

Gulf Islands' Island Tides

Giving The Coast A Community Voice For 27 Years

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Before & After: Salish Eagle gets its artwork



On April 13, at BC Ferries' Richmond refit facility, the 'wrap' adorning the hull of *Salish Eagle* was unveiled, pictured opposite with creator, Stz'uminus First Nation artist John Marston.

The Coast Salish depiction of eagles on the hull of the newly arrived vessel represents the strength and respect the eagle carries in First Nations culture.

Above is the unadorned vessel off Ogden Point when it first arrived in BC on March 20, after completing a 10,440 nautical mile journey from Gdansk, Poland, where it was built.

Salish Eagle will enter service on the Tsawwassen-Southern Gulf Islands route at the end of June. It features two car decks and has a service speed of 15.5 knots, powered by three dual-fuel Wartsila 8L20DF engines. *Salish Eagle* will share the Route N°9 service with *Queen of Nanaimo* this summer, until she is retired in the fall.

Artwork for *Salish Raven*, the third Salish-Class ferry, yet to arrive, is designed by Musqueam Nation's Thomas Cannell.

Meanwhile *Salish Orca* will be in service on the Comox-Powell River route in mid-May.

Historic Rockland tree creates art

Dozens of artists are busily crafting art from a single huge walnut tree under the motto 'a fallen tree should never die quietly, never mind who's around to hear it.'

Building on the success of the exhibit 'oneTree 2015', which was produced from a Cowichan Valley big-leaf maple, The Robert Bateman Centre and Live Edge Design are again partnering to celebrate the life of a single tree.

This time, oneTree artists are using wood from the black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) which stood for over 100 years on St Charles Street in Victoria's Rockland neighbourhood.

The tree took root in the Craigdarroch Castle-era, but by 2015 a crack had begun to form in the its centre. It was taken down to keep the surrounding homes and people safe. Being an urban tree, people remember the walnut and have stories about it.

'Already several people have come forward to tell us about walking past it regularly or collecting the walnuts as they dropped from the tree,' says John Lore, of custom wood furniture maker Live Edge Design.

This year's artists will create a number of widely differing pieces, including musical instruments, functional art, and carved pieces. The large volume of wood in the tree has allowed for 52 participating artisans.

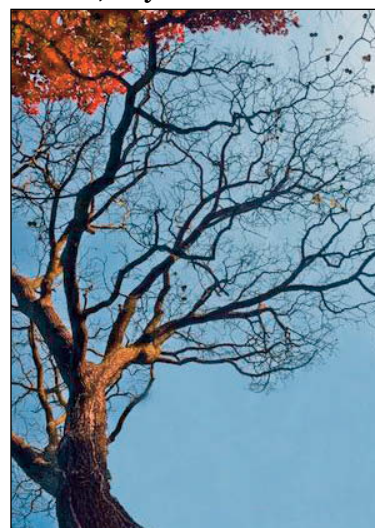
Included among the artisans are several First Nations artists. One artist, John Marston, has a beautiful contemporary take on traditional First Nations

design. In addition to winning several other design competitions, John's artwork is now adorning the side of BC Ferries' new *Salish Eagle* (see photo above).

Another new participant, Andreas Kunert, is becoming internationally known for his intricate and flowing stone mosaics. Lore will partner with Andreas this year to make a barn-style door for the exhibit.

Finished pieces will be on display at the oneTree 2017 exhibit at the Robert Bateman Centre from November 17 to January 31. Each piece will be available for purchase with proceeds benefiting the Bateman Foundation.

For more information on the exhibit and the 52 artists, [CLICK HERE](#).



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GULL RIOT: Rick Graham

Saturna Notes - Priscilla Ewbank

This year on Saturna, as well as lots of springtime lambs, we have baby humans!

While lots of lambs are an important yearly event, to have two new Saturna spring babies is noteworthy.

Chantelle and Lee Middleton and brother Jacob welcomed Adelaide Mae Marie Middleton. Violet Dentry arrived on April 19 into the arms of Katy, Ryan, and sister Isla.

Saturna Island is small in population and having a full range of new-to-old people makes community life that much more rich and diverse. Babysitters—yes, we need those—and fundraiser bottle-drives, Strong Start, support for parents, and all the thoughtful amenities that makes a young family's life that much richer and fulfilled.

Luckily, we have lots of peace and safety and beauty and goodwill at our fingertips to offer our young.

A Trip to Red Deer

I am so glad to be back home, on the coast, on Saturna Island. The time I spent in Red Deer, Alberta, with my beloved eldest daughter was rich and interesting for our strong family connections and beginning to adjust without Dave side-by-side with Genni

steering their family through life.

I wasn't born here—I was 22 when I stepped off the *Mayne Queen*. Yet, this is my home region and country, now. I am located and grounded—here.

The air, the islanders' conversation, the ocean water as it mirrors the sky, tides in and out, and good gardening dirt, eagles everywhere—I give and get here.

Alberta is a tough land to make a living in for wild animals and people. I do hear that June, July and August are marvellous.

Drumheller and the bad lands was fascinating. The endless soft-brown ploughed land with scattered oil pumper rigs nodding away in the cereal stubble is the main view. No fences at the verges of the grid of roads, green-brown rivers sliding by lined with ice cakes right now, calves, and the few birds—all have their beauties.

The contrast with home was very informing and brings me to even more appreciation of our coastal life and incredible natural surroundings.

East Point Life

The show at East Point has been magnificent. All sorts of herring, herring eggs and small fish are

bringing on the bonaparte gulls and the rest of the fishers. Regularly, with binoculars, you can see that there is a line looking towards Tsawwassen—probably a tide line where the air is boiling with sea birds and the water is frothy. Close at hand, the gulls and terns at East Point and Boiling Reef are swirling and twirling in the air and coming down to preen and socialize on the sandstone rocks. What a shock of life!

Election Signs Blowin' In The Wind

Saturna has a triangle in the middle of the road where our two main roads diverge. This 'downtown' Saturna triangle supports a small forest of signs from the NDP and the Greens.

We have a prevailing south-east wind and the signs act like little sails. They begin to tilt—and then to tilt more—as the campaigning continues. The signs then get repositioned as much for vertical purposes as political jockeying!

As with *Island Tides*, media is going all out, bless their hearts to bring informed journalism on the issues and to report candidates' responses at the party level and in individual ridings—so we tune in to the news and read updates.

The talk around is animated and thorough. I am delighted to hear real, respectful, strong positioning from local candidates and snappy informed comebacks from the NDP and Greens.

In my opinion the political conversation is informed, lively and respectful. As a province in a democratic nation, we are all winning. ☺



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Spring sunshine still casts long shadows at Horton Bay, Mayne Island.

Photo: Toby Snelgrove, SNELGROVEimages.com

Book Review by Patrick Brown

Recording History

Sometimes the significant events of human history happen without military victories, without fanfares, without proclamations, and without the participation of kings or presidents.

Sometimes real changes and shifts in power result from the agonizingly slow processes of sheer persistence, pursued by small groups of people devoting years of their lives to dreams and visions for their children and their communities.

Gary Moore, a North End resident, helped create such events on Galiano, though he would be the last to claim any credit for the thirty-year fight to save very large areas of Galiano for public use, public access, and public education.

Galiano, it should be remembered, is traditionally territory of the Hul’qumi’num people but was granted and sold by various governments in the nineteenth century. And in 1972, logging giant MacMillan Bloedel proposed a 1200 lot subdivision, similar to Magic Lake estates on Pender Island, which precipitated the writing of Galiano Island’s first official community plan.

Gary Moore’s slim booklet is titled *What Happened at Coon Bay*; a small cove on Porlier Pass, right at the north end of Galiano’s beautiful long, thin ridge bordering the Strait of Georgia. Now part of Dionisio Provincial Park, Coon Bay had a history as the tiny weekend and summer, boat-in beach community of east Vancouver Islanders, with quaint little shacks along the water’s edge. It was to be part of the subdivision development.

Gary Moore’s tale, which weaves back and forth,

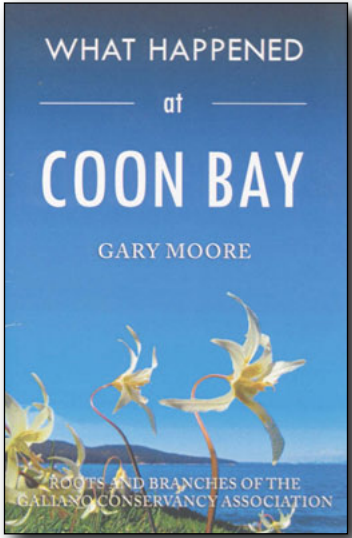
begins when MacMillan Bloedel begins clear-cutting in earnest over a large area of Galiano, including the Coon Bay area. Galiano did not have many residents at the time, and so the original organizational meeting, of about seventy people at the North End Hall, called in November 1987, by CRD Director Jim Campbell, represented a significant proportion of the island’s population.

The book goes on to record the gatherings, delegations, petitions, reports, court actions, and evolution of today’s Galiano, with its parks, conservancies, preserved landmarks, trails, and beaches.

Moore, to his great credit, accumulates stuff. His book records dates, places, and people; it is a sourcebook of Galiano history, and has great value in its own right.

What Happened at Coon Bay is a modest book, like its author (he records his presence through the story only in the third person), though the story it tells is one of great significance to the Gulf Islands and to public lands across BC and Canada.

It records the awakening of the people of the Gulf Islands to the need to care for the beauty and spiritual value of their landscape of rocks, trees, and



water; of heights and views and wetlands.

It is one of the many stories of islands’ people leading efforts to ‘Preserve and Protect’; the motto of the Islands Trust, a unique form of local government that continues to guard the integrity of the environment and the communities of the islands. And Galiano people led the Gulf Islanders.

Sometimes a recording of accomplishments is written long after the events which marked the progress of wishes to reality. *What Happened at Coon Bay*’s value lies in the accuracy and detail of an eyewitness account of what happened.


Some of the people in the book are gone now. We owe it to Gary Moore for ensuring that they are not forgotten nor is what a determined community can accomplish forgotten, either.

We need many more accounts like this one. 📖



Island Tides

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Owner, Publisher & Editor:
Christa Grace-Warrick

Contributors:
Priscilla Ewbank, Elizabeth May, Your BC Election Candidates, Rick Graham, Toby Snelgrove, Patrick Brown, Jenna Falk, TJ Watt, Corbin Smith, Ann McLean, Allan Evans, Barry Cotton, Nettie Adams, Natalie Dunsmuir

Island Tides Publishing Ltd
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International Aid

Dear Editor:

It is disingenuous of the Trudeau government to tout the implementation of a new Development Finance Institution (DFI) while at the same time announcing that there is no plan to increase international assistance.

