

# Gulf Islands' Island Tides

Every Second Thursday & Online '24/7' at [islandtides.com](http://islandtides.com)

Volume 16 Number 3

Your Coastal Community Newspaper

Feb 26–Mar 10, 2004

Attractions & Accommodation

Vancouver Island & The Gulf Islands, Page 8

Canadian Publications Mail Product  
Sales Agreement N° 40020421



Tyler, a new Salt Spring SPCA volunteer, gets nuzzled by Chrissy the cat. Tyler comes with his mom Jade to the shelter twice a week to cuddle cats, clean cages and do chores. See related story on this page. Photo: Cathie Newman

Tide tables	2
BC budget	2
Hydro tenders	3
Saturna notes	3
Letters	4
What's on?	5
World forum	7
Bulletin board	7

## Crisis in animal control and rescue on the Islands

Visitors to the Salt Spring SPCA, when they see the 21 large homemade cages and communal living space—complete with baskets and perch boxes—prowled by up to 50 cats, always comment on how different it is from other shelters. But this unique shelter may have to close, after losing a major source of funding two years ago and exhausting its reserves to operate.

Until 2001, Salt Spring's SPCA received most of its funding (\$30,000/year) from lottery money. Each SPCA branch could apply for funds directly and the Salt Spring branch was funded in this way for a number of years.

Then the rules changed. In 2002, only the SPCA Head Office could apply to the BC Gaming Commission and the funding was capped at \$250,000, about one quarter of the previous total.

A spokesperson for Vancouver Island SPCA commented that the Salt Spring branch could now expect to receive \$15,000 in funding. The additional amount would need to be raised locally. He stressed that all local donations would go back to the Islands' branch and not into general revenues. And that branches had been instructed to balance their budgets.

In 2003, the Salt Spring branch fielded 4,460 calls and travelled 10,658 kilometers to investigate cruelty complaints (about 5 per month) and pick up strays. The SPCA houses mainly cats and last year helped 133 cats find new homes. The shelter doesn't have facilities for dogs.

On the Islands, the SPCA and the CRD cover complementary aspects of animal care work. Vivian Murrill is a Special Constable who works on behalf of the SPCA under the provincial *Police Act* and her work complements that of Wolfgang Brunweisser, the CRD Animal Control Officer for Salt Spring and the Southern Gulf Islands. He is responsible for enforcing animal bylaws on all the Southern Gulf Islands, including the smaller islands like Piers and works with Animal Control Officer Jackie Main on Pender.

Special Constable Murrill has authority to investigate and prosecute cruelty cases in the courts. Animal Control Officer Brunweisser investigates allegations that fall under regional bylaws and may give tickets and impose fines when there are infractions.

ANIMALS, please turn to page 2

## Poll shows no mandate to privatize ferries

Patrick Brown

Three out of four British Columbians say that the Liberal provincial government had no mandate to 'privatize' BC Ferries, according to a public opinion survey completed in mid-January by Ipsos-Reid.

The survey, commissioned by the BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union, asked 800 BC residents questions about BC Ferries and the *Coastal Ferries Act* that was passed in the legislature on April 2003.

The poll asked for opinions on the actions taken by the provincial government over the past eight months, including not only the *Act*, but also the contract between BC Ferry Services Inc and the government, the role of public consultation and the provincial Auditor General. (Results are accurate to within plus or minus 3.5%, 19 times out of 20.)

### 78% on Coast Oppose Breakup of Ferry System

The *Coastal Ferry Act, Bill 18*, set out a structure whereby the ferry system, which for the last 30 to 40 years has been integrated under a single Crown Corporation, could be broken up and run by a number of private operators. The new poll shows that 57% of coastal residents had heard of the *Act*, but only 42% of respondents not living on the coast.

Three out of four of those surveyed thought that a 'broken up and contracted out' ferry service would be less reliable than the present integrated system. The same percentage felt that BC Ferries should 'seek cost savings through administrative and operational efficiencies' before changing the current system.

Over 90% (98% on the coast) of respondents agreed strongly or somewhat strongly that BC Ferries, and the inland ferries, were an integral part of the provincial highway system. Similar percentages agreed that the highway system should be publicly owned and financed. And four out of five agreed that the ferries were an essential service and 'should not be required to return a profit to investors.'

When it came to the public funding of the ferry system, over 50% said they thought the subsidy should 'remain as is'—a reference to

the one-and-a-half cent per litre allocation of the provincial gasoline tax initiated by the previous government at the recommendation of the Coastal Council (BC Ferries' stakeholder group). The new contract between the government and the 'privatized' BC Ferry Services Inc. sets out specific dollar subsidies, which may be changed, for each route.

### Cross-subsidization Supported by Two-Thirds

Only two of the ferry routes (Tsawwassen-Swartz Bay and Horseshoe Bay-Departure Bay) make a profit, according to the BC Ferries 2003 Annual Report. The remainder are financed, to a greater or lesser degree, by these profits; this is known as cross-subsidization, and the government has indicated its intention to end this.

However, cross-subsidization was supported by two-thirds of respondents. And well over two-thirds of those polled opposed the sale of publicly-owned assets (such as ferries) to private operators—over half said they 'strongly oppose' this.

The privatized (but still government owned) BC Ferry Services Inc has signed a 60-year contract with the government to provide services, with the proviso that it should continually seek out competitors and subcontractors. Seventy percent of respondents felt this was 'too long.'

### Public Participation Supported

Finally, with respect to transparency, the answers to two questions clearly indicated the public's concern that they had limited insight or input into the new structure. Approximately 90% felt the need for the participation of public advisory groups in order to obtain public input into major policy decisions; there is no provision for this in the *Act* or the Contract. And four out of five felt that BC Ferry Services Inc should be subject to the scrutiny of the provincial Auditor General; the ferry operator has been exempted from this, as well as from the *Labour Relations Code, Freedom of Information Act, and Ombudsman Act.*

FERRY POLL, please turn to page 2

## Citizens' Assembly learning the ropes

The work of the BC's Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform has begun just as the Prince Edward Island Electoral Reform Commission released their report recommending Mixed Proportional Representation as the preferred voting system to replace PEI's current first-past-the-post system.

The BC Assembly will spend much of 2004 examining electoral systems around the world to decide if they will propose a change to BC's current system of translating votes into seats in the Legislature.

If Assembly members recommend a change, it will be subject to a referendum in the 2005 provincial election. Any change approved by the voters would take effect with the 2009 BC election.

### The Assembly Begins

The Assembly's first session of six 'learning phase' meetings was held in Vancouver on the weekend of January 10 and 11.

Adriane Carr, leader of the BC Green Party, who was the proponent of the 2001 Citizen's Initiative that got the ball rolling on electoral reform, attended the first assembly as an observer. She says she wants to become as knowledgeable and informed as possible about how best to encourage province-wide citizen participation.

Assembly members started by developing a set of criteria that reflect what people expect and need from an electoral system.

'Just a terrific opening weekend,' said Assembly chair Jack Blaney. 'The enthusiasm and energy of the members was simply overwhelming.'

Members also gave the weekend rave reviews, and one observed: 'I did some homework. I read advance material. I looked at some of the websites listed on the Assembly's website. I thought I was beginning to grasp it all. Then Ken Carty (leader of the Assembly's educational program) stood up and started posing questions. I realized how much I will have to do to understand the various electoral systems and what they might look like if they were used in BC.'

### Second Learning Weekend

On the weekend of January 24–25, members began look at alternative voting systems and past experiments with 'preferential ballots' in BC and Alberta.

ELECTORAL REFORM, please turn to page 7

Catch up on old issues or download popular articles. Visit our archives:  
[www.islandtides.com](http://www.islandtides.com)

# Island Tides

AT FULFORD HARBOUR  
FEBRUARY/MARCH

Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.
24	0050	4.9	1.5	03	0440	10.8	3.3
	0745	10.8	3.3		1020	8.9	2.7
	TU 1420	5.2	1.6		WE 1245	9.2	2.8
	MA 2045	8.5	2.6		ME 2050	2.6	0.8
25	0130	6.2	1.9	04	0505	10.5	3.2
	0800	10.5	3.2		1030	8.5	2.6
	WE 1505	4.6	1.4		TH 1355	9.2	2.8
	ME 2155	8.5	2.6		JE 2130	2.3	0.7
26	0210	7.5	2.3	05	0525	10.5	3.2
	0815	10.2	3.1		1045	8.2	2.5
	TH 1545	3.9	1.2		FR 1455	9.5	2.9
	JE 2320	8.9	2.7		VE 2205	2.6	0.8
27	0255	8.5	2.6	06	0545	10.5	3.2
	0830	9.8	3.0		1105	7.5	2.3
	FR 1630	3.6	1.1		SA 1555	9.5	2.9
				SA 2245	3.0	0.9	
28	0145	9.5	2.9	07	0600	10.5	3.2
	0420	9.2	2.8		1135	6.6	2.0
	SA 0840	9.8	3.0		SU 1655	9.5	2.9
	SA 1725	3.3	1.0		DI 2320	3.6	1.1
29	0255	9.8	3.0	08	0615	10.5	3.2
	1820	3.3	1.0		1210	5.6	1.7
	SU				MO 1800	9.2	2.8
	DI			LU 2355	4.6	1.4	
01	0340	10.5	3.2	09	0635	10.8	3.3
	1915	3.0	0.9		1250	4.6	1.4
	MO				TU 1910	9.2	2.8
	LU			MA			
02	0410	10.5	3.2	10	0030	5.6	1.7
	2005	2.6	0.8		0655	10.8	3.3
	TU				WE 1335	3.6	1.1
	MA			ME 2025	9.2	2.8	

Tides Tables Courtesy of



## Island Marine Construction

Floats • Ramps • Moorings • Pile Driving

Ph: 250-537-9710 Fax: 537-1725

www.islandmarine.ca

# SEAFIRST

INSURANCE BROKERS

Call Us Toll Free for Quotes on

- Homeowners • Farm
- Commercial • Bed & Breakfasts

A2 - 9769 Fifth Street, Sidney

Doug Guedes • 1-866-656-9886 • (656-9886)

7178 W. Saanich Rd, Brentwood Bay

Doug Strong • 1-877-655-1141 • (652-1141)

www.seafirstinsurance.com



## Country Heritage Homes

THE EXCEPTIONAL HOME PACKAGE



- 35 years of design experience • vaulted open floor plans • factory direct •
- quality products and options • Performax® home package to lock-up •

Toll Free: 1.866.466.3535 • info@countryheritagehomes.com  
www.countryheritagehomes.com

DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOME

# Budget—Cheerleaders and Critics - Patrick Brown

**'The main estimates for the 2004/2005 fiscal year or for any subsequent fiscal year must not contain a forecast of a deficit for that fiscal year.'**

—The Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act, passed by the Provincial Legislature on August 16, 2001.

Well, they didn't forecast a deficit. Finance Minister Gary Collins presented figures that forecast small surpluses for the next three fiscal years. Slim margins—\$100 million on a \$30 billion budget—but at least not deficits. But these margins are awfully sensitive to the state of the BC economy; a small downturn would sink them.

