

Gulf Islands' Island Tides

Giving The Coast A Community Voice For 27 Years



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Photo: Mike Yip

Looking out from Qualicum Bay—a turquoise sea means the herring spawn has started, a magnificent sight especially if the sun is shining.

Harry Swain on BCHydro and convenient accounting

This is the transcript of part of a presentation, in which Harry Swain is answering an audience question. The event took place in Saanich in mid-February. Dr Swain, an Associate Fellow at University of Victoria Centre for Global Studies, chaired the 2014 federal-provincial review panel evaluating the impact of the \$8.8 billion Site C dam.

We, together, the 4.5 million residents of BC, are not very good at arithmetic. We are not interested in it. We don't pay attention to it. We go to sleep. These are big numbers. Who can tell a billion from a million? Let me very quickly give you another story that is related to this.

Every utility in Canada operates under Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, Canadian GAAP, right? The Government of British Columbia has a law in its financial administration act that says that all entities of the Government of British Columbia including departments, commissions, and crown corporations will keep their books according to Canadian GAAP—except ... when inconvenient.

A few years ago, there was a change in the basic accounting standard, to the International Financial Standard, you know. It meant that companies had to account for things like pension liabilities as they occurred. So, if you have got your employees pension sitting over here and the market goes down, you were supposed to account for that as an obligation of the company, it goes onto your cost, it lowers your profits, and so on. Right?

This was inconvenient for BCHydro and for its owner [the BC government], because in the 2008 year the value of their pension fund dropped by a couple hundred million dollars, and this would have to be recorded as a loss, and it would reduce the rather notional profit that BCHydro made, and therefore the

dividend that Victoria could claim. The dividend is important to a Minister of Finance who wants to claim that he is financially prudent.

Aright. So. What do you do in such a circumstance? Well, the easy thing is change the accounting standard. So, suddenly there is a midnight Order In Council that said that BCHydro, alone among all, will do its accounting according to an American standard called FASB 98 which is fairly generous on the issue of deferral accounts.

A deferral account is set up by a corporation when it has got, let's say, very lumpy capital expenditures and a steady stream of income, and it doesn't want—as in the case of utility—to face its customers with a big increase one year and a decrease the next year, and so on and so forth. People seem to be happier when their rates are steady.

So, deferral accounts are normal in the utility business. They usually never amount to more than 6 or 7% of the equity of the company, which in our case would be a couple hundred million dollars.

BCHydro has now run up deferral accounts over \$5 billion. Just to give you an example of a deferral account, they have income which they can accurately, pretty accurately, forecast because the rates have been approved by the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) for the next couple of years, right?

So, that income can, if you want, be accounted for now. (Prudently you would account for it only when

you get it.) In the out years, let's say from 2019 onward, Hydro says it needs a 14% increase in rates—and that's the number—and we know that the government isn't going to stand for it, but they, nonetheless, put that sum in a deferral account, say that it is money that is owed to them by us, or our kids. It is therefore income in the present year. It counts as part of the notional profit of BC Hydro, on which, or from which, water rentals and dividends are paid.

Now, how'd they get there? The American standard allows these deferral accounts to be set up only if the amounts are approved by an independent third party regulator. Aa-ha!

So, guess what, a little later there is another midnight Order In Council that says that BCHydro will now operate according to the FASB 98 standard—with no mention of a regulator. They can make it up. They don't have to have a regulator look at it.

Now, all that is assuming that you even think that BCUC is in fact an independent regulator at this point, subject as it is to government orders, directions, and what not—whenever convenient.

This transcript is available courtesy of Norman Farrell's blog In-Sights: [CLICK HERE](#) and, Ed Johnson's Saanich Report: [CLICK HERE](#).

Also 'Ed Johnson Presents', is a monthly program on Shaw TV Victoria. 📺

Saturna Notes – Priscilla Ewbank

With the daylight saving time shift, my internal clock is scrambled. We have slid gently by minutes and seconds into lighter days and an hour's jolt backward into dark mornings is disconcerting.

Awake early today, I saw that my little brown bat buddies are out of their winter dormancy and were swirling and twirling about in front of the bedroom windows, coming home to go to sleep for the day. (See article about bats, page 5.)

I cherish the dawn bird chorus this time of year. When I first became aware of spring migration and bursts of territorial birdsong, it was all a wonderful sound blur. Now, my love of birds and happy, ongoing study of the notes of their calls allows me to notice who has returned to join us for the season. Those that are still a mystery to me demand birdbooks and binoculars.

Besides all the pleasure that they give to me, birds have come to represent how much I have learned in my life, season by season. One of the beauties of living in a rural area for 30-plus years is that the seasons become richer and more familiar as your awareness increases and years roll by.

I came of age with the book, *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. An east coast biologist and child of biologists, Carson wrote about her concern that pesticides—specifically DDT—were having a killing affect on bird populations and their prey. Published in 1962, it coincided with my high school classes and fieldwork in biology, which I was growing to love.

About five-years-ago, I began to notice how much quieter our dawn spring chorus was at Haggis Farm. Suddenly, I remembered the title of that book and I knew from a deep place in myself what a silent spring would sound like.

Odonata Pond Survey

In mid-February, Athena George, our local Parks Canada interpreter and Jasper, her niece, joined our twelve Saturna Ecological Education Center students and their teacher Dorianna Chessa for a bioblitz of the big farm pond at Haggis Farm.

Athena and Jasper have been surveying the pond's inhabitants since

Jasper was about five-years-old. Jasper is now in university and is a wonderfully fun, informed person to have along on a pond survey.

The kids had a blast even though it was freezing with the winter sun softly shining.

When you pull up a bunch of pond gunk with a net and into sampling containers it is just the best to have someone say, 'Wow! Look at that big silver bubble of air which that diving beetle is lugging around underwater—just like a scuba diver has to do!'

Sometimes, I do wonder if our phone and digitally addicted kids even know that the moon rises, that Venus lights up the twilight sky sometimes, and that we are all alive at the whim of dirt, wind, and glasses of water!

How heartening it is to hear and see their genuine curiosity and wonder. How wonderful it was to be there and learn alongside them: four women—each one about 20 years older than the next—who love the world and marvel at our passage on this earth.

Palliative Care

My son-in-law died on February 26 in Red Deer. Husband of eldest daughter, father to two grandchildren, a bright light and deeply respected in his career, his death is still surreal.

I write of his death to share several things that have occurred to me in the short months that our family's life changed to such depth.

Dave spent his last ten days in a palliative care facility two blocks from their home. This facility, not attached to the bustle and movement of a major hospital, provides round the clock medical and loving care to ten people and their families in their last days. The director told me that the way the building is constructed and the way the staff work is modeled in many ways on the palliative care unit at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria.

The new building is bright and filled with artwork. Good food is cooked on premises and the kitchen is in the centre along with the medical unit. The rooms all face outside and have a little patio with double French doors to the outside. There are two bright, comfy spaces for families to collect, a library and fireplace, and a piano to play. Beautifully made quilts,



POND STUDY

no two alike, were all around on the beds of patients, the eating trays had hand quilted placemats that changed each time.

The front doormat was piled up with snowy boots and shoes. You can visit at any time, stay overnight easily, the parking is free and right to hand. The effort is to make lives work to the best outcome for the families and the people who are dying. There is free counselling available after the death of your loved one.

Close to Dave's room was a watercolour of a barn owl by Robert Bateman—soft, coastal, Salt Spring. Barn owls were so common where I grew up as a child. In the stress and exhaustion of the situation, the blaring cold and snow of an unfamiliar kind of winter, the painting brought me comfort, slowed me down.