Foreign aid is the biggest source of international funding for the poorest countries in the world, including those in the grip of conflict or natural disaster. Loans from DFIs, on the other hand, mainly benefit middle income countries—not surprising, since they have the capacity to take on debt. Depriving the poorest in order to help the less poor is hardly a matter of pride for a country that proclaims its humanism and aspires to be a world leader.

Chitra Ramaswami, Calgary

Malala and Canada's Aid Budget

Dear Editor:

Who doesn't love and respect Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate? She stands as a courageous beacon of what is possible no matter what the adversity. And now she is a Canadian citizen with a strong message for Canada to be proactive in being the world leader in girls' education.

But in spite of the honours and pomp and ceremony, do you know that the March federal budget saw no increase to the international assistance envelope (IAE), which means the upcoming fiscal year will see no new money—for the very thing Malala urged Parliament to do? In fact, Canada's commitment to official development assistance (ODA) sits at the low level of around 0.28% of its gross national income (GNI), and the upcoming year will be no different. This is nowhere near the UN target of 0.7% and puts Canada far behind its peers on the world stage—let alone a leader. Even more concerning, Finance Minister Bill Morneau declared in a post-budget interview that Canada should 'do more with less foreign aid spending'. This statement sets a clear tone about the government's perspective on the role of international assistance.

So in one way Canada looks pretty good in making Malala a citizen; in another, when looking at the actual numbers, Canada is quite the two-faced laggard.

Anita Mark, Saanichton

Readers' Letters

Three Key BC Issues

Dear Editor:

With the provincial election taking place May 9, here are three ways for voters to prepare:

Ask all candidates: 'Do you support proportional representation? What do you and your party commit to do to make sure that every vote counts?' [CLICK HERE](#)

Ask about halting work on the Site C dam could save British Columbians up to \$2 billion according to an April 19 report from UBC's Program on Water Governance. The report says the government should stop Site C construction and send the project to the BC Utilities Commission for review. [CLICK HERE & HERE & HERE](#)

Read '117 BC Liberal Falsehoods, Boondoggles and Scandals: The Complete List', which is available both as an online article and a PDF, [CLICK HERE](#).

David Buckna, Kelowna

John Horgan Will Deliver The LNG Industry

Dear Editor:

It happens every election. The NDP line-up and lecture other lefties on how they mustn't split the vote and open an avenue for the current government to retain power. It's always the same. Defeating the political right is of paramount importance, they sternly warn, and a vote for the Greens is a vote for the right.

Some of the more progressive among them take the debate a step further, recognizing that electoral math is not hard, that everyone can do it, and that there are actually good reasons to vote Green.

Nevertheless, in defense of the math—as if 410ppm carbon dioxide did not also count as math—they insist we must put political beliefs and good conscience on the back burner and vote NDP.

Perhaps 2017 is an inauspicious year, following so closely upon the 2015 federal election, endless talk about 'strategic' voting, and abundant promises of Real Change. Even if you disbelieved Justin Trudeau's campaign promises and weren't disillusioned when he broke so many of them, it doesn't mean you're in the mood to hear them repeated.

As a reminder, Trudeau promised fact-based decision-making, and also promised the needs of the economy and the needs of the environment could be balanced. From the get-go, he ignored the fact that every dollar invested in clean energy will yield three to seven times more jobs than a dollar invested in fossil fuels.

He also ignored the fact our parents taught us—you can't have your cake and eat it, too. His pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change failed to provide what he said it did, a pathway to approving tarsands pipelines and LNG projects while meeting established GHG emissions reduction targets.

A final insult in an overheated world, environment minister Catherine McKenna announced just days ago that implementation of methane regulations will be put off three years. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers explained that it was in reaction to their demands that the government roll back the date.

Disappointingly, the NDP is no less captured by fossil fuel interests than Trudeau and McKenna, or than Christy Clark. Lambasting Clark's 'phony promises' on LNG jobs, John Horgan says he will deliver the LNG industry that she hasn't, and also 'achieve the highest environmental standards while respecting our commitments to combating climate change'. How strategic could it ever be to vote for LNG?

Experts have calculated that fracked shale gas has a heavy GHG footprint due to fugitive methane leaks—some say a footprint as heavy as coal's. Horgan's promise was as phony as Clark's even before McKenna effectively said all bets on methane limits and 'clean growth' were off.

Count me weary—too weary to support such charlatans any longer.

Count me hopeful—I know a better way lies with the new green economy.

And count me defiant. Ours is not a two-party system despite what the NDP want us to believe. It's perfectly legitimate to vote Green, and it's perfectly

possible that the Greens could wind up holding the balance of power in a minority NDP government.

Furthermore, in ridings where Green candidates won't overtake the NDP, our votes will not be wasted. They'll signal to the NDP that if they want our votes in future, they had better take our phone calls, answer our emails, and deliver the policy that we, the progressive left, can get behind. The days of supporting fossil fuels and their lobbyists are over.

Dianne Varga, Penticton

The ABCs of the Election

Dear Editor:

Okay Salt Spring, it's time to get ready to vote! I believe BC is at a crucial point in our history and only you can change the course of the destruction headed our way.

If you are new to the west coast maybe you haven't yet realized we live on an island surrounded by the Salish Sea. If you think 600 super tankers loaded with bitumen going past our doorstep to and from Vancouver Harbour, through narrow passages and strong currents, is not a huge issue, then you haven't been paying attention. The Kinder Morgan pipeline supplying these tankers is a disaster waiting to happen and it needs to be stopped. The NDP and Greens agree and only the Liberals are prepared to destroy our pristine coastline by allowing this project to continue.

But if the environment isn't a priority, what about some other areas of concern? In this rich province, we rate first in Canada for child poverty, over 300 kids have died while in provincial care, welfare rates have been stagnant for 10 years, we have one of the lowest minimum wages, while the rich get tax breaks, and MSP premiums have risen. And hydro rates? Just wait, they are building a dam, not needed, for over \$8 billion. There's also a shortage of nurses and doctors and long hospital waits.

The Liberals are always yammering on about jobs, but in reality the new jobs are short term, low wage and part time. Where is the vision for new technology, green energy and for jobs embracing a change that will solve climate change? Where is the push we need to rebuild our forestry industry, create value added jobs and embrace future technologies rather than selling off our resources for a quick buck and filling the off-shore corporations' pockets?

If these problems don't concern you, then what about the future for your kids and grandkids? Education. The gutting of our schools and the atrocity of taking the BCTF to court for 15 years lands right in Christy Clark's lap. She tore up the contract and spent \$50 million of your money fighting teachers while a whole generation of kids suffered in underfunded classrooms. The money she's bragging about putting into education has been forced on her from the supreme court. It will take years to undo the damage she caused. Educating our young should be our priority.

We need a change of government, I say. ABC—Anyone But Christy Clark's Liberals. I say, just get out and vote on May 9. It's your right and your responsibility. Thanks for listening.

Susan Paynter, Salt Spring Island

Learning the Twisted Path of BCHydro Debt - How Can We Save BC's Extraordinary Public Utility?

The following two letters are question and answer from Nanaimo BC Green candidate Kathleen Harris and Gabriola economist Erik Andersen.

Hello Erik:

My name is Kathleen Harris and I am the Green party MLA candidate for Nanaimo. I am so thankful to have received a copy of your letter to Andrew Weaver and the accurate numbers you provide. I am not afraid to talk about any of the real issues in this election.

I stood up at my first all-candidates meeting at Dover School this week and did confront the Liberal on the fact that we are tens of billions (that was my low-ball and minimally-informed but safe number) in debt and the 'balanced budget' was a complete hiding/warping of the truth.

What I need are some of the real numbers like

Jobs in BC

this that evidence the scary truths, so that I can informedly talk about what neither of the other parties are willing to step up and discuss. Can you give me a reference source to cite or similar way to back up these numbers? I do know a bit about BCHydro being in debt for about \$80 billion but I am just learning this stuff.

Please do not under-estimate what I am prepared to do in this election to promote some sense of accountability on behalf of both our ruling government and the fact we have had 16 years of NDP in office representing both Nanaimo and Gabriola.

If you would like to educate me more, please know, that I am interested in hearing from you and being a strong voice at the table. My expertise is in the area of societal influences on health/wellness and population health but to do that well, I seek to have an understanding of the things that control a government's ability to support the people. I know there are countless ways we could and should be doing things better.

Kathleen Harris, BC Greens, Nanaimo candidate

Hi Kathleen:

I will send some info over the next day or so but what you need to first grasp is the difference between the words 'debt' and 'liability'.

Since Gordon became the premier, the government has favored the use of contracts. Because contracts have a number of provisions that relate to performance by the private contractor, they are captured in the government's accounting (for crown corps as well because the taxpayer must be the final guarantor) as 'Contingencies and Contractual Obligations'.

Formal 'debt' is just—and only—the payment of interest and principal, full stop and only driven by time passage. 'Contingencies and Contractual Obligations' can have a long-term to run but because the government made secret Independent Power Producers, and maybe P3 contracts as well, we only have the aggregate of these contracts. The best guess is that IPP Contracts total up to about \$55 billion of the total of the C&COs of \$101 billion as of one year ago.

Why the use of contracts instead of financing by sale of bonds, is that bonds must be disclosed in the province's annual report—where contracts get buried way at the end of the Auditor General's section of the annual report.

Contracts are an indirect way of getting financing. It is the private contractor that arranges financing, but for it to do so it is essential it can show lenders that the taxpayers stand fully behind the contractor no matter what.

Because the government carefully avoids talk of these contracted amounts, so does the press. Government MPs universally use the term 'debt' as their way of suppressing any talk about contracts.

To escape this trap, I and some others only use the term 'financial liabilities'. If you think about it, nobody is fooling anyone when they say they have only \$60 billion of debt and stop short of saying what other contractual liabilities must be paid off. It is like saying I only have a mortgage, those pesky car loans and credit card liabilities are meaningless.

In the preparation of annual financial statements, there are a number of moving parts. For BC, all that is important to know is that the per person amount of government revenues has not materially increased in the past 10 or 15 years while at the same time the amount of total provincial liabilities per person has almost doubled.

If you substitute your personal budget, you know right away you are heading into insolvency or at least the sale of any assets you might own. Either way, you just become poorer.

Since we now have a year to go by I am projecting no change in provincial per capita revenues and a further big increase in per capita liabilities.

If BC Hydro were to become solvent again, it would have to collect \$6 billion to settle its accounts receivable from its customers (euphemistically known as regulatory assets) and another couple of billion to cover Site C and IPP contracts. Its current total annual revenue amount is closing in on \$5 billion. To become solvent it needs a 40% increase in rates right now and I don't think the government is willing to acknowledge this shortcoming.

This BCHydro file is desperately in need of care and attention.