In fact, most of Collins' spending increases take three years to come true—well after the next election. Nevertheless, he can't resist a pat on the back for himself: '...through discipline, hard work, and sound fiscal management, we have turned BC's financial situation around.'

The estimates were accompanied by pages and pages of departmental and agency objectives, strategies and goals—massive volumes of consultant-speak, laughably modest goals, notable for an almost total lack of measurable targets. Mostly what these documents promised is that the results would not get noticeably worse.

In brief, a focus completely on costs, to the exclusion of real achievements or the quality of services.

(One exception, from the Energy Ministry: 'At least 50% of new electricity supply will come from environmentally responsible sources.' Remember that, Vancouver Island. And when you pay your new enhanced electricity bill, remember that the government will get an extra \$190 million from BC Hydro next year. But that's not a tax increase—or is it?)

Nevertheless, the government predicts a balanced budget. To find out whether they actually managed it we'll have to wait till after the 2005 election, when accounts for the 2004/2005 fiscal year are completed.

## The Cheerleaders

The budget was followed closely by the cheerleaders: a blizzard of faxes, web postings, and sound bites. The cheerleaders included the Certified General Accountants Association of British Columbia: 'Finally, a new era in fiscal responsibility and transparency has begun' (is that wording familiar?). The CGA applauded the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). 'We are witnessing the restoration of sound financial management and accountability in government,' said their president. Minister Collins, hire these guys to audit the books — they won't give you any trouble.

In fact, the use of GAAP handily meant that the budget could include schools, universities, colleges, and health authorities, the so-called SUCH sector. This added \$124 million to the budget.

The CGA's twin, the Chartered Accountants of British Columbia: 'This budget sets the province on a course for fiscal stability and prosperity...'. Normally the fees you would pay for such a sweeping professional opinion would be substantial. I wonder if they could tell us where the billion dollars from the sale of BC Rail shows up in the budget, or the \$750 million extracted from BC Ferries?

Some are even more optimistic. BDO Dunwoody LLP, Chartered Accountants, promised that the economy 'finally seems to be turning the corner.' The *Globe & Mail*: 'BC buried its reputation as a poor money manager.' The Vancouver Board of Trade gave the government an 'A'—strict examiners, these.

The Fraser Institute, apparently never satisfied, says the government 'failed to deliver on Liberal promises of tax relief and increased competitiveness.' Maybe they're not paid enough

to notice the tax reductions.

Telus, our local telephone company, went so far as to congratulate Premier Campbell on delivering a balanced budget, praising 'prudent management.' I hope that when Campbell calls them to congratulate them on their cost reductions, he can actually get through on the phone.

## The Critics

The figures seem to indicate that costs have certainly been contained. And give the Liberals some credit, it hasn't been easy. In fact, painful for most British Columbians, except those making over \$60,000 a year.

So a further blizzard—from the critics. Why are they complaining? The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities: 'The application process is extremely difficult and the definition of disability much narrower.'

The Health Sciences Association, ever polite, 'urges BC Liberals to keep their promises ... British Columbians ... know that services they used to rely on in their community aren't there any more.' The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia: 'a dishonest and mean-spirited approach to creating much-needed university and college spaces'. They are referring to the government's taking the funds from the student grant program; more spaces maybe, but less low-income students to fill them. Who will benefit?

The BC Government and Service Employees' Union: 'The budget works like a slot machine—only a select few can win while the rest of us pay.'

The BC Teachers' Federation: 'In real terms, per-pupil funding is \$165 less than in 2001.' The teachers say that student enrollment is down by 2.5% but the teaching workforce is down by 8.9%, and 92 schools have been closed.

But these people have a vested interest in complaining, don't they? Right; they are losing their jobs or their futures to government cutbacks. Those jobs provide real services to British Columbians. The cheerleaders, one might suppose, don't have any vested interests. And maybe they were wrong, anyway.

There's some evidence to show that, without Premier Campbell's hasty 25% tax cut right after the last election, this year's budget would still be balanced, services would not have been cut, and BC would have \$3 billion less debt. Could be. The tax cut certainly didn't produce an economic revival, despite the cheerleaders then.

## The Opposition

This is the general theme of the other blizzard of fax paper. The opposition has no difficulty in seeing through the figures. The NDP's Carol James: 'In three years, Gordon Campbell has hiked taxes for working and middle class families by close to \$2 billion. All to pay for a tax cut to high-income earners that did nothing to spur economic growth.' The BC economy continues to lag, says James. She says that a two income family of four, earning \$30,000 per year, are paying \$435 per year more in taxes.

The Green Party's Adriane Carr termed the budget 'deceitful': 'Where's the deceit? I think it's dishonest of Minister Collins to play with figures so it sounds like the Ministry of Children and Family Development budget is getting \$120 million more. In fact, the Ministry's budget is going down by \$70 million, just not the \$190 million previously predicted by Collins.'

'What the Liberals don't get is that you can't balance the books by leaving huge unaccounted-for deficits in the environment or in social costs,' added Carr.

And the voters? It's going to be an interesting election. As I write, the polls show the Liberals and the NDP at 40% each. ✓

## FERRY POLL, from page 1

### Steering the Wrong Course

Overall, the survey results strongly suggest that the government is 'steering the wrong course' in its complex restructuring of coastal ferry services.

Two other questions in the survey provide an interesting insight into respondents' general attitudes. One asked whether the government should increase funding to our school systems: 93% thought it should. The other suggested that corporate sponsorships including marketing and vending agreements should not be used to replace reduced education funding in our schools: 71% agreed they should not.

(NB. The above poll should not be confused with one commissioned by BCFS during contract negotiations with the Union last fall. That poll ask 700 British Columbians what they felt about the terms of the contract between BC Ferries and the Union. However three-quarters of those asked said they could offer no opinion, so that the poll's conclusions had little meaning, though it managed to gain media attention.) ✓

## ANIMALS from page 1

Brunweisser and Murrill deal with animals that are a danger to humans and livestock, dogs running at large, and licensing.

Salt Spring's SPCA provides care and adoption programs for which the CRD doesn't have the space or resources. Before the shelter existed, Brunweisser had to take all adoptable animals to Victoria because his small facility couldn't house them.

If the Salt Spring SPCA were shut down, the CRD would be left to deal with the animals. Murrill thinks that if the shelter closed more animals would be needlessly destroyed and Brunweisser agrees. He says 'We need the SPCA ... if they shutdown the SPCA it's going to be a nightmare for me.'

To raise the shortfall, the SPCA is fundraising through walk-a-thons, auctions, soliciting donations, and recruiting volunteers.

If you'd like to lend a hand or adopt a cat (or rabbit—right now there are at least ten), call 250-537-1442. ✓

## THE RAINWATER CONNECTION

Complete Rainwater Harvesting Systems

Roof to Tap Design

- Polypropylene-lined Steel Cisterns—4,000–30,000 gallons
- Roof Washers
- Gravity Filters

Bob Burgess 250-246-2155  
www.rainwaterconnection.com

DESIGN • SALES • INSTALLATION

## IS YOUR WELL WATER SAFE TO DRINK?

Contamination can occur without changes in colour or taste. Be safe, test annually.



250-656-1334

MB LABORATORIES LTD

ANALYTICAL &amp; TESTING SERVICES

fax: 250-656-0443 Website: www.mblabs.com

Email: mblabs@pacificcoast.net

2062 Unit 4 Henry Ave. West, Sidney, B.C. V8L 5Y1

## OCEANFRONT LOTS PENDER ISLAND



Brian Harris - Dave Cochlan

604-664-7630

www.landquest.com

## Balanced Budget for BC—but on a Razor's Edge

Marc Lee, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Gary Collins tabled his first balanced budget as Finance Minister but his projections for 2004/05 leave little room to move.

'This budget is balanced, but on a razor's edge,' says Marc Lee, an economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. 'If there are any economic shocks—such as a repeat of last year's forest fires, or if planned changes to federal equalization payments go ahead—we'll be back in the red.'

'The budget introduces \$350 million in spending cuts—bringing the total spending cut outside of health and education to \$1.9 billion since 2001/02,' says Lee. 'When it comes to health and education, however, the government is clearly looking towards the 2005 election. The Finance Minister has pointed to spending increases in these areas—but most new expenditures don't come on-line until 2006/07. In post-secondary education, the government is using \$30 million in savings from the elimination of student grants to fund the increase in spaces promised in the Throne Speech.'

'There is really little to celebrate here,' says Lee. 'The real bottom line for British Columbians is that we're entering a third year of painful spending cuts, with no economic boom for BC on the horizon. The government's tax cuts have failed as an economic strategy. Economic forecasts for the next three years are not spectacular, and even in 2006/07, personal

and corporate income tax revenues will still be lower than before the 2001 tax cuts. This has been an incredibly painful three years for British Columbia, especially for the province's most vulnerable citizens.'

The government has balanced its budget due to a combination of:

- \$347 million in new health care funding from the federal government;
- an accounting change worth \$124 million;
- a significant reduction in the usual forecasting allowance;
- one-time revenues from the sale of BC Rail;
- increased revenues from higher BC Hydro rates;
- \$100 million hike in alcohol and tobacco taxes;
- \$125 million anticipated new revenues from lotteries.

On the spending side, cuts to be implemented in 2004/05 include:

- \$117 million from Human Resources;
- \$70 million from Children and Family Development;
- \$96 million from Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services;
- \$39 million from Transportation;
- \$34 million from Public Safety and Solicitor General;
- \$34 million from Small Business and Economic Development;
- \$19 million from the Attorney General. /

## Hydro's flawed call for tenders & other electric news ~ Patrick Brown

The BC Utilities Commission rejected Hydro's proposal for a gas turbine generation plant at Duke Point because BCUC thought that it was not the most economic way to obtain additional electricity for Vancouver Island, and told Hydro that they must initiate a Call for Tenders (CFT) to explore alternative ways of obtaining additional power for Vancouver Island.

However, under the terms of the CFT, BC Hydro appears to be favouring private sector proposals to build the gas turbine generation plant, by offering to sell their preparatory work to the successful private bidder for at least \$50 million less than its cost to Hydro. (Expressions of interest from twelve companies included purchasing Hydros' fire-sale Duke Point assets)

This windfall for the successful bidder would also have the effect of making the privatized project appear more 'economic.' Hydro will be able to present it within CFT and BCUC may well accept it.

BCUC approved Hydro's CFT process on January 23, despite objections by NorskeCanada and the Joint Industry Electricity Steering Committee that the CFT process was biased towards a 'privatized' version of Hydro's gas turbine generation proposal.

Hydro's CFT also appears to limit generation alternatives to production of large amounts of continuous power, effectively excluding any strategy that includes 'green' alternatives. Strategies to reduce demand are also excluded.

