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SALT SPRING ISLAND
CALENDAR



Driftwood

GULF ISLANDS

Wednesday,
Dec. 18, 2024

64th year
Issue 51
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Kids' Stories

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Driftwood holiday season writing contest winners



10 Yael Wand's 10 years with Salt Spring Arts

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 - Home Hardware
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Big Xmas Sale

Salt Spring Books

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Merry Christmas

Artwork by Gulf Islands Secondary School Grade 10 art class student Semiah Charleson.



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COMMERCE

Nonprofits welcome end of long postal strike

Annual appeal campaigns impacted by lack of service

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Salt Spring's nonprofit community is keen to advise islanders that while the return of mail service might come too late for many Christmas parcels, there is still time to get in much-needed charitable donations before year's end.

Mail carriers represented by the

Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) who went on strike Friday, Nov. 15 are poised at press time to return to deliveries this week, notably heralding the return of languishing bills and print newspapers. But for nonprofits running annual end-of-year fundraising campaigns, it's a race to reach donors who prefer traditional mailing to online transactions.

ArtSpring communications and donor engagement manager Kirsten Bolton said next to the Treasure Fair, ArtSpring's Annual Appeal is the organization's most important fundraising campaign — and by

the first week of December, donations were down 35 to 40 per cent compared to previous years. That led to a quick scramble for outreach alternatives, she added, including email lists and social media.

"Within a week, the push is seeing an influx of donations that is starting to make up the shortfall, which is encouraging," said Bolton, noting ArtSpring's final day before its holiday closure — and the last day to physically drop off a cheque — is Friday, Dec. 20, although several online avenues will remain open through the new year.

The Salt Spring Island Founda-

tion has also encouraged people to drop off cheques at their office at 158A Fulford-Ganges Rd. by Dec. 20, recognizing that not everyone is comfortable with online donation methods.

Many nonprofits on Salt Spring have become creative in getting their messages out during the strike, including several efforts to transform traditional mail campaigns into in-person requests. Bolton said while ArtSpring had focused on pointing out ways people could skip the mail and give "remotely" — including by phone, credit cards

online, through CanadaHelps or via secure e-transfer — those "ground game" campaigns were indicative of the needs island nonprofits have found unmet during the strike.

"I even had a surprise envelope from the wildlife rescue people tied to my fence today," said Bolton, "with a green ribbon saying it was 'hand-delivered.'"

A charitable donation tax credit can be claimed for donations made until Dec. 31 for the 2024 tax year, according to the Canada Revenue Agency, as can any unclaimed donations made in the last five years.

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UNTIL DECEMBER 31

Merry Christmas from all of us at The Inn!

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INN**

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Tue, December 24th - 9am to 2pm
Wed, December 25th - Closed
Thurs, December 26th - Closed
December 27-31 - Open
Wed, January 1st - 10am to 7pm

The Laundr-O-Mat

SALT SPRING ISLAND
SOAP EXCHANGE



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OF THE SEASON
AND A
WONDER-FILLED
2025!**

**TO ONE
& ALL!**
With love from,
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PEACEWORKS!

Copper Kettle Community Partnership
Wagon Wheel Housing Society
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The Laundr-O-Mat and SSI Soap Exchange

RECONCILIATION

Novel Galiano DPA takes next step

Trust bodies advance groundwater recharge permit exemption for Indigenous-owned land

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

The Islands Trust's Executive Committee (EC) is supporting one island's small — if arguably historic — steps toward reconciliation within its own regulations, unanimously approving new language for Galiano Island's Official Community Plan (OCP) that specifically addresses Indigenous-owned land.

On its face, Galiano's proposed Bylaw 283 is simply the latest amendment to the island's OCP, updating groundwater policies and objectives — including guidelines for developing land within "aquifer recharge" areas identified by the bylaw. Galiano's LTC gave first reading of the bylaw back in March, ultimately approving it in November and sending it along to EC for its consideration Monday, Dec. 9.

The bylaw carves out a number of exceptions where the requirement for a development permit within some areas may not apply, including some "grandfathering" language for existing structures and their maintenance, farm operations, some limited tree removal and invasive species control. But uniquely, it also includes a qualified exemption for "land owned by a person with federal Indigenous status living in their traditional territory with proof of Indigenous family lineage."

That last line has prompted significant comment from local islanders since it was introduced, ranging from concerns over the LTC overstepping its authority to notions of fairness and bald accusations of favouritism and self-interest. Some correspondence from residents worried a well-intentioned exception would encourage "selfish" development from individuals that might not serve Indigenous people in the collective — the long tail of the Indian Act, one wrote, "hard at work to create division and oppress Indigenous people further."

"I just want to recognize that there have been over 40 letters, every one of [which] has been against this, or suggested that the Executive Committee should not approve this bylaw," said EC vice-chair Tobi Elliott. "I would just ask everyone for patience as we all adjust to new considerations — that maybe should have been considerations 200 years ago."

Another wrinkle noted by both letter-writers and staff: an exempt person could potentially sell their property after development.

"In terms of where we are, as part of a colonial governing system, I want to remind us that this may be seen as pushing the envelope," said EC vice-chair Tim Peterson, adding that there could be some "synergy" between passing the bylaw and the Trust's recent request to the province for governance review — necessarily including aligning decision-making with the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

"Is this the best way for Galiano LTC to advance reconciliation? Maybe, maybe not," said Peterson. "But it is [a] piece of legislation that's in front of the LTC that provides an opportunity to signal the intent."

Both Galiano's LTC and the broader Islands Trust have

strong policy statements favouring reconciliation, which a legal opinion suggested might be part of a defence should a court challenge be sparked. According to the opinion requested by trustees, such action is a possibility, as granting exemptions based on the identity of a landowner might be outside the powers intended for local governments.

Noting that staff had nonetheless recommended supporting the bylaw as written, EC vice-chair David Maude said the relatively "nice, tidy and small" language might provide just the right opportunity for trustees to find their first footing for further Indigenous collaborations.

"I think that if we're going to test the waters, this is the appropriate time," said Maude, thanking staff and the LTC for the work put into developing the bylaw. "I cannot, in my mind, find a solid reason to vote against it."

In joining fellow vice-chairs in support, Elliott said she had been moved after viewing the Islands Trust's archived recording of a recent meeting where Penelakut Chief Pam Jack had addressed trustees, voicing support for the proposal.

"So thankful to technology for that," she said. "It's quite a bit different to hear the words from Penelakut Chief Pam Jack that were spoken, than it is to read — and then weigh all these different considerations."

Elliott said the word of a chief speaking on behalf of her community "carries a lot of weight," and that her own support came after significant consideration of pros and cons, including concerns over precedent and whether it would raise expectations past the abilities of — or authorities delegated to — the Islands Trust.

"It was mentioned many times that Penelakut Tribe had not been consulted in the development of bylaws before, and this is the first time that they saw themselves in a document — in an instrument that we are giving power to," said Elliott. "So is this fair? I would say maybe no. But is the system fair? I would also say it isn't."

There were some operational concerns, such as how property owners would "prove" their Indigenous family lineage. When asked for clarification, staff told EC that while there could be legal consultation involved, such proof would generally be provided by the property owner, reviewed by staff and an exemption letter issued stating the information was sufficient to satisfy the exemption. That answer made it clear, trustees agreed, that they were likely leaving such interpretations to a future body of planners — and possibly future trustees.

But, they also agreed, finding ways for Indigenous governing bodies to be in a position of inclusion in bylaws was important, if "tricky," for local government everywhere.

"Even if it's not [in] an appropriate place," said Elliott, "that recognition alone, I believe, is going to support the Islands Trust as a whole in establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples."

"To me, it's about doing the right thing," said chair Peter Luckham. "I don't want to stand in the way of that, and I am prepared to see how that unfolds."

Peterson told attendees at Galiano's LTC the following day the next step would be sending the bylaw to the province for ministry approval.

"And we'll see how that all rolls out," said Peterson.

"I think if we're going to test the waters, this is the appropriate time."

DAVID MAUDE
Mayne Island trustee and
Trust Executive Committee
vice-chair

HEALTHCARE

LTC fast-tracks Bittancourt project rezoning

Permits secured for workforce housing at former hotel

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Land use officials on Salt Spring are moving quickly to support a healthcare workforce housing project that organizers said could — with a little help — be ready for residents by fall 2025.

The island's Local Trust Committee (LTC) has asked staff to prioritize a rezoning application from the Lady Minto Hospital Foundation (LMHF) for the former motel being renovated on Bittancourt Road, slated by the foundation since its 2022 purchase to house healthcare workers on Salt Spring.

LMHF board member Julian Clark brought the foundation's proposal to the LTC's meeting Thursday, Dec. 12, telling trustees that quick action on the October application was the best way for the LTC to show its support for the project. With construction permits in place and contractor tender processes complete, Clark said, the foundation has secured favourable construction financing — conditional, he noted, on the property being rezoned from commercial to multi-family.