Erik Andersen, Gabriola Island

The Future Look of West Coast Beaches?

Dear Editor:

DFO has recently released their Integrated Geoduck Management Framework (IGMF) which will not only introduce toxic deleterious substances into the marine environment, but will also cause serious harm to fish, which is a violation of the *Fisheries Act*.

Both the inter-tidal and sub-tidal cultivation of geoduck will cause serious harm by the introduction of deleterious substances in the form of plastics necessary for containment of the cultivated geoduck. The plastics used contain toxic chemicals and also act as vectors for other toxins such as carcinogens. These plastics break down, creating micro and macro plastic particles ingested by all marine animals, and bio-accumulating to work their way up the food chain to humans.

Harvesting geoduck is done using high pressure water jet hoses (stingers) which will release more deleterious substances, any dormant pollutions, heavy metals etc from the substrate, which will be consumed by numerous species including filter feeders such as shellfish.

Before a sub-tidal tenure is worked, stingers are used to remove any wild geoduck from the area, which also removes sea grasses, a crucial fish habitat especially during herring spawning season around March. The window for this wild geoduck 'purging' is from March to September, when the wild geoduck show. Again, this would be devastating for the herring/salmon fisheries and according to the *Fisheries Act*, would be considered a 'serious harm to fish'.

The mandate letter from PM Trudeau to the Minister of Fisheries, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc stating 'your overarching goal will be to protect our three oceans, coasts, waterways and fisheries and ensure that they remain healthy for future generations' is being disregarded. Also included in the mandate letter is the direction to 'ensure that decisions are based on science, facts, and evidence, and serve the public interest'; which is obviously not the case with the IGMF.

The harm that will be caused by the IGMF to the marine environment is not just a west coast issue but will affect the oceans and all the life forms that rely on a diverse, abundant and healthy marine ecosystem. This is just one more assault on the ocean we rely on for our survival, so please ask for a moratorium on geoduck culture until it can be done without harming the marine environment.

Email: dominic.leblanc@parl.gc.ca or call 613-992-1020 or fax 613-992-3053 or mail to The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6.

Edina Johnston, Denman Island

Vancouver Vacant Homes Tax

Dear Editor:

Seniors and professionals who mainly live in the Gulf Islands but maintain a small apartment in Vancouver are going to be badly stung by the new City of Vancouver bylaw that taxes 'vacant' housing (defined as being used less than 180 days of the year) at 1% of their appraised value annually. There are a number of legitimate reasons why people may continue to have a small Vancouver presence, including family, illness, specialist treatments, part-time work, academic commitments, etc. We are mobilizing against this punitive, indiscriminate and retroactive application of the bylaw, meant to curb real estate speculation and increase rental housing availability.

An inaugural meeting of the 'Unfair Vancouver Vacant Homes Tax Coalition' was held on the Sunshine Coast on March 8. Recruitment is critical. Mobilizing will take a number of forms including a presentation via city council to amend the bylaw, public protest, legal recourse, etc. If this tax applies to you unfairly, please contact me: rborkenhagen@yahoo.com.

Rainer Borkenhagen, Gibsons

Dear Editor:

How can this government claim to support job creation when whole tanker-loads of raw logs are being shipped out of Nanaimo harbour? People in Europe get nine to twelve jobs for a cubic metre of wood that supplies less than one job here.

Then there's all that tar sand bitumen they're planning to ship out of here via the Kinder Morgan pipeline. There are two ways to make natural gas more expensive, frack it and freeze it. Then send it overseas to provide jobs and wealth over there. Jobs cleaning up oil spills should increase.

Renewable energy provides more jobs than the fossil industry. Why does our government spend money to support a dying industry that produces fewer jobs every year?

Then there are the fish farms that have destroyed several hundred jobs in the fishing industry as they deplete wild salmon stocks.

An election should change these job killers at least.

Jim Erkiletian, Nanaimo

Risks to the Salish Sea

Dear Editor:

Roberts Bank Terminal 2 is currently undergoing assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. The project is nearing the public hearings stage, probably this fall.

This project, to build a massive extension to the existing container terminal adjacent to the BC Ferries terminal at Tsawwassen, involves a similar number of large ship transits along the same route as Kinder Morgan's.

Oil spills from tankers are rare. However, spills from container ships are not uncommon, and these ships carry a lot of fuel oil for their voyage to China, plenty enough to cause catastrophic damage in the Gulf Islands in the event of a spill. The project proponent, Port of Vancouver, has never offered any notification or public discussion to Gulf Islanders, so the project is under the radar for most of your readers.

Trevor Jones, Vancouver

ONE MORE CRACKING GOOD LETTER, SCROLL TO PAGE 8!



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MEETING

School District #64 (Gulf Islands). Regular meetings of the Board of School Trustees will be held on Wednesday, May 10, at the Mayne Island School. Meeting commencing at 1pm. Public Welcome! Agenda: <http://sd64.bc.ca/district/school-board-meetings/>.

Moon Dates:
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VICTORIA—SWAN LAKE:
Chris Maxwell, BC Greens

Absolutely! Every voter must be represented. Under the current system, five of the last six BC governments had all the power (majority) but only 39–46% of the *votes*, representing 23-27% of *registered voters*. A BC Greens government will move to proportional representation (PR) following consultation with the citizens of BC. There are many PR systems, so I will describe my personal favorite: Mixed Member PR.

In this system, candidates run, people vote, and the winning candidate is elected to the Legislature. To ensure the Legislature reflects the popular vote results, additional members are added to the directly elected ones. But, what members are added? I like the ‘near-winner’ method, which adds candidates that came the nearest to winning their elections. Since 1991, this correction would require ~40% more members, so we could reduce the number of ridings accordingly. These simple changes would ensure every vote counts in BC.

SAANICH SOUTH:
Mark Neufeld, BC Greens

This is one of the easiest question to answer so far. Firstly, because 59.8% of BC voted for proportional representation and secondly, because just about every modern democracy beyond the US, Britain and Canada has moved on from First-Past-The-Post. Restoring faith in our democracy, and particularly inspiring the faith in our democracy for our young people is among my biggest goals.

How? Nationally, push the Trudeau government to adopt the recommendations of the committee he convened and allow them to collaborate and come to consensus on the best way to move forward. Make it clear that BC will be moving toward proportional representation as soon as it’s constitutionally possible.

COWICHAN VALLEY:
Sonia Furstenau, BC Greens

Mainstream parties promise electoral reform before they are elected, and then break their promises once they are in power. We saw this federally with Trudeau and the Liberals, and provincially with Notley and the NDP. I do not see this troubling trend changing within the current status quo.

Only the BC Greens are truly committed to electoral reform, and would welcome the chance to change the system for the better, so that all voters are represented at the Legislature.

PARKSVILLE—QUALICUM
Glenn Sollitt, BC Greens

Proportional Representation is the single most impactful change we can make in order to fix and restore our democratic process. It is imperative that the percentage of popular vote reflects the percentage of seats each party receives.

Under that umbrella description, there are a host of different methods to achieve PR. I am not

Island Tides asks:

‘Do you support the swift introduction of proportional representation in BC? How?’

fixed on any one system. The government should spend less than one year to determine the most suitable model for BC then change our system accordingly in time for the next provincial election.

I think the change should be made without a province-wide referendum, however, I am in favour of having an evaluative referendum sometime in the near future, possible after two elections. That would be a very effective way to determine whether British Columbia citizens are happy with the benefits of proportional representation.

SAANICH NORTH & THE ISLANDS:
Adam Olsen, BC Greens

The best and most practical way to achieve electoral reform is to elect enough Greens so that there is not a party with majority status.

One of the six core principles of the BC Green Party is participatory democracy. We have committed to implementing a proportional voting system before the 2021 election. Proportional representation is a fairer, more representative system which encourages democratic participation and accurately reflects voters’ choices in the make-up of government. I am profoundly disappointed with Prime Minister Trudeau’s betrayal of his election promise of electoral reform that so many Canadians know is needed. A BC Green government will also lower the voting age to 16 to encourage lifelong voter engagement.

COURTENAY—COMOX
Ronna-Rae Leonard, BC NDP

John Horgan and the BC NDP are firmly committed to electoral reform. I am excited to be on the team that will move forward to make every vote count.

The voters of British Columbia have a right to be cynical, after the federal government and BCLiberals have failed to live up to their promises to bring democratic reform.

As your BC NDP government, we will not just pay lip service to electoral reform. As premier, Horgan and I will actively campaign for a ‘Yes’ vote, with the drive to win. We will institute a citizen-driven review with expert support, to choose the best system for BC’s diverse landscape and prepare a clear question for a referendum, to be decided by simple majority, 50%+1 vote. Together, we can bring everyone on board to build a truly representative democracy.

This concludes Island Tides’ election opportunity for candidates. We hope you have all enjoyed it!

PARKSVILLE—QUALICUM
Sue Powell, BC NDP

I support John Horgan’s plan to hold a referendum on proportional representation and will campaign on the ‘Yes!’ side.

In the 2013 election, the BCLiberals won about 44% of the vote, and yet formed a majority government that held all of the power throughout the province. In fact the BCLiberals held a mere two seats outside of the mainland, but were able to impose what they thought was best for our communities all across our island despite overwhelming public disagreement with and disapproval of their policy.

This type of disenfranchisement, in my opinion, is bad for democracy. We should use a system that allows for greater freedom of choice, representation that better reflects public opinion, and gives minorities a voice.

SAANICH NORTH & THE ISLANDS
Gary Holman, BC NDP

I’m proud of John Horgan’s commitment to hold another referendum on the proportional representation voting system. As NDP spokesperson for Democratic Reform, I’ve consulted with the public and advocacy groups like Fair Vote, and have recommended a 50% plus one approval threshold at the provincial level. John Horgan agrees, with safeguards to ensure fair rural representation.

This gives BC its best chance in modern history to ensure that voter preferences are more fairly represented in the legislature. I voted ‘yes’ to proportional representation as one of the 58% that did so in the 2005 referendum, but as one of only 38% in 2009. Our government will campaign for a ‘yes’ vote early enough in our term so that the 2021 election would be held under some form of proportional representation system. This will only happen if the NDP replaces Christy Clark’s government, starting here in Saanich North and the Islands.

NORTH ISLAND
Claire Trevena, BC NDP

I am very pleased that the BC NDP is committed to proportional representation. As government we would hold a referendum on the issue and would actively campaign in favour of changing BC’s voting process to proportional representation. It is a system in which, unlike first-past-the-post, every vote counts. So proportional representation would better represent the preferences of all British Columbians.

