <p>• Salt Spring Photography Club exhibits in the ArtSpring lobby until Jan. 31.</p> <p>• Anna McCollm shows photographs of sandstone at Country Grocer's cafe through January.</p> <p>• Natascha Wille exhibits Faces of Forgotten Horses at the Salt Spring Coffee Cafe.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>GISS Dance Presents Affinity. High school show at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Open Mic & Jam. At the Legion. 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Mother Goose. For babies, young children (0-4 years) and their parents/caregivers. Salt Spring Public Library. 10 to 11 a.m.</p> <p>Local Community Commission Meeting. SIMS board room. 9 a.m.</p> <p>Open House at The Core. Special invitation for parents and their youth to explore the youth centre at 134 McPhillips Ave. 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>Salt Spring Island Scottish Country Dance Club Celebrates Robbie Burns Night. Fulford Hall, live music and dancing. Doors open at 5 p.m. No tickets at the door. For waiting list contact Peter King, peterking@gmail.com</p> <p>Hannah Rose. At The Local Pub. 6 p.m.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>Salt Spring Local Trust Committee Special Meeting. To consider Bylaw 537. Viewing of livestream only available through Islands Trust website. 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Trivia Tuesday. At Moby's Pub. 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</p> <p>Best of the Fests: Physician, Heal Thyself. A Salt Spring Film Festival presentation at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m. Check for ticket availability.</p> <p>Music Bingo. See last Wednesday's listing.</p>

Affinity
GISS Dance show
at ArtSpring
Jan. 17-18 at 7:30 p.m.

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ISLAND LIFE

ISLAND ECONOMY

Society takes on Saturday Market operation

Vendors, local business and non-profits on board of new group

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

When the Saturday Market opens for the 2024 season on March 30 this year, patrons will surely notice the refurbished Centennial Park plaza area.

But what might not be immediately obvious is that the market will be run by a community-based society rather than the Capital Regional District (CRD), which inherited the venture decades ago due to its location in the CRD-owned park.

The Salt Spring Island Saturday Market Society, which was formed for the purpose of bidding on a CRD request-for-proposals first issued a couple of years ago, is now in charge of operating what most people consider to be Salt Spring's largest visitor attraction.

Society president and jeweller Alvaro Sanchez is a 33-year market vendor who has immersed himself in market operation by serving on the former market advisory group and through other activities.

But he stresses the society board also has representatives from the business community and non-profit organizations, such as Salt Spring Arts and the Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce, with a view to ensuring the whole community benefits from and is connected to the market.

"I know we cannot make everybody happy all the time, but so far the response has been excellent," said Sanchez. "The vendors are so thankful; everybody I've talked to is so thankful that we made the effort to run the market in a way that works for everybody."



DRIFTWOOD FILE PHOTO

Scene from the Salt Spring Saturday Market in the spring of 2023. The Salt Spring Island Saturday Market Society has been contracted by the Capital Regional District to run the market, which opens this year on March 30. The society seeks to hire a coordinator now.

The group is now advertising to fill a part-time market coordinator position, noting that person will be an employee of the society and not a contractor. Two peak-season assistants will also be hired.

While the volunteers involved admit doing everything required has been a huge amount of work, they are buoyed by how it has worked out and have enjoyed working with all parties.

"It's actually been a great experience," said society vice-president Susanna Kong, also a market vendor selling Elfworks Studio crafts. "We arrived at all the decisions by consensus and talked through everything, so it's been very good. Everybody just wants to make it work well."

Registration for vendors will begin in February through the saltspringmarket.com website. The society was able to acquire the existing URL for a long-existing site and it will be the go-to spot for market information.

Also of interest to vendors is the return

to the "point system," which has not been used in recent years after the pandemic hugely affected operations. It sees vendors accrue points each time they attend the market, with more points translating into better booth locations. Sanchez said that has the effect of increasing vendor numbers during the non-summer months, making for a better experience for market patrons and encouraging shoulder-season tourism.

Aaron Bouchard, of Pacific Puzzle Co., has taken on the society's secretary position. He observes that the society will be engaging customers through social media channels and promoting the island as a whole.

"When you bring a community element to it, it's out of necessity that the vendors and the market will work together to promote this island. These vendors are a really bright bunch of people who all love this island and are representing this island on Saturdays in a huge way."

Jennifer Emekoba, who owns Osisi Boutique in Ganges Alley with her husband John, said she feels honoured to be part of the society's board of directors and looks forward to the market's next chapter.

"The park refurbishment, alongside new, community-led Saturday Market operations, starts a positive chapter for our local economy," she said. "As business owners neighbouring the market, John and I are excited to see the results of the park's beautification and the new market commence this spring."