"And I would call it a downzon-

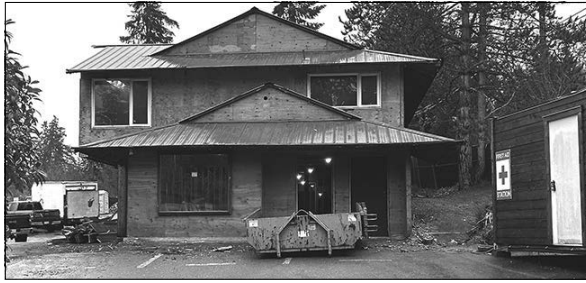


PHOTO BY GAIL SJURBERG

Former motel at corner of Bittancourt and Fulford-Ganges roads being renovated for healthcare worker housing by owner Lady Minto Hospital Foundation.

ing," said Clark, pointing to the building's previous use as a motel involving 28 water connections and significant month-to-month turnover, rather than the planned 18 dwellings — including studios and one- to three-bedroom units. "What we're trying to do is ensure that we're supporting the healthcare workers on our island."

Clark reiterated a message from Lady Minto Hospital site director Erin Price Lindstrom, who recently described "heroic" efforts by local physicians and operational leadership to maintain services, particularly at the hospital's emergency department. Price Lindstrom has said that Salt Spring's lack of housing is the biggest deterrent to potential new staff moving here.

"Too often, qualified staff will

apply, interview and be accepted," said Clark, relaying Price Lindstrom's comments, "only to go elsewhere."

A civil claim filed in July against the Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (PRHC) and BC Housing — alleging the former failed to abide by terms of its lease, and the latter "facilitated, encouraged and supported" trespassing at the site of the former Seabreeze Inn — is settled, according to Clark, after all parties went to mediation in late November. BC Housing confirmed Monday that a settlement had been reached "to the satisfaction of both parties," but that the terms were confidential.

During the Dec. 12 meeting, Salt Spring's Capital Regional District director Gary Holman called work-

force housing a critical segment of the island's housing market that's been poorly addressed — "because there's no funding, per se, for worker housing," he said. "It's all aimed at affordable housing, so there is a gap."

Clark told trustees LMHF and its general contractor believe that if the rezoning can be completed by the end of March, the project could be "up and ready for healthcare worker housing" by the fall.

"This is not necessarily intended for the doctors or the nurses, although it might be a good fit," said Clark. "But when you think about what keeps that hospital running, I ask that you think about the folks that are working in food services, the folks that are working keeping the hospital clean, and the laundry, the technicians — these are the folks who cannot afford housing on our island."

"The bottom line is somewhat talking about risk management," said local trustee Laura Patrick, noting that calculation turned on the likelihood that, once approved, LMHF might "flip" the property into condos instead of dedicated workforce housing.

"I'm pretty confident that's a very low risk," she continued. "And I think as an island that's in such need, I would say 'all systems go ahead.' We need to work to meet their needs and take a little risk."

Salt Spring's other local trustee

Jamie Harris emphatically agreed, noting he had lost his own on-island housing in recent months; indeed, with Harris still "zooming in" from off-island, fellow trustees had to begin the meeting with a resolution waiving the bylaw requiring trustees attend no more than two consecutive LTC meetings remotely.

"To get something [on Salt Spring] comparable to what I had would cost me over three times the rent I was paying," said Harris, calling the decision to support moving things forward "cut and dried."

"This has been going on for way too long," said Harris. "Let's speed it up."

The LTC asked staff to draft the relevant bylaw to rezone the property and proceed with public notification requirements, as well as prepare for a public hearing and referral to the Trust's Executive Committee early in the new year — a schedule both staff and trustees admitted was ambitious.

"I'm for giving it a good old college try," said Patrick.

After the meeting, Clark said LMHF was looking forward to the next steps and grateful for the LTC's quick action.

"LMHF is appreciative that our local Islands Trust trustees are both supportive of the foundation's affordable workforce housing project," he said, "and willing to step up to help make it happen."

HOUSING

Boarding house gets Trust nod

Lookout society to operate eight affordable units in renovated heritage home

BY ROBB MAGLEY
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

A local nonprofit can continue operating its boarding house on Dean Road, solidifying housing for residents there and possibly paving the way for the residential property to be rezoned, with a temporary use permit (TUP) granted last week.

Salt Spring Islands Trust trustee Laura Patrick said Dec. 12 that the Lookout Housing and Health Society had done considerable work upgrading the former Salt Spring Island Land Bank Society-owned property to make it better for its low-income residents. Staff noted the TUP was chiefly necessary to allow the property's "home-based business" to utilize more square footage than typical.

"I really appreciate the work that you did," said Patrick. "This is a building that was under operation for a very long time, and continues with a need. I know some of the residents."

The four people who had been living there when the building was sold remain as residents, according to Lee Fox, Lookout's regional director of operations.

Fox said the nearly 5,000-square-foot

house — first built in 1901, according to provincial records — has 11 bedrooms, eight of which will provide independent living while sharing common areas like washrooms, a kitchen and an on-site laundry. The remaining space will be utilized by a live-in caretaker.

The site is already served by the North Salt Spring Waterworks District, she added, with a connection it considered sufficient for nine residents. An existing septic system was also recently upgraded.

Salt Spring's Capital Regional District (CRD) director Gary Holman said he had made inquiries surrounding boarding house regulations under the CRD's building requirements, and inspectors had expressed no code concerns with the property given its intended use.

"Our plans for after the TUP will likely be to apply for an extension," said Fox, "then we will consider the zoning amendment."

Patrick and fellow trustee Jamie Harris agreed to extend the TUP beyond the asked-for two years to three, to give the operation more time — and to set the timing well after the next LTC term, to give any new trustees an opportunity to settle in before considering an extension or rezoning.

Lookout will not be offering staff, programming or supports at the Dean Road property, according to the nonprofit, focusing strictly on facilitating the eight affordable housing units.

"This is a building that was under operation for a very long time, and continues with a need."

Laura Patrick
Salt Spring Island trustee

Capital Regional District

CRD

Fernwood and Highland Water Service Commission

Notice of Annual General Meeting - Rescheduled

Pursuant to Bylaw No. 3911 (Fernwood and Highland Water Service Commission Bylaw No. 1, 2015), residents within the Highland and Fernwood Water Local Service Area are invited to attend a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting:

Fernwood and Highland Water Service Commission Annual General Meeting - Rescheduled

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025

Time: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Place: Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS) Boardroom
124 Rainbow Road, Salt Spring Island, V8K 2V5

The electronic MS Teams link will be provided on the first page of the agenda package posted to the CRD website: www.crd.bc.ca four days prior to the meeting.

Committee Membership Opportunity

Pursuant to Bylaw No. 3911, real property owners or residents in the Fernwood and Highland Water Service Area are invited to nominate themselves or another real property owner or resident who is prepared to represent the Local Service Area to stand on the committee for a two (2) year term commencing February 12, 2025.

Total membership on the committee is four plus the Electoral Area Director (three members resident electors; and one member may be a resident elector of the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area). **There are three positions expiring December 31, 2024.**

Nomination Instructions

When submitting your nomination, please include the committee name in the subject line, your full-name, telephone number and residential address along with the nominee's full-name, telephone number and residential address. Nominations may be submitted at the meeting for members to stand on the committee for the following term.

Bylaw No. 3911 is available for viewing on the CRD website at www.crd.bc.ca

Personal information collected is in accordance with s.26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, for the purpose of administering the Fernwood and Highland Water Service Commission nominations. Personal information submitted will be kept confidential, and used only for the purpose for which that information was collected. Any questions about this matter should be directed to MacKenzie Williamson, Committee Clerk, Salt Spring Island Administration: 250.538.4304 or email: mwilliamson@crd.bc.ca

OPINION

2023 CCNA Awards
Gold - Best Editorial Page | Gold - Best Local Cartoon (Dennis Parker)
Bronze - Best All Round | Bronze - Best Front Page

2023 BCYCN Awards
Gold - Best All Round (for circulation Category C)
Gold - Community Service Award



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Tony Richards, MANAGING DIRECTOR



Nancy Johnson
PUBLISHER

nancy.johnson@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Gail Sjuberg
MANAGING EDITOR

gail.sjuberg@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Robb Magley
REPORTER

robb.magley@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Bryan McCrae
ART DIRECTOR

driftwood@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Robert McTavish
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

robert.mctavish@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Matt Gaudette
ACCOUNT MANAGER

matt.gaudette@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Jane Gartrell
OFFICE ASSISTANT

driftwood@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

EDITORIAL

Job for experts

Driftwood staff are among those cheering a seeming end to the month-long postal strike that saw regular newspaper distribution operations disrupted.

It's not that no sympathy is due to postal workers, whose wages and working conditions have been credibly described in media reports as wanting; or to the Crown corporation, for that matter, which continues to lose money.

It's not that we didn't like seeing many of our subscribers face-to-face in the Driftwood office. That part was most enjoyable, even if it made it a bit more challenging to get our regular work done.

THE ISSUE: Postal strike

WE SAY: Glad it's over for now

But it also made us appreciate the sorting and delivery job done by our local post office workers. We've had enough of postal code juggling and gymnastics for awhile and are happy to hand the task back to the experts.