Net metering, which permits some power users to be given credit for the power they themselves may generate and feed back into the grid, is not being considered as part of the strategy. The criteria that will be used to judge proposals appears to have settled down to purely cost considerations, with greenhouse gas and environmental factors given little weight. This may well reflect the original BCUC decision, which emphasized 'cost-effectiveness'.

In all, it is a much narrower approach to

Vancouver Island's electricity planning than should have been taken.

### Chicken & Egg?

BC Hydro's persistence in pursuing its Duke Point plans may be explained in part by the federal National Energy Board's approval for the GSX pipeline. The NEB ruled that the pipeline poses no particular environmental hazard but that it is only economically justified if Hydro buys all the gas for use at a Duke Point-type plant. The NEB pipeline approval has been made contingent on the plant being built.

However BCUC ruled that Hydro had not proven that the Vancouver Island Gas Project/GSX combination is the most cost-effective way to provide additional power to Vancouver Island.

### Cock-eyed Process?

Meanwhile, Hydro has recently started preparation of a new 'Integrated Electricity Plan' (IEP) for the entire province. Some have suggested that electricity planning for Vancouver Island should follow the new IEP, not precede it.

The last such plan was written in 1995, and was 'updated' in 2000 to include the original VIGP/GSX proposal. It failed to anticipate the steady increase in natural gas prices, overestimated Vancouver Island consumption growth, and underestimated the potential for electricity conservation.

Currently, the role of the Burrard Thermal Generating Station is being evaluated (since it runs on price-volatile natural gas).

Hydro is also hedging its bets by requesting that the newly 'privatized' BC Transmission Company be prepared to put the first phase of a 230Kv transmission line from the Mainland (to replace the old HVDC line) into service in 2009.

### How Much Power Does Vancouver Island Really Need?

BC Hydro anticipates a potential power

HYDRO, please turn to page 6

## Saturna Notes ~ Priscilla Ewbank

The eagles are back on Saturna in full force. Every scrap of rotten salmon must be eaten from the spawning rivers and Saturna's eagles are back for their breeding, nesting, fishing and lounging cycle. Their chattering sounds and other calls can be heard regularly around our house.

Recently, an immature bald eagle landed in one of the spike-topped branches of a first-growth Douglas fir by our house. One of the resident ravens immediately took off and landed in the tree much higher up. By the time I had reached the top of the hill to get a better look, (I'm always trying to decide if we have an immature bald or golden by checking for feathered toes—a distinguishing feature) the raven was on the same branch nonchalantly inching closer while cleaning its beak, stretching a wing, inspecting its toes. I laughed!

Soon the other raven arrived and the pair kept up a constant calling back and forth. The eagle ceased appraising the chicken flock and turned its full attention to the raven, which hopped to the base of the branch in a fluid moment. Within several minutes the eagle gave up and fell into the air, gliding across Lyall Harbour valley to Mount David. I can imagine the conversation between the two ravens—they looked generally smug anyway.

I love seeing the buds in the daffodils start to swell. The crocuses are out when the sun shines and shut tight when the rains fall from the dim sky.

So much activity and so much promise at this time of year from flocks of lambs to rough skinned newts.

It's reading week February 16–20, and lots of our older kids are home reading and recharging for exams. We also have visiting students who are taking time for a spring frolic before hitting the books.

### Jacques 50th!

Saturday, February 7 was a really fun day on Saturna. Jacques Campbell's sister, Nan, the rest of the Campbell clan, and dear friend Susanne Middleditch welcomed the community to celebrate Jacques 50th birthday at the Campbell Farm.

Traditionally, Jacques' birthday celebration has involved roasting wieners in front of the fireplace because she never got the wished for birthday party at the beach. But her wish came true for her 50th, it was an outdoor wiener roast!

Dressed warmly in her usual attire, with only a small, slightly askew tiara to identify her as the guest of honor, she welcomed long-time friends from her many-faceted life.

A hundred people came to wish Jacques well and remind her what a delightful person she is. The party was so much fun. There were two big bonfires, plenty of well trimmed 'proper' roasting sticks, homemade sausages by Andrew, two of mom Lorraine's famous birthday cakes, baked beans, fresh buns, a sack of marshmallows so huge that none of the kids reached the bottom, comfy benches, big old Douglas firs to lean on, great pockets of conversation and new lambs to visit. Political conversation and debate was replaced with great discussions among young and old on how best to cook hotdogs, strategies to heat the bun and what condiments to add.

There were lots of happy faces warmed by the bonfire, good visiting and a lovely occasion to celebrate. Happy birthday to a bright eyed

Island girl who has matured to a lively, capable woman.

### Desolation Screening

The night of February 7, Hand Crank films presented *Desolation*—a comedy that was filmed on Saturna Island two years ago with Island talent in some of the scenes. It was a rowdy, rambunctious crowd that filled the Community Hall to premier the independent film directed by Max Kaiser in conjunction with Johnny Raven and Matt Ross.

The directors thanked Saturna for its time and goodwill and went on to say that the project had been positive and enjoyable from the start. It was great fun to see the film projected on a wide screen with neighbours and friends—we enjoyed the *Mayne Queen* swinging into our dock, Harvey Janszen's face filling the screen, seeing Neal Macdonald, Beth Jones, and Jane Dixon-Warren ably pull off a whole scene, and knowing all of the barflies in the bar scene!

The film is premiering in Vancouver, where all the 'real' actors will turn up, and then will go on to the Toronto film festival and? And? Perhaps only the local Island Goddesses who appeared several times in the film can tell!

### Wildlife Tree Stewardship

Kerri-Lynn Wilson gave a presentation about Wildlife Tree Stewards—a project conserving and monitoring trees for wildlife. A wildlife tree is defined as any standing dead or live tree with special characteristics that provide valuable habitat for the conservation or enhancement of wildlife.

She had a lot of interesting things to say about the courtship and nesting habits of our resident eagle population and their preference for large Douglas firs. Eagles have perching trees and nesting trees within their territories, and they may have more than one nesting tree. Eagles will nest about a kilometre apart, depending on tree choices available and the abundance of food. Nests weigh up to one ton, which is one reason why a big strong Douglas fir is a good choice.

Cyndi Shannon, a student from the University of California at Riverside, is studying our local population, mapping nests and recording behavior and quizzing our local bird experts. A course workbook was handed out at the presentation with lots of valuable information on bird habits, trees and human use of the environment. Alan Olsen will coordinate the work to identify, monitor and educate about the value of wildlife trees on Saturna. Contact him if you

are interested in being a part of this interesting project.

### Baking Presentation

On March 5 at Haggis Farm Bakery, Jon Guy will give the second part of his baking workshop (sponsored by Parks and Recreation).

The first presentation covered different flours, their qualities and milling. The second part will include doughs made up from the different flours, how they bake up, what their attributes are and how tasty they are! Everyone is welcome, contact Jane Dixon-Warren or Jon Guy to be sure there is enough space around the bakery table.

### Womens Club Dinner

The Womens Club put on a wonderful dinner for the community on February 7; roast beef and all the trimmings for \$10. This service is

SATURNA, please turn to page 7





**St. Margaret's School**  
Meet the students, teachers and staff and discover the All-Girls Advantage!

St. Margaret's Campus  
1080 Lucas Ave, Victoria

March 7, 2004  
1 - 4 pm

## OPEN HOUSE

- ✓ Dance, Drama and Music
- ✓ View Art and Science displays
- ✓ Talk to students and staff
- ✓ Children are invited to join the fun!

Day & Boarding • K to Grade 12 • (250)479-7171  
[www.stmarg.ca](http://www.stmarg.ca)

# seair

1-800-447-3247  
1-800-44-SEAIR

SEAPLANES [www.seairseaplanes.com](http://www.seairseaplanes.com)

## 6 Scheduled Flights Daily

Leaves Vanc. Airport

7:30am  
11:30am  
3:30pm

Leaves Gulf Islands

8:00am  
12 Noon  
4:00pm





FREQUENT FLYER DISCOUNTS

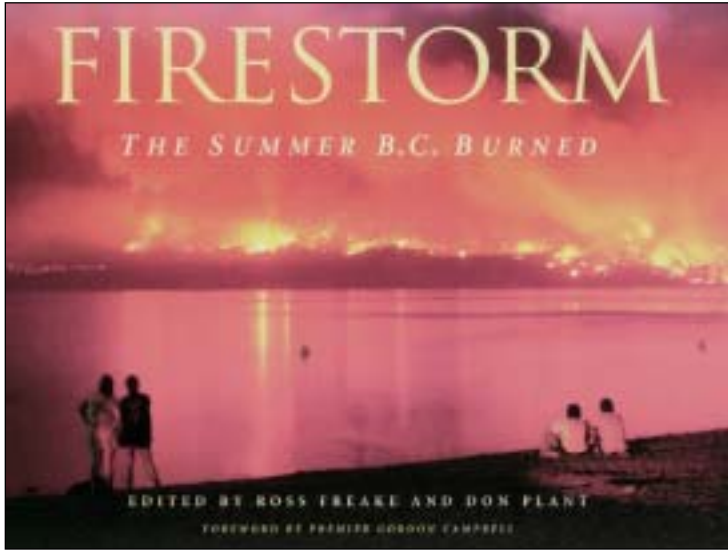
Ganges Harbour • Montague Harbour • Port Washington  
Lyall Harbour • Telegraph Harbour • Miners Bay

# Savage Beauty Book Review by John Wiznuk

**Island Tides**  
 15,000 copies this issue  
**Every Second Thursday**  
[www.islandtides.com](http://www.islandtides.com)  
**GULF ISLANDS' ONLY FREE & MAIL DELIVERY**  
**NEWSPAPER**  
 8,000 copies delivered to Southern Islands' households  
 7,000 copies on the Ferry Routes Sidney, Victoria & north of the Malahat to Nanaimo

**ISLAND TIDES PUBLISHING Ltd**  
 Box 55, Pender Island B.C. V0N 2M0  
 Publisher & Editor: Christa Grace-Warrick  
 Contributors: Patrick Brown, Gillian Allan, Marc Lee Priscilla Ewbank, Chickadash, John Wiznuk Paul Caspersz, Ellen D. Russell, Cathie Newman  
 Telephone: 250-629-3660 Fax: 250-629-3838  
 Email: [islandtides@islandtides.com](mailto:islandtides@islandtides.com)  
 Deadline: Wednesday between publications  
 Off-Islands Canadian Subscriptions \$37.45  
 Voluntary Mail & Box Pick-up Subscriptions \$21.40

The book's cover tells all—the arresting night time scene of a horizon ablaze—a fascinating and terrible beauty. *Firestorm, The Summer That BC Burned*, is a book of photo-journalism that tells the story not just of one fire but of the series of fires that burned through the BC's Interior, pushed provincial resources to the breaking point, and required emergency fire-fighting assistance from across Canada.



There were 14 major wildland/urban interface fires that burned over different portions of the BC Interior in 2003's hot, dry, summer. Usually there is only one.