With all of the doubt that surrounds our ability to get through provincial political grandstanding, bureaucratic turf-wars, public versus private funding, unions and benefits versus underpaid contract workers, I am here to tell you that, in palliative care, we have accomplished something completely successful in Alberta and BC. Dave and Genni and their children and our larger family were welcomed and cherished and Dave was as comfortable as modern medicine could make him in this new, inspired facility.

Genni and Dave had created between them relationship that made them close and honest before this situation came up, and had the time, and the support from our society and

their family to travel this, their last journey together with their children. How much better the family are prepared to sustain their loss.

I am grateful that our Canadian society is willing to allocate resources into figuring out how can we help citizens, in their last days, leave this world. Using what we know about pain control, about the value of family caring and support, and what we know about supporting the dignity and unique autonomy of the person dying. We could not have cared for Dave at home as well as he was cared for where he was. And we citizens are all funding this, through our belief and support of democratic principles and the shared commonwealth of our nation.

In my lifetime, I have seen such great changes in how my society handles and thinks of death and birth and caring for our citizens as we are born and die. When my British grandmother died I was told as an afterthought, two weeks later and no one ever kept track of me and wondered how I was dealing with her death. I was with my mother the whole time through her death and fended for myself unaware of how much better the process could have been. With my husband, Jon's, death, I learned so much more. Now, with Dave's death, my family has experienced comfort and relief knowing that he did not suffer needlessly and had full support from compassionate knowledgeable people in a facility that magnifies everyone's efforts. ✍️

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Photo: Martin Blakesley

Sunrise at Fulford (in case you've forgotten what sunrise looks like).

Southern Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan in the making

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is developing a regional trails plan for Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands.

'In general, each regional trail route on the islands will provide a 'spine' or 'loop' that other trails can connect with to create a broader network. The goal is that each regional trail will connect the ferry terminal to at least one key destination on the island,' explains David Howe, CRD Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area Director.

'The Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan will help foster tourism, recreation, active transportation, and economic development on the islands by setting a direction for the development of a regional trail on each of the six islands,' said Wayne McIntyre, CRD Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director.

'It complements the 'Experience the Gulf Islands' initiative, and once developed, the trails will provide infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists to travel between ferry terminals and some key recreation, tourism, and commercial areas on the islands. This expansion of walking and cycling opportunities on the islands will also provide connectivity to trails and active transportation routes on Vancouver Island and the BC mainland.'

The trail plan will be finalized in 2018. Trail construction on the islands will take place over many years as funding is identified.

The public is encouraged to get involved. Open

Houses have already taken place on North and South Pender and Salt Spring. There will be ones on Saturna on March 21, Mayne on March 22, and Galiano on March 28, see advertisement page 11, and: [CLICK HERE](#).

For those that missed them, a online survey, with individual island maps and the two or three proposed trail routes on each, is provided: [CLICK HERE](#). But hurry, the survey close March 31!

For more information about the concept: [CLICK HERE](#) for the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Bulletin.

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Doug Routley, MLA

Nanaimo-North Cowichan

Unit 112 50 Tenth Street
Nanaimo BC V9R 6L1
T 250.716.5221 | F 250.716.5222

Box 269 | #1 - 16 High Street
Ladysmith BC V9G 1A2
T 250.245.9375 | F 250.245.8164

Web: www.dougroutley.ca
Email: douglas.routley.mla@leg.bc.ca



Elizabeth May, O.C. MP Saanich-Gulf Islands



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Owner, Publisher & Editor:
Christa Grace-Warrick

Contributors:

Mike Yip, Martin Blakesley, Priscilla Ewbank,
Elizabeth May, Susan Banjavich, Paul Petrie,
Your BC Election Candidates, Alexandra Morton

Island Tides Publishing Ltd

Box 55, Pender Island, BC V0N 2M0
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Imagine: No Polio

Dear Editor:

Imagine a world with small-pox. Now imagine a world without polio.

In 1998, 40 children were infected by polio every hour. In 2016 fewer than 40 children were infected by polio during the entire year. This is amazing progress, and we are actually poised to eradicate this disease from the face of the earth, as we did with small-pox. However, every child that has polio poses a threat, and it will take political will and financial commitment to find the hardest to reach and most isolated.

Polio can lead to irreversible paralysis and the immobilization of breathing muscles, which results in the death of 5–10% of individuals who are paralyzed by this disease. It is highly infectious and has no cure. The only way to address polio is through prevention.

In 2015, it was assessed that an additional US \$1.5 billion would be required to eradicate polio by the turn of the decade. Canada should take a leadership role and provide an additional pledge of CAD \$150 million to ensure we finish this job once and for all. I would like to call upon the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie to help make this happen, as I would like to be a part of the generation that eradicates polio. Wouldn't you?

Connie Lebeau, Victoria

French Medal Available to Second World War II Veterans

Dear Editor:

Since 2014 the government of France has been awarding their highest medal, the Legion of Honour, to Canadian veterans who participated in the liberation of France in 1944.

Many veterans have now received this great honour but some veterans may not even know it's available. The Legion of Honour is a very significant official medal that is equal to the Order of Canada.

Living Canadian Veterans who saw service in France or directly supported the liberation campaign between June 6, 1944 and August 30,

Who Could Run An Exciting BC Government?

In less than two months, on May 9, British Columbians will elect a provincial government. You'd never know it.

The currents of democracy around the world have not run as strongly in many years, yet British Columbia remains a political backwater.

Established provincial political parties are failing to present forward-looking platforms, or sometimes even candidates. Their campaigns are lacklustre and devoid of new ideas. They present no reasons to visit the polls, or, for that matter, to have any sittings of the Legislature.

The BCLiberal Party, comfortably in power for many years, proposes same old, same old. Though there are lots of 'happy' news releases about borrowed proposals, and a sudden conversion to corruption transparency.

There was a 'balanced budget', providing you don't count the cost of unjustified bridge and dam construction, to be paid for when the Premier and her friends are comfortably retired. Low taxes, providing you don't count the perpetually increasing costs of electricity, car insurance, bridge tolls, ferry fares, camping fees, and MSP premiums. No economic policy; what was good enough for the last century is good enough for this one. Outright rejection of any environmental policy. Insensitivity to social needs. A thin mixture of 'low taxes' combined with minimal services and incompetent

administration.

The BC NDP, comfortably in the role of Official Opposition for just as many years, have not presented any indication that they could run a dynamic alternative government. No new ideas there, either—though a strong party line. There is more sensitivity to social needs but a lack of inventiveness, passion, or, for that matter, outrage.

The Conservatives have managed to field one candidate, so far.

The BC Greens, the unofficial opposition, is the only sign of life. It has recruited outstanding candidates (a necessity that has eluded the established parties).

It is presenting new, innovative, and important proposals, whether or not the government bothers to hold legislative sessions. And, most important, it has leadership. This party could run a government—an exciting one. It offers the best of all possible reasons for bored British Columbians, young British Columbians, dissatisfied British Columbians, and angry British Columbians to pay attention to this election, and to make sure they get to the polls, no matter what, on May 9.

Voter apathy will elect the established parties, and they offer no change.

Check who has had the energy to answer *Island Tides* Election Question, featured on pages 6 and 7. And which answers inspire.

Readers' Letters

1944 may be eligible.

There is no cost or fee involved. If you would like to apply there is a one-page application form on the website of Veterans Affairs Canada or you can contact me. For more information or assistance email korea19501953@yahoo.com, subject line 'Canadian Veteran', or send me a letter addressed to Legion of Honour C/O, 515–95 Moody Street, Port Moody, BC V3H 0H2.