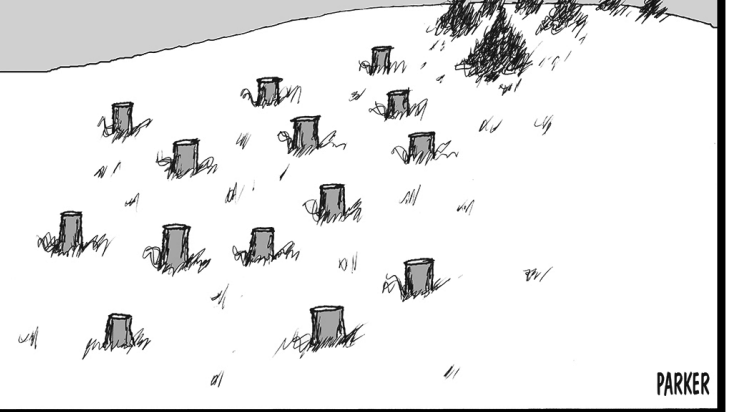
The Driftwood was just one of hundreds of local small businesses and organizations impacted by the strike at the worst-possible time of year. Many craftspeople, for example, had to seek alternate ways to ship goods to customers.

Nonprofit organizations that mount annual giving campaigns in November and December — encouraging donors to take advantage of the Dec. 31 deadline for donations to be tax receipt-eligible in the calendar year — were particularly impacted. Some members of the older generation, for whom annual donations are a natural part of civic and financial life, prefer to use cheques and the mail service to get their contributions where they need to go. They are understandably not comfortable with the various online options for giving, and short of visiting an organization's offices during opening hours in-person, which is not convenient for everyone, no other option existed.

Hopefully with the mail-in option restored, people will remember to make their donations as soon as possible, as local charitable groups rely on that annual infusion to their budgets.

One more thing for people to remember is to pay their bills, even if paper reminders didn't arrive in the mail in the past month.

ONLY SEVEN MORE CHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS



PARKER

LCC an advocate option

BY DAVID COURTNEY

There's been a lot of local consternation over BC Ferries (BCF) cancelling the ferry advisory committee (FAC) program in the 13 smaller communities across the system. While the recent news from BC Ferries management to axe and silence the FACs was not surprising, the truly disappointing part is that they didn't have a plausible program to replace it. It was a knee-jerk reaction to those FACs that have been less than civil in the engagement process.

Over the last two decades, BCF has had "terms of reference" in dealing with the FACs. Tenure of the chairs has not been observed in some cases: "Members are expected to serve a term of four years, for a maximum of two consecutive terms. NOTE: a member can serve for greater than two terms under extenuating circumstances; however, they would be expected to only serve one year into the next term." The idea was to adopt fresh ideas and approaches by electing a new chair from within every four years.

BCF felt they needed to approve members appointed to the committee. That instantly sends a red flag up the pole, when it comes to being biased. In other words, we would like to hear your constructive thoughts and opinions, but only from the people we approve of. The FAC chair and patrons on the Sunshine Coast increasingly became frustrated with BCF (they are not alone) and hostilities towards BCF unfortunately boiled over at a joint committee meeting.

Remember the outrage from patrons on Route 6 (Vesuvius Bay - Crofton) when everyone said, "Please be reasonable, don't deploy the MV Quinitsa on Route 6?" This after concerned warnings from

VIEWPOINT

regular patrons and most importantly the commercial operators who provide our essential goods and services.

What unfolded was an unmitigated disaster. BCF management refused to listen to their FAC and patrons, but more importantly the employees who were deployed on the service and live in our community.

Dec. 21, 2024 marks the third anniversary of "The Fix for Route Six" petition, 2,257 signatories strong, which is still active. It was encouraging to have the support and signatures of some FAC members over the last three years.

Where do we go from here? We feel the advocating and engagement process with BCF should come from the elected officials of the communities being served. In our case this means the Local Community Commission (LCC). If you don't like the manner in which your commissioners address the issues with BCF, you have the opportunity to express your displeasure at the polls every four years.

Here's the public request I am making on behalf of the 2,257 petitioners:

Dear chair Earl Rook, on behalf of the LCC, please consider advocating along with Mayor Rob Douglas and his North Cowichan Municipal Council in a joint communique to Premier David Eby and BCF CEO Nicolas Jimenez to restore the funding from service agreements 5 and 6 for the previous commitments to the infrastructure at Vesuvius Bay and Crofton terminals. Specifically, the 2019 approved design for Vesuvius Bay and Plan B, the preferred plan chosen by the residents of Crofton and the patrons of Route 6 for the Crofton terminal upgrade. Thank you!

Best of the season to all.

241 Fulford-Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2K7 | PH: 250-537-9933
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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Do you agree with the decision to legislate an end to the postal strike? Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:



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

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

Environmental values or economic exclusion

Thank you, Eric March, for bringing attention to Salt Spring's stark housing reality ("Time to address lack of decent working-class housing," Dec. 11 Driftwood). As someone who spent two years on the Islands Trust Housing Action Program Task Force working to legalize secondary units in suitable areas of the island, your article resonates deeply.

The irony is striking: while British Columbia has embraced accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to help solve the housing crisis, Salt Spring clings to restrictive residential zoning that permits only large-lot, single-family homes in most parts of the island. Historically, this zoning was never about environmental protection. Like similar zoning laws across North America, it was designed to exclude people by making housing expensive: requiring large lots while prohibiting all forms of modest-scale housing.

Today, these same restrictions are defended using environmental rhetoric, while actually pushing a broad spectrum of islanders — our neighbours, friends and community members — into precarious, often environmentally compromised housing situations. This has created exactly what March describes: a community with the highest wealth inequality in the province, where makeshift housing exists alongside multi-million dollar homes.

While we pride ourselves on environmental values, our zoning blocks the very housing that historically created affordable, livable communities — garden suites, basement apartments, duplexes and small-scale shared housing.

I'm grateful to see voices like March's bringing these hard truths to light. After years of pushing against these barriers, many housing advocates have grown weary. Keep speaking up. Salt Spring needs voices like yours.

KERRIE PROULX,
SALT SPRING

Work together to address barriers

This letter is for those who were confused by Eric March's guest column in last week's Driftwood, blasting unnamed persons and lamenting the great need for affordable housing on Salt Spring.

As far as I know, there is no anti-housing lobby and the author's accusations are unfounded. In fact, over the years, our elected trustees have approved every single request for increased zoning for affordable housing projects as quickly as they could. Granted, there are various views on the best approach to this problem. But the article did not provide a single solution.

What we badly need is more government funding for non-profit organizations and agencies to build verifiable permanently affordable housing for island workers. Let's work together to address

barriers like this, rather than gutting the population limit in our official community plan, that already allows up-zoning for affordable housing.

MAXINE LEICHTER,
SALT SPRING

CRD dollars provide good value

David Fullbrook's characterization of the Capital Regional District (CRD) as a galactic black hole aside ("Black hole expands under CRD" letter), I share his concern about the proposed tax increase for 2025, and voted against elements of the CRD Board and Local Community Commission (LCC) budgets.

However, as LCC chair Earl Rook and I explained recently in the Driftwood, 2025 is a particularly difficult budget year with costs that are unavoidable, required to maintain services or that created significant community benefit.

Mr. Fullbrook could provide further budget input at the LCC's Jan. 30 special meeting, but should first get his facts straight. The Portlock Park and Rainbow Road recreation site plans, while necessary to create a coordinated long-term vision for these properties, are not part of the 2025 budget, and may ultimately require voter approval.

The CRD requisition increase in 2024 was about 6.5 per cent, not nine per cent as Fullbrook states, and the average CRD increase during the seven years of my term, including 2025, is less than six per

cent annually. That is somewhat greater than inflation, but it enabled considerable community progress, despite challenges like the Covid pandemic and inflation — the same challenges Fullbrook rightfully states are faced by Salt Spring residents.

Fullbrook's diatribe also invites the old saying about knowing the cost of everything and the value of nothing. The tax increases he opposes enabled the CRD to establish a 25,000-square-foot community centre at SIMS, at a cost per "average residence" of about \$3 per month. The six-acre Phoenix School property is leased by the LCC from our community-minded school board for \$2,000 per month. The property will likely generate net revenue while providing affordable rental space for important community services, potentially even housing. The modular building at Phoenix is already rented to the Chuan Society for a warming/community centre.

The Ganges fire hall was acquired at no cost to local taxpayers as part of a collaborative arrangement with the fire district that provided \$1 million in federal gas tax funding for our new fire hall. Even if repurposing the Ganges hall is not feasible, the site itself will be an important public asset at the entrance to Ganges.

Mr. Fullbrook sees these investments as "passion projects." But most of our residents understand both their community and economic value, achieved at little cost to local taxpayers.

GARY HOLMAN,
SALT SPRING CRD DIRECTOR

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"To me, it's about doing the right thing. I don't want to stand in the way of that, and I am prepared to see how that unfolds."