The CRD did not provide a comment on the change as it has not yet been discussed publicly. A report is expected at the Jan. 18 Salt Spring Local Community Commission meeting.

FILM

Gabor Maté film screened

'Charismatic tortured soul' profiled in compelling work

BY STEVE MARTINDALE
FOR SALT SPRING FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

Fans of Dr. Gabor Maté won't want to miss the Salt Spring Film Festival's one-night-only screening of the award-winning film at ArtSpring on Wednesday, Jan. 24.

Vancouver filmmaker Asher Penn will be on Salt Spring next Wednesday, Jan. 24 to present his engaging documentary on the world-renowned expert on trauma and addiction — Dr. Gabor Maté — which made its world premiere and won an audience favourite award at the Vancouver International Film Festival in October.

While all advance tickets to Physician, Heal Thyself have sold already, a final 30 more will be released today (Jan. 17).

Both a medical doctor and a bestselling author, Maté is one of the world's most influential thinkers on trauma, addiction and mental health, widely admired as the author of such bestsellers as *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction*; *The Myth of Normal: Trauma,*

Illness and Healing in a Toxic Culture; and *When the Body Says No: The Cost of Hidden Stress*.

In this searingly honest review of his life's work, Maté shares not only his professional theories but also his personal story: his difficult upbringing in a Jewish family in post-war Hungary, his experience as a student journalist for *The Ulysses*, his early reputation as an infuriating contrarian, and his work with marginalized communities in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

The founder and editor of Vancouver's online *Sex Magazine*, Asher Penn decided to make a documentary about Maté after reading his books and looking for insights while battling his own addictions.

Although primarily comprising Maté's own reminiscences on his life and work, this surprisingly compelling film is almost hypnotic in its ability to draw the audience in and hold the viewer's attention. Candidly discussing his own struggles with addictive behaviours, ADHD and fractured relationships — and encouraging us to own our failings, accept our imperfections and prioritize our mental health — Maté admits: "Part of the problem was that I believed in everybody's healing but my own."



Islands Trust

North Pender Island Local Trust Committee NOTICE OF FIRST READING Draft Bylaw No. 234

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to s.467 of the Local Government Act that the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee will consider first reading of draft Bylaw No. 234, cited as "North Pender Island Land Use Bylaw No. 224, 2022, Amendment No. 1, 2023" at its Regular Business Meeting scheduled at 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 26, 2024, to be held at the St. Peter's Anglican Church Hall, 4703 Canal Rd, North Pender Island.

What is Draft Bylaw No. 234 about?

Draft Bylaw No. 234 will, if adopted, amend the North Pender Island Land Use Bylaw No. 224 (LUB) to permit multi-family dwellings at the **Plum Tree Court Senior Housing Society** property located at 5719 Canal Road, Pender Island. Currently, the LUB limits the use to only two-family dwellings at this property. There is no proposed change in overall density.

The Local Trust Committee is not holding a public hearing for this bylaw under the authority granted in Section 464(2) of the Local Government Act that states that a local government may decide not to hold a public hearing on a draft bylaw if an Official Community Plan is in effect for the area that is subject to a draft zoning bylaw, and the draft bylaw is consistent with the plan. Draft Bylaw No. 234 is consistent with the North Pender Island Official Community Plan No. 171.

How Do I Get More Information?

A copy of the draft bylaw may be viewed at the **Islands Trust Office, 200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC**, or on the Islands Trust website <https://bit.ly/NPBylaw234> commencing Friday, January 12, 2024 and ending Thursday, January 25, 2024 during regular business hours (8:30 am – 4:30 pm).

Enquiries or Written Comments may be directed to **Brad Smith**, Island Planner by email bsmith@islandstrust.bc.ca, or phone at (778) 679-5185. For toll-free access, request a transfer to the above telephone number via Service BC: in Vancouver at 604-660-2421 and elsewhere in BC at 1-800-663-7867. Written submissions must be received at the Islands Trust Victoria Office via email to vicphsub@islandstrust.bc.ca or Mail or Drop Off: Islands Trust, 200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8, no later than 4:30 p.m., Thursday, January 25, 2024.

Jas Chonk, Deputy Secretary

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Obituaries



Jennifer Elizabeth Mary Steele
July 27, 1985-December 28, 2023

WITH DEEP SORROW AND BROKEN HEARTS WE WANT TO LET OUR FRIENDS AND WIDER COMMUNITY KNOW THAT WE HAVE LOST OUR DARLING GIRL.