Guy Black, Port Moody

UBCIC Calls On BC and Canada to Reject Steelhead LNG Project

The following letter was sent to Prime Minister Trudeau, BC Premier Christy Clark and BC Ministers Polak and Rustad:

We are writing with respect to UBCIC Resolution 2016-34, 'Support for WSÁNEĆ First Nations' Opposition to Steelhead LNG,' which was presented, affirmed and endorsed by consensus at the UBCIC Annual General Assembly Chiefs Council on September 22, 2016.

As Indigenous Peoples, we have experienced time and time again, third party industrial interests being granted access to the resources of our territories. The Federal and Provincial Governments continually fail to recognize our Indigenous Title Rights and Treaty Rights which reflect and enshrine the deep environmental values that many British Columbians share with us.

The Chiefs of the WSÁNEĆ First Nations located on the Saanich Peninsula (Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum) have publically announced their opposition to the Malahat LNG project proposed by the Steelhead LNG and Malahat First Nation.

The WSÁNEĆ First Nations are the successor Nations and beneficiaries of the rights recognized and confirmed by the Treaty of 1852 with the Crown. The Treaty provides unqualified protection and recognition of their right to carry on their fisheries as formerly done.

First Nations continue to exercise our laws and jurisdiction to protect our lands, our waters, our coasts and our rivers, as we have done for thousands of years.

These rights are enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Canada has adopted without qualifications, which states:

Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual

relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Article 32:

(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

(3): States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

In contravention of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the National Energy Board export license was issued last year to the proponent without the free, prior and informed consent of the WSÁNEĆ First Nation.

This project poses an unacceptable risk to the health, safety and livelihoods of First Nations throughout the Saanich Inlet, and will contribute to the negative environmental and health impacts experienced by Indigenous peoples throughout the world as a result of accelerating global climate change.

The Saanich Inlet is a critical source of food, recreation and ceremony for the WSÁNEĆ First Nations.

The WSÁNEĆ First Nations are opposed to the proposed floating liquefied natural gas terminal, the proposed sub-sea gas pipeline or the proposed shipping activity in the Saanich Inlet.

The UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support the WSÁNEĆ First Nations' opposition to the Steelhead LNG project and urge the governments of Canada and British Columbia to respect the laws and authority of First Nations and to protect the environment, fisheries, and health and safety of all BC communities by opposing and rejecting the Steelhead LNG project.

on behalf of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs



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What's with this crazy weather?

Elizabeth May, MP

Unremarked in our mainstream press, a major shift has happened in global climate. It is this: the systems that drive our weather are increasingly driven by changes in the Arctic, and less from the Pacific Ocean patterns of El Nino and La Nina. Of course, the warmer and cooler Pacific cycles are also impacted by global warming, but the jetstream-driven wacky weather is likely more driven by the warming Arctic.

In February, while southern Vancouver Island residents dug out from freak snowfalls, the Arctic was experiencing a heat wave. The north coast of Greenland posted temperatures more common in June—above zero. In one 24-hour period, the temperature jumped by an incredible 34.8°C.

So how is the warming Arctic impacting our weather? The prevailing view is that the weakening differential between the cold Arctic and the warmth of the Equator is throwing off the jetstream. The jetstream, 8km above the earth's surface, is often described as a river of air.

When the temperature difference between the frigid Arctic and hot Equator drove the jetstream, that river of air ran strong and more or less horizontal at mid-latitudes. In effect, the jetstream acts as a dividing line—keeping colder air and warmer air separated on either side of the surging river of air. As the temperature differential between the Arctic and Equator weakens, the steady jetstream weakens as well. Rather than a soft, curvy jetstream, we see a very loopy jetstream. On one side of the line, warm air is forced north, while on the other side, cold Arctic air is forced south.

The result, what some meteorologists

are calling 'snowmageddon,' includes extra snowy winters—including in places that are not used to them—as well as severe flooding, droughts, and killer summer heat waves in other places.

The Arctic warmth contributed to the lowest extent of sea-ice in the Arctic on record. And the reason for the warmth was clear. Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at Oxford, told *Scientific American*, 'In terms of the magnitude of change, this is a totally different picture than what we have seen before.... Climate change really is the game changer here. (It) increased the risk of this event occurring by several orders of magnitude!'

While the Arctic is warming at a rate three times faster than the rest of the planet, the impacts of that warming are not restricted to the Arctic. As Environment Canada meteorologist David Phillips puts it 'What happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic.'

'We are now in 'uncharted territory,' Professor Jennifer Francis, an Arctic climate expert at Rutgers University, told *The Guardian* in December 2016.

'These rapid changes in the Arctic are affecting weather patterns where you live right now' she said. 'In the past you have had natural variations like El Niño, but they have never happened before in combination with this very warm Arctic, so it is a whole new ball game.'

'It is inconceivable that this ridiculously warm Arctic would not have an impact on weather patterns in the middle latitudes further south, where so many people live.'

'It's safe to say [the warming Arctic] is going to have a big impact, but it's hard to say exactly how big right now. But we are going to have a lot of very interesting



Gardening anyone?

Photo Susan Banjavich

weather—we're not going to get around that one.'

Over the last few decades, the Arctic has seen a dramatic reduction in the extent of its multi-year ice (more than four-year-old ice). In September 1984, multi-year ice covered 718,000 square miles of Arctic water; by September 2016, only 62,000 square miles.

Readers of *Island Tides* are likely familiar with the positive feedback loop, called the albedo effect. White ice bounces much of the sun's heat back to the atmosphere, while dark ocean water absorbs the heat, thus speeding the melting of the ice.

We need to think about the Arctic in new ways. Can we

determine the Arctic we need in order to avoid increasingly dangerous impacts globally? Clearly, we must keep it cold enough for most of the permafrost to remain frozen to avoid the release of enormous volumes of heat trapping methane gas. We must also do everything possible to keep the ice-cover on the North Pole as intact as possible.

The Inuit first drew attention to loss of Arctic ice as a human rights issue in which pollution in the more southern industrialized areas imperilled their future. Now, it turns out destroying Arctic ice is a boomerang coming right back to the sources of the pollution. ☞

Report sick and dead bats

The Province, in partnership with the BC Community Bat Program and other concerned groups, is asking the public to be on the lookout for dead or sick bats that may have contracted an invasive fungal disease called White Nose Syndrome.

White Nose Syndrome has not yet been detected in British Columbia; however, it was detected in Washington State in 2016 and the risk of its arrival is very high.

The name refers to a white fungus that grows on the muzzles or bodies of bats. White Nose Syndrome kills 80% to 100% of little brown and northern bats, which resulted in an emergency listing of both these species under the federal *Species at Risk Act* in 2014. The syndrome does not infect humans.

Detecting and mitigating the impact of White Nose Syndrome on bat populations in British Columbia includes working to better understand bat behaviour and use of habitat in BC, to help design strategies to protect bats, as well as to help them recover from the effects of the disease.

Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture's Animal Health Centre is one of two labs in Canada nationally recognized to test for the fungus that causes White Nose Syndrome.

Bats are important to both the environment and economy. Bats are major predators of invertebrates, helping to control forest, agriculture and urban pests. For example, endangered little brown bats can eat 600 mosquitoes per hour. Researchers estimate that bats provide billions of dollars in pest control services annually in North America.

Do not attempt to capture sick or injured bats and do not touch a dead bat with your bare hands due to a risk of rabies.

If you do find a dead bat, collect it in a plastic bag using leather gloves and label the bag with the date, location, put the bag in the freezer and contact the BC Community Bat Program: email: info@bcbats.ca, or 1.855.922.2287. ☞

Election Thoughts

Now just what is the legacy of Chisty's government?