PETER LUCKHAM, CHAIR, ISLANDS TRUST COUNCIL, ON GALIANO DPA EXEMPTION

Ambitious \$46.3 million water master plan needs more examination

BY DOUG WAHLSTEN

Having abandoned its moratorium on new hook-ups to its water supply system, the North Salt Spring Waterworks District (NSSWD) has announced big plans for changes to its system that could incorporate more than 1,000 new customers in the near future.

At an open house on Oct. 30, they presented a water master plan (WMP) that included estimates of what all the changes in hardware and infrastructure would cost their customers. The bills would not be paid via general tax increases because the enhancements would benefit only the customers of NSSWD, roughly half of the island population.

Enhancements and repairs are anticipated in several domains. First and foremost is the new Maxwell Lake water treatment plant plus the associated Clearwell reservoir and Shepherd Hills pumping station. The design

has not yet been finalized, but it is certain to cost in excess of \$10 million, not including land acquisition. Then there is the piping system to distribute all that water. Current pipes add up to 76.3 km, and large portions of the network are old and in need of repair or replacement. About 34 per cent of those pipes are antiquated asbestos cement.

Part of the WMP entails a flood of new connections of homes to the water system arising from 252 housing units (potentially 554 people) already promised water by NSSWD mainly on Channel Ridge, plus an anticipated potential increase in the population of Ganges by 660 units (about 1,320 people), and an unspecified growth of population beyond Ganges. Those customers would pay monthly fees for water consumed, but first there could be a need to pay for the added infrastructure to make the water flow. The WMP estimates that system capacity

INDEPTH

would need to increase by 22 per cent from the current 38.1 litres per second to 46.5 litres per second to support new connections for a population increase of 1,200 in the near future.

The original plans for the water system decades ago took no account of water that might be needed for fighting fires, assigning zero litres per second for fire flow. It is recommended that there be emergency water storage near the more heavily populated regions of the island for fighting fires equivalent to 25 per cent of the mean daily discharge for six hours and 60 litres per second for 1.4 hours for a single house (in Ganges only), which would require larger pipes in many neighbourhoods. There would also need to be a larger storage reservoir in Ganges plus pumps to boost line pres-

sure. Low pressure that currently exists in 12 places in the system, including four places in Channel Ridge (pages 6-2 and 6-3 of the WMP) would need to be remedied. More rural portions of the system would continue to exist with no fire flow provisions.

The WMP is an ambitious proposal that has not yet been presented to the people of Salt Spring for discussion and approval.

The very preliminary budget for the Maxwell plant is currently \$10.6 million. I estimate piping for 9.9 km of new water mains plus upgrading another 3.6 km would cost more than \$2,000 per metre of pipe. Add

up these improvements and additions to the system, and the total at the present time, would be about \$46.3 million, without provisions for the seemingly inevitable cost overruns. This huge bill would need to be approved by a referendum and could need to be financed by borrowing at moderately high interest rates.

The WMP is an ambitious proposal that has not yet been presented to the people of Salt Spring Island for discussion and approval. It is the first system-wide plan for the entire NSSWD water supply. It is only an interim assessment of future needs because of impending changes to the official community plan and perhaps the mandate of the Islands Trust that could radically alter prospects for population growth here. It includes no provisions for building or servicing affordable housing. Neither does it address concerns of First Nations.



DRIFTWOOD CONTEST

Holiday story contest winners announced

Ten writers' work chosen by community judges

BY GAIL SJUBERG
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

Young writers in the Gulf Islands continue to make a Driftwood tradition meaningful with plenty of submissions to the annual holiday story writing contest received this year.

Community members taking on the judging task — Victoria Olchoweki (coordinator), Joan Gage, Sheila McEachern, Fran McIninch and Donna McWhirter — determined the following winners, with stories of first- and second-place winners published in the following pages and on the Driftwood's gulfislandsdriftwood.com website.

Ages 5-7: First place, Sofia Névé Langer, *Storm and the Magic Mouse*; Second place, Henry Russell-Jones, *Sharkie's Christmas*; honourable mention, Yuawi Flores Dolotallas.

Age 8: First place, Ambrosia Chan, *Amelia's Blustery Christmas*; second place, Woodson Howard, *Journey for the Sno Scroll*; honourable mention, Emmi Johnson, *Lulu's Christmas Adventure*.

Age 9: First place, Nova Brown, *The Christmas Adventure*; second place, Willow Kilpatrick, *Santa Won't Take a Bath*; honourable mention, Fern Cardinal, *Rudolph's Origin Story*; Evanna Bantel, *A Christmas Mystery*.

Age 10: First place, Piper Proudfoot, *The Elf's Best Christmas*; second place, Nathan Silva, *Crab Catastrophe*; honourable mention, Annie Deas, *Santarella*; Zavy Van Ommen, *Santa and the Storks*.

Ages 11-12: First place, Inara Demich, *Aida's Winter Wish*; second place, Luka Skotecky, *Santa's Lost Sleigh*; honourable mention, Cyrus Butler-Cole, *The Winter's Gift*; Lizzy Phillips, *Christmas Wish for Peace*; Clara Palmer Bazdresch, *Claire's Totally Normal Night in Paris*.

Winner of the student cover art contest is Semiah Charlson. Artwork from members of Melissa Hingston's grades 4-5 class at Fernwood Elementary School is also included in the story pages and on our website.

Charleson, and first- and second-place story winners can pick up vouchers for gift certificates to Salt Spring Books at the Driftwood office at 241 Fulford-Ganges Rd. as of Thursday, Dec. 19. Vouchers must be taken to the bookstore by Jan. 31, 2025 to be exchanged for gift certificates.

Thank you to Salt Spring Books for once again participating as a much-valued contest sponsor, and to our contest judges as well.



Some of the artwork by Willow Kilpatrick, age 9, accompanying the *Santa Won't Take a Bath* story, below.

Santa Won't Take a Bath

BY WILLOW KILPATRICK
SECOND PLACE
AGE 9 CATEGORY

Santa had never had a bath, and, oh . . . he needed one **BADLY!**

The reindeer had gone on strike because of his ferocious smell and even the skunk ran from his putrid odour.

It was Christmas Eve and with the reindeer on strike the elves were in distress. How will they get millions of presents to all four corners of the globe? There was no choice. **IT WAS TIME FOR SANTA TO TAKE A BATH.**

How to get Santa in a bath was a different story altogether. After a lot of brainstorming, this is what the elves came up with:

1. Persuasion
2. Bribing
3. Trickery
4. Head-butting (by the reindeer)

Persuasion

"Oh, Santa, you are so dirty," said Gordon the Decorator Elf as Santa walked through the front door. "Why not take a warm cozy bath tonight before you leave to go to the four corners of the globe? Wouldn't that be nice and relaxin'?"

To that, Santa just put on more layers of clothes, just like every year ever since he was two years old!

Bribing

"Dear Santa, if you go into the tub I'll give you 300 Christmas cookies and 20 glasses of milk," said Mrs. Claus.

"300 chocolate chip sugar cookies and 20 glasses of cold milk. Yum!" thought Santa.

It was his favourite! But he was no galoot. He knew this was bribery.

Plus, Santa was scare of water and things in it.

Trickery

The elves were getting desperate. They decided it was time for the trap.

As Santa walked through the toy factory's big doors, he slipped on a banana peel, triggering an alarm.

"Huh, that's odd," he thought, as he was getting up. He walked over to turn off the alarm and set of a trip wire that made a net fall, wrap him up and roll him across the floor where he hit a bottle of peppermint tea that flew through the air and hit the lever of a toy grabber, making it grab Santa and swinging him over to the tub. If Santa hadn't grabbed the coat rack in time it would be Santa's bath time! But it wasn't.

Head Butts (By the Reindeer)

The elves by now were so frantic they were ripping out their hair. They knew it was time for the reindeer . . .

Now the reindeer, as everyone knows, are a clumsy lot, and as they inspected the bathroom for good head-butting areas, Prancer dropped his candy cane in the tub. They all watched as it sizzled away like a bath bomb and it left behind a wonderful smell of candy cane.

Once all the reindeer were hidden, the elves left to get Santa so the reindeer could head-butt him in. Except, when they opened the door and Santa smelled the candy cane in the bath he jumped in before the reindeer could even have time to think about head-butting him. Finally, after hours, Santa declared he was never getting out!

P.S. They never did get him out of the tub. So if you see a bath tub instead of a sleigh in the sky, you know it was that Christmas! There were cinnamon buns and presents. It had worked! It was the **BEST CHRISTMAS EVER.**

The Elf's Best Christmas

BY PIPER PROUDFOOT
FIRST PLACE
AGE 10 CATEGORY

In a tree in the woods there lived an elf named Wilber. Wilber loved Christmas, but he always thought it was too cold. This year Wilber was prepared. He had been knitting a snow suit all year. He also had lots of hot cocoa, hot apple cider, and lots of firewood.

"Yawn," said Wilber as he woke up and walked down the stairs to start making breakfast. He looked out the window and it was snowing.

"Yay!" said Wilber, and he ran to put on his snowsuit before racing out the door.

That day, he built a snowman and an igloo. He even made caramel snow to eat! By the end of the day, he was so tired he went straight to bed without even eating any cookies.