Jennifer was born on the island 38 years ago and grew up here surrounded by loving family and friends. After graduating from high school she attended the University of Victoria and received her degree as a Registered Nurse. She worked for several years at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Victoria where she impacted many lives in her work with children. Her compassion and empathy for people made her an exceptional nurse.

She had a special bond with animals, especially our myriad of family dogs. She loved the ocean, kayaking on the lake, music, painting and loved nothing more than a good laugh with her family and friends.

She loved her family near and far and her many close friends and co-workers.

She was predeceased by her beloved, older sister Courtney, who she held close to her heart.

She leaves behind her Mom and Dad, her brother Casey and sister-in-law Taylor and many aunts, uncles and cousins whom she loved dearly.

Jenny was loved and cherished and will forever be held close in our hearts.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday January 20 at 2pm at All Saints Church in Ganges.



Obituaries



Sharon Ann Sykes
(Nee Falenda)
1952 -2024

Sharon Ann Sykes (nee Falenda) passed away peacefully at the age of 71 on

Friday, January 12th, 2024 after a long and courageous battle with cancer. She was born on May 12, 1952 in Burnaby to Audrey and Michael Falenda. Sharon is predeceased by both her mother and father as well as her younger brother Lorne. Sharon is survived by her sister Carol Renshaw (Jim), Husband Doug, her daughter Kimberly Beamish (Eric) and their boys Cameron and Jacob, and her daughter Amanda Cayford (Jason) and their boys Dexter and Greyton.

Sharon cared deeply for her community and she was proud to call Salt Spring Island home. It brought her immense joy to watch everyone enjoy her Christmas window display at Mouat's each season. Sharon loved to spend her days watching her daughters and grandsons play sports, especially baseball. She also enjoyed creating cake masterpieces and timeless crafts. Her favourite place to spend her time was on her porch with her spring flowers and surrounded by butterflies. If she wasn't sitting there, she would choose to be chasing after her 4 grandsons.

A celebration of life will be held later during the spring time which was her favourite season.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations to be made to the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation. Sharon, and her family, extend their deepest gratitude to the loving care that was given to them during this journey. A special thank-you to Dr. Reznick and his team for all of the care given to Sharon during her many years on Salt Spring.

Obituaries



Mary Elizabeth Davidson
(Nee McLennan)
August 10, 1930 -
December 19, 2023

Mary passed away gently and peacefully at a time of her choosing with family by her side. Born in Vancouver's Grace Hospital, Mary spent her early childhood on Salt Spring Island, followed by a few years in Duncan, Victoria and Saanichton before her family moved into the home her father built near Deep Cove. After Normal School Teacher Training in Victoria she moved to Surrey, B.C. and taught for 2 years at the one-room Grandview Heights Elem. Sch. She married Don Davidson in 1950 and by the end of 1957 was the mother to five. Mary did a stint of substitute teaching throughout Surrey in the 1960s before teaching full-time for a decade at Cloverdale Catholic School. She then went on to earn a B.Ed degree with a double major at UBC, followed by 7 years at Delta Manor Elem Sch as a Teacher Librarian. Mary and Don retired to Salt Spring in the early 1980s where she became a member of the Historical Society and in 1989 guided the establishment of the island's Archives, whose collections include photos and stories of the McLennan family homestead from the late 1800s. She returned to reside in South Surrey in 2014.

Mary developed a passion for genealogy in the 1960's after discovering her connection to one of Surrey's early pioneer families. Sixty years later she had traced both her and Don's ancestry back many centuries to leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Mary was also an avid reader, never shy about sharing an opinion, and ever ready to take up her pen in support of protecting South Surrey forests and farm land.

Predeceased by her husband, Don, and sister, Jean; survived by her brother, Robert (Lesley) and cousin, Agnes Cunningham of Fulford Harbour; Mary will be lovingly remembered by her 5 children and their spouses: Gary (Caroline) on Pender Is; Bob (Pat) in Vancouver; Karen Sadler (Ian) in Stroud, England; Bruce (Cathy) in N. Vancouver; and Lynne Palmer (Booth) in Delta; 9 grandchildren of whom she was so very proud: Jesse, Sarah, Kristina, David, Kasandra, Sheree, Janice, Troy and Spencer; and 18 (soon to be 20) great grandchildren.

The family is sincerely grateful to Mary's neighbours: Randy and Sharon; and dear friends: Sandy, Jola and Dinah; whose help and visitations meant so much. We would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the kind and caring staff at the Irene Thomas Hospice, with a special thank you to Susan and Parm.

No service by request, in lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Delta Hospital and Community Health Foundation or a charity of your choice.