*Firestorm's* editors, Russ Freake and Don Plant, both worked at the Kelowna's *Daily Courier* during August of 2003 but have not limited their story to the Kelowna catastrophe. The book is put together from images and thoughts of local people; reporters and photographers from the newspapers in Kelowna, Kamloops, Nelson and Cranbrook.

Freake and Plant's overview give a sense of the widespread damage that the fires caused, the enormous effort required to bring them under control, and the even greater enterprise by government and relief organizations to care for the tens of thousands of evacuees.

How all these people were moved, registered, housed, fed and kept informed in the midst of the crisis is the big untold story of summer 2003. Firefighters got the glory but the RCMP, Emergency Social Services, Provincial Emergency Program, Red Cross and other relief workers deserve public applause as well.

The main attraction of the book is the colour photos. This is photo-journalism of a kind not seen much outside of royal weddings and *National Geographic*; reminiscent of *Life Magazine* in its glory days of the fifties and sixties. The dramatic shots of the Canadair, CL145 waterbombers in action are superb.

There were 31 waterbombers working over the interior at the height of the fires, on loan from as far away as Quebec and New Brunswick.

The other photos run the gamut: from Jean Chretien and Gordon Campbell catching a photo-op with Kelowna's Fire Chief Gerry Zimmermann, to burned-out basements, to dog-tired firefighters, to the savage beauty of a hillside being consumed by flames—it's all here.

The text fills in around the images, telling the background story; why and

how things happened as they did. What decisions were made and when, and how peoples lives were affected. And, of course, the statistics; the square kilometres of forest burned, the 334 buildings destroyed, the \$497 million cost for firefighting and emergency relief, the 10,000 fireline, support, and administrative workers that fought the fires, and the mercifully small number of deaths and injuries.

An incredible story with lessons for all of BC. This is what it might look like on our doorstep if the Okanagan's tragic events were repeated on the coast.

*'Firestorm, The Summer That BC Burned'*, Russ Freake and Don Plant, Editors, McClelland and Stewart, \$39.95. /

## Readers' Letters

### 'Save our Ferries' Meeting

Dear Editor:  
 Although the 'Save Our Ferries Advocacy Group' was formed by BCFWU members, the panel at their meeting on Pender Island on February 15 stayed away from union issues to bring to our attention *Bill 18, Coastal Ferry Act* and how it will affect ferry users.

The mission statement for the new BCFS is drastically changed from the mission statement of the former Crown Corporation. The old mission statement reads: 'The British Columbia Ferry Corporation is dedicated to satisfying its customers' needs for safe, efficient, effective and reliable ferry transportation services. As a publicly owned crown corporation, BC Ferries facilitates economic and social development of the province.' The new mission statement reads: 'efficient ferry service which consistently exceeds the expectations of our customers and communities, and creates value for the shareholder.'

One section in *Bill 18* specifies that BC Ferry Services 'must' contract out different functions in the system or it would be breaking the law.

If this Bill is not repealed immediately and in the future a contract goes to a US or Mexican company, that contract will be subject to NAFTA's infamous Chapter 11. Should the operation of the ferries not go well and we feel forced to revert back to a public operation, the buy back costs and penalties would be tremendous and may be beyond taxpayers ability to pay; there would not only be the costs of the infrastructure but also the costs of loss of potential future profits of the company involved.

It was brought to the attention of those present that the 'selling off' of crown corporations (e.g. BC Hydro & BC Ferries) in other countries did not go well. The purchasers used the infrastructure for profit until repairs became too costly, then bailed out. So there is a history, which our government refuses to acknowledge.

Letters are needed to our MLA Murray Coell also to the Minister of Transport Kevin Falcon & Premier Gordon Campbell. (Sample letters and info are available online.)

We could be headed toward very serious trouble with exorbitant ferry fares and/or cutback ferry service. Each route has to make a profit, as per the *Coastal Ferry Act*, not just the Authority as a whole. Be sure to visit [www.saveourferries.com](http://www.saveourferries.com).

Sara Steil, Pender Island  
*Ed's Note: A petition is circulating in ferry-dependent communities to ask the government to reconsider Bill 18 because of lack of public consultation before it was passed. Ask for it in your community or find (and sign) it online at www.saveourferries.com. To see how British Columbians feel read 'No mandate to Privatize Ferries,' page 1.*

### Eliminating Student Grants for Ordinary Students Creates Places for the Well Off

Dear Editor:  
 In the provincial budget, the BC Liberals announced the elimination of all grants for students in British Columbia. At the same time the government gave 30.5 million to BC Colleges and Universities to create spaces for the rich.

For a student on loans, this means debt upon graduation will rise to as much as \$40,000. A single parent will owe as much as \$70,000. Many students will be forced to drop out of college or university all together.

In a calculated, cynical move, BC university presidents have turned their backs on students and are actively and publicly supporting the government's plan to scrap student grants. The University Presidents Council's Don Avison has described the move as 'good news' for universities.

But the decision to scrap the grant program isn't final until the Budget Implementation Act is passed.

University presidents should stand up for students in BC instead of Campbell's sick plan. Or have their salaries increased so much since the Liberals eliminated the tuition freeze that they can only think of themselves?

Richard Bell, Vancouver

### Who Will Save My Grandson?

Dear Editor:  
 My grandson was born 19 years ago. He was a sweet boy, with a mother who suffered from manic depression and a father who was not involved in his care. From the time he was 2-1/2, he has been in and out of foster care.

When he was four years old, his parents divorced and his mother had custody of him. He had behavioral problems. With her problem, his mother could not care for him and he became a ward of the court at the age of five. From that time until almost five years ago, he lived in 27 different foster homes, none lasting longer than six months. He was physically and sexually abused as a young child in one of his placements. When he was nine he was removed from a foster home which was closed because of 'confinement issues'. He stayed with me for three months at that time. By this time, he was diagnosed with ADHD and was put on Ritalin.

His last placement was the longest at five years. When placed there he was diagnosed with Pervasive Development Disorder (Aspergers), a form of Autism. He thrived (as well as he was capable of) in this new environment and was made to feel a part of this family. He now had a mother, father, two brothers, and extended family. These foster parents wanted to keep him, but funding was cut when he turned 19.

His social worker, foster parents, psychiatrist, and all who worked with him have publicly stated that he cannot function and survive on his own. The government will not listen to these professionals.

Because my grandson has reached the magical age of 19 he is

now a man. The government ministry must now feel that miraculously my grandson's Aspergers has disappeared. Oh that it were so! They must think that he went to sleep one night and in the morning awoke a 'normal 19-year-old male.' He is still the same boy as he has always been. As a grandmother, I cannot care for him; he needs constant supervision.

He is on six different medications which need to be taken at specific times during the day. He needs to be reminded to do this. His foster parents monitored this when he was in their care.

He is a compulsive eater at times, has very bad social judgment and cannot look after his basic needs. His understanding is at the Grade 4 level. He cannot make change, and does not understand the value of money. Nor the consequences of his actions.

He has been in a Special Ed class for some years, and in June of 2003 was booted out because they would no longer tolerate his behavior. He was and is a danger to himself and others, carrying knives, screwdrivers, exacto knife etc. to school. He has an anger management problem and will strike out at others. I fear he will end up in the penal system if he is not allowed to be in care on some level.

Based on assessment and feedback from his psychiatrist and former foster parents, it is strongly recommended that he receive support through the Community Living Services of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. CLS refuses to accept my grandson. Mental Health also refuses to help him. Basically, the government has washed its hands of him.

To cut him loose is to literally kill him. On a weekend not long ago, he ate two weeks worth of food. With no money for food, and no way of getting any, what is left for him to do? Steal? be incarcerated? Become a burden on the taxpayers of this province in this way? He needs help so he can have a meaningful life. He lives in a basement suite that he cannot stay in, for many reasons, not the least of these is his inability for both personal hygiene and caring for his surroundings. There he sits alone 24/7 watching TV and playing video games. (He delivers papers 3 times a week for about 1-1/2 hours each time.)

When I talked to him last week, he had slept for many hours past the norm, as he had forgotten to take some of his meds. He cannot understand that when he sleeps late and misses a medication time, he cannot then take two doses of his medications at the same time. Help!

We care for the children and the elderly. Young adults like my grandson are falling through the cracks, and I am afraid they will be tomorrow's headlines in a horrific way.


Gramma, Kelowna

### Update from Cuba

Dear Editor:  
 I have just returned from Cuba and I think your readers may be interested in an update. With so many very explosive situations in the world, touched off by the actions and policies of the US, people may be inclined to forget that Cuba has been resisting

**Christine M. Piercy, MD. MA**  
 Registered Clinical Counselor  
 working with individual adults  
**Separations & Life Transitions**

Loss and Grief • Illness and Death  
 Depression • Aging • Dream Work  
**250-655-1014**  
 204B-2453 Beacon Avenue, Sidney, BC



**Butler Brothers Supplies Ltd.**  
**CONCRETE & AGGREGATE DIVISION**  
 Reliable Service, Quality Products & Competitive Prices  
 Serving All The Gulf Islands  
**Phone 250-652-4484**  
**Fax 250-652-4486**  
 6700 Butler Crescent, Saanichton, B.C. V84 2A6

**richard j. wey & associates**  
 land surveying inc.

Richard J. Wey BCLS  
 Legal, Engineering and Topographical Surveys  
 Subdivision Planning

The Oakville Suite 106-9717 Third Street  
 Sidney, BC V8L 3A3  
 Telephone 250-656-5155 Fax: 250-656-5175

# 'What's On?'

## Vancouver Island & The Gulf Islands

Only \$26.75! • With photo just \$32.10 to Promote your Event to  
36,000 Readers from Tsawwassen to Victoria to Nanaimo

### Sunday, February 29

**Public Meeting on BC Hydro & Our Electricity**—Mark Veerkamp speaks about privatization of BC Hydro, sponsored by Mid-Island Coalition for Strong Communities • Bowen Park Complex - 2300 Bowen Park Road • 2-4pm • Free • Info: June Ross 250-729-0185 or email [cat\\_balou@shaw.ca](mailto:cat_balou@shaw.ca) • IN NANAIMO

### Saturday, March 6

**'Going Local: The Practice, Politics and Pleasure of Eating Closer to Home'**—lecture by local Pender Island farmer and sustainable food and farming advocate, Derek Masselink; find out the hidden costs of our food and agriculture system and the benefits of eating and producing food close to home • Community Hall • 1-3pm • Free, donations accepted • Info: Derek, [hopebayfarm@gulfislands.com](mailto:hopebayfarm@gulfislands.com) • ON PENDER ISLAND

### Saturday, March 13

**Three on the Tree Productions presents Finding May Way: A Tale in Taps**—tap dancing, live music and projected images in this one-woman show; a memoir of a good Sicilian girl coming of age in the '60's and '70's • Community Hall • 8pm • Tickets \$15, \$13 for Three on the Tree members • Info: Jill Moran 629-3836 • ON PENDER ISLAND

### Fri & Sat, March 19 & 20, 26 & 27

**Sewing and Crafts Show**—over 70 seminars, exhibits, demonstrations, celebrity speakers, prizes, stage show, shop-till-you-drop • 19th & 20th: Victoria Conference Centre, 26th & 27th: Tradex, Abbotsford • 9am-6pm daily • Each show: 2-day pass, \$10 • Info: 1-888-245-6777 or [www.sewingandcraftsshow.com](http://www.sewingandcraftsshow.com) • IN VICTORIA & ABBOTSFORD

Promote your event! Only \$26.75

### LETTERS from previous page

American colonization and interference for forty-five years now. In the last UN vote, only the US, Israel, and the Marshall Islands voted against the resolution to lift the blockade against Cuba. The vote consistently goes this way but as we know, the US pays no attention to world opinion. It is little known apparently, that the US is, among other anti-Cuban practices, illegally holding billions of dollars in Cuban assets in the United States. The many instances of American terrorism against Cuba are also little referred to anymore, as if, suddenly, Cuba is a nonentity. Yet the US holds five Cubans in terrible prison conditions and under extreme sentences because they were trying to track the movements of a known anti-Cuban terrorist in Miami.