The next morning, Wilber woke up feeling unusually cold.

It was not like yesterday; it was much colder.

He gasped! "The Snow Witch was back."

In a flash he had all the elves gathered in the great oak tree.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Bartholamew the Third.

"The Snow Witch is back!" someone in the crowd cried.

"What?" yelled Bartholamew. "We must flee the forest immediately. Everyone pack your bags! We're going to the North Pole to get Santa."

The journey to the North Pole was long and cold. By the time they arrived, all the elves were freezing and some even suffering from frostbite. Luckily, Ms. Claus greeted them with hot chocolate. Once they were all warmed up, they walked down the hall to Santa's room.

"Hello," Wilber called. "Is anyone there?"

"Hoho little elf!" a voice boomed. Wilber turned, and standing right in front of him was Santa Claus.

"Santa, I need your help!" Wilber exclaimed. "The Snow Witch is taking over the woods!"

"Ho no," said Santa, "We must act quickly before it's too late!"

They all hopped into Santa's sleigh and flew to the oak forest. Once they arrived, standing there was the Snow Witch. Santa hopped out of the sleigh and marched right up to the Snow Witch, who said, "What is the meaning of this? I want to cancel Christmas for everyone in the world, starting with this forest!"

"No," yelled Santa, "you cannot do that. I won't let you! I will banish you to the land of the evil." And with a wave of his hat the Snow Witch disappeared into thin air.

"Well, now I must be off, but before I go, I have a present for you." He dropped a little box into Wilber's hand and then he disappeared into the night. When Wilber opened the box, he found something truly magical — a Christmas miracle. An iPhone 17!



Storm and the Magic Mouse

BY SOFIA NÉVÉ LANGER
FIRST PLACE
AGE 5 TO 7 CATEGORY

Once there was a kitten named Storm. He lived with his uncle Sam, who was big and cuddly. He also lived with his mother Suki, who was a bit skittish and a good hunter.

Storm was also skittish and he had a silky gray coat. Storm was looking forward to Christmas because he really wanted cuddles with his owner Sofia, who seemed to always be at school.

One day, Storm saw Suki chasing a mouse and then he noticed that something was peculiar about it. It was different. This mouse was a special mouse called the Christmas mouse. It helped the elves to make all the presents and to wrap them. Also, the mouse helped the reindeer to fly just with a touch of magic.

Finally Suki caught the Christmas mouse. She was so proud of herself that she showed it to Storm and Sam and tried to show it to her owners Sofia and Sonia, who were nowhere to be found. Suki guessed that they were at school and at work, but she was wrong! They were actually on a hike.

Suki was about to kill the mouse, when Storm meowed, "Wait!"

Suki pawed. (A little kitty joke!) Storm realized that this was the MAGIC MOUSE! If Suki killed the mouse, Christmas would never come. Luckily, Suki realized that this was a girl mouse.

Dear reader, I know you may not understand, but in this story, cats don't like the taste of girl mice.

Then Suki let go of the mouse! Quickly the mouse scurried away from Suki and Storm.

Unfortunately, Suki did not let go of the mouse in time. The mouse scurried as fast as its little chubby legs could carry it. Unfortunately, the mouse would not make it on time. The elves, Santa and the reindeer were worried about her! The Christmas mouse was stuck on Salt Spring Island! Christmas would be delayed!

Then Storm had an idea, but there was one problem. Storm didn't know how to get to the ferry. Storm asked his mom and uncle how to get to the ferry, so they told him.

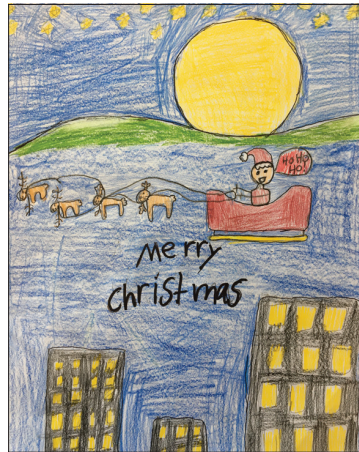
The mouse would take over on the journey to the North Pole. With the mouse on his back to guide him Storm could get there in time! Storm luckily had brought a piece of paper and a pencil and a bottle so he wrote a note to Santa, saying, "Don't worry Santa, I've got your mouse. I'll bring her to the North Pole." Storm rolled it up and put it in the bottle and corked the bottle. And he threw it in the ocean.

With the same magic as he did to the reindeer, the mouse tapped Storm on the tips of his ears so her could fly.

Storm said, "What was that for?"

The Christmas mouse said, "So you could fly!"

So Storm flew wobbly at first but then he got better and better. Before they knew it, they were at the North Pole! Storm saved CHRISTMAS!



Christmas cover artwork submitted by, from left, Grade 4-5 students Peyton Byron and Vika in Melissa Hingston's class at Fernwood Elementary School.

Journey for the Sno Scroll

BY WOODSON HOWARD
SECOND PLACE
AGE 8 CATEGORY

Once upon a time, snowflakes were falling in the town of Ganges. Everything was peaceful until . . . Will was driving home when he heard his dad say, "Something important."

"What, Dad?" Will asked.
"Um, just something about work, Will," his Dad answered. Then Will heard his dad say, "Sno Scroll." Will did a search on the internet and found out . . .

1. The Sno Scroll was a famous artifact.
2. Will had spelled it wrong – Snow should be Sno!

So the next day, Will got to work. He snatched his dad's toolbox and hid it in his backpack. Then, he hid up by the old broken fence. He grabbed some wood and started sawing, nailing and putting on some old wheels he'd found by the fence. Soon, he had made an invention. It was a sleigh that he called the "Board Bus." He

wasn't exactly sure where the Sno Scroll was, but he was still determined to find it.

Will ZOOMED down the road, crossed straight over Lower Ganges, raced over a cliff and then landed on the salty ice. On his way, he came across a snowmobile wreck. Then he met his friend Charlotte from 5th grade. She was looking for the Sno Scroll too, so they joined forces together.

Will and Charlotte continued together on their journey. Little did they know that right behind them was . . . a gigantic black bear! And he was MAD!

They zoomed away, but hit a bump that sent Charlotte flying off the back of the sled. She landed in a snowbank. Luckily she was okay! Then she got up and ran back to the sled and noticed a small jagged hole in the boards of the sleigh. Suddenly, the hole opened up to reveal a piece of snow-white paper. It suddenly occurred to them that it was THE SNO SCROLL! Will jumped up and down. Charlotte just stood there with her mouth gaping open like a goldfish.

They raced excitedly to Will's house. Then Will knocked on the door and when his mom opened it, she shouted, "Frank! Will's come home!"

But Will was not ready for the hugs . . . yet. First, he wanted to know why his parents were talking about the Sno Scroll. Second, he wanted to know who his parents really were. They exchanged nervous looks.

Then Will's mom answered, "Will, your dad is a famous archeologist, and I am an undercover police agent. Your dad has been trying to find something called the Sno Scroll, and when he finds it, I will protect it."

Then Will showed his parents the Sno Scroll and said, "I think you've been looking for this."

The next day, Will and Charlotte's faces were on the front page of the Driftwood. They got the reward for finding the missing artifact. Plus, Will got lots of new toys to play with on Christmas morning.

ASK THE EXPERT

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Kids' Stories

Aida's Winter Wish

BY INARA DEMICH
FIRST PLACE
AGE 11-12 CATEGORY

Kelemi, his little sister Abeba and their grandma Aida had just arrived in Paris where the twinkling of Christmas lights welcomed them into the festively decorated city.

They had flown there from their home town in Ethiopia, a place where no one except them celebrated Christmas, a holiday their family would spend travelling to different countries and learning about how they celebrated Christmas there.

Christmas had always been their favourite time of year, until Kelemi and Abeba's parents died one year ago. This loss brought the deepest grief Kelemi and Abeba had ever felt. How would they ever love Christmas again if they wouldn't have their parents to share it with?

But Aida had hope that this trip to Paris would heal an emptiness that had grown in all their hearts, or at least help to fill it. Paris was bustling and all the taxi cabs were full.

"Well, our first stop is only three blocks away, why don't we just walk?"

said Aida. "Fine," said the siblings.

Warmth grew in Kelemi's heart as he took in the festive excitement surrounding him in the glittering streets of Paris.

"Look, it's Le Musee d'Orsay!" Kelemi said excitedly. He loved art and had always dreamed of seeing this museum.

"Let's go inside, Grandma!" Kelemi said.

"Tickets first, Kelemi!" Aida reminded him.

"Yeah, chill Kelemi, it's just a boring museum," said Abeba unenthused.

"Maybe to you!" said Kelemi, annoyed.

When they arrived at the museum they looked in awe at the impressionistic art displayed everywhere. Even Abeba was astounded. Kelemi stopped to look at a huge statue of four women of different ethnicities holding up the world. As Kelemi gazed up at the statue he thought of how much his mum would have loved to see it. He sighed and wiped the streaming tears off his cheek.

"It's amazing, isn't it?" said a girl standing next to him.

"Yes it is. What's your name," asked Kelemi.