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In Memoriam

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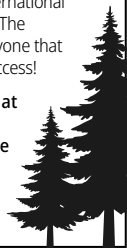
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EDUCATION

'Care economy' course crafted by educators

SD64-designed career sampler to be shared province-wide

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring educators have crafted a new Grade 11 course focusing on exploring careers in B.C.'s growing "care economy," rolling out for local students this fall and potentially being picked up by other schools throughout the province next year.

Care economy careers explored in the course will include early learning and education, health care and emergency response, looking at support roles in those sectors in particular.

District career coordinator Maggie Allison, Gulf Islands Secondary School (GISS) principal Ryan Massey and work experience teacher Shari Hambrook created the framework for the Care Economy Career Sampler Course, which they presented to the Gulf Islands School District (SD64) Board of Education Wednesday, Jan. 10.

It was built at the request of the Ministry of Education and based on information from a world café-style event held last fall that saw input from Vancouver Island University, Camosun College, BC Ambulance Service, Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue, B.C.'s Justice Institute and Island Health nursing staff, educators, social workers and psychologists.

"There's this idea that anyone who pokes and prods you must be a nurse or a doctor," said Allison. "But there are over 70 occupations in allied health, and then there's massage therapists and physiotherapists and more."

Allison said the policy framework was built around skills training to provide educational

pathways for secondary students to explore future potential careers in in-demand areas. The core of the care economy sampler course, according to Hambrook, would be teaching the so-called "intersecting" skills — like communication or cultural awareness — as well as learning from expert guests and field trips.

"And a ton of work, of course," said Hambrook. "Students hopefully will learn to define who they are by what they value."

Hambrook pointed out the work experience program at GISS has seen a growth in student involvement for that sector for several years — which is one of the reasons the ministry came to them.

"Students hopefully will learn to define who they are by what they value."

SHARI HAMBROOK
GISS work experience teacher

"We've had students doing work experience in our hospital, the assisted living residences, the daycares — all of those care economy locations," said Hambrook. "So it didn't take very long to establish a group of subject matter experts — and working professionals — to meet with us."

Massey said the ministry's funding allowed the trio to work on the project every day at school — one block per day — since the start of September.

"It's going to be a comprehensive resource that any teacher can use," said Allison, "to help mold and shape a course that will fit their community."

In addition, the coursework lays out how the occupations fit into the various care economy sectors.

"A profile for [each] occupation, which shows labour market outlook, skills required, personality type and the educational pathways for certificate diploma and bachelor's degree programs in the whole of B.C.," said Allison. "It will be a product we'll be very proud of."

Trustees unanimously approved a motion authorizing the course. Allison said the guide will be completed and ready to share provincially by the end of May.

HEALTH

'Dry January' efforts offer lots of benefits

Practical tips suggested by industry expert

BY NICKOLAUS HAYES
SPECIAL TO THE DRIFTWOOD



NICKOLAUS HAYES

Taking part in Dry January is your opportunity to abstain from alcohol for the entirety of the first month of the year. For many, drinking alcohol during the holiday season is commonplace. Social drinking is widely accepted. Unfortunately, many people find themselves drinking much more than usual.

A Dry January is an opportunity to give your mind and body time to recover and even re-evaluate your drinking habits if you feel they have become problematic.

Most people would agree there are significant stressors during the holiday season. It's a complex time of year for many, and alcohol is often used as a crutch.

The benefits of Dry January are significant. Abstaining from alcohol leads to better sleep, mental clarity, more energy, clearer skin, weight loss, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, less stress, depression and anxiety.

Most importantly, you are removing the risk of drinking and driving. Abstinence from alcohol is the backbone of drunk driving prevention. The University of Victoria found that alcohol consumption in British Columbia returned to pre-COVID levels in 2023. ICBC estimates that 21 per cent of car crash fatalities are related to impaired driving.

Dry January can also be a time to re-evaluate your drinking habits. Ask yourself if you are using alcohol as a tool to cope with stressful situations. Do you find yourself stressed without alcohol, and is alcohol use impacting your professional or personal relationships?

If the answer is yes, it's a good time to give yourself a break from alcohol.

While this can be challenging, there are practical tips you can use to make Dry January a success.

- Create a supporting environment where you know you will succeed. Thoroughly purge all the booze around you; either dump it, hide it, or give it away. Moreover, find a suitable non-alcoholic drink for social situations.

- Recruit a friend or family member to participate and help avoid temptations. Not only will you support one another, but you can also plan activities that do not involve alcohol, and you can speak about the successes and challenges of abstaining from alcohol.