If you travel to Cuba, you will find a country that is using its resources in a most rational way to promote the greatest good for all. It has the lowest illiteracy rate in the Americas, including Canada and the US. It has a good free health care system and a fair standard of apportioning goods and services.

The US blockade is hurting Cuba. People are very short of material goods, not luxuries, but things we take for granted. Household objects, clothes, etc., are in short supply. Yet the most hurtful shortages are those that affect people at an even more basic level: anesthetics, anti-biotics, cancer medicines, etc. Cats and dogs are not neutered; there is no anesthetic to spare. If people have donations of things, such as computers, which are used in the poly-clinics, or medicines, money, or school supplies, etc., the Goods for Cuba committee can be contacted through me.

What is striking about Cuba and the Cuban people is the spirit of the place. Here is a people, almost alone really, in the Americas, who have stood up to the most terrible pressure for their precious right of determining their own destiny and direction as a country. We would be happy to have the same degree of political participation in our country as the Cubans have in theirs. If we did, then maybe we would not tolerate homelessness, hunger and political corruption.

We must examine the example of Cuba and see why it is so different from the sad litany of political failures which are appearing more and more under the assaults of neo-liberalism in the world. There is plenty of evidence, for instance, that before FTA and NAFTA working people of Canada were better off, with better jobs, than they have been since these trade agreements came into being. I admire the fortitude and independent spirit of Cuba. That's just one reason why I return there year after year.

I am sorry to see poverty anywhere, yet I saw no homelessness in Cuba. I saw very humble homes, of course, but I found the Cubans very skeptical when I told them that we have homeless people in Canada. On the day after I arrived home, I almost tripped over a very small person sleeping as close as she could to the bus stop at Main and Terminal in Vancouver, on the bare sidewalk, with only a piece of cardboard between her blanket and the very cold cement. All her worldly goods were in a shopping cart at her side. How would we feel if photographs of this were circulated in a country like Cuba alongside photographs of the opulent goods in all the shops?

What would 100 million dollars do to alleviate poverty in Canada? That's the 100 million we have been told disappeared into a black hole of 'misappropriation of funds.' In Cuba, their fewer resources do seem to get to the people.

Wilma Riley, Pender Island

### Feds Have No Money to Rebuild Saturna's Wharf

Dear Editor:

I have just been advised by Fisheries Minister Geoff Regan that the federal government has no money to rebuild the government wharf on Saturna Island, which burned in a fire in June 2003. This is Saturna's only public wharf and an entrance to a major portion of the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.



Readers may want to ask the Prime Minister why the government had money for Challenger Jets and advertising firms when his government doesn't have money to fix a government wharf that is used to serve community needs such as the school boat, float plane service, mail boat, medical evacuation facilities, boat fuel, RCMP, water taxi, BC Hydro and Telus maintenance services, medical personnel, and church clergy (among others).

Pat Carney, Senator for British Columbia, Saturna Island

### Suggestions for Hydro's Energy Plan

Dear Editor:

In relation to Hydro's 2004 Integrated Energy Plan, I want to see BC Hydro:

1. Taking a leading/active role in drastically reducing the amount of electricity used by BC consumers. By this, I mean reducing demand by say 30% in the 10 next years. This should be possible because we presently consume excessively and waste a lot through poor energy efficiency. (North Americans consume something like four times more energy per capita than the rest of the world. In a time of dwindling energy resources and obvious world-wide environmental degradation this needs to change)

An obvious way to encourage industrial, commercial, and residential customers to significantly reduce consumption is to develop standards of reasonable use in each of these sectors and bill at progressively higher rates for above-standard consumption (stepped rates).

Stepped rates worked in Qualicum, where, prior to their introduction there was a water shortage. And implementation didn't require much capital—a small number of meters were installed at first, and then more meters were bought with the resulting revenues. (Ref: Mayor of Qualicum at BC Hydro meeting in Nanaimo on Jan 21/04.)

Significantly reducing electricity demand in BC will create more electricity for export (gaining export revenues without the capital cost of building generating plants) and buy time to develop the green/ sustainable generating alternatives that make environmental sense and that many BC citizens want.

2. Encouraging green/sustainable generating schemes of all sizes and shapes. Going green/sustainable will be respectful of the environment and will also help keep electricity costs down as the price of fossil fuels increases. As well, there's potential for a vibrant secondary industry in green/sustainable energy, with many jobs, etc. Allow net metering to encourage such development.

3. Developing fossil fuel generation only as a last resort. This means considering, properly and adequately, environmental and social costs when making least-cost decisions. My observation around the VIGP process is that BCH paid only lip service to environmental and social costs.

4. Dealing with VI's looming electricity problem. It's apparent from the BCUC hearing that BC Hydro should be going all out on demand-side management to buy time—particularly peak-shifting and interruptible contracts—and

starting work immediately on a new 230KV transmission link.

5. Steering by what its engineers say is the best solution to a particular electricity problem, and not by what politicians say is best.

If there's a difference in this regard, then the matter needs to be put to the BCUC and the public to decide—early in the game. There should be no hidden agendas. For example, the fact that gas-fired generation on VI was a political decision made in the mid-'90s and contrary to what BC Hydro engineers wanted should have been made clear to the public from the start.

6. Generally being more open with the citizens of BC, being really interested in what they have to say, and actively striving to accommodate their needs.

Bob McKechnie (retired professional engineer), Gabriola

### President Bush's Policies are a Disaster

Dear Editor:

The foreign and military policies of the US Bush Administration are disasters.

Peter D. Carter, (*Island Tides*, February 12, 2004), points out quite well how counterproductive these policies are with respect to their ostensible objectives of creating an Iraq at once democratic, friendly to its neighbours, and unfriendly to terrorist groups.

Turning over control of Iraq's economy to US corporations will make meaningless and powerless any democratically elected government's claim to control the country on behalf of the citizenry: no matter whom the citizenry freely elects as leader, he or she will be but a figurehead and a stooge of the US Administration (which will exercise real control of Iraq through the corporations and through a long-term American military presence in the country).

The net effect of the Bush Administration policies towards Iraq is likely to be an alienating of the Iraqi people from both America and (sham) 'democracy'. Anti-American terrorist groups, as well as authoritarian secular and religious movements will be able to feed off of this alienation, gaining recruits to staff guerrilla bands which will keep Iraq dangerous and unstable by attacking the American Imperial presence and its Iraqi stooge government.

Bush Administration policies towards Afghanistan are equally incompetent, selfish, and short-sighted. The country remains fragmented and chaotic, in conditions ideal for the revival of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Furthermore, the Administration has not found a way of stopping its war in Afghanistan from spilling over into nuclear-weapons-armed Pakistan, making it more unstable and more anti-American.

The most serious and frightening test of the Bush Administration's ability to handle foreign and military policy problems is yet to come—in the Far East, where US-China tensions over North Korea threaten South Korea and Japan; or if Taiwan makes major moves towards formal independence from China.

Failing the test in Iraq and Afghanistan is making future regional wars more likely in the Middle East. Failing the test in the Far East could make World War III—a nuclear exchange between the US and China, which Russia perhaps siding with China—more likely than it is now...

...And that would be the ultimate disaster caused by Bush Administration incompetence and stupidity in foreign and military policies!

D I Solomon, Victoria ✓

**LANCE VAESSEN ROOFING**  
1184 SUMMIT AVE, VICTORIA



**STANDING SEAM METAL ROOFING**  
**FOR WATER COLLECTION SYSTEMS**

ALSO  
**TORCH-ON MEMBRANE SHAKE & SHINGLE**

**250-381-2157 CELL 250-361-5028**  
FAX 250-383-2198

**Serving the Gulf Islands for 20 Years**

*Going Somewhere?*

**1-800-434-0566**

whittome's travel  
[travel.whittome@shawcable.com](mailto:travel.whittome@shawcable.com)  
60 Station Street, Duncan  
*Serving the valley since 1935*

**ROCK & GEM SHOW 2004**

**Fri 19, Sat 20 & Sun 21 March**  
**Leonardo Da Vinci Centre**  
**195 Bay Street Victoria, BC**

**A learning experience for the whole family**

Retail dealers from Alberta, BC & USA • Gold panning • Gem cutters at work • Rock polishing • Silver smithing • Opal cutting • Kiddies Korner

**Fri 1-9pm • Sat 10am-6pm • Sun 10am-5pm**  
Adults \$4 • Seniors / Students \$3 • Family (4) \$8

Sponsored by Victoria Lapidary & Mineral Society  
50% of proceeds donated to Santas Anonymous

Information: [www.islandnet.com/~vlms](http://www.islandnet.com/~vlms)

## Deep sea research could save offshore workers' lives

A new type of a re-breathing system could potentially save lives lost in offshore helicopter crashes in rough marine environments, such as Canada's North Atlantic Ocean, Europe's North Sea and the Baltic Sea. These waters are home to numerous gas and oil drilling operations, which rely on helicopters to ferry their workers to and from ocean-bound offshore oil platforms.

Matthew White at Simon Fraser University's School of Kinesiology leads three national projects aimed at improving the abysmal survival rate of offshore drilling workers involved in helicopter crashes. While roughly 80% survive the initial crash, only about 20% of those survivors escape drowning.

In experiments, White and his twelve research partners have discovered that survivors do not have the ability to hold their breath long enough to swim safely to the surface in most cases. White and some of his partners will assess three types of devices that could enable ditched helicopter survivors to

make a successful underwater swim to the surface.

Two of the devices are modeled after the re-breathing capabilities of existing military equipment, which are not adequate for an escape from a submerged helicopter. One device is a prototype hood developed in BC by Mustang Survival. Another device is a miniature oxygen-containing scuba (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus) bottle that has an air regulator and mouthpiece. The third option would be a hybrid of the hood and the scuba bottle.