"Je m'appelle Ember, what's your's?" "Kelemi," he said, wondering if this girl and him would become friends.

"Where are you from?" asked Ember.

"Me, my sister and my grandma are from Ethiopia," Kelemi replied.

"What are you doing for Christmas," asked Ember.

"Not much," said Kelemi.

"You could come to my house for Christmas dinner, my mum's a great cook!" said Ember excitedly.

"That sounds wonderful! My grandma loves cooking!" Kelemi said.

So Kelemi, Aida and Abeba stayed with Ember, her mom and sister, and shared delicious food and laughter around the fire.

After the wonderful meal they all stepped out into the moonlit garden to look at the night sky. The stars were like jewels embroidered on a black silk.

"I wish Mum and Dad were here to see this," said Kelemi and as he spoke a star shot across the midnight sky, just for him at that moment.

Aida knew that her Christmas wish had been granted, and like that great statue the two families held each other up.

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Santa's Lost Sleigh

BY LUKA SKOTECKY
SECOND PLACE
AGE 11-12 CATEGORY

It was a snowy Christmas Eve. Santa was delivering presents to the last neighbourhood.

He was getting tired and a little forgetful. He parked his sleigh on one roof then unhitched one reindeer and rode it to the other houses roofs and delivered the presents that way. Then he flew to the North pole on Comet the reindeer's back.

The next day he realized he forgot his sleigh on that rooftop with his other reindeer. Meanwhile people found it and pulled it down and put it in the history museum.

Santa went to get Comet to ride to the sleigh, but Comet was too tired from last night's trip. Instead, he takes his old truck and drives to Inuvik where he takes a plane to Victoria. Then he drove to Vancouver and he found his sleigh in the history museum.

He dresses up as an old man. He gets a cane and walks into the history museum. There are two security guards but

he doesn't have a museum pass, so the security guards say, "No, you're not allowed in."

Then he climbs up the side of the museum and he goes to the roof. He opens the attic door and he climbs through the attic and down the stairs past the Employees Only sign and he finds the sleigh but no reindeer. He realizes they went to animal control.

So, then he puts his sleigh into his truck and drives to the animal control centre. He sees Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph.

He talks to the guy and says, "Those are my reindeer. They really like sleighs, so that's why they were on the roof."

The animal control officer said he was not allowed to have them.

At night, Santa sneaks them out and connects them to the sleigh. He flies back to the North Pole. When he comes back, the reindeer are so excited to be home.

He disconnects them and puts them in their stables. He gets the elves to shine his sleigh, and he sits back in front of his fire and eats cookies and milk.

"What a relief!" he says.

Sharkie's Christmas

BY HENRY RUSSELL-JONES
SECOND PLACE
AGE 5 TO 7 CATEGORY

Once upon a time, Sharkie went outside and he played in the snow.

Then he went deep deep into the forest where his mother forbade him to go. There he met wolves! And he ran away, but then the wolves caught up and he was feeling brave.

And then he used sharky cybertronic and summoned a magical butterfly that told him what to use (like superpowers) and then the magic butterfly summoned a snake. And the snake

summoned a parrot and the parrot used bright beak, which scared the wolves away.

And then the snake, the parrot and the butterfly went home with Sharkie. And they all played outside and had a Merry Christmas with Sharkie's mother, but they didn't go too far because they didn't want to encounter the wolves again.

And then they opened all their presents and drank hot cocoa.

They were happy Santa Claus came and gave them lots of advent treats and gifts. All the presents were cute, cool and pretty.

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SUNDAY Closed DEC. 29	MONDAY Open DEC. 30	TUESDAY Open DEC. 31	WEDNESDAY Closed JAN. 1	THURSDAY Open JAN. 2	FRIDAY Open JAN. 3	SATURDAY Closed JAN. 4

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Kids' Stories

Crab Catastrophe

BY NATHAN SILVA
SECOND PLACE
AGE 10 CATEGORY

Whoosh — the wind blew while Santa flew through the air, up in the clear midnight blue sky.

Suddenly the engine stopped, the sleigh plummeting in a nosedive into the snow with a poof. Everything went black.

The next thing Santa knew, he was underground, in a jail. He heard a familiar voice and then he saw it: the red shell of a crab.

"Jerald, what are you doing?" Santa asked.

"Trapping you in jail so I can steal your sleigh to get back to the Hawaiian ocean," said Jerald the crab.

"You were once my loyal apprentice," said Santa with a sigh. "Besides, my reindeer will never cooperate with you."

"Well, I bribed them with shortbread carrot cake. And Christmas will never happen, hahaha!" cackled Jerald. "Crabs, prepare the sleigh! We will be leaving shortly."

The forty red-shells skittered to the sleigh, packing it with food. Then without a sound, a penguin appeared in the shadows.

"Pssst, Santa, I heard your apprentice's plan, so I snuck away on your sleigh last minute,"

said Penguin. "I came here to save you."

He opened the jail door. Santa and Penguin crept along the cave wall. The crabs didn't see them because they were too busy packing the sleigh. Then without a sound, Santa used his magic to lift the crabs out of the sleigh and hopped in with Penguin and took off through the small gap in the underground ceiling, into the midnight sky.

Penguin was delighted because he had never flown before. The stars twinkled as they flew through the sky to deliver presents to the houses. The only light was from the full moon.

As if no time had gone by at all, the sleigh

was empty of presents. They had all been delivered.

Just as they were turning west towards Hawaii for their after-Christmas beach day, Santa turned back toward the crabs.

As they arrived at the cave, the crabs were surprised to see the sleigh.

Santa stood up. "We're on our way to Hawaii, why don't you come with us?" said Santa.

Within minutes, Santa and Penguin were lounging in hammocks, drinking from fresh coconuts under the palm trees, while the crabs were making sandcastles in the morning sun.

The Christmas Adventure

BY NOVA BROWN
FIRST PLACE
AGE 9 CATEGORY

Christmas was Kevin's favourite day of the year. Every Christmas morning he would run downstairs at 5:01 so that he would get the first cinnamon bun before his brothers and sisters woke up.

But this Christmas was different. Kevin woke up at nine! He never woke up that late on Christmas.

When he got downstairs there were no cinnamon buns and no presents. This was not possible, he thought, maybe it was Christmas Eve. But no, it was Christmas.

Just then, his brothers Samuel and Dustin and his sisters Cyndi and Eve came downstairs. They had the exact same reaction as Kevin.

"Is Christmas cancelled?" asked Cyndi.

Mom and Dad came down, and they didn't act like anything was wrong. It was silent until Cyndi interrupted, "Is Christmas ruined?"

"No," said Mom. She took a deep breath and said, "I'm sorry, kids, but this Christmas is just not for us."

She looked very sad and said, "I don't know what happened. I kept trying to make the cinnamon buns but they weren't working."

Then Dad said, "I know this Christmas was not how you hoped, but we can always try to make it better, right?"

Kevin got an idea and he shouted, "LET'S BAKE CINNAMON BUNS TOGETHER!" The whole family ran into the kitchen screaming, "HOORAY!"

After they put the buns in the oven, Kevin told his siblings to come to his room for a meeting. They had to figure out how to save Christmas! They hurried to get their boots and jackets on and ran out the door, even though they did not know where they were going. As they were walking, Eve found a map named "How to Bring Christmas Back." She had found what they needed, a way to save Christmas!

They didn't have much time before the day was over so they quickly followed the map, over hills, through six-foot-deep snow, and then Cyndi shouted, "Look at that house!"

She pointed at the little cabin up on the hill and they all sprinted for the cabin. They knocked, and a fat old man with a white beard and a little elf at his side opened the door.

Cyndi exclaimed, "SANTA!"

The old man said, "How did you find me?"

"There was a map in our back yard and we followed it," said Eve.

"Ho ho ho, you found the right man. Let's not waste a second, it's almost dawn," said Santa.

Quickly, they all got to work making toys and thingamabobs. When they were done, Santa said, "Now I need to deliver the presents."

Cyndi said, "But yesterday was Christmas."

Santa said, "Oh, I almost forgot, we need to go back in time. No problem, I have a solution." He had a potion that would reset the clock to Christmas morning!

As soon as he drank the potion, Kevin woke up in his bed. His clock said 5:01. He ran downstairs and to his surprise there were cinnamon buns and presents. It had worked! It was the BEST CHRISTMAS EVER.

Amelia's Blustery Christmas

BY AMBROSIA CHAN
FIRST PLACE
AGE 8 CATEGORY

Once upon a time there was a fox named Amelia (that's me), who lived with her family in a forest beside New York City. They were very poor and knew that there would not be anything under the tree this year.

I stepped out of our den and saw that it was a very blustery day. The wind was blowing snow everywhere! I saw a white coat of snow on the ground. I looked to the side and saw the twinkling lights of New York City. I went back into our den. I woke up our mom and sisters Ellie, Ava and Cecelia (but we call her Cece).

I asked mom if we could all go down to the river. She said yes. When we got to the river, I noticed that Ellie was missing! I watched my sisters playing on the ice. I told my sisters that it was time to go.