- Stay busy and active and take this time to focus on your mental and physical well-being; take advantage of having more energy and sleeping better. Utilize Dry January apps that will help you track your progress and find practical ways to hold yourself accountable.

Ideally, this can be optimal to reflect on your drinking habits. During the month, you will begin to lose alcohol cravings, and you may realize alcohol does not need to take up such ample space in your life. If the benefits make you feel great physically and mentally, consider continuing for another 30 days. Embrace your new attitude to alcohol use.

The writer is a healthcare professional in the field of substance use and addiction recovery and part of the editorial team at the U.S.-based DRS. His primary focus is spreading awareness by educating individuals on the topics surrounding substance use.

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ORNITHOPHILIA

Salt Spring bird count numbers top 15,000

Annual Christmas count results both pleasing and surprising

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Organizers of the 2023 Salt Spring Island Christmas Bird Count are delighted with results coming from a counting day that saw unseasonably mild weather and many record or near-record species counts.

And whether your tastes run toward the sooty or spotted, the yellow-rumped or the ring-necked, there were a few surprising sightings on Dec. 17, according to coordinator Tim Marchant.

This year's robust total tallied 15,673 birds of 100 species across the zones that make up the combined Salt Spring and Prevost Island count, Marchant said, and with record numbers of surf scoters, great blue herons, kingfishers, flickers, pileated woodpeckers and golden-crowned sparrows during the 35th year of the event.

Marchant said despite 10 to 15 per cent fewer counters out this year compared to the last two — and a lower number of total counting hours — there were higher counts, including near-record numbers of ring-necked ducks, cormorants and towhees.

"And a good showing by mer-

gansers, California quail, buffleheads and chickadees," said Marchant, who said the birds-counted-per-counter figure varies considerably each year, from as few as 65 to as many as 155 birds spotted by each person on average.

"Maybe the good weather during the fall and during count week allowed more birds to stay a bit further north this year?" said Marchant. "Or maybe the residents were more visible/accessible this year — not hiding deep in the branches due to cold?"

Marchant said intriguing numbers came from counts of American robins and pine siskins — 7,500 fewer this year than during a record count year in 2020, despite generally high count numbers across other species.

"Which is why I look to the friendlier weather as a possible cause, rather than cyclical food sources or year-to-year counting differences," said Marchant. "And of course it's usually a combination of factors."

As with every year, the groups had a few unexpected sightings — birds not seen for a few years — including the sooty grouse, spotted sandpiper, pine grosbeak, yellow-rumped warbler and Lincoln's sparrow.

The "signature sighting" of this year's count was a pair of Indian pea fowl, Marchant said.

"Debate rages whether they 'count' as wild or domestic," he said. "I am told that the population has to be established for quite some time in order to be officially counted by Audubon, but there is no doubt that they were seen — and so we are counting them, much as the longer-established wild turkeys on Saturna are counted."

Next year's count — which will be Salt Spring's 36th, and the Audubon Society's 125th — will be held Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024. For more information, visit nature-saltspring.org and birdcount.org.



PHOTO COURTESY KATHLEEN MASER

Islanders meet in Vesuvius for the start of the Dec. 17, 2023 Christmas Bird Count.



**NORTH
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DISTRICT**

NOTICE TO RATEPAYERS OF CANDIDATE INFORMATION SESSION:

Have you considered running for a Trustee position on the NSSWD Board?

The North Salt Spring Waterworks District will be holding a virtual Candidate Information Session for those who are interested in learning more about becoming a Trustee.

January 24, 2024 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

A presentation by District Staff will be followed by an opportunity for Q&A. For more information and the link to the meeting, please visit our website or email info@nsswaterworks.ca.

TIDE TABLES at Fulford Harbour

JANUARY 2024 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
17	222	1.4	4.6	21	411	3.2	10.5
	945	3.6	11.8		740	3.1	10.2
	1659	1.5	4.9		1135	3.3	10.8
18	2256	2.3	7.5	22	2008	0.5	1.6
	307	2	6.6		456	3.4	11.2
	1010	3.5	11.5		933	3.1	10.2
19	1749	1.1	3.6	23	1218	3.2	10.5
	122	2.6	8.5		2052	0.4	1.3
	404	2.5	8.2		536	3.5	11.5
20	1035	3.4	11.2	24	1037	3.1	10.2
	1837	0.8	2.6		1311	3.1	10.2
	311	2.9	9.5		2134	0.4	1.3
	535	2.9	9.5		612	3.5	11.5
	1102	3.3	10.8		1118	3	9.8
	1923	0.6	2		1404	3.1	10.2
					2214	0.4	1.3

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