There is a lot to be fixed up that's worthy of comment.

And lots that we must live with 'cause the goofs won't go away—We've got to get those Liberals out, they've overstayed their stay. So, Site C—what is wrong with it? Five basic things, and more—But first we do not need the power, so what'd we start it for? A Liberal boondoggle that's what, for which we have to pay, With huge losses of farmland, fish and wildlife on the way.

And then there's Kinder Morgan, where the evidence is clear Bitumen in the Salish Sea's a thing we all must fear; Yet blithely Christie sanctioned it—without a single quibble, An action just as dim-witted as irresponsible! And what about those other matters—fishfarms in the strait, LNG emissions, fracking, these we must invalidate; For global change is with us now, and there is no reversal, Those winter floods in Labrador were merely a rehearsal.

When homelessness was building up, it seems they had no notion, While adding to the slush-fund for their LNG promotion. They cut back on our services when we least wanted it, Then raised the rates on premiums, to make their budget fit. But when it seems that voting's near, their change is quite abrupt, They offer cutbacks on those premiums they'd already upped! We've had enough of pie-in-sky, financial wizardry, A change might bring stability to beautiful BC!

—H Barry Cotton, March 2017

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BC ELECTION

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2017

SAANICH SOUTH:

Mark Neufeld, BC Greens

The BC Greens absolutely support a guaranteed livable income for all British Columbians. We believe it is the economic mechanism to promote equality that best suits the 21st century. Dr Weaver has stated we'd immediately implement a pilot project in Port Alberni and one smaller town in the Interior. I personally see this as both a difference maker and counter to the 'automation' culture of the 21st century, to support students, artists and actually *save* money for taxpayers with a more intelligent and streamlined system of support.

VICTORIA—SWAN LAKE:

Chris Maxwell, BC Greens

One in five kids lives in poverty in our province (stillin5.ca). For single-moms, it is much worse—one in two kids live in poverty. We need a game changer. I strongly support moving towards a basic income in BC.

One Canadian study (Mincome) found a minimal income over 4 years had strong health benefits (reduced hospital and mental health visits). Only two groups worked less after receiving a minimal income: teenagers (who increased their graduation rates) and single-moms.

But, many questions remain: Is a basic income approach more efficient? Do investments in basic income return to our economy? Will basic income free our kids from poverty? You and I don't yet know the answers to these questions, but we do know there is a crisis. We do know that an initial program will provide evidence and inform decisions that benefit our community. We do know we must act.'

SAANICH NORTH AND THE ISLANDS:

Adam Olsen, BC Greens

BC has one of the highest levels of inequality in Canada and is the only province without a poverty reduction strategy. The myriad of social programs that individuals must navigate come with a high administrative price and have not be been able to address the persistent, intergenerational poverty in BC, or reduce the burden on our overwhelmed social services. They cannot alone adequately address new workforce challenges such as the rise of precarious employment and automation in the workplace.

To adequately address these challenges we must create forward-thinking policies, informed by strong evidence and

Island Tides asks:

'Would you support the provision of a basic income to all British Columbians? Why?'

a commitment to a more equitable future. The BC Greens have committed to introducing basic income pilot projects in order to explore the costs and benefits of instituting basic income as part of a wider framework addressing affordability and financial security in our province.

SAANICH NORTH AND THE ISLANDS:

Gary Holman, BC NDP

Provision of a basic income—replacing provincial and federal support programs with a minimum income—is worth pursuing, depending on the income level proposed. It would require significant policy changes at the federal level, and federal-provincial coordination. A basic income does not directly address the affordability crisis in BC created by huge increases in a range of fees imposed by Christy Clark.

We must act more quickly on poverty, address the affordability issue, and do so as part of a poverty reduction strategy with explicit targets and timelines, as the BC NDP has proposed repeatedly with private members' legislation.

The BC NDP will also eliminate MSP premiums, bring in \$10/day daycare, implement a \$15/hr minimum wage, reduce ferry costs, reinstate needs-based post-secondary tuition grants and implement an aggressive, ongoing affordable housing program. All these measures can be implemented provincially and could reduce annual household costs by thousands.

COWICHAN VALLEY:

Sonia Furstenu, BC Greens

Andrew Weaver has investigated the concept of basic income—a holistic approach that I support for addressing unemployment and poverty in BC.

The Centre for Policy Alternatives estimates that poverty costs BC \$8-9 billion annually. Pilot studies show basic income not only greatly reduces costs of all kinds, but it also restores health and dignity to those currently trapped in a downward cycle they cannot simply work themselves out of.

We are facing serious issues. The advent of automation, a housing crisis, and a current liveable wage of \$18.18/hr in Cowichan will not be solved by raising the minimum wage.

In fact, doing so can cripple small business, the driver of our economy, leading to layoffs and fewer jobs, and perpetuating the cycle. An over-arching approach such as guaranteeing a basic income will break the crushing cycle of poverty that we see in BC.

PARKSVILLE—QUALICUM

Glen Sollitt, BC Greens

Income disparity is an ever worsening problem in BC, leading to unacceptable levels of poverty and working poor. Assistance exists, however, levels are stagnant and force recipients through a myriad of means-based programs that can be humiliating. It is time for a bold approach and a basic living income is just such an idea. In various forms, providing all citizens with a livable income has been implemented or at least tested in many countries, including Canada.

Despite the understandable concerns that this approach could be cost prohibitive and discourage work ethic, data shows the opposite. Bringing our entire population out of poverty has tremendous upside; lowering healthcare and policing costs, growing our workforce and improving overall mental health. This is an idea whose time has come and needs our attention.

PARKSVILLE—QUALICUM

Sue Powell, BC NDP

I am committed to working as the MLA for Parksville-Qualicum on the implementation of a poverty reduction strategy that addresses the needs of families suffering due to the failure of the BC Liberal government to address income support, affordable daycare and full access to health care. British Columbia remains the only Canadian province without a strategy to reduce poverty despite having one of the worst child poverty rates in the country. As a career child protection worker and as a mother and grandmother, this is not acceptable to me.

The failure of the BC Liberal government to address economic inequities in our province is a major reason for my candidacy; and, I will work towards tackling poverty as a priority. The days of tax breaks to Christy Clark's friends and political contributors rather than making our economy work for everybody will end with the election of an NDP government.

Continued on next page

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 Furstenu, Paris Gaudet, Kalen Harris, Gary Holman, John Horgan, Steve Housser, Carole James, Leonard Krog, Alicia La Rue, Chris Maxwell, Andy MacKinnon, Mark Neufeld, Sue Moen, Cathy Noel, Adam Olsen, Lana Popham, Stephen Roberts, Doug Routley, Ernie Sellentin, Nic Simons, Dallas Smith, Glenn Sollitt, Michelle Stilwell, Claire Trevena, Lia Versaevel, Andrew Weaver, Matthew Wilson

Island Tides' Next Question:

'What are the major components of the accumulated debt of BC Hydro? Why has this debt been accumulated? How will the debt be paid off?'



Photo: Mike Yip

Over a wide area of the Salish Sea, the seine herring fishery opened on Monday March 6, here at Cape Lazo, Comox.



Two sea lions in a February howling north-easter, at high tide on Boiling Reef, just off East Point, Saturna Island. Photo: Nettie Adams

BC ELECTION 2017 - What Your Candidates Say - BC ELECTION 2017

Continued from previous page

MID ISLAND—PACIFIC RIM
Alicia LaRue, BC Greens

As a person who as been through many different income brackets, I can tell you that the added stress of making ends meet can have a immensely negative impact on your health, social, and emotional state. At one point, I had to choose between food and bills. As a hard working individual, making these decision between food and a roof over your head is completely unacceptable.