When we got home, I told our mom that Ellie was missing. Mom went out to look and came home two hours later . . . without Ellie. She said that we could not leave the house because she didn't want us to go missing too.

That night, I woke up and really missed my sister, so I went out to look for her (even though my mom told me not to). It was very dark. I was very worried because it was also very cold. I had to get home before mom could find out I was missing.

The next day mom went out again to look for Ellie. She told us to stay (she didn't know I snuck out the night before).

While I waited, I saw a little mouse. It looked as

cold as an ice cube! I asked if it wanted to come in and warm up in our den. It came in and sat by the crackling fire with me. It asked where my mom was, and I said she was out looking for my sister.

Then the mouse said, "Oh, I saw her in the forest behind a tree!"

I asked if the mouse could take me to my sister. The mouse said yes and showed me the way.

I was so happy when I saw Ellie that I gave her a big hug. When we got home, we sat by the cozy fire. We were all so happy to be back together!

We noticed that, in the end, all we needed was a family — not toys or gifts! When mom found out that I snuck away to look for Ellie, she wasn't mad at all — she was relieved.

To celebrate, mom offered us all hot chocolate — even the mouse. We had our best Christmas ever!



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ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Salt Spring Arts salutes departing Yael Wand

Jennifer Van de Pol joins team as new ED

SUBMITTED BY SALT SPRING ARTS

As Salt Spring Arts (SSA) bids farewell to its executive director Yael Wand in 2025, her profound contributions to the organization and local arts community are celebrated.

In 2014, Wand joined the team with two decades of experience working as an artist and cultural coordinator, accepting the position as SSA's first executive director (ED) in 2019. Her passion and dedication have left an indelible mark, building on the organization's extensive history fostering creativity and supporting artists on Salt Spring Island. SSA flourished under Wand's leadership, sustaining and creating accessible arts programs – many of which are free to the public – that continue to enrich the cultural fabric of our island.

"Yael came through the doors of Mahon Hall with incredible determination and has kept up that pace for 10 years," said former Artcraft manager Richard Steel. "Her energy and expertise has seen Salt Spring Arts expand its programs, stature and professionalism in difficult circumstances and with limited budget and staffing. She has done great things for the arts council, and for Salt Spring."



PHOTO COURTESY SS ARTS
Salt Spring Arts ED Yael Wand at a past Summer Outdoor Concert Series event.

Wand's tenure saw the launch of new initiatives such as the Summer Outdoor Concert Series, which has since grown into a beloved tradition for many, bringing community members and visitors together in a weekly celebration of live music. She also spearheaded the annual BC Family Day event, a free celebration for kids, families and caregivers to enjoy an afternoon of art-making, face painting and a dynamic performance.

"As our first ever ED, Yael has virtually invented her job as she went along," said SSA board chair Julie Kemble. "Her numerous contributions to the growth and development of Salt Spring Arts can be seen everywhere. Her considerable skills extend far beyond her talent as an accomplished musician. In my role as board chair it's been a delight to work with, and learn

from her."

Wand's leadership has extended far beyond thoughtful programming, to developing and fostering meaningful partnerships in the community with local artists, professionals and businesses.

"It has been a distinct pleasure working with Yael for the last three years," said Robert Steinbach, community relations manager at Country Grocer. "Her sense of purpose has always been palpable and her clarity of communication exemplary. We have explored so many options and consequently forged a strong and joyful working relationship which has been very rewarding for us over an extended period of time. We will miss her smile, humour and her dedication to the arts!"

Wand's vision and commitment were also instrumental in shaping Salt Spring Arts' first strategic plan, announced in 2023, which will continue to guide the organization for years to come.

As Wand embarks on her next chapter, her legacy of fostering artistic excellence and community engagement will continue to inspire Salt Spring Arts.

"Yael leaves big shoes to fill and she will be dearly missed," said Julie Kemble. "However, we are happy to welcome our new ED, Jennifer Van de Pol, to the Salt Spring Arts team. Jennifer — an artist herself — brings excellent knowledge of the provincial arts scene. She also brings

leadership and arts education experience from her time spent at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the Nanaimo Art Gallery. Salt Spring Arts looks forward to introducing her to our community."

Capital Regional District CRD

Arts & Culture

Project Grant Deadline

Project, Series, and Extended Programming Grants support non-profit arts organizations.

Funding can be used to produce and present arts initiatives such as:

- ▶ One-time projects
- ▶ A short series of events
- ▶ Extended programming within a year

Apply by Jan 16, 2025 at 4:30 pm.

Online info session: Jan 6, 2025, 12:30-1:30 pm.

Learn more and register for info session at www.crd.bc.ca/arts

CRD Arts & Culture Support Service
Ph: 250.360.3215
E: artsdevelopment@crd.bc.ca

what's on this week

Wed. Dec. 18

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Carols for Christmastide. Carol sing and food bank fundraiser. All Saints. 2 p.m.

Christmas With Scrooge. Newman Family Productions musical. Fulford Hall. 7 p.m.

GISS Music: Motown Mayhem. End-of-term concert at ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Festival of Trees. Bring donations for the food bank and put under your favourite decorated tree. Harbour House Hotel. Daily through Jan. 1.

Thur. Dec. 19

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday Night Live. Curated local musicians. Moby's. 5 p.m.

Christmas With Scrooge. See Wed. listing.

GISS Music: Motown Mayhem. See Wed. listing.

Open Mic. With Rough & Tumble at the Legion. 7:30 p.m.

Small Town Artillery Collective. Mateada. Doors at 7 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Thursday Lunch. Seniors Centre. Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Reserve seats at 250-537-4604.

Fri. Dec. 20

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Two Pants Jazz Band play for Ugly Sweater Day. Moby's Pub. 5 p.m.

Christmas With Scrooge. See Wed. listing.

Karaoke. At the Legion. 7 p.m.

Celebrate the Solstice with Ananda: A Night of Sacred Music. Salt Spring Centre of Yoga. 7 p.m.

Viva Chorale! Food Bank Fundraiser. Christmas songs plus Anne of Green Gables storytelling. ArtSpring. 7:30 p.m. Bring food bank donation.

Sat. Dec. 21

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

SOLD OUT: Christmas With Scrooge matinee show.

Rising Tide. Legion. 8 p.m.

Woodland Band. Moby's Pub. 9 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

Christmas Market in Centennial Park. 10 a.m to 3 p.m.

Christmas Tea. Second annual event at the Harbour House Hotel. Copper Kettle and food bank fundraiser. 1 p.m.

Sun. Dec. 22

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Carolling With Salt Spring Singers. Meet with choir members at the gazebo in Centennial Park at 1:30 p.m. Join singers as they move throughout Ganges for two hours.

Jazz Jam. Legion. 3 to 6 p.m.

ACTIVITIES

The Root Mini Winter Market. 189 Beddis Rd. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mon. Dec. 23

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Merry Monday. Carol singing with Valdy at the Salt Spring Mercantile parking lot. 6:15 to 7 p.m.

Tues. Dec. 24

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Country and Folk Singers and Songwriters Night. With Sherry Leigh Williams. Legion. 7 to 10 p.m.

Wed. Dec. 25

ACTIVITIES

Christmas Day Free-be-do. All welcome for family-friendly Christmas celebration at Fulford Hall. Gifts for kids, food, live music and fellowship. From 10 a.m. on.

EXHIBITIONS

- **16th Annual Christmas Exhibition of Small Works,** featuring all Gallery 8 artists, runs daily through Dec. 31.
- **Salt Spring Gallery** presents Small Works by gallery members until Dec. 21.
- **Different Perspectives: Photographs by John de Bruyn and Stephen Morris** is the library program room exhibit until Dec. 29.
- **Artcraft Winter** — the Salt Spring Arts show and sale of work by Gulf Islands artisans — runs at Mahon Hall daily through Dec. 24.
- **Salt Spring Groove – A Photographic Collection of Salt Spring Musicians** by Andy Doyle-Linden is the ArtSpring lobby exhibit until Dec. 20.
- **Michael Wall** has a new set — the eighth — in his continuing series of Italian Photographs on display at Pasta Fresca.
- **Laurel Lemchuk-Favel** is showing her paintings at the Country Grocer Cafe for the month of December.

Viva Chorale!
Food Bank Fundraiser
ArtSpring
Fri., Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m.

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Obituaries

Obituaries

Obituaries

Obituaries

Coming Events

HOROSCOPE



Major Patricia Ann Lavender nee Traynor
April 20th 1936 – December 3, 2024

Major Patricia Ann Lavender nee Traynor (Pat) passed away peacefully at Veterans Memorial Lodge in Victoria BC on December 3, 2024 at the age of 88.
Born April 20th 1936 to Bert and Ella Traynor in Kingsville Ontario. Graduated from Grace Hospital School of Nursing in Windsor 1957. Encouraged by her parents to "See the world" Pat joined the R.C.A.F in 1962 and was posted to Churchill Manitoba. Not the "World" she was expecting. Other postings included Marville France, NDMC Ottawa, CFB Gander Newfoundland, CFB Petawawa, Regional Headquarters Winnipeg where she was Matron in Chief for Western Canada and finally CFB Esquimalt in BC.