There are problems with all three options that still need to be resolved. 'Claustrophobia could be a big concern with the hood and a scuba bottle would have all the challenges associated with scuba diving,' explains White. 'The hood wearer would have the challenge of breathing normally under stress to conserve available air, while use of the scuba bottle requires good diving technique to avoid decompression injuries.'

## UVIC astronomer discovers stellar case of 'cannibalism'

It's a galaxy-eat-galaxy universe out there and there's evidence right in our own galactic backyard, according to new research by UVic astrophysicist Dr. Julio Navarro and colleagues in the Netherlands and Australia.

In a paper published this week in *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*, the team concludes that the star Arcturus—the third brightest star in the night sky—is an alien star from another, smaller galaxy that was swallowed up about 10 billion years ago by our own Milky Way galaxy.

This new finding challenges the traditional theory of galaxy formation, which says that they develop in isolation following the collapse of a giant cloud of gas and dust. 'This may be too simplistic,' says Navarro. 'Instead, the formation of all galaxies may be punctuated by distinct merger events in which smaller galaxies are disrupted, trapped and swallowed.'

When galaxies merge, their stars don't collide—they're far too small—but retain for a long time traces of their previous identity in the form of similar dynamic properties.

Using sophisticated computer simulations, Navarro and his colleagues argue that the peculiar movements of Arcturus and several other associated stars indicate they didn't

originate in the Milky Way. 'The main clue is that they follow paths that differ strongly from that of our sun, which, like the majority of stars in the Milky Way, moves on a roughly circular orbit around the centre of the galaxy,' says Navarro.

It's possible that the Milky Way acquired a large fraction of its stars through such intergalactic cannibalism. In fact, there's evidence that, even now, the Milky Way is busy swallowing up the Sagittarius dwarf galaxy, which in a few hundred million years, will have been disrupted beyond recognition.

Arcturus is a mere 36 light years away from Earth—very close in astronomical terms. In BC, it is currently visible in the early morning eastern sky as the dominant star in the constellation of Bootes—the Herdsman that chases across the sky after the Great Bear, Ursa Major.

'It's oddly gratifying to think of stars visible to the naked eye, such as Arcturus, as silent night sky witnesses of the eventful formation history of our Milky Way,' says Navarro, a theoretical cosmologist who studies the evolution, structure and dynamics of galaxies. His work was featured in a *National Geographic* article, 'Galaxy Hunters,' in February 2003.

## Show Me The Real Numbers

Ellen D. Russell

*We can't have democratic reform without financial transparency.*

Paul Martin has made democratic reform a hallmark of his leadership. According to the throne speech, the government promises to 'make Parliament what it was intended to be—a place where Canadians can see and hear their views debated and their interests heard.' But no democracy can function without clear and accurate information about what the government is really doing. After all, how can Canadians engage effectively with our elected representatives if we don't know the real facts and figures?

Nowhere is this absence of reliable information more shocking than in the official government estimates of the current state of federal finances. Answers to fundamental questions like 'is the government running a budget surplus right now?' and 'if so, how large?' remain shrouded in mystery.

To give Canadians information about the state of federal finances, the government provides the public with an estimate of the current year's budget surplus. These estimates typically portray the upcoming budget surplus as quite modest—usually about \$2 or 3 billion. Then when the fiscal year ends—surprise, surprise—it is revealed that the government is sitting on a sizeable budget surplus. How big a surplus do they disclose at year-end? As much as \$20 billion in 2000/01, but a hefty \$7 billion in the last two fiscal years as well.

In spite of the recent rhetoric of democratic renewal, the same pattern seems to be continuing this year. The government tells us in the most recent Economic and Fiscal Update that the current budget surplus is \$2.3 billion. At the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives we estimate the real budget surplus to be \$8.3 billion. This is not new either; every year since 1999, the CCPA's estimates of the federal budget surplus have been substantially more

accurate than the official estimates published by the government.

The federal government's miserable track record in estimating the budget surplus should give Canadians pause. We could forgive the occasional mistake, especially given the fact that the unforeseen can occur. But when the government is wrong seven years in a row, and wrong by such a significant amount, one has to wonder if the government is being entirely straightforward in its assessment of its current financial position.

Why would the government so consistently low-ball their estimates of the budget surplus by such a wide margin? Well, for one thing, it is a very effective way of reducing Canadians' expectations. If Canadians are persuaded that the government is in dire financial straits, we are less likely to make demands that have a price tag attached—demands that, for example, require reinvestment in our battered social infrastructure.

If the Canadian government is knowingly presenting a distorted picture of federal finances, this is itself a violation of democratic principles. The democratic process relies on the honest disclosure of financial information. With the consistent low-balling of federal surpluses, debate on fiscal priorities is limited at the outset because Canadians are under a mistaken impression of the government's true financial situation.

To have genuine democratic reform in Canada, we must all have access to the real numbers. If Mr. Martin is truly committed to democratic reform, he needs to address the ongoing deficit in accurate fiscal forecasting immediately.

*Ellen Russell is a Senior Economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and author of 'Crying Wolf Again? A Pre-Budget Assessment of Federal Finances,' available at [www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca).*

### HYDRO from page 3

shortage in 2007, when it plans to 'decommission' the existing HVDC powerline that carries power from the mainland across Galiano and Salt Spring Islands to Vancouver Island. To fill the shortfall Hydro had proposed the \$370 million, 265 megawatt, natural gas turbine plant at Duke Point, supplied by the GSX natural gas pipeline running through Boundary Pass and the Gulf Islands.

However, Hydro has also received preliminary approval from BCUC for a 7.23% increase in electricity rates, starting April 1 this year. Estimates included in its application for the increase say that a 6.5% increase in electricity prices would lead to a decrease in demand of 64 Mw in 2007/08 and an 88 Mw decrease in 2011/12. A decrease of this magnitude (Hydro's Vancouver Island demand peaked this year at 2194 Mw on a cold January 4) would make a significant difference to the quantity and the urgency of new power generation.

The reaction of large industrial consumers on Vancouver Island, particularly pulp mills, to the rate increase is not yet apparent. They have proposed co-generation plants at the mills, which would reduce Hydro's demand (and its revenue) significantly.

### Meanwhile Duke Point Moving Right Along

The original Duke Point proposal received environmental approval on December 23, 2003 from the Province of BC Environmental Assessment Office (operating under newly relaxed legislation). Said the EAO, 'Today's decision provides greater certainty for those bidders who expressed interest in the assets and will assist BC Hydro in seeking and evaluating tenders for alternative proposals, some of which may be located on the same site.'

BC Hydro has also applied for a Regional Waste Management Permit, to cover waste discharge from a VIGP. This despite their not having specific permission from the BCUC yet.

However, equipped with the necessary ministerial permissions following EAO approval, it is unlikely that this will be refused.

Meanwhile, Williams Pipelines, Hydro's partner in GSX, continues its efforts to get landowners in Cobble Hill to sign right-of-way agreements. And in the US, Williams is reportedly still negotiating pipeline easements with landowners in Whatcom County. But a pipeline safety group, Fuel Safe Washington, is in federal court in Denver, challenging the authority for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of the pipeline.

### Terasen Liquefied Gas Storage Proposal

Meanwhile, Terasen Gas (TGVI) have been preparing for a possible Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage facility, near Timberland Road, North Oyster, south of Nanaimo. Application is being made to the Cowichan Regional District for rezoning of four hectares of land to accommodate a billion cubic foot storage tank estimated to cost \$100 million.

Such a facility would probably enable Terasen to undertake the supply of natural gas to a Duke Point power generation plant without building an additional pipeline across the Strait of Georgia. The NEB refused to consider this possibility when reviewing the GSX proposal.


### Rate Increases

Power rates in BC have not gone up in ten years, and are among the cheapest in North America. However, the provincial government has indicated that the currently applied for 9% increase is just a start in a gradual climb to 'market rates'. The consumer is being told, via a recently issued BC Hydro brochure, that replacing just five light bulbs in her house with fluorescent bulbs will reduce household power consumption by 5%, and thus mitigate the coming increase. This is, of course, provided that she does not use electricity for heating, as many on Vancouver Island and nearly all on the Gulf Islands do.

**Galiano Gifts Galore!**  
Treat Yourself—& Those You Adore

ART & SOUL CRAFT GALLERY, Sturdies Bay. A wide selection of Galiano and BC art and crafts. Galiano and native art clothing (kiddie and youth sizes too). SALE of 40-50% on selected clothing... 539-2944 HOURS: FRI 10am-3pm, SAT & SUN 10am-5pm, extra viewing call Sandra 539-3075

**Live Your Dream**



**THE LINWOOD ADVANTAGE**

CUSTOM DESIGN  
HIGH QUALITY CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS  
FULL WARRANTY PROGRAM  
WORLDWIDE SHIPPING EXPERTISE  
CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT

1.888.546.9663  
[www.linwoodhomes.com](http://www.linwoodhomes.com)

NEW PLAN BOOK NOW AVAILABLE  
— Over 100 full colour designs —

**IRON  
ODOUR  
BACTERIA  
HARDNESS  
ARSENIC  
FLUORIDE**

ARE FOUND IN GULF ISLAND WATER

FOR SOLUTIONS CALL:

**PRO STAR**  
MECHANICAL TECHNOLOGIES LTD.

320 Mary St., Victoria  
250-383-4558  
[www.prostarwater.ca](http://www.prostarwater.ca)  
[info@prostarwater.ca](mailto:info@prostarwater.ca)

**SHORELINE DESIGN**

specializing in water access over steep & rugged terrain

Peter Christenson

excellent references

250-629-8386

[www.shorelinedesign.ca](http://www.shorelinedesign.ca)

**Interested in what happened last time the coast took on BC Ferries (and won)?**

For our 1997 coverage of the meetings, demos, and the infamous 'Fulford Tea Party' go to [www.islandtides.com](http://www.islandtides.com). Follow the links either through the 'Featured Articles' (top right of home page). Or through 'ARCHIVE,' and then 'BC Ferries.'

**You will see what Islanders can do!**

**PORT BROWNING MARINA, CAFE & PUB**



**FALL HOURS:**  
Café: Weekdays 7:30am-8pm daily  
Early Bird' weekday special \$4.95 (7:30-9am)  
Sat & Sun 8am-8pm  
Pub: Open from noon daily  
Liquor Store: Weekdays 4-9pm, Sat & Sun Noon-9pm

**Enjoy pay-per-view Canuck Games. Exclusively at Browning!**

629-3493 • [www.portbrowning.com](http://www.portbrowning.com) • [portbrowning@gulfislands.com](mailto:portbrowning@gulfislands.com)

# The World Social Forum ~ Paul Caspersz

The Fourth World Social Forum, held this January in Mumbai, Sri Lanka, was an international forum of people, from many different countries of the world, who are profoundly dissatisfied with the present World Order and who hope for a new World Order of peace and justice for all, but specially for those who have been marginalized.

The main watchword of the forum was 'Another World is Possible.' It was an answer to the arrogance of people like of Margaret Thatcher asserting 'There is No Alternative.' To which a resounding response was given: 'There are Many Alternatives.'