MID ISLAND—PACIFIC RIM
Scott Fraser, BC NDP

Yes, the BC NDP supports electoral reform. We’re committed to holding a referendum on changing to a proportional electoral system that will ensure every vote counts. All of BC’s regions will be involved through consultation and fair representation. And, unlike previous referenda on electoral reform, an NDP government will commit to campaigning on the ‘Yes’ side.

Island Tides emailed the above question to all contactable, declared candidates running in: Powell–River Sunshine Coast, North Island, Courtenay–Comox, Parksville–Qualicum, Mid Island–Pacific Rim, Nanaimo, Nanaimo–North Cowichan, Cowichan Valley, Langford–Juan de Fuca, Saanich North & The Islands, Oak Bay–Gordon Head, Esquimalt–Metchosin, Saanich South, Victoria–Beacon Hill, Victoria–Swan Lake.

All received responses of the correct length are above, and may have been edited for relevance to the question. All candidates are invited to answer upcoming questions.

Jim Benninger, David Calder, Alana DeLong, Barb Desjardins, Kim Darwin, Alex Dutton, Rob Fleming, Scott Fraser, Sonia Furstenau, Paris Gaudet, Kalen Harris, Kathleen Harris, Gary Holman, John Horgan, Steve Housser, Lori Iannidinaro, Croale James, Leonard Krog, Alicia La Rue, Chris Maxwell, Andy MacKinnon, Mark Neufeld, Sue Moen, Cathy Noel, Adam Olsen, Lana Popham, Sue Powell, Brendan Ralfs, Stephen Roberts, Doug Routley, Ernie Sellentin, Nic Simons, Dallas Smith, Glenn Sollitt, Michelle Stilwell, Claire Trevena, Lia Versaevel, Andrew Weaver, Matthew Wilson

Rockfish conservation in the Southern Gulf Islands - Jenna Falk, Darienne Lancaster, Lily Burke and Warren Warrtig

In British Columbia, land of the charismatic salmon, it's difficult for other fish to make a splash. However, around the Southern Gulf Islands, another fish is making waves because of the hard work of local scientists and conservation groups. An effort that started out small in 2011 and has been growing since. The Galiano Conservancy Association (GCA), in partnership with the Valdes Island Conservancy (VIC), and, as of 2014, the University of Victoria School of Environmental Studies (UVic ES) are working to raise the profile of BC's imperilled rockfish.

Rockfish represent a genus of fish and more than 30 species make their home in BC waters. Many live out their lives at or near the bottom of the ocean on rocky substrate. Some rockfish species around Galiano Island can live for over 120 years and they usually spend their long lives in just one area. From a human perspective, this means up to four generations of family could live on a Gulf Island and, during this time, the same rockfish could be found living offshore!

Rockfish do not survive the usual catch and release fishing like most salmon species and this, along with biological and behavioural characteristics, make them vulnerable to overfishing. Many rockfish species are now listed as Threatened or as a species of Special Concern by Canadian protection agencies.

Rockfish declines observed around the Southern Gulf Islands galvanized the GCA to coordinate a SCUBA survey in 2011 to assess rockfish numbers inside and outside some of Galiano's Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs). GCA biologist Lia Chalifour spearheaded this effort and the results of this survey found more rockfish outside of RCAs than inside. However, this was a preliminary finding, which created a host of new questions and avenues to explore.

In 2014, Masters student Darienne Lancaster, from UVic ES, placed shore-mounted trail cameras around Galiano Island and other Southern Gulf Islands to count recreational fishers fishing inside of RCAs. She also conducted dockside surveys to find out the amount of recreational fisher knowledge of rockfish and RCA regulations. Darienne's research showed low levels of rockfish and RCA knowledge, and moderately high levels of illegal fishing within RCAs. It is very likely that most of this illegal fishing is due to the low levels of RCA

knowledge among recreational fishers. Results from Darienne's research spawned an outreach campaign by the GCA who pulled together more community partners like the Vancouver Aquarium and the Marine Life Sanctuary Society along with local researchers. Working together, 29 permanent signs were installed on eight Southern Gulf Islands and 19 more are planned for the Vancouver Island and Mainland BC coasts. These organizations continue to spread posters across the region to raise awareness of RCAs and threats to rockfish.

In the summers of 2015 and 2016, GCA Intern Alanna Vachon continued Darienne's trail camera monitoring and dockside surveys to see if recreational fisher behaviour or knowledge changed after the course of the education campaign. Alanna found that 88% of people interviewed thought rockfish conservation was important, with 52% suggesting increased education to improve RCA knowledge. This indicates initial outreach efforts are improving public awareness and that the community wants to be more informed.

Next it was time to plunge under the waves with some intensive SCUBA dive surveys to collect data on rockfish abundance and diversity. In 2015, Masters student Lily Burke, also from UVic ES, took up the rockfish conservation banner and conducted surveys of rockfish abundance inside and outside RCAs by diving 58 sites throughout the Southern Gulf Islands—not for the faint of heart! This underwater research involved frequent visits from lingcod, sealions, and even a cameo appearance by the resident killer whale pod, which swam past a few hundred meters from the divers. This project is also comparing rockfish abundances observed to known levels of recreational fishing from research conducted by Dr Dana Haggarty and Darienne Lancaster.

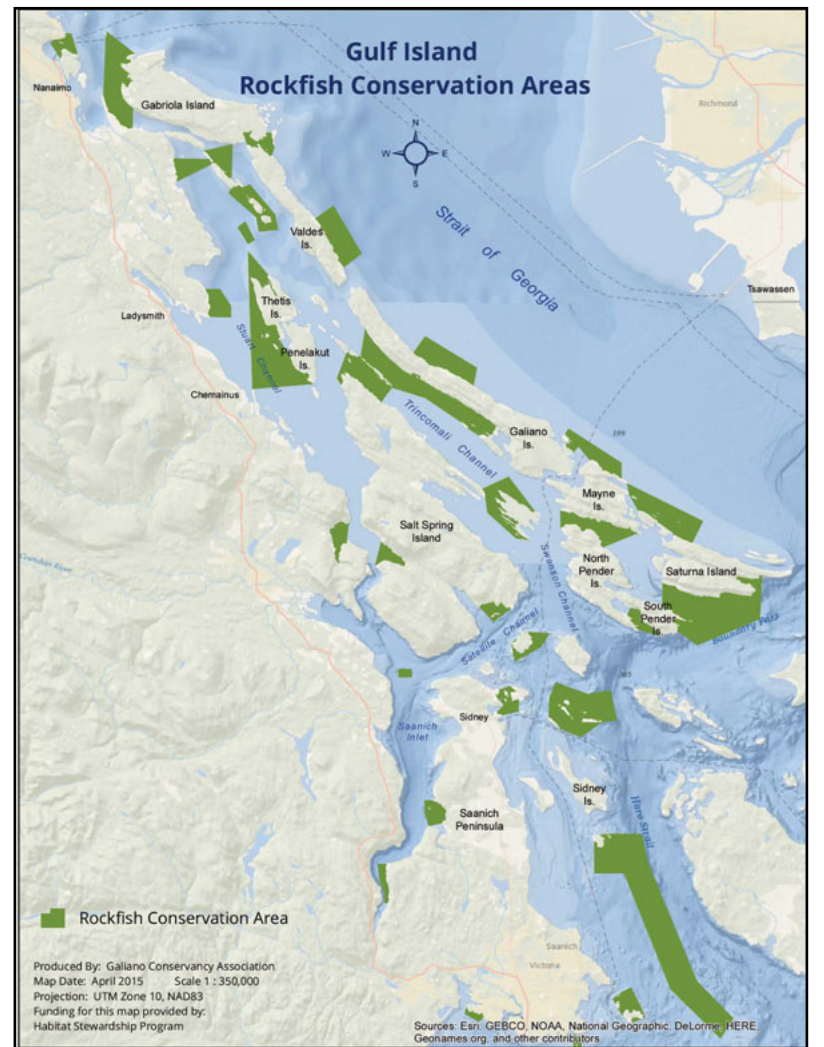
We wanted to further engage the community in this research and provide an opportunity to share information both ways. To do this, the GCA hosted a Rockfish Workshop in 2016 at the Millard Learning Centre with guest speakers that included Andy Lamb, local rockfish aficionado, and Jeff Marliave, Vancouver Aquarium rockfish expert.

'Rockfish do not survive the usual catch and release fishing like most salmon species and this, along with biological and behavioural characteristics, make them vulnerable to overfishing.'



Photo: Scott Stevenson

Copper Rockfish



The workshop allowed community members and up-and-coming researchers to connect and brainstorm the best ways to conserve rockfish for the future.

Moving forward, the Rockfish Conservation Project is building on the substantial knowledge gained through previous rockfish research and is planning to extend these marine conservation efforts. Project partners hope to continue this initiative with funding provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program.

There is continued information gathering (dive surveys, Valdes Island Bioblitz) and sharing (public talks, posters) activities planned for the future. Educational signs are being made for marinas and docks on Vancouver Island and BC's Lower Mainland this spring, with much interest from wharfingers, marina owners and conservation organizations to steward their local Rockfish Conservation Areas through signage and other materials. An exciting new aspect of this project is that it is looking into how members of the public can be involved in the long-term monitoring of rockfish abundance through citizen science and the success of this conservation initiative.

If you would like more information and ways to get involved, please contact me: development@galianoconservancy.ca, 250-539-2424. We want to hear from you! ✍️

Walk and Paddle for climate and reconciliation

People's Climate March

On Saturday, April 29, people across the world will be marching for climate justice. The People's Climate March is expected to bring thousands onto the streets to call on elected leaders to resist fossil fuel projects and fight for climate justice. A march is taking place in Washington DC which is expected to reach 100,000 people. Other marches are taking place across the United States and in Canadian cities from east to west—including Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina and Toronto. Worldwide, marches will be taking place in ten European countries, as well as in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Kenya, and Uganda.

The April 29 march is the third annual People's Climate March. The first took place on September

21, 2014, on the eve of the UN Climate Summit, with the main event happening in New York city.

The Vancouver march will be taking place at 1pm. Ralliers will gather at Science World and will march from there throughout downtown Vancouver.

Speakers will include Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs; George Heyman, a BC New Democratic Party MLA, and Kanahus Manuel, a Secwepemc First Nations activist. To learn more, [CLICK HERE](#).

Paddling Towards Reconciliation

Young people will be paddling hundreds of kilometres this summer, working toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples. More than 30 participants, comprised of Indigenous, English

and French Canadian paddlers, will embark on a month-long, 850-kilometre canoe trip on July 21 in response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Following a traditional First Nations canoe trade route, the Canadian Canoe Pilgrimage (CCP) will begin at Midland, Ontario, up Georgian Bay, travel across the French River, Lake Nipissing, the Mattawa and Ottawa Rivers, and end near Montreal.