Basic Income will add value to our local economy, build healthy communities, and give confidence back to the people.

As we progress into the 21 century, our changing economy is one of building business cooperatives, social enterprises, and local sustainable economies. Basic Income will help people make the transition to adapt to this change. It is proven when people love what they do for their work, they live a more balanced happy life and are more likely to be positive citizens in their community.

MID ISLAND—PACIFIC RIM
Scott Fraser, BC NDP

Poverty is an issue ignored by the BCLiberals. One in five children lives in poverty, welfare rates haven't increased for 10 years, and many new jobs don't provide a living wage for BC families. While the rich have gotten richer and corporations have been given increased tax breaks by the BCLiberals, the poor have gotten poorer. That's why the BC NDP has stood up for increases to the minimum wage, affordable childcare, and an end to benefit claw-backs, while the BCLiberals have rejected plans to address the issue of poverty.

I, and many others across the political spectrum, believe it is time to consider strategies like a basic income to address the growing problem. It's an issue that needs to be examined in conjunction with the federal government to look at how the social safety net and the tax system can be reformed to more effectively reduce poverty.

COURTENAY—COMOX
Ronna-Rae Leonard , BC NDP

When Johnny goes to school hungry, his only consolation is he's not alone. With an on-going 20% child poverty rate in the Comox Valley, he will be joining another 4 or 5 students from his class. Also, measuring the vulnerability of children entering kindergarten, 38% of our little ones are predicted to go on to have poor health, education, and social outcomes as adults.

Island Tides asks:
‘Would you support the provision of a basic income to all British Columbians? Why?’

We can't afford any more of Christy Clark and the BCLiberals' neglect. A universal basic income is worth exploring. In the grander scheme of things, however, we need a Poverty Reduction Strategy for the province, where government works as a team to include all British Columbians in our economy. While the BC NDP has introduced such legislation many times, Christy Clark has ignored the calls, instead, deepening the economic divide, working to make life better for people at the top. Johnny and his family deserve better.

OAK BAY—GORDON HEAD
Bryce Casavant, BC NDP

I strongly believe that all citizens have the right to life, liberty and security of their person. To deny someone assistance in acquiring food and shelter is to directly put their safety and security at risk. Christy Clark has put her wealthy friends and donors first, while leaving BC as the only province without a poverty reduction plan. It is little wonder that 1 in 5 children in BC live in poverty. A government that ignores poverty is a government that has lost its capacity to care for the people.

Universal basic income is worth considering in the future, but right now we need a plan that tackles this issue immediately. A John Horgan NDP government will implement a poverty reduction strategy, which includes such elements as \$10 a day childcare, housing for seniors, \$15 minimum wage, with specific targets and a clear timeline. Together, we can build a better BC!

ESQUIMALT—METCHOSIN
Andy MacKinnon, BC Greens

I'd certainly support looking into the advantages and disadvantages of such a system. Poverty is endemic in our society. We have the second highest rate of child poverty in the country, and a great number of seniors retire into poverty. Today, there is a complex web of bureaucracy that people need to navigate to access the services and support they need. Welfare rates are low, and the current budget doesn't address this issue. Evidence suggests that basic income gives people the resources to lift themselves up out of poverty, get better education, make better health and lifestyle choices, and reduces the demand on the criminal justice system. To tackle the systemic problem of poverty in our society we need to look at systematic solutions. Green Party leader Andrew Weaver has proposed a 5-year basic income pilot project, in

some smaller community in BC. This makes sense to me.

NORTH ISLAND
Claire Trevena, BC NDP

A basic income for everyone is interesting but in BC the disparity between the haves and the have-nots is so vast we must take immediate action, not experiment. Under the BC Liberals, the wealthiest 10% of British Columbians now control 56% of the wealth with just 3% of it going to the bottom 50% of our population. We have kids going to food banks and relying on volunteer-provided school meal programs for their only meal of the day. We must act.

We can take a giant step toward equity by: increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour as we've promised; introducing, as the BC NDP have tried to do six times in the Legislature, a poverty reduction plan with targets and timelines to improve standards of living and including affordable housing strategies; and, by reducing childcare to \$10 a day permitting greater workforce participation and greater opportunity for our children.

NORTH ISLAND
Sue Moen, BC Greens

I absolutely support initiatives to ensure a basic income is available to every British Columbian. Around the globe, including pilot projects in Canada, there is ample evidence that the surest and swiftest route out of poverty is money in people's hands. BC has deplorable rates of child, senior, and even employed poverty. In my work with homeless and other individuals and families with multiple barriers, I see the heartbreaking loss of participation by these courageous, and often, ingenious people in their communities and in our economy.

When every moment in someone's life is spent trying to get their basic needs met—shelter, food and clothing—they are left with few physical, emotional or mental resources. Systemic income inequality must be addressed across all our systems, starting with a basic income financed in part by the savings society would accrue in health care, the justice system and administering the complex bureaucracy of benefits.

The BC Greens are dedicated to exploring and implementing sensible solutions to poverty, along with the many community stakeholders who have tirelessly done the research, the advocacy and the work on the ground.

Island Tides' Next Question:
‘What are the major components of the accumulated debt of BCHydro? Why has this debt been accumulated? How will the debt be paid off?’

Pender Reconciliation Initiative takes shape - Paul Petrie

The W̱SÁNEĆ (pronounced whu saan'ich) people have lived on the Saanich Peninsula and around the surrounding Islands in a respectful and sustainable manner since time immemorial. Archaeological evidence at the canal site between North and South Pender documents evidence of cultural settlement over 5,000 years old with evidence of a major winter village with nearly full development of Northwest Coast Culture.

In March 2016 representatives of the Pender Reconciliation Circle, St Peter's Anglican Parish, and the South Pender Historical Society met with the Tsawout leadership team (see photo, right) to identify next steps in gaining a greater appreciation of the rich cultural traditions of the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose ancestors have been stewards of the Gulf Islands and beyond for more than 10,000 years.

The 2017 Pender Reconciliation Initiative, supported by a Community Grant from the Victoria Foundation, builds on four years of a developing relationship between the Pender Island community and our Tsawout First Nation neighbours who have reserve land on South Pender at Hay Point.

The resulting Reconciliation Initiative will incorporate knowledge and wisdom of W̱SÁNEĆ Elders for

two projects. The SENĆOŦEN language workshop on June 30 will provide an introduction to the language revival movement and the role it plays in reinforcing the cultural identity of the W̱SÁNEĆ People.

The second project, the installation of a large commemorative sign on South Pender depicting the W̱SÁNEĆ 13 Moon Traditional Calendar and a brief history of the W̱SÁNEĆ people, will highlight their cultural traditions and wisdom.

A traditional W̱SÁNEĆ community salmon pit cook is also planned for July 1 to celebrate indigenous culture and wisdom, with support from a CRD grant.

Tsawout Chief Harvey Underwood noted that this initiative: '...represents an important step forward in its recognition at the community-to-community level to promote accurate cultural education, honour past cultural practices and build future relationships.'

Ellen Willingham, Anglican priest on Pender, comments: 'We are very pleased to join the wider community on Pender to engage in these reconciliation initiatives and projects with our brothers and sisters of the Tsawout Nation. We hope to continue building a new relationship based on mutual respect while learning more of each other's culture and wisdom.'



Photo: Paul Petrie
Tsawout Elders (L to R): Helen Jack, Adelynn Claxton, Belinda Claxton, and former Chief Lou Claxton meet to plan reconciliation initiative with Pender Island community.