The first WSF was held in January 2001 in Brazil in the city of Porto Alegre. It was organized by a group of only eight Brazilian organizations and NGOs, including the Brazilian Association of Non Governmental Organizations and the Brazilian Movement of Opposition to the Multilateral Agreement on Investments. This extraordinary event was aimed at representing and giving voice to the growing worry and discontent all over the world concerning neo-liberal policies deregulating financial capital movements and against the anti-poor practices of international trade.

WSF movement is neither an organization, nor a neat stage where common deliberations take place and where participants have to agree on everything. Rather, the basic idea is to create a space for discussing alternatives, for exchanging experiences and strengthening alliances between social movements and unions of workers and peasants, and for affording the opportunity for everyone dissatisfied with the present organization of the world economy to come together in order to demand an alternative.

## Globalization

The WSF in less than four years has come to symbolize the strength of the anti-globalization movements. One of the thousands of posters and flags in Mumbai read: 'Globalization is Imperialism.' What the WSF opposes is not globalization as such, but capitalist globalization, that is, the globalization of a world economic system which places money and profit at the centre of the economy.

'Development' imposed on all the countries of the world by the system of capitalist globalization is therefore centred round money and the making of ever more money. The magic wand of this development, its criterion, goal and its measuring rod is the increase in per capita Gross National Product. All else—culture, the basic needs of the most needy in the population, spiritual and ethical considerations—are relegated to the periphery.

What then was the demand at the World Social Forum? It was the demand to unmask the spurious model of capitalist

'development' and install in its place the true development model where the human-person-in-community and not money is at the centre of the process of development.

Thousands of, what Frantz Fanon calls 'the wretched of the earth,' the dalits, the tribals and the adivasis went round and round the field of the WSF asking for just this: that they and not the board rooms of the transnationals should be at the centre of development. The toffs were not visible at the WSF, but the poorly clad and the visibly undernourished were, in numbers.

Estimates of the crowd that gathered at the Nesco Grounds somewhat on the outskirts of the big city ranged from a low of 80,000 to a high of 150,000. Delegates from Brazil noted the difference between Porto Alegre and Mumbai: in Porto Alegre middle class groups, students, intellectuals, a more restrained but also a better informed group, in Mumbai the sheer masses, thousands of dalits and tribals, swirling and dancing, drumming, singing, play acting round and round the grounds, turning the field into a dust bowl in the driest of dry weather.

The official opening of the Forum on 16 January began at 4 o'clock in the evening and ended well after 10. There were adivasi dance performances, drummers from Kerala, percussionists from Andra Pradesh, sufi rock bands from Pakistan, a youth band from Brazil, a dance group from South Africa and speeches from persons as well known as Lakshmi Segal, a 90-year old Gandhian, Ahmed Ben Bella from Algeria, Arundhati Roy, Jeremy Corbyn, the Iranian Nobel winning lawyer Shirin Eloadi, Mustafa Barghouti from Palestine, and Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel winning economist formerly of the World Bank.

## Next Steps & Criticism

Writer Arundhati Roy struck a necessary note of radicalism warning that the Forum might become only an incident of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Faced with the increasing victims of capitalist globalization now on the rampage around the world, she said that the Forum and worldwide social movements that follow cannot limit themselves to criticizing globalization but must emphatically cry, 'Enough and Away,' and move into action. WSF needs to become an avenue for the pro-poor reconstruction of life on the planet.

Indeed, there is some reason to be critical of the WSF. Some of this criticism came directly from a forum set up next to the Nesco grounds. It was called the Mumbai Resistance (MR) and was much smaller than the WSF. MR was determined not to dance to anyone else's tune and so did not attract, probably did not seek, big donor funds. Groups of the disabled using crutches or on wheelchairs were also reproachful and asked the Forum, Why are you also ignoring disability? Have you thought about

the dreams and aspirations of the disabled, especially the disabled children?

## Reform & Revolution

The WSF, it was stated privately, cost \$2 million. But much more than \$2 million is spent on one unit of sophisticated fighter aircraft used to bomb the compact population of Baghdad. Yet there were some who asked whether the returns justified the cost.

Claims were made that the WSF was asking merely for a reform of capitalist globalization; not all thought so, probably not even the majority, and many of the more than 1,000 seminars held during the five days asked for the complete rout of capitalism as being ruinous to the greater part of humankind. The MR meeting said the WSF was reformist while it thought that only revolution could overcome capitalism.

The World Social Forum was powerful, no doubt, as promise and as symbol. But will the world's incendiary problems be solved by promises and symbols? /

## ELECTORAL REFORM from page 1

Members also discussed questions: What are the pluses and minuses of majority governments? Of minority governments? Of coalitions? Does it matter how many political parties we have? Is multi-party or two-party competition better for BC?

Some of the members' comments in debate were:

- 'A majority government can get things done without having to look over its shoulder all the time. The stability is important.'
- 'But a majority government doesn't feel it has to listen to the people. The cabinet decides, the premier decides, and that's it.'
- 'I'd rather see at least five parties, personally, it would break this deadlock, left and right.'
- 'But what matters is who gets into the legislature, and that's not a function of the number of parties.'

## Third Learning Weekend

In their third round of meetings on February 7 and 8, Assembly members dug into the details and workings of three electoral systems that are in use around the world; proportional representation, single transferable vote, and mixed systems.

## More Sessions—Open to Public

The Citizen's Assembly will continue to meet in Vancouver, for the fourth of the six weekends about electoral systems.

The learning weekends are open to the public, but space is limited and pre-registration is recommended. You can pre-register at the Assembly website [www.citizensassembly.bc.ca](http://www.citizensassembly.bc.ca) or by calling 604-660-1232. /

## Plant power solves crimes

Criminals had better beware of plant bits left at the scene of their crimes. Rolf Mathewes, a botanist at Simon Fraser University, is regularly seconded from his academic and teaching duties to help solve high profile murder cases.

Trained in botany and paleobotany, the study of ancient plant fossils, the silver-haired academic refers to himself as 'the accidental forensic botanist.' 'My study of microscopic plant remains in sediments to track forest history and climatic changes unwittingly prepared me for forensic analysis of similar fragments recovered from crime scenes and bodies,' explains Mathewes.

The Maple Ridge resident and associate dean of science at SFU helped police identify plant evidence found, almost four years ago, in a bag that had contained the body of a young murder victim. 'I was called in after police recovered the bag from the bottom of Alouette Lake in Golden Ears Park,' remembers Mathewes. 'My identification of plant remains from the body bag and the victim's hair helped police confirm where her body had originally been hidden.'

Mathewes' forensic work involves using leaves, seeds, pollen and other plant parts to confirm the timing or location of a crime. 'With the help of a microscope, I'm often sifting through pans of dust and sediment for plant fragments that can be up to 500 times smaller than what can be seen with the naked eye.'

Mathewes is also in demand on the lecture circuit. Homicide investigators and other professionals in forensics attended his Lower Mainland workshops last year. A fictional detective novel is also taking root in the back of his mind. An avid reader of such works, Mathewes says with a sly grin, 'Forensic botany is fertile ground for new plotlines.' /

## SATURNA from page 3

presented so the community can get together to eat and visit. Thanks to the Womens Club for this effort.

## Church Improvements

Have you noticed the new entry to the library and the church? With a combination of donated and paid labor, materials and time, our access to the library and Church is being much improved. Thanks to everyone who worked on the project.

## Community Club and Crib Night

March 1 is the quarterly meeting of the Community Club. The meeting will be in the Community Hall. Everyone is welcome.

Doris Ackerman and Linda Sohler, two people who love to play crib, are having Crib Night on Saturday, February 28 at the Community Hall. Everyone is welcome—all ages, all abilities. Come to have fun and play this age-old game.

## Wedding Shower for Odessa

On March 6 there will be a wedding shower for Odessa Davies at the Community Hall in the evening. Everyone is welcome to come and congratulate Odessa and send her off with their blessing. Please contact Ingrid Gaines and Shelley Crooks for information. /

# Bulletin Board

(PAID BY DEADLINE ONLY - VISA ACCEPTED) • Phone 250-629-3660, Fax 250-629-3838

Email: [islandtides@islandtides.com](mailto:islandtides@islandtides.com) • Next DEADLINE: Noon, Mar 3, 2004

BULLETIN BOARD BOXED ADS - 1', 2' & 3' - \$20 per inch+gst— multi-issue discounts

BULLETIN BOARD WORD ADS - \$17.12 for 25 words or less, 27¢ per additional word

## AUTOMOTIVE

### SIDNEY TRANSMISSIONS

- AUTOMATICS & STANDARDS
- 4-WHEEL DRIVE SPECIALIST
- DIFFERENTIALS • CLUTCHES
- NAT'L WARRANTY • COURTESY CARS

CUSTOMER PICK-UP & DELIVERY TO FERRY TERMINAL  
**TRANSMISSION SPECIAL!**

- ✓ Trans inspection
- ✓ Clean pan ✓ adjust bands
- ✓ Replace pan gasket
- ✓ Check modulator
- ✓ Adjust throttle linkage
- ✓ Fill with new trans. fluid

only \$29.95  
reg. \$49.95  
Filter extra required

**1-877-655-3707**  
Local: 655-3707  
#3 - 2051 MALAVIEW  
(ACROSS FROM SLEGG)

## BOOKS

### Galleon Books & Antiques

Buying & Selling Quality Used Books, Antiques & Collectibles

We Purchase Estates & Private Libraries

Call for On-Site Valuation

(250) 655-0700

9803 Third Street Sidney

[galleonbooks@hotmail.com](mailto:galleonbooks@hotmail.com)

## MARINE

**ISLAND MARINE CONSTRUCTION SERVICES**  
Ph: 250-537-9710  
Email: [imarinec@salt.spring.com](mailto:imarinec@salt.spring.com)  
[www.islandmarine.ca](http://www.islandmarine.ca)

## FOR RENT

### ISLAND EXPLORER

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LTD.

250-654-0230

**Southern Gulf House & Cottage Rentals**  
PENDER: 2-storey home with ocean views, 3 bedrooms + den/office, 2 bathrooms-\$800. Wonderful ocean views from this furnished 2 bedroom insulated cottage. Available immediately to mid-July-\$700. List your long term rental property or vacation home with us! Licensed Property Management on the Gulf Islands since 1994.

PROVEN SERVICE •

COMMITMENT • RESULTS

**1-800-774-1417**

[email:hgerry5@shaw.ca](mailto:email:hgerry5@shaw.ca)

[www.island-explorer.com/pender](http://www.island-explorer.com/pender)

## GETAWAYS

### MAUI

### Vacation Condos

1 & 2 bedroom units  
Ocean & Garden Views  
Reasonable Rates  
Upgraded, CLEAN units

**1-800-800-8608**

[www.mauisuncoast.com](http://www.mauisuncoast.com)

## FOR SALE

1989 Ford Econoline E250 propane-powered camper van. Stove/oven, fridge, propane fireplace, 12-disc CD player, large skylight, pine tongue and groove paneling. Open and spacious design. Good condition. \$5500 obo. Phone Trevor or Gillian, 250-629-3380.