'We are retracing this historic route on the 150th anniversary of Canada as a nation, but more importantly we are trying to work for reconciliation,' says Erik Sorensen, Project Manager of the CCP.

For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

Last Readers' Letter

Trump's Ignorance of Canada's Well-Regulated Dairy Industry

Dear Editor:

It is the very fact that the US dairy industry does not have a supply management system like Canada's excellent one that their dairy farmers suffer at the mercy of their unregulated system and regularly go through boom and bust cycles.

Canada is one of the few, if not the only, country in the world that had the foresight to regulate the production of milk. We used to have oversupply too and learned that regulating the industry was better than costly, long-term storage facilities, paid for by Canadian taxpayers. In 1973, farmers, after joint consultation with the government, agreed that their next three years of production would henceforth determine what they would be allowed to ship on a yearly basis—called their quota. That way our dairy farmers would stand on their own two feet with assurance and dignity, and processors could count on a guaranteed supply. In other words, this was the way to manage the supply.

Supply-management was born. If farmers produced more than their allowable quota, they would receive almost nothing for that milk; quite the incentive for complying and only producing what was needed for the Canadian market.

Here's how the vicious circle works with our neighbour to the south: when the price of milk drops in the US from over-supply, dairy farmers continue to produce more milk in order to survive, and avoid bankruptcy. However, many dairy farms do fail, thereby causing a shortage of milk. In a shortage the price rises. When the price rises again, they still produce extra milk in order to pay off the additional debt incurred when the price was low. This unregulated supply-and-demand market causes great havoc to dairy farmers in America, as referenced by President Trump's comments about Wisconsin's dairy industry a few days ago. What has not been mentioned in any news reports, and only adds to the oversupply of milk, is that almost 50% of all American dairy farmers' incomes are derived from hidden subsidies. Canadian dairy farmers do not receive subsidies.

Hence, Canada's superior supply-management system, designed to fend off this very problem, ensuring that Canadian farmers have stability and a reliable paycheck—the envy of most, if not all, American milk producers.

It's not a bed of roses though, as Canadian farmers all face economic challenges due to the ever-rising costs of production. In order to succeed, farms have had to grow bigger and bigger—which is why we see so few family farms nowadays.

Americans are not the only ones with a lot of milk to get rid of. New Zealand and Australia are in this game too, with small populations and low-cost over-production. Like America, neither has a supply management system, so they want to palm off their cheap, lower-quality surpluses to Canada. With Canada's consistent high standards, these countries' milk would not qualify to be sold here.

So, President Trump blames us as a means to solve America's problem by making us the 'bad guys', allegedly responsible for what in fact is their own short-sighted mismanagement.

In Canada both farmers and consumers have benefited a great deal from the visionary implementation of the supply management system, with stability for farmers and an assured supply of high-quality milk for families.

So—Canada, please don't give into the bullies. And Mr Trump, stop playing the blame game; keep your hands off our dairy farmers and take care of your own. Try supply management.

Oliver & Anita Mark, Saanichton

Another promise about to be broken?
Will Liberals restore the protections
of Canada's navigable waters?

Elizabeth May, MP

On March 23, 2017, the federal Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities released its long-awaited report on how the Liberals will make good on the promise to repair the damage done by the Harper administration's assault on the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*.

The *Navigable Waters Protection Act* (NWPA) is one of Canada's oldest environmental laws. Of course, when it was passed in 1882, no one thought it was an environmental law. It was a key piece of legislation to protect rights of navigation. As it evolved, over more than a century, it became essential to controlling and assessing how projects impacted both the human right to navigate, as well as the protection of water itself. From 1882 until 2009, the NWPA protected Canadians' historic right to navigate the lakes, rivers, and streams of Canada without being impeded by pipelines, bridges, power lines, dams, mining and forestry equipment, and more.

Budget Bill Subversion

In 2009, former Prime Minister Harper started the process of weakening it, using the clever maneuver of putting the changes in an omnibus budget bill. With a minority of the seats, putting unpopular legislation into a budget bill forced opposition parties to support of bill, or bring down the government and spark an election for which they were unready. Budget bills are confidence votes. Harper would never have managed to gain opposition party support for weakening the law to protect our waterways. The 2009 omnibus bill changed the definition of 'navigable' from an objective one—'navigable' means waters that can be navigated—to navigable became whatever the Minister of Transportation said it was.

By 2012, with a majority in Parliament, Harper didn't need to put destruction of environmental laws into omnibus budget bills to get them passed. He had the votes, but putting the gutting of the *Fisheries Act*, the NWPA and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* in omnibus bills C-38 and C-45 made the passage fast and the study of the changes woefully inadequate. In 2012, both budget bills C-38 and C-45 wrecked over a century of environmental laws.

Restoring Protection

Ideally, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Fisheries Act*, and the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* should have been restored as quickly as possible, returned to the language as it existed in 2006. I pressed for this soon after the 2015 election.

I lament that the advice to the government from a number of national environmental law groups was that the Liberals should take a longer time for consultation. With the restoration of the 2006 framework of environmental laws, the government could than have subjected them to a review to move to modernize and strengthen our legal regime.

The *Navigable Waters Protection Act* (NWPA) is one of Canada's oldest environmental laws. Of course, when it was passed in 1882, no one thought it was an environmental law.

Rather than restore the original NWPA, thus bringing all navigable waters within the scope of the Act, the committee sets out proposals to make it easier to add named rivers and waterways to the schedule at the back of the Act.

Instead, we have had three separate streams of review—one before the Fisheries Committee, one through an Expert Panel on Environmental Assessment and the last, dealing with the laws to protect Canada's Navigable Waters conducted by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

Transport Committee Report

As David Suzuki and Maude Barlow pointedly noted in their column in the *Globe and Mail*, the transport committee report was released the day after World Water Day, on March 23, and 'the recommendations allow the federal government to abandon its responsibilities to protect the 31,000 lakes and 2.25 million rivers in Canada and communities' rights to navigate these waterways.'

The majority report, written by the Liberal members of the committee, proposes to maintain the structure of the damage done by Harper's omnibus budget bills. The winnowing down from every waterway that was navigable, to a handful of listed waterways was wholly indefensible. But now the committee seeks to defend it.

Rather than restore the original NWPA, thus bringing all navigable waters within the scope of the Act, the committee sets out proposals to make it easier to add named rivers and waterways to the schedule at the back of the Act.

The solution is not to make it marginally easier to add waterways to the Act. It is a clear violation of the Liberal platform and election promises.

There is a significant issue of constitutional law at stake. Navigation is an exclusive head of power under section 91 of the Constitution. Section 91(10) covers navigation and shipping. What the Conservatives did in C-45 is unprecedented in Canadian history. The Conservative government opted out of an exclusive federal head of power.

Navigation has a critical role in Canada's history. And for First Nations and Metis, navigation of remote unnamed rivers is a constitutionally protected right. But C-45 has announced open season for bridges, dams and obstructions of all kinds. Yet, due to the fact that navigation is an exclusive head of federal power, no provincial government can protect navigation.

In addition, within the framework of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) should be incorporated in to the NWPA so that development cannot go ahead without the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous people.

Canadians expect our government to protect our waterways, which are a keystone of our economies, ecosystems, and cultural identities.

Thus far, the Minister of Transport, the Hon Marc Garneau, has not commented on the committee recommendations. I have written to urge him to reject the committee report. I have endorsed the NDP dissent.

There is still time to repair the damage Harper did to navigable waters. ✍



Photo: TJ Watt

Sustainable forestry rally at the BC Legislature. ‘In order to placate public fears about the loss of BC’s endangered old-growth forests, the BC government typically over-inflates the amount of remaining old-growth forests by including hundreds of thousands of hectares of marginal, low productivity forests growing in bogs and at high elevations with smaller, stunted trees, lumped in with the productive old-growth forests, where the large trees grow (and where most logging takes place). It’s like including your Monopoly money with your real money and then claiming to be a millionaire, so why curtail spending?’ says organizer Ken Wu.

UBC report urges BC to suspend Site C - Natalie Dunsmuir

The \$9 billion Site C dam will cost British Columbians billions of dollars to create unnecessary power, according to a new analysis by UBC researchers. The study, *Reassessing the Need for Site C*, calls on the BC government to immediately suspend the ongoing construction of the Site C dam.

‘In December 2014, the Provincial Government justified the significant adverse environmental effects of the Site C Project on the premise—which this report demonstrates to be incorrect—that the project would deliver energy and capacity at lower GHG emissions and lower costs than the available alternatives’, the study states in its summary.

A Surplus of Expensive Power

The report’s main finding is that the Site C dam would create energy that BC doesn’t—and most likely won’t—need. BCHydro’s load forecasts over the last thirty years have been overestimates 85% of the time, and the decision to build Site C is based on a 2013 estimate that was ‘strikingly high’, according to the report.

That 2013 estimate has already been lowered by BCHydro, and current forecasts indicate that the Site C dam would produce a surplus of energy. Any unneeded power would be sold for much less than the cost of producing it, for years to come. Under the current forecast, cumulative losses from exporting this excess power would be around \$2.7 billion by 2036, and ‘would continue to increase thereafter.’

The report also concludes that even with the predicted ‘electricification’ of BC’s economic system,

increases in power consumption will be less than BCHydro has estimated. This is due to continuing delays and reductions to several mining, LNG and oil and gas projects, lower residential and commercial demand, higher electricity prices, and the ongoing effects of energy conservation. BC’s power consumption rates have been essentially flat since 2005, due to conservation programs.

Going Over Budget

When British Columbians first learned about the Site C proposal, the budget sat at roughly \$5.8 billion to build. Currently, the cost of the project is sitting at almost \$9 billion. While the construction of the dam has not yet gone over that increased budget, history shows that overruns are ‘common and potentially substantial’ with this type of project.

The report also takes into account the cost of increasing greenhouse gas emissions. BCHydro’s estimate, while it includes the GHG emissions generated by the construction of the dam, leaves out the emissions generated by its operation. The report estimates that the costs of GHG emissions associated with the dam will peak at around \$32 million per year in 2026, based on the price of \$50/tonne in 2022 that was announced by the Canadian government.

Conclusion: Site C—On Pause

The latter half of the UBC report examines three options for Site C, and their economic consequences—continuing the project as per schedule, suspending the project, or cancelling the project. Authors Richard Hendriks, Karen Bakker and Philip Raphals find that the best option in terms

of economics is the suspension of the dam until the power is actually needed—if it ever is. However, even cancelling the dam is preferable, cost-wise, to continuing with the project.

‘If the clock could be turned back to December 2014,’ the report reads, ‘a Final Investment Decision not to proceed with the Site C Project would have resulted in savings of \$1.4 to \$1.7 billion.’