Thermal imaging can inspire home retrofits - UVic News

Being able to see where heat is escaping from your own home is a powerful—and underutilized—way to encourage home energy retrofits, especially when those infrared images are packaged with other incentives and promoted within a community.

Some 63% of energy use in Canadian homes is from space heating, so heat loss is expensive and wasteful.

A UBC team examined the impact of programs in the United Kingdom and North America that used thermal imaging (TI) to encourage home improvements such as window and draft sealing, and insulation.

TI cameras produce digital images that show relative temperature differences, thus identifying problems such as heat loss from floors, windows, walls and roofs, (drones are used for roof inspections).

While thermal imaging isn't a new technology, the report shows that combining visual evidence with incentives and community support can be a winning strategy.

Lead researcher Lisa Westerhoff says one example is the West Vancouver Eagle Island community initiative, where 26 of the 31 homeowners retrofitted their houses

after receiving a TI energy audit and getting information about financial rebates. She says the average carbon footprint of the retrofitted homes dropped from 5 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year to 1.7 tonnes of CO2 as a result.

This approach has since spread to 11 other neighbourhoods, including Bowen Island, with more than 1,000 homes receiving thermal audits.

Westerhoff encourages other municipalities across BC and Canada to launch neighbourhood programs. 'The numbers tell the story. More people will address energy wastage when they see it happening in their own home, especially when their neighbours are also taking action,' she says.

Residential housing produces around 19% of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions—making it a priority area for reducing carbon footprint.

The report, 'Motivating Communities To Retrofit Their Homes: The Potential Of Thermal Imaging In BC' offers 30 recommendations for using thermal imaging technology. Find it on Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions' website: [CLICK HERE](#).

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Bald eagle dining at Qualicum Beach
Photo: Mike Yip

Mystery solved - this farm salmon disease is in BC

Alexandra Morton

On February 22, a team of scientists from the Pacific Salmon Foundation and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, funded by Genome BC, published a scientific paper that put to rest the debate whether the salmon disease, Heart And Skeletal Muscle Inflammation (HSMI) is occurring in BC farm salmon. The highly contagious Atlantic salmon disease is confirmed in BC.

Could the causative piscine reovirus (PRV) be harmful in one ocean, and *harmless* in another as was commonly believed? The answer is a clear 'no'.

The research team, which includes DFO's Dr Kristi Miller renowned for her pioneering work on deciphering the immune system of salmon, tracked the amount of piscine reovirus (PRV) in salmon in a farm in the Discovery Islands, off Campbell River.

The team reports that as the virus level increased, the fish developed the signature cell damage caused by the disease HSMI. Scientists in Norway report that PRV causes HSMI and HSMI damages heart and skeletal muscle to the point where salmon become so weak they can barely swim.

While HSMI was first detected in Norway in 1999, the virus that causes this disease, piscine reovirus, was not discovered until 2010. This means that the 30 million Atlantic salmon eggs that entered BC prior to the discovery of PRV could not be screened for the virus. Today, 80% of BC farm salmon are infected with PRV.

In their Annual General Reports, Marine Harvest lists HSMI among the greatest impact on their production since 2012.

The paper reports that piscine reovirus infects the red blood cells of fish, where it lies in wait for the fish to experience some kind of stress, such as sea lice, handling, disease, warm water etc. at which point it is released and damages the salmon's heart and the muscles required to swim, which run the length of the fish. This means that every time farm salmon are deloused, the stress of that can cause an outbreak where billions of viral particles will

explode into the surrounding waters.

What does this mean for wild salmon? Double jeopardy—lice then infection. The report's authors tested for 44 disease agents, and only piscine reovirus correlated with the appearance of the lesions in the heart and skeletal muscle of the farm salmon.

The virus reported on in this paper matches a virus I collected from an Atlantic salmon. In 2013, my co-authors and I reported in *Virology Journal* that the piscine reovirus we found in BC salmon closely matched a virus from a farm salmon suffering from HSMI in Lofoten, Norway. This suggests this strain of PRV is a recent import from Norway.

Somehow government scientists and Marine Harvest report in 3 scientific papers that PRV is harmless in BC. The new paper confirms PRV is not harmless in BC, that it is causing disease. This is a very important finding for everyone working to figure out what is happening to wild salmon.

We can be grateful to Genome BC for funding this work. I am hopeful that Minister of Fisheries, Dominic LeBlanc will allow this research team to continue and will heed this science from his own department.

Please consider contacting Pascal Spothelfer of Genome BC at: info@genomebc.ca and Minister Dominic LeBlanc at: dominic.leblanc@parl.gc.ca to thank them for funding the Strategic Salmon Health Initiative and the work of Dr Kristi Miller.

Ministry of Fisheries & Oceans will put out no press release and the paper is hard to find. If we don't stand up and be heard it will be buried along with wild salmon.

This work will allow us to restore salmon to this coast, because for the first time we will understand what is harming wild salmon. This is a breakthrough in our relationship with salmon and this is the mandate that Trudeau has given to his minister—use science to manage wild fisheries. ☞

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Wed, Thurs, Fri, March 15, 16, 17



Stop the Pipelines, Start the Music, 2017—featuring music, dancing and reports from the front lines of pipeline opposition in Northern BC; fundraiser for the Unist'ot'en Camp • **GALIANO ISLAND:** Wed, March 15; **VICTORIA:** Thurs, March 16; **NANAIMO:** Fri, March 17 • Info:

www.facebook.com/events/254490611652762 • **GALIANO, VICTORIA, NANAIMO**

Tuesday, March 21

Greening Your Vacation Travel—feeling a bit guilty about your carbon footprint as you fly off on your vacation getaway? David Denning explains how we can enjoy both vacation travel and local transportation with a lower carbon footprint; discussion to follow; co-sponsored by Transition Salt Spring, The Community Energy Group, and the Salt Spring Public Library • Salt Spring Public Library • 7pm • Free • **SALT SPRING.**

Wednesday, March 22

Saturna All Candidate's Meeting, BC Election 2017—community potluck dinner at 6pm followed by meeting • Community Hall • **SATURNA**

Saturday, March 25

'The Life of Pender Pioneer Bea Freeman'—Freeman edited the local classic *A Gulf Islands Patchwork* still in print; talk presented by grandson Kelly Irving and sponsored by South Pender Historical Society • 1:30pm • South Pender Community Room • Everyone welcome • **SOUTH PENDER**

Saturday, March 25



The Deep Sea—exploring hydrothermal vents and their ecosystems—proposed mining of deep sea thermal vents raises new questions, one of SIMRES Seatalks • Saturna Community Hall • 1pm • \$10 at the door, 18&Under free • **SATURNA**

Next Deadline: Wednesday, March 22

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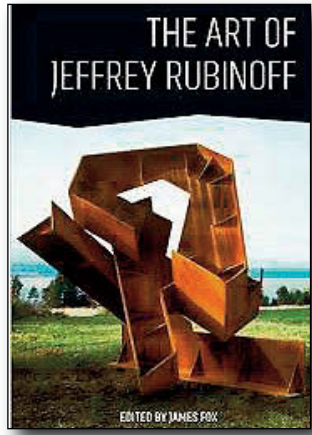
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AROUND THE ISLANDS

Hornby's Sculpture Park

Not only did Canadian sculptor, and Hornby-dweller, Jeffrey Rubinoff stop selling his artwork, following two decades of exhibiting widely alongside such greats as Anthony Caro and George Rickey, he went as far as to buy much of it back. It is displayed in a sculpture park which he has developed on his 200-acre property, once a farm, on Hornby.