A highlight of her Military career was in 1970 being appointed the Canadian Nurse to accompany Queen Elizabeth, Prince Philip, Prince Charles and Princess Anne on their tour from Manitoba to the Northwest Territories.

In 1971 Pat married Major Keith D. Lavender the love of her life and became a Stepmother to four teenagers!

Pat took early retirement in 1985 so she and Keith could move to Salt Spring Island BC. Retirement included cruises to Antarctica and Alaska, year-round golfing between Salt Spring and trips to Arizona. With the occasional trip to a casino where Pat managed to stick to her twenty-dollar limit!

Patricia is survived by her sister Cathy (Pat) nieces Heather and Erin, great nieces Ella and Bryn. Step Sons Terry (Sharon) Lavender and David (Myra) Lavender and Grandsons Michael and Daniel, Brothers in Law Dennis (Helen) and Lyle Lavender. Predeceased by stepson Dennis Lavender, stepdaughter JoAnne Lavender and her loving husband Keith.

Fred Victor Gent long time resident of Salt Spring Island passed away peacefully on September 29th.

Survived by Granddaughter Nicole Gent, Daughter in law Deanna Jenkins, and close friends Leslie Steer and Susan Taylor.

Predeceased by daughter Yvette Gent, son Victor (Derek) Gent, wife Phyllis Gent and sister Vivienne Gent.

Thank-You to Dr. David Woodley for his wonderful care over the many years, and the Lady Minto team for Fred's final hours.

A big Thank-You to Leslie, Susan, Adiel and Paula for all your care and allowing Fred to remain at home.

Finally reunited with his family.



Fred Victor Gent
July 12, 1927 - Sept. 29, 2024



In Memoriam

In Memoriam

Salt Spring Island NATURAL CEMETERY
2100 Fulford-Ganges Road
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 1Z7
250-653-9884
saltspringcemetery.ca

Coming Events

Coming Events

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wagon Wheel Housing Society

Saturday, December 21, 2 pm at the Laundr-O-Mat
162 Fulford-Ganges Rd Salt Spring Island

Celebrating the Ancient Pagan Rite of Saturnalia
from Dec. 17 to Dec. 24, highlighted by the Winter Solstice, 1:20 am Dec. 21.

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

Andy & Caroline Hickman

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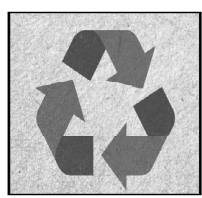
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Coming Events

Coming Events

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE

Islands Trust offices will be closed for the holidays from 25 December 2024 to 1 January 2025, inclusive. We will re-open for business on January 2nd. We apologize for any inconvenience and look forward to serving you in the New Year.

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TIDE TABLES at Fulford Harbour

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

DAY	TIME	FEET	METRES	DAY	TIME	FEET	METRES
18	0:11	0.2	0.06	22	3:00	4.5	1.37
	8:41	11.8	3.61		10:57	11	3.35
	14:20	9.6	2.87		18:13	6.5	1.98
	16:15	9.7	2.96		22:23	7.2	2.2
19	0:54	1	0.31	23	3:41	5.8	1.77
	9:21	11.6	3.54		11:20	10.7	3.27
	15:33	9	2.74		18:49	5.6	1.71
	17:05	9	2.74		1:04	7.5	2.29
20	1:37	2	0.61	24	4:27	7.2	2.2
	9:57	11.5	3.51		11:38	10.4	3.14
	16:40	8.3	2.53		19:21	4.6	1.4
	18:11	8.3	2.53		3:27	8.4	2.56
21	2:19	3.2	0.98	25	5:37	8.3	2.53
	10:30	11.3	3.44		11:50	10.2	3.05
	17:32	7.5	2.29		19:52	3.7	1.13
	20:00	7.6	2.32				

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WEEK OF DECEMBER 15 TO 21, 2024

THE LUCKIEST SIGNS THIS WEEK: VIRGO, LIBRA AND SCORPIO

ARIES
Your family may be counting on you to handle all the holiday preparations. Consider delegating some tasks to distribute responsibilities more evenly this year.

TAURUS
You'll have plenty to talk about this week! You'll start wrapping your Christmas presents, adding your personal touch to impress your loved ones and delight the kids, even if it takes some time.

GEMINI
You'll find yourself in the spotlight as you work on a special project. You may bring the family together for an impromptu trip or a special holiday activity.

CANCER
You'll receive many invitations, which you may initially want to decline. However, you may change your mind at the last minute, especially when it comes to participating in the festivities.

LEO
You may find sticking to your budget to be a bit of a struggle, as you might be inclined to choose more expensive gifts than planned. You may also give certain loved ones preferential treatment.

VIRGO
Your credit card will get a workout this season! You'll have to choose whether to buy Christmas presents, participate in social activities or go on a family trip. You must dig deep as you consider your options over the next few days.

LIBRA
Your home will be bustling with activity even before the festivities begin. Your children will turn your abode into a base camp with their friends before the holidays officially start, adding to your responsibilities.

SCORPIO
You'll be carried away by the magic of Christmas, even if you thought you could escape it this year. You'll dedicate time to charitable causes, bringing joy to the people who need it most.

SAGITTARIUS
You'll embrace the excitement of Christmas this year, feeling cheerful and excited to participate in the celebrations. You'll eagerly visit bustling shopping malls to enjoy yourself and join in on the fun.

CAPRICORN
The thought of taking a trip or going on a getaway may cross your mind, a sign of your desire for adventure and new experiences. You might consider working abroad for a change of scenery.

AQUARIUS
Depending on your situation, going back to school could considerably improve your life. A great opportunity may arise, bringing significant material gain and providing relief from your financial stress.

PISCES
It may be time to re-evaluate your personal and social media connections. You don't need toxic influences in your life sowing discord and harming your relationships.

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ISLAND LIFE



PHOTOS BY GAIL SJUBERG
WINNING WINDOWS: Scenes from decorated Ganges businesses chosen among the best by a Christmas on Salt Spring online vote are, from left, Ganges Dental Hygiene (first place in Best All Round, Best Use of Lights and Most Creative); Choices and Love My Kitchen (second place tie for Best All Round). Salt Spring Info Centre also earned second place for Most Creative and Best Use of Lights. Winning businesses earn advertising credits from the Driftwood, which sponsors the annual decorating contest.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW



PHOTOS BY SIMON WHEELER

More than 130 years after its doors first opened, the St. Mary's Church at Fulford, far left, is "pleasantly warm now," thanks to a modern heat pump, near left, installed by Salt Spring's Whirlwind Heating and Refrigeration, according to churchwarden Simon Wheeler, who said they had just finished the switch from an increasingly costly heating oil system. The church, which hopes soon to once more house programs by the non-denominational Star of the Sea Centre for Spiritual Living and Practice, was consecrated in 1894; the adjacent cemetery holds the graves of several members of well-known Salt Spring families. The building faces additional challenges before opening, Wheeler said, such as a flood in the washroom that came in through a roof leak and an unreliable water supply. A fundraising campaign is being considered to address those issues.

RECREATION

Runners raise food bank funds

Annual prediction run

SUBMITTED BY SALT SPRING SNEAKERS RUNNING CLUB

A small but merry band of dedicated Salt Spring Sneakers took to the roads sans timepieces on Saturday, Dec. 7 to raise funds for the Salt Spring Island Food Bank.

This year's annual Salt Spring Sneakers Prediction Run was organized and managed by Anne Synnes and John Tulip, with the route layout and timing expertly crafted by Sneakers team captain and distance coach Eric Ellis.

The concept of a prediction run is simple: each participant estimates the time it will take to complete a course that is revealed only on the morning of the event. Runners base their calculations on their well-honed understanding of stride, pace, distance and feel, along with a good dose of luck as they try to come as close as possible to their predicted time without the aid of a GPS or sports watch.

This year's course, with a change of venue, comprised three loops totalling five kilometres and featured a few challenging hills. The event's winner, Peter Freeman, was narrowly seven seconds off his predicted time of 35:40, finishing the distance in 35:47. In the "predictionally



PHOTO BY SERENA MELLEN

Salt Spring Sneakers members at the Dec. 7 prediction run.

challenged" category — awarded to the participant furthest from their predicted time — Karen Clark took the title, racing across the finish line four minutes and eight seconds sooner than she had anticipated.

The fun run raised just over \$1,000 for the food bank, demonstrating the Sneakers' commitment to community support.

The Sneakers running club prides itself on being welcoming and recreational, boasting an active social component. Our group includes a mix of highly experienced former and current members eager to assist newcomers looking to start or enhance their walking and running programs. If you're interested in

connecting with members or joining our three weekly workouts, reach out to the Salt Spring Sneakers via our Facebook group page.

Looking ahead, the Vancouver Island Race Series kicks off in January. For program tips and details about the races, you can contact Ellis at ehellis@mymts.net.

Additionally, Susan Gordon coaches our track workouts and will resume her fitness walking group sessions in the spring. To find out more, search for "Walk This Way Salt Spring" on Facebook or email us at susan.greenpony@gmail.com. Best of all, all memberships and workouts are completely free.

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