By June 30 of this year, BC Hydro will have incurred approximately \$1.87 billion in sunk costs. The report concludes that cancelling the Site C and continuing on an ‘alternative path’—such as wind resources, the cost of which has declined by 20% in recent years—would save BC ratepayers by between \$520 million and \$800 million, depending on the load forecast.

As for suspending the project, regardless of BC Hydro’s current forecasts of load growth, suspension would save ratepayers \$800 to \$870 million when compared with completing the project by the estimated date of 2024.

‘The analysis concludes that suspending the Site C Project is preferable to cancelling the Site C Project, with a potential benefit of up to \$350 million dollars,’ the report concludes.

Not Just Economics

Activists protesting the construction of the Site C dam are concerned with more than its economics. The dam will flood 100 kilometres of river valley, which is home to prime agricultural land, First Nations sacred lands, and important wildlife habitat.

A petition is being launched by Leadnow to call on the BC government to listen to the new UBC report and suspend the dam. It has already garnered almost 4000 signatures, [CLICK HERE](#).

To read the full UBC report, [CLICK HERE](#).

‘...the best option in terms of economics is the suspension of the dam until the power is actually needed—if it ever is. However, even cancelling the dam is preferable, cost-wise, to continuing with the project.’

The Gold Rush

In BC's wild west the gold rush is on,
As the political leaders their hard hats don.
With handshakes and smiles they traverse the land
Extolling the virtues of their party's brand.
They use every stop for smart photo ops
Backdrops are filled with happy face props.
Their TV commercials, smooth and slick
All promising change while our pockets they pick.
Crunching the numbers the pollsters count
As the candidates their platforms mount.
Their sponsor's donations just keep on mounting
From whence they come, there is no accounting.
This quest for power, calculating and cold
Can only deliver a pot of fools gold.
While our natural resources are being depleted
Of their security blanket our children are cheated.
When taxes are squandered to purchase our vote
Of these subtle deceits we should all take note.
The truth of these matters we must be told
To a culture of cronies we will not be sold
If the political mess we wish to sweep clean
Perhaps it is time we all voted green.
The gold diggers creed is the pursuit of wealth.
Humanities first need is the planet's health.

—Ann McLean

Bella Coola ferry approved

The British Columbia Ferries Commissioner has issued an approval for BC Ferries to acquire a used vessel, currently named *Aqua Spirit*, to provide direct-summer service in 2018 between Port Hardy and Bella Coola. The government of BC has also announced that it will contribute \$15 million towards the purchase and operation of this vessel.

Aqua Spirit will also replace the 44-year old *Nimpkish*, which provides a year-round connector

service on Route N°10S between Bella Coola and other mid-coast ports of Bella Bella, Ocean Falls and Shearwater.

The vessel will accommodate more than 35 vehicles and 150 passengers and crew. BC Ferries will take possession of the ship in August 2017, and it will undergo major upgrades from the fall of 2017 through the spring of 2018. All passenger areas will be refurbished including lounges, the galley,

washrooms and outer-deck spaces.

Summer service is scheduled to begin in 2018 and will run from mid-June through mid-September on the direct route between Port Hardy and Bella Coola five times per week, a voyage that will take approximately 10 hours. BC Ferries will be engaging with the mid-coast community regarding the sailing schedule and the naming of the vessel. ☞

Photo: Corbin Smith



In a close finish, Gulf Islands Secondary School's team won the Canadian Improv Games in Ottawa. Drama teacher Jason Donaldson (glasses, behind) is as ecstatic as the youngsters: Fiona Pirie, Amelia McCluskey, Kane O'Scaleigh, Melanie Gregory-Worsell, Peter Hoskins, and Shaye Steele. To help with costs of going to Ottawa, the team recently held a fundraiser show tour of the islands and were enthusiastically received.

What's On?

VANCOUVER ISLAND & ALL THE GULF ISLANDS

Sunday, May 7

10th Annual River Never Sleeps Festival—



Celebrate salmon and their ecosystems; fish, family fun, BBQ and booths • Rosewall Creek Hatchery, 8425 Berray Rd, off Hwy 19A, north of the Cook Creek Rd turnoff in Fanny Bay •

10am–3pm • Info: Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society, www.fbses.ca • **FANNY BAY**

Sunday, May 7

Ruckle Heritage Farm Day—Geared toward children and educational farm related themes; heritage farming and crafts; animals, orchard, farm products displays, classic machines, demonstrations, exhibits, activities, food • Beautiful Ruckle Farm •

10am–3pm • Volunteers still needed, contact Marjorie Lane, 250.653.4071 or rucklefarm@shaw.ca • **SALT SPRING**

Wednesday, May 24

22nd Annual Bob Dylan Birthday

Party—An evening listening to or performing your favourite Bob Dylan tunes and celebrating Bob's Nobel Prize in Literature 'for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition' • Galiano Community Hall • Show at 7pm, Bob's cake at 8:30pm • Admission: donation to Galiano Community Land & Housing Trust • Performers or general info please call Tom, 250.539.2960 • **GALIANO**

Hike for Hospice a chance to celebrate loved ones we've lost

Four years ago, Marion Pape's husband Manfred Pape passed away at Victoria Hospice after a long battle with colorectal cancer. A few weeks before he died, bolstered by the support of their son Andrew, family and friends, Marion participated in her first ever Hike for Hospice.

'Initially, we used the opportunity as a way to relieve our feelings of dread,' she says. Since then, the event has become a celebratory annual tradition for her multi-generational family and friends.

'Hike for Hospice is a wonderful way to honour someone who is special to you,' says Marion. 'And doesn't everyone in the world have someone to remember? For us, the hike has become more important than Manfred's birthday or the day he died.'

'We're a family that does a lot together and hiking is a joy. Hike for Hospice gave us a chance to cheer Manfred on during his final journey—he connected

with the hikers via tablet from his hospice bed, being too weak to join us on the road.

'The beautiful side-effect was that it actually brought joy and laughter to Manfred. It raised his spirits to see how many people loved him and came to hike in his honour.'

Victoria Hospice depends on community support for almost half of its operating costs, making events like Hike for Hospice truly meaningful. The goal for this year's hike is to raise \$40,000 for end-of-life care. 'The fact that Hike for Hospice also raises funds for such a vital service in our community makes the time spent hiking with loved ones that much more special,' says Marion.

'What I've come to realize is the minute you step up and reach out to help others in their grief, it feels so much better. Hike for Hospice really is a chance to step up and celebrate the loved ones we've lost.'

The next opportunity to Hike for Hospice is on May 7. [CLICK HERE](#) for details. ☞

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Artists Raise Money for Democracy

Over a dozen Canadian artists have donated original artwork to Fair Vote Canada's online auction, Artists for Democracy. Fair Vote needs to raise money to support its work in promoting a better voting system for Canada. Robert Bateman, long time supporter of Fair Vote Canada, is leading the effort, along with several other outstanding artists.

The Artists for Democracy auction closes on April 30. To bid on a painting, [CLICK HERE](#).

Mandatory High Heels Banned

Green MLA Andrew Weaver tabled a bill on International Women's Day last month to ban the practice of forcing female employees to wear high heeled shoes. The bill passed mid-April, and the government of BC has amended the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* under the *Workers Compensation Act* to include that 'potential for musculoskeletal injury' must be considered in determining appropriate footwear.

The amended regulation ensures that workplace footwear is of a design, construction and material that allows the worker to safely perform their work and ensures that employers cannot require footwear contrary to this standard.

'When I first tabled this bill it went viral and received media coverage around the world. Forcing female employees to wear high-heeled shoes,

especially when their male colleagues are wearing flat shoes, is archaic and this change is clearly overdue,' said Weaver. 'We are very far from an inclusive, gender-equal province. But this is an important step (taken in work-appropriate shoes of our choosing) in the right direction.'

Greenpeace Movement gets Samsung to Recycle

In 2016, the Samsung Group recalled millions of Galaxy Note 7 phones due to possibility of battery fires. The phones were destined to end up in the landfill, but after five months of work from Greenpeace supporters around the world, the multinational corporation agreed to recycle the recalled phones instead.

Samsung will refurbish unsold Galaxy Note 7s and repurpose non-problematic components, such as the camera and alarms, so they can be used and resold in future phones. For components that can't be repurposed, the company will extract and recycle the raw materials.

Samsung also announced it will participate in new research led by the European Union aimed at developing environmentally friendly ways to recycle smartphones.

The change in the company's plans was due in part to a petition that gathered hundreds of thousands of signatures, as well as to online action using the [#SaveTheGalaxy](#) hashtag. Activists in Barcelona also protested outside of a Samsung press conference.

SCROLL TO PAGE 13 FOR MORE NEWS DIGEST

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LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that I, **Michael Canaday** from **Mayne Island, BC**, have applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Mayne Island/vicinity of Campbell Bay** fronting **LOT 38, SECTION 10, MAYNE ISLAND, COWICHAN DISTRICT, PLAN 15027**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414535**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 28, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: <http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp> for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation's office in Nanaimo.

LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that we, **Gary and Donna Bello** from **Saltspring Island, BC**, have applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Saltspring Island in the vicinity of Walker's Hook** fronting **LOT A, SECTION 13, RANGE 3 EAST, NORTH SALT SPRING ISLAND, COWICHAN DISTRICT, PLAN 2925, EXCEPT PARTS IN PLANS 4925 AND 5367**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414536**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 28, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: <http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp> for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation's office in Nanaimo.

LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that we, **Robert and Veronica Euper** from **Mayne Island, BC**, have applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Mayne Island/vicinity of Dinner Bay** fronting **LOT 229, SECTION 6, MAYNE ISLAND, COWICHAN DISTRICT, PLAN 23981**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414515**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 28, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: <http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp> for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation's office in Nanaimo.

LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that we, **ANNE DENISE CASHIN and JOHN BASIL CASHIN** from **Ganges, BC**, have applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Saltspring Island /vicinity of Stuart Channel** fronting **LOT A SECTION 8 RANGE 2 WEST NORTH SALT SPRING ISLAND COWICHAN DISTRICT PLAN 19010**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414546**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 31, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: <http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp> for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation's office in Nanaimo.

LAND ACT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND

Take notice that I, **Raymond Quing Leung Tong** from **Saltspring Island, BC**, has applied to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO), West Coast Region for a **Specific Permission – Private Moorage** situated on Provincial Crown land located at **Stuart Channel / fronting Lot3, Section 7, Range 2 West, North Salt Spring Island, Cowichan District, Plan 36401**. The Lands File Number that has been established for this application is **Crown Land File # 1414443**. Written comments concerning this application should be directed to the Section Head, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations at 142 - 2080 Labieux Rd, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or emailed to: AuthorizingAgency.Nanaimo@gov.bc.ca. Comments will be received by FLNRO up to **May 22, 2017**. FLNRO may not be able to consider comments received after this date. Please visit our website: <http://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/index.jsp> for more information. Be advised that any response to this advertisement will be considered part of the public record. For information, contact the Freedom of Information Advisor at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation's office in Nanaimo.