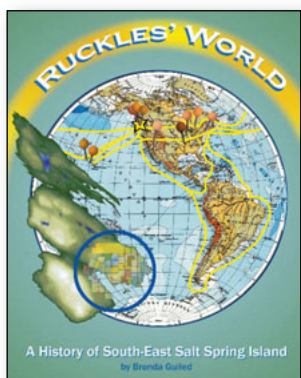
The *Art of Jeffrey Rubinoff* is the first book to be written about Rubinoff, one of the great sculptors in steel of the second half of the twentieth century—his refusal to sell any pieces means he has disappeared almost entirely from view.

After discovering Rubinoff's work by chance, editor James Fox brought together a dozen internationally recognized scholars to look at the Rubinoff's life, work, and ideas from a variety of perspectives, including through the lens of the broader arts scene in postwar Canada and in terms of the meanings that derive from his use of steel.

The book—a collection of essays and photos, some by other Gulf Islanders, like Maria Tippet, Peter Clarke and Sergei Petrov—brings Rubinoff's work out of obscurity. It is engaging to see massive works of art in our familiar landscape. Look for the book at your library.

The Art of Jeffrey Rubinoff, edited by James Fox, Douglas & McIntyre, 2016, \$39.95.

Ruckles' World Book Launch



A very local book will be launched at Salt Spring Library on Sunday, March 26. This one is rising like a phoenix from the ashes. Brenda Guiled worked on the book as a fundraiser to move the 110-year-old Monk farmhouse near Ruckle Park on south Salt Spring (that's that waters-edge campsite—dotted with colourful tents in summer—which ferry-riders pass on their way to Swartz Bay). The provincial park was willing but despite a year of effort it was not to be; the privately owned building was bulldozed in February.

Though, the Monk farmhouse is history, its stories and much more live on in Guiled's book, *Ruckles' World: A History of South-East Salt Spring Island*.

Guiled started looking into the history of the farm and original owners; this quickly expanded to neighbours and more neighbours.

The book begins with the First Nations families who, for millennia, called this area home. Then, from 1860 on, men from Hawaii, Greece, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, England, United States, and Norway—with hired help from Japan and China—rushed in to clear and farm the land. Many settlers took First-Nations wives, creating a international community with deeply local roots.

The Salt Spring Island Historical Society, a treasure trove of information, provided hundreds of historic photos, an invaluable contribution. The book launch will also be a fundraiser for the historical society.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

A Month of Mondays on Gabriola

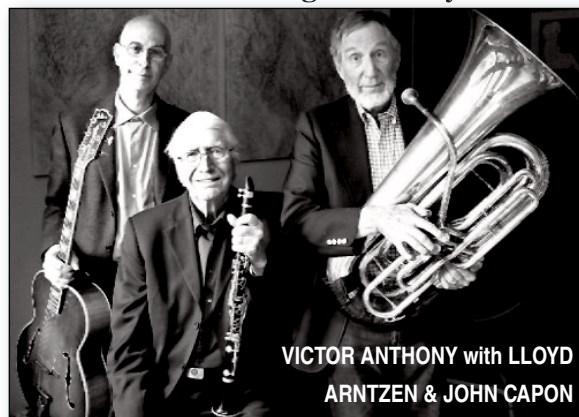
The Gabriola Library is also hosting a book launch on Saturday March 18, Page's Bookstore lets us know. This one is a spring break event for the middle grade crowd.

In the novel *A Month of Mondays*, Suze Tamaki's life gets turned upside down when her mother suddenly reappears after a ten-year absence. At school things aren't much better, as one of her teachers decides the way to cure her apathy about class is to move her into Honors English—a development Suze finds both inspiring and distressing. When she's paired with straight-A student Amanda on an English assignment, she finds herself caring about people's expectations like she's never done before.

Author Joëlle Anthony is a Gabriola Islander, who also publishes under the name JM Kelly.

Her husband is Victor Anthony, intrepid inter-Islander, musician, songwriter and photographer. Last November, in one of his emails, Victor announced a series of house concerts all over BC. Now there's a good idea.

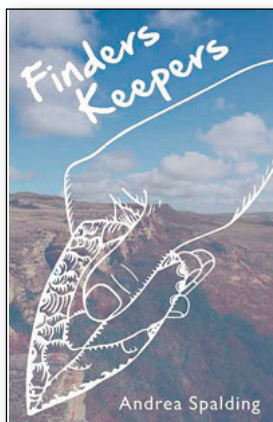
Have you ever considered hosting a house concert? You clear out your largest room, bring in as many chairs as you can fit into it (hopefully at least 30), and invite your friends over for a concert. Victor will do a two-set show. Your friends make a donation at the door and that money goes to the performer. He'll also bring CDs to buy.



There's one more 'host duty', Victor says: overnight accommodations for Victor and Joëlle.

Visit them both at Joëlle website, [CLICK HERE](#).

Finders Keepers Is Back



Another well loved islands' youth book is back in a revised edition. Prolific Pender author Andrea Spalding's *Finders Keepers* is now available from Dundurn Press.

It's the story of Danny, who, while walking through a neighbourhood field in Alberta, finds an 8,000-year-old arrowhead. His friend Joshua, who lives on the Peigan reserve at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, joins him on buffalo hunts, powwows, archaeological digs, and a break-in at the local museum. In the process Danny learns about history and gains the self-confidence to overcome dyslexia.

First published in 1995, it was short-listed for the Sheila A Egoft Award for Children's Literature and received the Violet Downey IODE Book Award and the Silver Birch Award.

Two Fiction Writers' Contests

So, have you been writing away this winter? If so, two of the Salish Sea's premier literary contests are back this spring.

Now in its 12th year, the Islands Short Fiction Contest welcomes entries from writers on

Vancouver Island and the Gulf islands in three categories: Adult (writers 19 and over), Youth (writers 13 to 18), and Junior (writers 12 and under).

The contest is co-sponsored by the Nanaimo Arts Council, the Vancouver Island Regional Library, and the Vancouver Island University Department of Creative Writing and Journalism. More info: [CLICK HERE](#). Hurry! Deadline March 31.

A well known novel-length contest is announced again this year by Salt Spring-based Mother Tongue Publishing—Great BC Novel Contest for the best unpublished manuscript of fiction.

Judges for the 4th contest are well-known BC novelists Audrey Thomas and John Lent. The contest is open to all writers living in British Columbia, and the deadline for submitting an unpublished manuscript (a novel or novella) is August 1. For guidelines [CLICK HERE](#).

Groups Send Along Newsletters

Salt Spring Conservancy's spring newsletter is ready to read online. The engagingly named *Acorn* is an inspiring read about generous donors of land, help, and funding and about the new projects that these has made possible.

Since 1994, Salt Spring Conservancy has helped preserve over 3,900 island acres, including 7 nature reserves (694 acres) and 16 conservation covenants (793 acres). The conservancy protects species at risk and their habitats, educates adults about land stewardship, and provides nature-based education for all Salt Spring elementary students.

Be sure to give the newsletter a read. [CLICK HERE](#).

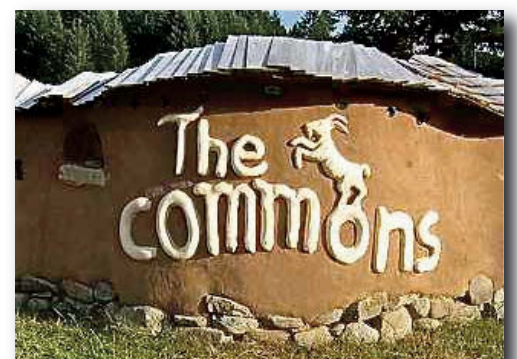
Fix Yer Stuff At The Commons

Another faithful sender of great info is Gabriola's Commons. It's a place where sustainability, community and agriculture and people meet, featuring 26 acres of peaceful rural landscapes and rich ecosystems with significant biodiversity. Sited on a unique property, its zoning recognizes and enshrines the vision and spirit of a 'community commons'. As well as connecting pathways, open vistas, meditative spaces, and vibrant community gardens, the property includes public learning and meeting facilities.