## HOME, GARDEN & PROPERTY

### Luttmer Woodworks

Kitchens  
Wall units  
Closet organizers

250-539-0466  
[www.luttmerworks.com](http://www.luttmerworks.com)

## ARMOUR ROOFING

A Division of Flynn Canada

- Torch-On
- Standing Seam & Low-slope Metal Roofing
- Custom Flashing
- Asphalt & Cedar Shingles
- 6" Water Collection Gutters

**1-877-652-0599**

Member: Better Business Bureau,  
Roofing Contractors Assoc of B.C.  
[www.flynn.ca](http://www.flynn.ca)

## FOR WILD BIRDS & GARDENERS

Home & Garden Accessories  
Wild Bird & Hummingbird Feeders

Quality Seed and Suet

George Lovick & Calvor Palmateer

**1-250-881-7575**

566 Johnson St, Victoria  
Email: [hummgarden@telus.net](mailto:hummgarden@telus.net)  
Locally owned/operated since 1997

## PEST PROBLEMS!

Rodents, birds, moths

Specializing in Carpenter Ants

CALL BC Certified 'VERMINATORS'  
604-692-0781

Special Group Rates for Gulf Islands Residents

## Trevor's Garden Maintenance

pruning • trimming  
planting • bed work  
seasonal cleanups

**250-629-3380**

on Pender Island

## D. A. SMITHSON & SONS

### Well Drillers

**539-5252 or 250-478-6937**

## MEETINGS

School District #64 (Gulf Islands). A regular meeting of the Board of School Trustees will be held at SIMS, Wednesday, March 10 commencing at 1pm. Public Welcome!

From the high Andean communities, women have come into town—in their pleated skirts, black braids and tall felt hats. Many of them have shoulder wraps in which they are carrying babies. Over 60 mothers have come bringing flowers and smiles to receive us. Each one gives us a hug, a kiss on the cheek and an armful of freshly-picked flowers. Small boys and girls freshly out of school are arriving in ever increasing numbers, their blue uniforms blending into a sea of children in the narrow street. The mothers line the road to one side and 120 children fill the street on the other side. Shera and I are here on one of our trips to Peru, this time bringing two large boxes of clothing.

Two brothers stand across from us in the middle of the narrow street welcoming us all. Both are tall, with glistening long hair, laughter in their eyes, somewhat gangly bodies, and long arms that carry their glowing smiles into the hugs they offer so easily and naturally to us and to the children around them. But that is not the beginning of the story.

The story begins with Washi, a small boy living in a tiny, impoverished mountain community in Peru outside of this Inca town of Ollantaytambo—more than a two-hour walk outside to be exact. Together with his brothers he measures out that two-hour distance every day, Monday through Friday. One step at a time. First on the way to school. Then again on the way home. A cup of coffee and a bowl of potato gruel at 4am will be all that fuels him from the time he wakes until after he gets home again in the late afternoon.

There are countless 'Washis' from 4 to 12 years of age, whose private pilgrimages each day are a testament to parents' faith in the promise education holds for something better.

These days however this Washi is no longer making that trek to school. He has grown into the 21-year-old Washington who is welcoming us with his brother Carlos.

The brothers have stood for most of their young lives in shadows cast by the gloss of wealth rolling through their impoverished

community, sparkling tour groups in polished buses rumbling by in bubble-tour packages that look at but leave nothing for the 'colourful' local communities, without which there may well be no tours at all.

Yet the generosity of Carlos and Washington allows no thought of the inequities; no anger, bitterness or frustration. In their place is only determination. They are focussed instead on those tourists with open hearts, those willing to learn more. As heart touches heart, alliances are inevitable.

Helene and Sharon, two women from California, had also been watching Washington for years. And when, in July this year, they and Washington were considering the blight of poverty so evident in the children of Ollantaytambo—dishevelled hair, sun-cruised faces, clotted noses, and shabby clothes hanging randomly on their tiny bodies—Washington immediately thought of the hungry children still trekking to school as he used to, and the project took form.

The brothers retreated into half of their tiny (300 sq ft) rented home so that the space freed up could be dedicated to preparing and serving food to children, food bought with funds raised by Sharon and Helene. They have now been feeding the children for half a year. Every school day, they give 120 children steaming bowls filled with vegetables piled over rice, potatoes or pasta, nourishing and strengthening their bodies for their trek home.

'We are not just feeding the children,' says Carlos, 25. His eyes brighten as he says, 'We meet with the mothers and talk to them about stopping violence in their homes. The weight of poverty can crush the fabric of family and community. You know, when we were growing up we thought violence was normal. There was shouting and beatings in our home, and we could hear yelling and screaming from the neighbours around us. Most of us don't even know there is another possibility.' Pausing as we talk to confirm his statements with the women circled on benches around us, he adds, 'We tell the mothers that the most important thing for a child is love, and that there is no place for violence.'

Their vision and dedication are a magnet for others who look for ways to make a positive difference in the world. That is why we are in the middle of this small street with so many people. The air is electric, with heart, openness and anticipation. Washington and his brother Carlos stand together smiling with excited satisfaction, radiating delight, clearly living out their long-held dream of serving their community and the children they love. A shaman they have brought in for the occasion lights several sticks of incense beside a bible, and invokes the blessings of the Mountain Apus—spirits—for our gathering.

Then amid great excitement clothing is passed out to the mothers, toys and crayons are distributed to the children, and a thousand pencils are set safely aside for two months so they can become Christmas presents. And after the many hugs and tears and the laughter, the children finally make their way into the tiny dining room to receive their steaming bowls of lunch. They know they still have a long walk home ahead of them.

The brothers tell us they are looking for bigger premises. They want to provide a refuge for children who simply are too far away to walk in each day for school. The children could

then come in on Mondays and stay in the refuge until they go home on Friday. And they want to find a way of building an orphanage. And some day they want to be able to feed some of the poor local children from the town.

When we look back one last time, Carlos is still in the street, smiling broadly at two of the town children, a tiny boy and girl, smudged by the dusty street and burnt by the sun, leaning timidly against each other, eyes wide, unsure. His smile widens as he steps toward them, his long arms encircling their small shoulders, including them, and guiding them gently toward the shelter of the dining room and a hot meal. Today, it seems there is enough food to share.

(Feel good update: At Christmas they served 2,000 mothers and children in remote villages—hot chocolate, buns, and a pencil for each child. In January, Carlos arranged for a busload of doctors and dentists to come 50 miles from Cusco to Ollantaytambo to see 300 children.)

Galiano's Chidakash and Shera are currently raising money to purchase land for a building that will accommodate 20 children during the week with a proper dining hall and kitchen (instead of the current 12 x 16' space (plus 5 x 5' kitchen). If you would like more information or to help, call 1-800-944-2655. /



WASHI

## Queen of Nanaimo in refit

Gulf Islands—Tsawwassen (Route 9) regular vessel the *Queen of Nanaimo* is out of service for its scheduled dry-docking and annual refit. She is not expect to return to service until Sunday, March 28. The *Nanaimo* has been replaced by the smaller *Queen of Tsawwassen*.

Overloads and delays can be expected at peak sailing times, especially on weekends and over spring break. Those anticipating travelling on her should make advanced bookings. Alternate travel options between Tsawwassen and the Southern Gulf Islands are available by sailing via Swartz Bay on a throughfare ticket. /



## GREEN PARTY OF CANADA

THE GREEN PARTY STANDS FOR • Quality Healthcare for All • Fiscally Responsible Government • Community-based Democracy and Electoral Reform • Fair Trade and Sustainable Communities • Long-term Strategic Vision

### Support Andrew Lewis

Your candidate for the May(?) federal election

*I believe true leadership is rooted in our local communities, not in Ottawa. I trust you will join me in the coming election and help Saanich-Gulf Islands show Canada true 21st Century leadership by supporting the Green Party as your voice for your values.*



### JOIN THE GREEN TEAM NOW!

You can make a difference...

- I'd like to make a tax deductible donation of \$50—real cost of \$12.50\* • \$100—real cost of \$25\* • \$200—real cost of \$50\* • \$400—real cost of \$100\* (\*\$5000 maximum individual donation accepted)
- I'd like \_\_\_ lawn signs.
- I can host a house gathering so friends and neighbours can meet Andrew Lewis.
- I can deliver \_\_\_ leaflets in my neighbourhood.
- Please contact me about other volunteer opportunities.
- I'd like to join the Green Party (membership \$10-\$25, sliding scale).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Island \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: The Chair, Saanich-Gulf Islands Green Party  
8727 Lochside Drive, Sidney BC, V8L 1M8

All cheques payable to: Saanich Gulf Islands Green Party EDA

For more information, contact 250-653-4630.

### YOU ARE THE FUTURE!

Greens have been elected in 29 countries, forming governing coalitions in seven. It is time Canada joined the global movement and elected Green Party MPs. Saanich-Gulf Islands, one of the strongest ridings in Canada, is ready to lead the way.

**REAL CHANGE! REAL CHOICE!**

**X VOTE! ANDREW LEWIS for Saanich-Gulf Islands Green MP!**

Authorized by the Financial Agent, Saanich-Gulf Islands Green Party

## Accommodation & Attractions Vancouver Island & The Gulf Islands

**Brigantine Inn**  
"The BRIG" has had a Refit!  
The waterfront pub in Maple Bay  
Live Music Wed, Sat, & Sun Night  
Dine on our new enclosed balcony  
6777 Beaumont Ave. Duncan 746-5422  
Coming by boat? Use our guest wharf  
**Beer, Wine & Liquor Store**  
open 7 days a week, 11 am to 11 pm

**The Haven B&B**  
In Peaceful Victoria  
Close to beach, hospital  
and university. Organic  
breakfasts and private  
bathrooms. \$40-\$60  
250-598-7015

## We offer visitors a better deal!

Our quality accommodation includes:

- indoor pool, sauna,
- free parking, in-room coffee,
- a convenient location
- and a warm welcome.
- Stay with us.

**\$39\***  
from



3110 DOUGLAS ST. VICTORIA, BC V8Z 3K4  
across from Mayfair Shopping Centre,

1-800-997-6797  
www.blueridgeinn.ca

\*Single occupancy. Subject to availability. Valid until March 31, 2004.

36,000 Readers from Tsawwassen to  
the Gulf Islands to Victoria to Nanaimo  
250-629-3660  
Fax: 250-629-3838  
islandtides@islandtides.com

**Canada's  
Friendly  
B&Bs**  
www.bbvacation.com  
CANADABC.com  
canadacyberhighway.com

**SEABREEZE  
INNE**  
SALT SPRING ISLAND, B.C.  
FROM \$59 FROM \$79  
Weekdays Weekends  
250 537 4145  
Reservations  
1 800 434 4112  
Moped Packages and  
hourly/daily rentals  
The Island's premiere resort hotel.  
www.seabreezeinns.com