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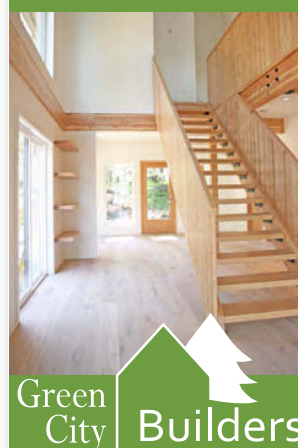
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AROUND THE ISLANDS

Gabriola's Isle of the Arts Festival

The Gabriola Arts Council held their 8th Annual Isle of the Arts Festival from April 6-16 this year. The festival included 65 workshops and seven events. Workshops were in a variety of art forms, from videography, painting, music, lantern making, printmaking, quilting, and even tarot card creation.

The festival opened with a series of readings by authors Joëlle Anthony, Lorna Crozier, and Monique Gray Smith, which took place at sunset at the Surf Lodge and Pub. Easter was celebrated by an Easter Bonnet Show and Parade, a first ever for the festival.

The week-and-a-half festival closed with an Artist Appreciation BBQ on April 16, open to everyone who wanted to celebrate art on Gabriola Island.

To learn more about this annual celebration, [CLICK HERE](#).

Students Create a Habitat Garden

Earth Day was celebrated at École Marigold Elementary School by the creation of a pollinator habitat garden and outdoor learning space in the schoolyard, created through the Green Spots school program by the non-profit Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT).

Last fall the students dug in over 250 native plants to create the pollinator garden. On April 21 this year, the day before Earth Day, students hosted a school-wide assembly to learn about the native species in their garden with bees and butterflies in mind. Students of Marigold are discovering how wildlife habitat can be found and nurtured not only in parks, but all around them, even on their own school grounds.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure allowed HAT staff to salvage native plants in the McKenzie Interchange construction area to be planted in the garden.

With many hands working together, wildflowers like the camas, fawn lilies, and native grasses—

which once flourished under the majestic Garry oaks of Marigold's fields—are being brought back by the students.

Pollinators, seasonal changes, and indigenous use of plants of the meadow are just a few of the elements to inspire learning, curiosity, and awe.

Mayne Plant Sale & Tea in Good Time for Mothers' Day - Allan Evans

Silver Maynes' annual plant and baked goods sale, and its Mother's Day Tea, is on Saturday, May 13 at 1pm in the historic Agricultural Hall, and on the fair grounds beside the hall.

This is a weekend when our island fills up with visitors who come to honour mothers or grandmothers, or simply because it is spring.

Plants on sale are donated from Mayne Island gardens, and some, too, from Home Hardware.

High Tea (or coffee), presented in bone china cups, is served in the newly-decorated hall.

I have checked the weather predictions in Old Farmer's Almanac; it is cautious. Yet you can be sure that May 13 will be a splendid day even if it rains, for the tent that the Lions Club provides will keep us dry.

Mothers' Day Run and Walk

The Oceanside Mothers' Day 10K Run and 5K Run/Walk event is back this year on Sunday, May 14. This event offers two courses, awards, great food and an abundance of draw prizes both for entrants and for the valued volunteers.

The 10K Run is a scenic course, part road and part trail, that winds through Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Park and along the beautiful oceanfront. This is the course to pick if you are a competitive or recreational runner. The 5K Run/Walk is back by popular request and loops through the Englishman River Estuary (road and trail). This is the course to pick if you want to take more time, enjoy a shorter course or are a new runner with a personal goal. It's also the course to choose if you are a walker or will be pushing a baby buggy/stroller.

All are welcome! More information, [CLICK HERE](#), [REGISTER HERE](#).

Island Bullfrog Invasion

The American bullfrog is not a native animal on the Gulf Islands, but it lives here anyway—with a burgeoning population. These bullfrogs can weigh 1.5 pounds and have a large appetite for the smaller, native frog species on the islands, as well as other amphibians, reptiles, ground-nesting birds, young water fowl, domestic farming fowl, and fresh water fish species. In fact, the American bullfrog will eat any animal which it is capable of swallowing.

The Pender Islands Conservancy Association is holding a seminar on this invasive species on May 6, from 2pm to 3:30pm, at the Pender Community Hall. The information session, hosted jointly with Parks Canada, will teach islanders about the negative ecological impacts of this invasive species on the native species, as well as on domesticated species, on the islands. It will also give an update on efforts to eradicate the bullfrog population from the area.

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Photo: Nettie Adams
A blue heron: 'Tread carefully, I'm feeling a little spiky today.'

Nanaimo Family Donates Legacy to VIU Theatre Students

Nanaimo residents Eldred and Joyce Classen lost their son, Brent Dana Classen, an alum of the Technical Theatre Diploma program, unexpectedly in 2015. He was 55. To honour his memory, they have donated \$175,000 to the VIU Foundation to create an endowment fund that will ensure one student in financial need will be helped every year.

The Brent Classen Technical Theatre Award covers all tuition costs and other fees for a year plus a \$500 cheque towards books for students enrolled in VIU's Technical Theatre Diploma. Starting next fall, one award will be available each year in perpetuity. The award is available to students who attended a public school on Vancouver Island, and can demonstrate both financial need and a passion for the stagecraft profession.

Brent was well-known in Vancouver Island's theatre community through his company, Whole Hog Productions Ltd. Growing up in Cedar, his passion for stagecraft began in his teens when he started volunteering for the Yellow Point Theatre Group. After high school, he went on to complete the Technical Theatre Program at VIU (then Malaspina University-College).

The award will make a huge impact on aspiring theatre technicians going forward, says Leon Potter, Theatre Department Chair.

Commuter Train in the CRD?

The BC government has announced that it will review options for a commuter train in the Capital Regional District, between Victoria and Langford. The proposed route would use the E&N rail line that stretches the 15 kilometres between the two cities.

Previous referendums in the area have shown that more than 90% of residents are in favour of the train, and four communities have endorsed the plan. The proposal is based on an increasing population in Langford that is causing congestion on Highway 1 into Victoria by residents commuting to work by car.

A working group, which will include representatives from the ministry, local government, BC Transit, the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (VRTC) and BC Safety Authority, will investigate the options for this part of the E&N rail corridor. It is expected that the analysis will be completed this summer. ✍

The Platforms

Now of the party platforms, and that's three that I have seen,
The one that is the best for people has to be the Green.
A trustworthy good government, like we haven't seen in years
A contrast to those Liberals who keep giving us the gears!
We'd implement those industries more suited to BC,
And managed more sustainably, just as they used to be.
Forestry, fishing, tourism and an end to trophy sport,
And fish-farms in the Narrows—put on dry-land as they ought!

We'd get upgraded services, and medicare reform,
Clean waterways, and transit plans as per the Green's platform.
We do not want to turn BC into an industrial slum,
With tankers lining up for berths just like in Rotterdam;
Nor do we need a Site C dam, and all its extra debt—
A Liberal boondoggle, where the power's not needed yet.
And I must add—if anyone, the Greens know what is meant
When it is said that we have rights to a Healthy Environment!

—H Barry Cotton, April 2017

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The lunch table at the Saturna Store Cafe as Hubertus Surm cooks up a storm in the kitchen. Photo: Priscilla Ewbank

More News Digest

Protesters Crash Massey Bridge Groundbreaking

The construction of the \$3.5 billion bridge that will replace the George Massey Tunnel officially began on April 5. The toll bridge is designed to have 10-lanes spanning the Fraser River's south arm, and will take five years to build. It's a controversial project, with the City of Richmond strongly opposed to the bridge while Delta Mayor Lois Jackson strongly supports it. With the exception of Delta, however, Metro Vancouver mayors oppose the construction project, saying that provincial spending should be invested in transit projects instead.

The official groundbreaking ceremony on April 5 was forced into cancellation by protesters. BC Transportation Minister Todd Stone was late for the ceremony, so protesters took the stage instead.

'Sing Me A Song' Winners

The winners for Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon's community music award, 'Sing Me A Song', have been announced. This year's contest was centered around Canada's 150th birthday.

Winners are 'We are Canada' by Mme Daniel's Class (Eric Langton Elementary School) in Maple Ridge, in the under 11 category; 'Home' by Our Lady of Mercy School Choir in Burnaby for the under 18 category; 'Welcome to Canada' by The Gardens Choir in Qualicum Beach for the open category; and, 'Chances' by Stz'uminus Community school's Grade 6 class in Ladysmith for the

'Enthusiasm and Spirit Award'.

Entries were scored on musicality, spirit and originality by a panel of musicians. All submissions had to have a minimum of eight voices, be original content and be inspired by the Canada 150 theme.

Glacier Ski Resort Approved

A new year-round ski resort in the Robson Valley, just inside the BC border close to Jasper opens up a glacial area near Valemont to skiing gained provincial approval on March 28.

Valemont Glacier Destinations Ltd says it will invest \$100 million in the first phase of the project.

The mountain access will reach elevations of more than 3,000 metres on the summits of Mount Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Glacier Ridge, Mount Arthur Meighen and Twilight Glacier. A village at the base of the mountains will house residential, commercial and hotel space.

Canadian Video Contest


In honour of the upcoming World Environment Day to be hosted in Ottawa on June 5, federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna is inviting Canadians from the ages of 18 to 25 to participate in the Great Canadian Video Contest. Applicants will submit two-minute videos showing how they connect with nature, and why environmental protection is important to them. Two winners will be selected by random draw to join Minister McKenna in Ottawa on June 5. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

Clayoquot Mine Proposal


The company involved in the Mount Polley tailings pond dam collapse wants to build an open-pit copper mine in the heart of the iconic and pristine rainforests of Clayoquot Sound, says petition organization SumOfUs. Imperial Metals' proposed

mine site, Catface Mountain, is part of the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve—one of only 18 in Canada.

A petition to stop the mine has already gathered over 30,700 signatures. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.




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NEW FEATURE! - THE LONG READ

Electoral Dysfunction and Reform - Elizabeth May, MP

On February 12, Elizabeth May gave this 'Tedx Stanley Park: Ideas Worth Spreading' minitalk. She got the audience laughing and received a standing ovation. Recently put on YouTube you can [WATCH HERE](#), it is a great explanation of the Canadian election system and should go viral. May was a member of the recent Special Committee on Electoral Reform and is Leader of the Green Party of Canada.

I want to start by acknowledging with gratitude that I stand here on the traditional, unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

Amid all the fun, exciting, and emotional talks you are going to hear today, I get to tell you about voting systems. How they work, how they sometimes don't work, the perennial Canadian problem of electoral dysfunction—there someday will be a drug...