At the end of January, The Commons hosted Gabriola's first 'Fix-it Fair'. Organized by the Sustainable Gabriola Network, folks were encouraged to 'bring by their broken and wounded stuff'. There was help for bikes, electronics, small appliances and much more. If it couldn't be fixed, could it be up-cycled? There was help with that too.

Sustainable Gabriola Network has a plan afoot to create a tool library for Gabriola residents. Tool libraries, which have sprung up in the last few decades across North America, lend tools the way public libraries lend books. To begin, Gabriola's tool library will be housed at The Commons. The inventory will initially include smaller tools for a variety of uses, rather than the heavy tools that can be rented on-island. The hope is that many tools will be donated.

BTW: The Commons is asking for people to work on a new logo to replace the prancing goat (below) and a new motto, replacing 'A place for everyone'.



FERRY FACTS: FARE INFORMATION SHEET - MARCH 2017

Crippling Ferry Fares ARE an election issue . . .

Since 2003, **ferry fares have increased by over 100%** while the consumer price index (CPI) has increased by only 18%.

- Ferry fares have risen every year since 2003 – with no relief
- Fares are scheduled to continue to rise until 2020.

Graph #1 shows the rate of increase of ferry fares for typical non-major routes compared to the BC Consumer Price Index rates since 2003.

Continued ferry fare increases have had **a real and increasingly devastating impact** on our communities.

- Jobs have been lost as many businesses have closed and others have reduced their hours of operation
- Weekenders and part-timers are coming less frequently and the decreased number of tourists who do visit are spending less in our communities because they are spending more on ferry fares
- Coastal community real estate markets have lagged far behind those of most of the rest of BC.

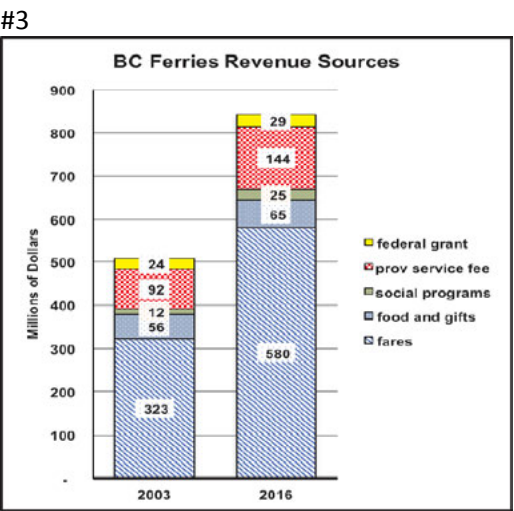
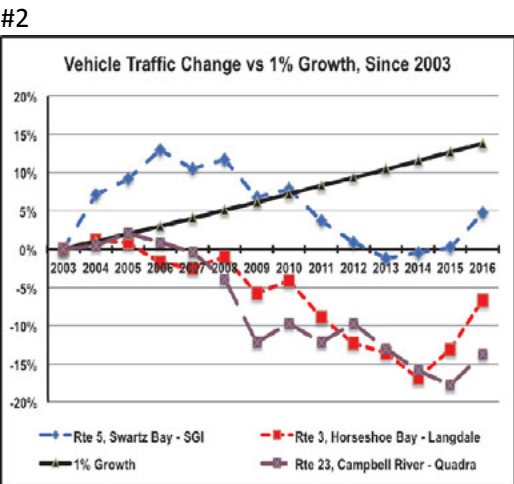
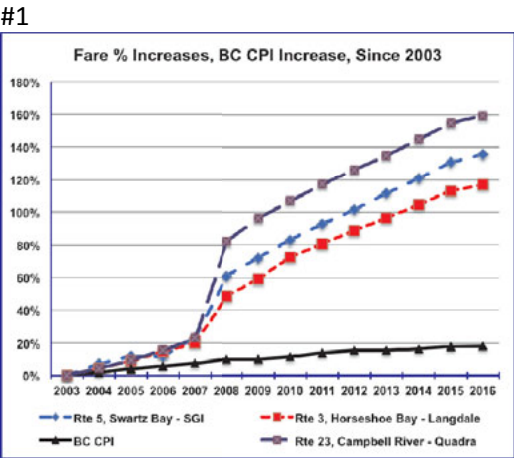
Graph #2 shows the declines of 15% to 20% from peaks to recent lows, compared to a modest 1% traffic growth, seen to have been achievable, given BC GDP and population growth, with fare increases at the rate of inflation.

The government, in choosing how much to contribute to BC Ferries’ revenue needs, effectively **sets the level of fares**. The bulk of BC Ferries’ revenue comes from the government service fee and customer fares.

- The government’s contribution dropped from 18% of total revenue in 2003 to 17% in 2016. During the same time frame, the fares portion increased from 64% to 69%.

Graph #3 also shows BC Ferries’ other sources of revenue: the fixed federal grant, ancillary revenue (food and gift shop proceeds) and government funding for free and discounted ferry service.

As May 9th BC Election approaches, there will be opportunities to speak with candidates to ensure they understand ferry fare concerns and elicit their support for a fare roll-back.



OPEN HOUSES on the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

The Capital Regional District is developing a regional trails plan for the Gulf Islands. The plan will identify a conceptual regional trail route on each of the main islands. You are welcome to drop in at one of the open houses to learn more and provide input on preferred route options and priorities.

Open Houses

Tuesday, March 21, 12-3 pm
Saturna, Community Hall

Wednesday, March 22, 1-4 pm
Mayne, Community Hall

Tuesday, March 28, 1-4 pm
Galiano, Community Hall

You may also provide your feedback online by March 31.
www.crd.bc.ca/project/gulf-islands-regional-trails-plan



Teachers ratify restored collective agreement

BC Teachers’ Federation members voted, 98.4% in favour of ratifying the agreement to implement their restored collective agreement language. The agreement will see all the substantive working conditions, unconstitutionally stripped from teachers’ collective agreements in 2002, restored.

‘With this vote, BC schools are finally on the verge of having better working and learning conditions back in place,’ said BCTF President Glen Hansman, ‘With our restored language in effect, BC schools, students, and teachers will see significant improvements in class sizes, support levels for children with special needs, and access to specialist teachers this September.

‘The unconstitutional stripping of our collective agreement never should have happened in the first place, and a whole generation of students have gone without the frontline service they ought to have had during the entirety of their K–12 experience, but we are proud that we’re able to turn our Supreme Court of Canada victory into positive change so quickly. We can never forget, though, what happened.

‘I want to thank all of our BCTF

members for their tenacity and solidarity over the last 15 years. By sticking together and acting as outspoken advocates for our rights and our students’ education, we are finally going to see meaningful improvements in our schools. Thank you as well to parents who have supported us all these years.’

Hansman said the focus will now shift to the collective agreement-based school staffing processes that will begin later this month as well as holding the government accountable for its commitment to fully fund all the costs.

‘The government stated it will fully fund the costs of implementing this agreement,’ said Hansman. ‘All eyes will be on the BC Liberal government this March and April to ensure the necessary funds materialize.

‘It’s also important to note that our restored language does not solve many of the other urgent funding pressures facing school districts. The government needs to step up and properly address overcrowding in many of our districts, the lack of resources for the revised curriculum, and all of the seismically unsafe schools across the province.’