In the meantime, we have it in our hands to fix our broken voting system, but first we need to understand it. So, one of the things I wanted to share with you is that it's really easy to vote, using almost any voting system you can think of, but people who use that voting system often find it hard to explain the system they are used to.

I discovered this when I was on the Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reform and Forum Research came to us to tell us that they had polled Canadian's to find out if we even knew the name of the system we are using.

Now, they made it easy. They actually created a multiple-choice list, and went out to find out could Canadian's pick from a list—you know—you've got the preferential voting, proportional representation, or first-past-the-post. I was actually quite surprised to find that most of Canadian's couldn't properly name the system we are using from a multiple-choice question. Only 40% could. And the 40% who saw that it was first-past-the-post probably couldn't explain how it worked exactly; because any voting system can be complicated to explain, even if it is easy to use.

For instance, I hear news media people all the time during an election talking about the campaign to *elect* a new prime minister. News flash to news media: we don't elect prime ministers in Canada. We do not hold an election to choose a new prime minister. The only voters in Canada who ever saw Justin Trudeau's name on a ballot in 2015 were the voters in Papineau, in his riding, in Quebec.

We elect *members of parliament* in a Westminster Parliamentary system, and I want to shed a bit of light on that; but I want to give us three easy, how-to, things you think about when you design a voting system. Okay? And I will walk you through them, but here they are; three things:

1. Design a voting system for people, not horses. It's more important than you think, this one.
2. Avoid the problem of having the wrong winner, and (laughter and clapping) Well ... I think you are already ahead of me on this, but
3. Come up with a voting system that is designed for voters, not for political parties.

What Have Horses Got To Do With It?

So, let me start with the first one. What about horses, why do we have so much horsey stuff in our voting system? We talk about the ridings. We have ridings across Canada and each riding elects an MP; and then we have the electoral system we use, first-past-the-post.

Well, 'riding' is about how much of a district in the olden days you could ride around on horseback to either collect the votes or go back to tell your constituents what you have been doing, and 'first-past-the-post' is a term from horse racing—a horseracing term. So, these strange things were involving horses.

Now first-past-the-post is actually a rule that the first horse that got its nose over the line would win all the money, even if that horse was later disqualified. I found this from a book published in 1880 called *Race Horse in Training*—you could probably find it too—and it referred to this

'So, voting for what you want should be something we build into a voting system as something that is meaningful. Your vote has clout. You know you can vote for what you want without getting what you most fear.'

rule and said, 'fortunately it was stopped in its infancy thanks to the vigilance of the jockey club'. The system we use to vote is named for something they used to do in horseracing that the jockey club got rid of in 1880. Just saying ... it must be a wonderful system.

Now, all of these horses and all of these riders, where were they all riding around? Not in Canada. All of this terminology and all of this system came from 'Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves'. The great British Empire developed the system of voting that we have, and only those countries that were ever a part of the British Empire use this system. That's something else that Canadians don't really know about our system of voting, first-past-the-post. Most modern democracies don't use it. They don't go near it. There are many reasons why not, and I will get into some of those, but it's a *hand-me-down*.

Now, in 1867, which we all know because it is now—yay—the 150th birthday of Canada (recognizing that there were other people here first—I just like to remind us of that when we celebrate the 150th birthday), our constitution, the *British North America Act, 1867*, said, 'Canada's Parliament shall be elected using the system we are using now at Westminster until such time as the Canadian Parliament decides on its own system'—150 years and counting!

We are essentially still wearing Queen Victoria's old hand-me-downs. We have not improved on it, and it is not as though parliament hasn't tried. It was, again something I learned from being on the Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reform, the first time the Canadian Parliament studied our voting system was in 1921; and they concluded that in any democracy with more than two parties, which Canada had—3, 4, 5 parties since the early part of the 20th century—that in any system with more than two parties, first-past-the-post did not work. It was a bad system for Canada. But we didn't take it forward to figure out what would be a good system.

Wrong Winner Problem

Well, let me take you to the second problem. The problem of the wrong winner. Now, it's been on our minds a lot lately, I know you are all thinking of it—'and best picture goes to La-La-Land'. Oh my god, the consternation—you saw it—the cast and crew of La-La Land are on stage giving their thank you's, and then there are people with headsets and they are running around behind, it's like 'it's a mistake,

it's a mistake, they're not the real winners'.

Don't you just wish that when Donald Trump put his hand on the bible, and commenced to take the Oath of Office of President of the United States, someone hadn't just run up and said, 'Sorry, mistake. While we were tweeting, we missed that Hillary Clinton got three million more votes than you, I am so sorry Mr. Trump.' Wrong winner.

Now, the wrong winner problem, amazingly enough, yes, the United States of America which threw off the British Empire (had a whole revolution about it, got rid of King George III, but, what the heck, they kept first-past-the-post. And, they made it even weirder by creating the Electoral College.)

So, some of you, and I think a lot of Canadians often think, as we look at other countries, we can feel a bit smug. We can say to ourselves 'well, that couldn't happen here'. Not only could it happen here, it *has happened here*. The wrong winner problem happens because under first-past-the-post, the way we vote separates the seat count from the popular vote.

So in 1957, John Diefenbaker, by popular vote, lost the election that he won. The Liberals under Louis St Laurent had more votes than John Diefenbaker, but—and literally we could say the rest is history—Diefenbaker became Prime Minister.

In 1979, the Progressive Conservatives under Joe Clark had fewer votes than the Liberals under Pierre Trudeau, but it was one of those wrong winner problems and the Liberals lost the election, even though they won the popular vote.

The wrong winner problem is really quite confusing. It has happened a lot. It has happened in the UK.

And if you wonder why it is that New Zealand, a Commonwealth country, with a constitutional monarchy, just like us, Her Majesty is their Head of State, and a Westminster system of electing members of parliament, if you wonder why New Zealand has proportional representation—fair voting under the system *they* picked, mixed member proportional—it's probably because in the late '70s and early '80s they got two wrong winner elections in a row. Two times in a row the people of New Zealand voted for a party and gave more votes to the party that lost.

It can happen here, it has happened here, we really need to be concerned about having a system that can deliver to us a government with the wrong winner; and even in some ways, an almost bigger problem is the problem of the wrong *big* winner.

When a minority of the voters vote for a party that manages to accumulate the majority of the seats, and that is when you have a majority government that doesn't have the support of the majority of votes. It is easy to see how it happens if you are going riding by riding—a lot of those votes disappear.

To give you an example, in 2015 there is a group of MPs' who were elected in their own ridings, with less than 29% of the popular vote—28.6, 28.8. We are all equal as members of parliament. Now, it doesn't matter how much we carried our own riding by, we are all equals, but when you are in Quebec with a strong campaign for Bloc, a strong campaign

SCROLL TO NEXT PAGE



Photo: Rick Graham

Canada geese sample the spring air on Tumbo Island, Saturna.

THE LONG READ, CONTINUED

for Liberal, a strong campaign for everybody, you can see how it happens. You can win your seat leaving 72% of the voters in your riding with their votes not counting. That's how you accumulate this big distance between the seat count and the popular vote.

Voting System For Voters Not Political Parties

So, Point 3: You are designing a voting system, you ought to design it to work for the voters and not for political parties. Now, political parties want one thing, and I think you know what it is, they want power and they will manipulate any voting system you give them to figure out how to play the odds to get that power.

So, under first-past-the-post, since it is the seat count that matters and not the popular vote, increasingly in recent years the big parties know you don't need to go forward to the Canadian public and try to get the majority to agree with you, and you don't need to necessarily listen to the majority of Canadian's when they tell you what they want you to do, because you are playing the odds and you are slicing and dicing a targeted message. You are using dog whistle politics. You are using voter suppression.

Political parties, and the big ones, like first-past-the-post because they have got this sense that even if they lose one election or two elections, eventually it will be their turn again. Right?

People talk about politics in Canada all the time, but the phenomenon isn't about people getting excited and voting for what they want. It is about this overwhelming incentive to throw the bums out, and then you get a big sweep in the other direction, and everything the last government does, the new

government tries to change. That's what parties like.

What Do Voters Want?

What do voter's like? Voter's like knowing that when you put your little 'x' next to a name on the ballot, your vote has clout. You want to know that your vote means something, and when you vote for a person in your riding to be your MP, or a party whose beliefs you align with your own and that person represents that, you want to know that your vote is going to count and if you live in a riding—and you know the stories: 'you know you could run a goat with a red sweater and he would win in this riding because the Liberals always win here', or 'you could run a dog in blue sweater'—if you are living in a place like that, where the outcome seems certain before you go to the polls, you have less reason to go. Voters want to know that their vote is going to count and have clout.

Second thing voters really want in a democracy should be absolutely obvious; that every system should let people vote for what they want. Vote for what you believe in. Vote to send a message. Vote to use your voice. But in first-past-the-post, so often people say 'well, I know what I want, I want to vote for that party X, but if I vote for party X, I am terribly afraid party Y might get in, so I am going to have to hold my nose and vote for party Z'.

Now, I don't know about you, but I think when you can't breathe as you vote, it is actually not very healthy. I think it induces nausea and makes it less likely you are going to vote again next time.

So, voting for what you want should be something we build into a voting system as something that is meaningful. Your vote has clout. You know you can vote for what you want without getting what you most fear.

The third thing that Canadians really want in a voting system is knowing that the way the collectivity of Canadians have voted is reflected in the seat count in the House of Commons. You want to know that the popular vote is reflected in the parliament you get. It's a democracy—that should be considered so basic that we shouldn't still be talking about it.

So don't you think, with the 150th birthday since we were first told that as soon as parliament can get around to it you can pick a voting system that works for Canada, we ought to have a look at the voting systems that work for Canada?

That we should look at the systems that allow us to keep an MP representing us locally—just so you know, our committee said it's 'nay' on anything like the system used in Israel where you just vote for a political party. I love that I represent a constituency: people who tell me what they want, and I work for them. And my constituents want to know who is their MP, who is their go-to person for everything.

Now, that can be protected with mixed member proportional like they use in Germany and New Zealand, with single transferrable vote, clustering the ridings and being able to pick a number of candidates every time you go to vote, electing a number of MPs for a clustered riding. These systems can be tweaked. They will work great for Canada.

What we do know is that first-past-the-post is a system that doesn't work well for anyone.

So, in 2017 for our 150th birthday party, what do you say? Shouldn't we have rules that are at least as fair as what the jockey club insisted on in 1880?

And shouldn't we have elections that are even fairer than the Oscars?

'The envelope please....' 📧



Islanders, let's stick together

GaryHolman.bcndp.ca / Gary.Holman@bcndp.ca Authorized by Janis Gauthier Financial Agent, 250-653-0041

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